FINAL PUBLICATION

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KA2 Strategic Partnerships for school education

Exchange of Good Practices

Content

1 Introduction

Fostering of literacy competences plays a key role in promoting social cohesion and reducing economic and social disparities. Quality ECE lays the foundations for later success in life in terms of education, well-being, employability, and social integration, and is especially important for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. In 5 of the 7 partner countries the average percentage of early leavers is higher than the EU average. Only Belgium and the enlargement country Bosnia and Herzegovina have better scores. At least 4 of the 7 partner countries (no data from BiH) have scores below the OECD average in the Pisa2019 Reading test. This READ project fully meets the needs of the EU to modernize and improve the quality of early education, increase key competences, and professional development of teachers and educators, also thanks to international cooperation and exchange of good practices.

The methodology of the project is based on mutual learning between partners and the exchange of good practices. This has been realised through short-term joint staff training activities organised in each partner country. The goal of the project was to compose an international collection of good practices that support the development of basic reading skills before the actual learning to read process begins.

The training activities all focussed on the observation of development activities of literacy competences for pre-school children, and of the reading activities in primary school. For this purpose, a uniform observation scheme was developed to observe the good practices, services offered, and the quality of teaching and training materials. Additionally, the trainings created interesting opportunities to collect data and exchange about the social, cultural and educational contexts, strategies, policies, involved stakeholders (public and/or private). Each country also conducted a literacy competence survey for educators, teachers and parents. A summary of each survey, as well as the observation results are included in this publication

2 Partners

In this chapter, you discover the partners involved in the Read Project.

2.1 Galileo Progetti

Galileo Progetti Nonprofit Kft. was founded in Budapest in 2009. It is a Hungarian organisation with a significant Italian participation: it belongs to the business group of companies set up by ARCA Social Cooperative of Florence. Galileo Progetti is member of the European Network of Social Integration Enterprises ENSIE. The main objectives of Galileo Progetti are the development of the ECEC sector and the social economy and social sector in general and the inclusion policies.

Galileo Progetti collaborates with local providers of ECEC services who create STEAM activities, aiming to teach children about innovation, to learn them to think critically and to teach them how to use engineering or technology in imaginative designs or creative approaches to real-world problems, based on mathematics, science and art.

Galileo Progetti also wants to develop the sense of civil participation and European citizenship and has particular attention for the inclusion of disadvantaged people or people at risk of social exclusion, such as Roma minorities and disabled people.

We aim for continuous exchange of good practices and experiences among the European Union countries and collaborate with private and public local bodies that are normally not very active at an international level. Indeed, we strongly believe that international experiences increase personal and professional skills and have a very positive impact on the quality of the social sector at local level.

Galileo Progetti has developed a wide local and international network of social enterprises, educational institutions, VET providers, public organizations, associations, and civil organisations.

Galileo Progetti's management is convinced that the exchange of good practices can enhance the local development and the competences of the local organisations, sharing and adapting well-functioning training and working processes in the social sector can indeed have a significant impact on the professional performance and on the competitiveness of the local participants.

Galileo Progetti aims to support children and other vulnerable groups with a specific attention for the fight against discrimination for the inclusion of disadvantaged people society, particularly disabled people, people belonging to minorities, people in economic distress and at risk of social exclusion.

2.2 Mesezene Association

General information

The Mesezene Association was founded in 2019 to promote an evidence-based way of both fostering language skills in kindergarten and teaching reading in elementary school. The association is based in Budaörs, Hungary, and consists of ten members. We maintain a close relationship with kindergartens (e.g. Bóbita Óvoda), elementary schools (e.g. Herman Ottó Általános Iskola) and universities (e.g. Eötvös Loránd University, Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary).

Invention of methodology

Reading as a cultural tool plays an important role in children's school career. Their school success depends on their reading skills. Many of the upcoming subjects (history, literature, biology) are based on written material and therefore require reading skills and reading literacy. It is thus relevant to provide children as many opportunities as possible to develop their reading. The Mesezene method provides a reading training for children from the age of six during their last year in kindergarten, as well as a motivational way of teaching reading in elementary school.

Our philosophy is to create optimal circumstances for children in order to teach them to read 'instinctively' with the least amount of ~~bitter~~ efforts~~.~~ Our aim was to develop a method that develops reading skills and motivates children at the same time. The *Mesezene* method is a new Hungarian approach for teaching reading. *Mesezene* is a two-module programme that can be used in preschool education to develop reading skills and applied in primary school as a pedagogical tool in reading instruction. The method applies a specific motivational aspect using stories and collective gaming activities in order to emotionally engage children and provide a more profound cognitive development.

Publishing

The Mesezene Association has published children's books and workbooks that make our method more vivid and likeable for children. Our publication provides written material as well as countless colorful pictures and playful tasks where children can express themselves through different activities (coloring, drawing, painting, or writing).

Research

Our collaborators constantly measure the efficacy of our methodological innovations, as we believe that the evidence-based practice has a critical importance - not just in medical discipline -, but also in human fields , such as education. Our studies have examined the efficacy of Mesezene method on phonological awareness, rapid automatized naming, and phonological short-term memory. Our recent publications in the field:

- Szűcs Antal Mór (2022): Mesezene: Introducing a new Hungarian approach in fostering language skills to prepare reading in kindergarten. In: Márkus Éva – Trentinné Benkő Éva – Árva Valéria – Svraka Bernadett (eds.): Languages, Inclusion, Cultures and Pedagogy: Research and Good Practices 2. Eötvös Kiadó
- Szűcs Antal Mór – Tar Éva (2020a): A Mesezene program óvodai moduljának hatása a fonológiai feldolgozás műveleteire. In: Bóna Judit – Krepsz Valéria (eds.): *Nyelvfejlődés csecsemőkortól kamaszkorig.* Eötvös Kiadó, Budapest. 67-82.

- SZŰCS Antal Mór – TAR Éva (2020b): A Mesezene módszer óvodai moduljának fonológiai feldolgozási műveletekre gyakorolt hatásának vizsgálata halmozottan hátrányos helyzetű gyermekeknél. *Fejlesztő Pedagógia* 31(4-6). 65-74.
- SZŰCS Antal Mór (2019): Fonológiai tudatosság fejlesztése a Mesezene élménypedagógiai módszerével. In: BÓNA Judit (eds.): *Az anyanyelv-elsajátítás folyamata hároméves kor után*, Eötvös Kiadó, Budapest. 307-323.
- SZŰCS Antal Mór – VÁNYI Ágnes (2020): Mesezene módszertan. *Fejlesztő Pedagógia* 31(4-6). 13-33.
- VÁNYI Ágnes – SÁNDOR Krisztina – SZŰCS Antal Mór (2014): Óvodai Mesezene program: hangulatmesék. *Fejlesztő Pedagógia* 25(2). 48-64.

Dissemination

Every year our association organises several trainings for professionals.We are dedicated to provide educators, teachers, speech and language therapists with a profound, professional knowledge regarding early literacy skills and teaching reading. We believe that the aspects of motivation and entertainment can be the most efficient from the side of cognitive-language development also. To achieve our mission, we have two separate training programmes approved by the state.

Organizing events

- Together with our partners (e.g. Hungarian Academy of Sciences) we have organised conferences for professionals and summer camps for children in order to provide the proper development for successful reading abilities.

2.3 37 Kindergarten Valshebstvo

The kindergarten 37 Valshebstvo is a municipal kindergarten founded in 1975. It is located in Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria. It provides educational services for more than 300 children, aged between 10 months and 6/7 years. Approximately 60 persons are employed within our organisation (preschool teachers, medical nurses, psychologist, speech therapist, resource teacher, assistance educators, technical and administrative staff, kitchen staff, etc.).

37 Kindergarten „Valshebstvo" has more than 40 years of experience in education and care for children from early and preschool age. It follows all the national laws and regulations in early education and care. In Bulgaria, there is a split system. The care for children from 0-3 is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health. The education in Bulgaria is regulated by the Ministry of Education and Science. Since 2012, compulsory education includes two years of preschool education (starting at the age of 5), before children start primary school. Since 2016, there is a new law of education in Bulgaria, the Pre-school and School Education Act. Since 2021, the preschool compulsory education starts at the age of 4.

The management of the kindergarten aims to create optimal interactive organisational and educational conditions in order to stimulate children's development. We aim for the continuous qualification of the educational and non-educational staff. The pre-school teachers are highly qualified and responsible.

37 Kindergarten „Valshebstvo" is very active in various projects and activities regarding children's education. The kindergarten collaborates with the Department of Cognitive Science and Psychology, New Bulgarian University, Sofia, Bulgaria since several years in research and applied projects. There are additional extracurricular activities provided for the children like foreign language learning (English), applied arts, folklore dances, ballet, Latin American dances, yoga for children, gymnastics, taekwondo, football. Annually additional activities for children are organised (excursions, green school, white school, summer camp).

Our organisational needs and objectives:

- Exchange of good practices and achievements
- Development of child literacy
- Optimal cooperation between kindergarten-family, teachers-parents

We are eager to share experiences with partners from other European countries and to learn more about:

- Prevention of early dropout from the educational system
- Achievement of literacy competences that will provide opportunities for personal and social development
- Enhancement of literacy competences, according to the development of children
- Exchange of good practices
- Development of initial knowledge and information competencies in earliest childhood
- Improvement of the quality of pre-school education as a solid base for further learning, achievement and social inclusion of children

We can contribute to this project by sharing good practices:

- Provision of a positive environment for every child
- Involvement of parent community in the kindergarten activities
- Support for children with special educational needs
- Support of implementation of innovations
- Ensuring the motor activity of pre-school children in order to achieve harmonious personal development
- Promotion of continuous professional qualification of the staff in the field of pre-school education
- Creating conditions for facilitating the transition of young children from family context to educational environment

We as a partner will take part in:

- Preparation of SHORT-TERM JOINT STAFF TRAINING EVENT: organisation, involvement of local participants, beneficiaries and stakeholders, self-learning, logistical aspects and content issues.
- Research and data collection NATIONAL/REGIONAL/LOCAL LEVEL: legal and financial framework, social, cultural and educational context, strategies, involved sectors (public/private)
- LITERACY COMPETENCES SURVEY: distribution, collection of QUESTIONNAIRES
- Participation to the realization of the FINAL PUBLICATION - in English, meanwhile its summary will be translated in each partner countries' language by partners.
- DISSEMINATION: Updating its WEB PAGES / FB GROUPS, internal and for stakeholders
- Participation in the INTERIM / FINAL REPORT
- Collection and management of JUSTIFICATIVE DOCUMENTS

We will coordinate and put extra efforts in:

- Creation of a COMMON VOCABULARY
- Measurement of COMPETENCE AQUISITION TOOLS

2.4 Centro Social de Soutelo

Centro Social de Soutelo is a non-governmental organization, founded in 1976. Our organisation develops its activity, in Portugal, specifically in the Oporto district (Gondomar, Porto and Matosinhos), in the fields of early childhood /youth education, the elderly and social and community intervention. Our mission is "Meeting the legitimate needs and expectations of the community, promoting equality, participation, cooperation and solidarity". Thus, the CSS aims to support families in the education and protection of children, promote the well-being of the elderly and meet the needs of the community through typical social responses and social intervention projects. We have 110 permanent workers in our organisation, as well as multiple persons who benefit from occupational programs to support the professional insertion and various professional and academic internships. The early childhood and youth education is one of the core areas of intervention. We support 138 children and young people, in kindergarten, pre-school and extra-school occupational responses. We also develop activities to support the elderly and dependents (175 people). Centro Social de Soutelo also develops community intervention projects, intervenes in several relevant issues of the surrounding community (health, alcoholism and drug addiction, unemployment in socially vulnerable groups, poverty and social exclusion) through the financing of various entities. In addition to our nursery and pre-school, attended by approximately 150 children, we also help families economic and social vulnerability through our projects and protocols with Social Security, which include a large number of children.

We are partners in this project and our role is the preparation of EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION TOOLS: FB Page, Stakeholders list; updating partners' WEB PAGES / FB GROUP, uploads on the EPRP Erasmus + Project Results Platform information and main outputs, such as FINAL PUBLICATION in English and the short summaries in the partner languages, photos or videos, presentations, testimonies, training (or other relevant) materials.

2.5 Inspectoratul Scolar Judetean Satu Mare

Satu Mare County School Inspectorate is a decentralised public service institution which applies the policies of the Ministry of Education at county level and which:

- acts to achieve the educational objectives provided by the Education Law;
- implements the policies and strategies of the Ministry Education at county level;
- controls the application of the legislation;
- monitors the quality of teaching-learning activities in compliance with national standards/ performance indicators;
- coordinates and controls the activities of educational units and related units in the county area;
- controls, monitors and evaluates the quality of the management of educational units and institutions;
- ensures, together with the local public administration authorities, the schooling of the students;
- monitors students' participation in classes during compulsory education;
- coordinates high school admissions, national assessments, school competitions at the level of educational institutions in the county;
- coordinates the organisation of national final exam in education.

