



EUROPEAN COUNTRIES OVERVIEWS

Social and Emotional Development
for Children aged 0 to 7 years old

COMPENDIUM

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Socio-emotional learning (SEL) can be defined as “the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions” (CASEL, 2020). According to the model proposed by the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2021), it focuses on the development of five main areas of competencies and knowledge: self-awareness, social awareness, self-regulation, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Internationally, SEL has been increasingly recognised by researchers, practitioners and politicians, both in the psychology and educational fields, with literature showing that the development of socioemotional skills (SES) in early ages is associated with several positive child outcomes not only during early years, but also later

in the school path and adult life (e.g., Bierman et al., 2016; Durlak et al., 2011; Eklund et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2015). Thus, promoting children’s SES through universal evidence-based programmes is spreading around the world, including in several early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings, during the last decade.

Regardless, although the number of studies and interventions regarding the effects of SEL interventions on preschool aged children is growing, as well as the awareness of educational policies to consider SEL in early education years, there is still little is known about assessment and intervention practices regarding SEL across European countries ECEC settings (Djamnezhad et al., 2021). Thus, considering the accumulated evidence on the importance of ECEC to incorporate SEL in the childcare and preschool curricula and daily practices this compendium provides an overview of the SEL assessment and intervention practices in ECEC across 51 countries.

Vera Coelho, PhD
Editor

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Many reports (Cefai, et al., 2021a; Cefai, et al., 2021b; OECD, 2021, Kankaraš, et al., 2019; Cefai, et al., 2018; Chernyshenko, et al., 2018; Lazzari, 2018; OECD, 2018) recognise the importance of social and emotional skills (SES) and provide evidence for a variety of positive outcomes. In the last few years, several Europe-wide reports (Cefai, et al., 2021a; Cefai, et al., 2021b; Kankaraš, et al., 2019; Cefai, et al., 2018; Lazzari, 2018) emphasise the significance of SES and provided guidelines on strengthening SES education as a part of the school curricular across the EU, whole school approach, assessment of social and emotional education in the EU, whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing in schools in the EU, the current state of national ECEC quality frameworks, etc. Some of these reports provide clear guidelines for the EU Member countries on how to develop, implement and improve SES assessment and interventions on a national level.

The European Council recognised the importance of key competences development. So on 22 May 2018, Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning was issued (2018/C 189/01). Seven fields of competencies are defined: (1) Literacy competence, (2) Multilingual competence, (3) Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering, (4) Digital competence, (5) Personal, social and learning to learn competence, (6) Citizenship competence, (7) Entrepreneurship competence, and (8) Cultural awareness and expression competence. Our main interest is the field (5) Personal, social and learning to learn competence. By 2020, the European framework, LifeComp, for personal, social and learning to learn key competence, was released (Sala et al., 2020). The LifeComp framework presents a broader view and is "a set of competences applying to all spheres of life that can be acquired through formal informal and non-formal education, and can help citizens to thrive in the 21st Century." (Sala et al., 2020). According to the authors, "LifeComp can be used as a basis for the development of curricula and learning activities fostering personal, and social development, and learning to learn." (Sala et al., 2020).

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Nevertheless, despite these improvements across the EU, there are large variations within each EU country, as well as between all the countries in Europe as a whole. One of the main aims of the EU-Self Project was to make a step towards a better understanding of the SES European context. The current compendium presents SES country overviews for 47 European countries and 4 countries overseas. Beside all of the specificities, in many EU countries, there is no equal understanding of SES; still there is a huge gap between the scientific knowledge in this field and its implementation; practitioners (teachers, educators, psychologists, etc.) not always having access to the competences and/or tools to develop preschool children's SES; etc. So, there is still a lot to be done regarding the translation of recommendations and "intentions" into curricular frameworks, activities and programmes.

This compendium will be a valuable tool for educators, researchers, parents, stakeholders, decision-taking bodies, local authorities, professionals, ECEC providers, EU bodies, etc. The content presented here is also uploaded into EU-Self Digital platform, another main output of EU-Self Project. It is presented in an interactive, structured, easily accessible and user-friendly format. It serves as an information hub regarding SES state, programmes, assessment measures and resources. Our SES "map" of Europe can be an indispensable tool for a variety of activities for early and preschool children – prevention, inclusion, research, educational services, planning of interventions.

We started with a very ambitious aim – covering the state of SES development, assessment and intervention of SES in children in early and preschool years in all Europe. It is a very demanding and effortful task. We faced many obstacles along the process. Many researchers and experts in European countries publish in their native language, however, we could assess mainly papers, documents and information in English. There are very valuable sources in paper format, but we could use mainly on-line databases and sources of information. We intended to be as objective as we can. It was extremely important for

us to not only rely on literature search and desk review, but also to validate the descriptions with the help of national experts. That is why we sent numerous letters with a request for assistance to International and European networks and organisations, and individual experts as well. Unfortunately, we did not get many replies so for most of the descriptions we had to rely on the references we could access. Nevertheless, in our efforts for finding information, our search was very limited regarding the sources we could find for many countries. Sometimes we could not get any documents regarding SES actions in a country. Sometimes we were able to get just a few. This is not a reason to describe a country as not having SES practices. These are strong limitations for

our descriptions. We do not pretend in any way for exhaustive descriptions. They are solely based on the sources that were accessed. We view our country overviews as a first step towards a European information hub. Thanks to the EU-Self digital platform, they can be further updated and enriched.

We hope that our country overviews, in combination with the platform and compendiums on programmes for SES development and SES assessment measures, will boost the actions regarding SES development in young children.

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As it was mentioned above, we covered 51 countries – 47 European countries and 4 countries overseas – the USA, Australia, Canada, and Japan. Below is a table with the distribution of country description per partners (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of countries for country overview descriptions per partners

Organisation	Country	Literature search
New Bulgarian University	Bulgaria	Bulgaria, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Iceland
Galileo Progetti	Hungary	Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Moldova, Germany, Austria, Italy
ISMAI - Instituto Universitário da Maia	Portugal	Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom, Ireland, Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Lithuania
University of Tuzla	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Croatia, Slovenia, Estonia
EhB University college of Brussels	Belgium	Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Latvia
Lund University	Sweden	Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, USA, Australia, Canada, Japan

Sources of Information

The Countries overviews' authors could use any sources they could access via scientific databases, reports, national legal documents and/or reports, grey literature, online search.

Contacts with colleagues and experts from different countries were highly recommended. Unfortunately, not many were willing to assist. We hope more experts could be involved in the future also via the EU-Self digital platform.

Country Overview Template

Especially for writing the descriptions, the EU-Self Project team developed a structured template. On the one hand, it was needed for uniformity, on the other hand, it was needed as a reference to guide the process of writing. We started with a more detailed template (Template 1). Soon after the process started, we realised that, regarding all the limitations we started to face, it is difficult even to find information for the different fields, making it impossible to answer the questions. That is why we simplified the template and left only the main fields (Template 2).

Template 1. Country Overview Template

I. Development	<p>1. How are the practices for promoting early childhood SES developed in your country?</p> <p>1.1. Are those practices developed at national, local or program level?</p> <p>1.1.1. Is there a national program?</p> <p>1.1.2. Are there any local developments organized by specific municipalities?</p> <p>1.1.3. Are there any organization – NGO or state, educational or other that develop those practices?</p>
II. Assessment	<p>1. Are those practices evaluated?</p> <p>2. If yes, how?</p> <p>3. Do specialists use assessment measures of SES?</p> <p>4. If yes, describe briefly.</p>
III. Intervention	<p>1. What are the specifics of the practices?</p> <p>2. How are they applied? Describe briefly target group (all children, children at-risk), context of implementation, who implement the practices (teacher, psychologist), frequency of intervention, etc.</p>
Conclusion	
References	

Template 2. Revised Country Overview Template

Country	Author (name, affiliation): Reviewer (name, affiliation):
Abstract	
I. Development	
II. Assessment	
III. Intervention	
References	

Country Overviews | Europe

Abstract

In Albania, very little focus is given to preschool education policies. The Ministry of Education and Sport has established the goal of implementing a mandatory pre-primary year before grade 1 by 2018. With one of the youngest populations in Europe, Albania has great potential to take advantage of the benefits of pre-primary education. Nonetheless, barriers to achieving this persist, including low enrolment, lack of budget-

ary attention, poverty gaps, disparities in enrolment among minority groups (Roma and Egyptian) and those with disabilities, and insufficient public supply of pre-primary education services (Sula, Dutrevis, & Crahay, 2019). Regarding social and emotional learning (SEL), to our knowledge, there are no national level evidence-based preschool interventions.

I. Development

Preschool education in Albania is part level 0 of the National Qualification Framework, and includes an integral part of education and social care for children. Preschool education, as in most other countries, has the purpose to provide a positive impact on child development and support families in children's education and care

processes. That includes the development of the individuals, acquisition of developmental skills, and participation in social life. At the national level there are no evidence-based nor proven preschool programmes related to social and emotional learning.

II. Assessment

The pedagogical approach in Albania is very teacher-centred: the teacher is the one leading the learning process. The curriculum should be child-centred and focused on natural learning. There is no unique system for assessing and

monitoring children's skills in the preschool institution, as well as the shortcomings of evidence-based studies related to assessment of social and emotional skills of preschool children.

Intervention

There are no national systematic and certified programmes of social and emotional learning for children, but we find a few positive practices through international project activities, although not for preschool children.

For instance, for school aged children, and in the framework of the "A total approach to address students at risk of dropping out of school in Tirana, Korça, Berat and Durrës", project implement-

ed by the Albanian Social Services Association in collaboration with MASR & ASCAP and supported by UNICEF Albania. During these project activities 200 teachers, school psychologists and principals have been trained to develop social and emotional expressions, aiming at increasing the resilience of vulnerable children at risk of dropping out of school in 20 schools in Tirana, Korça, Berat and Durrës. Also, during these activities 68 teachers and school principals have been trained

to build good relationships and involve parents in school (Nano, Salla, & Zeqiraj, 2019).

Albania has focused financial resources for education mainly on the social inclusion of Roma and other minorities (Egyptians, children with special needs etc.). One of the projects with positive ben-

efits is "Leave No one Behind," which is related to children, and is financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). This is a four-year programme (2017-2021) that was implemented by UN agencies under the management of UNDP (www.al.undp.org).

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Abstract

The primary concern of Armenian education is its limited resources that prevent many children from access. Still, Armenia has participated in an initiative that mentions social and emotional skills (SES) development. It is the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4:

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (2016). Both international and national organisations are contributing to early childhood development and specifically to the development of children's social and emotional skills.

I. Development

The practices for promoting early childhood SES development in Armenia are developing gradually within the efforts to strengthen early childhood education in general. Early childhood education's (ECE) focus is to provide access to the most vulnerable groups of children: children with disabilities and children from vulnerable communities. This development has been initiated mostly by foreign organisations who, along with this agenda, introduce SES concepts.

Since 1993, Armenia has established a number of Early Childhood Intervention centres, which offer Inclusive Preschool Education for all children. World Vision International is also implementing a programme named Early Childhood Development (ECD) as part of delivering humanitarian aid after the devastating earthquake in 1988 (World Vision International Homepage, Armenia, 2022).

Dallakyan (Даллакян) (2016), a professor of pre-school education at the Armenian State Pedagogical University, is a scientist who has conceptualised the transformation of the Armenian pre-school education. She argues that ECE must be transformed through improvement of upbringing priorities that stimulate the child's autonomy, self-upbringing, self-knowledge. In order to achieve those, Mihailova (Михайлова) (2017) argues that teacher-children interactions have to be transformed from the traditional subject-to-object activities to subject-to-subject process that makes these activities difficult, non-standard, creative. Both authors agree that the teachers have to abandon the old tradition-

al authoritarian style in their relationships with the child by considering them as a subject rather than as an object of the teacher's interventions. Dallakyan (2016) argues that the skills the child should develop during the pre-school education are: reflexivity of their own activities and self-education skills, skills developed in "more natural conditions for self-realisation and self-satisfaction" (Dallakyan, 2016), and the autonomy rather than the child's controllability.

When it comes to ECD in Armenia, the priority is to promote the Healthcare (Childhood immunizations; Well-child visits), Nutrition, Early leaving (parenting programmes and childcare, especially for working parents), Social (Policies to protect rights of children with special needs) and Child protection (Mandated birth registration, and job protection and breastfeeding breaks for new mothers, specific provisions in judicial system for young children, etc.). Social and emotional development in early childhood was not considered a priority, and not much, by few institutions, have been done in this scope (SABER Country report, 2012).

Nevertheless, the Government officially supports few non-governmental organisations (NGO) national initiatives, such as the Early Childhood Development Program (ECDO), which aim to improve the abilities of parents and service providers for children under 5 years of age, in order to create an environment for their healthy growth and development (Early Childhood Development, 2015).

Some of these organisations are:

- Save the Children International;
- Kindergarten at Skagerak International School;
- CIS Armenia, and;
- Step by Step Foundation.

Without focusing on SES exclusively, those skills have been introduced within the ECE programmes developed by three organisations working in Armenia: UNICEF, World Vision and Save the children. The reports published by these organisations agree that the early childhood education in Armenia is in its early stage of development and the reports share their concern regarding the vulnerable children's limited access to ECE in general. So far, the biggest effort is for the groups of disabled children and children without parents. Therefore, all the programmes provided by those organisations focus on broadening the access of vulnerable children and on inclusive education.

UNICEF states that 70% of children in the country do not receive the care and education that would allow them to reach their full potential, pushing to make a shift from early learning pilot projects to universal access to inclusive early childhood education, which should ideally start at 3 years of age, especially for the most disadvantaged children. The First target is universal access to one year of preschool for all children of five years of age in Armenia, with early education being understood as a critical investment in human capital (UNICEF Country Office Annual Report, Armenia, 2019).

World Vision Armenia ECD programmes focus on early child development to support the healthy growth and development of children under 5 years of age. They are working in two directions: Enhancement of the quality for healthcare and preschool educational services in 200 communities of Armenia (Early Childhood Development, 2015).

II. Assessment

As the field is not well developed yet, there are no official evaluation programmes conducted. SOS Kindergartens are measuring their day-to-day progress with the children using internal metrics. The same is with Save the Children programs.

Save the children, with the goal to stimulate "emotional, personal, and social development; cognitive and speaking skills; safe behaviour; and attitude towards learning/ studying" (Save the Children International, 2016). They have built twenty-one centres all over the country, two of them are in the capital Yerevan. They provided access to ECD services for more than 3,600 children in nineteen rural communities of Armenia. Each child completed a 10-month pre-school programme and were successfully enrolled in primary school. Capacity-building was provided to forty-eight early and preschool teachers and parental education methodology. 2,452 parents and caregivers enhanced their knowledge and skills on children's health and development. Twenty-one Parental Resource Centres were established as well, and parental classes conducted for parents/caregivers of children 0 to 6 years of age (Save the Children International, 2016).

SOS Kindergarten Armenia. Working with children of vulnerable families from neighbouring communities, implementing a "Parental Education" program within the framework of which various meetings and trainings were organised for parents. These events provided a great opportunity for parents to develop their knowledge on childcare, as well as on their physical, social, emotional and intellectual development.

The educational process in SOS includes various games, thematic planning and interactive activities. All these methods were adapted to the individual needs, interests and peculiarities of children, as well as taking into consideration special needs of the kids (SOS Kindergarten, 2022).

Step by Step Foundation offers and implements individualised teaching and learning approaches, which are child centred and are based on democratic principles of education (Step by Step, 2022).

There is a promising evaluation conducted by World Vision Armenia. It assessed the effectiveness of the integration of an ECD counselling model within an integrated maternal, neonatal, and child strategy intervention in Armenian rural communities but it focuses on the cognitive development of the children rather than on the SES (Rosales et.al., 2019).

III. Intervention

Save the Children project includes:

1. improving the learning environment for children;
2. gross and fine motor skills; emotional, personal, and social development; cognitive and speaking skills; safe behaviour; and attitude towards learning/ studying;
3. child initiated Developmentally Appropriate “creative curriculum” that targets all the interest areas such as blocks, dramatic play, toys and games, art, library, discovery, sand and water, music and movement, cooking and outdoors;
4. self-reflection;
5. autonomy;
6. social competencies related to the inclusion of vulnerable groups.

World Vision ECD programmes are carried out in two directions: “Enhancement of the quality for healthcare and preschool educational services and Increasing awareness among parents on child rights for health care and education, as well as for child care, nutrition and upbringing” (2015, Early Childhood Development). Major activities includes:

- Professional development lectures, practical and theoretical trainings for medical workers of the beneficiary communities to improve the quality of health care services.;
- Each centre is created in a way to improve the environment at preschool educational facilities through equipping them with development materials, toys, books, game simulations, etc;
- Supporting 80 parental schools established in 2016 providing training materials including video lessons and leaflets on child-care, nutrition and positive parenting, and;
- Another set of educational booklets and video lessons has been developed on nutrition, child-care, safety and upbringing – widely circulated in parental schools”.

Step by Step programs (2022) provides practical methods such as:

- Development of critical thinking in preschool children;
- Diverse thinking styles;
- Inclusive education;
- Life skills, and;
- Parental education.

Cis Armenia International School curriculum includes:

1. Personal, social and emotional well-being

- To provide opportunities that enable them to learn how to co-operate and work together;
- To be able to concentrate on their own play or on group tasks;
- To gain an enthusiasm for knowledge and learning and a confidence in their ability to be successful learners, and;
- To become a valued member of their group and school community so that a strong sense of self-image and self-esteem are promoted.

2. Problem solving, reasoning

- To help children develop their understanding of numbers, measurements, patterns, shapes and spaces through various songs, poems, games and group activities;
- To allow them to practice, enjoy and talk about themselves;
- Knowledge and understanding of the World;
- To allow children to explore the world around them;
- To find out about their environment, to learn about people and places that are significant to them;
- To investigate, experiment, predict, plan and question, and;
- To share their discoveries with others.

3. Creative development

- To allow children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through creativity in art, music, dance, imaginative play and design and technology.

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Abstract

The main feature of the German-speaking areas of Europe, including Austria, is that early childhood prevention and intervention relies on the extensive and well-functioning institutional system that has been in place for several decades.

The organisation and structure of early childhood education services is related to the decentralised approach of the already existing governmental system in Austria. In addition to one or two central institutions, early childhood education services are based on a federal/regional and/or local decentralised model.

Austria includes nine provinces (Bundesländer), therefore the structure and the content of early education services can differ from each province, as each of the 9 provinces have separate laws and regulations. The common concepts of care and education are: systems approach, parental participation and full inclusion ideology. However, within the states and regions, there may be differences in the criteria used to identify the children at risk and/or in need of interventions.

I. Development

The general aspiration in each province is to place early childhood education services as close as possible to the families and to provide the services for the families with equal, free access. Early childhood intervention is considered to be a scientifically based preventive service, provided to children with different, delayed or at-risk developmentally, and socially disadvantaged children. In recent decades, change has taken place in terms of definition and target group. The target group has been expanded to children with an immigration background, children from 0 to 6 years of age, and children from 0 to 6 years of age who are at risk due to the mental condition of their parents (Pretis, 2009a; EASNIE, 2018a).

In 2005, the government set up the Austrian Centre for Personality Development and Social Learning (Österreichisches Zentrum für Persönlichkeitsbildung und soziales Lernen – ÖZEPS). The aim of this centre is to promote and implement personal and social competences in all educational and training institutions. ÖZEPS is the main public institution responsible for raising awareness of, and implementing, Social and Emotional Learning programmes in Austrian schools. Its activities are also focused on teacher education in social learning in the classroom and violence prevention in school (Leibovici-Mühlberger and Greulich, 2013).

II. Assessment

In Austria, the primary focus of early childhood intervention is to find out within the first few months of a baby's life whether they need some intervention or not. Particularly important in early care is that the family of a child in need of care receives as much help as possible - be it medical, psychological or pedagogical support. Early childhood intervention is therefore based on the cooperation of hospitals (obstetricians), paediatricians, and a well-established network of counsellors, whose task is to provide support for the developmental delays as soon as possible and

provide the child and their family the necessary support and assistance (EADSNE, 2005, 2010).

Pregnancy care is the first phase in early childhood intervention and is done according to protocols that comply with health laws. The condition of the childcare fee is that the mother participates in at least five examinations during pregnancy, and then in five additional examinations until the child is 14 months of age (oesterreich.gv.at, 2020).

The above mentioned screening procedure in early care contributes to the inclusion of children in the care system if they are diagnosed with social and emotional disorders. If a problem is

found during this screening procedure, the professionals direct the parents or caregivers to early development centres (Pretis, 2009a).

III. Intervention

The Viennese Developmental Test (Der Wiener Entwicklungstest) is responsible for early childhood assessments and interventions. The Viennese Development Test (WET), is an evidence based and generally used method to record the general developmental status of children from 3 to 6 years of age, and is used primarily in the area of support diagnostics.

The WET is a test developed by Kastner-Koller and Deimann (2002).

The WET takes into account the following relevant functional areas of development:

- Visual perception/visuomotor skills;
- Cognitive development;
- Language;
- Memory and learning;
- Socio-emotional development;
- Motor skills.

Each functional area is divided into two to four subscales. In the following, an overview of the structure of the WET will be given and all subscales will be briefly described. The WET consists of a total of 14 subscales, although not all subscales are specified for all age groups.

Functional area of social-emotional development, the "photo album" subtest consists of a total of 11 tasks to assess the ability to understand facial expressions of emotion.

In the various tasks, the child is presented with photos of children and adults and is asked to name their emotional state. The children and adults in the photos show emotions such as joy, sadness, fear and anger, while other photos show neutral faces. The child receives the following instruction: "Now I will show you photos of children and adults. Look carefully at the pictures and tell me how the people in the photos feel". Whereas the questionnaire for parents contains 22 items to record the child's development of independence. The questionnaire provides information about independent behaviour in everyday routines.

In Austria, services are provided in three types of institutions:

1. general early childhood intervention centres (for children with movement, cognitive and emotional disorders) that receive children and their families from birth to 3 or 7 years of age;
2. in early centres for the visually and hearing impaired, where children can arrive from birth to 7 years of age;
3. in clinical centres, four of these are located in the country and receive clients for all ages.

Early childhood intervention centres can be accessed from both the health and social sectors, and are usually run by non-governmental organisations that receive a central budget. The early care centres professional team consists of paediatricians, paediatric neurologists, special educators, psychologists, other pedagogical and health professionals, and social workers.

The follow up and control examinations are individualised and take place usually every 3 months for the first year of life and every six months thereafter until enrolment in a childcare facilities. Interdisciplinary cooperation is also an important aspect in the selection and organisation of the child's developmental or therapeutic treatment programme(s), which is developed with the participation of several professionals and the strong involvement of the parents.

The early intervention and care concept is family-centred and sees the child as an integral part of the family. The aim of the care, measures and forms of support for the family is to enable the child, who may have different developmental or developmental disabilities, to live with as much independence as possible. (Pretis, 2004, 2005, 2009a, 2009b, 2010b, 2010c; EADSNE, 2005, 2010).

The Austrian professionals are committed to SEL and Life Skills education. A good example to mention here is the role of the Salzburg Global Fellows statement and programme. They "believe that global and national education policies,

practices and systems should put SEL at the centre of “whole person” development from birth” approach (Salzburg Global Seminar, 2019).

Another good example is the running Erasmus+ project working on “Social and Emotional Educa-

tion, Building Inclusive Schools and Ownership of Values”, Erasmus+ project on the topic of SEL (PROJECT, 2022)

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Azerbaijan

Abstract

Our literature review provides information regarding attempts to establish educational practices for promoting the improvement of social and emotional competences in young children in Azerbaijan. Together with UNICEF, the Azerbaijan government implemented the Basic Life Skills program, which is a well structured curriculum for teaching life changing skills to children. There is also the Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Children for 2020-2030, where children's rights are prioritised, shifting the focus to fostering the children's ability to express them-

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selves independently, increase social activity, improve leadership qualities and address issues openly (Information on the report to be prepared by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on children's rights at the High-Level Political Forum in 2021, 2021).

As a whole, it is clear that Azerbaijan has a level of awareness on how important it is to teach social and emotional skills from early childhood. This is the focus across various projects and with different strategies.

I. Development

There is the Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Children for 2020-2030, where children's rights are prioritised and the focus shifts to ensuring they have the ability to express themselves independently, increase social activity, improve leadership qualities and address issues openly (Information on the report to be prepared by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on children's rights at the High-Level Political Forum in 2021, 2021).

There have been a lot of projects for training teachers established in order to provide psychological support to children, adolescents and their families. Together with UNICEF, the Azerbaijan government has implemented the Basic Life Skills Curriculum. It is a well structured curriculum for teaching life changing skills to children. Through a partnership between UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, and approved by the Azerbaijan Institute of Education (with the financial support of the United Kingdom), an initiative was launched in schools. The project idea consisted of school-based support provided by teachers and psychologists for coping with stressful circumstances, building resilience and developing social and emotional skills. The training is provided through various courses, including strengthening of social and emotional skills, social-emotional learning (Social and emotional skills teachers supported, 2019). The project idea is called Education for all. Some of the topics

from the list are: making decisions, managing emotions, developing children's personality, talents and mental abilities; learning to know oneself and others, making effective decisions to live harmonically; evaluating conflict situations, etc. The project uses models and practical methods on how to build life skills for capacity development and quality life.

The National Alliance on Early Childhood Development (a programme developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour and Social protection of Populations) has developed a national strategic plan of action and new standards for the early learning and development of children. These standards add value to the preschool agenda. They have reformed the way caregivers work with kids under 6 years of age and provide structure on what and how to offer uniform indicators of physical, mental and social development for children (Republic of Azerbaijan. SABER Country Report, 2018). The strategic plan was developed for a seven year-period (from 2018 to 2025) and is divided in four sectors:

1. Social and child protection (Promotion of parent-child relationship for vulnerable families);
2. Health (Parenting programs; home visiting programs);

3. Nutrition (Breastfeeding promotion), and

4. Education (Parent engagement; family-based early childhood education and care (ECEC)).

So far, many resources are invested in covering the first three sectors with activities such as – home visit consultations, activities for preschool enrolment, improve access to health and nutrition interventions for families, better accommodation for marginalised children, including children from low socioeconomic background, children in more remote areas, and children with special needs.

The Assembly of Children's Ambassadors was established by the President of the Republic

of Azerbaijan. The aim is to develop children's ability to express themselves independently, improve leadership qualities, increase social activity, guiding children in the spirit of active citizenship and the rule of law. It is a group of people and associations (including schools) who meet, discuss and exchange opinions on different topics related to kids' wellbeing. Conferences are organised with the idea to raise awareness and exchange good practices with other countries. Children, together with teachers and parents, can participate and discuss/listen to important topics as violence, social protection, trust, social adaptation, etc. (Information on the report to be prepared by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on children's rights at the High-Level Political Forum in 2021, 2021).

II. Assessment

As a part of the Schools for Health in Europe Network Foundation (SHE), Azerbaijan has to implement various guidelines, tools, standards or indicators to support schools in becoming a Health Promoting School (HPS). Some tools shared by SHE, such as the SHE rapid assessment tool and the SHE school action planner, are used by the schools in this country (Bessemers, et al., 2020). A survey was conducted in 2020 based on existing questionnaires and information sources including the SHE Mapping Survey 2019, the SHE Rapid Assessment Tool and the fifth SHE Factsheet. This is the latest report found. It shows that over 25% of preschools have a Health Promotion programme. The programme consists of 6 components: 1) healthy school policies, 2) the school's physical environment, 3) the school's social environment, 4) individual health skills and action competencies, 5) community links, and 6) health services (Bessemers, et al., 2020). We are interested in points 3 and 4. Some of the assessment el-

ements in them are:

- Spaces in the canteen, playground, classrooms and corridors are organised to promote student socialisation and wellbeing;
- Health education and health promoting activities are included in after-school programs;
- Educational professionals (e.g. pedagogists) are available to pupils, parents and teachers to optimise education for example by mapping the support needs of pupils and translate these into action-oriented advice for teachers;
- Teaching/learning methods that enhance mental health and wellbeing are part of daily life in schools;
- Health literacy and action competence are integral parts of the schools' policies;
- E-learning methods are used to promote health skills and action competences of students.

The social element is the observable one – when and how the children behave.

III. Intervention

UNICEF has supported the implementation of the Additional training designed for school psychologists on Psychological First Aid. It is approved by the Institute of Education as an in-service training programme. Some of the key strategies and tools covered by the training include psychological diagnostics, rehabilitation, information sharing with parents and other techniques for identifying roadblocks and sup-

porting the development of emotional and social skills (Social and emotional skills teachers supported, 2019).

Centre for Innovations in Education (CIE) is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that works to provide all children access to quality education and social support. Their first initiative is to manage the early childhood education

program, Step by Step (SbS), and the teaching methodology and professional development programme, Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking (RWCT). According to the organisation, both programmes have become critical tools for reform and debate in education in Azerbaijan. It is a member of Network of Education Policy Centres (NEPC). Currently the network is a part

of the HAND in HAND project, "Social and Emotional Skills for Tolerant and Non-discriminative Societies (A Whole School Approach)", co-funded by the Erasmus+ Key Action 3 Programme of the European Union and the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

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Abstract

The Ministry of Education of Belarus' main focus is on improving accessibility, especially for children with disabilities and low socioeconomic status, ensuring the quality of preschool education and improving the basic conditions. From the literature we had access to, no information regarding national practises for development of children's social and emotional skills was found. International organisations, such as UNICEF, have projects in the country, but it seems that they are mainly oriented towards children with de-

velopmental delays and special needs. Some alternative educational approaches have also found their place in private kindergartens, for example, the Montessori method of education that has been implemented in Zorachki kids kindergarten (Zorachki kids club. The first Belarusian network of Montessori kindergartens (tilda.ws). No specific information regarding assessment methods or programs that are applied and/or used in the country regarding development of children's social and emotional skills was found.

I. Development

The Ministry of Education of Belarus' main focus is on improving accessibility, especially for children with disabilities and low socioeconomic status. The second focus is on ensuring the availability of quality preschool education and improving the basic conditions. In this regard, the educational policies in Belarus are focused mainly on providing the basics for as many children as possible. It is difficult to find information for the country regarding social and emotional skill development at the national level. From the literature we managed to reach, the focus is on the assessment of secondary and vocational education as teenagers are engaged in monitoring the educational processes at their schools and professional colleges. There is no information available in the sources we reviewed for social and emotional skills development in early childhood in mainstream kindergartens. We also didn't find information regarding any local developments organised by specific municipalities.

There are however non-governmental organisations who operate in the country. UNICEF is the biggest non-governmental organisation engaged with the Belarusian educational system. They have been implementing a project for "Early Childhood Intervention, Special Education and

Inclusion", where the focus is on children with developmental deficits or other special needs (Vargas-Barón et al., 2009). UNICEF together with the World Bank actively work on developing conditions and providing resources for children with developmental disabilities and disorders. The World Bank has successfully completed a Higher Education Modernization Project (Combined Project Information Documents, World Bank, 2019) and plans to implement a project for early childhood education in the near future. UNICEF is supporting Development Centres for support and rehabilitation in all central regions of Belarus, but none of them focus so far on developing the social and emotional skills, or at least no such information was provided. UNESCO also supports the educational process in Belarus for gifted and talented children; children with learning difficulty; with health problems; with psychophysical peculiarities; with behavioural disturbances and deviant conduct; from ethnic minorities and from families with a low social-economic status. The EU finances some educational interventions who specifically target children at risk.

At some point, social and emotional skills are boosted to grow in early childhood, mainly in the private kindergartens. We found that Zorach-

ki kids, a private kindergarten, that follows the Montessori method of education, develops such practises, and teaches social skills to children from 2 to 6 years of age.

Another focus for the country is to put extra efforts for growing competent and educated chil-

dren. So, besides improving accessibility, the quality of preschool education and the basic conditions, the next step should focus on the development of children's social and emotional skills.

II. Assessment

No information was found regarding assessment of preschool children's SES. Regarding the private kindergartens, we found information about "Zorachki kids". As stated above, they follow the Montessori approach. They follow a general approach for assessing children's development and growth. Their specialists track children's learning process, the level of language development, cognitive abilities, motor and social skills. Social skills are part of the main developmental

domains but not a focus in itself. They use these observations of every child for planning the individual work with every child according to the child's level of development and his/her needs. For young children of 1 to 2 years of age they initiate activities with both children and parents, so parents on one hand can accompany the child, but on the other hand, to be able to track their child's development. The assessment is based on Montessori's criteria.

III. Intervention

No detailed information regarding this topic was found.

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Abstract

The development of practices for promoting early childhood social and emotional skills (SES) development is organised at a regional level in Belgium, as the communities (Flemish, French and German speaking) are in charge of education and welfare. Belgium has a split system for the organisation of early child education and care. This country overview is describing the situation in the Flemish community.