The team of Satu Mare County School Inspectorate assumes its role in the development process of society by ensuring an effective relationship between the components of the education system and through the optimal management of resources, with the aim of increasing the degree of adaptability to the expectations of the community and for the school and the teachers to regain their status as vectors of development.

2.6 ARCA Cooperativa Sociale

Arca Cooperativa Sociale was founded in 1983 and supports social, welfare and educational services both designed and provided privately, and in agreement with / commissioned by public administrations. Arca works in the Tuscany Region, in the Provinces of Florence, Livorno, Lucca, Pisa, Pistoia and Siena, with services for elderly, minors, disabled people, drug addicts, young children and people with mental issues. Through its many projects and interventions, the Cooperative pursues the general well-being of the community and the promotion and integration of its citizens, in a company that combines the principles of business with cooperation, participation and democracy.

The cooperative involves more than 1.300 people (total number of members and employees).

Arca is member of the Metropoli Consortium, that brings together type A and B Cooperatives of of the metropolitan area (that connects the provinces of Florence, Prato and Pistoia) and promotes the associated Cooperative. We are also part of the Pegaso Network Consortium of Tuscan Social Cooperation, which aims to achieve a stable local network for development and innovation. Arca, together with other important Tuscan cooperatives, has founded the company Rosalibri S.r.l., to manage the following structures: Residential community for psychiatric patients "A. Ponticelli "of Panzano in Chianti, the RSA Rosa Libri of Greve in Chianti and the RSA Naldini Torrigiani located in Tavarnelle Val di Pesa. Arca joins the National Mutual League of Cooperative and has promoted and supported the birth of two Type B Cooperatives, the Ulisse Cooperativa Sociale and the Cooperativa Nuova Chianti, whose aim is the integration of disadvantaged people into the work market.

Arca has been managing early childhood educational and care services since 1989. It currently manages, on behalf of public administrations or on a private basis and on project financing, about 90 early childhood services 0/6 years: Childcare centers, Play spaces, Child and parent centers, Supplementary services 0-3, Preschools (nurseries and Kindergartens), and educational activities in the afternoon with an expansion of the educational offer in kindergartens.

ARCA is particularly active in the field of ECEC. Since 1989, it has been managing ECEC services, several kindergartens as well as play centers and centers for children and families. Arca manages about 90 services for early childhood.

Our ECEC services focus on the overall well-being of the child, that is:

physical, psychic, emotional, a well-being that allows children to benefit from new experiences, to build meaningful relationships, to grow according to personal rhythms and paths. Every child is welcomed in the services as a subject of wealth, of a world to be respected and protected in supported in its development, and in daily exchange. ARCA has developed a proper, modern and inclusive method of ECE, based on the development of the child's skills, on the involvement of educators and families, on differentiated and dynamic activities, with particular attention to the inclusion of children differently skilled and with respect for intercultural issues. It has developed quality standards and guidelines for services for ECEC. ARCA has collaborated with the National Consortium of Social Cooperatives LEGACOOP to standardise the quality criteria and guidelines of services for ECEC, also in accordance with the next ministerial reform of the educational sector, which will lead to the unification of pre-school services (0/6 years). ARCA also manages internal training courses for its early childhood educators, coordinators, managers.

ARCA participates in the I.ECEC project and before in MECEC+ project, both on intercultural and inclusive ECEC, in which it has carried out the analysis of the context and training needs of educators in relation to intercultural education, in collaboration with the University of Florence. Thanks to the results of this study, ARCA has better identified the main criticisms related to the issue of intercultural education. The organisation is also working on a strategy to improve the quality of ECEC services and develop and modernise the competence of educators. ARCA has participated in and promoted numerous European projects (Erasmus+ KA1 and Ka2; Leonardo da Vinci TOI, Partnership ad Mobility; Europe for Citizens; Central European Initiative), including the MECEC+ project and KA1 Mobility projects of VET International Mobility for students and VET school staff, in which host students in early childhood education in its nurseries. ARCA collaborates on a permanent basis with Galileo Progetti and has a good experience in the management of European Projects. ARCA's educators, coordinators and managers of early childhood services are involved in the project, both as trainers and learners-participants in the implementation of the curriculum.

2.7 Private pre-school institution Montessori IQ Corner

Private pre-school institution Montessori IQ Corner, based on the famous pedagogy of Maria Montessori, is the first Montessori pre-school institution in the Tuzla Canton. All curriculums were authorised by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Tuzla Canton. Montessori is a worldwide acknowledged pedagogical concept. The Montessori approach provides spontaneous and expansive education, designed in a way for the child to move and work in a carefully prepared surrounding. It is based on the philosophy of child's development, where a child gains operational knowledge of the life spheres it will participate in as adults. It is a holistic and original educational system, which focusses on self-activity of the child and its individual development pace, and which at the same time has a unique approach to the learning technique. Unlike traditional pre-school institutions in the city, the Educational and Pedagogic Institution Montessori IQ Corner provides a safe and stimulating environment for learning, work in small groups, individual dedication by teachers, effective learning methods and flexible curriculum. Each classroom consists of five areas of learning: Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematics and Science.Private Pre-school Institution Montessori IQ Corner educates 80 children from 0-6 year in multi-age classrooms. Private Pre-school Institution Montessori IQ Corner employs 9 fulltime professionals for early childhood education and care (coordinator, nurseries and pre-primary teachers) and numerous part-time professionals and volunteers (special educators, yoga instructor etc).Our pre-school institution uses both the Bosnian and the English languages. Therefore, the children have the possibility to learn more languages simultaneously, regardless of their current development or social background. Advancement of a native language of a child, in the sense of vocabulary, is the main precondition to learn a foreign language. Learning and acquiring a language is based on stimulation and development of linguistic skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The mission of the Private Pre-school Institution Montessori IQ Corner is to become an institution that supports children in becoming independent participants of our current society, using the Montessori method where "love is not a dependence, and discipline is not subordination". The vision of a kindergarten is to become the centre of excellence for the Montessori method in Tuzla and Tuzla Canton, as an example of life in the wider community.

The Montessori system emphasises the significance of the inherent potential of a children, as well as their natural development. Understanding of the child's nature is based on the idea that the child has the inherent motivation for self-development, which is explained by having the inherent scheme of integral relationship with the environment and the child's need for freedom. The Montessori IQ Corner will offer the surrounding, which will stimulate the child's development and the presence of teachers who have been trained in the Montessori method. These teachers have knowledge of the development of children and have special competences to create the child's learning in a natural and spontaneous manner. By promoting a childcentred approach of learning and high quality services of ECEC we offer equal opportunities to all children according to their needs and skills and promote social inclusion.

The Montessori approach provides spontaneous and expansive education, designed in a way for the child to move and work in a carefully prepared surrounding. Through movement, the child comes into contact with objects, people and overall reality; it is, as such, being perceived and assumed. The Montessori supportive environment provides children with the facilities required to acquire reading and writing skills in a natural way. A Montessori classroom is a reading-friendly environment, where

children are encouraged to independently acquire knowledge and skills regarding sounds, letters and words. Apart from reading as such, special attention is paid to reading activities referred to geography, history and some other topics, reflecting kids' specific interest. Through project activities professionals are able to share the innovative and successful experiences of literacy competence of preschool children related to the specific methodology they used. The participants from MIQ and academic staff members of the University of Tuzla can provide wider perception and contribute in analysing and developing final results in the form of a publication and ensure a mutual benefit for partners in relation to project aims.

Our vision is to become the centre of excellence for the Montessori method in Tuzla and Tuzla Canton, as an example of life in the wider community. Participation in Erasmus+ project and opportunities to share experience and visit European partner organisations will be one of the key steps in creating one of the most stimulating environments and high quality services of ECEC in B&H.

2.8 Erasmus Brussels University of Applied Sciences and Arts

Erasmus Brussels University of Applied Sciences & Arts (EhB) is a Flemish higher education institution located in Brussels. It offers 21 BA and 4 MA-programmes in 9 different fields of study which are attended by more than 5.000 students, clustered in 4 departments and 2 Schools of Arts located on 6 campuses throughout the city. The departments offer Bachelor programs with a strong professional focus while the Schools of Arts offer Bachelors and Masters in Music, Audio Visual and Performing Arts. Erasmus Brussels University of Applied Science and Arts has 891 staff members, who represent 493 Full Time Equivalents (January 2018). EhB applies the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), which facilitates curriculum comparison and student mobility. Erasmus Brussels University of Applied Sciences & Arts is cooperating actively with the Vrije Universiteit Brussels (VUB) in the Brussels University Association (UAB).

Erasmus Brussels University of Applied Sciences & Arts stands for student-oriented curricula through an intense collaboration between students and lecturers. The language of instruction is Dutch, however English modules are available for (incoming) students. During their studies, students at EhB are involved in ongoing research as much as possible, fostering an attitude of innovation and inquisitiveness. Artistic research groups within the Schools of Arts (the Royal Institute for Theatre, Cinema and Sound (RITCS) and Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel (KCB)) carry out artistic and academic research, while several Centres of Expertise engage in practice-based multidisciplinary research.

Erasmus University College Brussel's internationalisation policy is to foster an international mindset and orientation within each student and staff member. Therefore, all schools participate actively in the Erasmus + Exchange Programme. Throughout the years, Erasmus University College has also developed expertise in EU-projects. Erasmus University College is a member of the Compostela Group of Universities. All our departments are active members of international thematic networks. Our University College has developed courses in English in most of its programmes and created opportunities for traineeships.

The Department of Teacher Training and Early Childhood Education & Care:

Through narrative, creative and pedagogical coaching we create cultural awareness which enables people to grow personally and professionally. Our practical scientific research about, among other things, 'Diversattude' and 'A School for Cultural Sensitive Professionals' gives us tools to professionalise early childhood educators and preschool and primary teachers.

3 Country reports

3.1 Belgium

3.1.1 Educational context

In Belgium, the communities (Flemish, French and German speaking) are in charge of education. The Flemish, French and German-speaking Communities each have their autonomous educational systems. The Federal Government has only a few responsibilities in the field of education: determining the duration and age range of compulsory education, the criteria for acknowledged qualifications and the retirement regulations for teachers and educational staff. (OECD, 2015) Instruction in each community is provided in the language of the community in question. (Eurydice, s.d.) In this publication we will only highlight the educational system of the Flemish Community.

In the Flemish community, schools enjoy a high degree of autonomy, which is part of the Belgian Constitution, "Freedom of education". Freedom of education gives the right to any natural or legal person to found a school. This "freedom of organisation" also allows each school to develop its own educational policies, including its own pedagogical plan, teaching methods, curriculum and timetables, as well as to appoint its own staff. Although, schools receiving public funding are required to operate within a regulatory framework, they still enjoy "considerable autonomy". (OECD, 2015)

Schooling in the Flemish Community is compulsory from the age of five to eighteen. Until the age of fifteen, fulltime education is compulsory. From 15 years onwards, there is the possibility to engage in part-time schooling and to choose a structured learning path which combines part-time vocational education in an educational institution with part-time employment. (Eurydice, s.d.)

The school system is organised in four main stages, preceded by a non-compulsory offer of pre-primary education (2,5 – 6 years), which is free of charge.

- Pre-primary education (2,5 – 6 years)
- Primary education (6 – 12 years)
- Secondary education – first stage (12 – 14 years)
- Secondary education – second stage (14 – 16 years)
- Secondary education – third stage (16 – 18 years)

All pupils who have obtained a certificate of upper secondary education can access higher education. Higher education institutions organise study programmes which result in the degree of bachelor, master or doctor. Also, higher vocational education is part of the level of higher education.

Most schools in Flanders are part of an education network. In Flanders, there are three education networks:

- GO! Education is the official education network organised by the Flemish Community.
- Government-aided public education comprises schools run by municipal or provincial authorities.
- Government-aided private education is organised by a private person or organisation. The network consists mainly of Catholic schools. It also includes schools not linked to a religion (e.g. Freinet, Montessori, or Steiner schools) that apply specific teaching methods.

Curriculum:

For pre-primary education the Flemish government defined broad developmental objectives, in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes. The word 'development' refers to a process of growth, possible 'pathways' to achieve results. Every child goes through this process at its own pace. These developmental objectives are aims and do not necessarily have to be achieved.

The developmental objectives form the common core curriculum. These are divided into 6 areas of learning:

• human and society: self-awareness, social skills, society, time and space

• physical education: motoric competences, healthy and safe lifestyle and social integration;

• arts education: visual arts, music, drama, dance, media and attitudes;

• Dutch language skills : listening, speaking, reading, writing, linguistics;

• science and technology: nature, technique,

• mathematical initiation: numbers, measuring and space (geometric initiation).

For primary and secondary education national targets are established by the Flemish government. Every governing body or school board must include these targets in the curriculum. But the way in which these developmental goals are translated in a curriculum is decided by the school. Schools decide autonomously on their educational methods, curriculum, timetables and the recruitment of their personnel. (Hulpia, 2014).

3.1.2 Supporting (early) literacy competences: in school and out-of-school

For pre-primary education in Flanders the three major educational networks all have objectives that are related to phonological awareness (recognizing and experimenting with sound groups, sounds and rhymes) and phonemic awareness (partly auditive analysis (from words to phoneme, auditive synthesis from phoneme to words). For letter knowledge there are different expectations among the educational networks. The Catholic educational network states that children between the ages of four and six children need to distinguish letters from other characters and recognize a specific letter among other letters and words. Additionally, children should be able to recognise some individual letters using the term letter, like for example the letters of their own name. On the other hand, the GO! Network prescribes that at the end of pre-primary education children have to recognise and name at least 10 letters. Other development objectives related to early literacy competences are related to functional reading, reading comprehension and reading motivation.

Teachers create a rich and stimulating learning environment for children to be able to attain these development objectives. Children can explore reading materials and letter materials in reading corners or class libraries. Preschool teachers prepare different learning activities in which books or stories are brought to life, through creative activities using playful and art-based methods. Reading is not limited to the reading corner, but is integrated in the classroom environment. Reading pleasure is also stimulated by integrating storytelling or reading a book into the daily routine.

For primary education, the list of aims and objectives states that pupils are aware of and can use sets of linguistic concepts, including phonological terms like 'sound', 'vowel' and 'rhyme'. In the first year

of primary education, a lot of attention is paid to naming letters, recognising them and making sound-letter connections. In addition, a lot of time is spent on reading words (holistic reading). A book or text is also regularly read and an activity is done that is related to a book or story. Further, other reading activities include reading aloud, reading in silence and reading comprehension. Attention is paid on average almost once a week to applying ideas from a text to one's own environment. (Vanbuel, Boderé & Van den Branden, 2017)

<u>Non-profit organisations supporting literacy competences:</u>

Iedereen leest

'Iedereen Leest' ('Everybody Reads') is a non-profit organisation that wants to inspire people to read (more). The organisation emphasises on the crucial role of reading for pleasure in the literacy discourse: 'More reading for pleasure, more readers'. The organisation was founded by the Flemish government and is funded by Flanders Literature (the Flemish fund for literature).

In order to encourage the reading engagement of children, young people and adults, Iedereen Leest connects people and organisations in (local) networks and communities in Flanders and Brussels.

Iedereen Leest coordinates programmes for different age groups:

- 'Boekstart' (Bookstart), a programme for babies and toddlers (and their parents)
- the 'Voorleesweek' (Reading Aloud Week) focuses on the joy and benefits of reading aloud to children.
- 'Jeugdboekenmaand' (Children's Book Month) celebrates children's books in schools, libraries and book shops.
- the 'Leesjury' (Children's Reading Panel) for children from 4 to 18 years old

The goal of these initiatives is to make reading more visible and develop programmes for libraries, schools, child care centres and other organisations to share methods and ideas to enhance reading engagement.

(website Iedereen Leest: https://www.iedereenleest.be/english)

Brussels libraries

Boekenbende (Book Squad)

Via the 'Boekenbende' project the libraries motivate families to read to their children by sending out reading ambassadors to the family at home. For this project, they work with volunteers, students who go reading at least five subsequent weeks. In this period, there will also be at least one visit to the library, so that families get to know the local public library.

Brussels Reads Aloud

Through multilingual storytelling, the libraries want to give more space and attention to the diversity of languages that are spoken in Brussels. In this multilingual set-up, the story will be read in Dutch and another language. Storytellers from different communities are involved.

3.1.3 Good practice

3.1.3.1 Supporting literacy competences through theme projects in the third grade of preschool

During the study visit in Belgium, which was held in February 2020, one of the observations took place in two third grade class groups (children 5 – 6 years old) at the preschool Heilige Familie Schaarbeek in Brussels. The two classes each consisted of 24 children and two teachers. The school follows a co-teaching model, in which teaching responsibilities for the children of both classes are shared between two teachers. At the time of our visit the children were working on the project „space & planets". The development of literacy competences is stimulated through playful experiences and activities in which children are interacting with language, books and prints in various ways.

During the first days of a project week, the teacher generally introduces the topic, but also a lot of time and attention is spent on getting to know the children's interest in the topic. Children have the opportunity to propose ideas, activities and materials to explore the topic. In this way, the teacher is keeping children involved in the activities and the children experience a great autonomy.

The observation of the activities took place on Wednesday, which was the third day of the project week. To start the day, the teacher had a group discussion with the children, which is part of their daily routine. During the group discussion, the teacher asked different questions regarding the topic space and planets. Children can ask questions or tell something related to the topic. Afterwards, the teachers continued with an experiment 'Saturn versus Earth', in which the children had to guess whether Saturn and/or Earth would float or sink. In order to make the experiment visible to the children, Saturn was demonstrated by a big red balloon, filled with air. Earth was represented by a smaller blue balloon, filled with sand. The children learned that planets have different characteristics, e.g. volume, density, … and therefore behave differently.

After this experiment children were free to explore and discover more about space and planets in different corner activities that are spread over two rooms. The activities include various learning materials for emergent literacy:

- floating and sinking experiment at the water table: children can put different objects in the water table and discover whether the objects sinks or floats. Children write on cards that are prepared by the teacher, they have to fill out what they observed during the experiment. There are extra assignments for children that want to further explore floating and sinking.
- reading corner enriched with a star heaven: children can read or look into different kind of books related to the theme "planets and space": picture books, informative books, science books, fantasy books
- Fine motor skills activities
- Fantasy corner which has been decorated as a space station
- Games in the space and planets theme
- Writing pattern "the star", which is a preparation exercise for writing

During these activities children experience a lot of autonomy, as they can decide themselves which activities they want to do. By creating a rich literacy environment and organizing engaging activities, the teachers are contributing to a positive attitude towards reading and writing with the children.

3.2 Bosnia-Herzegovina

3.2.1 Educational context

In 2003, the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina initiated the adoption of four framework laws in the field of education (Framework Law of Pre-school Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Framework Law of Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, The Framework Law of Secondary Vocational Education and Training in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Framework Law of Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina). This was the first step to educational reform as well as eligibility for EU integration. The regional education of Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided by the competences of the Entities of Republika Srpska, ten cantons in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Each of the twelve units has its own Ministry of Education, laws in the field of education and a budget for education. At the entity level, the Federation Ministry of Education and Science has a coordinating role over the ten cantons. The Framework laws in different field of education present uniformly policies and regional laws of cantons and entities, as well as Brčko district, are determined by specific and additional individual policies that are consistent with the framework laws at national level. At national level three education agencies have been established: Agency for Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education, Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance, and the Center for Information and Recognition of Documents from the higher education. Regarding to regional and level of each cantons Bosnia and Herzegovina has established nine pedagogical/educational institutes that are responsible for the evaluation and monitoring of educational institutions, the development of curricula, the affirmation of new approaches and methodologies of learning, the organisation of training for professionals and other similar activities. These institutions have developed and implemented different laws which are in accordance with framework laws of education (pedagogical standards, regulations for professionals and institutions etc.).

Inclusive education has been the main topic of educational reform for the last 15 years in Bosnia and Herzegovina and it is often misunderstood by the stakeholders in this field. The inclusive education in BIH is still in its infancy despite the fact that it is being legally supported since 2004. The current system of education for children with special educational needs in Bosnia and Herzegovina is organised in three basic forms: education in special schools, special classes in regular schools and in regular (inclusive) schools. Children with special educational needs attend special education schools or regular elementary schools, to which they are referred to by the Commission for classification which assesses the degree and type of disability. It is important to note that the recommendation of the Commission regarding the education of a child with a disability is not mandatory and the parents make the final decision which school their child will attend (Dizdrević, Mujezinović & Memišević, 2017). Most parents disregard the Commission's advice and enroll their child with a disability in a regular school, which means that they attend the school without additional support from special education teachers. All of the above affects the overall assessment and monitoring of the number of children with disabilities in schools, as well as the quality of implementation of inclusive education in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The framework of Preschool law determines compulsory enrollment of all children in preschool education at least three months in the year before school. Preschool institutions will provide these programmes for free at least three hours a day without inclusion of nutrition, placement and care of children during parental work (Institution of Ombusmen for Human Rights B&H). Compulsory preschool education for all preschool children adopted since 2007 still not a permanent practice in all

regions and cantons of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This indicates that Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have systematic support or a preparation system of children for school at the national level. This mandatory preschool education program as a necessary minimum of preschool education is supported by non-government organisations and different projects.

The cooperation between preschools and primary schools must be continued and organised in both ways. Coordinating joint work between preschool and school institutions empowers children's motivation and positive attitude towards a new school environment and establishes positive social relationships. The transition of children from kindergarten to school should involve three aspects: support parents to more easily prepare their child for school, kindergarten organisations and preparation of work plan for school, and school responsibility to take into account a wide variety of needs and different developmental skills of children (Halilović, 2018).

3.2.2 Supporting (early) literacy competences: in school and out-of-school

School children in Bosnia and Herzegovina start their formal education at the age of 6 years by enrolling into the first grade of elementary school, which is compulsory. Prior to enrolling in elementary schools, all children are required to attend a preschool preparation programme at the age of 5 (one year prior to their nrolment in elementary school). However, in that preparation programme children are not required to learn any academic content such as numbers and/or letters. As for the reading outcomes, children are expected to learn to read in the second grade of elementary school. The curriculum goals for the first grade of elementary school are related to learning letters, reading short words and learning to write. Thus, we did not assess first grade pupils on reading fluency, although some children learn to read in the first grade (Memišević et al., 2019).

In the first semester of first grade there is a focus on the development of speech and phonemic skills. The teacher will use forms of expression and exercises appropriate for a six-year-old child (re-telling the stories, games with cards and object, singing songs, describing at the level of perception of objects and beings with engaging all the senses, image content) (Framework Curriculum for the 1sr grade, 2009).

Teachers in preschool institutions mostly use pictures, songs and concrete objects to develop appropriate games for children. In the first grade of primary school, attention is paid to the development of speech and oral expression, exercises for reading, reading comprehension and reproduction. If children should experience difficulties, the teacher will try to help and resolve problems by patient and persistent work (Framework Curriculum for the 1st grade,2009).

The organisation and results of children depend on the subjective teacher's motivation of teacher in preschool institutions and primary schools. In Montessori IQ Corner teachers often foster basic reading skills such as identification of phonemes or blending thought typical Montessori materials or language games with children in free time. That include materials of sensorial and manipulative graphemes and object related to specific graphemes, drawing and writing the letters in different textures (sand, rice, etc.) and identification sounds in words, manipulative activities with graphemes and clay and their identification as a sound of the word or object in picture, singing song or story telling with pictures and movements activities… Teachers need to organise activities during the week related to the theme of the week/months and need to provide specific materials inspired on Montessori pedagogy related to that theme in area of language, cosmic and math learning. Teachers each week need to provide and

organise at least one activity per day related to language learning (that include storytelling, song learning and literacy game with letters, rhyme etc.)

Some of the most popular activities in preschool institutions and first grade ~~include~~:

- Children need to find object in the room which begins with specific phoneme or include specific phoneme in word (first, in the middle, at the end);
- Children need to listen to song or nature around them and recognise and describe sounds they heard…
- Children associate object or picture with graphemes and phonemes;
- Children need to identify phonemes (the first, in the middle, at the end) in correlation with the grapheme.

Education in B&H is also highly fragmented, with fourteen government bodies responsible for education in a country of only 3.3 million people and 422,645 students. It's therefore no surprise that staffing costs for officials, teachers, school leaders, and non-teaching staff account for over 90% of education spending, compared to an EU average of 77%. This leaves very little room to buy learning materials and equipment, provide training for teachers, or upgrade school learning environments. Public kindergarten and schools have a lack of didactic materials (books, manuals, quality toys, …) and ICT in the classroom.

In Montessori IQ Corner the use of ICT is not recommended. Teachers only once a week present relevant materials by ICT. Usually, on Friday, children can watch documentaries or cartoons which are in correlation with learning activities. Kindergarten have a library and reading corner which can be used as a space for organisation of group reading activities with children led by the teacher or a place for rest and reading of children in small groups or individually. Regards to curriculum. During the week the teacher provides appropriate encyclopaedia, books with different types of stories, magazine texts or songs. Weekly, teachers learn about new terms and words on BHS and English. Montessori Nomenclature cards are used for building vocabulary and concepts in all subject areas. These cards are mainly in English.