For childcare provisions for children under 2.5 years of age, a pedagogical framework for childcare for babies and toddlers, came into force in 2014. One of the main goals of the framework is to ensure the well-being of the child, (Laevers, et al., 2015).

Four areas of experience are defined to offer each child integrated development opportunities (Kind & Gezin, 2019). These areas of experience integrate social-emotional learning competences like self-confidence, self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills and social awareness.

For pre-primary education, the Flemish government defined broad developmental objectives, in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes. The goals related to social and emotional learning are situated in the learning area "human and society", which include self-awareness, social skills, society, time and special orientation (onderwijsdoelen.be). Very specific for working on social and emotional skills with young children in the educational system in Belgium is that the pursuit of objectives in this area always takes place in an integrated and implicit manner. Social skills are applied and practised in (simulated) realistic settings. Teachers practise a basic attitude that is centred around observation and responding to the needs of children. For the specific assessment of SES, ECEC services select tools or measurements they find most suited for this topic. The Leuven Scale for Well-Being and the Leuven Scale for Involvement are instruments commonly used in this respect.

I. Development

The development of practices for promoting early childhood social and emotional skills development is organised at a regional level in Belgium, as the communities (Flemish, French and German speaking) are in charge of education and welfare. Belgium has a split system for the organisation of early childhood education and care. Accordingly, in all three communities, different ministries are responsible for the provision of children under 2.5 years of age and for children from 2.5 years of age and up. In Belgium there is no compulsory school attendance, but compulsory education (home schooling is allowed) from 5 years of age and up. At 6 years of age, children transition from preschool to primary school (Schreyer & Oberhuemer, 2017). This

country overview is describing the situation in the Flemish community.

Childcare: (0–2.5 years)

In April 2014, a new Government Decree on the organisation of childcare provision (Decreet Opvang van Baby's en Peuters) came into effect for the childcare settings in the Flemish Community. A pedagogical framework for childcare for babies and toddlers has been implemented. Ensuring the well-being of children is one of the main goals of the pedagogical framework. The wellbeing of children refers to: "the positive feeling a child has when the situation he is in fulfils his basic needs: this concerns physical needs,

the need for love and affection, the need for clarity and security, the need for appreciation and respect, the need to feel able to do something by himself and the need to matter", (Laevers, et al., 2015).

The framework defines four areas of experience in which practitioners offer each child integrated development opportunities:

1. "Me and the Other", because children develop their identity during early childhood in a world full of other adults and children;
2. "Body and Movement", because during early childhood the child's body undergoes extensive changes;
3. "Communication and Expression", because children learn to express themselves verbally and non-verbally during early childhood;
4. "Exploration of the World", because during early childhood children get to know and understand the world, both objects and people.

(Kind & Gezin, 2019, p. 10)

The different areas of experience integrate social-emotional learning competences like self-confidence, self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills and social awareness. The aim of the pedagogical framework is to give a best efforts obligation for childcare facilities. The early childhood settings are expected to work along the lines of the vision, however the implementation will always be customised to the local context. Children's development will not be measured in order to assess the quality of the organisation (Verhaeghe & Wastijn, 2018).

Pre-primary education: (2.5 - 6 years)

For pre-primary education the Flemish government defined broad developmental objectives, in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes. These developmental objectives do not have to be achieved but are aimed at. The developmental objectives form the common core curriculum and are divided into six areas of learning. The goals related to social and emotional learning are situated in the learning area "human and society", which include self-awareness, social skills, society, time and special orientation (onderwijsdoelen.be). This learning area is divided into three categories of development objectives: 1) me and myself, 2) me and the other, 3) me and others in a group. Every governing body or school board must include the attainment targets or developmental objectives in the curriculum and the way in which these developmental goals are translated in a curriculum is decided by the school (Hulpia, 2014). So, although there is a broad framework which entails different aspects of social and emotional learning competences, the implementation is context related and always integrated in a broad and holistic educational approach.

However, in the Flemish early childhood education and care system, considerable attention is given to how (young) children feel. The quality criteria for good experiential education: 'wellbeing' and 'involvement' are used as a measure of deep learning and of the effectiveness of the learning environment. It focuses attention on the immediate context of education (the setting), the people involved and, not least, the children whose basic wellbeing and motivation must be a constant concern of teachers. Its nurturing of broad competences or life skills is entirely suitable to early childhood education and care, but is also relevant to later education where motivation, self-organisation and social competence continue to remain essential goals (Laevers, 2011).

Following the decree concerning pupil guidance in nursery and primary education, secondary education and pupil guidance centres, every Flemish school is obliged to develop, implement and evaluate a policy on pupil counselling. The decree was ratified in April 2018. Four areas are defined for the pupil guidance policy: 1) learning and studying, 2) school career, 3) preventive health care and 4) psychosocial functioning. (Eurydice, 2018) Furthermore, the school must offer broad basic care and increased care to pupils who need it. Every school needs to appoint a pupil counsellor. Every school is supported by a Centre for Pupil Guidance, (Centrum voor Leerlingenbegeleiding CLB). There are 73 CLBs in Flanders, financed by the government, (Nusche et al, 2015). Because of the decree on pupil guidance, schools are obliged to comply with the conditions and the education inspectorate takes into account the quality control of the school policy. Attention to SEL is increasingly decided at the policy level.

II. Assessment

In the Flemish educational system, schools are taking the (ped)agogical project into account, which are responsible for the provision of quality education and for the support of education to be offered in a high-quality manner (Decreet betreffende de kwaliteit van onderwijs, 2009). The reference framework for Quality in Education describes a number of context and input characteristics, which schools can take into account when shaping their education. The core of the reference framework consists of quality expectations. This framework was created under the coordination of 'The Education Inspectorate'.

The Education Inspectorate assesses and stimulates the quality and quality development of education and inspires both the education world and the policy in a reliable, independent and transparent way. In this, the development of each learner takes a central position, (onderwijsinspectie.be).

The Inspectorate is also responsible for the audit of schools. Every school is audited at least once every six years. Four areas are scoped during this audit: The quality development, one or more quality areas, teaching and learning practises and habitability, safety and hygiene. The inspections are carried out at both the policy and classroom level.

For the specific assessment of SES, schools select the tools or measurements they find most suited for this topic. The Leuven Scale for Well-Being and the Leuven Scale for Involvement are instruments commonly used in this respect. This score is based on the observation of signals for well-being: enjoyment, being spontaneous and being oneself, being relaxed, open and curious, radiating, feeling confident. The level of well-being indicates how well children or adults are doing emotionally and how well the environment enables them to satisfy the basic needs (www.cego.be).

III. Intervention

Very specific for working on social and emotional skills with young children in the educational system in Belgium is that the pursuit of objectives in this area always takes place in an integrated and implicit manner. This is an integral part of a play oriented curriculum that aims to have children experience wonder and have meaningful learning experiences in an authentic and hands-on learning environment. Rather than talk with children about emotional skills, they practise with peers and adults in increasingly complex situations. Social skills are applied and practised in (simulated) realistic settings. Teachers practice a basic attitude that is centred around observation and responding to the needs of children, whatever the nature of these needs may

be. If teachers suspect that a child has needs of a more specific nature, they can call upon the Centre for Pupil Guidance for an expert diagnostic and the referral to more specialised services and support.

A process-oriented self-evaluation instrument for care settings (SiCs) has been designed to support the early childhood education services in evaluating their strengths and weaknesses for creating the best conditions for children to develop. The self-evaluation instrument relies strongly on data collection through observation and a process of reflection and action. The whole team is involved in this process (Laevers et al., 2005.).

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Abstract

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, public/private early childhood education and care (ECEC) organisations, stakeholders and professionals are still working on promoting the importance of early childhood education and care in general, considering that the enrolment of children in a preschool institution is still an important goal for the future. Social and emotional skills (SES) learning is not a priority for future strategic development of ECEC. In official legislation, the term of programme for socioemotional learning cannot

be found. Activities related to SES are a part of learning outcomes for preschool education development. There are no systematic approaches or programmes related to SES learning in preschool institutions at a national or local level. An additional problem presents further adaptation of the national policies by the 10 cantons in Federation, Republic of Srpska and Brčko District, which results in their implementation in a different way.

I. Development

In official legislation, the term of programme for socioemotional learning cannot be found. Activities related to SES are a part of learning outcomes for preschool education development. In document of "Common core of comprehensive development programs for preschool education", one of the key competence is social and civic competence, which includes the children's a sense of responsibility for their behaviour; positive and tolerant attitude towards others; interpersonal and intercultural cooperation; mutual assistance and acceptance of diversity; self-esteem and

respect others, and training for effective participation in the development of democratic relations in kindergarten and community (Agencija za predškolsko, osnovno i srednje obrazovanje, 2018). In a document "Platform for development preschool education and care in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2017-2022" SES learning is not a special priority, but some priorities and activities related to SES learning can be found in the activities package for ensuring quality preschool education and care in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Ministarstvo civilnih poslova, 2016).

II. Assessment

Preschool teachers and psychologists have no specific instrument for the assessment of SES that are obligatory for administration and evaluation of children in general. In this context, most of them do not assess children, or just include observations as part of their evaluation reports.

Professionals from other organisations (NGO or health institutions) often use different test batteries for measuring childhood development, where the assessment of social and emotional development is a part of them.

III. Intervention

The specific intervention, as well as measures of social and emotional skills for preschool children cannot be found in the frame of intervention programmes. To our knowledge, professionals in preschool institutions still don't have appropriate measuring instruments for the assessment of social and emotional skills of preschool children, and there are no intervention programmes

exclusively directed to social and emotional learning. Some NGO and associations of children and health institutions promote and work on assessments and treatments related to behaviour disorders, but these interventions are not systematic nor within specific intervention and evidence-based programmes at national level.

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Abstract

There is a different management and different status of the education and care of children between 0 and 6 to 7 years of age in Bulgaria. This is due to a so-called “split system.” Respectively, there is a stronger focus on care in nurseries for children from 10 months until 3 years of age, and a stronger focus on education for children from 3 until 6 to 7 years of age, or entering first year, which are in preschool education. There are national standards for knowledge and competencies that children must cover during this period (Law on Preschool and School Education, 13.10.2015, last changes 18.09.2020; Preschool Education State Standards in Ordinance № 5, 3 of June 2016 on Preschool Education). Social skills are recognized and are included into one of the domains (3. The world around), however, they are a very small part and are mostly defined as knowledge rather than skills. However, the process for the promotion and recognition of social and emotional skills (SES) in Bulgaria has started. It is mostly a bottom-up process. In some kindergartens, implementation of SES activities can be initiated by the staff, within the framework of projects or other types of cooperation. There are private business organisations, child centres, educational centres, therapeutic centres, or individual professionals who offer various activities for social and/or emotional skill development for children. However, there is not much information regarding these approaches, the types of activities, necessary qualifications, proof of effec-

tiveness, etc. Non-governmental sectors are also active in the field, mainly via finance projects for specific vulnerable target groups.

There is not a common practice for practitioners working with children in early and preschool years to assess only children’s social and/or emotional skills. Officially, distributed measures that can be identified currently are mainly two groups: (1) developmental measures, which include social and emotional domains and measures, and (2) measures for children with developmental disorders.

There are no national or regionally recognized programs or interventions that target SES, but in the country, there are many initiatives: (1) initiatives within kindergartens, (2) initiatives by non-governmental organisations and (3) initiatives by private business organisations.

There are foreign programs adapted in Bulgaria (Zippy’s Friends, Verhaltenstraining im Kindergarten), but they are not widely used. There is a newly developed Bulgarian program, “Play with Fori”, which is still in the process of approbation.

There is still a lot to be done regarding the promotion and development of children’s SES in Bulgaria. There are various initiatives but they are rather patchy, not sustainable, and are with no clear capacity or effectiveness.

I. Development

There is a different management and different status of the education and care of children between 0 and 6 to 7 years of age in Bulgaria. This is due to the so-called “split system.” Between 10 months until 3 years of age, children can go to nurseries, institutions primarily considered for young children’s care. The nurseries are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, and are managed by local authorities. According to

the regulations, nurses are the main caregivers in the nurseries. Children between 3 to 6 or 7 years of age, or entering first class, are enrolled in kindergartens. In Bulgaria, kindergartens are considered educational institutions (preschool education) and are under the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and Science. Many more children in Bulgaria attend kindergartens (215,666 for the academic year 2020/2021, data

26.04.2021, National Statistical Institute, 2021) than nurseries (29,238, data 31.12.2020, National Statistical Institute, 2020). It is much more common for most of the children to be raised at home until the age of three. Due to these differences regarding the institutions for young and preschool children’s education and care in the country, there are different national regulations and requirements.

Nurseries are not considered educational institutions. Due to this, there are no specific requirements for the development of children’s cognitive, language or social and emotional skills. In the period from 2008 to 2014, national standards for early childhood development for children between 0 to 3 years of age were developed (Атанасова-Трифоновна et al., 2014). UNICEF Bulgaria supported the whole process. The standards cover the physical, cognitive, social, emotional and language development of the child. In 2017, these national standards were suggested to be accepted officially in a political document offered for public consultations and review by the Minister of Health and the Minister of Education - Ordinance on Standards for Early Childhood Development (Council of Ministers, Portal for Public Consultations, 2017). In the ordinance, four areas were defined: 1. health, physical and motor development; 2. cognitive development; 3. personal - emotional and social development; 4. linguistic and communicative development. These areas were aligned to the standards for education in preschool settings. The social and emotional area was aligned to the so-called “The world around” domain (for e.g. self-affirmation, communication with others, etc.).

Kindergartens, as it was mentioned, are considered educational institutions. They can be municipal or private. The education in kindergartens (of all kinds) follows the requirements set in the Law on Preschool and School Education (effective from 13.10.2015, last changes 18.09.2020), and according to the Preschool Education State Standards in Ordinance № 5, 3 of June, 2016 on Preschool Education (effective from 01.08.2016). All the competencies that children must develop during their preschool education are defined in seven areas: 1. Bulgarian language and literature; 2. Mathematics; 3. The world around; 4. Fine arts; 5. Music; 6. Design and technology; 7. Physical culture. Social and emotional skills are partly defined by area 3. of The world around. Social skills are mentioned as a priority in this area, however, the educational content of the area covers specific ideas and skills about the world around, systematised in four educational cores: self-affirmation and communication with

others, social and health environment, the world of nature and cultural, and national values. We must acknowledge that social skills are recognized as of utmost importance, and are included in such a basic document regulating the education of preschool children in Bulgaria. However, unfortunately, they are just a small part of one of the educational areas. On the other hand, the expected results are formulated in a very general manner (e.g. “Expresses attachment to members of the family.”, “Has a specific notions of trust and tolerance for others.”), or does not define core social skills (Has a specific idea of the “social role” student), (Ordinance № 5, 3 of June, 2016 on Preschool Education, p. 27). Rather than focusing on the skills children should develop, the defined results mainly focus on the knowledge the children have to/should acquire.

However, we must mention that a process of such promotion and recognition of SES in Bulgaria has started. It is on-going, and in the last few years, it has become stronger and stronger even though it is mostly a bottom-up process. On an organisational level, there are kindergartens that adapt and/or develop and experiment with such practises. Usually, those are initiatives undertaken by any of the following – the kindergarten’s pedagogical team, the kindergarten’s principal, kindergarten’s psychologist (if such specialist is employed), individual teachers, etc. Such initiatives can also be initiated within the framework.

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There are many private business organisations, child centres, educational centres, therapeutic centres or individual professionals (psychologists, kindergarten teachers, speech therapists, etc.), mostly in the capital and the big cities in the country, who also promote social and/or emotional intelligence, social skills and/or emotional skills development for children. They offer various activities and programmes that promote SES and emotional intelligence development. On one hand, these endeavours are good initiatives. They raise social and emotional skills development as an important topic, pointing out the various benefits to sensitise parents and increase their knowledge on the topic. On the other hand, however, these are private endeavours. These services are accessible only for children whose parents can afford to cover such costs and are convince of the worth of efforts. Obviously, they are in very different formats - from individual sessions to group sessions with various different durations. Their biggest shortcomings, however, are that usually all these offers are very general; are rarely clear in what exactly the skills are that children will develop; if it is a program, there is no clarity about its content; usually there is no information how the skills will be developed; what is the approach/techniques/methods

that will be applied; what is the qualification of the people who will work with the children; no proof for effectiveness, standards of implementation, etc. They follow different approaches, and this is understandable, but rarely is clear which one is used.

In the last few years, there have been many initiatives regarding social and emotional skills development provided by non-governmental organisations working with children and/or parents, promoting children's wellbeing, and providing training and effective practises for parents. These organisations not only recognize SES as an important topic and promote it, but also try to implement various applied activities. Usually this happens within the framework of financed projects. More often, depending on the organization's profile, the implemented measures may target specific vulnerable groups – children from Roma minority (Health and Social Development Foundation (HESED), Trust for Social Achievement), children from poor families (Trust for Social Achievement), child abuse prevention and treatment (Animus association); children with disabilities (Karin Dom), etc. The initiatives targeting universal practises for typically developing children are much less common. Examples of some such projects are part of the ones

recently financed by the Lachezar Tsotsorkov Foundation.

There is still a lot to be done regarding the promotion and development of social and emotional skills (SES) in children in Bulgaria, not just for young and preschool children, but also for children of all ages. There is still no systematic integration of social and emotional skills development on a national level, nor in the different levels of education. SES are still not recognized as key competences from policy stakeholders and decision makers. The topics for social and emotional skills are still not integrated within the educational programs for professionals who work with children in nurseries and kindergarten - preschool teachers, educators, nurseries, etc.), nor in schools. Such analyses are initiated and currently in progress by the private Foundation "Lachezar Tsotsorkov". There is still no shared understanding among professionals, no common framework and standards. In Bulgaria, there is still no program for social and emotional skills development for early and preschool children. As described above, all the initiatives and actions are rather patchy, not sustainable (they end when the project is over) with no clear capacity and effectiveness.

II. Assessment

On one hand, it is not a common practice for practitioners to work with children in early and preschool years to assess only children's social and/or emotional skills. On the other hand, in Bulgaria, there are not many adapted and standardised measures for practitioners. So far, there are two companies, Guinty Psychometric, Bulgaria (Giunti Psychometrics Bulgaria website, n.d.) and Hestia/Prometrics (Hestia Foundation website. n.d.), who officially distribute assessment measures. Their children assessment measures portfolios' are increasing in the last years but still a lot to be done. Part of the measures are developmental test batteries for assessment of children's overall development split into different developmental domains, including social and emotional development. Such measures are DP-3: Developmental Profile (Guinty Psychometric Bulgaria), Denver II Developmental Screening Test (Hestia), DESK 3-6: Dortmund Developmental Screening for Preschools (Hestia). There is another developmental measure called the Screening Test for 3-years-old. It measures chil-

children's development in 5 domains – physical, social, emotional, cognitive, language. Social and emotional development are two separate domains. It is distributed by the Ministry of Education only for use in kindergartens for assessing the level of development of children starting at the preschool educational level. It is for a very limited age-range from 3 years until 3 years and 6 months (Атанасова-Трифоновна et al., 2014).

Another big part of the measures used in Bulgaria are the ones containing partly social and or emotional skills, but in measures for children with developmental disorders. Giunti Psychometrics, Bulgaria offers Achenbach System for Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA) - Preschool version (CBCL/1½-5, C-TRF), Achenbach System for Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA) - School Version (CBCL/6-18, TRF, YSR), CONNERS 3: Connors' Rating Scale of assessment of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), CARS-2: Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS). They also offer a projective measure for assess-

ment of emotional and behavioural problems TEMAS: Tell-Me-A-Story, designed for children and adolescents from 5 to 18 years of age. In Hestia's portfolio is CAB: Clinical Assessment of Behaviour. They also distribute ERQ-CA: Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents, but it is for children who are older than 10 years of age.

There are some instruments that are adapted by university academics and students of theirs (Challenging situation task, author S. Denham, adaptation for Bulgaria N.Koltcheva; Affect Knowledge Test, author S.Denham, adaptation for Bulgaria L.Sedloeva-Kirilova (Седлоева-Кирилова, 2018) but they are not in use by practitioners.

III. Intervention

As it was mentioned in part I. Development, there are no national standards nor national programmes still in Bulgaria. However, there are many initiatives going on regarding social and emotional skills interventions. We can sum-up those initiatives like:

- Initiatives within kindergartens

- It can be an initiative of the kindergarten's pedagogical team, the kindergarten's principal, or the kindergarten's psychologist and/or individual teachers. It can be an initiative within the framework of a project, implementation of separate activity or technique (mostly by individual teachers) or for implementing a specific educational approach, for example, there are business educational centres that promote Lego Education with focus on social and emotional skills.

- Extracurricular activities targeting the development of children's social and emotional skills offered by external business companies.

- Initiatives by non-governmental organisations – they try to implement various applied activities, experiment with new approaches, adapt foreign techniques, and improve children's skills and wellbeing. These initiatives usually target specific vulnerable groups. Organisations mentioned above - Health and Social Development Foundation (HESED), Trust for Social Achievement, Animus association, Karin Dom, etc. For e.g. Trust for Social Achievement financed organisations for implementing activities and programs for improvement of language and social and emotional skills like – CinEd: Cinema ateliers for develop-

ing socioemotional skills, Educational Program "Design Champions", Forming language and socioemotional skills through fairy-tales. Here we can also mention the Lachezar Tsotsorkov Foundation's Social and Emotional Education Program. In 2020, the foundation financed 14 non-governmental organisations who must apply various activities and approaches targeting children's social and emotional skills.

- Initiative by private business organisations, child centres, educational centres, therapeutic centres or individual professionals - they usually offer various activities and/or sessions for improving children's social and emotional skills.

There are foreign programs adapted in Bulgaria. Zippy's Friends is such a program. It was adapted by Animus association within the framework of a project but it is not distributed and in mass use in the country (Приятелите на Зипи, n.d.). Another try is the German program Verhaltenstraining im Kindergarten (Stoyanova-Shyrayeu, 2021). This is a national program in Germany but also not in wide use in Bulgaria.

A very interesting endeavour is the development of a Bulgarian program by Sevdzhihan Eyubova (2021) "Play with Fori". The programme was designed in 2020 and is still in the process of approbation. However, it focuses mostly on the emotional domain rather than a wider spectrum of social and emotional skills. It targets improving children's vocabulary for emotions and how they can manage various difficult emotional states and behaviours.

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Abstract

In the Croatian educational system, the most represented intervention related to social and emotional learning is PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies). This programme is the most widespread and can be represented as the only program at the national level. The key concepts in realising preschool PATHS-RASTEM represent lessons of self-efficacy, emotional un-

derstanding, self-control, thinking skills and social skills and peer relationships (Krušelj, 2014). Next to PATHS-RASTEM, a national programme, several public/private institutions and NGOs applied various types of development and implementation specific SES programmes during various projects.

I. Development

In 2005, Croatia initiated an educational reform with the goal of introducing new and innovative teaching methods in school, and social and emotional learning (SEL) in the educational

curriculum. After that several programs for SEL were adopted and implemented, as well as promoted through research projects, scientific journals and media.

II. Assessment

The Republic of Croatia has no systematic implementation of programmes aimed at development of social and emotional skills (SES). The implementation of specific batteries for assessment of SES are provided and used at national level. Professionals apply different types of scales depending on their research, as well as

practitioners in their work with children. There are more additional efforts for the adoption and validation of other specific assessments for SES, such as validation of Croatian version of Scale of socioemotional well-being and resilience of preschool children, (Tatlović Vorkapić i Lončarić, 2014).

III. Intervention

The PATHS program was implemented as a part of the project "Implementation of evidence-based prevention programme of socio-emotional learning through science evaluation and its application into Croatian kindergartens and primary schools (PATHS-RASTEM)." Based on a collaboration between the Faculty of Edu-

cation and Rehabilitation Sciences (University of Zagreb), and The Prevention Research Centre of Pennsylvania State University (USA) from 2008 to 2012. After the collaboration, the PATHS program was promoted and implemented around Europe through the project "European Assessment Protocol for Children's SEL Skills

(EAP_SEL)". The PATHS program is being implemented within an experimental research design within 15 experimental and 15 control elementary schools (in select first and second grade classrooms/groups) in the cities Rijeka and Zagreb, and several cities in the Region of Istria. Also, the preschool PATHS-RASTEM programme is being implemented within a quasi-experimental research design in 6 kindergartens in Rijeka, Zagreb and Labin and Vrsar in Istria (total of 12 groups of preschool children). For the purposes of implementing the PATHS-RASTEM programme, a research licence was obtained, and programme materials translated and prepared for all participants of the programme (University of Zagreb, 2010).

One of the ongoing projects related to SEL is the HAND in HAND project, which focuses on the development and implementation of SEL programmes. The HAND in HAND project will develop an open access systemic policy tool – an EU based universal social and emotional learning programme (a programme for students and school staff) based on multiculturalism and diversity awareness. This programme fosters inclusion and develops more tolerant and non-discriminative learning environments for all students (including immigrant and refugee) to prevent discriminative bullying, segregation and ESL (www.handinhand.si).

Project PROHEMS (Promoting Mental Health in Schools) is co-financed under the Erasmus+ project, which has partnered with Croatia, is expected to develop a curriculum that will enhance the social and emotional well-being of students. The developed curriculum will aim at improving students' attitudes towards themselves, others, and education, as well as reduce conduct problems and aggression, emotional distress, and anxiety. PROHEMS will provide high-quality training for school staff as one of the most impacting and affecting factors in mental health promotion in schools (www.promehs.org). Some other project related to development and implementation of SEL program is the "Comprehensive approach to treatment and social and economic reintegration of drug addicts - CLOUD," co-financed under the IPA Operational Program Slovenia-Croatia 2007-2013 of the European Union between Slovenia and Croatia.

These programmes have been exclusively implemented by the organisations involved in the project, and a small number of organisations at the local level. However, it cannot be stated if it is a matter of implementing a certain programme in a systematic way. Also, there are a number of scientific research and professional papers published for the implementation of the programmes and the projects.

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Abstract

The implementation of social and emotional learning (SEL) promotion programmes in Cyprus is relatively recent and came to be in the wake of increasing levels of mental health difficulties among young Cypriot students, as reported by the Ministry of Education in Cyprus. Several studies conducted since 2014 up until recently, performed by the Ministry of Education, with the cooperation of specialised institutions and researchers, such as the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, have shown an increase of students' emotional difficulties (e.g., low levels

of self-confidence, self-image and wellbeing), behavioural problems and school adjustment issues. (Charalambous, 2013; Kali, 2020). This was due to a combination of a school system unprepared to respond to students' emotional needs, a social and economic crisis, and a significant increase in the number of non-Cypriot students in schools. This combination, and its effects on students' mental health, has led to the necessity of integrating a social and emotional development curriculum in classrooms of all academic levels (Kali, 2020).

I. Development

Early implementation of SEL focused activities in Cyprus dates back to the 1980's, when teachers, using a framework based on the "Reggio Emilia" method, created positive classroom environments. Here, preschool children were able to participate in educational environments that aimed to foster the development of their social, emotional and cognitive competencies (Foersch & Iuspa, 2016). By adopting a child-centred methodology like the "Reggio Emilia" approach, in tandem with other social and emotional development frameworks, teachers managed to create school curriculums focused on developing specific, key skills, such as curiosity, observation, exploration, respect and care for others, managing adversity, resiliency, and problem-solving. Most of the activities used to execute this school curriculum were based on artistic and individual expression such as drawings, sculptures, dancing, pretend-play, modelling or music, to facilitate students' learning, acknowledgment and expression of thoughts and emotions, as well as the connections between them (Kali, 2020).

The national curriculum in Cyprus was officially revised in 2000 by the Educational Reform Commission to integrate several theoretical and methodological approaches focused on promoting social and emotional health in Cypriot students. This addition resulted in the creation of the "Health Education" curriculum, a methodological umbrella under which the social and emotional learning of students is brought together in educational contexts. Educators in Cyprus have since been using "Health Education" methodology to address various social, emotional, psychological, health and educational needs of Cypriot students, namely through improvements of school organisation. "Health Education" is an interdisciplinary programme focused on improving school effectiveness on social and emotional learning, with a close connection to social reality, which is implemented in classrooms by (class) teachers. Since 2011, that "Health Education" has dedicated time to the curriculum, reaching from 40 (younger students) to 80 (older students) minutes per week dedicated to promoting social and emotional learning and development (Kali, 2020).

II. Assessment

The "Mental Health" programme modules are designed to address the development of specific social and emotional skills and knowledge in students. To guarantee their efficient application, teachers must apply them in accordance with Success and Adequacy Indicators of the Cypriot Ministry of Education and Culture. The assessment of SEL based programmes of "Health Education" was conducted mainly with the cooperation of the Centre of Education Research and Evaluation (CERE) of the Department of Psychology of the University of Athens, using qualitative and quantitative measures, namely social and emotional learning questionnaires, responded by teachers, whom also prepared reports and assessed students' performance on

a number of classroom activities. Assessment procedures showed positive effects for students and teachers, namely in terms of:

- Improved communication;
- Improved emotional expression;
- Enhanced self-awareness;
- Improved self-respect, and;
- Positive impact on teachers' personal and professional development (Hatzichristou, 2011).

III. Intervention

"Health Education" courses provide social and emotional skills and resources for students to be attentive to social aspects in schools, and maintain effective relationships with teachers, peers and parents. Also, these courses provide teachers (and educators in general) with important tools for personal and professional development, thus allowing them to be prepared to efficiently execute the courses with their students. Each course is organised into thematic units (or modules), provided with lesson plans, and practical activities, among other materials to support teachers in their work. All materials are designed to target the improvement of students' physical, mental and social well-being, with the final objective of consolidating social skills and values, such as self-acknowledgement, self-regulation, self-improvement, as an integral part of students' lifestyle, and consequently enhancing school climate. The general themes of "Health Education" modules were the following:

- Social and communication skills (including social diversity, communicating efficiently, working cooperatively with others, handling peer pressure);
- Self-awareness (set realistic goals, planning how to achieve goals);
- Specific characteristics (identifying family and individual characteristics, diversity training, respecting human rights);

- Conflict resolution (identifying and assessing risks, managing conflicts), and;
- Educational process (study planning and organisation) (Kali, 2020).

Within these main themes, "Health Education" addressed specific issues or problems accordingly with each ages' needs, such as healthy interpersonal relationships, sexual education, social behaviours, nutrition, road safety, among others. Addressing these issues, and informing students about them, has shown to be effective in improving social, emotional and psychological well-being (Ioannidis, 2003).

Specific for preschool education, one of "Health Education" main courses is "Social and Emotional Education" aims to reach students' early psychological developmental levels. This course is an adaptation of the original Greek programme "Social and Emotional Education at School: Program for the Promotion of Mental Health and Learning in the School Community" (Hatzichristou & Lianos, 2016). The main concept of this course was to equip children with social and emotional competences from an early age, laying the foundation for a healthy development later, through social and emotional learning adapted to pre-primary level (Kali, M., 2020). Early social and emotional milestones can be achieved by children by engaging in playful activities with classmates (peers), such as

the understanding of teamwork, collaboration, empathy, self-awareness, self-esteem and peer pressure, at progressive stages of development (Bulman & Savory, 2006).

Another social and emotional based programme implemented on Cyprus was the "ARETI", supported by the Ministry of Justice and Public Order of Cyprus. "ARETI" focused on developing tools to create opportunities for cognitive, emo-

tional and social development in school context (Charalambous & Charalambous, 2017). The programme, applied since 2007 in Cypriot schools, aimed to develop 12 key areas of interpersonal and intrapersonal development, showed effective results in children's self-esteem, engagement, satisfaction, resiliency cooperation, creativity and diligence, as well as in the decrease of anxiety, bullying, aggressiveness, indifference and negativity.

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Czechia

Abstract

The concept of social emotional learning (SEL) is not common in Czechia. However, the key educational documents state similar goals as social emotional learning does. The effort made by Czech Government in the prevention of risk behaviours is acknowledged, mainly in primary and middle schools through a systematic work on social-emotional competencies. There are programmes that are aimed at developing these competencies, labelled as non-specific primary prevention programmes, to develop the important skills necessary for life. The target group for the Second Step Programme is the primary school group, having used the programme in Czechia since 2015, and the social emotional learning program in kindergarten since 2018.

Social emotional learning is still in its beginning stages in Czechia. Although there are texts dictating the importance of developing these skills, there is no systemic approach to date, only cues in the key educational documents stating that these skills should be promoted.

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Therefore, following their experience both in the research and in the practice, the researchers stated recommendations for the social emotional learning in the country.

They recommend:

1. Creating a social emotional learning program that would fit into the Czech educational system;
2. Preparing validated methods for evaluating the progress in social emotional competencies;
3. Train the teachers according to specialised training;
4. Work in cooperation with other educational organisations who have experience in similar preventive programs, and;
5. Implementing social emotional learning.