3.2.3 Good practice

During the training in Bosnia and Herzegovina, participants have observed activities for Montessori language learning activities and specific materials as well as a story telling activity with kid yoga poses.

One of the activities during training was a yoga class with children from 5-6 years ~~old~~, which include presentation of story and language learning in different way. The teacher and yoga instructor prepared the story "Jenny's winter walk" a kids yoga story written by Giselle Shardlow. The teacher chose this story because the monthly theme of the preschool curriculum was "Winter" and the week theme was "Hibernation". This story includes a walk through woods and learning about animals and nature in winter and it related to programmes and knowledge described by the curriculum.

The teacher read the story in the Bosnian language and presented yoga poses related to the sentences and poses in the book. The children then had to repeat these poses and their name in the book. At the end, teacher and children discussed the plot of the story and characters and new knowledge about winter, animals in the winter and changes of nature in wintertime.

During these activities participants read and followed the story with English materials. Also, all participants could participate in the yoga class and do poses if they wanted.

The video of the story can be found on Youtube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfSa2pQq4S0)

3.3 Bulgaria

3.3.1 Educational context

In Bulgaria, there is a law for pre-school and school education. This law deals with the social relations, connected to securing the right of pre-school and school education as well as the mechanism, the functions, the organisation, the management, and the financing of the pre-school and school educational system. The pre-school and school education law is mandatory for all educational institutions across the country.

Ordinance № 5 of 03.06.2016 for preschool education.

This ordinance defines the state educational standard for pre-school education, as well as:

1. the management of the activities in pre-school education;

2. requirements for the application of a program;

3. a method for participants' interaction in the process of pre-school education.

(2) The state educational standard is a compilation of requirements regarding the results of the education and it defines the following:

1. the educational directions applied in pre-school education;

2. the goals and content of the separate educational areas;

3. requirements regarding the results of the education in each educational area among the different age groups.

Ordinance № 6 of 11.08.2016 for implementing Bulgarian literary language, amended in the National Newspaper, issue 67 from 26.08.2016, enforced as of 01.09.2016. This ordinance defines the state educational standard for implementing Bulgarian literary language in the pre-school and school educational system.

Ordinance for inclusive education, defining the state educational standard for inclusive education. The ordinance defines the social relations, connected to securing an inclusive education for children and pupils in the pre-school and school educational system, as well as the activities of the institutions in the system for providing support for personal development of children and pupils.

Ordinance 15 for the status and professional development of the teachers, principals, and other pedagogical specialists. This standard creates a prerequisite for enhancing the authority and social status of the pedagogical specialists, building a system for continuous qualification, professional refinement, and career development.

Regulations for foundation, mechanism, and activities of the public councils. The public council is an institution for supporting the development of the kindergarten and the school, and it enables a civilian control over their management.

Ordinance №15 for inspection of kindergartens and schools. The inspection is a process of creating a complete and independent expert assessment of the quality of the provided education by the kindergarten or the school at a specific stage of their activities, and defines the spheres for improvement.

Ordinance for financing of institutions in the system of pre-school and school education

Table of the Bulgarian educational system

Stages of education	Age (in years)	Grade	Institutions
1.Nursery	8 m.o - 2,3 y.o	0	Nursery Kindergarten
2.Pre-school education	Up to 6-7 y.o	0	Kindergarten
3.Elementary (**Initial stage** of the primary education)	7-11 y.o	1-4	School
4.Middle school (**Pre-high school stage** of the primary education)	11-14 y.o	5-8	School
5.High school	14-19 y.o	8-12	School
6.Secondary specialised education	15-19 y.o	9-12	School
7.Higher degree of education	18/19 y.o. and up		University

The inclusion of children who need support for their personal and social development is becoming a contemporary strategy for humanisation of social relations through remodelling the traditional educational models. The idea that a teacher's assistant in third preparatory group supports teachers' activities in the children with SEN groups, is being approved.

The kindergarten is the institution where children are being prepared for elementary school. The kindergarten is the specific institution responsible for children's preparation for reading. The age range goes from 3 to 7 years old in the pre-school stage. The actual reading education starts in first grade.

The aim of the native language education in kindergarten is forming a proper verbal expression and a verbal communication with others based on mastering the literary language of their culture.

One of the main tasks of native language education is to develop a sound culture of speech. This task is especially relevant in pre-school age and requires a lot of attention for its full completion until the child is enrolled in school.

Another essential task, which is especially relevant for children in the third age group (5-6 y. o.), is the **preparation for literacy education**. Children have to gain a new attitude towards oral speech as a linguistic reality. Also, for the child this is the first time speech becomes an object for study and analysis. The realisation of this task is significantly difficult, as until now the child has only used speech one-sidedly – as perceiving and expressing thoughts only catching the meaning of them without having in mind the structure of speech. During preparation for literacy education, children become aware of the main linguistic elements (sound, word, sentence), to develop a speech analysis skill, and to

consciously and willingly construct their speech. The focus of these tasks is for them to be applied to third age group, however in a simpler form they can and should be solved in the first and second age group. In order to do so, the teacher needs to formulate the task, so the sounds, words, and sentences are used purposefully. For example, when working on pronunciation instead of saying "Name an object with 'R'", it could be said "Name a word, which contains the sound 'R'".

Children who are 6 or 7 years old start their school education. In the beginning of the school year, after the children from first group have successfully adapted, the pedagogical specialists perform an early assessment of the need of support for the personal development of the children. For this assessment they use a screening test for grading the developmental stage and functioning of the child. Each parent is informed about the manner in which the assessment is being done, he/she is introduced to the results, and if needed, together with the coordinator of the kindergarten, decides upon the type of support for personal development – general or additional. At the end of the school year, all pre-school aged children take a school readiness test, which aims to define their strengths and weaknesses, in order to detect the areas that might be difficult for them.

According to Ordinance № 5 for the pre-school education, **monitoring of the child's accomplishments is being done (through diagnostic tests)** by the teachers in the respective group at the beginning and at the end of the academic year. Monitoring of the achievements is done for each age group. Teachers do it in accordance with the methods and forms and the expected results from art. 28 para.2 form the Ordinance. The children's results are noted in the group register. The kindergarten, as well as the school (for the pre-school groups), issues a certificate for mandatory pre-school education for children in the preparatory groups when they graduate from pre-school. The level of readiness of the child for starting grade one in school is written down in the certificate as well as the child's expected results according to the educational directives.

If the child's health and development is interfering with the requirements for the first grade enrolment and there are recommendations in the certificate regarding enrolment under the condition that additional support is provided for the child's personal development, then starting school can be delayed with one academic year according to terms and conditions defined in the state educational standard for inclusive education.

3.3.2 Supporting (early) literacy competences: in school and out-of-school

Out of all literacy preparatory tasks the sound (phonemic) analysis of the word is essential, since it contains the central core of the phonematic perception. This is not only the most important task, but it is also the most complex, the most difficult for comprehension, and the most time-consuming. Therefore, this task is given in the third age group in kindergarten, whilst work on the other tasks begins earlier and prepares for the successful completion of the sound (phonemic) analysis of the word. The final goal of the preparation of the literacy education is reaching the phoneme and realising the relation between sound and phoneme, and later the child could easily progress to the realisation of the relation between phoneme and letter.

The main method for forming the phonematic perception is the speech examination. Children get to learn that words are formed by sounds that are different in their sounding, pronounced one after the other, and they can be a lot or a few. That is how children learn to phonemically (sound) analyse a word. To complete all these tasks of the phonemic (sound) analysis of a word, various methodical ways are used, some of which are the same for the speech analysis of a sentence and the syllable analysis of a word. Also, intonation, visual presentation and modelling of the sound structure of the analysed

word through tokens, schemes, games, etc., are used. In the third and fourth preparatory groups, children are given tasks for assessment of their speech abilities once or twice a week. The focus is on correct perception, accurate pronunciation, speech breathing, intonational expression of speech.

What comes next in literacy education is reading a syllable, the skill to blend sounds in a syllable. The main reading unit in the sound analytic-synthetic method is the syllable, a new reading algorithm with focus on the vowels, i.e. positional reading. The children turn their attention towards the vowel, and they change the consonant in accordance to the vowel. This is done through:

- Reading the consonant combined with all vowels (ma, mo, me, my, mi, mu);
- Reading words, modified by changing the vowel (dam, dim, dem; look, leek; tick, tack, tock);
- Reading the syllables in the process of modification, through graphic abacus with two or three rows.

Reading and writing are mastered simultaneously. First graders are introduced to a sound and its print letter. They are taught to read and to simultaneously write cursive letters – lowercase and uppercase. Other methods and techniques are didactic games, conversations, discourses, visualisation, etc. It is recommended two-syllable words to be analysed (ex. tuna).

1. Selection or choice of suitable words – two-syllable with open syllables.

2. Presentation and visualisation of a word.

Inclusion of the term "word" and modelling of the word that would be analysed, after which the syllable division of a word is shown (with a fist under the chin). After the analysis is done, the term "syllable" is introduced, and its placement, the order, and number of syllables are determined.

When modelling the phonemic composition of the word, objective and schematic visualisation is done simultaneously. During the phonemic analysis, there is a picture with an illustrated object in front of the child, as the word that is the name of the object would be analysed, and under the picture there is a graphic scheme of the phonemic composition of the word (in a row, there are as many cells, as there are phonemes, in the analysed word). Along with the picture and the scheme, there are a number of tokens in front of the child (they could be one color or multicolored, in one or a few geometrical forms, depending on the task of the phonemic analysis). Through intonation, subsequently the phonemes in the word are being divided. The child fixates them onto the scheme with a specific visual action (most often the child puts a token on the relevant cell on the scheme). This way the tokens are used by the child as replacements for the phonemes. Being able to move the tokens, as well as to change, switch, take, add them, etc., gives the child the opportunity to understand that the sounds in a word could also be switched or replaced, and the replacement of one sound with another completely changes the word, i.e. in this way the child reaches the realisation of the semantic function of the sound, which is the end result of the phonemic analysis at this stage (*сал – сол; път – пет; гора – гара; кула – кола; билет – балет*). Usually children model the phonemic composition of a word with similar tokens. However, later on, when children learn the task well, it could be made more complicated by not only defining the number and the order of the sounds, but also their type, character – vowels and consonants. Then differentiated replacements are offered to the child – two-colored tokens or two geometrical objects. Along with complicating the task of the phonemic structure of the analysed words, they are modelling words going from words with two open syllables (like *роза, риба, куче)* to words with differently ordered vowels and consonants (like *слон, заек, вълк*).

In this manner, through intonating and modelling, the language activity becomes accessible for pre-schoolers to observe and learn. That is why we consider them to be the main methods for preparation for literacy education. The end goal of the preparation-for-literacy education is the relation grapheme-phoneme awareness.

During the preparation for reading in pre-school age, didactical booklets are used, which are chosen by the pedagogical specialist from each group. The decision is made at a pedagogical council, and it is coordinated by the Public Council of the kindergarten. Each teacher can use literature approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, can prepare individual didactic materials for enhancing competencies – teaching new materials for exercise, setting requirements for notebooks with narrow and wide rows for writing fragments of letters, initial stages of writing letters, words, sentences. At a pre-school age, only the fragments of letters are exercised, as the children must be able to fit them in narrow and wide rows. Initially, the ABC book, the reading book, the workbooks, and the additional didactic materials are used during the actual literacy education of children.

Of high importance are the didactical games for developing the listening attention as a skill to find the source and location of the sound. Musical instruments or sound-producing toys are used. The phonemic hearing helps children to distinguish phonemes only by listening. Didactic games with increased complexity are used in a group. The methods for following speech, intonating, and modelling are used.

3.3.3 Good practice

Below we are presenting a summary of the lesson plan presented in one of the preschool preparatory groups, group "Detski svyat", 6-7 years old children in 37 Kindergarten "Valshebstvo", during the short-term joint staff training event in Sofia, Bulgaria, 23-27.05.2022.

Main topic of the lesson: "The Sound and the Letter M"

Educational area: Bulgarian language

Keywords: name, letter, sound, word;

Objective: Preparation for children's literacy;

Tasks:

1. Cognitive tasks:

- Determine the sound at the beginning, middle and end of the word. Recognition of the letter with which the sound is written;

2. Arranging letters and forming three-four-letter words.

- Educational task: Observance of rules when working in small groups.

 3. Emotional - evaluation tasks:

- Expression of personal satisfaction with achieving results;
- Formation of skills for self-esteem and sharing emotions / empathy /.

Methods:

- Conversation, discussion, work in small groups, graphomotor exercise, active modeling, game exercise with didactic component.

Techniques:

- Provoking and clarifying questions, motivation, instructions, encouragement, self-evaluation, evaluation - analysis.