I. Development

The **Second Step Program**, which was created by the Committee for Children Seattle in 1987, is currently used in Czechia. The main aim of this programme is to help the development of the social-emotional competencies of kindergarten and secondary school's children. It is composed of three parts: Empathy, Impulsivity Management and Problem Solving, and Anger Management. Moreover, the Second Step Program has been used all over the world, being implemented in Czechia in 2015. Among the studies that contributed to the utilisation of this program, studies carried out by Palová & Smékalová (2019), two researchers from **Palacký University** (Faculty of Arts, Department of Psychology), aimed to analyse the success of the program in Czech schools.

The participants of the pilot research study were sixty-six children from primary schools in Olomouc and surrounding areas.

The program's implementation in Czechia is the result of the cooperation with the citizen's organisation **PROFKREATIS Plus**, which is currently the owner of the program's licence for both Czechia and Slovakia.

Since 2015, several versions of the social emotional learning program for the main target group, primary school, have been in use, starting the **kindergarten version in 2018**.

II. Assessment

The methodology used by researchers varies:

- Students filled in a set of surveys:
 - an Intelligence and a Development Scale for Children aged 5-10 (social competence);
 - B 4 (class climate), and;
 - Piers Harris Self Concept Scale (self-concept).
- Teachers filled in a survey about the situation

in their classes, for example, sharing possible behavioural problems.

These surveys were completed in September 2017 (pretest), in June 2018 and June 2019 (post-test). Teachers involved in the program were interviewed at the end of the school year 2017/2018 (Palová, 2019).

Parents had the possibility to evaluate the program as well with an online survey.

III. Intervention

Since 2015, in the framework of several small-size research projects on students, the effectiveness of the Second Step Program has been investigated. Each research project had a different number of participants, but, in general, the number of respondents was about forty students in the experimental group (students who worked with the Second Step Program for 5 months) and forty students in the control group, who did not receive any social emotional intervention.

Primary schools (second and third grade students). The effect was confirmed in the following areas:

- Social emotional competence;
- Self-concept;
- Creativity, and;
- Positive class climate.

Kindergartens: the kindergarten pilot research has started in 2017 and is still in the process. The research has confirmed effect on:

- Social emotional competence, and;
- Cognitive abilities.

The results and methodology recommendations of the pilot research were used to prepare a longitudinal research project on the effectiveness of the Second Step Program in Czechia. The research project started in 2016. The last set of data was collected in June 2019. However, the project is still not closed.

The main goal of the research was to verify the effect of the Second Step Program in the following areas: social and emotional competence, class climate, self-concept, risk behaviour, and the attitudes of the teachers working with the program (Palová, 2019, Smékalová, 2016).

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Denmark

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Abstract

Denmark has several examples regarding the development of social and emotional learning (SEL) programmes for early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings. Some of these initia-

tives are also evaluated. One prominent example is the program We Learn Together, which has been evaluated by TrygFonden's Centre for Child Research.

I. Development

Denmark's education system has a long history in placing importance on social and emotional learning (Clouder et al., 2015). As such, it is no surprise that it permeates the pedagogical foundations in Denmark's framework for preschool curricula, called the strengthened pedagogical curriculum, which features six pedagogical themes (Ministry of Children and Education, 2018):

1. Comprehensive personal development;
2. Social development;
3. Communication and language;
4. Body, senses and motion;
5. Nature, outdoor life and natural phenomena;
6. Culture, aesthetics and community.

As an example, the theme Social development entails the development of empathy.

ECEC in Denmark is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Children and Education, though there are several forms of ECEC stemming from different providers, such as municipal preschools or private daycare (Børne- og Undervisningsministeriet, n.d.). This split responsibility for ECEC provision is also reflected in developing projects regarding SEL. There is no single organisation that drives the development, usually cooperation is required. One example of a project, called "Vi lærer sprog i vuggestuen og dagplejen" (We learn language in the nursery and day care) was a cooperative effort between several organisations, municipalities, researchers and developers, and also funded by the Ministry of Children and Education (Bleses et al., 2019).

II. Assessment

Assessing quality and adherence to guidelines in ECEC is generally under the responsibility of local municipalities and the leader of the child care unit, though formal guidelines are available. These are supported by the Ministry of Children and Education and the Danish Evaluation Institute. They don't necessarily have an enforcing role, however, greater emphasis is placed on eval-

uating the use of their framework and guidelines on a national level (Danish Evaluation Institute, 2022). The pedagogical framework states that ECEC settings should establish an evaluation culture, but the concrete approach is largely determined locally (Ministry of Children and Education, 2018).

Further guidance is provided in brief materials provided by the ministry, which can be summarised in three steps that act as a cyclic process (Danish Evaluation Institute & Ministry of Children and Education, 2018):

1. Have a clear purpose for the evaluation
2. Document with a focus on learning environment and common reflection
3. Analyse to set a direction for your future practice

The guidance on evaluation is based on a research review by the ministry, though its focus remains on evaluation in ECEC settings in general and not necessarily factors related to SEL. Still, social development and SEL programmes are mentioned as possible areas of evaluation (Danish Evaluation Institute, 2018).

Evaluations of specific interventions are also conducted in Denmark. Several projects regarding evaluation of SEL interventions have been head-

ed by TrygFonden's Centre for Child Research. Projects regarding ECEC are often aimed at language, but the previously mentioned project Vi lærer sprog i vuggestuen og dagplejen also had a focus on empathy and self-regulation. This program will be longitudinally evaluated in a new version called Vi Lærer Sammen (We Learn Together). An earlier example is a project called Leg og læring i vuggestuen (Play and learning in the nursery) which also investigates the interventions effects on language skills, along with social development and problem-solving skills, but with the focus being on the nursery rather than preschools. The centre also investigates tools for measurement that focus on well-being and personal development for children and youth (TrygFondens Børneforskningscenter, 2021). Work has also been done to validate a Danish adaptation of the strength-based questionnaire Social-Emotional Assessment/Evaluation Measure ([SEAM] Sjøe et al., 2017; Sjøe et al., 2020; Sjö, Kiil & Jensen, 2021).

III. Intervention

The previously mentioned programme We Learn Together is described as a flexible curriculum, closely tied to the strengthened pedagogical curriculum. The programme contains a flexible curriculum with suggestions and materials for activities that educators can use to plan their curriculum according to learning outcomes. The learning outcomes are language, mathematics, executive function and socioemotional competence. The program consists of four core elements (Aarhus universitet & TrygFonden, n.d.):

1. **Flexible pedagogical framework** where educators use their professionalism to plan In-depth, Focus, Exploration (different modules);
2. Strengthens **language, mathematics, executive functions and socio-emotional competencies** through goals that describe **what children can learn** if given the opportunity;

3. Focus on **interaction quality** through the use of **supportive and differentiated strategies** that support how children learn best;

4. Reflection on practice through assessing children's development and implementation of We Learn Together.

The intervention has been evaluated in randomised controlled trials, showing a positive effect on language and maths skills (Bleses et al., 2020; Bleses et al., 2021).

Another example of an intervention is the CAT-kit. CAT stands for Cognitive Affective Training and is a collection of tools used in individual treatment. It was originally developed in Denmark for use with children and adults with autism spectrum disorder (CAT, n.d.).

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Abstract

The following overview of literature indicates that preschool policies and practices promote the importance of social and emotional skills learning in ECEC settings in Estonia. The preschool institutions do not have unique, obligatory and standardised measurement instruments for social and emotional skills (SES), nor national based intervention and programmes for social

and emotional learning (SEL). Non-government organisations and kindergarten through international projects work on the promotion of SEL, as well as developing practices in preschool settings. There is a lack of evidence-based studies related to intervention and programmes for social and emotional skills learning of preschool children.

I. Development

Currently, the Estonian education system is decentralised. The division of responsibility between the state, local government and school is clearly defined. Preschool education (ISCED level 0) is generally acquired in childcare institutions (koolieelne lasteasutus). Local governments are obliged to provide all children from 1.5 to 7 years of age who permanently reside in their catchment area with the opportunity to attend a preschool or childcare institution if the parents wish so. In addition, there is also a system of childcare services (lapsehoiuteenus) mainly to the youngest children. These services can be either centre- or home-based (Eurydice, 2021). Most of the preschool children (96%) attend public preschool institutions. In 2016, 71% of two-year-olds and 90% for three-year-olds were enrolled in an

ECEC setting. Enrolment of children under 2 years of age is lower in relation to parental leave benefits. Preschool institutions are responsible for developing its curriculum according to the local needs, interests and children's abilities, according to the National Curriculum for Preschool Child Care Institutions. Preschool institutions have the autonomy to apply multiple methodologies and pedagogies. The most widespread teaching practises are the step-by-step methodology, the Reggio Emilia approach, the Montessori approach and active learning methods such as Bruner's discovery learning (OECD, 2020). At the national level, there are no evidence-based and proven preschool programs related to social and emotional skills learning.

II. Assessment

The assessment principles of the child's development are given in the Framework Curriculum of the Preschool Education (1999). The teachers observe children and provide information about their developmental skills. The evaluation of social skills includes the child's activity and interaction with others, independence and coping skills, control of emotions and expressive skills, and adaptation in the group (Õun, 2007).

Research of social and emotional skills of children in Estonia are measured as part of International Early Learning and Child Well-being study (IELS) conducted by parents and teachers. IELS included a direct measure of emotion identification and attribution, and indirect measures of pro-social behaviour, such as trust in familiar people and non-disruptive behaviour. Results show that teachers in Estonia perceive children as more

disruptive than teachers in England or in the United States do (Kettlewell, et al., 2020). On the contrary, teachers in Estonia perceive preschool children as exhibiting social and emotional skills at the same, or higher levels than children from England and the United States, showing higher prosocial behaviour, and better identification of

feelings. In all domains, girls show better results than boys (OECD, 2020). However, this research and assessment is not at national level practises, and there is no evidence that Estonia has national and standardised assessments of social and emotional skills at preschool level.

III. Intervention

There are no national systematic and certified programmes of social and emotional skills learning for children, but a few positive practises through international project activities were found. There are some activities of introducing Askelleittan as Finnish version of Second Step Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in preschool and school institution in Estonia^{1,2}.

One of the ongoing Erasmus projects "Nature As Teacher," include development of intellectual outputs and exchange of practises related to social-emotional skills learning and include kindergarten from Estonia as a partner in the project (www.nature-as-teacher.com).

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¹ <https://www.cfchildren.org/blog/2017/12/partners-in-estonia-champion-sel/>

² <https://www.cfchildren.org/blog/2018/07/nordic-partners-supporting-second-step-and-sel/>

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Abstract

This literature search gives a brief overview of initiatives and practices related to social and emotional learning (SEL) in Finland. There are a multitude of initiatives that can be categorised as assessments and interventions regarding SEL

in early childhood education and care (ECEC), stemming from different types of organisations. This overview gives just a few examples of SEL in ECEC and should not be considered exhaustive in describing the subject.

I. Development

Finland has a multitude of initiatives regarding SEL. ECEC providers follow the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care (540/2018), along with the National core curriculum for ECEC (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2019). While this provides extensive guidelines that include SEL-related terms, ECEC providers (read: or i.e., primarily municipalities) also need to populate local practices in a concrete manner. The need for such practices can be considered a driver of development for SEL in Finland.

Overall, the need for practices, as well as the support available, seems to have produced several examples of practices regarding SEL in Finland. Although The Ministry of Education and Culture and The Finnish National Agency for Education enact and execute the relevant policies and the national curriculum, they do not necessarily develop these practices in a direct manner. However, they do have several means of providing support, such as funding for universities or other organisations to develop such practices.

II. Assessment

The overall assessment of ECEC in Finland falls under the responsibility of the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC). Even though the focus of the assessment and evaluation of the preschools concern overall quality, some factors are related to SEL, such as interactions in a child group and children's peer relationships. Evaluations are used on a national level, but also to support ECEC providers on a local level (Finnish Education Evaluation Centre, 2019).

In addition to systematic evaluation on a national level, there are tools available for more specialist uses, such as a Finnish version of the Strength

and Difficulties Questionnaire (Borg, Kaukonen, Joukamaa, Tamminen, 2014). Another example is the Brief Infant Toddler Social-Emotional Assessment (BITSEA) that has been translated and studied in Finland (Haapsamo et al., 2012). There are also commercially available tools for SEL assessment, one example that also includes intervention strategies is School Day (School Day, n.d.). Finland, specifically the capital Helsinki, was also part of an international survey of social and emotional skills conducted by OECD (2021a; 2021b).

III. Intervention

There are several SEL-related interventions available or undergoing development in Finland, though many of them are designed for school-aged children rather than ECEC. Some examples of school aged SEL interventions are Together at School (Björklund et al., 2014; Kiviruusu et al., 2016), the anti-bullying programme KiVa (KiVa Antibullying Program, n.d.), and a Finnish version of Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS) called ProKoulu (Savolainen, 2020). Though the latter has also seen use in ECEC (Prokoulu, n.d.).

There are also examples of interventions more strictly focused on the ECEC context. One example is the German SEL programme Papilio that has been adapted to a Finnish context (Koivula et al., 2020). Another example is a universal SEL programme called The Roundies (Moazami-Goodarzi, Zarra-Nezhad, Hytti, Heiskanen & Sajaniemi, 2021). There is also a commercial application based on the animated series Pikkuli™ that is designed for SEL in ECEC (Aittokoski Experience, 2016).

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Abstract

In France, the monitoring of quality includes programmes for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) for Early Childhood Education (and Care) or ECE(C) that are organised at the national level. Next to this aspect of monitoring, this national level is also responsible for the standard of the setting, the development of the curriculum, and the finances and funding for preschool. For early childhood education, this is done by the local authorities. In France, quality is defined through these minimal standards, including the emotional development of children, and is defined by its curriculum (i.e., objectives).

Considering the monitorization of the children's development and learning outcomes for the children of 3 to 6 years of age, narrative assessments and portfolios are used, alike to the use of observation tools and checklists. To monitor quality of staff and services, tools like observations, surveys, interviews and documentary research are used in addition to self-assessments and parental surveys conducted for inspections regarding parents and the level of quality provided.

I. Development

France, officially as the French Republic (République Française), is a country in Western Europe, and is the third largest European country. France is a decentralised unitary state and has a democratic semi-presidential republic. The country is a member of important international organisations such as the European Union (being one of the six founding members of the EU), the United Nations, the Security Council (permanent member with veto-vote), NATO, the G8, the OECD and the WTO. France was one of the initiators of the Economic and Monetary Union, which, in 2002, led to the introduction of the euro as legal tender in many Member States of the European Union, including France. In 1960, France became the fourth nuclear power after the United States, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom. In sum, France is one of the 30 most developed countries in the world.

The French education system is run by the Ministère de l'Éducation nationale. Since the Blanquer reform of 2019, education is compulsory from 3 to 16 years of age, and compulsory training from 16 to 18 years of age, it can be either schooling, apprenticeship, professional integration or another civic service. There are more

than 61,000 schools, mostly public, which serve more than 12 million students. The private establishments under contract with the State, accommodate 15% of the pupils of the primary school and 20% of the pupils of the secondary school, private teaching without contract being a marginal phenomenon in France, like the instruction known as "in family" (Clark, 1986; Schreyer & Oberhuemer, 2017).

In France there is a split system. This means that both the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Ministère des Affaires sociales et de la Santé) and the Ministry of National Education (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale) are responsible for organisations in the field of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). The first is responsible for services in childcare (up until 3 years of age [or 2 years of age in schools belonging to a priority area]), the second is responsible for pre-primary education (between 2 to 3 years of age and 6 years of age) (OECD, 2015).

Considering the development of children, in childcare services, there are the Orientations générales pour les crèches (general guidelines for crèches) that is considered as a general

framework. As for pre-primary education, the national curriculum is implemented. In general, it contains the objectives for both the foundations as general orientations, and expectations for the subjects and skills to be taught in preschool (Schreyer & Oberhuemer, 2017).

In 2013, The Framework Act on French School Reform (the Loi d'Orientation et de Programmation pour la Refondation de l'École de la République) reaffirmed the joint contribution made by educational and health policies in students' academic success and in the reduction of inequality (Terriot & Vignoli, 2020). The central aim is to make schools a place where all children can achieve autonomy, success and self-fulfilment; where children discover a desire to learn, intellectual curiosity, open-mindedness and sensitivity; where it is possible to learn and teach under proper conditions; as well as being a place of socialisation where young people receive the training they need to join society and enter the workforce. Furthermore, it focuses on promoting optimal health because "our schools are responsible for teaching children about health and

II. Assessment

The French Ministry of Education is responsible for the inspection of the écoles maternelles and the Ministry of Social Affairs for nursery/infant-toddler provision (Schreyer & Oberhuemer, 2017). The assessments, or facilities, are done on different levels, focusing on the health, hygiene and safety requirements, as well as staff qualifications in settings that are for children younger than 3 years of age.

In pre-primary education, the aim of assessment is more content oriented. Mainly, the development aiming for the goals in the national curriculum is the subject of the inspections. Also, the role for the head of the preschool organisations is important as they write annual reports for the local authorities (Eurydice 2014).

Assessments are done by external inspections, usually every two or three years, by self-evaluations for the quality of leadership and the staff satisfaction with the working conditions (Mneesr, 2016). There are also parent questionnaires, school inspections done by the two inspectorates: the General Inspectorate of National Education (Inspection Générale de l'Éducation Nationale, IGEN) and the General Inspectorate

of Educational Administration and Research (IGAENR). The Directorate of Evaluation, Prospective Planning and Performance (Direction de l'Évaluation, de la Prospective et de la Performance, DEPP) is responsible for educational statistics, conducting The French Ministry of Education is responsible for the inspection of the écoles maternelles and the Ministry of Social Affairs for nursery/infant-toddler provision (Schreyer & Oberhuemer, 2017). The assessments, or facilities, are done on different levels, focusing on the health, hygiene and safety requirements, as well as staff qualifications in settings that are for children younger than 3 years of age.

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The assessment of children in école maternelle is done in terms of the required curricular goals and done by the teachers. They follow the guide-

lines of the guidance document (2010) from the Ministry of Education. The result is an annual report from each child together with a school report (livret scolaire) showing the development of the child throughout their primary school. Parents are also informed about the child's abilities and skills at the end of pre-primary education (Schreyer & Oberhuemer, 2017).

As social and emotional skills are part of the curriculum, the assessment is done by the teacher as part of the main programme. Together with motor skills, literacy and language, socio-emotional skills are the most common aspects in the monitoring. For the SES, most used methods are observations and narrative assessments, not direct assessment (OECD, 2015, p. 14).

III. Intervention

Nurseries/crèches in both public and private ownership accept children from 2-3 months of age and up to 3 years of age (Schreyer & Oberhuemer, 2017). Recently, there are also multi-functional centres (structures/établissements multi-accueil) that have arisen to provide alternative and more flexible care. Multifunctional facilities offer more occasional, part-time, and regular care needs within the same setting and aim to accommodate the diverse needs of families, single parents or parents looking for a job or working atypical hours. (Schreyer & Oberhuemer, 2017).

Preschools (jardins enfants) are complementary facilities to the écoles maternelles, as they are mostly private and for-profit initiatives offering long opening hours. These centres have qualified éducatrices/éducateurs organising educational activities. Mobile services (services itinérants) are used in less populated areas. They intervene with different materials (Schreyer & Oberhuemer, 2017).

Open-door services (Lieux d'accueil enfants parents – LAEP) for parents, children, family day carers are regional networks for persons involved in home-based care facilities, whether parents, registered and independent family day carers, or other persons (assistants familiaux, nannies) employed by parents in the home (Eurydice, 2012).

In France there are also Family day care networks (crèches familiales). These services are

offered by professionals trained by the Ministry of Health: Mother and Child Protection (PMI Protection maternelle et infantile). These facilities can take up to a maximum of 150 children. There is also family day care offered by registered and approved individuals (assistant[e]s maternel[le]s agréé[e]s) (Schreyer & Oberhuemer, 2017).

Nearly all children between 3 and 6 years of age attend pre-primary education (écoles maternelles), even though attendance is not mandatory. Classes are divided into same-age groups: la petite section (2 and 3 years of age), la moyenne section (4 years of age) and la grande section (5 years of age). The curriculum contains three overlapping cycles bridging children's learning from preschool to primary school (Drees, 2012; Oberhuemer et al., 2010).

As written in the sections above, interventions and programmes for SES development of children between 0 and 6 years of age, are integrated in the curricula of the nurseries (0-3 years) and preschools (3-6 years). Child development contains socio-emotional skills, health, motor skills, early numeracy, literacy and language skills. Each development has pre-defined outcomes per age group that are translated into curricula objectives or learning oriented frameworks. Those frameworks are implemented and developed in the services by the organiser of the service itself (OECD, 2015, 5). There are no specific interventions found in literature considering SEL or SES.

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Abstract

Pre-primary education in Georgia is not compulsory, however, it has a long history that focuses on care rather than education. This focus has been shifting in the last few years due to the reform that has been undertaken by the Georgian's government and coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS). In 2017, the "Unified Strategy for Education and Science for 2017-2021" was developed, and in 2018, the "New School Model" was introduced. The main aim was to provide high quality education, and to expand on the scope of service, including additional skills and social competence. There is a special structure that the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) is responsible for, such as the licensing and monitoring of programmes that can operate in early child care facilities. Some programmes that have been implemented in Georgia are Georgia's Pre-K Programme, and Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) programme. There is a Quality Rated system that assesses program quality. Unfortunately, we were not able to get any more

information about the Quality Rated system, or details regarding their curriculum. With the support of organisations like UNICEF and non-governmental organisations in the country (Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS)), many initiatives and projects are for the improvement of quality of education, inclusiveness, children's development and wellbeing. For example, one of the members of GEEARS is the Georgia Infant-Toddler Coalition. Their main objective is "to advance the health, social, intellectual, and emotional well-being of infants and toddlers across Georgia" (GEEARS, n.d.). They follow the holistic approach and recognize the variety of aspects that impact children's proper development. There are also other successful programmes piloted in the country ("Learn by Playing", UNICEF), as well as the implementation of teaching techniques for school aged children.

I. Development

In Georgia, young children between 0 to 6 years of age are in the system of pre-primary education, however, it is not compulsory. There are different types of early childcare and learning facilities in the country: public schools; licensed childcare learning centres; licensed family childcare learning homes; family, friend, and neighbour care; and other licence-exempt programs, (GEEARS, 2020). According to OECD report (2019) "most Georgian students do not attend early childhood education". GEEARS document on "Georgia's Early Care & Education Landscape" (2020) estimates that roughly 500,000 children in Georgia under the age of six need childcare. The biggest demand is for infants and toddlers.

The Georgian government put effort into expanding early childhood services, especially for children who are 5 to 6 years of age. Some actions towards achieving this goal are undertaken (e.g. abolishing entry fees for kindergartens).

Another big concern regarding early childhood services in the country is the quality of education that is provided. According to the same OECD report (2019), citing a report from the World Bank, "A school readiness study conducted in 2011 observed that only a third of children who attended early childhood education and care had satisfactory levels of cognitive, social and emotional skills". A partial explanation of this conclusion the authors of the report suggested is that prior to 2016, pre-primary institutions in the country were only orientated for providing childcare services. UNICEF office in Georgia also had noticed the issue with the quality of education in the country, (General Education, UNICEF, n.d.). They call it "the challenge". UNICEF supported Georgia's national education system in strengthening the quality and inclusiveness. This was done together in partnership with the Government of Estonia and Poland. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport also

put a lot of effort into improving the quality of the whole educational system in the country in recent years. In 2017 the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS) developed the "Unified Strategy for Education and Science for 2017-2021". The main aim was to provide high quality education and expand the scope of service, including additional skills and social competence. In autumn 2018, the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport introduced the "New School Model." This is an initiative whose main aim is to establish a vision of schooling. According to this vision, modern approaches promoting the development of the whole child (intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially) must be implemented. The "New School Model" encourages teachers to use active pedagogical techniques, and to put more effort into teaching students various skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity. This approach was initially piloted in one school in Tbilisi, with a plan to increase the number of pilot schools to 50, to continue working on the reform to analyse what has been achieved. In 2019, OECD in a report (Li, et al., 2019) stated that Georgia has made "tremendous recent improvement in educational participation and outcomes". However, the authors also claim many inequalities in students' educational progress, and for many students struggling to cover basic competencies. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge the endeavours of the Georgian government and their efforts to

improve the educational system for all children. The ongoing national reform in Georgia partially targets changes to the educational system for early and preschool children. One of the main focuses is to expand the number of kindergartens and increase the number of children attending them. There is also a focus on providing children with basic educational needs, while also stimulating children's development in general, in particular, the socioemotional development, as one of the main developmental domains. This national reform is still ongoing but it has already put the focus on the children and the importance of their development. Information regarding reports that specifically analyse the outcome of the reforms could not be found, however, information regarding ongoing successful practises in the country have been. They are presented in the Intervention section. There is a special structure, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), responsible for licensing and monitoring programs that can operate in early childcare facilities. Such licenced programs are Georgia's Pre-K Program, Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program. There is a Quality Rated system that assesses the quality of programmes who have applied to be listed in the system. Once accepted, they are monitored two times per year and have to demonstrate their quality in terms of ratios, staff credentials, curriculum, etc.

II. Assessment

No information was found regarding any specific assessment practises and/or assessment measures in use in the country.

III. Intervention

The programs we mentioned above, Georgia's Pre-K Program, Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, seem very promising. Unfortunately, we were not able to get any more information regarding the details of their curriculum.

We found out that nongovernmental organisations operate very successfully in the field of education, childcare and development, and, in particular, the development of children's socio-emotional skills. The Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS) is a non-prof-

it organisation operating to inspire and provide leadership for a state-wide movement on quality early learning and healthy development for all children from birth through 5 years of age. It organises various initiatives, campaigns (e.g. First 2000 days campaign) and provides resources. One of the members of GEEARS is the Georgia Infant-Toddler Coalition. Their main aim is "to advance the health, social, intellectual, and emotional well-being of infants and toddlers across Georgia." (GEEARS, n.d.). They follow the holistic approach and recognize the variety of aspects that impact children's proper development.

An Alliance of national and private institutions support mental childcare by establishing the National Centre for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI). The model is funded by the Office of Special Education Programs to improve and support the capacity of state systems in implementing an early childhood social, emotional, and behavioural outcomes of young children with, and at risk for, developmental disabilities or delays. Some of the key purposes are to reduce the use of inappropriate disciplinary practises, include more of the family in the educational process, and better integrate the understanding of how important mental health is in early childhood. The Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children was developed by identifying the evidence-based practises that would:

- Promote the social and emotional outcomes of all children;
- Promote the skill development of children with social, emotional, and behavioural delays to prevent the need for more intensive supports; and
- Intervene effectively when children have persistent challenging behaviour.

“Pyramid Model practises were identified through a systematic review of the research on classroom promotion, prevention, and intervention practises that have been associated with positive socioemotional outcomes and decreases in challenging behaviour in young children

with and without disabilities” (The Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children (n.d.).

There are successful practises implemented through projects and/or partnerships. Since 2018, with the educational reform, various methods for socioemotional development have been implemented in the public school. However, this applies to older children. One example is the digital learning programme “Learn by Playing” (Snip, 2019), which was the result of a partnership between UNICEF Georgia, the Government of Estonia, and the Government of Georgia. Through newly developed educational software, children can create their own stories based on the materials covered in a previous class. The idea behind introducing the software to the regular curricula is to include and engage the children in the learning process, and create a learning environment that provides them with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the 21st century, such as memorising, proactiveness, presentation skills, focusing attention and communication skills. Other efforts into developing children’s skills and, in particular, social skills, such as creativity, initiative, reflection, and group work, are related to the implementation of an interesting teaching environment. Educators, for example, will integrate dancing lessons into the programme, music plays, free drawing spaces, etc. Relaxing places are set up for children to sit with their friends, or special free time is set up and children can do what they enjoy most (Corso, 2018).

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Germany

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Abstract

The Federal Republic of Germany comprises sixteen federal states (*Bundesländer*), with each state having its own constitution, and is largely autonomous to its early childhood educational policy. However, in each state there is a local authority in the field of preschool education which ensures preschool education at all levels.

In the German-speaking area, several socio-emotional learning (SEL) programmes have already been developed and scientifically evaluated. The most interesting programmes to be mentioned are as follows: **“Papilio”** (Mayer et al., 2007), **“Lubo aus dem All”** (Hillenbrand et al., 2009) and **“Verhaltenstraining im Kindergarten”** (Koglin & Petermann, 2009). All three programmes are available as a manual in which the concept and materials used are explained, and implementation instructions are described. The programmes are designed to be suitable for children, by using movement games, musical and creative elements.

In sum, Germany has a high level of awareness for the importance of social and emotional development in early childhood education. This is due to the fact that interventions in early childhood are very effective and produce less costs for the society compared to interventions in adolescents.

I. Development

In Germany, children under 3 years of age attend the *Kinderkrippen* crèche groups, typically in mixed age groups. Children from 3 years of age and up to 6 years of age attend *Kinderkrippen* crèche groups. If the child does not reach the level of development required for entry into the school, they have the option to attend a Special Class or Special School, *Förderklasse*, to receive the special education they need. The attendance in early childhood services is voluntary, although in some cases, the state is entitled to make the attendance compulsory.

In 2008, the UN Convention defined a legal right concerning day care and kindergarten, which has changed the profile of the early childhood education system definitively. Therefore, the local authorities increased the number of day care centres for children under 3 years of age. (Eurydice, 2021)

According to the Act, Social Security Code VIII (Achttes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Kinder- und Jugendhilfe – R61), all children from 1 year of age have the right to receive Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services. Under certain circumstances, if the parents are employed or

looking for work, children under 1 year of age can be granted the legal right to attend a day-care centre (Eurydice, 2021).

The Social Security Code VIII prefers the ECEC institutions to be run by non-public bodies, as opposed to local maintaining bodies, to ensure there is a diverse range of services provided. In 2017, around 67% of services were run by non-public bodies (Dossier, 2017).

In each federal state the responsible and supervisory authority for ECEC services is the local youth welfare office, *Landesjugendamt*.

The range of services offered should be based on the needs of the children and their families. According to the above mentioned law, the day-care centres for children have to ensure and encourage the children develop into responsible/ functioning members of society. Furthermore, a role of the day-care centres is to supplement the child’s upbringing in the family, as well as to assist the parents in better reconciling, employment and child rearing. These duties focus on the child’s social, emotional, physical and mental development. Moreover, education and care

is adjusted to the individual child's age and developmental stage, as well as by taking into account the child's life experiences, interests, and other capabilities, such as linguistics in regards to the child's ethnic origin.

The Joint Framework of the Länder for Early Education in Day-Care Institutions for Children (Gemeinsamer Rahmen der Länder für die frühe Bildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen), mentions educational objectives in early childhood education. This includes things such as developing and strengthening personal resources, the development of basic skills, holistic personal development to play a responsible part in society and to be open to lifelong learning.

As of November 2009, the Land Youth Welfare Services (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Landesjugendämter) declared that early childcare must attend to the basic needs of young children. The specific needs of children are as follows: loving attention; sensitive care based on

stable relationships; sympathetic support appropriate for the development stage; empathy and support in stressful situations; unconditional acceptance; safety and security. Educational support at this stage in life is primarily understood as shaping relationships with the child and as holistic support complementing development. The accompanying educational partnership with parents is essential.

The early intervention and support of children at risk and children with disabilities were redefined as a complex service in SGB IX in July 2001. In addition, in 2003, the so-called early support ordinance (FrühV) came into force, which completes the framework of SGB IX.

In each state there is a system and well organised centres for Early Childhood Intervention and Development (Frühförderstellen). A well prepared early intervention centre offers complex services such as psychological, medical-therapeutic and holistic support for the child and family.

gramme, a summative assessment was conducted with a group of 225 children. Pre-, post- and follow-up measurements were collected for three groups: treatment with full implementation, treatment with partial implementation, and treatment without implementation, or the control group. The results of this comparison between the control group and the experimental group with full treatment implementation showed mean effect sizes of $d=0.53$ (post) and $d=0.62$ (Hillenbrand et al., 2009).

“Verhaltenstraining im Kindergarten” scientifically evaluated programme from Prof. Dr. Ute Koglin and Prof. Dr. phil. Franz Petermann.

II. Assessment

There are different programmes, which develop children's social and emotional competences. (Papilio, Lubo aus dem All, Verhaltenstraining).

The scientific background of the **Papilio** programme was based on the work of Prof. Dr. Herbert Scheithauser of Freie Universität Berlin, who partook in the long-term study by Webster-Stratton & Taylor, U.S. American research team. The effect of the programme has been proven successful by the data of 700 children, 1200 parents and 100 kindergarten teachers.

Lubo aus dem All! [English: Lubo from outer space] In order to test the effects of the pro-

III. Intervention

One of the most popular intervention programmes is EFFEKT (**E**ntwicklungs**f**örderung in **F**amilien: **E**ltern-und **K**inder **T**raining), which promotes parenting skills and children's social skills. EFFEKT consists of a parenting course “Promotion of parenting skills”, and a course for children “I can solve problems”. The parenting

courses contain 6 group sessions of 90 to 120 minutes each, which take place in the kindergarten of the respective institution. The content is conveyed by the course leaders in lectures, group discussions, with an exchange of experience, role plays, homework etc. (Table 1).