Means and materials: song, work cards, magnetic letters from A to Z; cardboard flowers, A4 sheets; stickers - emblems of teams; themed decor and props, magnetic board.

Technical means - CD player, flash memory card.

Integration and interdisciplinary links:

Educational areas: "Knowledge and understanding of the world", "Music", "Physical Culture", "Mathematics".

Preliminary preparation:

- They do sound analysis of words;
- They assemble puzzles from pictures on a visual support;
- They recognise and try to reproduce letters and sounds in games, with the help of plastic materials, sand, pebbles and more.

Expected results:

The child:

- strengthens his skills to determine the sequence of vocal sounds in the flow of speech from the initial picture, determines the first, last and middle sound;
- has a general idea of letter and sound;
- arranges letters and forms a familiar short word.

ORDER OF THE PEDAGOGICAL SITUATION:

1. Short gymnastics and a song to focus the children's attention on the beginning of the lesson.

2. Introductory topic to children:

"From an early age, Petya loved to read many books. Her dream was to reach the castle of knowledge. Her mother explained that she had to overcome many obstacles along the way. She walked and reached a meadow. It was dotted with a flower, you have to say its name."

(The children name the flower – poppy flower ("МАК" in Bulgarian). I'm showing a background picture of the poppy flower. The children pronounce the word: "МММАААКKK".)

With the children we determine the first, the last and the middle sound of the word.

Continue with the game "Living Words Game". Each child has a template for sound analysis. They say the word poppy again, pointing to the place of each sound with a finger. They take the red and blue cards and place them on the template, determine vowels and consonants.

Make a difference between vowels and consonants sounds.

They stand up to say the names of each child, dividing them into syllables by clapping, marching, and placing a fist under the chin.

Children sit in their seats. For the following activities the children work in small groups.

Activity 1:	There is an envelope with a letter under the table. There are pictures on each table. The children at the table should only pick up a picture that starts with this letter.
Activity 2:	I say words, children clap their hands only if there is a corresponding sound in the word.
Activity 3:	Train with three cars. Pictures of animals above it. In the first carriage are animals whose names begin with the first sound "K". Second carriage - sound "K" is in the middle of the word, in third carriage - is at the end of the word.
Activity 4	Game "CHAIN OF WORDS" - Each group receives an envelope with pictures of animals. Rules of the game - each subsequent word must begin with the last sound of the previous word.
Activity 5:	There is a square grid on the slide. Instructions are given on the side of the legend. The child follows the path of the arrow, counting how many squares he has to go through. He reaches the end and finds a sealed envelope. He opens it. The task is to arrange the numbers from 1 to 5 in a numerical sequence. He turns the cards over with the numbers and the children read "BRAVO" (which means „good job"). Petya reaches the castle of knowledge. With the "graphic abac" we show the way of pronouncing a syllable.

From the presentation we confirm the formation of a syllable. At the end - A song about the letters. Game "King, Portal".

3.4 Hungary

3.4.1 Educational context

In Hungary, institutional childcare and education are the responsibility of two separate ministries. Nursery care for children aged 0-3 is managed by the social sector, while pre-school and school education for children aged 3-16 is managed by the field of education.

Nursery care can be operated by public, municipal and private maintainers. State and municipal institutions provide their services free of charge, while private institutions operate on a paid basis. Their work was reviewed in the 1997 year XXXI. Act on the Protection of Children and Guardianship Administration. According to this, nursery is a form of day care for children as part of basic child welfare care. The nursery is an institution that provides professional care and upbringing for children aged from twenty weeks to three years. If the child has reached the age of three, he or she can remain in the nursery until the end of the nursery care year. Act XXXI of 1997 on the Protection of Children and the Guardianship Directorate. Pursuant to Section 42 (1) of the Child Protection Act {hereinafter: the Child Protection Act}, if a child is not yet ready for pre-school education, he or she may be educated and cared for in nursery until the 31st of August following the age of four. The nursery school can also provide early childhood education and care for children with special educational needs until the child is 6 years old. In addition to the basic care, the nursery can also help families with counseling, periodic childcare, operation of a children's hotel, operation of a playgroup, home childcare and care, rental of toys and equipment, and children's meals.

Hungarian schooling is regulated by the law CXC of 2011 that has been amended several times. Unique in Europe, the use of pre-school care is compulsory in Hungary, so compulsory education begins at the age of 3 and lasts until the age of 16. Kindergartens can be run by municipalities, churches, and the private sector (foundations, associations).

Kindergarten is an educational institution for a child from the age of three until the beginning of compulsory schooling. The child attends kindergarten for at least four hours a day from the beginning of the school year in the year in which he or she reaches the age of three by the 31st of August. The registrar - in the case of church and private institutions - the maintainer - may, at the request of the parent and with the consent of the headmaster and guardian, waive the obligation to attend compulsory pre-school education until the child reaches the age of five.

Primary and secondary schools can be maintained by the state and churches, as well as the private sector (foundations, associations).

The stages of pedagogical work in public educational institutions are as follows:

I. A stage of pre-school education that begins when a child reaches the age of three and lasts until he or she starts compulsory schooling.

II. The primary education phase, which begins in the first year, lasts until the end of the eighth year and is divided into two parts:

1. the lower beginning in the first grade and ending in the fourth, and

2. upper secondary school beginning in the fifth grade and ending in the eighth grade.

III. The secondary education phase, which begins in the ninth grade and ends at the end of the eleventh or twelfth grade.

In Hungary the act on public education classifies the specific learning difficulties into two types:

1. "BTMN disorder"
    a. legal category
    b. provides benefits/accommodations to a certain extent
    c. Provides special services
2. Special Educational Needs (SEN)
    a. legal category
    b. Provides benefits/accommodations to a broader extent
    c. Provides special educational services

1. BTMN (Public Educational Act 2011. CXC. 4. § 25)
- Integration, learning and behavioral disorder (Beilleszkedés, Tanulási, Magatartási zavar)
- "Significantly underperforms compared to its age, has problems with *social relations*, or has *learning difficulties*, or has *behavioral difficulties*, or shows difficulties in the *integration* into the community, or shows difficulty in the development of personality"
- Learning disorders
    o Dyslexia (reading disorder)
    o Dysgraphia (writing disorder)
    o Dyscalculia
- ADHD
- Integration disorder

Accommodations for children in BTMN:
- Eligible for *special education services*
- Special Needs Educator
    ▪ Speech and Language Therapist (SLT)
    o Hungarian specialty „Developmental Educator"
        ▪ Has similar competencies to SNE, BUT:
        ▪ Supports children only with SUPERVISION provided by SNE.
- Extended time in written tasks/tests
- Provided the option to do oral presentation instead of written tests

2. **Special Educational Needs** (Public Educational Act 2011. CXC.4. §. 25)
- A pupil with special needs is
    o locomotor,
    o sensory,
    o intellectual or
    o speech impaired,
    o in the case of the co-occurrence of several disabilities, cumulatively disabled,
    o has autism spectrum disorder or
    o suffers from other mental developmental disorders (severe learning, attention or behavioral disorders).
- Based on the professional opinion of the experts committee.

Accommodation for children with SEN

- Eligible for *special education services*
  - Type and amount of service provided is declared by the county level Pedagogical Professional Services

- Accommodations specific to reading and writing disabilities
  - Spelling is not graded
  - Enable the use of a keyboard
  - Extended allotted time for a test
  - Allow for verbal presentations
  - Exemption from the grading of foreign language

Steps for dyslexia identification

Identifying and assessing dyslexia is an ongoing process of gathering information over a period of time. This requires a common approach and sharing of knowledge among professionals.

The protocol for the diagnosis and therapy of dyslexic and dysgraphic children in Hungary was amended by the 2011 CXC. Act on National Public Education and 15/2013. (II. 26.) is regulated by the EMMI decree on the operation of pedagogical professional service institutions.

According to these, an investigation into dyslexia or the risk of dyslexia can be initiated by the parent and the public educational institution with which the child has a legal relationship. The organisation entitled to establish the diagnosis is the pedagogical professional service institution, which is organised at the county level in Hungary, in such a way that it operates member institutions in all district headquarters. Investigations begin in district member institutions, however, if the child's condition appears severe in terms of expected reading-writing or reading-writing difficulties, the investigation is completed by the county expert committee. The examination of the child is performed by a team consisting of a speech therapist, a psychologist and a paediatrician. Dyslexia-dysgraphia resp. there is a well-defined protocol for risk assessment, which, if necessary, reveals the condition of a child with the results of additional tests.

When making the diagnosis, the committee of experts shall determine the conditions which must be fulfilled in order for the child to suffer the least disadvantage during his or her studies. In Hungary, speech therapy schools or classes are organised for children diagnosed as 'at risk of dyslexia', which means temporary segregation, from which students are integrated into the schools and classes of typically developing children after one or two school years. However, the vast majority of children learn in an integrated way from the beginning with the benefits provided by the expert committee: individually organised individual developments, individual assistance during teaching, special forms of assessment, use of ICT tools ...

At regular intervals, children undergo a follow-up examination at the pedagogical service that issued their diagnosis.

3.4.2 Supporting (early) literacy competencies: in school and out-of-school

The National Core Curriculum comprises the following competencies, in concordance with the European values:

- Learning competencies
- Communication competencies (mother tongue and foreign language)

- Digital competencies
- Mathematical and thinking competencies
- Personal and social relationship competencies
- Competences in creativity, creative creation, self-expression, and cultural awareness
- Employee, innovation, and entrepreneurial competencies.

Hungary is the only European country where (from the 2015-16 school year) the full-time education of the kindergarten is part of the general compulsory education. The national basic program of pre-school education forms the basis of pre-school education in Hungary (Government Decree 363/2012. XII. 17.). Kindergarten is an institution that educates a child from the age of three until the beginning of compulsory schooling (Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education). The basic program provides a framework for pre-school education, but also provides a great deal of methodological freedom for the pre-school teacher. The principle is child-centered, the aim is to develop the child's personality, considering individual differences and characteristics. The aim of pre-school education is to promote the multifaceted, harmonious development of pre-school children, the development of children's personality traits, the reduction of disadvantages, considering age and individual characteristics, as well as different development rates. Accordingly, the task of compulsory pre-school education from the age of three in the 2015/2016 school year is to meet the physical and mental needs of pre-school children, including the development of a healthy lifestyle, emotional, moral, and value-oriented community education and mother tongue, intellectual development, and implementation of education.

In Hungary, public education wants to ensure that reading skills reach the level required for independent learning by the end of primary school, by following a well-thought-out protocol. A development network based on the results of step-by-step diagnostic procedures is available for this.

1. At the age of three, non-speaking children who show symptoms of language disorder are admitted to care (therapy, home training or counseling) after a compulsory speech therapy screening. Speech therapy for children can take place within the pedagogical service by a speech therapist at the kindergarten, or on an outpatient basis in the home institution or in the private sector.
2. At the age of five, after another speech therapy screening (therapy, home training or counseling) is carried out.
The care can be provided by a development teacher within the kindergarten, or by a speech therapist in the pedagogical service within the kindergarten, or on an outpatient basis in the home institution or in the private sector.
3. At the beginning of the first grade, the DIFER survey is conducted, which is a standardised procedure for mapping different areas of school maturity. Taking this into account, children are placed in developmental or speech therapy with the help of professionals from the school, the pedagogical service, or the private sector.
4. If the child was not able to overcome his / her significant language deficiencies during the pre-school education, it is possible to take the first two years or the lower part of the so-called in my speech therapy class, where, in addition to low class sizes, daily individual speech therapy developments - developmental pedagogical sessions, help the student to develop his / her written language skills.

It should be noted that one of the Hungarian reading teaching methods is a dyslexia prevention procedure. The method was compiled by Ildikó Meixner, an internationally renowned speech therapist-psychologist, with maximum consideration for the peculiarities of the Hungarian language,

the age-specific characteristics of children and the scientific results of reading psychology. It is also a procedure that takes the time to develop reading skills.

3.4.3 Good practice

The *Mesezene method* is a two-module programme that can be used either in preschool education to prepare reading skills or in primary school education as a pedagogical tool in the early stages of reading instruction. Both options provide a system that can be applied during the entire school year. According to the authors, to develop a successful reading ability, it is essential to apply an appropriate motivational system that emotionally engages children. In this method, this aim is achieved by means of various tales and collectively played games. These specifics can have a positive effect on children's emotional and social intelligence as well, however, this assumption requires further investigation at a later stage.

The method connects speech sounds to symbols, thus contributing to the development of *print awareness* while simultaneously helping to consolidate the phonological system. Vowels and consonants are marked by a separate symbol system; moreover, the establishment of the association is well separated in time as well. In the last stage of the programme, pictograms symbolising sounds are 'read together'. These are always closed (VC) syllables. Articulation based on vowel and consonant images forms the basis of one of the fundamental steps of reading teaching, the blending of letters, and contributes to the development of print awareness and the formation of synthesis within phonological awareness. In addition, the programme also includes the development of explicit phoneme awareness in which children are asked to identify the actual speech sounds in words.