Table 1. Review of three intervention programs

	„Papilio” (Mayer et al 2007)	„Lubo aus dem All” (Hillenbrand et al 2009)	„Verhaltenstraining in Kindergarten” (Koglin and Peterman 2009)
Group size	kindergarten group	10-12 children	up to 18 children
Age	3-7 years old	4-6 years old	3-6 years old
Frequency:	2 * per week over a period of a year, speciality: the unit „Paula und die Kistenkobelde”, 8 units for 30-40 minutes	3* per week, 34 meetings for 40 minutes	2* per week, 25 meetings for 30-40 minutes
Methods and Materials	<p>„Paula and pixies in the box” (picture and sound material)</p> <p>„Toys go on holiday „Day : Children learn to play creatively on their own and with others without conventional playing materials</p> <p>„Mine-yours-ours” Game: In playful community spirit, children practice and learn social rules and mutual support. Reader/DVD/CD ParentsClub</p>	<p>Frame story, Lubo hand puppet. Buddy principle, „Your personal weather” report, problem solving cycle (role play, token system)</p>	<p>Frame story, Hand puppets, Image templates: role-play rules and reminders cards, token system 1* Parents club</p>
Goal setting	knowledge about the emotions: regulation and expression, promote interactions in the group, improvement of the social behaviour, transfer of the topics in the family's everyday life	knowledge about the emotions: regulation and expression, building a positive group feeling, convey the value of friendship, learn problem solving strategies, improvement of the social behaviour	knowledge about the emotions: regulation and expression, learn the main causes of the conflict, learning various action of coping strategies, improvement of the social behaviour, transfer of the topics in the family's everyday life

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Greece

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Abstract

Under the coordination of the Center for Research and Practice of School Psychology (CRSPS), in the Department of Psychology at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece has had a considerable boost in the promotion of implementing socio emotional learning (SEL) programmes when following the example of other countries around the world, implementing SEL programmes in Greek schools since the beginning of the 21st century. This research unit became the main developer and coordinator of SEL intervention programmes in the country.

The strategy for a systematic implementation of SEL in the Greek educational system was to implement the programme in the university's curriculum for the professional training of psychologists and teachers, thus providing these professionals with the necessary skills to implement SEL based intervention. From that point, SEL interventions flourished across different educational institutions (Hatzichristou et al., 2010; Hatzichristou & Polychroni, 2014; Hatzichristou & Lianos, 2016).

I. Development

Beginning in the early 21st century, the gradual implementation of SEL interventions followed the general development of school psychology services in Greece. These services, created and implemented on a data-based, multi-level, and evidence-based framework, focused on addressing the needs of the entire school community, and worked closely with CRSPS on implementing the programme Promotion of Mental Health and Learning (PPMHL) in schools across Greece. As a response to the country's recent socio economic difficulties, this programme combines concepts from positive psychology, systemic theory and SEL to promote resiliency, coping, well-being, academic achievement and positive climate in the school setting (Hatzichristou & Lianos, 2016).

In this context, a wide range of educational materials (including conceptual framework, thematic units and activities books) for preschool, primary and secondary education were created, developed and published to support the implementation of SEL based/ focused interventions (Hatzichristou, 2011). The SEL related thematic addressed in the programme are:

- communication skills;
- emotion recognition expression, and management;
- self-concept and self-esteem;
- coping strategies;
- conflict resolution;
- school and diversity in culture;
- school and diversity in families;
- school and students with special educational;
- social skills;
- learning/study skills;
- crisis intervention in the school community. (Hatzichristou & Lianos, 2016)

The development and consequent implementation of the PPMHL was designed to address the very real issues and necessities of children in educational/school contexts that were found after assessing their resources and collecting feedback from a pilot experiment of the programme. The implementation of PPMHL occurred across several years, firstly by experienced school psychologists, supported by specialists from university, and in the subsequent years by school psychologists and teachers, trained specifically in the programme's framework and methodology. At the same time, a network of participating schools was created to support and facilitate

sharing ideas, experiences and resources to disseminate the programme and SEL focused interventions to other teachers and school communities (Hatzichristou et al., 2010).

The extension of PPMHL to teachers, and its implementation in school and class contexts, created a bigger impact than initially expected. Overtime, SEL focused interventions became a recognized necessity, and a regularly discussed issue in schools. Generalised attention from the educational community developed into a system-wide, SEL focused programme, namely the programme for the Promotion of School Community Well-Being (PPSCW), which included

two main axis of intervention: a) implementation of PPMHL by teachers in classrooms, and b) promotion of resilience in school community and broader school networks. The basis of this broader programme was to train teachers to use the problem-solving model. The use of this model fosters the development of action plans to enhance a sense of community in the schools, evaluate critical domains of SEL, such as resilience, and set priorities and goals with the objective of implementing specific actions in response to the particular needs of each school (Hatzichristou & Lampropoulou, 2004).

II. Assessment

The implementation of the referred SEL intervention programmes included a multilevel assessment model which included process and outcome evaluation, as well as regular or continuous assessment (pre, midterm and post testing), and control group comparison. To this end, data was collected by different instruments (qualitative and quantitative), methods (questionnaires, diaries and logs, personal reports from teachers), and stakeholders (teachers, school administrators, students, parents) (Hatzichristou & Lianos, 2016).

The assessment procedure implied that teachers respond to PPMHL measures at the beginning and at the end of the training, while students' data is collected at the beginning and at the end of the intervention. Meanwhile, throughout the course of the programme, a process evaluation procedure was implemented by a scientific team from CRSPS, with the objective of improving and tailoring the programme to the specific needs of the school community. Assessment also included student control groups (other classes from the school), in order to evaluate the impact of the implementation in the same setting.

III. Intervention

It's important to note that most of the SEL based intervention programmes in the Greek school system are not early childhood and pre-school specific. They are more of a systemic approach/model, designed to be adapted and adjusted to school community needs, primarily in preschool. Which means that intervention programmes are designed, mainly for K4-5 and onward.

Fuelled by several years of social and economical crisis in Greece, several SEL focused intervention programmes were created and implemented, namely with the coordination of the CRSPS. One of these programmes was

Connecting For Caring (C4C, www.connecting-4caring.gr), a multilevel prevention, awareness building, education and intervention project, that uses a holistic approach to foster positive development, adjustment and support of children and adolescents in school and family settings. This multilevel project includes intervention programmes in Greek schools that:

- target the entire student population;
- intend to enhance resilience and self-esteem;
- strengthen social-emotional skills; and

- develop a positive school climate and supportive environment in the classroom and the school (Hatzichristou & Lianos, 2016).

Three school-based intervention programmes of C4C have been designed, implemented and evaluated: (a) the Supporting in Crisis programme; (b) the E.M.E.I.Σ [Ενδιαφερόμαστε (Care) - Μοιραζόμαστε (Share) - Ενθαρρύνουμε (Encourage) - Ισχυροποιούμε (Empower) - Συμμετέχουμε (Participate)] programme; and (c) the International programme WeCARE.

The Supporting in Crisis programme focused on crisis prevention and intervention with a large attention on the economic crisis, and promotion of resilience in school communities (Doll et al., 2004; Masten, 2011). The programme aimed to support and strengthen students' and teachers' resilience and well-being at an individual, group and school community. At the same time, the programme sought to explore the needs of teachers and students that emerged during the economic crisis in Greece. The structure of the programme included: (a) three specialised training seminars for teachers, to raise awareness on the effects of economic crisis, how to respond to the students' immediate needs, and to promote resilience and coping strategies; (b) structured classroom activities that promote resilience at an individual and group level; and (c) the development of educational material.

The E.M.E.I.Σ. programme was implemented in schools across Athens. The main objective of the programme was the development of a positive school environment, to reinforce individual and group resilience, as well as to promote and develop internal strengths, motivation and skills. At the same time, another important goal of this programme was to offer teachers an opportunity to strengthen their own resilience to be able to support and empower the students

by addressing the intense needs for psychological support. This programme included teacher training, development of structured classroom activities, supervision, and a closing ceremony. The programme focused on the following five thematic units: (a) resilience and positive school climate promotion; (b) crisis management in the school community; (c) coping with stress; (d) social skills, conflict resolution and bullying; and (e) teacher burnout. The activities were implemented at an individual, classroom and school level (Hatzichristou & Lianos, 2016).

The International programme WeC.A.R.E. is an online, international teacher training and classroom intervention programme that aims to enhance the students' psychological well being, build resilience, foster team-spirit, and create a global support network of educators, school psychologists and students. Participating classes are divided into groups of two or three from different countries. Together, they make an online sailing journey inspired by the ancient Greek 'Journey of Odysseus,' passing through a series of islands-stations, where each island station constitutes the platform for each of the modules of the programme, namely: (a) identifying values and goal setting and building resilience; (b) emotion recognition, expression, and management; (c) coping with stress; (d) understanding diversity; (e) closing project. Training occurs through an interactive electronic platform and includes: (a) five teachers' training seminars; (b) development and implementation of classroom activities in schools and joint projects; (c) use of an online interactive educational game (Sailing for Caring); (d) development of an international school network; and (e) process and outcome evaluation of programme effectiveness (Hatzichristou & Lianos, 2016).

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Hungary

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Abstract

In Hungary, the National Core Curriculum (NCC) is an educational framework that regulates the content of the Hungarian public education policies. The latest version has taken into account most of the recommendations made by the European Union. The priority and main focus of the NCC is the development of key competences such as: communicating in the mother language, and improving literacy skills and social emotional competencies (including, for instance, communicative, decision making, co-operative skills) as well. The NCC defines cross curricular themes like: mental health and communication culture, too.

Considering this, the main goal of the curriculum is to develop educational practices that foster the above mentioned competences. At the local level, it is regulated by the local educational programmes of schools including local institutions curricula (Pedagógiai programme).

In Hungary, there are currently no complex and large scale programmes for Social Emotional Learning (SEL, but there are some very interesting programmes (e.g., Magical Games, Happiness Lessons), tests and interventions (e.g., DIFER) which promote childrens' social and emotional skills. The existing SEL programmes in early childhood education can be found in the local kindergarten curriculums especially linked with the different inclusion programmes for the children with special needs. The existing evidence based programmes are mostly linked to school changes and school years.

Pre-primary education has recently received renewed attention from educational policy-makers, which is mainly the result of the key role it plays in the social integration of disadvantaged groups.

I. Development

In Hungary there are different evidence-based experiences on SEL development and measurement (see below the good practices).

The Hungarian kindergartens (3-6 years), similarly to most other European countries, are organised by children's experience fields rather than by subjects, and aims to develop various skills and competences, including socio-emotional ones,

as required by the National Core Curriculum given from the Hungarian Ministry of Health, Social and Family Affairs and the Ministry of Education. The responsibilities related to early childhood education and care are shared by considering that they contribute to the construction of children's identity, autonomy, and competence and initiate them to citizenship.

II. Assessment

In Hungary, the need for the evaluation and assessment of social and emotional competencies is mentioned in the National Core Curriculum.

The evaluation system is more structured and tested for schools, while evaluation in pre-school institutions is mainly focused on identifying the children who lack social and emotional skills. If the child needs socio-emotional development, based on the observation of the pedagogical staff or parents, they can get individual developing programmes. This individual assessment and developing programme is held by a psychologist. The child will be assessed by one of the committee of experts, and if it is needed, these will become the developing lessons in the Educational Consultant Institute.

The pedagogical research in this field consists of mostly basic research, with a few correlation studies as well (e.g. Braunitzer, Kasik & Benedek, 2009; Kasik & Tóth, 2009). However, currently, there is very little reliable empirical data about the existing developmental programmes available. Most of the measuring instruments operate basically with child-like self-characterization, and the judgement of the teacher or parent. However, developmental programmes - like most in the case of the international programmes - are built on the evaluations and interpretations of adults (mainly teachers) (e.g. Konta & Zsolnai, 2002).

III. Intervention

In Hungary, early childhood education existing SEL programmes are as follows:

DIFER (Diagnostic Development Test System) of Hungarian development is increasingly used. This system of tools can be effectively used in kindergarten, in the period of transitioning from kindergarten to school, and for lower graders in the diagnostics of criteria-oriented development of children's cognitive and social competencies assessment and their development.

The DIFER developmental programme of the social competencies includes concrete pedagogical plans and situations for the pedagogical staff. The pedagogical games for developing the social and emotional skills in the kindergarten years includes various games and descriptions for: games developing social relationships, self-knowledge, knowledge of peers, games of trust, collaborative games, joint experience, relaxing and concentration games, interaction games, understanding and following rules, communication development games etc.

Varázsjátékok (Magical Games)

Orsolya Góbel's "Magical Games" programme is a practical implementation of Socio-Emotional Pedagogical Therapy (Góbel, 2012 a). The programme is based on the work of German psychiatrist Klaus W. Vopel, who developed children's emotional intelligence with imaginative

games. The essence of the Hungarian adapted programme is that it helps during the sessions to address: self-knowledge, verbal and nonverbal communication, emotional abilities, skills, social information processing, social relations, social perception, empathy, the development of cooperation, the change of perspective with activities that provide opportunities, to the children to share and process their previous experiences.

Magical Games are age-appropriately developed and can be properly used in early childhood education. The programme includes: movement games, fantasy games, breathing games, touch games, soul games etc. The programme gives accurate methodological suggestions to the educators not only for each task, and how to initiate and conduct each task, but also makes recommendations for appropriate group organisation methods, knowledge, stages of experience sharing, as well as well-executed pedagogical questioning and the method of active listening.

The impact assessment and the follow up studies of the Magical Games programme showed that children can become very well developed in several areas with the programme. Children's communication skills have significantly improved, which resulted in a positive change in the relationships with their peers (Góbel, O.2012 a). As a result of development, with the active involvement of parents, family relationships became closer. Significant changes were noted in

the children in the experimental group emotional and social development, shaping their social relationships more effectively so they are able to communicate their emotions and are more open to their environment.

The joint experiences (e.g: joint drawing) reduced aggressive manifestations, which can be a good foundation for starting the school years too.

Boldogságóra (Happiness Lessons)

The Happiness Lessons programme (Bagdy B. et al., 2017) aims to provide methodological support to develop the ability to nurture happiness - to develop and practice positive emotions and social attitudes - in children attending nurseries and schools. This evidence based programme is based on the results of positive psychology and has proven that this programme effectively fosters the emotional development and inner well-being of children.

The programme developed for preschool children aims to provide positive experiences and emotions from a very young age, and develops self-confidence in children, self-knowledge, divergent thinking, an ability to concentrate, problem-solving ability, emotional intelligence, altruism, social skills, and reduces negative emotions and aggression.

The programme helps by processing ten topics:

1. the exercise of gratitude;
2. the exercising optimism;
3. cultivating social relationships;
4. practising good deeds;

5. commitment to a goal;
6. coping strategies;
7. enjoyment of small pleasures;
8. the practice of forgiveness;
9. exercise;
10. sustainable happiness.

The development programme includes session plans that kindergarten teachers can easily apply in the pedagogical activities, as well as in many other topics. Each session follows the general process of knowledge processing, at the same time starting with relaxation exercises and personality development children's songs developed by the authors. The effectiveness of the programme was studied and confirmed by Prof. Attila Oláh of ELTE (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest) Positive Psychology Team. His research found that the children who participated in the experimental group had significantly better emotional intelligence than their peers and also their empathic skills, social sensitivity and divergent thinking significantly improved as a result of the programme also significantly improved as a result of the programme.

Among the development methods developed for kindergarten age-group, there are children's songs that develop a positive self-image and self-confidence, board games, personality development cards, colouring, expressing positive and negative emotions, images of characters that all serve to make children's personal and social development and their competencies in as many forms as possible. In addition to individual and peer group sessions, the programme actively involves family members in the development process.

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Abstract

The educational system in Iceland is very progressive regarding the integration of social and emotional skills (SES) into the official educational system. Moreover, the country has developed a welfare model, which includes equal access to Early Childhood Education Centers (ECEC) for all children. As defined by the 2008 Preschool Act, ECEC is a paramount part of childhood education, with established practices for the implementation and evaluation of SES skills. Furthermore, each municipality is empowered to decide how to integrate SES into the basic educational system, which allows freedom and flexibility for schools and teachers to experiment and adapt.

Although there has been much talk about restructuring the curriculum around having the last year of preschool to be more academic-oriented, free play has remained the status quo. A study by Einarsdottir (2016) showed that par-

ents approve the ideas laid out in the National Curriculum Guidelines for Preschools and are satisfied with the level of competence, self-reliance, self-confidence and independence their children have adopted. Moreover, they emphasise that social and emotional skills are of paramount importance to their children's education. Although the study does not include the opinion of the growing number of immigrants in Iceland, it does echo the sentiments of parents interviewed on the same issues about a decade before.

The value of play underlines the principles of ECEC in Iceland and underscores all related educational practices. Social and emotional skills are taught through cooperation, encouragement and care, and educators help develop children's abilities to both collaborate and be more self-reliant.

new National Curriculum Guides' implementation for all school levels (pre-, compulsory, and upper secondary schools), with the other five being: literacy, sustainability, democracy and human rights, equality and creativity. The system encourages positive self-image, physical activity, nutrition, rest, mental well-being, positive communication, security, hygiene, and understanding of one's feelings and those of others. The fundamental pillars, including the pillar of "Health and welfare", are aimed at aiding children to develop both mentally and physically, thrive in society and cooperate with others.

Other elements, such as a vision of the future and the ability and desire to create an impact and support society, underline the complexity of the national educational programme. The idea behind the creation of this pillar was to ensure the upbringing of a generation of well-educat-

ed and healthy citizens, which would go on to promote an increasingly equal and democratic society.

In Iceland, both municipally and privately-owned preschools are mostly financed by the municipality in which they are located. Children start attending early childcare and education facilities at 18-months of age, but parents can issue a special request to have them start at 12. As of 2013, it has been estimated that about 97% of children between 2.5 and 6 years of age attend preschool,

and, as most facilities offer a nine-hour stay, most children attend for 7.5-8 hours (Dyrfjord, 2014). Also, while preschool education is not free, parents pay on a sliding scale, depending on their income, marital and educational status, such as: students and single parents receiving a discount (Samband íslenskra sveitarfélaga, 2011).

In addition to federal programmes, UNICEF is also involved in developing such practices in Iceland.

II. Assessment

Schools or specific aspects of school activities at all educational levels are subject to an external evaluation organised by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Evaluators from the Directorate of Education conduct an external review for pre-primary and compulsory schools and from 2014 for upper secondary schools. Each preschool issues a school curriculum guide under the responsibility of the preschool head teacher. The school curriculum guide is a more detailed version of the National Curriculum Guide for Preschools. It includes the preschool's operational plan for achieving the objectives and an outline of how it would reach them. In addition, the school curriculum guide considers the preschool's characteristics and the educational policy of the municipality in which it is located. The preschool head teacher is tasked with issuing a detailed operational plan annually and with regularly revisiting the curriculum. The plan provides information on year-round activities, such as the preschool calendar. A committee is then called to approve the school curriculum guide and the operational plan.

Moreover, there are three primary skills included in the educational strategy mentioned below in the Intervention section. What is essential for all of them is the so-called "Social responsibility" standard that involves four criteria: 1) contributing to the classroom and school community 2)

solving problems in peaceful ways; 3) valuing diversity and defending human rights, and; 4) exercising democratic rights and responsibilities. There are four scales for different grade groups (kindergarten to 3rd grade, 4th to 5th grade, 6th to 8th grade and 8th to 10th grade). The assessment is based on accumulated observations over time, both in the classroom and on the playground. Schools can use this scale to assess the behaviour of primary school students, such as spontaneity, open-mindedness, and self-confidence.

Some other evaluation methods also include: school climate survey - aimed to describe the school social environment in terms of support for students and staff, relationships between staff and students and the safety of students and staff. For example, the questionnaire for teachers included such scales as "student sensitivity" (e.g. "Students in my classes generally respect viewpoints different from their own"), "student disruptiveness" (e.g. "Students in my classes generally disrupt what others are doing"), student helpfulness (e.g. "Most students are friendly to staff"). The student questionnaire also included several school climate questions, including "How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school? - Students in this school have trouble getting along with each other, etc." (Jakobsdottir, 2019).

III. Intervention

Preschool practice and methods are characterised by tolerance and affection, equality, democratic cooperation, responsibility, concern, forgiveness, respect for human values, and Icelandic culture's Christian heritage. Teachers' behaviour is democratic as they give a lot of freedom to kids to do things themselves. Children learn primarily through play and can move freely around the room.

Icelandic teaching methods prioritise SES in preschool education as crucial for developing the skills needed for the transition to primary school. The main objectives of upbringing and instruction in the preschool are:

- a. To monitor and encourage children's general development in close cooperation with parents;
- b. To provide systematic linguistic stimulation and contribute to common skills in the Icelandic language;
- c. To provide children with mental, intellectual and physical care according to the needs of each individual so that they may enjoy their childhood;
- d. To encourage children's broadmindedness and strengthen their moral values;
- e. To lay the foundation necessary for children to become independent, autonomous, active and responsible participants in a democratic society that is undergoing rapid and continuous development, and;
- f. To cultivate children's expressive and creative abilities with the aim of strengthening their self-esteem, health awareness, confidence and communication skills (Jakobsdottir, 2019).

In fact, the official document outlining the educational guidelines for Preschool Education at the University of Iceland, "Training of Preschool Teachers in Iceland", reads that children are competent from birth and that play is to be en-

couraged, as it is their main tool for exploration and education. The environment used for play, be it inside or outside, is organised around the context of safety, but also around freedom of movement, self-expression, self-initiated exploration and the ability to experiment and challenge themselves.

To introduce the six fundamental pillars of education and support their implementation, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture has developed a website and videos (Icelandic) (<http://namtilframtidar.is>). Some of the skills cited are: goal achievement, cooperation, and emotional management. Each teacher can access the platform and make use of the available resources. For example, concerning the category "goal achievement", the skills mentioned include a sense of responsibility, autonomy and diligence. The skills related to the category "cooperation" include respect for others, cooperation and a sense of solidarity. Finally, those related to "emotional management" include self-confidence, self-esteem and independence. While not all objectives refer to these skills, they aim to encourage general SEC, such as attitudes, social competencies and emotional development.

For school events, the curriculum suggests organising specific activities such as school trips through which students can experience intensive group interactions and learn to be respectful of others.

Aside from these activities, most schools organise the cleaning of school facilities done by students. This provides an opportunity for children to learn ways to collaborate with others and discipline themselves while helping to maintain a clean learning environment. In addition, there are guidelines on extracurricular activities, specifying time allocation for "creative experiential activities", including self-regulated activities, club activities, voluntary activities and career education.

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Abstract

Through the analysis of several Irish policies, from health and education sectors and national curricular frameworks related to all educational levels, including early childhood education and care (ECEC), it is evident that Ireland recognizes the relevance of addressing socioemotional well-being of children and adolescents. Educational

settings are acknowledged in Ireland as pivotal contexts to accomplish this goal. Beyond policy and curricular frameworks with a significant SEL component, a number of evidence-based intervention programmes were also identified as a relevant approach in Ireland to support children's socioemotional well-being.

I. Development

Socioemotional learning (SEL) is recognized as a priority to 21st-century education in Ireland, as stated by Boylan and colleagues (2019, p. 22): "SEL is firmly embedded as a component of educational discourse in Ireland with policy and curriculum documents regularly referencing the holistic development of children and young people, using a lexicon that reflects international discourse on SEL. There is a clear acknowledgment of the rationale for SEL and its necessity".

Byrne and colleagues (2020) underline several Irish national policy documents released in the last decade that have important implications for the design and development of policies and practices to enhance students' wellbeing in schools. These policy documents include: (1) Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The national policy framework for children and young people 2014–2020 (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014); and (2) Wellbeing policy statement and framework for practice 2018 to from 2023 (Department of Education and Skills, 2018). The first policy framework endorses "the societal importance of raising physically and emotionally healthy young people and the development of socioemotional skills in children and young people underpins the policy outcomes in a number of ways. For example, under Outcome 1 the need for children to develop protective factors such as resilience, self-esteem, good social networks and to engage in community participation is noted, while under Outcome 2 the second stated aim

is that children will have socioemotional wellbeing, which includes the capacity to self-regulate, to have empathy and to be emotionally resilient" (Boylan et al., 2019, p. 12). In its turn, the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice intends to provide "schools with a whole school, multicomponent and preventative approach to wellbeing promotion, based on international research and best practice" (DES, 2019, p. 34). As highlighted by Boylan and colleagues (2019, p. 16), this education policy builds on "existing guidelines and frameworks that address elements of wellbeing", such as Aistear (Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, 2009), and Wellbeing in Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (DES, HSE, & Department of Health, 2015a). The latter guidelines were developed by the National Educational Psychological Service with the purpose of complementing Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum and other current primary schools' good practices that addresses children's well-being and mental health taking into consideration a whole-school approach. Another relevant policy that is worth mentioning is the First 5 – an Irish Government ten-year policy strategy (2019-2028) to improve positive early experiences for all Irish children. One of its main goals is to support young children's positive mental health.

Young children's emotional well-being/literacy is one of the main topics of the Healthy Ireland Smart Start program, which draws on the

Healthy Ireland framework (Department of Health, 2013) and is promoted by a partnership between HSE Department of Health Promotion and Improvement and the National Childhood Network (an Irish national voluntary organisation). This national program intends to promote young children's healthy lifestyle behaviours by providing information, training and resources to providers from preschools services across Ireland.

In what concerns Irish curricular frameworks related specifically to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings that are attended by children from birth to 6 years of age, which encompasses the junior infant (four-year-olds) and the senior infant (five-year-old) classes in the first two years of primary schools, Boylan and colleagues (2019, p. 22) stresses that "the curricular framework in ECEC settings places a very notable emphasis on the holistic development of the child and resonates to a very considerable degree with the aims and objectives of SEL." Indeed, Síolta (National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education) and Aistear (Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, 2009), two important frameworks in ECEC, endorse the importance of educational settings of promoting young children's socioemotional developmental domains (Boylan et al., 2019). For instance, two of the themes covered in Aistear are (1) Well-being

(e.g., Aim 1: Children will be strong psychological and socially), and (2) Identity and Belonging (e.g., Aim 1: Children will have strong self-identities and will feel respected and affirmed as unique individuals with their own life stories; Aim 2: Children will have a sense of group identity where the links between their family and community are acknowledged and extended; Aim 3: Children will be able to express their rights and show an understanding and regard for the identity, rights and views of others; Aim 4: Children will see themselves as capable learners).

Regarding infant classes (first two years of primary school), since its introduction in 2009, primary school teachers should use the Aistear curriculum framework to complement and extend the areas of Primary School Curriculum (DES, 1999a). While Aistear emphasises holistic and integrated learning, the primary school curriculum is more subject-based, presenting the content of children's learning through divided curriculum areas, and allocating time for specific subject areas (Gray & Ryan, 2016). The Primary School Curriculum has seven curriculum areas, including SPHE, where SEL contents can be taught (Boylan et al., 2019). The SPHE curriculum is divided into three strands: Myself, Myself and others, and Myself and the wider world. Resources (e.g., lesson plans) to support SPHE curriculum are available for teachers (DES, 1999b).

II. Assessment

Both Aistear and SPHE curriculum consider assessment as an important component for improving children's learning opportunities in educational settings. Therefore, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) provides guidelines for good practice regarding assessment to help practitioners to enhance children's learning and development across Aistear's themes (http://www.ncca.biz/Aistear/pdfs/Guidelines_ENG/Assessment_ENG.pdf). SPHE curriculum also includes information about the key roles of assessment and the most appropriate tools teachers could use. "Assessment in SPHE guides the teacher in improving the learning experience Both Aistear and SPHE curriculum consider assessment as an important component for improving children's learning opportunities in educational settings. Therefore, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) provides guidelines for good practice regarding assessment to help practitioners to enhance children's learning and development

across Aistear's themes (http://www.ncca.biz/Aistear/pdfs/Guidelines_ENG/Assessment_ENG.pdf). SPHE curriculum also includes information about the key roles of assessment and the most appropriate tools teachers could use. "Assessment in SPHE guides the teacher in improving the learning experiences for the child and in continually refining and developing the programme to suit individual needs, interests and abilities" (DES, 1999b, p. 8).

The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (DES, 2018) requires that all schools by 2023 should develop and implement a Wellbeing Promotion Process with the support of the School Self-Evaluation, also including assessment of the interventions' impact. Note also that the Circular to Management Authorities of all Primary Schools (Circular No. 0042/2018 from the Department of Education and Skills, which provides best practice guidelines in the use of programs and/or external facilitators in promot-

ing wellbeing) highlights, among other issues, that the evaluation of impact should be implemented by schools who use well-being promotion programs.

Finally, it is important to note that socioemotional development and wellbeing are one of the main domains assessed over time in *Growing up in Ireland* – a longitudinal study that follows the development trajectories of two Irish represen-

tative cohorts of children: an Infant Cohort and a Child Cohort. Specifically, this study collected data about different aspects of children's social and emotional well-being during their first 5 years of life (N = 11 100) such as behaviour, and social skills (e.g., assertiveness, empathy, and self-control). The main goal of this study is to inform Government policies.

III. Intervention

In Ireland, "the curriculum at all levels affords opportunities to embed SEL and teach social and emotional skills in formal education using a variety of approaches" (Boylan et al., 2019, p. 22). Evidence-based intervention programs are considered one of the approaches to promote SEL (Boylan et al., 2019; DES, HSE, & Department of Health, 2015b). Therefore, it is noteworthy to highlight some universal SEL programs that have already been or are being delivered in Irish educational settings for children up to 7 years of age. For example, Buddy Bench Ireland (<https://buddybench.ie>) is a non-profit organisation that offers children's mental health initiatives for schools, including Buddy Bench Aware Program (BBAP) – a series of universal and age-appropriate intervention programs that intends to enhance "a culture of self-expression, listening, tolerance, resilience, and mutual support" (Quinn & McGilloway, 2018, p. 4). For preschool children, the BBAP includes the Little Buddies (3-6 years). Since 2015, this new and emergent intervention program has been delivered to about 222 Irish primary schools. Preliminary findings from a pilot study, which assessed the perceived effectiveness of the BBAP in several primary schools, revealed that BBAP was well received by children, parents, and teachers (Quinn & McGilloway, 2018).

The Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management Training Program (IYTP; originally developed in the USA, and later implemented in other European countries) and the Zippy's Friends

(originally developed in the UK), two well-known universal interventions, have also been implemented in Irish primary schools. The IYTP aims to promote teachers' classroom management competences and children's social and emotional skills. Findings from a group randomised controlled trial, conducted with teachers and children of Junior or Senior Infant classes (the first and second year of primary school respectively), revealed that high-risk children improved their behaviour in the classroom as reported by teachers (Hickey et al., 2015). In its turn, Zippy's Friends, another universal school-based program for children aged 5 to 8 years of age, intends to help young children cope better with everyday adversities. In Ireland, this program was piloted with children (7-8 years) from disadvantaged primary schools as part of SPHE curriculum. When compared with the control group, children from the intervention group showed significant improvements in a number of emotional literacy skills (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and social skills), which were also observed in a 12-month follow-up.

Lastly, to our best knowledge, Fun Friends (4-7 years), a school-based anxiety prevention and resilience-building program, originally developed in Australia, is also being implemented in Irish primary schools by trained teachers with the support of psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (Department of Education, n.d.).

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Abstract

In Italy, the implementation of social and emotional skills (SES) programmes is recent, often aimed at enhancing a specific skill rather than working in parallel on all five interrelated skills

identified by the CASEL (CASEL, 2021) model, namely: self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, making decisions responsibly.

I. Development

The Italian kindergarten (3-6 years) is organised by children's experience fields, rather than subjects, and aims to develop various skills and competences, including socio-emotional ones, as required by the National Guidelines of the Ministero dell'Istruzione, Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca, **MIUR** (Minister of Education, University and Research) and by European Parliament, considering that they contribute to the construction of children's identity, autonomy, and competence and initiate them to citizenship.

In 2020, a research (Stringher, 2020/07/15) in kindergartens was carried out for the first time by the INVALSI (INVALSI, 2021) organisation of the Ministry of Education (see section II, assessment). INVALSI is a research body with legal personality under public law that has collected, in a long and constant process of transformation, the legacy of the European Education Centre (**CEDE**, Centro Europeo dell'Educazione), which

was established in the early seventies of the last century. The research includes the assessment of all areas of the school, including the development of SES.

No "measurement tests" were used, however, the teachers' perception of children's development are privileged. This research analysed the educational and teaching practices at the national level for the first time, highlighting how it is necessary to develop the skills of teachers in reading data during self-assessment and teacher training. The research has shown that kindergartens give great importance to the development and well-being of the child, and that the professionalism of educators is increasingly shifting from aspects of care to an all-round reflection on well-being, involvement, development and the learning of the children. In Italy there are pilot experiences on SES / social and emotional learning (SEL) development and measurement (see below, section III - intervention).

II. Assessment

In Italy, the evaluation of educational institutions is the task of INVALSI (INVALSI, 2021). The evaluation and quality aspects of the school system, evaluation and quality aspects of the school system are already structured and tested for schools, while evaluation in pre-school institutions is in an experimental phase. In preschools, the evaluation system is based on self-assessment.

The 2020 research shows that there is a limited use of accredited tools for measure the well-being and the development of children: 53.2% of teachers declare that they do not use any formalised tool to detect areas of interest, well-being and development of children, 20% say they detect children's interests and inclinations, and 23% of them are using formalised tools.

The research also shows that there are few trainings offered to teachers for the observation of children with self-assessments provided.

As mentioned above, building on teachers' perceptions, children's development, including SES, can be documented through the evaluation process.

III. Intervention

One intervention described by Cavioni and Zanetti, called **CON LA TUA MANO** (Cavioni & Zanetti, 2015), and implemented in the North of Italy with children of 5 years of age, had followed children during the transition from kindergarten to primary school. The programme included 10 weekly meetings, one hour a week, in which, through familiar situations, children could understand the basic emotions, the causes that usually activate them and the consequences, and how to self-regulate in the management of emotions.

The study on the effectiveness of the programme was carried out by making measurements before and after intervention, when the children were still in the last year of pre-primary school, and also after 1 year (Follow up 1), and 18 months from the pre-test (Follow up 2), when the children attended the first grade of primary school. At each measurement, the tools used were the following:

- to measure the understanding of emotions, the Test of Emotion Comprehension (Pons, 2005) calibrated for children from 3 to 11 years of age and in this case administered directly to children by researchers;
- to measure the general level of emotional adaptation and relationships with adults and peers, the evaluation (Rosario Montirosso, 2007) calibrated for children from 2.5 to 6.5 years of age and used here in the version for teachers; for the measurement of emotional difficulties and behavioural (emotional symptoms, behavioural problems, inattention / hyperactivity, or ADHD, problems with peers) and prosocial behaviours. The Italian Version of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Tobia, Gabriele, & Marzocchi, 2013) was completed here by the parents.

Another significant programme, implemented in 2015, uses a conversational path to promote the development of the emotional vocabulary, knowledge of basic emotions and behaviour prosocial in nursery children. The programme, developed by the group research from Ilaria Grazzani of the University of Milan Bicocca, uses

conversation in a small group and, takes inspiration from the stories told in the book L'EMOZIANANTE MONDO DI CIRO E BEBA (The exciting world of Ciro and Beba) (Agliaiti, Brazzelli, Gandelini, Grazzani, & Ornaghi, 2015) to promote knowledge about the three main components of socio-emotional competence, namely expression, understanding and the regulation of emotions, as well as cooperative behaviours and help.

The book presents eight stories that have a couple of bunnies acting as protagonists, Ciro and Beba, who live a series of adventures in which rabbits feel frightened, happy, angry, or sad. The stories always follow the same format: after the scene is set, a critical situation causes a particular emotion and prosocial action, which is required to resolve the crisis.

The nurseries' teachers participated previously in special training for a period of 3 months and received guidelines for conducting the reading.

Researchers used an experimental method and an observational paradigm to evaluate the effectiveness, working with small groups (one educator to four to six children), to encourage the exchange between children.

The DREAM Project (Development and Run-test of an Educational Affective Model) (Silva et al., 2019; <http://dream-edu.eu>) lasting three years (2016-2019), cofounded by EU in the framework of the ERASMUS+ programme and coordinated by the University of Florence (Department of Education, Languages, Interculture, Literature and Psychology), proposed an in-service training on emotions and tools in the educational contexts addressed to children 0 to 3 years of age, in kindergarten and primary school.

The project focused mainly on the teachers' knowledge on SES, and – thanks to the focus group involving educators and teachers – there methodologies for detecting and measuring children' SES in education from birth to 10 years were analysed.

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Kazakhstan

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Abstract

The inclusion of children's early social and emotional skills (SES) in the preschool curriculum is a relatively new, albeit essential, focus of preschool education in Kazakhstan. SES is defined and monitored by state institutions. However,

no information was found during this literature search on SES programmes, curricula or evaluation of such, even though several are known to be running in the country.

I. Development

Kazakhstan maintains an integrated early childhood education and care (ECEC) system. The Ministry of Health Care and Social Development is responsible for children under 1 year of age, and the Ministry of Education and Science - for all children in ECEC between 1 and 6 years of age (Adamson & Litjens, 2016).

Kazakhstan has a centralised system with federal standards and curricula frameworks. Monitoring and financing are divided between national, regional and local authorities (Adamson & Litjens, 2016). In 2020, a new conceptual framework for pre-school education was developed. It includes updated goals, tasks, values and principles ("Концепция модели развития дошкольного

воспитания" / "The concept of the developmental model of preschool education"). One of the main features is the replacement of old academic instruction centred practices with a more child-centred approach.

Additionally, SANA, the Centre for Scientific and Applied Psychology, specialises in studying, developing and implementing SES skills training for the Kazakh education system. This organisation has developed a programme called SANA skills, adapted to the Kazakh cultural context. This programme considers the most innovative developments in the SES training and is created in collaboration with international and local experts.

II. Assessment

ECEC practices are scrutinised against national standards. The monitoring responsibilities in Kazakhstan are shared between federal and local authorities. The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for monitoring at the national level. However, it works along with the territorial departments of education and the control of education in the country's fourteen regions and two major cities. In addition, service and staff quality are typically scrutinised via external inspections and internal self-evaluations.

Child development is monitored continuously, with the same areas and competencies monitored throughout preschool. The tools used for assessment, based on age and skill evaluation,

vary from checklists and scales to screenings and narrative assessments.

Direct assessments test children at a certain point in time. In contrast, narrative evaluations and observational tools survey children's development, including socio-emotional skills and autonomy, both assessed by observations and narrative assessments on an ongoing basis. Funding for monitoring ECEC services comes from national and municipal (local) public funds (Adamson & Litjens, 2016).

However, detailed information on the assessment process and results from previous years are not available online in English.

III. Intervention

There are several model curricula in place that explain what subjects and skills children should be taught and the objectives and expectations of ECEC. In 2009, the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan approved three model curricula (Algashky Kadam, or First Step; Zerek Bala, or Smart Child; and Biz Mektepke Baramyz; or We Go to School). Each ECEC setting is expected to adopt one of these frameworks. These frameworks aim to ensure that children are psychologically prepared for primary school. In addition, they stimulate their intellectual and artistic capabilities, curiosity and imagination and communication skills.

These programmes are presented with additional educational materials available to both educators and parents, such as a teacher's study guide, reading books/samplers, didactic materials and A-B-C copy books (Kazakhstan, 2014).

In addition to these curricula, the order issued by the Ministry also sets minimum regulatory standards regarding group size, sanitation, and health and safety. Hence, while no quality framework has been officially developed, minimum regulatory standards for ECEC settings and the government-approved curriculum frameworks implicitly define quality ECEC (Adamson & Litjens, 2016).

The State standards for preschool education define socialisation as a process of a child's entry into the social environment through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities, norms, rules necessary for a full life in society. With this, the importance of several areas has been highlighted. Educators are given an overview of the methods and techniques of social interaction that a child needs to master in preschool, along with a set of measures aimed at the physical, intellectual and emotional development of a child from birth to 3 years of age (Государственный общеобязательный стандарт дошкольного

воспитания и обучения [с изменениями и дополнениями от 05.05.2020 г.] / State obligatory standard of preschool education and training [with amendments and additions from 05.05.2020]).

Preschool education in Kazakhstan aims to develop children's skills in both social and academic settings. Part of the curriculum is dedicated to developing skills in a group setting, such as group communication, team-working, mutual respect and adherence to social norms, and self-control, with an accent on controlling one's impulses and desires. This curriculum encourages children to express their feelings and emotions, which in turn helps educators instruct them on how to regulate their emotional states in various situations. Preschool is also a place where children learn how to establish supportive relationships. Moreover, educators work along with children to help them learn not only positive peer-to-peer communication but also that with adults (both acquaintances and strangers).

To achieve those goals, educators stimulate a positive psychological environment in the group. As a result, children are nurtured to express themselves both independently and with their peers. They receive no condemnation but are often stimulated with both words and expressions of encouragement. Peers and adults participate in joint activities, and children are presented with stimulating problems and novel situations that help them master new skills and ways of interaction (Программа - Методические рекомендации для педагогов по определению уровня сформированности у детей раннего возраста социальных навыков и навыков самообучения, Нур-Султан, 2019, с. 21 / Programme - Guidelines for teachers on determining the level of formation of social skills and self-learning skills in young children, Nur-Sultan, 2019, p. 21).

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Abstract

The main focus of preschool education in Kosovo is to provide opportunities for all children to attend preschool education. Kosovo has legislation related to laws of preschool education, standards and curriculum, and in the organisation of preschool education in the public and private sectors. The main challenges in this realm include providing access to preschool institutions for children from rural areas, vulnerable children and minority children, as well as organising adequate university training for professional staff. The main strategic objective for preschool edu-

cation is to provide inclusiveness and participation of all children in preschool education.

Related to this state of preschool education and goals for the future period, Kosovo does not have specific, systematic, evidence-based programmes for the intervention and assessment of developmental skills in preschool children, as well as specific programmes for the intervention and assessment of social and emotional skills (SES).

I. Development

Education is one of the universal rights, and involvement of children in preschool education is recognized as a fundamental right of the child at the earliest age. Since 2015, the Law on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo made preschool education compulsory. Preschool education in Kosovo can be organised in school as a preschool class from 2-3 hours per day, in private and public kindergartens or preschool classes in the Community Based Centres, which are funded by the community and different donors (KOMF, 2014).

Reform of the education system in Kosovo represents an integral part of the overall changes in society. The education policy in Kosovo has transformed into modern processes with the goal of faster economic and social development, which implies the adaptation of the education policies to modern tendencies. The reforms in Kosovo have resulted with the adoption of important documents (Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System and the Law on Preschool Education; Education Development Strategy until 2020) which support improving the quality of

educational, self-evaluation and external evaluation systems and established basic conditions for better access to quality and diverse preschool programmes. Related to these changes, the policies of preschool education, administrative instructions and the situation in practises do not match. The conditions for the implementation of the new curriculum are inadequate, because there is a lack of basic funds for the implementation of the curriculum (Ajvazi-Rama, 2019). Over the last year, Kosovo has increased the involvement of children in preschool institutions, and this was achieved mainly through private institutions. Generally, access for children in preschool education in Kosovo is low, especially in rural municipalities where it has been found that there is a lack of parental awareness regarding the importance of preschool education, learning and early childhood development. The other problem is the gap between services and non-majority communities like Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians and their social inclusion.

II. Assessment

To our knowledge, there are no specific and unique assessment measures for social and emotional skills at national level.

III. Intervention

The overview of literature shows no data in regards to the national systematic and certified programme of social and emotional learning for children. The goals and main activities related to preschool education in Kosovo are focused on increasing the number of children who attend

preschool education, ensure inclusion of vulnerable groups and minorities (Roma, Egyptian, children with special needs etc.) and provide necessary resources and support of professionals in preschool institutions to implement new curriculums and methodologies of learning.

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Abstract

In September 2020, schools in Latvia started to gradually implement the new national curriculum for all ages, which takes a competence approach to curriculum (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020). Social and emotional learning (SEL) are considered to be important to gain certain transversal skills like critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and entrepreneurship, self-regulated learning, collaboration, civic participation and digital competence (SEED Project Consortium, 2018). More specifically, in recent years Latvia started with the implementation of The Latvia SEL program. Theoretical insights from current SEL programs in other countries were used as the foundation of this program (Martinsone, 2016). Latvia takes an integrated approach to the implementation of SEL into the curriculum. SEL is implemented into everyday teaching practices in every subject (Ferreira, Martinsone & Talic, 2020). The Latvia SEL program is a preventive, universal school-wide program from 1st to 12th grade, including

pre-school. Well-developed and structured SEL sessions of 40 minutes are implemented by the classroom teacher. It was concluded that a program persistently facilitating the development of social and emotional skills would be very important for all children, but perhaps even more so for children with learning difficulties, because the behavioural and emotional problems could be both contributing factors as well as sequel of the learning difficulties (Martinsone, 2016, p. 59). There was no literature found about an assessment tool for social and emotional skills of the SEL programme in Latvia. Generally, to assess the quality of education in Latvia, observation based on a checklist is one of the methods recommended by educational guidelines for ECEC in Latvia. The programme itself has been evaluated on different levels with a focus on how the programme is implemented, what teachers need to implement in practice and how they perceive the programme.

I. Development

Children can enter pre-school education (ECEC) in Latvia at 18 months of age as a preparation for primary school. Different types of preschool educational institutions offer pre-school education, like kindergartens or special pre-primary classes at general education institutions such as primary schools. For children 5 to 6 years of age, and who do not attend pre-school education institutions, it is compulsory to participate in pre-primary education programmes. About 85 % of children attend preschool educational institutions in Latvia. (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019) According to the Educational Guidelines, play is the most important pedagogical activity in the preschool. There should be a balance between play, which should be purposefully organised or indirectly directed by the teacher and children's free play, both indoors and outdoors (SEED Project Consortium, 2018, p. 23).

Latvia guarantees a free public ECEC place for every child from as early as 1 year and 6 months of age, which is when the universal legal entitlement to publicly subsidised ECEC starts. However, maternity leave with an allowance of 80% of previous earnings is granted for only 16 weeks. Afterwards, a parental allowance with two options is available: until the child is 1 year of age (32 weeks) with 60% of the previous salary allowance; or until the child is 18 months of age (58 weeks) with 44% of the previous salary allowance. Most parents choose to take care of their child at home or turn to informal childcare solutions (relatives, nannies) (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019).

As a member of the international community, Latvia has made the commitment to achieve collective goals and participate in shared actions in

the areas of education and skills. In this regard, the development of social and emotional skills, also known as non-cognitive skills, soft skills or character skills, are crucial (OECD, 2020). Social and emotional learning are considered to be important to gain certain transversal skills like critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and entrepreneurship, self-regulated learning, collaboration, civic participation and digital competence (SEED Project Consortium, 2018). In September 2020, schools in Latvia started to gradually implement the new national curriculum for all ages, which takes a competence approach to curriculum. (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020).

Before the development of the SEL programme, Rascevska, Razeva, Martinsone, Tubele, Vucenlzdans, & Vazne conducted an initial research study in 2012 on social exclusion risks in 25 Latvian schools. In this study, teachers addressed the problem of a large number of pupils with low academic achievement level and/or emotional and behaviour problems. One of the conclusions of the research study was that a programme supporting the development of social and emotional skills would be beneficial for all children, but even to a greater extent for children with learning difficulties (Martinsone, 2016).

The Latvian SEL programme, called "Social-emotional learning. Lesson plans for grades 1-12" (Martinsone et al., 2021), was developed as a universal and preventive school-wide programme

from 1st to 12th grade. The programme used theoretical insights and elements from existing SEL programmes in other countries. However, the programme has been designed and adapted to meet the needs of the specific sociocultural context of Latvia. (Martinsone, 2016). The goal of the Sociali emocionala audzināsana (SEA) programme is to "develop pupils' social and emotional competencies so that the pupils may effectively self-regulate their own emotions, communicate positively, set realistic goals and solve problems responsibly." (Martinsone, 2016, p. 61). The programme is built around four major themes that correspond to core competencies of social and emotional learning: emotional self-regulation, positive social interaction, setting realistic and positive goals, and problem solving (Martinsone, 2016). The programme is aimed at all pupils and is implemented in the entire school simultaneously. Well-developed and structured SEL sessions of 40 minutes are implemented by the classroom teacher. (Martinsone & Vilcina, 2017).

The SEL programme has two main goals: 1) to directly develop social emotional skills and 2) to promote a holistic approach to lesson management, setting an important goal for students by providing positive, growth-oriented feedback during lessons, reflecting on what knowledge and skills have been acquired, and ensuring students' self-assessment of what they have learned (Berzina & Martinsone, 2021, p.47).

II. Assessment

To our knowledge, no literature was found about an assessment tool for social and emotional skills of the SEL programme in Latvia. Generally, to assess the quality of education in Latvia, observation based on a checklist is one of the methods recommended by educational guidelines for ECEC in Latvia (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019, p.104). The external evaluation of ECEC settings for younger children operates according to a cyclical model in which all settings are evaluated at regular intervals specified top-level authorities. Educational guidelines from top-level authorities apply to centre-based settings across the whole ECEC phase. The guidelines are binding. Educational guidelines

from top-level authorities for centre-based settings also apply to home-based provisions (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019). There is also use of the national assessment tool to track students' physical health, social and emotional needs and other special needs. This would help identify ECEC institutions that may have a disproportionately larger share of at-risk children who may need additional support (OECD, 2020)

At programme-level: Two studies were found where the programme is already evaluated on how the programme is implemented, what teachers need to implement in practice and

how they perceive the programme. In a study of Martinsone (2016) and Martinsone & Vilcina (2017), the sustainability of the SEA programme was measured. Belows quotation shows how Martinsone describes the process:

• Assessment

An initial research in 25 schools in Latvia revealed insufficient social and emotional competences as one of the risk factors of social exclusion and school drop-out. Those findings approved the necessity of a targeted Social emotional learning program. (Martinsone, 2016, p.66);

• Development

The SEA program has been developed. The SEA program included a whole-school approach with the emphasis on 1) proactivity (aimed at all pupils, not only those struggling with different problems) and 2) sustainability (continuous implementation for more than several years). (Martinsone, 2016, p.66);

• Implementation

The SEA program was introduced and implemented in 39 schools at each grade level. Teachers completed the continuous education course 'social emotional learning in schools'. Regular group supervisions (led by program developers) for all 630 teachers were implemented. Afterwards the best SEA teachers from every region of Latvia were invited and prepared as SEA supervisors. Simultaneously, there was a cooperation with the program coordinators in local municipalities to create the network for maintaining achieved practice in subsequent years. (Martinsone, 2016, p.66);

• Evaluation

Statistically significant differences were found between the teachers' ratings in the schools, which implemented the SEA and other programs, and the control group. The teachers considered relationship quality, cooperation between teachers and pupils, and understanding of positive behaviour habits. (Martinsone, 2016, p.66), and;

• Reassessment/modification

In order to address the Teachers' perceptions of program effectiveness and sustainability seven focus groups were organised. Thematic analysis of the focus group discussions pointed to various benefits of the program, including a general dissemination of SEL principles, and teachers' reflections on the importance of their own active role in the process of social and emotional learning" (Martinsone, 2016, p.66).

The SEA programme is based on these findings respecting the importance of teachers' education, assistance during implementation, organising regular supervisions (provided by programme developers), strong cooperation with school principals/administration and the preparation of programme's consultants in local municipalities. Thus, the support network for the SEA programme sustainability was created with the hope that after the European funding expires, the involved schools will be able to sustain the practice at a similar standard (level of quality) (Martinsone, 2016; Martinsone & Vilcina, 2017).

At content level: the research of Berzina & Martinsone (2021) researched the link between the school climate and the SEL programme. The hypothesis was confirmed, finding that teachers who implemented the SEL programme would show a higher perceived school climate.

SEL implementation practices. (Ferreira, Martinsone & Talic, 2020, p.24).

A set of well-defined lesson plans together with additional materials relevant to all SEA topics are offered to the teachers. The Teacher's Handbook includes a theoretical framework of the SEA programme; detailed and structured lesson plans; CD with additional materials and a glossary of core concepts. (Martinsone, 2016, p. 61).

Social and emotional learning is implemented through practical skill-learning activities and participation in discussions, group work, role-plays, behaviour modelling, research, projects, actions and the prosocial activity projects. Each activity has a detailed plan with a clear goal and common structure.

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III. Intervention

Mostly, teachers implement specific programs, but they have difficulties in incorporating SEL into the regular curriculum (including kindergarten). Latvia has focused on the conceptual model of sustainable integration of SEL into everyday teaching practices in every subject (Ferreira, Martinsone & Talic, 2020). Some key principles are highlighted in the literature in order to promote successful and sustainable practice of

SEL at schools. SEL practices tend to occur within supportive contexts, acknowledging features of a broader community; to extend SEL beyond the classroom, finding time to implement SEL activities sufficiently and efficiently throughout the school; to ensure enough staff support and training; and finally, to use data to inform decision making, calling upon tools to assess students' outcomes, and tools to assess and support

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Abstract

Liechtenstein's education system is organised under the supervision of the state. This applies to both state schools and private schools (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2019). The main characteristics of Liechtenstein's education system has been influenced by the education system of the German speaking neighbouring countries, in particular, the education system from Switzerland (von Kopp, 2015).

Liechtenstein has a split system for the organisation of early childhood education and care (ECEC). The transition takes place from 4 years of age. From 4 months and up to 4 years of age, children can go to centre-based settings like Kindertagesstätte and Kinderkrippe. Home-based care is also possible (Tageseltern), but is less common. Childcare settings fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Culture and are supervised by the Office of Social Services. (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2019)

From 4 years of age, children are entitled to pre-primary education, which is provided in Kindergarten and is free of charge. Public kindergartens fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Education and Sport, while pri-

ivate kindergartens are the responsibility of the Office of Social Services within the Ministry of Social Affairs. Nearly all children from 4 to 5 years of age attend kindergarten for 2 years, which is provided for the purpose of pre-school education. The subsequent period of compulsory schooling is 9 years, starting with 5 years of primary school and continuing with 4 years of lower secondary school (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2019).

The pedagogic staff working in the childcare settings are trained at the vocational education level. The respective education is offered in Liechtenstein (or Switzerland) as a three year long vocational education. Staff working with younger children are not required to have more than an upper secondary qualification. The teaching profession and the respective requirement specifications for the various school levels are detailed in the relevant laws and ordinances. As there are no teacher training institutions in Liechtenstein, teachers are mainly trained in Switzerland and Austria (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2019).

system from Switzerland. Key elements such as types of school, requirements for teaching qualifications, terminology and curricula are closely tied to the ones in Switzerland (von Kopp, 2015).

Liechtenstein has a split system for the organisation of early childhood education and care. The transition takes place at 4 years of age. From 4 months and up to 4 years of age, children can attend centre-based settings like Kindertagesstätte and Kinderkrippe. Home-based care is also possible (Tageseltern), but is less common.

These types of provisions fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Culture. The child care settings are supervised by the Office of Social Services. Childcare is offered in half-day or full-day sessions, as well as on a more flexible, hourly basis ('short-term' care services). Childcare services are intended to encourage a better life-work balance for families, support the integration and socialisation of children, and support the development of children. Parents are free to choose which type of public or private services for childcare (child day-care facilities, day-care parents, playgroups) they want for their children. The guidelines for assessing young children have been issued by the National Association for Care Services (Verein Kindertagesstätten). These are centred around personal, emotional, physical, language and social development (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2019). The Office for Social Affairs determines the maximum number of children per staff member based mainly on the age and special needs of children. An internal guideline states that groups should be mixed-age. An infant under 18 months of age is counted as 1.5 children. Further, there may not be more than three infants per group, and groups with infants only are not allowed. Staff working with younger children are not required to have more than an upper secondary qualification.

From 4 years of age, children are entitled to pre-primary education, which is provided in Kindergarten and is free of charge. Public kindergartens fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Education and Sport, while private kindergartens are the responsibility of the Office of Social Services within the Ministry of Social Affairs. Almost all children from 4 to 5

years of age attend kindergarten for 2 years. In 2019, the participation rate of children from 4 to 5 years of age was 99% (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019). Enrolment is voluntary for most children. However, once a child has been registered, attendance becomes compulsory. Further, for children whose first language is not German, attendance for the second year is obligatory. They receive German language training to prepare them for primary school (von Kopp, 2015). Parents can also make use of additional childcare services along with the time spent at Kindergarten. Children can attend before and after kindergarten's opening hours, as well as during lunchtime (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019).

The National Curricula for the kindergarten, primary and secondary schools include general education goals, and learning goals and contents. These are developed at separate levels and for the different departments and subject areas, as well as the total number of lessons for separate levels, and the number of lessons in the individual departments and subjects. The National Curricula provides teaching that is oriented towards specific learning outcomes and to an outcome-based assessment of the children (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019).

The teaching profession and the respective requirement specifications for the various school levels are detailed in the relevant laws and ordinances. As there are no teacher training institutions in Liechtenstein, teachers are mainly trained in Switzerland and Austria (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019).

I. Development

Liechtenstein is a constitutional monarchy in Europe. It has a surface of 160 square kilometres and a population of 38,000 inhabitants. The government is Liechtenstein's highest executive body. The education system is organised under the supervision of the state. This applies to both state schools and private schools (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2019). The main characteristics of Liechtenstein's education system have been influenced by the education system of the German speaking neighbouring countries, in particular, the education

II. Assessment

We did not find information regarding the assessment of children in educational settings in Liechtenstein.

There were no useful hits for the keyword Liechtenstein. The keywords below were used to search for more information:

- Social and emotional skills
- Policy welfare and education
- Wellbeing
- SEL AND Liechtenstein AND ECEC
- Skills development in ECEC
- SEL AND Liechtenstein policy

III. Intervention

We did not find information regarding the intervention of children in educational settings in Liechtenstein.

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Lithuania

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Abstract

Regardless of the global recognition, especially in Lithuania (not sure if necessary; see below), for how important the role of early years education is for a child's development of socioemotional competences, as well as the support for recent research/the recent support for conducting research in Lithuania that highlights the importance of emotional education in those early years for achievement in later school years, there is still a lack of practical recommendations, par-

ticularly for children under 7 years of age who attended early childhood education settings in Lithuania. Although (if removing 'especially in Lithuania': Lithuania recognizes the importance of early childhood socioemotional education, which is seen in some initiatives/initiatives that were found,) some initiatives/initiatives were found in these regards, little information about the assessment and implementation of these processes are available in English.

I. Development

In Lithuania, the Law on Education states that children under seven years of age can enrol in nursery school and kindergarten. Early childhood education and care is referred to as "preschool education" for children from birth through 6 years of age, and as "pre-primary education" for those who are 6 to 7 years of age. Since 2016, one year of pre-primary education has become compulsory in Lithuania (OECD, 2017).

Lithuania shares a tradition of concern with promoting the structural dimensions of early childhood education (ECE) quality (e.g., adequate space, group sizes, staffing, facilities, and hygiene), as well as a focus on the importance of preschool education for a child's cognitive, emotional and social skills development. Although preschool education is not mandatory, there are state level recommendations on what a preschool education curriculum must include. More specifically, pre-primary education has a nationally approved general curriculum that focuses on the development of general competencies such as a child's social, health, cognitive, communication and artistic skills. Additionally, the national level curriculum for pre-primary education in Lithuania underlines the need to consider the development of the children's emotional intelligence, as well as children's psycho-emotional

state, (Educational Guidelines | Eurydice (europa.eu). However, we note that despite such recommendations, each preschool education provider can freely decide on how to design its own curriculum.

In Lithuania, the implementation of socioemotional programmes in early childhood education are scarce and mostly dependent on local initiatives. Although the ECE targets children from 0 to 7 years of age, and aims for developing children's cognitive, emotional and social skills, there are only national level recommendations on what the curriculum must include for children from 6 to 7 years of age, such as pre-primary education. For preschool education, which includes children from 0 to 6 years of age, centres are free to decide on what to include in the curriculum, which can lead to high variability in the teachers' practices for promoting children's socioemotional skills. Although there is little information available, and no national level initiatives were found, some local initiatives for promoting children's social and emotional skills in preschool contexts in Lithuania are described, such as the one carried out by the public company "Vaiko la-bui".

II. Assessment

Some evaluation practices are found regarding the programmes being implemented in Lithuania for promoting preschoolers' social and emotional skills. For instance, the programme Zippy's Friends was evaluated on several occasions through an independent entity to ensure implementation fidelity, as well as to assess its impact on children's socio-emotional skills. The results showed that the programme significantly im-

proved the children's ability to cope with daily difficulties, strengthened cooperation, and reduced behavioural problems (e.g., Mishara & Ystgaard, 2006; Monkevičienė, 2014; Monkevicienė et al., 2006; Zipio draugai | Vaiko labui). Regarding the other programmes, to our knowledge, data on the impact of such programmes on children's competencies is not available in research papers published in English.

III. Intervention

Some local initiatives can be found for promoting children's social and emotional skills in preschool contexts in Lithuania. For instance, the public company "Vaiko labui" has been implementing the international early prevention programme of emotional and behavioural problems 'Zippy's Friends' in Lithuania, since the 2000/2001 school year (e.g., Mishara & Ystgaard, 2006; Monkevičienė, 2014; Monkevicienė et al., 2006). The programme Zippy's Friends in Lithuania can be attended by all children under 5 years of age, including children with disabilities. According to "Vaiko labui" information (Zipio draugai | Vaiko labui), over 229,000 children and over 5,000 teachers have been involved with the programme in several municipalities across the country. This programme was included in the

National Programme for Prevention and Assistance to Violence against Children from 2008 to 2010, and the government of Lithuania recommends its implementation in preschool educational settings. In 2020, the programme is being implemented in several municipalities.

Besides Zippy's Friends, preschoolers' social and emotional skills in Lithuania are also developed through the implementation of the Antras žingsnis (Second Step; International Reach | Committee for Children (cfchildren.org) programme since 2004. From 2017 to 2018, about 1,000 teachers were using this programme (Nuo kitų mokslo metų mokyklose – keturios naujos prevencinės programos | KaunoDiena.lt).

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Luxembourg

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Abstract

The Ministry of National Education, Children and Youth is responsible for the Early childhood education and care (ECEC) services in Luxembourg. It is also responsible for the pedagogical principles and educational framework for early ECEC of both formal and non-formal preschooling.

Luxembourg explicitly monitors children's development of socio-emotional skills by implementing a wide range of monitoring practices for the services provided and quality of the staff. However, some challenges remain, such as the absence of the children's view in the assessment.

I. Development

In Luxembourg Early Education and Care is provided in two types of systems, depending on the age of the children. From birth up to 4 years of age, children are welcomed in crèches, which are run by the (local) government, municipalities or commercial initiatives, under private law. Small crèches are small settings with a limited number of children and staff. There is also the option of 'home-based provision,' where childminders, also known as parental assistants, are self-employed and look after children in their homes.

The second type of ECEC-setting is part of the educational system. From 3-years of age, children have the legal right to be enrolled in the elementary school system, which consists of three years. The first year is optional, while the second and third years are mandatory. That means that preschool is compulsory for children from 4-years of age. The optional year, and the two following mandatory years, constitute the first cycle of education: pre-primary education. Each municipality is responsible for providing children with a place in elementary school, and children are expected to attend school on a regular basis. Public education is provided free of cost.

In Luxembourg, the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse) is responsible for ECEC. It sets out the pedagogical principles of ECEC for collective childcare facilities and elementary education.

For the collective childcare facilities, there is a national framework on non-formal education in

childhood and adolescence from 0 to 12 years of age (Cadre de référence nationale sur l'éducation non formelle des enfants et des jeunes). It dates from 2017, and three of the four main annexes focus on ECEC. The use of this reference framework is mandatory for all facilities that are subsidised by the government.

For cycle 1 of elementary school, the pedagogical guidelines are published in the study plans of the four cycles of elementary school (Plan d'études de l'école fondamentale). It covers children between 3 to 12 years of age in formal education, including early childhood education programmes and compulsory preschool education. The study plan specifies the foundational skills that have to be attained by the end of each cycle. The study plan has a binding character, also for the first cycle.

ECEC services (0-3 years): the national framework on non-formal education specifies the age-specific characteristics, the role of pedagogues, and the framework and context of educational processes and the action areas for non-formal education.

Children and young people are characterised as follows:

- They are capable individuals and each person has a unique (educational) background;
- They are social and cultural beings;
- They are equal members of society. (Cadre de référence nationale sur l'éducation non formelle)

des enfants et des jeunes, 2017)

The focus lies on the competences developed in three areas:

- Self-determination
- Participation in social development
- Responsibility. (Cadre de référence nationale sur l'éducation non formelle des enfants et des jeunes, 2017)

The main fields of action that are specified in the framework are emotions, social relations, language, communication and values, such as democracy, participation and interculturality.

The key values in the framework are comprised of inclusion, diversity and multilingualism (Cadre de référence nationale sur l'éducation non formelle des enfants et des jeunes, 2021).

In the study plan for cycle 1 of elementary education, the areas of development and learning are specified. In addition to domains such as language and mathematics, the focus also lies on the development of social and emotional skills. These transversal skills contain relational and emotional attitudes.

II. Assessment

Luxembourg implements a range of monitoring practices in ECEC, with variations across settings. ECEC and early education provisions for family day care and day care centres are monitored by regional officers. Early educational programmes and preschool education fall under the responsibility of the Ministry, and are monitored by national inspectors.