In this method-specific association system, vowels are connected to colours and emotions of balloons. It is therefore a common task during the application to name coloured balloons (either based on their colour or associated qualities, such as the speech sound or the emotion), which can potentially affect the ability for rapid automatised naming.

Studies

Szűcs and Tar conducted two studies in the field: one with children developing typically and living in cities in Hungary (Szűcs – Tar 2020a) and one with children who live in socially and economically disadvantaged circumstances in a rural environment (Szűcs – Tar 2020b).

The greatest effect can be detected at the *phoneme level* in the field of *identification*. In this task, not only intragroup but also intergroup comparisons revealed significant differences in both presented studies. In the study of children living in typical conditions, the *phoneme synthesis* task showed significant differences in intragroup comparisons, while this was not present in intergroup terms. However, in the case of children living in socially and economically disadvantaged conditions, the extent of development is presumably higher, as there was a statistically significant difference not only within group comparison but between the groups as well. There was no detectable difference in any of the studies in the phoneme deletion subtest.

We could have predicted the present results with the profound knowledge of the method, as the training provides the participating children with a number of elements that contribute to the consolidation of the phonological categories and the blending of speech sounds. However, there is no implicit or explicit instruction in the methodology for the phoneme deletion task, so it is no coincidence

that the present research in this area did not reveal any detectable difference between the study and control groups.

At the *syllable level*, an interesting phenomenon can be observed between the results of the two studies. In the simpler *identification* task, the study group of disadvantaged children displayed significant improvement in both intergroup and intragroup comparisons. In this respect, children living in typical conditions only performed better in intragroup comparison. On the other hand, in the case of *syllable deletion* only children living under typical conditions reached statistically significant difference in intragroup comparison.

The present results can be interpreted as follows: socially and economically disadvantaged children show a more outlined and focused development in simpler syllable identification, while in the case of more complex, operation-level deletion, there is no detectable effect. In contrast, in the case of children living in typical conditions, training has a greater effect in the case of a more complicated syllable deletion operation.

From the presented data, we can conclude that the method influences phonological awareness at different linguistic levels and operational aspects. At the level of syllables, in the case of children living in better conditions, the effect is more pronounced in the operational tasks, while in the case of disadvantaged children the effect can be better detected in the identification tasks. In the latter case, we can talk about a deeper, more profound development revealed both in intragroup and intergroup comparisons with respect to phoneme identification and blending show reactivity to the training programme. This is highly important, as access to phonemes and the synthesis operation performed with them provide a significant part of the linguistic aspects behind reading skills. The preschool development of these can greatly contribute to later reading learning success.

When comparing the two studies, we can conclude that the effect on phonological awareness is even more pronounced among children situated in economically and socially disadvantaged circumstances than in children living in typical urban settings. The significance of the discovery lies in the fact that linguistic assistance in this relation can be critical for later life perspective. However, the results should be treated with caution as the current subject refers to pilot studies with a relatively small number of cases.

In either study, none of the *rapid automatised naming* tests showed statistically significant differences between the compared groups. The control group did not show a significant difference between the two assessments in either of the two studies, while the children living in urban circumstances performed better compared to themselves in terms of the accuracy of colour naming and the pace of object naming. The examination group of the socially and economically disadvantaged children also produced better results in one of the RAN indicators examined: they named colours faster in within group comparison. This may be related to the rapid automatised naming activity used in the *Mesezene* method, which is carried out with colourful balloons. Rapid automatised naming is one of the main precursors for reading abilities. As deficiency in the preschool life stage is a good precursor to later reading disorder, enhancing the performance of RAN might produce better results in later reading skills.

Based on studies to date, the method does not appear to influence phonological short-term memory as none of the studies showed a detectable difference between the groups examined. As research suggests that the level of development of phonological awareness at the phoneme level is a good predictor of the success of word reading, children participating in the programme are expected to be successful in the early stages of reading learning.

3.5 Italy

3.5.1 Educational context

The education and training system in Italy includes all levels, from early childhood education to higher education. The organization of schools is mainly divided into state schools, administered and financed through funds provided by the budget of the Ministry of Education, University and Research and non-state schools, which can be equal or private.

In Italy, art. 33 of the Constitution allows entities and individuals to establish schools and educational institutes. The schools defined as non-state can be of three types: equal, non-equal and foreign. Equal schools carry out a public service and the recognition of equality guarantees them autonomy from a cultural and educational point of view and the qualification to issue qualifications with the same legal value as state schools. For pupils who regularly attend non-peer schools, on the other hand, even if they fulfil the obligation of education, at the end of each school path, they will have to take an eligibility exam since non-peer schools cannot issue qualifications with legal value. nor intermediate or final certificates with the value of legal certification. In Italy there is a greater presence of the public sector than the private sector, in fact, even in Tuscany both kindergartens and primary schools are mostly state-owned.

Kindergarten in Italy

Early childhood education and care is organised separately according to the age of the children: 0-3 years and 3-6 years. Both offers constitute the "0-6 integrated system" and are not mandatory.

The kindergarten is aimed at all boys and girls from 3 to 6 years of age, it can be managed by the state, by local authorities, directly or through the stipulation of agreements by other public or private bodies. Since the establishment of state kindergartens fails to meet the request, non-state schools (both private and municipal) receive subsidies from the state, provided that certain conditions deemed essential for the functioning are observed. In addition to state subsidies, there are funds, direct to schools or indirect through the families of pupils, provided for by regional laws. It aims to promote in children the consolidation of identity ("I am"), the acquisition of autonomy ("I can"), the acquisition of skills ("I know, I know how to do") and live the first experiences of citizenship ("me and the others in the world"). These aims are pursued through the construction of quality learning, developed in an inclusive environment guaranteed by the professionalism of the teachers and the consequent dialogue with families and communities.

In 2012, the goals to be achieved have been stipulated in the "National guidelines for the nursery school curriculum and the first cycle of education". In kindergarten, this happens through the definition of five "fields of experience" that allow teachers to guide, organise and shape activities and experiences aimed at increasing children's global skills:

- the self and the other;
- body and movement;
- images, sounds, colors;
- The speeches and words;
- knowledge of the world.

The experience goals are set at the end of kindergarten and constitute unavoidable references, cultural and didactic paths to finalise the educational action and the integral development of the person. In 2018, the National Scientific Committee updated the national guidelines with the New Scenarios in which reference is made to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union and the objectives set out by the UN in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. The emphasis here is therefore placed on two very important issues: education for citizenship and sustainability.

The national guidelines for the curriculum establish that, at the end of the three years of kindergarten, each child has developed some basic skills that structure his personal growth:

"He recognizes and expresses his emotions, is aware of desires and fears, he feels his own and other people's moods. He has a positive relationship with his own corporeality, has gained sufficient self-confidence, is progressively aware of his own resources and limitations, when needed he knows how to ask for help. He manifests curiosity and a desire to experiment, interacts with things, the environment and people, perceiving their reactions and changes. He shares experiences and games, uses common materials and resources, gradually addresses conflicts and has begun to recognise the rules of behavior in private and public contexts. He has developed an aptitude for asking and asking questions of meaning on ethical and moral issues. It captures different points of view, reflects and negotiates meanings, uses errors as a source of knowledge. He knows how to tell, narrate, describe situations and lived experiences, he communicates and expresses himself with a plurality of languages, he uses the Italian language with increasing property. Demonstrates first skills of a logical type, begins to internalise space-time coordinates and to orient himself in the world of symbols, representations, media, technologies. It detects the main characteristics of events, objects, situations, formulates hypotheses, searches for solutions to problematic situations of everyday life. He is attentive to deliveries, gets passionate, gets the job done, becomes aware of the processes carried out and documents them. It expresses itself in a personal way, with creativity and participation, it is sensitive to the plurality of cultures, languages, experiences.

The teaching methods and the organisation of the day

The school promotes well-being and peaceful learning through the care of the environment, the preparation of educational spaces, the careful management of the entire school day. The nursery school curriculum is expressed in a balanced integration of moments of care, relationships, learning.

Learning takes place through action, exploration, contact with objects, nature, art, the territory, in a playful dimension, to be understood as a typical form of relationship and knowledge. The teaching methods mainly refer to concrete experience, exploration, discovery, play, trial and error, conversation and comparison between peers and adults.

Very important are the routines, moments of the day that recur in a constant and recurring manner linked to hospitality, well-being and hygiene, to interpersonal relationships, which perform a function of regulating the rhythms of the day and offer as a safe basis for new experiences, they help children to orient themselves with respect to the passage of time and strengthen their personal, cognitive, affective, communicative skills: the appeal, the assignment of tasks, the care of the body, the re-organisation of the environment, the community meal, rest, …

An essential element is time to play, during which children express themselves, tell and re-elaborate their personal and social experiences in a creative way.

Observation by teachers, in its various ways, is a fundamental tool to adequately support a child in all its developmental dimensions; the documentation serves to keep track, memory and reflection, in adults and children, of the progress of individual and group learning; the evaluation recognises, accompanies, describes and documents the growth processes of each child and has a formative value.

Primary School in Italy

Primary school lasts five years and is part, together with lower secondary school, of the first cycle of education. Attendance is mandatory and registration is for all boys and girls who have reached the age of six on the 31st December of the reference year, regardless of their citizenship. The purpose of the first cycle is the acquisition of fundamental knowledge and skills to develop basic cultural skills in the perspective of the full development of the person. The new Indications assign to the school the general purpose of the harmonious and integral development of the person, within the principles of the Italian Constitution and the European cultural tradition, in promoting knowledge and respecting and enhancing diversity individuals, with the active involvement of students and families.

The objectives of the first cycle are aimed at cultural and social literacy which includes the instrumental one in "reading, writing and arithmetic". Specifically, primary school aims at the acquisition of basic learning, as the first exercise of constitutional rights.

The disciplines taught during the 5 years of primary school are: Italian, English, history, geography, mathematics, science, technology, music, art and image, physical education, Catholic religion. The latter is optional, since you can choose an alternative subject, assisted individual study or you can request postponed entry or early exit. To these disciplines is added the teaching "Citizenship and Constitution", introduced with law no. 92 of 2019, which schools must consider in their three-year educational offer plan (PTOF). It is not a separate subject and its contents are developed through didactic paths designed by each school. As for the kindergarten, the 2012 National Guidelines were updated in 2018 with the provision of "new scenarios" that place the emphasis above all on education for citizenship and sustainability, with reference to the Recommendations of the European Parliament and Council of Europe and the objectives set by the UN in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. For each discipline, goals are set for the development of skills at the end of primary school. These are prescriptive and the learning objectives, which identify fields of knowledge, knowledge and skills, are considered indispensable in order to reach the goals for the development of skills.

Evaluation in primary school must be consistent with the learning objectives outlined in the training offer (PTOF) of each school, with the national guidelines for the curriculum and with the personalisation of the paths. Descriptive judgments are correlated on four levels: first-time acquisition, basic, intermediate, advanced. For the second and fifth grades, national surveys of learning are carried out, they are external evaluations carried out by the Invalsi (National Institute for the evaluation of the education system). The assessment focuses on mathematics and Italian for secondary school pupils, while it also includes English, with tests consistent with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, for pupils in the fifth grade.

Pupils with disabilities and specific learning disabilities attend primary school with the aid of specific support measures made available by the State and local authorities.

3.5.2 Supporting (early) literacy competences: in school and out-of-school

ARCA method for developing key competences and basic skills in pre-school:

Learning of the child is possible thanks to the DIRECT EXPERIENCES of play and work that are indeed proposed, stimulated and supported by adults but also and, above all, designed, planned and implemented by the children themselves. In this perspective the child is an active protagonist of his own learning of which he is fully conscious. Another element that we consider fundamental is also that this learning takes place mainly in groups. The strength of the group makes children's learning opportunities exponential, the results of a group process are very interesting and richer than when the child plays alone. Children receive responses to both their intellectual-cognitive and emotional-affective needs. The teacher provides the child with the right stimuli so that the child himself can bring out his own talents. We referred to cooperative learning and learning by doing.

Starting from the observations carried out in the first part of the educational / school year, our method is based on the identification of the educational / school needs of children and on the consequent choice of the experiences illustrated below to support the linguistic development of each one, so that the programming responds to the real needs of the group.

READING AS A PLEASURE INCREASES MOTIVATION

For some years our reading project has been enriched and intensified thanks to the participation in the "Reading strong" project promoted by the Tuscany Region in all schools of all types and levels, starting from kindergartens, in order to favor the academic and life success of the children through the effects that the daily practice of reading aloud produces.