The inspections and self-assessments are used to assess services and staff. To monitor the quality of the services, the focus lies on a broad spectrum of areas, ranging from structural aspects, hygiene and health, materials used, safety guidelines, and planning, time management and curriculum implementation.

In formal ECEC settings, inspectors use tools such as observations, interviews, and the analysis of internal documentation. Sometimes, the results of self-evaluation are taken into account. Regional officers also use these tools for monitoring non-formal ECEC-settings.

In general, children's views are not included in the monitoring process. It is also challenging to ensure that the monitoring informs policies and

practices. An increase in data and information collection could guarantee evidence-based policymaking.

The Grand-Ducal Regulation (2009) sets out the pupil assessment in the first cycle of elementary school. It determines the method of pupil assessment, and the content of the assessment portfolio in elementary education. During the first cycle, the assessment of the children is formative, based on observation and documentation of the child's behaviour, development and learning. The assessment is carried out by the teachers and the members of the pedagogical team. The main objective is to ensure that these competences of the child are attained in order to guarantee that the transition to the second cycle will be successful. At the end of the first cycle, the assessment becomes summative. In a variety of works, the child will demonstrate their competences in order to enter the second cycle.

Each child has a personal evaluation portfolio with a variety of documents illustrating their developments and competences. The assessment of children under 3 years of age is formative.

III. Intervention

Luxembourg supports the participation of all children in ECEC. Efforts are made to ensure there is free access for children to receive an education, especially for children under 3 years of age, and selected target groups in the population, such as those from low socio-economic backgrounds and vulnerable family status of the parents. Participation in the group from 0 to 2 years of age, and in the group from 3 to 5 years of age is notably higher than The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average.

Pre-primary school teachers are required to have four years of induction programme, and hold a Bachelor's degree.

In the Plan d'études école fondamentale (2011), learning goals are presented in various catego-

ries. Learning goals concerning language awareness (l'éveil aux langues), and moral and social education (La vie en commun et les valeurs, l'éducation morale et sociale), are explicitly included in the first cycle of formal education.

However, experts recommend prioritising actions that address segregation, as well as providing more focus towards/shifting the focus to aiding disadvantaged groups: 'Luxembourg needs to reform the basic educational structures and improve the educational quality and performance, particularly in the light of the continuing increase of children and youth not having one of the Luxembourg languages as their mother tongue' (Frazer & Marlier, 2014).

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Abstract

In the last decade, Maltese policymakers have increased their awareness on the importance of early childhood education and care (ECEC) for prospective (lifelong) learning. In this respect, their awareness for social and emotional skills (SES) development during early childhood has also been growing. The Centre for Resilience and Socio-Emotional Health of the University of Malta plays an important role in both research and (educational) projects on SES development in educational settings. With respect to early childhood education, RESCUR is a good practice.

The Early Years Cycle established by the Maltese Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE) covers the educational cycle from 0 to 7 years of age: non-compulsory childcare (0-3 years), non-compulsory Kindergarten (3-5 years) and the first two years of compulsory primary education (5-7 years). The regulation of Early Childhood Education and Care is the responsibility of the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, which is part of the Ministry for Education and Employment (Sollars, 2017).

I. Development

From 0 to 3 years of age, children in Malta are welcomed to enrol in non-compulsory childcare. Since 2014, childcare services are provided for free (Ministry for Education and Employment, 2014) to parents/guardians who are 'in work' or 'in education'. (<https://education.gov.mt>). Currently, childcare in Maltese is focusing on child development in a broad sense, "including social, emotional, physical, intellectual, communication and creativity", (<https://education.gov.mt>). From 3 to 5 years of age, children can attend two years of non-compulsory Kindergarten (KG1 and KG2), and from 5 years of age, primary education becomes compulsory.

In 2012, the 'National Curriculum Framework for All' identified five learning outcomes for the Early Years Cycle. In 2015, the Ministry for Employment and Education published a 'Toolkit for the Early Years Cycle (0-7 years)', elaborating on those five learning outcomes. The Toolkit serves as an educator's guide for pedagogy and assessment through the use of a learning outcomes approach. The Learning Outcomes Framework provided in the document does indeed relate to SES development through learning outcome 3 'Children are socially adept' and its related achievements:

- Children who are capable of establishing relationships with others (Level 1, 2, 3, 4);

- Children who develop empathy, respect and acceptance of different points of view (Level 1, 2, 3, 4);
- Children who learn to collaborate with peers and adults with diverse backgrounds and needs (Level 1, 2, 3, 4);
- Children who develop an awareness of the notions of fairness, a sense of justice and non-preferential treatment (Level 3 & 4).

Both pedagogy and assessment strategies are described for children from 0 to 3 years of age (childcare), as well as for children from 3 to 7 year of age. Regarding the latter group, the guide clarifies that "educators working in the Early Years, are responsible to document the cognitive, social and emotional development, the progress of learning, attainment, and behaviour of the children in their care" (Ministry for Education and Employment, 2015, p. 32). In the appendix, the guide explicitly refers to several authors and key concepts regarding SES development and implications for practice. Examples are Maria Montessori and Loris Malaguzzi (Reggio Emilia).

In 2006, the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity, together with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment, published the 'National Standards for Child Day Care Facilities'. The standards were considered to be essential in order to stimulate and strengthen children's "emotional,

social and educational developments" (Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity and Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment, 2006, p. 1). The fifth standard 'Care, Learning and Playing' clarified that the caregiver responds to both the physical and intellectual needs of the children, as well as their social and emotional needs. In 2021, the Ministry for Education published the 'National Standards for Early Childhood Education and Services (0-3 years)', referring to the abovementioned Learning Outcomes Framework, including learning outcome 3: 'Children are socially adept' (Ministry for Education, 2021).

In 2019, a 'National Inclusive Education Framework' was introduced by the Ministry of Education and Employment, which is applicable to educational settings in childcare centres, kindergartens and primary education. The Framework consists of 10 themes, of which 'Positive Behaviour Management' explicitly refers to guidelines for social and emotional skills development. For example, "Positive behaviour and social and emotional literacy are promoted at school"; "Prioritising social and emotional education"; "Awareness of emotions, caring, empathy, concern for others, positive relationships, making responsible decisions, impulse control, resolving conflict constructively are embedded in school curriculum". (Ministry of Education and Employment, 2019, p. 40)

II. Assessment

The Learning Outcome Framework ('Toolkit for the Early Years Cycle (0-7 years)') underlines that authentic assessment is preferred to effective assessment: "authentic assessment provides a broader, more holistic and genuine picture of the children's learning." (Department of Education and Employment, 2015, p. 30). The guide refers to the following examples of authentic assessment: observing individual children, or groups of children, journals (depending on the children's age), drawings, photos, artwork, portfolios, learning stories, audio and/or video tapes of children's learning and work samples showing ongoing growth and progress (Department of Education and Employment, 2015).

RESCUR adopts a "developmental and formative rather than normative and standardised assessment format" (Cefai et al., 2015, p. 29). With

Finally, in 2021, the Ministry of Education published a 'National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care'. According to the Policy Framework the curriculum should enhance both physical, social, emotional, cognitive, spiritual language and creative development. Moreover, children should be able to talk about their thoughts and feelings, and they should be acknowledged and valued by their caregiver/educator (learning experience). The learning environment has to stimulate the social competencies and general well-being of children, and provide a coherent learning atmosphere should promote positive behaviour towards each other and their caregivers/educators. (Ministry for Education, 2021).

The University of Malta is involved in several (research) projects aiming to develop/improve social and emotional skills in an educational context. Moreover, its Centre for Resilience & Socio-Emotional Health (CRES) is the publisher of the International Journal of Emotional Education in collaboration with the European Network for Social and Emotional Competence (ENSEC).

From 2012 to 2015, the Centre for Resilience & Socio-Emotional Health coordinated a LLP Comenius Project (2012-2015), resulting in RESCUR: a resilience curriculum for early years and primary schools through intercultural and transnational collaboration. For more information: see Good Practice RESCUR (Cefai, et al. 2015).

this, the creators of the project aim to reduce the risks of traditional achievement assessment, which typically results in a labelling process: 'resilient' or 'non-resilient'. Each theme (i. developing communication skills, ii. building healthy relationships, iii. developing a growth mindset, iv. developing self-determination, v. building on strengths and vi. turning challenges into opportunities), has its own checklist for teacher assessment and self-assessment (early primary and late primary education only). "The teacher assessment checklist has to be completed at the end of the specific theme" in order to assess whether the learning goals are adequately attained or still need some support (Cefai et al., 2015, p. 7).

III. Intervention

The RESCUR curriculum is “an inclusive, universal intervention programme targeting all learners in the classroom, but with activities reflecting the diversity of learners, particularly vulnerable children such as Roma children, migrant and refugee children, children living in poverty, and children with individual educational needs.” (Cefai et al., 2015 p. 14). It is a resilience curriculum for early years and primary schools that “proportionate universalism perspective” allows for all children to be engaged in the activities, and at the same to address the needs of those children with (potential) difficulties, without paying too much attention to their ‘difference’ (Cefai et al., 2018, p. 192).

The activities follow the SAFE approach: “a sequenced step-by-step approach (Sequenced), experiential and participative learning (Active), a focus on skills development (Focused), and explicit learning goals (Explicit)” (Cefai et al. 2018, p. 192). All activities share a common set-up: explicit learning goals and learning outcomes, a mindfulness activity, storytelling and processing, practical, multisensory activities, and a take home activity, which parents and children complete together (Cefai et al. 2018).

For more information on the specifics of the RESCUR programme, see ‘Good Practices RESCUR’.

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Montenegro

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Abstract

The literature view of nationally-based strategic documents of preschool education in Montenegro indicates that professionals and institutions are still working on promoting the importance of early childhood education and care (ECEC), improvement of infrastructure of preschool institutions and increasing the rate of enrolment children, in addition to improvement of inclusive strategies for Roma and Egyptian children, as well as children with special needs. Professionals in preschool institutions still do not have

appropriate measuring instruments for the assessment of social and emotional skills (SES) of preschool children, and there are no intervention programmes exclusively directed to social and emotional learning (SEL). The prevention and intervention programmes are related to the implementation of different projects and actions (coordination by UNICEF), and are available as a part of the existing Resource centres for education and training.

I. Development

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

Early childhood intervention programmes in Montenegro are related to the organisation of support for children with special needs. Early

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

II. Assessment

Currently, there is no systematic or evidence-based research related to evaluation of the programmes for social and emotional skills at the national or local level. However, handbooks for teachers developed as a part of the 'My Values and Virtues' project include materi-

als with specific guidelines for SEL as a part of each subject in primary or secondary schools, but not for preschoolers. The implementation of these or similar programmes and their evaluation through scientific and evidence-based form have not been found.

III. Intervention

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

ers, reports and workshops at the primary and secondary school level.

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

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Netherlands

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Abstract

In the Netherlands, social and emotional learning (SEL) is organised as a part of healthy lifestyle promotion education and active citizenship education (Diekstra, 2008). Social and emotional learning programmes are mainly referred to as "social skills training" or "life skills training programmes" (Cefai et al, 2018). There is no national curriculum in the Netherlands for childcare and primary education. For children from 0 to 4 years of age, a national pedagogical framework has been defined, which serves as the base for childcare centres to develop their own curriculum. Following a holistic approach, childcare has the task to ensure the physical, social, emotional and personal well-being of the child. Education and care are considered to be inseparable elements of pedagogical practice (OECD, 2016). Central goals are defined for primary education, which means that the core curriculum tends to be uniform. However, schools have the autonomy to choose their own teaching methods and learning materials to attain these goals. The most recent version of the curricular recommendations entails different learning areas related to 21st century skills like social and cultural skills, cooperation, self-regulation and communication. (SLO, 2020)

Different SEL interventions have been developed and implemented in the Netherlands. PAD -Programma Alternatieve Denkstrategieën was one of the first SEL programmes to be implemented in the Netherlands in the 1980s, (Van Overveld, 2017). Another programme in the field of SEL is Toppertraining (Kanjerttraining). The goal of the programme is to stimulate authentic and respectful social behaviour and well-being of children. The Peaceful School programme has been developed for primary schools to promote social competence and become democratic citizens. In 2014, an online SEL programme for schools Kwink (<https://www.kwinkopschool.nl/>) was launched. It is the first programme to integrate the five SEL competencies of CASEL (Van Overveld, 2017).

In order to improve the quality of education, the policy is stimulating evidence-based practice in schools (OECD, 2011). Schools can consult databases for the evaluation of the effectiveness of educational or youth intervention programmes, such as the Netherlands Youth Institute (NYI) and the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment.

I. Development

Social and emotional learning programmes are mainly referred to as "social skills training" or "life skills training programmes" in the Netherlands (Cefai et al, 2018). Although there is no exact data available about the actual number of schools that have been implementing SEL programmes Diekstra (2008) concludes that a substantial percentage, or perhaps, even a majority of the schools have been working with SEL programmes in one way or another. From the late 1980's, there was a growing awareness in the Netherlands about the role the educational system had to fulfil with regard to the social and emotional development of children. The increasing attention for the mental well-being of children was a direct consequence of the World Health Organization's definition of health that

states health is a complete state of physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease (Diekstra, 2008). From 2000 onwards, there was a rise in the number of SEL programmes for primary and secondary education (Van Overveld, 2017). Social and emotional learning is organised as a part of healthy lifestyle promotion education and active citizenship education (Diekstra, 2008). For this country overview, the focus is the promotion of social and emotional skills development in early childhood education and care.

In the Netherlands, children under 4 years of age can attend full day private childcare centres, or home based care provided by childminders. For children between 2 and 4 years of age, publicly

funded playgroups or early childhood education programmes intended for children at risk of educational disadvantages are provided. At 4 years of age, most children enter pre-primary education, which is located in a primary school setting. Compulsory education starts at 5 years of age, but nearly all children start school at 4 years of age, (Eurydice, s.d.).

There is no national curriculum in the Netherlands for childcare and primary education. For children from 0 to 4 years of age, a national pedagogical framework has been defined, which serves as the base for childcare centres to develop their own curriculum. This pedagogical framework defines four basic goals for childcare:

1. Provide a secure foundation;
2. Encouraging personal competence;
3. Promote social competence;
4. and Transferring norms and values.

(Slot, 2016).

Following a holistic approach, childcare has the task to ensure the physical, social, emotional and personal well-being of children. Education and care are considered to be inseparable elements of pedagogical practice (OECD, 2016). In 2018, a pedagogical curriculum for early childhood years was developed, which describes how childcare settings can work around the four basic goals for childcare. It is a research-based document that is a directive for childcare settings. The active role of educational professionals in the development of social and emotional skills ('soft skills') has been highlighted in the curriculum (Fukkink, 2017).

II. Assessment

In order to improve the quality of education, the policy is stimulating evidence-based practice in schools (OECD, 2011). Schools can consult databases for the evaluation of the effectiveness of educational or youth intervention programmes. The Netherlands Youth Institute (NYI) is an independent knowledge centre on growing up. They manage a database with youth interventions that provides school leaders and other professionals with accessible information on which youth interventions have been shown to be effective. Intervention programmes are described in a detailed manner and the descriptions include whether interventions are evidence-based

For primary education central goals are defined, which means that the core curriculum tends to be uniform. However, schools have the autonomy to choose their own teaching methods and learning materials to attain these goals. The National General Institute for Curriculum Development provides curricular suggestions in order to support school leaders. Since 2006, all primary and secondary schools are required to include education for active citizenship or civic engagement in their curriculum goals and activities. Civic education has three main goals: 1) fostering adjustment and the capacity for self-regulation; 2) Enhancing the ability to think independently and in a way that allows for constructive participation in democratic processes of discussion and decision-making; 3) Promoting social involvement and community orientation. As it became a formal requirement for schools to engage in civic education, schools (re) found their way to social and emotional learning programmes, (Diekstra, 2008). However, as a result of the freedom of education, no formal regulations regarding content and didactic forms have been formulated with regard to the development of social and emotional skills. Therefore, the differences between schools can vary tremendously. The national institute for curriculum development in the Netherlands (SLO) provides schools with information and tools to develop social and emotional learning. Looman and colleagues (2014), studied the importance of a whole school approach of social and emotional learning programmes in primary education. The most recent version of the curricular recommendations entails different learning areas related to 21st century skills like social and cultural skills, cooperation, self-regulation and communication (SLO, 2020).

with further information about the research. Another database conducted by the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment includes interventions that promote a healthy lifestyle. In this database, 79 interventions have the aim to promote the social and emotional development of children in primary education. However, a majority of the programmes are not clearly described, and therefore not replicable in another location. Ten out of seventy-nine interventions are assessed to be "theoretically well-grounded", "probable effective" or "proven effective" (Looman et al, 2014).

III. Intervention

PAD - Programma Alternatieve Denkstrategieën was one of the first SEL programmes in the Netherlands. It was first introduced in 1987 (Van Overveld, 2017), and is the Dutch version of the PATHS programme from the USA. PAD is a universal programme for children from 4 to 12 years of age. The aim of PAD is to increase the social-emotional competences of children in order to prevent behavioural problems. There are 4 central themes: 1) self-awareness; 2) self-regulation; 3) emotions; and 4) problem solving. PAD consists of 161 classroom lessons that are offered from grade 1 to grade 8. On average, a lesson of 30 to 45 minutes is given once or twice a week. In addition, there is daily time for processing what has been learned. The lessons consist of varied teaching methods. PAD is based on the ABCD Model of Development. According to this model, people develop optimally when feelings, behaviour and cognition are integrated (Affective-Behaviour-Cognitive). This integration is a lifelong and dynamic process (Dynamic). PAD has been certified as an effective intervention by The Netherlands Youth Institute. Another programme in the field of social and emotional learning is Toppertraining (Kanjertaining). In the training, a 'Topper' is defined as someone who is authentic, trustworthy, socially competent and respectful to others and him/herself, (Vliek, 2015). It is a preventive intervention programme for children between 4 and 16 years of age. The goal of the programme is to stimulate authentic and respectful social behaviour and well-being of children. In schools, the programme has the

aim to improve the classroom climate by stimulating positive relationships between the pupils and between the teacher and the pupils, (Vliek, 20210). For each age group, there are 10 lessons of one and a half hours that are given every other week. The methods include exercising social skills like dealing with bullying, role-plays (supported by wearing four caps), giving feedback to each other, and exercises in building confidence in oneself and in others. The lessons are given by the classroom teacher, after having received training from Toppertraining trainers. Teachers are motivated to use "topper language", and to fulfil a role model-like function. Four research studies have been conducted, three had a quasi-experimental design and one study followed a randomised control trial with a half-year follow-up. Following these studies, the NYI gives the Toppertraining programme the label "probable effective". The Peaceful School is a programme for primary schools to promote social competence and become democratic citizens. The programme targets five domains of social emotional development: self-awareness, social awareness, decision-making, self-management, and relationships. It includes social and emotional skills development in the context of civic education. In 2014, an online SEL programme for schools Kwink (<https://www.kwinkopschool.nl/>) was launched. It is the first programme to integrate the five SEL competencies of CASEL, (Van Overveld, 2017). The NYI gives the programme the label "theoretically well-grounded".

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Abstract

The overview of literature indicates that North Macedonia is currently reforming preschools, focusing on providing conditions for developing and implementing social and emotional learning (SEL) in preschool institutions. The assessment of preschool children is based on the observation of behavioural and developmental skills in relation to standards that include social and emotional skills achievements. There are no systematic or standardised tests for social and emotional skills (SES) at the national level, as well as nor any adopted programmes for SEL

in preschool institutions. Currently, there are efforts made by UNICEF, as well as other organisations, to develop a nationally based platform with different types of resources for teachers and parents. It is necessary for this platform to include SEL resources for preschool education. Also, non-government organisations, kindergarten, ministries and UNICEF all promote SEL and have implemented a programme “Peer Support Teachers” across the kindergartens at the national level.

I. Development

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) in North Macedonia provides care and education to children from birth until 6 years of age, however, it is not compulsory. Typically, children start attending preschool when they are 8 to 9 months of age. There are two types of centre-based ECEC settings: preschools (detska gradinka) which include nursery groups (jasli) for children under 3 years of age, and centres for early childhood development (centar za ran detski razvoj). Centre-based provision can be public or private. The enrolment rate of children from 3 to 6 years of age in 2019 was 40%, which is far lower than the European Union’s recommended level of 95%. Participation in preschool is also low across minority groups, showing only 2.6% of children 4 years of age from Roma communities attend preschool education. The Early Learning and Development

Standards specify what children from birth to 6 years of age should know, and be able to accomplish, across six developmental domains: physical health and motor development, social and emotional development, development of approaches to learning, language development, literacy and communication, and cognitive development and general knowledge acquisition. Home-based early childhood education and care is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, but is largely organised by local authorities. The provider needs to have specific qualifications, such as at least a high school diploma and a valid caregiver licence, and to follow the national regulations, which states that the maximum number of children per childminder is up to five children (EURYDICE, 2020).

II. Assessment

Child progress has been monitored through a teacher-compiled children portfolio. The portfolio includes information regarding the children’s achievement of required outcomes, which are defined in the Early Learning and Development Standards. The portfolio for children from 2 to 6

years of age covers the physical, cognitive, language and social development domains. It helps identify children with developmental delays so teachers are able to adjust their teaching strategies accordingly (EURYDICE, 2020).

III. Intervention

Over the past three years, UNICEF and the UK Government invested US \$1,978,413 in North Macedonia to start a long-term reform in early childhood education, which included a new framework for teachers, a SEL programme for preschool children, and launching the learning Eduino platform (UNICEF, 2021). The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, UNICEF and the United Kingdom Government supported the programme “Peer Support Teachers” to introduce the SEL in preschool institutions. This programme includes play, exercises and storytelling to express feelings, empathy, care about the environment, and feel happier. Initially piloted in selected kindergartens, this programme is now in the process of being implemented across the country (UNICEF, 2019).

EDUINO is an educational platform designed for teachers and parents that provides resources in the form of videos, educational materials and games for children from 3 to 6 years of age. The resources from the platform can be used in both preschool institutions and in the home with parents. The video resources can be found in the educational platform, which provides over 150 videos in Macedonian and Albanian, each video including a thorough presentation and narration/explanation by a knowledgeable teacher (EURYDYCE, 2020). The implementation of this project for this specific SEL programme in preschool institutions will be the first systematic and nationally based programme for SEL in North Macedonia.

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Abstract

In Norway, the municipalities are responsible for overseeing social and emotional learning (SEL) in early childhood education and care (ECEC) kindergartens. There are several initiatives that can be categorised as assessments and inter-

ventions regarding SEL in ECEC, stemming from different types of organisations. Below, some examples of SEL in ECEC are presented, however, should not be considered exhaustive in describing the subject.

I. Development

Norway has a multitude of initiatives regarding SEL in kindergartens. Municipalities are responsible for ECEC, however, there are private alternatives as well. In 2017, 97% of children from 3 to 5 years of age attended kindergartens in Norway (SSB, 2018). All ECEC's follow the Kindergarten Act (no. 64), a regulatory framework for the content and tasks of kindergartens (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017). While this provides extensive guidelines that include SEL-related terms, such as stressing social competence including skills, knowledge and attitudes, there are possibilities for different

ECEC providers (municipalities as well as private providers) to develop local practices. In fact, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, the executive agency for the Ministry of Education and Research, has encouraged the study of variations in ECEC practices in Norway. Under the programme "Norwegian Research Towards 2020" (Utdanningdirektorater, 2013), the directorate has funded large projects studying the variations of quality in ECEC in Norway and the effects of these differences on children's well-being and social, emotional and cognitive development.

II. Assessment

The Ministry of Education and Research has the overall responsibility for quality in ECEC in Norway. The goals, purposes, and responsibilities are regulated by the Kindergarten Act and the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training is liable for the implementation of the national kindergarten policy as well as for the development of knowledge based guidelines to support the quality work in kindergartens.

The county governor has a key role in attaining the political goals concerning quality in kindergartens through advising and inspecting the municipalities and the administration of state grants aimed at promoting the kindergarten

staff's professional competencies as part of national strategic plans in the sector. The municipalities are responsible for kindergartens, both public and private. The local authority is liable for the approval, supervision, and guidance of kindergartens and for ensuring that public and private kindergarten owners meet the standards stated in the regulations. Kindergarten owners (both public and private) are responsible for observing laws and regulations, the content of the Framework Plan, including content related to SEL, and for quality development in their kindergartens (European Commission, 2022).

III. Intervention

There are several SEL-related interventions available, or undergoing development in Norway, though many of them are designed for school-aged children rather than ECEC. One example is SELMA, which is a project including development and testing of effects of SEL interventions with elements from positive psychology aimed at both ECEC teachers and children (Evertsen et al., 2022). A Norwegian version of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) called PALS has been extensively studied in Norwegian elementary schools (e.g. Sørli, 2021), but not in ECEC settings. Another example is the teacher classroom management programme from the Incredible Years series that has been evaluated in kindergartens with some promising results (Fossum, Handegård & Drugli, 2017).

There are also examples of interventions more strictly focused on children at risk. TIBIR ("Early Initiatives for Children at Risk") is a programme for the prevention and treatment of behavioural problems in children between 3 and 12 years of age and their families (Kjøbli & Ogden, 2014). The service is provided through municipal services such as public health clinics, the educational and psychological counselling service, child welfare services, kindergartens and schools. TIBIR services are currently offered in 104 of Norway's 356 municipalities.

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Abstract

In the 20th century, the political system, and the form of the government of Poland was changing constantly, which lasted into the early 21st century. Presently, the educational system of Poland is characterised by a certain dualism, which can be observed in other countries as well, but interestingly, this division reflects the assumptions of the financing, infrastructure, the conditions of the employees, as well as the supervising organs. In Poland, nurseries (żłobki) and kids' clubs (kluby dziecięce) offer care and education for children under 3 years of age, and who are at least 20 weeks of age. As it can be seen in practise, very few children below 1 year of age enter nursery care. These institutes are being overseen by the Ministry for Family, Labour and Social Policy, and the local communes. There are several very strict conditions and requirements for anyone wishing to run or head a nursery. Kindergarten points offer care and education for children from 3 to 6 years of age. In Poland, children are supposed to go to elementary school by 7 years of age, unless the parents want to have an early admission for a child who is 6 years of age, and has undergone at least one year of kindergarten as preparations.

Since February 14th, 2017, the legal act (Dz.U. poz 977, ze zm.) that regulates the base of the kin-

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dergarten educational programme was implemented by the Ministry of Education. Decree on the base program for kindergarten education, mentions in two points goals regarding to social-emotional competences, namely;

1. shaping emotional resilience in children so that they can rationally cope with new and difficult situation, including a capacity to ease up handling of stress and failure;
2. developing social competencies that are necessary for children to establish appropriate relationships with adults.

The law in Poland deals separately with the youngster's social and emotional methodologies and directives. The directives read as follow: shaping emotional resilience in children so that they can rationally cope with new and difficult situation, including a capacity to ease up handling of stress and failure; developing social competencies that are necessary for children to establish appropriate relationships with adults; shaping children's sense of social belonging (to family, peer group and national community) and a patriotic attitude.

I. Development

We do not know about a prevention and intervention programme developed or adopted at the national level to develop social and emotional skills or learning.

In 2016, the Polish government launched the programme "Rodzina 500+ (Family 500+)", with the understanding that the investment into the early childhood education system and by providing support for families, especially those from socially disadvantaged groups, will increase the demographics in these aforementioned areas.

Within the framework of this programme, many families received financial support. According to the European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC) evaluations, the Family 500+ Programme boosted birth rates in Poland, and in addition to this, contributes to the improvement of better living conditions of large families, and by that, reducing child poverty.

In the formal education system, the ART, Aggression Replacement Training Programme, was successfully adapted in Poland and conducted

by the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, as well as in the school inspectorate of Wielkopolska. During this programme, about 1000 kindergarten principals took part in training that was focused on the role of social emotional skills development in the preschool system.

To make the implementation of the ART more successful, the programme was implemented further in Warsaw by the Amity Institute Train the Trainers, who also trained the Polish Municipal Guard Officers.

In the Newsletter of European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC) informs us, that as a part of international programme, Zippy's Friends Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programme was conducted in Poland.

Zippy's Friends is a programme that aims to help children between 6 to 8 years of age cope better with everyday adversities and prevent psychological problems (EPIC, 2021). This SEL programme includes 24 meetings on different themes such as: feelings, communication, relationships, conflict resolution etc.

II. Assessment

The above mentioned programmes, Zippy's Friends and ART, have been measured in the long term effectivity in other countries, however, they have not been measured in Poland as of yet (Bowles et al. 2017).

Bowles et al. (2017) pin-pointed the following facilitators and barriers to the delivery of SEL programmes in Poland:

Barriers:

- the general crisis of education in Poland: the people questioning the organisation of the education system or the mission and the status of the teaching status;
- the value of SEL Programmes is not yet understood by authorities;

• the lack of an integrated and holistic vision of education.

Facilitators:

- increasing consciousness for the importance of SEL among the parents and professionals.

According to the Bowles et al. (2017), recommendations for the future of SEL Programs in Poland to develop the social-emotional competencies will be challenging since "the environmental factors and patterns of activity introduced by global pop culture are not optimal conditions for social-emotional development".

III. Intervention

Bowles et al. (2017) urged, planned and controlled the intervention of SEL, through the mainstream education system, the explicit definition of the importance of SEL into the national

curriculum, and further training for teachers and conducting more scientific research in this field is also necessary.

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Abstract

In the last decade, the interest in promoting children's early social and emotional skills (SES) through evidence-based programmes is spreading around the world, including in Portugal, (Cristóvão et al., 2017; Marques-Pinto & Raimundo, 2016). Although there is still a long way to go in order for SES of young children to be widely and consistently promoted across the educational system of Portugal, a significant investment was made in the last few years by different stakeholders supported by research, national policies, and funding for this type of intervention. Nevertheless, there is an urgent need to ex-

pand research on developmentally appropriate SEL programmes for preschool children, and its efficacy, as well as on supportive and challenging conditions regarding the implementation of evidence-based programmes in preschool centres, in order to inform future programme delivery (that must be sustainable and continuous to the elementary school), and evaluation. Despite these questions, by sharing what is being done to fulfil the mission of developing Portuguese young children's SES, we hope to validate, inspire and/or expand the knowledge of the SEL implementation efforts in Portugal.

I. Development

In the past few years, there has been a growing interest in Portugal regarding the social and emotional learning (SEL) in educational settings, (Bowles et al., 2017; Cristóvão et al., 2017; Marques-Pinto & Raimundo, 2016). This is visible through the increase of the number of scientific publications in the topic, the research and intervention projects that had been funded, as well as local/school level initiatives aiming the promotion of children and adolescents' social and emotional skills (SES). An example of this investment has been set by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation that has assumed, in 2018, the commitment to financially support around 100 local projects that aim to promote key SES in children and youth under 25 years of age, (<https://gulbenkian.pt/academias/>). These projects are called "Gulbenkian Academies for Knowledge".

Mental health and SES are also a priority area in some national policy documents, such as National programme for Mental Health, National programme for School Health, and Education for Health Referential. These documents underscore the schools as an important intervention setting, and were further supported by the publication of the Manual for the Promotion of Social

and Emotional Learning in the Schools in 2016. This document is a product of a joint partnership between the Directorate-General for Health and the Directorate-General for Education published, and includes pedagogical resources (also for preschool aged-children) to support the practices of teachers and health school professionals. It is also worth to mention another key national policy document – "Student's Profile by the end of compulsory education" (<https://cidadania.dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/pdfs/students-profile.pdf>), as well as other institutions like the Portuguese Board of Psychologists (<http://escolasau-davelmente.pt/directores/prevencao-e-promocao-da-saude-psicologica-e-sucesso-educativo/aprendizagem-socio-emocional-ase>), have also been emphasising the pivotal role of SES for students' academic achievement and other important long-term life outcomes.

In Portugal, preschool education is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, a national level entity that provides general guidelines and specific regulation both for public, private non-profit and private for-profit institutions serving children between 3 and 6 years of age. As such, early childhood teachers have a set of key

guidelines for supporting their actions, known as the National Curriculum Guidelines (Silva et al., 2016). Among others, SES is highlighted in the document as key for child development in early years, although no specific programme, activities or monitoring procedures are provided at the national level. The same specific guidelines are supposed to be applicable for institutions serving children under 3 years of age, although the Ministry of Social Welfare plays the role of managing crèche in Portugal.

Two recent studies (e.g., Peixoto & Machado, 2020; Neto et al., 2019) about SEL practices in Portuguese preschool settings showed that a significant number of preschool teachers value and cultivate daily children's SES. Specifically, the study of Peixoto and Machado (2020), which included 180 teachers serving children 3 to 6 years of age, showed that although the implementation of structured and systematic SEL programmes is not common (7.4%), most preschool teachers reported to develop other practices recommended in the literature such as embedding SEL throughout routines (e.g., snack time) and activities of different content areas (e.g., story book reading for teachable SEL moments), and adopting explicit teaching activities with the specific goal of promoting certain aspects of SES (e.g., emotions check-in). These findings are consistent with Neto and colleagues' study (2019; participated 182 preschool teachers serving children 3 to 6 years of age), where teachers reported to provide a variety of experiences to help children learn and practice SES on a regular basis (e.g., cooperative-learning games, teach children how to manage feelings and emotions, acknowledge children's positive behaviours throughout the day; teach children a problem-solving procedure).

Specifically, in what concerns universal SEL programmes, despite the growing interest in promoting children and adolescents' SES in Portugal during the last decade, there seems to be less investment in this kind of practice in early childhood years compared to the other education levels. From the 100 local projects supported by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, only 25 are intended for children of preschool age (Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2020). In a recent bibliometric study, where the goal was to

identify research on SEL programmes implemented in Portuguese schools and its effects in students' academic achievement, Cristóvão and colleagues (2017) only found one publication reporting a SEL programme for preschool aged-children (Preschool Giant's Leap from Correia, 2015). Another relevant publication reporting the panorama of universal and targeted programmes to promote children's and adolescents' mental health in Portugal (Canário & Cruz, 2016) has identified four programmes for preschool children: Incredible Years - Teacher Classroom Management programme (Maria Filomena Fonseca Gaspar and Maria João Rama Seabra Santos; Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, University of Coimbra); Giant's Leap (Karla Sandy Correia and Alexandra Marques Pinto; Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, University of Lisbon); Zippy's Friends (Associação Escutar), and RESCUR (Celeste Simões, Paula Lebre, Anabela Santos and Margarida Gaspar de Matos; Faculty of Human Kinetics of the University of Lisbon).

Notably, there are several stakeholders worth mentioning/to highlight due to the awareness they have brought to SEL programmes in Portugal. Some of these stakeholders include: NGOs, municipalities, schools, parents' associations, universities – public, private, and non-profit organisations – to increase the spread of SEL programmes in preschool settings, and some of them with the support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (within the scope of Gulbenkian Knowledge Academies). Several municipalities (e.g., Câmara Municipal de Famalicão; Câmara Municipal do Seixal; Câmara Municipal de Oeiras; Câmara Municipal de Lagoa; Câmara Municipal de Leiria), NGOs or non-profit associations (e.g., Prevenir, www.prevenir.eu; Unificar, <https://www.unificar.pt>; Escutar, www.escutar.pt; Arisco, <https://arisco-ipss.org/>), or other type of organisations (Acrescer - Associação de Animação Sócio-Educativa), sometimes in partnership, have developed and promoted SEL programmes for preschool children. Some of these organisations provide training and support materials to facilitators (e.g., teachers, psychologists) so they can implement the programmes more effectively in school settings.

II. Assessment

Regarding SEL programmes' evaluation, usually, the organisations include some kind of evaluation strategy, such as process evaluation, programme effectiveness (pre-post design, most of the time without control group), and participants' satisfaction. Indeed, some NGOs report that programme's effectiveness and process evaluation measurement is part of their services. Although empirical works related to the efficacy of SEL programmes in Portugal are scarce

(Marques Pinto & Raimundo, 2016), particularly in preschool (Cristóvão et al., 2017). The team of monitoring and evaluation of the Gulbenkian Academies for Knowledge, acting upon the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's concern with the issue of programme evaluation, has been providing assistance to the different academies in the planning and implementation of rigorous evaluation and monitoring processes of their programmes.

III. Intervention

Here are some universal SEL programmes that are currently running in preschool settings in Portugal (including adaptations of well-known international programmes and programmes originally developed in Portugal with data on their effectiveness):

The Incredible Years - Teacher Classroom Management programme (<https://www.incredible-years.com>) is a well-known, evidence-based prevention programme, developed in the USA (Carolyn Webster-Stratton, 1994), that is being implemented in Portugal. It aims to promote teachers' classroom management competences and children's SES (e.g., self-management, prosocial behaviour, and problem-solving skills). The target audience is children from 3 to 8 years of age and their teachers, or other professionals who work directly with them (e.g., psychologists). The programme includes seven workshops of six hours each (a total of 42 hours) over six months that address key strategies for effective classroom management and that promote children's SES (previously mentioned). The organisation responsible for this programme in Portugal is the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences of the University of Coimbra (Maria Filomena Fonseca Gaspar and Maria João Rama Seabra Santos), (Webster-Stratton, 2018). Findings from one quasi-experimental study, developed in the scope of a doctoral thesis (Vale, 2012), indicated that, compared to control groups, teachers who implemented the programme describe their children at the end of the intervention as having significantly less conduct problems and more pro-social skills. After 7 months of the intervention, the gains were maintained. Moreover, preschool teachers reported high satisfaction with the programme. This programme was identified as a reference methodology in "Gulbenkian

Academies for Knowledge" (Webster-Stratton, 2018), and it has been implemented by several organisations around the country over the last decade.

Zippy's Friends (www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk), a recognized effective programme, has received a lot of attention around the world, including in Portugal, since 2016. Escutar is the Portuguese organisation responsible for the Amigos do Ziki (Portuguese translation and adaptation of Zippy's Friends; <http://amigosdoziki.pt/mundo/index.htm>). It is an universal evidence-based programme for children from 5 to 7 years of age (in Portugal for children who are attending the last year of preschool education, which are, normally, children from 5 to 6 years of age) that intends to help children cope better with everyday adversities through engaging activities, such as, listening stories, games, role-play, and drawing. Zippy's Friends is organised throughout 24 weekly sessions (6 modules about feelings, communication, friendship, conflict, change and loss, and moving forward; each module with 4 sessions) for about 50-60 minutes each. The programme is delivered by preschool teachers with training in the programme. It has been implemented in several Portuguese preschool settings in recent years and its impact is usually assessed through teachers' and families' perceptions about the changes they observe in children after their participation in the programme. This programme also includes alternative and additional activities for children with special needs, as well as a set of sessions for parents (Zippy at Home; in Portuguese - Ziki em casa).

The non-profit organisation Prevenir, a reference association in the prevention and promotion of health in Portugal (currently operating

also in Spain), develops since 2002 several programmes for the school population, including **Nino and Nina** (<https://prevenir.eu/wp-site/index.php/pt/pre/>). This programme is delivered to preschool-aged children (4-6 years) by preschool teachers after appropriate training and intends to promote key SES for children's healthy development, namely self-control, emotion differentiation, self-esteem, and social skills. Nino and Nina is a 2-year longitudinal programme with 21 weekly sessions in year 1 and 20 weekly sessions in year 2. The programme contains a guide about the sessions (e.g., goals, activities, materials), the game Nina and Nino - Deck of feelings, as well as three videos of cartoons by Nino and Nina with stories of the topics covered. It also includes workshops for families in order to expand the intervention developed by teachers in the preschool settings. According to the association, more than 15,000 children have already benefited from the programme. Findings from impact evaluation showed that, compared to a control group of children, participation in the programme for 2 years related to better SES (self-control, emotion differentiation, self-esteem, and social skills). These results were consistent with teachers' perceptions regarding children's SES work in the scope of the programme. For example, they observed a significant decrease of the following children's behaviours: "has difficulties in maintaining attention"; "hits in peers"; "don't usually show what he/she feels" (Crusellas et al., 2013).

We also highlight the programme **Salto de Gigante** (Giant's Leap; Correia & Marques-Pinto, 2016), which was also originally developed in Portugal and includes two versions, one targeting preschool children ("Salto de Gigante - Pre") and another targeting first graders ("Salto de Gigante 1"). From the empirical point of view, the outline of the two versions of the programme took into account the perspectives of children, parents, educators, and teachers on adaptation in the transition to formal school, collected in a previous study developed by the research team in the Portuguese context (Correia & Marques-Pinto, 2011; 2016), and follows the framework and recommendations for Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2012). This universal intervention aims to develop SES skills, as well as to improve the school adaptation of children in transition from preschool education to elementary school. The preschool programme can be used with children aged between 4 and 6 years of age, is carried out in the classroom throughout the school year, and contains 15 weekly sessions of 45 to 60 minutes. The curriculum includes six components: the first introduces the programme and provides guidance for the transition to the first year of school, and the remaining five involve the SEL compo-

nents: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The programme is described in a manual that contains the general goals, the programme structure, and the session plans, with specific objectives, strategies, and a description of the activities and materials. The sessions are organised so that new competencies are constructed based on previously learned ones, thus providing an integrated view of social and emotional competencies. The programme's activities include the presentation of didactic videos designed specifically for the programme through storytelling, group educational games, role playing and artistic expression activities. Strategies such as brainstorming, modelling, constructive feedback, individual positive reinforcement, and reflection/group discussion are used. The effectiveness of the program was assessed through a quasi-experimental study (four preschool centres; 67 children), which showed an improvement regarding children's interpersonal strengths, emotional knowledge, school functioning, and broadening the perception of the social support network in the school context (Correia, 2019; Correia & Marques-Pinto, 2016). This programme was also identified as a reference methodology in "Gulbenkian Academies for Knowledge" and is currently running in several preschool settings around the country.

A program also worth mentioning is the **RESCUR - European Resilience Curriculum** (www.rescur.eu; **Currículo Europeu para a Resiliência na Educação Pré-escolar, 1.º e 2.º ciclo**), developed by Cefai and colleagues (2012-2015) under the Lifelong Learning programme (funding from European Commission), which has a Portuguese version developed by Simões and colleagues. This is a multi-grade programme (preschool, 1st - 4th grade, and 5th - 6th grade) that aims to promote children's resilience and develop socio-emotional skills and it is led by teachers in the classroom over the school year. Six main topics are addressed in this programme: (1) communication skills; (2) healthy relationships; (3) positive mind; (4) self-determination; (5) resources (self-concept, self-esteem); (6) Turn challenges into opportunities. The programme contains a guide for teachers (where the goals, theoretical framework, structure of the curriculum, main topics covered, evaluation, and main guidelines for implementation are described), and a guide for parents with strategies that can help parents promote resilience in their children. In addition, for each grade level, there is a manual that includes information about the activities, its learning goals, and strategies, as well as other digital resources to use in the intervention sessions. In the scope of a pilot study, each country involved in the RESCUR de-

velopment (Malta, Croatia, Greece, Portugal, Italy, and Sweden) assessed the implementation of one specific topic addressed in the programme. In Portugal, after teacher training, and the self-determination topic implementation over six sessions, intervention impact was evaluated. In general, findings revealed improvement in children's cooperative behaviours, problem-solving skills, and more appropriate behaviours in school (Simões et

al., 2016). Moreover, preliminary quantitative and qualitative findings from an impact study of the RESCUR in Portugal (Simões et al., 2018), specifically with migrant and/or refugee students, also documented a positive effect on the intervention group behaviours (e.g., decreased emotional, conduct and peer problems, increased prosocial behaviours).

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Republic of Moldova

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Abstract

While the Moldovan education system has made efforts to foster and measure academic skills, limited attention has been devoted to the students' socio-emotional development.

In the last few years, Moldova has introduced numerous metrics of internationally recognized cognitive abilities, aiming to enhance the educational system, resulting in positive outcomes with these implementations. Nevertheless, the same cannot be said in the field of social and emotional skills. Therefore, the Moldovan government is trying to make improvements in this area by introducing new curricula on "counseling and personal improvement" and "education for society" that are characterised by elements of the SEL (social and emotional learning). This work was started by the government, aiming to promote the civic engagement, entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness of the students.

The results suggest that the before-mentioned tools can be implemented in Moldova with success. Among the main findings is the fact that various measures of socio-emotional skills are strongly correlated with maths grades and students' well-being.

The Moldovan Socio-emotional Skills Assessment points to gender differences in the self-reported measures of socio-emotional skills across the skills distribution. The results showed that girls tend to self-report higher levels of socio-emotional skills in almost all the skills' domains, which was also demonstrated in other countries. The only exception is the girl's capacity to 'manage emotions', which they tend to self-report at a lower level compared to boys (World Bank, 2019).

Moreover, the assessment of skills also demonstrates that school and family contexts affect students' levels of socio-emotional skills.

It is also important to attribute a role of primary importance to policy makers and educators, they "may benefit from better understanding how fostering students' socio-emotional skills can help to improve their learning outcomes, labour market success, and well-being" (World Bank, 2019). Moreover, they should consider the introduction of a regular socio-emotional skills measurement at the system and school levels, "which can in turn provide valuable information for them to explore integrating SEL in policies and practices" (World Bank, 2019).

I. Development

The organisation "World Bank" published a report that gave "a first diagnostic of socio-emotional skills in Moldova to profile the skills composition of grade 9 students" (World Bank, 2019). This report tries to pinpoint the learning context measures firmly related to socio-emotional skills, and to help practitioners and policy makers to promote these skills. In April 2019 – in order to

achieve these aims – the Moldovan Socio-emotional Skills Assessment was launched.

No further data or information was found in English to provide more information regarding social and emotional skill development in ECEC in Moldova. In addition, information about the target group (children 0-6 years) hasn't been found.

II. Assessment

The Moldovan Socio-emotional Skills Assessment, held in 2019, has introduced for the first time several measures that are useful to evaluate a range of socio-emotional skills amid the school-age Moldovan children. The measures in question had been approved internationally, and addressed the students' self-reported capaci-

ty to: (i) work with others, (ii) care for others, (iii) engage with others, (iv) explore new horizons, and (v) manage emotions. Besides the technical validation of measurement, the assessment also functions as initial guidance for policies and practices to promote these skills.

III. Intervention

A first diagnostic testing of socio-emotional skills in Moldova has been done, to profile the skills composition of grade 9 students, identify learning context measures that are strongly associated with socio-emotional skills, and clarify options for policy makers and practitioners to foster socio-emotional skills.

The crucial aim of this project is to better understand the level of socio-emotional skills that the students have at the end of the mandatory schooling, and how these skills are linked to the inputs from schools and families.

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Comment

This report is based on the findings of the World Bank report, since other sources in English were not found.

Romania

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Abstract

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

In the kindergartens, the focus of the programme is on children's activities so that different personal competencies and skills are developed. The education in kindergartens is also divided into a two-level curriculum. The initial level is the so-

cialisation stage, which lasts from 3 to 5 years of age, and is followed by the second, advanced level. The advanced level corresponds to the preschool stage, which consists of large groups and preschool classes respectively. At the advanced level, the basic skills are: preparing children for school life; laying the foundations for reading and writing; attention; developing imagination and creativity; motivation to learn.

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

I. Development

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

The deficiency of the curriculum for the above-mentioned tasks is that it suggests the traditional daily and weekly themes for their implementation and does not recommend a meth-

odological solution. The main problem seems to be that the systematic development of social and emotional skills does not appear in the training of the kindergarten teachers, thus they do not have sufficient theoretical background on the subject. However, in the last 5 years, there seems to be a change in this field as well, and the Teachers' House (Casa Corpului Didactic) training offers training related to this subject for professionals.

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

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Abstract

The Russian Federation recognises the need for the development of social and emotional skills in children. There are two main documents regarding the legislation for early childhood education (ECE) - the Education Act 2012 ('On Education in the Russian Federation', No. 273-F2), and the Federal Standard of Education, No 115, 17 October 2013 (Volkova, 2017). Another important document that regulates ECE is the Federal Standard of Preschool Education (FGOS DO). Part of the document discusses "Strengthening the development of social-emotional skills, learning dispositions, basic language/literacy, mathematical competences and motor skills" (Volkova, 2017). Since 2014, there has been a State Programme 'On the Development of Education' (2014, No. 295), and in 2016, national educational standards were introduced for the preschool education system. According to Volkova (2017, p. 7) in the

latter document, "a broad and balanced approach to the curriculum is encouraged, including personal and emotional development as well as respecting diversity and individuality; social development and citizenship; learning dispositions; physical and health education; language and communication; reading and literacy; mathematical skills; understanding the natural world; science; technology and the digital world; and second/foreign language acquisition". In this literature search, not many assessment measures were found, however, several programmes for development of children's social and emotional skills have been noted. Some of the programmes are the Charitable Foundation "Investment in the Future", "Socio-emotional development of children" (2022, <https://vbudushee.ru/>), Triz programme, Razvitie' programme, and the Raduga programme.

I. Development

The Russian Federation has a "split system" regarding early and preschool education and care. Children up to 3 years of age attend facilities that are oriented more towards care and are not part of the educational system in the country, and children between 3 and 7 years of age attend kindergartens. The preschool education in the Russian Federation is the first stage of the so-called general education since 2012 according to the Federal law of the Russian Federation of 29 December, 2012 (Nisskaya, 2018). According to this law, every child in Russia has the right to equal opportunities for education depending on their needs, level of development, personal characteristics, etc. There are two main documents regarding the legislation for early childhood education, such as preschool education for children between 3 to 7 year of age - the Education Act 2012 ('On Education in the Russian Federation', No. 273-F2) and the Federal Standard of Education, No 115, 17 October 2013 (Volkova, 2017). There is also another important document that

regulates early childhood education, the Federal Standard of Preschool Education (FGOS DO). Part of the main goals of FGOS DO are related to providing equal opportunities for all children, ensuring high quality in all the services, encouraging parents' participation in the educational process, supporting school readiness skills, etc. The most important and interesting part, however, is "Strengthening the development of social-emotional skills, learning dispositions, basic language/literacy, mathematical competences and motor skills" (Volkova, 2017).

The Federal State Educational Standard also specifies the objectives for the preschool institutions. Some of the objectives are to target life skills and, more specifically, social and emotional skills: "Preserving and promoting children's health and well-being including emotional well-being; Integrating instruction in cognitive and non-cognitive domains in a comprehensive educational system based on the societal norms

and values; Developing well-rounded individuals by promoting healthy lifestyle, fostering physical, cognitive, moral, and social development, cultivating initiative and responsibility, and laying down the foundation for school readiness, etc." (Bodrova & Yudrina, 2018, p. 64).

The development of social and emotional skills in children from an early age is recognised in the Russian Federation and is one of the main goals listed in an important legislative document. Since 2014, there has been a State Programme 'On the Development of Education' (2014, No. 295) that has a part regarding the development of the early childhood education system. In 2016, national educational standards were introduced for the preschool education system. Kindergartens must follow the FGOS DO. This reflects also the curricular frameworks that are implemented. According to Volkova (2017, p. 7) "a broad and balanced approach to the curriculum is encouraged, including personal and emotional development as well as respecting diversity and individuality; social development and citizenship; learning dispositions; physical and health education; language and communication; reading and literacy; mathematical skills; understanding the natural world; science; technology and the

II. Assessment

It appears that there are a lot of initiatives going on in the Russian Federation with regards to social and emotional skills development of children of different ages. This literature search has found information for the use of only one assessment measure - Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). The quality of kindergarten education is of great importance for children's further development. CLASS seems to be one of the most relevant for the educational environment quality evaluation. The CLASS methodology is based on the cultural-historical approach,

digital world; and second/foreign language acquisition." Its implementation is part of the regional ministries of education responsibilities. All of which have individual approaches. It is still a recent policy so no official reports regarding the results achieved have been found so far. According to Nisskaya (2018), the new developmental approach "focuses on developing the child's abilities and using cultural tools, rather than just transmitting educational content" in contrast to the traditional approach that "focuses on the transmission of knowledge, patterns of social behaviour, and assumes teacher-centred interaction between child and teacher." The child-teacher interaction is based on "a partnership, an individualised approach, and aims to develop children's initiative." (Rubtsov & Yudina, 2010).

Another argument for the recognition of the importance of social and emotional skills for children in the Russian Federation is the fact that in 2019, Moscow, the capital city, is one of ten cities that took part in the OECD Survey on Social and Emotional Skills (SSES) for school students (Survey on Social and Emotional Skills [SSES]: Moscow [The Russian Federation], 2021).

which shows the interaction between students and adults as the main mechanism for child's development (including social and emotional development). The CLASS methodology assesses classroom experience in three domains: emotional support, classroom organisation, and instructional support. The CLASS system is based on observations, role games and measures interaction between teacher and kids (Veraksa, et al., 2020). There are potentially many more measures in use, however, no information could be found in these regards.

III. Intervention

Some information was found regarding programs for development of children's social and emotional skills. The Charitable Foundation "Investment in the Future" (2022, <https://vbudushee.ru/>) presents the educational programme "Socio-Emotional Development of Children", created by a team of Russian authors for children in ECEC. Many theoretical and applied materials are developed in order to help each teacher to effectively implement the program. The theoretical part contains the main psychological characteristics of preschool and school aged children, the specificities of their social and emotional development, and a brief review of various foreign and domestic programs of social and emotional development are presented. The aspect that is applied is the programme itself.

Some other programmes that aim the development of social and emotional competences of young children are:

- Triz programme - develop children's imagination and independent decision making. It contains collective games and activities, where the child chooses the theme, materials and types of activities independently;

- Razvitie' programme – It helps children's mental and artistic abilities development through provoking them to solve tasks, find solutions, build scenarios or play games, and;

- Raduga programme – It is for children from 3 to 6 or 7 years of age. It consists of basic games for teaching design, music, maths, drawing and speech development. It is organised in an interactive, group-oriented way so children are able to develop interpersonal and other social skills.

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Abstract

The new Preschool Curriculum Framework, symbolically titled 'Years of Ascent', defines the concept of preschool education in Serbia. Preschool promotes programmes that are created through joint participation, in an environment that is inspiring and provocative for children, and where they can freely explore, play, think, cooperate with others, try out and be immersed in the world around them. Although the new curriculum asserts children's freedom of choice, creativity, initiative and openness, the main principles of this curriculum do not relate primarily to children's social and emotional skills. To our knowl-

edge, there are not many projects implemented in preschool education in Serbia, and the ones we found were not specifically related with social and emotional competencies. In Serbia, the social and emotional learning (SEL) programs still have not been adequately applied in educational institutions, and they are not recognized by the relevant ministry. However, the awareness around this topic is slowly changing, primarily in part due to the work of the nongovernmental sector and local community implemented through the international project.

I. Development

As in some countries, interventions in Serbia for social and emotional skills are related to specific interventions for children with behavioural problems (Pavlović & Klemenović 2019). Many children with basic socioemotional and behavioural problems, and without formal diagnosis (e.g., disorders of the autistic spectrum) do not necessarily receive any help or intervention, while at the same time they represent a challenge that neither parents nor educators can bear (Pavlović & Klemenović, 2019). Further, the preschool institutions have no unique and obligatory instruments to measure for social and emotional

skills (or other developmental skills), as well as no national based intervention and programmes for social and emotional learning. Through international projects, non-government organisations work towards improving the conditions of preschool institutions to provide access to education for all children. Also, there is a lack of evidence-based studies related to interventions and programmes for social and emotional learning of preschool children, and most of them include studies related to the intervention and assessment of children with behaviour disorders.

II. Assessment

Currently, and to our knowledge, there is no significant evidence-based data at the national level outlining the systematic and unique evaluation of practices related to social and emotional skills of preschool children, nor intervention and social-emotional learning programs in preschool institutions. There is no formative or summative

assessment during ECEC programmes. It can be concluded that there is no unique system for assessing and monitoring children's skills in the preschool institution, nor the shortcomings of evidence-based studies related to assessment of social and emotional skills of preschool children.

III. Intervention

One of the most popular projects related to preschool educational reform is the project “Improvement of preschool education in Serbia-IMPRES”, which lasted from 2011 to 2014. IMPRES is a joint project of the Ministry of Education, and Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia and the European Union. The overall objective of the project is to upgrade the conditions of preschool education for children, especially those from vulnerable groups, most notably Roma, through improvement in the quality of preschool programmes and expansion of the capacities of preschool institutions (<https://internationaler-bund.org>).

In 2014, the Vega Youth Centre launched the project “Koba Yagi Toys” as a social enterprise in which women from vulnerable groups pro-

duce toys that encourage creativity, independence and empathy. One of the toys include EnimalZ puppets – toys with storytelling cards for the methodology of emotional learning for children. After that, in 2016, a project called “Be a super emotional hero too” was implemented. Their idea was to start a School for Superheroes, within a series of interdisciplinary workshops that focused on the practical and creative problem solving and the development of 21st century skills needed by children. The project was supported by USAID, Trag Foundation, Group 484 and UniCredit Foundation, and Association of Business Women of Serbia and Smart Collective. No formal institutions from the educational system of the Republic of Serbia supported the project (Marić-Jurišić and Kostović, 2016).

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Slovakia

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Abstract

According to the study “Teachers’ perceptions of children’s Kindergarten readiness in Slovakia” (Stillerova et al., 2019), the main knowledge given to children by the Kindergarten teachers in Slovakia are the following: how to draw, communicate, sing, recite, geometric shapes with some emphasis on pre-writing, pre-reading and elementary mathematical concepts. In Slovakia, kindergartens are included in the pre-primary education, and their aim is to improve children’s intellectual, moral, social-emotional and physical skills. The compulsory Slovakian school begins with primary school (usually starting from 6 years of age), whereas kindergarten is not mandatory and is provided by the government from 3 to 6 years of age. Slovakian Kindergarten class-

es are divided from elementary school classes. Finally, a child who finishes kindergarten should not only have developed the above-mentioned skills, but they should have developed appropriate behaviours.

“A standard curriculum could also be developed with social-emotional and early academic content for Kindergartens based on the international standards. Teachers would have to follow standard curriculum, which would result in fewer discrepancies among individual Kindergartens and thus lead to a reduction in learning inequality” (European Commission, 2021).

I. Development

The Slovakian kindergarten’s teachers do not have to be pedagogically qualified to teach academic skills. For this reason – and for the fact that this type of education is not compulsory – there does not exist an official and standard curriculum devised for the kindergartens. According to Upadyaya, Aunola, & Nurmi (2009), the philosophy of the kindergarten is based on several activities, such as:

- Play with number and letters;
- Learn social and linguistic skills;
- Learn concepts related to reading and mathematics.

The growth of the social-emotional skills of the children in Slovakia had an important enhancement thanks to the Second Step (Druhy Krok) Social-Emotional Learning programme, fostered by the non-profit organisation Profkreatis. The Ministry of Education also allowed the use of this programme in elementary schools beginning in January 2014, however, it would be beneficial for the Profkreatis organisation to promote this implementation further.

II. Assessment

Stillerova, Troxler, Cubry, & Roth, a group of researchers from the Psychology Department of the George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia (USA), conducted a study in 2019 concerning the analysis of the perception of Slovakian kin-

dergarten’s teachers views of children readiness, social-emotional and academic skills, and which skills are the most important to evaluate children’s readiness according to the teachers. The study focuses on the lacking skills of the children

upon beginning kindergarten. The researchers surveyed 182 Slovakian Kindergarten teachers. The main findings regarding the teachers' views are the following:

- Most of the children are ready for kindergarten at the start of the year;
- At the same time many children showed some difficulties with social-emotional and academic skills;

· In terms of readiness, the teachers attributed a higher value on socio-emotional skills over academic skills.

The latter finding is common in different countries, this explains how despite the different socio-cultural contexts, the Kindergarten's teachers may have similar experiences.

III. Intervention

The Profkreatis organisation is very active on this topic, going so far as to conduct a longitudinal study from 2014 to 2015. The aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the before-mentioned program. Since 2010, Profkreatis has had great success in expanding it. The Druhy Krok

program has been implemented in more than 150 elementary schools. Moreover, the number of the teachers that have been trained and certified to teach the research-based curriculum amounts to 250 teachers (Second Step, 2010).

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Slovenia

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Abstract

Preschool education in Slovenia, through laws and curriculum, focuses on the well-being of children, and providing a safe environment for children in preschool institutions. The kindergarten curriculum has no specific area of learning for social and emotional skills (SES), however, children learn these skills through knowledge about society and other additional activities in class. After reviewing recent literature for the programme

“Health in Kindergarten”, a national-based programme for the prevention of health injury and diseases, it was found that some of the program activities and materials can be related to SES development. Also, this document presents other programmes (found during a literature review process), projects and research papers related to intervention for social and emotional skills in Slovenia.

I. Development

The Kindergarten Curriculum for preschool education in Slovenia focuses on social learning, good communication, and a flexible, safe and inspiring environment. The aims for preschool education in Slovenia as an integral part of the Kindergarten Curriculum include the learning of skills for understanding and accepting oneself and others; learning skills for negotiating and discussing, respecting diversity and teamwork or cooperation; learning skills of empathising, as well as encourage emotional experience or expression, sense of curiosity. Different areas of learning prescribed by the Kindergarten Curriculum does not include social and emotional

learning, however, one area of learning includes society with knowledge about oneself and other people, experiencing kindergarten as environment of equal opportunities to participate in activities and everyday life regardless of any type of discrimination and promoting awareness about new cultures and tradition (Kindergarten Curriculum, 1999). Parents can choose the type, public or private, of institutions for their child, as well as the location of the institution. The professional staff need to implement goals and planned activities related to Kindergarten Curriculum and other documents, but they can choose methodologies, materials and specific activities in class.

II. Assessment

The Kindergarten Curriculum does not define skills and knowledge for children that need to be developed for a specific age range, and professionals do not formally assess children's developmental skills. They observe children's development, learning and functioning in preschool institutions, and provide oral information to par-

ents about progress or developmental problems (EURYDICE, 2021). There is no unique way to record the information in regards to the children's development and functioning in the preschool institutions, and kindergartens choose different ways for that, such as portfolios and protocols.

III. Intervention

The programme “Health in kindergarten” is a national based programme for preschool children with the goal to develop and strengthen the capacity of kindergartens to create environments that prioritise well-being and health (<https://www.nijz.si/sl/zdravje-v-vrtcu>). In 2006, Institute of Public Health Ljubljana created this programme, and the National Institute of Public Health implemented the programme in kindergartens throughout Slovenia shortly thereafter. This programme is focused on the prevention of health-related content, however, some of the activities and developed materials can be used for emotional and social skills development.

One of the ongoing projects related to SES is the HAND in HAND project, which focuses on the development and implementation of social, emotional, and intercultural (SEI) programmes. The HAND in HAND project will develop an open access systemic policy tool – EU based universal SEI learning programme (a programme for students and school staff) based on an awareness of multiculturalism and diversity that fosters inclusion and develops more tolerant and

non-discriminative learning environments for all students (including immigrant and refugee) to prevent discriminative bullying, segregation and early school leaving (ESL) (www.handinhand.si).

There are also other programmes for social and emotional skills development designed within projects or other initiatives but they are for older children. For example, “This is me” project (<https://www.tosemjaz.net/>) that focuses on the development of positive mental health of teens in Slovenia. We also found the implementation and evaluation of programmes related to social and emotional learning. For example, Kozina (2018), in a follow-up study that tested and evaluated the FRIENDS programme (Barret, 2005) in two primary schools in Slovenia. The FRIENDS programme, as a programme for prevention and treatment of anxiety, was tested in this research study by using a multimodal measurement of anxiety with children from grade 8 (12-13 years). The results support the use of the My FRIENDS programme as an intervention for the prevention and treatment of anxiety of children.

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Spain

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Abstract

In Spain, the guidelines for preschool education stand for the need of preschool education to support children's socioemotional development, and there has been an increase of investment in the development of children's and youth socioemotional competences in educational settings in the last decade. However, despite the increase in the number of local level initiatives regarding the implementation of interventions in the

scope of socioemotional skills, there is still the need for more investment in the area (Aguiar et al., 2017). Rigorous evaluations of the initiatives and interventions conducted in educational settings is still lacking, which may compromise the commitment and engagement of the schools, as well as the sustainability of the interventions over time.

I. Development

Since 2006 there is a particular emphasis on the social and emotional education and learning in Spanish educational settings, not only since preschool education, but across the lifespan of education. This issue was underlined in the Organic Law 2/2006 of Education that argues that education is the most powerful and adequate setting for supporting children's development of emotional competences and personalities, integrating the cognitive, affective dimensions. Article nr. 71 of the Organic Law 2/2006 of Education underlines that “educational administrations shall provide the necessary means for all students to achieve maximum personal, intellectual, social and emotional development, as well as the objectives established in general terms in this Law.”, bringing an awareness to educational settings and its professionals on the need to incorporate practices supporting socio-emotional development in their educational practices.

Particularly regarding preschool education, this is available for free to all children whose parents choose to enrol them, meaning that preschool education is not mandatory. Regardless, almost 100% of children between 3 and 6 years of age attend a formal educational setting in this country. The government is highly supportive of early education as its expected positive role in children's later academic achievement is recognised. The ministry of education highlights that both for children aged from 0 to 3 years of

age, as well as for children from 3 to 6 years of age, progressive attention should be paid to the affective development, to the development of language and communication skills, as well as to the promotion of children's abilities to relate with others, solve conflicts, and create positive social relations. Children's motor development, body control habits, and the focus on supporting children's discovery of the physical and social characteristics of the environment are also underlined as important during preschool years in educational settings (<http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/va/contenidos/estudiantes/educacion-infantil.html>).