A fundamental assumption of this project is that "Reading together (reference adults and children) promotes motivation to read and creates an environment conducive to the subsequent learning of reading and writing". A child who enjoys reading aloud will therefore be more motivated to "struggle" to learn from the "passionate reader".

Shared reading then becomes an appointment to be respected, a moment which gives time to the relationship, in which we stop and suspend all activity, detaching ourselves from the real space-time dimension, to enter the imaginative dimension of the book.

To promote the motivation to read, we choose to keep books within reach of "children", leaving them through experience, the opportunity to learn how to handle books with care.

A child who receives daily readings will have a richer vocabulary, will express himself better and will be more curious to read and learn about many books.

In fact, reading aloud is pleasant and creates a habit of listening and also increases attention spans. Literature is, for preschool children, a precious tool to learn about themselves, others as well as the surrounding reality. Literature offers children the opportunity to discover the articulated world of emotions, urges them to reflect, to encounter ways of thinking different from their own, to perceive the richness of diversity, to encounter amazing environments and places. In short, with these illustrated stories, each child grows according to his own times and needs, elaborating independently and not learning by heart the values that matter.

The objectives of this project are:	• Strengthen the adult-child relationship
	• Increase attention spans
	• Enrich vocabulary
	• Stimulate reflection

The techniques of reading aloud used are: The daily and intensive practice of reading aloud

- Create welcoming and stimulating reading settings, where it is possible to create an "emotionally warm situation" of sharing the experience that is going to be realised.
- Increase the daily reading times up to 60 continuous minutes to train the physiological listening times of children.
- Vary the reading texts as much as possible to stimulate attention, language skills and the pleasure of reading (from picture books, silent books, comics, nursery rhymes, stories).
- Use increasingly complex stories depending on the age of the children in front of us, to develop language learning and structuring.

The types of reading used are:
- Storytelling
- Dialogue
- Animated

The tools used for reading:
- Multimedia tools such as the video projector with which it is possible to create, through the projection of the pages of the book to be read, immersive and pleasant contexts for children that capture their attention and help the understanding of the story because they simultaneously stimulate listening accompanied by images
- The light table with transparencies created ad hoc that represent characters and / or situations of the stories told in order to facilitate the comprehension.
- Kamishibai, that is the Japanese paper or wooden theater that has a series of advantages for reading stories such as: the large format of the pages, creates a natural focus of the group on what to focus on, symbolically creates a setting because it is already a small theater.

3.5.3 Good practice

For some years our working groups have been experimenting, following a training course, with the method created by maestro Camillo Bortolato for kindergarten. This method is mainly applied in larger groups of children. It can be seen as the most natural method of learning through metaphors and analogies. It is a method that aims at learning through the heart and intuition across the board, exercised to welcome everything, without fear and without the need for control, which blocks everything. The assumptions that the master Bortolato frames his method are already fitted to us and the experimentation with children carried out over the years has allowed us to evaluate the effectiveness of this tool / method with a view to a growth oriented to learning.

"The analogical method does not want to inaugurate a new path of ideas but only be the rediscovery of the right, forgotten way. So don't invent but rediscover. Because there is a simple way in which everything is obvious and gradual. Many children in each class walk through it in secret without any extraordinariness except that of learning on their own without being infected by teaching."

AWARENESS OF FAMILIES: THE PRESTA BOOK

Within our educational services we have always carried out the "Presta book" project to share with the attending families the importance of reading aloud with children, so that it does not only happen at school but also becomes a routine at home taking into account the benefits already listed. The educational service therefore makes itself available to share its library of books and picture books with families, so that every child has the opportunity to choose the desired book to take it home and read it with family members in the weekend and then bring it back to school on Monday.

3.6 Portugal

3.6.1 Educational context

Access to Education is a right of all Portuguese, enshrined in the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic and in the Basic Law of the Educational System (Law 46/1986 of 14 October), and education is consigned as universal and free during compulsory schooling.

It is the State's responsibility to promote the democratisation of education, but it is not the State's right to program education. This role is entrusted to the Directorate-General of Education of the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for the implementation of policies concerning the pedagogical and didactic components of pre-school, primary and secondary education, and out-of-school education and technical support for their formulation (Decree-Law 266-G/2012).

Portugal has defined a compulsory schooling of 12 years.

Pre-school is an optional level whose objectives include individual stimulation, emotional stability and security; promotion of integration into various social groups; development of the capacity for expression and communication, as well as creative imagination.

Basic Education is compulsory and aims the acquisition of foundational knowledge that enables the development of competencies, interests, and aptitudes, fundamental for civic, social, and emotional awareness and maturity (Law 46/1986). Lasting 4 years, it foresees the development of oral language and the initiation and progressive mastery of reading and writing, of the essential notions of arithmetic and calculation, of the physical and social environment, and of the artistic, dramatic, musical, and motor expressions. The 2nd cycle lasts 2 years and is organised by interdisciplinary areas. It aims to allow the assimilation and interpretation of information in a critical way. The 3rd cycle, which lasts 3 years, integrates areas essential for entry into active life.

Secondary education is the last compulsory level, lasting 3 years.

After completing compulsory education, people can choose to enter the job market, opt for vocational education or higher education.

In 2008, Law 3/2008 was enacted, which defined the specialised support to be provided in preschool, and primary and secondary education for the public, private and cooperative sectors. It was republished by Decree-Law 137/2012, which includes the approval of the regime of autonomy, administration and management of public establishments of pre-school education and basic and secondary education. Law 85/2009 established the compulsory schooling regime and enshrined the universality of pre-school for children from 5 years of age, which, with Law 65/2015, changed the age to 4 years of age.

The inclusion of all implies the adoption of differentiated pedagogical practices that respond to individual characteristics and address their differences, supporting their learning and progress.

The knowledge of foreign languages can be included starting in preschool. This awareness, playful and informal, is integrated into the daily routines of kindergarten.

3.6.2 Supporting (early) literacy competences: in school and out-of-school

Despite the multiple educational options and the way they manage the educational process, educators should attend to the three content areas referred to in the Curricular Guidelines for Preschool Education: personal and Social Development Area – supports all the other areas and focuses on the development of attitudes and the acquisition of values, which allow children to continue to learn successfully and to become autonomous, aware, supportive and problem-solving citizens; world Knowledge Area – through a process of questioning, curiosity and quest for knowledge, it aims to give children a better understanding of the world around them and expressions and Communication – understood as a basic area that includes different forms of language essential for the child to interact with others, provide meaning and represent the world around it.

Basic Education consists of the 1st cycle, with a duration of four school years (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th years), and foresees the development of oral language and the initiation and progressive mastery of reading and writing, of the essential notions of arithmetic and calculation, of the physical and social environment and of the artistic, dramatic, musical and motor expressions.

The language development is complex, due to the multiplicity of aspects and factors that are involved. However, we can consider that there are two major components in language acquisition, which are oral communication and linguistic awareness.

It is in the communication climate created by the educator that the child will master the language, expanding its vocabulary, building more correct and complex sentences, acquiring a greater domain of expression and communication that allow ~~them~~ more forms of representation. The daily routine of pre-school education will allow, for example, that children use simple sentences appropriately in different ways (affirmative and negative) and types (interrogative, exclamatory, etc.), as well as the agreements of gender, number, time, person and place.

The learning skills to be promoted at this age group are understanding oral messages in different communication situations and using oral language in context, managing to communicate effectively in an appropriate way to the situation (production and functionality).

The educator can promote these skills, for example, through material that develop language in different spaces of the classroom (stories in different formats, puppets, ICT tools: recorder and/or CD player, games and computer). It can place orders and promote increasingly complex and elaborate instructions. Also, it can use playful methods, like games that promote language development (identification of sounds, vocabulary, posts). Telling stories can generate conversations, create opportunities for children to tell or create their own stories. It is important to promote, in daily routine, child-adult and child-child communication opportunities, both in informal and more structured moments (meals, playground, classroom activities, communication in large or small groups and extracurricular activities) as well as to encourage children to share their ideas and experiences, giving them support to do so in increasingly elaborate, considering the specifics of each one.

According to the guidelines curriculum for education preschool, in preschool education and in the first year of basic education, there are three dimensions in linguistic awareness, phonological awareness, word awareness and syntactic awareness.

In (OCEPE, 2016) the phonological awareness refers to gradually becoming aware of different oral segments (syllables, intrasyllabic units and phonemes) that make up words.

The word awareness concerns identifying different words in a sentence, for example, when a child isolates and identifies how many words a sentence has or understand that the word is different from its referent, or even when, in a sentence, it substitutes one word for another.

The syntactic awareness is about identifying whether a sentence is correct or incorrect and eventually correcting it, explaining the reasons for this correction (OCEPE, 2016).

As children get in the 1st year of Basic Education, they continue to develop and consolidate the written language, in terms of reading and writing. They are expected to develop:

- oral competence (give short messages, comply with instructions, answer questions, express their opinion, share ideas and feelings);
- reading competence (safer way of understanding texts, identifying the alphabet, reading isolated words, short texts with correct articulation and proper prosody);
- writing competence that includes writing short texts with the correct graphic, spelling and grammar knowledge;
- literary education through oral and written texts by listening, drawing, reading, writing, acting, role-playing, tongue twisters, nursery rhymes and poem;
- linguistic awareness (phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, textual-discursive). Identify phonemes, syllables, words; discover the meaning of unknown words from verbal and non-verbal context; make simple sentences using the correct punctuation;

With reading and writing, even with smaller children, it is important for them to realise the importance of these two competences which will help them build their own personal project. They are the basis for children to become motivated to use the language itself. The educator's role is fundamental, by creating environments that can lead to positive attitudes towards the learning of the written language.

Reading or writing activities that give children pleasure and satisfaction, such as stories, rhymes, poetry; reflecting and sharing ideas that are sometimes personal make them feel valued. The quality of the stories and the books, as well as the aesthetic side of them are important. Give children therefore the opportunity to choose their stories according to their interests. Value and share their progress so they can continue to feel the pleasure of the language.

3.6.3 Good practice

On the last day of our mobility we visited the ATNP - Casa Nossa Senhora da Conceição. An IPSS (Institution of Social Solidarity) that works as an educational space for children from nursery to the 1st cycle. It also has study rooms for 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycle students.

During the visit, we went to a pre-school and a 1st grade classroom. We observed an activity on numbers, counting and writing. Next, we followed the lesson of the 1st grade class. The introduction to literacy, letters, words and simple sentences was always present.

We could interact with the children and teachers, ask questions about methodologies, presentation of content, working materials, organisation and we noticed the positive relationship and mutual support between children, school and families.

Finally, we participated in an activity with the 5 and 6 year old children, where the project partners read a story in their own language, so as to let children get in contact with other languages

3.7 Romania

3.7.1 Educational context

The National Law on Education in Romania sets the framework, the structures, the values and the main principles in education. The document aims to guarantee the fundamental right to education targeting lifelong learning. The compulsory educational path one must follow is 10 years including the primary and the upper-secondary educational stages. The law is set on a vision that aims to promote an educational system based on values, creativity, cognitive capacities, volitional capabilities and action capabilities, knowledge fundamentals skills and essential abilities both in the professional and personal spheres.

Schooling is compulsory until the tenth grade (corresponding with the age of sixteen or seventeen). The school educational cycle ends in the twelfth grade, when students graduate the baccalaureate. The system is structured on levels and, where appropriate, branches to ensure the necessary conditions for acquiring key competences and for professional development. National education system is organised as following:

- Primary education, including the preparatory grade and grades from 1 to 4.
- Secondary lower education or gymnasium includes grades 5—8. The access to the higher level is achieved by a national evaluation examination and distribution in upper secondary education units.
- The secondary superior education can be high school education, which includes the high school grades 9-12/13, with the following pathways: theoretical, aptitude-based (vocational) and technological or a minimum 3-year professional education. The graduates of the professional education promoting the certification examination of the professional qualification may attend the high school education courses.
- The tertiary non-university education includes the post secondary education. The professional and technical education is composed of professional education, technical education and post-secondary education.
- The higher education is organised in universities, academies, institutes, higher studies schools, referred to as higher education institutions or universities, temporarily authorised or certified. High school graduates with a high school diploma can enroll in higher education. The admission conditions are different from one institution to another. The structure of higher education reflects the principles of the Bologna process: Bachelor studies, master studies, PhD studies.

The above described educational paths are organised and coordinated by the Ministry on Education. The compulsory educational stages are the primary and the secondary stages (up to the 10th grade). The technical education (technological pathway) includes the 12th and 13th grades of high school education. Vocational and technical education consists of vocational education, technical education and post-high school studies.

For pupils with different abilities, special educational measures are put in place. For pupils with special educational needs, classes of special education and integrated education are organised. Furthermore, for pupils with exceptional results additional support is being offered through the Excellency Training Centres.

Where and when needed, through the school decisional acts, the daily educational activities within the primary and secondary education can be prolonged through the School after School (afterschool) programmes aiming to offer additional educational support or leisure time activities offered either by the teachers in school or on partnership basis with the non-governmental organisations.

The schooling network is defined through the National Law on Education as being composed of all the teaching units both accredited and only under temporary authorisation. The network is being organised by the local public authorities under the supervision of the Counties' School Inspectorates. The network includes the private schooling structures of primary, secondary or post-high school ones. All schooling structures are permanently evaluated and monitored by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-Higher Education.

3.7.2 Supporting (early) literacy competences: in school and out-of-school

Romania developed and approved key reference standards for early learning and development for children from birth to age six in 2018. These reference standards provided the basis for the development of an "early pre-school curriculum" and a pre-primary curriculum. The span of the reference standards and curricula, as well as the introduction of a compulsory preparation class at age five, helped to encourage a smooth transition into primary education. National stakeholders have reported that the pre-primary curriculum incorporates many modern concepts for early childhood learning such as individualisation and focusing on the development of the whole child.

Romania's new integrated curricula for children from birth to age six appear to encourage a kind of balanced approach, giving equal weight to pre-academic activities, play and self-regulation. For example, it is based on a holistic view of child development, including physical development, health, personal care, socio-emotional development, cognitive development, and language development and communication. It aims to cover both pre-academic skills in preparation for school but also socio-emotional development such as working with others, and physical development such as health and gross motor skills.

Reading is one of the four skills included in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. It is seen not only as a skill when it comes to foreign languages, but also when it comes to mother tongues. The formation and development of students' reading skills is an important activity of the learning process in primary classes. In the 1st and 2nd grade, pupils learn to read, and in the 3rd and 4th grades, they read to learn, as reading becomes a learning tool and a technique for working with books. The entire evolution of students, both in school and in life, depends on the extent to which reading becomes a means of information and self-education. The specificity of the current curriculum consists in the new communicative - functional model which aims, first of all, at the ways of structuring communication skills. According to this model, "communication is a complex field that includes the processes of receiving oral and written messages ("reading"), as well as those of oral expression and written expression".

According to the Education Common Framework (Education, 2013), Romanian Language and Literature is taught in the 3rd and 4th form 5 hours/week. Prior to it, in the preparatory, the 1st and the 2nd grade, the subject 'Communication in Romanian Language', a discipline from the same curricular area, develops literacy skills. This subject is being taught 5-7-6 hours/week.

The curriculum was designed according to the Common Framework for Developing Communication Skills in Mother Language. This framework takes into account the Literary Framework for Teachers, LiFT, being used to design the necessary skills for reading and PIRLS Assessment Framework (PIRLS , 2011), involving the progress of the reading skills at the end of the primary education.

The curriculum includes 4 categories of information: general skills (oral and written comprehension, oral and written production of messages), specific skills (derived of the general skills), learning activities (non-compulsory tasks by which specific skills are developed), contents (speech acts, grammar, typologies of texts) and methodology suggestions (meant to guide the teacher to develop the students' skills).

The curriculum for students from 11 to 14 years old takes into account the same 4 general skills as the previous curriculum. The texts are either literary or non-literary at this stage. Apart from other topics of interests, this curriculum mentions that it aims at developing skills for reading. The curriculum includes not only general skills, but also values and attitudes which should be developed in students, such as: arousing the interest for and the pleasure of reading, as well as developing the autonomous reflexive thinking related to the written/oral messages.

The curriculum for students from 15 to 18 years involves partially different general skills: using Romanian in order to comprehend written or oral messages, using different types of analysis to comprehend literary/non-literary texts, expressing for/against opinions. The curriculum includes not only general skills, but also values and attitudes which should be developed in students, such as: arousing the interest for and the pleasure of reading, as well as developing the autonomous reflexive, critical thinking related to the written/oral messages. The contents fall into two categories: Literature; Language and Communication. Romanian Language and Literature is taught in the 9th and the 10th form (to pupils of 15, 16 years old) 3 hours/week. The curricula for students from 16 to 18 years are unitary in general skills, in values and attitudes that are promoted, as well as in the two categories of contents: Literature; Language and Communication. It emphasises among other aspects on developing advanced reading skills (synthesising features of a literary movement, of a literary period…) being based on a chronological approach.

The curriculum does not clearly propose reading promotion strategies or techniques for promoting reading for fun, this kind of reading being mentioned only as a social value to be indirectly acquired. The inter-disciplinary guidelines for promoting reading are related to understanding literary works by comparing them with works coming from different artistic fields such as cinema or painting; this idea is mentioned only for the high-school curricula and it could be regarded as a great opportunity to bring students closer to reading, but the methodology is rather scarce.

3.7.3 Good practice

The method used in a kindergarten in Satu Mare County can bring innovation in the development of communication and in the development of the key competencies that help to prepare / to form correctly reading and learning. That is why the choice was made for the Fairytale Music Method, which responds to the multimedia changes of today with presence, collective experience, a connected chain of tales, and free music. The stories of the letter tales "protect" as a mythological system the process of learning to read. They invite children into a fairytale world in which lovable characters with human qualities display sounds and then letters: the Orange Balloon, which always laughs at the "í" sound, Nénó Zénó, an ambulance that is not excellent in orientation, standing for the "n" sound …

The Fairytale Music programme provides much more to preschool children than reading preparation. This surplus is the development of emotional intelligence, which includes self-knowledge, empathy, self-expression, interpersonal communication. With the help of this method, the kindergarten teachers and therapists leading the session can plant 'seeds' into the children, who are in an intellectually and emotionally receptive, sensitive period, seeds which jump into the stem and provide a long-term chance for a more joyful, cheerful, competent, confident, a more balanced life of effective self-expression.

In 2019, about 30 kindergarten teachers and school teachers took part in a training in Nagykároly, where Hungarian professionals presented this method of teaching.

The application of the educational method developed for today's young children was also studied in January 2020 in Budapest by the kindergarten teachers from Nagykároly.

In order to understand and apply the method as effectively as possible, the professionals of Nagykároly were invited to a so-called hospitalisation in the "mother institution" of the Fairytale Music Method.

The method was already used in the 2019/2020 school year in Nagykároly.

In February 2020, the teachers of the kindergarten in Nagykároly introduced the Fairytale Music Method to 4 kindergarten teachers from Zilah, close to practice, thus promoting the project. It was wonderful to see how eager the children take part in the activity, how they share their own desires with Dibi-Dob, how correctly they pronounce speech sounds and perform rhythm exercises.

The representative of the Zilah team saw the success of the method in the simplicity of the everyday tales, which are close to the children, in the variety of sound games, and in the presence of essential emotional development.

We also used the method during online education, we made online games with the sounds of this and told the stories for them.

The preschool module of the Fairytale Music program begins with the Balloon-tales, which are used to become aware of vowels. The protagonists of the fairytale, connected one to another by loose 'threads' are colorful balloons who experience funny, humorous, enlightening adventures. They are being magically transformed into companions with human faces and human emotions as a result of what they experience during their journey around the world. During the encounter with the world, they learn various emotions, emotions which carry a sound (fatigue: á, anger, rage, laughter, frantic good mood: í….).

At this point, it should be mentioned that Paul Ekman, a professor of psychology at the University of California, a world-famous researcher in facial expression recognition, has identified seven universal basic emotions as a result of decades of intercultural research. The emotions in question can be accurately recognised by everyone from members of the New Guinean tribes living in isolation to the average man of Western civilisation: joy, anger, fear, surprise, disgust, interest, sadness.

The nine emotions in the Balloon-tales are: curiosity/attention, laughter/joy, sadness/pain, fatigue/drowsiness, fear/fright, satisfaction/ mile, anger/rage, interest, surprise/ amazement.

- Yellow Balloon - satisfaction, smile: é
- Green Balloons - anger, rage: ű
- Purple Balloons - surprise, amazement: ó
- Brown Balloons - pain, sadness: ő

- Orange Balloons - laughter: í
- Red Balloons - fright, fear: ú
- Blue Balloons - interest: e
- Gray Balloons - fatigue: á

The Fairytale Music program brings these universal emotions to young children. Discussing and personalising these emotions is of paramount importance. Children have the opportunity to share with each other the experiences from their own lives that have generated a wide range of emotions in them. There is also an opportunity to parallel their own emotions with the lived emotions of a given balloon, thus facilitating the process of self-acceptance.

An essential component of competent social behavior is the open expression of needs, wants, positive and negative feelings in a way that is acceptable to the other person. The depth of the shared experience is left to the children: it depends on their mood whether that day they are just remaining silent or sharing their most personal experiences with the community. The exploration of our emotions is in sharp contrast to our ordinary habits, as we often try to hide the manifestation and surfacing of our emotions, so that we often do not know about them. This is despite the fact that if we do not know about them, it does not mean that they do not prevail, on the contrary.

This sub-technique of the Fairytale Music program helps the individual to become able to: recognise and become aware of the emotional motives of his or her behavior, and to create an opportunity to better understand himself or herself and his or her human relationships.

4 Observations made about reading

The "Ready to read" project focussed on joint teaching trainings with professional staff of project partner organisations in all participating countries (Hungary, Belgium, Portugal, Italy, Bulgaria and Bosnia and Herzegovina). Due to COVID-19 restrictions the project consortium organised three types of the training: in presence, online and hybrid. An overview of the response and results of the all-training activities with in total 79 participants, is presented in Table 1. (Annex 1.).

The survey includes observation classroom resources, climate and teachers' behaviour during the lessons. That includes questions related to classroom climate and environment, teacher methodology, planning, skills and instructions.

The answers of all participants indicate that results are unique. Related to response type we can target some of the problems that are uniform and common to all preschool and school organisation in partner countries.

Results of classroom climate and environment indicate that most of participants strongly agree (84,81%) or agree (12,67%) that classrooms in kindergarten and schools of observation are positive and teachers' attitudes have a positive effect on children. Also, results show that 88,60% of the participants strongly agree that teacher-student interactions are described as supportive and respectful and 81,01% of participants indicate that students promote the collective success of classrooms. Participants commented that children received positive reinforcement and that there was a warm environment for children with adequate interaction between children and teachers. Related to the study visits participants said that study visits in Portugal and Romania presented great interaction with warm and supportive learning for children.

Related to the classroom environment results indicate that 67% to 69% of the participants observed a classroom with library, reading corners, visible literacy and printed materials. In addition, results related to these questions show that 18% to 25% of the participants were not sure how to observe these types of resources. Comments of participants show that the classroom of study visits in Portugal have a highly positive impact based on research and strong emphasis on practice. Comments of participants from Bulgaria and Bosnia and Herzegovina include that some of the classrooms didn't have visible reading materials, walls are sober or with some decoration without literacy materials.

Results of teacher's methodology show that 7,59% of the participants disagree that teacher goals and objectives meet student learning. Also, 6,32% of them disagree that teachers' lesson planning and behavior is logical and systematically. Some participants found that the observed activities didn't demonstrate reading activities in an appropriate way and there wasn't sufficient preparation for lessons.

Results of teacher skills and criteria show that around 13% of the participants strongly disagree or disagree with the assertion that teachers use ICT in classroom. These answers could be related to the specific methodology of the Montessori kindergarten in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which does not provide any kind of technology in their classrooms. In addition, other results indicate that around 12% of the participants were undecisive on whether teachers provided opportunities to discuss texts with pupils and demonstrate the use of reading skills and strategies.

5 Conclusions

This chapter contains the most important results related to the observed activities during the joint staff trainings and recommendations related to literacy and learning to read in preschool and school institutions in EU countries and B&H.

Although the trainings took place in different countries and types of institutions with different methodologies, the participants' results were uniform with regard to pros and cons. We can conclude that participants observed a positive atmosphere and climate in the classrooms and teachers were considered to be supportive. The study visit in Portugal was highly appreciated, thanks to well-planned school activities. During the study visit in Romania participants experienced a warm and welcoming learning environment. Less positive was the lack of understanding and identification of key resources related to environment (library, reading corner and literacy workstation) presented in Bulgaria and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The answers of participants show that they are not sure about these terms and environmental resources in the classroom. The doubt includes questions on what is essential in a library or reading corner. The main problems related to literacy learning include answers of participants that show lack of teacher skills concerning planning and presenting lessons logically. Participants also showed dismay with regard to activities in Italy because there was not enough time to observe.

One of the main recommendations that can be derived from the results is that we need better definitions related to literacy learning resources (library, literacy workstation, reading corner) from professional staff. Another recommendation is that preschool and school institutions need to improve skills and instruction of teachers related to literacy learning. This could be reached by additional professional training activities, introduction to specific methodologies or providing adequate learning materials for children.