In addition, guidelines for preschool education recognise the need for preschool education experiences to support children across all developmental areas, encouraging them to achieve a positive and balanced image of themselves, and to develop personal autonomy. Spain presents a decentralised educational system, with educational authorities being managed at autonomous administrations. The autonomous administration character of educational authorities implies a certain level of autonomy regarding the way and degree in which schools concretize and extend the national policies. Particularly regarding the social emotional learning focus in school/preschool environments, each autonomous community has marked their own statements within the margins allowed by central ad-

ministrations, creating a wide range of different practices and levels of implements and extension according to local administrators' priorities and guidance (Aguilar et al., 2017).

In this scope, different intervention programmes have been initiated for the social and emotional

development of children attending formal educational settings, including more individual approaches as well as global programmes, global approaches, or at the level of the autonomous administrations (Aguilar et al., 2017).

II. Assessment

Some studies have been published documenting the effects of different programmes aiming to promote children's socio-emotional skills in preschoolers in Spain. Besides the above mentioned, Esteban and colleagues (2010) compared a group of children that was receiving an intervention programme on socio-emotional skills with a group of preschoolers that were not, finding that only children in the intervention group significantly improved their social understanding skills. In the same line, a study with children 6 years of age (grade 1) in Madrid school, authors also found that the experimental group scored significantly higher than the control group in the emotional competence after attending an intervention focused on socio-emotional development (Ambrona et al., 2012).

Evidence on the impact of the CRECES programme with preschoolers (a health education programme for children aiming to promote the development of the social and emotional competence) is children's development of socio-emotional competencies and health related habits is also being discussed in Spain (Bermejo-Martins et al., 2015).

Regarding the programme "Aprender a Convivir", some evidence is also documenting its positive effects in the intervention groups, with results showing a significant reduction in anti-social behaviours and conduct problems, as well as a noteworthy improvements in social competence among preschoolers in the experimental group (Benítez et al., 2011; Justicia-Arráez et al., 2015).

We also note that the above mentioned studies have used several socio-emotional skills measures, such as the Child Behavior Checklist-Teacher Report Form (CBCL-TRF; Achenbach & Rescorla, 2000), the Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scale for Teachers and Caregivers, PKBS-2 (Merrell, 2002), the Prueba de reconocimiento emocional (Ekman & Friesen, 2003), a version of the desire-belief-emotion task (Harris, Johnson, Hutton, Andrews, & Cooke, 1989), the Emotion knowledge: Perceval v.2.0 test (Mestre, Guil, Martínez-Cabanas, Escandon, & Gonzalez de la Torre, 2011).

III. Intervention

Some examples of local level initiatives for pre-school education aiming to enhance children's social and emotional skills in Spain include the broader programme conducted by the Marcelino Botín Foundation - Responsible Education programme. This initiative consists of different programmes specific to social and emotional development and has been implemented in more than 100 educational centres in different

parts of Spain. The evaluation of the programme implementation shows that the programme can contribute to improve children's academic performance, as well as to decrease children's anxiety.

Another programme widely used in Spain is the adaptation of the American intervention by Marc Brackett, known as the RULER. This programme

can be used with children from all ages, from pre-school education to higher grades. In Spain, children under 7 years of age may also have access to the validated programme "Aprende a Convivir", which means "Learn to live together", or the programme Educación Emocional, which means "Emotional Education" (Alba et al., 2013; Aguilar et al., 2017, Benítez et al., 2011; Morales et al., 2012). Although there are several local level initiatives fo-

cus on developing children's socio-emotional skills in early years, we note that we have no information regarding their coverage across the country. Most interventions are timely, without any follow-up on the long-term impact of the intervention thus pointing to the need for further investigating this issue (Aguilar et al., 2017).

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Abstract

Swedish municipalities are responsible for early childhood education and care (ECEC) programmes. There are several initiatives that can be categorised as assessments and interventions regarding socio emotional learning (SEL)

ECEC in Sweden, stemming from different types of organisations. Below we will give a few examples of SEL in ECEC, but it should not be considered exhaustive in describing the subject.

I. Development

In Sweden, approximately 85% of all children from 1 to 5 year of age attend preschools, family daycare homes or open preschools prior to compulsory school. Children are registered and the parents pay a fee that, in most areas, is linked to the family's income and the child's attendance. There are both public and private ECEC programmes in Sweden. Children are generally divided into groups of approximately fifteen children, but can vary depending on the children's needs and the conditions in the preschool. As a rule, three employees, such as preschool teachers and daycare attendants, are allocated to each group.

The preschool is part of the Swedish school system and according to the Education Act (2010:800), the purpose of the education in preschool is to ensure that children acquire and develop knowledge and values. Education should give children the opportunity to develop their ability to express empathy and consideration for others by encouraging and strengthening their compassion for and insight into the situation of other people.

According to the Curriculum for the Preschool (SKOLF5 2018:50), which defines the national goals and delegates the implementation of these goals to the local school authorities, the interaction between children is an important and active part of children's development and learning in the preschool. The teachers and attendants of each preschool should stimulate interaction between children and offer them help and support to resolve conflicts, work out

misunderstandings, and to compromise and respect each other. The preschool should also provide each child with the conditions to develop an ability to function individually and within a group, cooperate, manage conflicts, understand their rights and obligations, and to assume responsibility for common rules.

For the majority of children in Sweden, preschool is the context, next to home, where they spend most of their time. Over the last decade, there has been a gradual development towards an emphasis of education and teaching in the Swedish preschool system (<https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/forskolan/laroplan-for-forskolan/guide-och-webbinarium-om-forandringarna>). Simultaneously, several reports have described the possible influence of children's challenging behaviours in educational contexts on declining school results (Skolinspektionen 2016).

Several projects have been initiated to study the implementation of socio emotional skills (SES) learning in Swedish schools (e.g. Kimber et al., 2008). When schools and preschools in Sweden focus on common values (värdegrund in Swedish, a broad concept covering morals, social norms, and relationship questions), SES has often been translated to a form known as Life Skills Training (Livskunskap in Swedish) (Medin & Jutengren, 2020). Typically, the goal of these programmes is to foster children's social and emotional development. Ultimately, they aim to improve the children's environment and reduce bullying.

II. Assessment

The responsibility for quality in ECEC in Sweden is divided. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate is a government agency with the objective to ensure that all children are provided with equal education of good quality in a safe environment. They are responsible for the ECEC inspections in public kindergartens, also assessing applications to establish independent schools and ensure that the preschools comply with legislation and regulations. The municipalities are responsible for quality assessments of private ECEC programmes.

Between 2015 and 2017, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate was given the task to evaluate the Swedish ECEC by the Swedish government. Surveys with questions to the staff and parents were distributed to the majority of all ECEC programmes, and the results were used to produce thirteen government reports, which formed the basis for a continued quality assessment and improvements of the ECEC system in Sweden (Skolinspektionen, 2022).

III. Intervention

There are several SEL-related interventions available or undergoing development in Sweden, though many of them are designed for school-aged children rather than ECEC. The Swedish National Agency for Education launched an initiative in 2013 where they focus non-cognitive skills or "soft-skills", including social competences, in ECEC settings. This initiative was not linked to any specific intervention within the field, but rather served as a foundation for further development in Swedish preschools (Skolverket, 2013).

In a six week intervention study, led by professor Lenz-Taguchi (Gerholm et al., 2019), 18 preschools and 29 preschool programmes, with a total of 431 children and 98 teachers, was included in a randomised controlled trial of a socioemotional and material learning paradigm, and a digitally implemented attention and maths training paradigm. The interventions lasted for 6 weeks, preceded by pre-testing and followed by post-testing of the children. However, neither of the two intervention paradigms had measurable effects on the targeted skills.

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Abstract

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) is part of the childcare facilities and kindergartens, which is linked to elementary school. In Switzerland, national objectives are stipulated and monitored by The Confederation. Additionally, regional cantons may add objectives and quality indicators for ECEC. Curricula are organised based on the regional educational curriculum plans for each linguistic region (French, German, Italian). Although each canton can freely design its curriculum within these teaching objectives, a lot of similarities in the domains and areas re-

main. This is a result of the HarmoS Agreement, which stipulates the harmonisation of educational objectives in all cantons of Switzerland. The main challenge is quality control at the level where differences arise: the operational level and the methodology used. Especially for early childhood education and care, heterogeneity in implementation occurs, because this is solely the responsibility of cantons and municipalities. Because there is no confederational framework, a compulsory educational framework for quality control in ECEC is a challenge for the near future.

I. Development

Switzerland is a federal state that is organised in three levels: the Confederation, the cantons and the communes. The cantons and communities are mandated to organise education. The official school language is French, German, Italian or Romansh, depending on the region (Faeh & Vogt, 2021).

In Switzerland, compulsory education starts at either 4 or 6 years of age. Before 6 years of age, children can attend preschool or nursery school for one or two years. Preschool starts at 4 years of age at the earliest and is compulsory in most of the cantons. However in some German speaking cantons, there is no obligation to attend preschool. Therefore, some children start at 5 or 6 years of age. Childcare refers to care for children under 4 years of age and is organised in private and public (state-run) facilities, so called Kindergartens, or creches. Childcare is organised under the responsibility of local/cantonal ministries of social affairs. In some cantons it is organised under the responsibility of the ministry of education (Expat guide to Switzerland, 2021)

From 0 to 4 years of age children may attend centre-based or family-based childcare, or kindergarten. Each region has its own characteristics. Faeh & Vogt (2021) describe better conditions in French speaking Switzerland compared to German and Italian speaking Switzerland.

Since 2016, there is a national curriculum, and orientation framework for ECEC (Wustman, 2016). It formulates directions and guidelines for practitioners within ECEC and is based on the convention of the rights of the child.

Wustman, (2016) cited in Faeh & Vogt (2021, p.32):

- Physical and mental wellbeing: A child who is well can be curious and active;
- Communication: Children acquire a rich understanding of themselves and the world through exchange with others;
- Belonging and participation: Every child wants to feel welcome and participate from birth;
- Strengthening and empowerment: Reactions children experience in relation to them as a person or to their behaviour influence their self-perception;
- Inclusion and acceptance of diversity: Every child needs a place in society;
- Holistic and appropriate: Small children learn with all their senses, guided by their interests and previous experiences.

Since 2020, the Swiss childcare association issued quality guidelines for centre-based childcare. From 4 years of age, children can go to nursery school (Kindergarten or preschool). Kindergarten is part of the educational system and linked to primary school in Switzerland. It offers

a mixture of guided and free play within a nationally harmonised curriculum. Kindergarten is part of the primary school educational system. National objectives (Nationale Bildungsziele) are applied to the basic areas for compulsory education: languages, mathematics and natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, music, art and design, and exercise and health. These national objectives harmonise objectives for the whole country. The educational standards for compulsory education are set by the Intercantonal Agreement on Harmonisation of Compulsory Education (HarmoS Konkordat). Regional legislatives in cantons and schools may add educational standards. The cantons develop the curricula, which are stipulated per language region. French-speaking cantons follow the "Plan d'études romand", Germans speaking cantons follow the "Lehrplan 21" and the Italian speaking canton Ticino follows the "Piano di studio". These comply with the HarmoS Agreement that stipulates the general national teaching objectives.

French speaking regions

SES-development is part of the global educational project that transversally intersects with the 5 basic disciplines (mathematics and sciences, languages, human sciences, arts, health education). These transversal capacities focus on self-development and are grouped in different

domains: collaboration, communication, learning strategies, creative thinking and reflective skills (CIIP, 2021).

Germans and multilingual speaking regions

The Lehrplan 21 applies to all German speaking and multilingual cantons in Switzerland. Similar to the Plan d'études, it specifies teaching objectives for SES in transversal competencies. In the first cycle, development of pupils is strongly encouraged. The curriculum strongly focuses on: motor development, perception, temporal and spatial orientation, imagination and creativity, language and the ability to express themselves. 'Play' is an essential element of the teaching method (D-EDK, 2021).

Italian speaking regions

In accordance with the other linguistic areas, the educational plan 'Piano di studio' has a similar structure and teaching objective with specific disciplinary objectives, transversal objectives and general educational objectives. Development of the SES is part of the transversal objectives and has similar areas as the French speaking curriculum: collaboration, communication, learning strategies, creative thinking and reflective skills (Scuolalab, 2015).

II. Assessment

Childcare Centres are not obliged to follow the orientation framework. In practice, this acts merely as a guiding function (Faeh & Vogt, 2021).

Evaluation of the educational programme in kindergarten (first cycle of primary education) is a cantonal matter. They are responsible for the curriculum and the compliance with the Intercantonal Agreement on Harmonisation of Compulsory Education (HarmoS Agreement). Assessment of pupils in the first grade is often without grades, but can be seen as an orientational assessment. In many cantons structured observational documents are used to evaluate pupils.

The entire Swiss educational system is structurally monitored. This quality assessment is the responsibility of both The Confederation and the cantons. The monitoring process is a 4-year cycle ("das Bildungsmonitoring"). Results are published in the Swiss Education Report, which covers all levels of compulsory education. As mentioned above, childcare is not included in

the report. The educational objectives, including SES, are externally and internally evaluated at cantonal level. Article 3 of the HarmoS Agreement stipulates specific goals and socio emotional skills for primary school, as cited by Antognazza (2015, p. 199):

"Article 3: Basic education: During compulsory school all female and male students acquire and develop basic competences and knowledge, as well as cultural identity, which engages them in lifelong learning and enables them to find their own place in social and professional life", and "The third paragraph mentions a wider dimension of basic education that, apart from its disciplines, promotes the development of the pupil as a person: Compulsory school facilitates in female and male students the development of an independent personality as well as the acquisition of social competences and the sense of responsibility towards other people and the environment".

III. Intervention

Because the main mandate for education in Switzerland is a cantonal affair, Switzerland has as many educational curricula as there are cantons: twenty-six (Antognazza, 2015). There is a great variety in implementation strategies of SES within the national and cantonal educational curricula. In the German speaking part of Switzerland, social and emotional skills and learning are fostered by focussing on implementing specific programmes, such as the PFADE programme. Antognazza (2015) describes three case studies to foster SES development in Swiss schools.

Interventions vary throughout Switzerland:

Example 1: in the bachelor programme for pre-service teachers, a mandatory twenty-four hours course on social and emotional skills is offered. Because of the large interest of students, it is now structurally embedded in the curriculum.

Example 2: introduction of the Pfade programme (Programm zur Förderung Alternativer Denkstrategien or Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) in a large part of the German speaking primary schools. This programme focuses on the development of self-esteem, social skills and identity. It has gained popularity and acceptance, and in some cantons, public bodies even provide financial support for implementing the programme at primary school level.

Example 3: introduction of “the chameleon game” to encourage SES development for children from 4 to 10 years of age. This game is intended to teach children how to share and express their emotions.

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Turkey

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Reviewer

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Abstract

The current Turkish Early Childhood Education Curriculum underlines the importance of the social and emotional development of young children. Although Rakap and colleagues (2018) highlight that this emphasis does not guarantee by itself the teachers' intentional use of practices to support children's social and emotional competence. At least two well-known universal social and emotional learning programmes – Pre-

school Promoting Alternative THinking Program (Preschool PATHS; Domitrovich et al., 1999), and Second Step from Committee for Children – were adapted and are being implemented in Turkish preschool settings. Given the limited number of information available in English, it is important in the future to deepen the knowledge regarding SEL assessment and intervention practices developed at preschool settings in Turkey.

I. Development

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Turkey is provided via nursery and day care centres for children of 0 to 36 months of age for which the General Directorate of Children Services of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services is responsible. In its turn, preschool education is under the responsibility of the General Directorate of Basic Education and is provided in kindergartens (for children of 36-66 months), and in nursery (for children of 48-66 months). Additionally, there are early childhood educational centres in special education kindergartens (for which the General Directorate of the Special Education and Guidance Services are responsible), for children from 0 to 36 months of age and 37 to 66 months of age who are in need of special education. Although preschool in Turkey is not mandatory, with the exception for the individuals who are in need of special education, it aims for children to benefit from preschool education services for at least 1 year (Eurydice, 2021).

“The aim of preschool education is to ensure that children acquire body, mind and emotion development and good habits in accordance with the general principles and basic principles of national education, to prepare them for primary school, to create a common development environment for children from unfavourable environments and families, and to provide children with a correct and beautiful speech”, (Eurydice, 2021). The current Turkish Early Childhood Education Curriculum (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2013; for children who are between 3 to 6 years) aims to

promote several children's developmental areas, including the social-emotional development domain (Ata-Aktürk et al., 2017; Rakap et al., 2018). “It is described as a child-centred, flexible, spiral meaning repeatable, eclectic, balanced, play and learning by doing based programme”, (Gülçiçek et al., 2019, p. 78). Considering the research-based approach Pyramid Model for Promoting Social-Emotional Competence in Young Children (e.g., Hemmeter et al., 2013), a recent study by Rakap and colleagues (2018; not representative of Turkish preschool teachers and based on one classroom observation) suggested that, without training and professional development support, preschool teachers working in public preschool classrooms in Turkey use few key practices to support young children's social-emotional competence, and tend to use primary or universal promotion practices more often than tertiary intervention practices. The most observed practices were those related to supportive conversations with children, schedules, routines, and activities, connecting with families, transitions between activities, and collaborative teaming. According to Rakap et al. (2018, p. 19), “although social-emotional development is acknowledged as an important area of development in the national preschool programme, there is no comprehensive curriculum developed in Turkey that focuses on social-emotional development. Therefore, the majority of teachers underutilize systematic and explicit instruction to support young children's social-emotional competence”.

II. Assessment

Regarding universal social and emotional learning programmes in Turkish preschool settings, to our best knowledge, a limited number of publications in English describing its implementation and efficacy are available. Seyhan et al. (2017) mentioned that although some inter-

ventions have been implemented, such as Arda & Ocak (2012), Dereli (2008), and Durualp & Aral (2010), additional research is needed to prove the effectiveness of intervention programmes for promoting well-being of children.

III. Intervention

Based on our review, it was possible to see that at least two well-known universal social and emotional learning programmes – **Preschool Promoting Alternative Thinking Program** (Preschool PATHS; Domitrovich et al., 1999), and **Second Step** from Committee for Children – were adapted and are being implemented in Turkish preschool settings.

Preschool Promoting Alternative Thinking Program (Preschool PATHS; Domitrovich et al., 1999) was first introduced in Turkey in the scope of a doctoral dissertation (Durmusoglu Saltali, 2010). At least, two more studies are known: Arda & Ocak, 2012; Seyhan et al., 2017. The main findings

revealed improvements in children's social and emotional skills and a reduction in children's disruptive behaviours and compliance problems. Also, an adapted version of the Second Step preschool-age programme (Committee for Children) is being implemented (<http://www.sdoakademi.com/ikinci-adim/>) at private and public Turkish schools. A recent study that was done in the scope of a doctoral dissertation (Sezer, 2020) analysed the Second Step effectiveness with a sample of children from 36-60 months of age, and found positive effects on the children's social and emotional skills (assertiveness, self-regulation, attachment/relationship building, and total protective factors).

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Ukraine

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Abstract

In the last 5 years, Ukraine has focused on integrating social and emotional skills into the national school programme. At the national level, there was a recognition for the need to improve the educational system from an early stage, where social and emotional skills were recognized as the foundation. Since 2018, all schools in Ukraine adopted the new programme, based on 10 basic competences. Three of them are re-

lated to social skills: sense of entrepreneurship, social and civic competencies, and cultural awareness. Ukraine has gained a high awareness of how important these skills are. UNICEF is also supporting Ukraine by analysing the best practices from other countries. Non-governmental organisations contribute to social and emotional skills research and development.

I. Development

In 2019, Ukraine spent approximately 6.4% of the GDP, including 0.9% on preschool education, for education as a whole (National Statistical Bureau of Ukraine 2019). The Law on Preschool Education, 2001 (Zakon star doshkil'nu osvitu), ensures admittance to state-funded preschool institutions for all young children. It laid out the basis for the country's present framework. Ukraine is among other countries with a high enrolment rate in preschools. In 2020, Ukraine's pre-primary gross enrolment ratio was 86%, contrasted with 75% in other European countries and Central Asia areas.

Ukraine's schooling system faces long standing difficulties, such as the lack of educators. The fundamental reasons young professionals are not attracted to the workforce are the low compensation and the perceived low social status (Putcha et al., 2018). Therefore, the public confidence in education is diminishing.

Ukraine is currently carrying out a significant instruction change, the so-called New Ukrainian School. UNICEF upholds the Ministry of Education and Science's (MoES) endeavours to increase preschoolers' admittance to early education by establishing comprehensive quality conditions in preschools in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Efforts incorporate ways to structure educators' skills, to raise parental awareness, to foster children's social and emotional skills, and to provide up-to-date instruments for support (Litchenko et al, 2021).

Moreover, UNICEF and the MoES have implemented an asynchronous e-learning programme for teachers that teaches life skills. It has spread to 21,000 educators across the country and would thus impact up to 240,000 children.

Additionally, the new Law on Education, 2017 (Zakon star osvity, 2017), implemented changes to the required qualification and professional development of teachers. For example, linking an increased salary to increased qualifications and providing further options for ongoing professional development.

Recent studies based on the best possible practice implementation from countries in the European Union (Melnyk et al., 2019) have identified several areas needing improvement for the higher education of preschool teachers. This includes aspects such as expanding the curriculum to include topics about preschoolers socio-emotional development, general psychological wellbeing and supporting children from a multicultural environment.

In Ukraine, instruction is mostly teacher-directed, often because teachers lack the knowledge and training in child-centred practices (Ognevyuk, 2016), hence the necessary changes needed for higher education that aims to support future teachers in new child-centred practices. These changes will contribute to the improvement of social and emotional skills (SES) in preschoolers.

The issues with preschool education in the European Union and in Ukraine are consistent with one another. They centre around the personality of the child, considering physical, mental, and social-emotional development (Pantiuk et al., 2019). Thus, the new state-funded programme focuses on sustainable changes to the pre-school curriculum across various areas: family, education, state, and NGOs.

As stated by Diekstra et al. (2008): “Given the present state of knowledge regarding the effectiveness of Social Emotional and Life Skills Learning, countries can no longer be excused for not providing the means and support to schools to offer such programmes”.

The practices in the New Ukrainian School reform are developed to “change the educational tradition, to raise an innovator and citizen who can make responsible decisions and respects human rights” (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2016). The Reform was created in September 2017, describing the pillars of the new approach to education to be rolled out as part of a nationwide programme.

Since 2018, all schools in Ukraine adopted the new programme, which is based on 10 basic competences. Three of them are related to social skills:

- 1. Sense of entrepreneurship.** (Builds on skills for innovation and being a self-starter and implementing a logical and balanced approach in business endeavours);
- 2. Social and civic competencies.** (Social competences such as the ability to work with others to achieve results, to prevent and resolve conflicts and reach compromises, support for social and cultural diversity), and;
- 3. Cultural awareness.** (A set of skills related to art appreciation, cultural responsiveness and “respect for diversity”).

There are a few more **Lifelong learning skills**, like the way children perceive themselves and the world around them, the ability to work with others, to achieve results, to prevent and resolve conflicts and reach compromises, support for social and cultural diversity, etc., in which children are trained.

There are various local developments and non-government organisations (NGO), that work on different aspects of SES. Smart Education (Smart Osvita, 2019) NGO is a New Ukrainian School partner who supported the official web-page of the reform and the training of teachers to implement the new knowledge. The mission of Smart Education is to raise an innovator and citizen who can make responsible decisions and respects human rights. Each teacher or educational specialist has access to the platform. The eLearning tool hosts different techniques and instruments for developing the new skills at school. This is a result of a long-term active national campaign of collaboration and sharing good practices.

UNICEF is also supporting Ukraine with analysis and best practices from other countries. Other NGOs contributing to SES research and development:

- Krok za Krokom (Крок за Кроком, 2022) – offers early diagnostics and prevention to children at risk of developmental delays. This includes support of gross and fine motor skills development, social-emotional skills, behaviour issues, and speech therapy;
- Institute for Education Development (IED) (Institute for Education Development, 2014) – The main mission of the 2013 founded NGO is to “promote innovation and reform in education. The IED aims to provide high quality research and expertise in the fields of education, education policy, humanities and social sciences”;
- International Step-by-Step Association (International Step-by-Step Association, n.d.) – “The mission of the Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation is to promote the reforms in the system of education towards quality, inclusive education for children aged from birth till 8 years old, with active engagement of families and local communities”. They place special focus on disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, such as Roma children and children with disabilities, and;
- Results for development (Results for development, 2022) – is an international organisation that aims to promote programmes for early childhood development. They provide research services, awareness campaigns and funding.

II. Assessment

The new national programme is implemented on a nationwide level. Hence, it is mandatory across all pre-school age groups. The evaluation is also carried out centrally, by the government. Evaluation is done every six months. It is based on a centralised monitoring and reporting system. As stated in the New Ukrainian School reform (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine): “... a new system for the measurement and evalua-

tion of educational outcomes will be created. In particular, the content of the External Independent Assessment will be changed.”

This is achieved by observation through specifically developed checklists. Data is gathered and analysed centrally and is compared and ranked across the geographical areas and cities in the country.

III. Intervention

The evaluation practices are across all domains of preschool education. The programme distinguishes between 3 main domains: cross-cutting skills (3 Rs: reading, writing and arithmetic); emotional motivation (being able to express oneself, understanding emotions); and pedagogy or partnership (teachers and children build skills to work together). According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine:

- Cross-cutting skills: reading comprehension, expressing one’s “opinion orally and in writing, critical and systemic thinking, ability to logically substantiate one’s position, creativity, proactivity, ability to manage emotions constructively, assess risks, make decisions, resolve problems, ability to cooperate with others”. The teaching curriculum is focused on play-based activities and creative practices that aim to provoke and hence - observe those behaviours daily;
- Emotional motivation: Morning circle time includes a daily practice to let children “learn to express their opinions and feelings and listen to others”. Thus, children become aware of others’ emotions and their expression, and;
- Pedagogy of partnership – involving teachers in actively building relations with children. This domain is using social and emotional elements. For example, a play-based approach has been developed to include the teacher as part of the team. Thus, adults get to see things from a

child’s perspective. According to the programme developers, the following skills are developed: “respect for others personality; Benevolence and a positive attitude; Confidence in relationships; Dialogue, interaction, mutual respect; Distributed leadership (proactive behaviours, the right of choice and taking responsibility for it, horizontality of connections); Principles of social partnership (equality of parties, in being keen to accept responsibilities, obligation to fulfil agreements)”.

All activities and checklists are uploaded on the Online Platform. This platform was rolled out across all preschools as part of the program implementation.

While moving from a teacher-centred to a child-centred classroom model and to improve the SES curriculum, there is a need to either locally develop, or to adapt and implement, an existing assessment tool for classroom education (von Suchodoletz et al., 2019). Such a potential tool is TEACH, developed by The World Bank and aiming to capture the teacher-child interactions, thus providing a means to assess those children who are at risk. “Teach differs from other classroom observation tools in that it captures (i) the time teachers spend on learning and the extent to which students are on task, and (ii) the quality of teaching practices that help develop students’ socio-emotional and cognitive skills” (The World Bank, 2020).

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United Kingdom

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Abstract

Social and emotional wellbeing is considered a key area of development for early childhood education and care (ECEC), later being included

among the main content areas of the British National Curriculum at all educational levels (Cefai, Bartolo, Cavioni & Downes, 2018).

I. Development

In the United Kingdom (UK), early childhood education and care (ECEC) is universal for children from 3 and 4 years of age (also often referred to as childcare (Lloyd, 2015). For younger children, early education is also available, both as a mix of private for-profit and not-for-profit (Eurydice, 2021). ECEC aims to be available and provide high-quality services according to the families and children's specific needs, also including a focus on disadvantaged children and families, aiming to improve life changes and social mobility through education. Overall, the UK is committed to increasing the quality of the early years' education, aiming to prepare children for formal schooling and support families, including those in disadvantage.

Several areas of learning and development are identified by the UK ECEC and are included as key for ECEC practitioners to focus on, namely: communication and language, physical/motor development - moving and handling, health and self-care, and personal, social and emotional development (Eurydice, 2021). Social and emotional skills, including for instance children's self-confidence and self-awareness, managing feelings and behaviour, and making relationships, are included as a core area for ECEC in the UK, being an integral part of The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), which records children's development against the 17 early learning goals in early years (Eurydice, 2021).

II. Assessment

Regarding the deployment of SEL programmes within school settings in the UK, there has been a significant variation in terms of evaluations conducted. Particularly for the intervention of early aged children attending educational settings, evidence of the effectiveness of the interventions conducted in such settings is scarce. For instance, the programme Zippy's Friends has been implemented in UK preschools, but the main research in the UK is only available for older children (e.g., Clarke, Bunting & Barry, 2014; Sloan, Gildea, Miller & Thurston, 2018). Regardless, an evaluation protocol for a large scale evaluation of Zippy's Friends effects in UK children

from 6 to 7 years of age was developed (Sloan et al., 2017), as well as the documentation of positive effects of the programme with children and young people with special education needs (https://www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk/uploads/Files/PDFs/Evaluation_Zippys_Friends_Judith%20Trust.pdf).

Moreover, reports on project implementation documented some results of the program effects. We found project reports documenting the effects of the implementation of Zippy's in the UK. In Southampton, a report describes the evaluation of the Zippy's Friends program. The

study involved four intervention classes in three schools, and three control classes in one school. Results show improvements in the intervention groups emotional literacy skills and hyperactivity, with teachers and children considering that the program was positive (Holmes & Faupel, 2004, 2005). In Northampton, children in the Zippy's Friends intervention groups showed more gains in their levels of self-esteem, as rated by their class teachers (Davidson, 2011).

In relation to the Second Step Early Learning and the MindUP 3-7 programs, although implemented in the UK, we found no published evidence regarding evidence on how such interventions were evaluated (<https://guidebook.eif.org.uk/programme/second-step-early-learning>, 2019).

III. Intervention

Several intervention programs can be found in the UK across all school grades, from universal programs to target programs. Particularly for the early years, universal programs such as Zippy's Friends, Second Step Early Learning, and MindUP 3-7, have been implemented across the UK. These are all universal programs, widely used internationally, and with evidence of its effectiveness in several countries (e.g., Clarke et al., 2014; Crooks et al., 2020; Thierry et al., 2016).

More specifically, Zippy's is a universal intervention for children from 5 to 7 years of age that aims to improve children's social and emotional skills, particularly coping skills. It is organised in 24 sessions of 45 minutes each. Sessions are designed around stories focusing on themes such as: friendship, conflict, change, and difficult feelings. In the UK, Zippy's Friends is provided by a UK-based non-profit agency, Partnership for

Children, which licences agencies in other countries to implement the program. Second Step Early Learning is a universal, classroom-based programme designed to promote social-emotional competence and self-regulation. It has several versions, including a version for children from 4 and 5 years of age. The programme is delivered across 28 weekly activities including either the whole group or small-group activities. MindUP 3-7 is a schools-based social and emotional learning and mindfulness programme. This universal programme has three versions, including a version for young children from 3 to 7 years of age. The programme supports children in developing strategies to focus attention, regulate emotions, and engage in prosocial behaviours in order to foster positive academic, social, and emotional well-being. It is organised in 15 sessions, with a core part of the intervention focusing on the use of mindfulness techniques.

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Australia

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Abstract

Australia is a diverse landscape from geography to administratively concerning early childhood education and care (ECEC). Still, there are several examples of national initiatives regarding

social and emotional learning (SEL). Several programmes are available, as well as nationwide assessments conducted that are relevant to early learning and SEL.

I. Development

In Australia, early childhood education and care (ECEC) is a shared responsibility between the federal government and corresponding administration on a state or territorial level. However, it has been found that this administrative and geographic diversity could affect the availability of SEL initiatives (Bowles et al., 2017). With this discovery in mind, in 2012, a new common quality standard called the National Quality Framework (NQF) was established. To support preschool curricula, NQF uses approved learning frameworks such as the default option for children from 0 to 5 years of age, which is Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. This framework prominently features wellbeing, and social and emotional skills as outcomes (Australian Government Department of Education and Training, 2010).

There are many SEL initiatives, such as frameworks, programmes and assessments, available in Australia. Though SEL is publically encouraged, the drivers of development are not always clear. There are several likely paths for SEL initiatives to come to fruition. For instance, a programme called Animal fun was first developed by a team

at Curtin University, with later evaluation and development being funded by Healthway (a government health promotion agency for Western Australia) and the Mental Health Commission of Western Australia. Now, the licence has been transferred from Curtin University to one of the authors of the programme (Animal Fun, n.d.). Regarding multiple organisations developing or promoting SEL and mental health initiatives, there is also Be You, a national mental health in education initiative, which was created by the organisation Beyond Blue under appointment of the Australian Government. In addition, Beyond Blue has contracted Early Childhood Australia and headspace as service providers for Be You (Be You, n.d.a).

As Australia has a large population of native English speakers, programmes developed in the USA and UK could also be made available through public or private stakeholders. An example of this is Second Step, a programme based in the USA, that is now being licensed to an Australian/New Zealand publisher (Positive Pieces Education, n.d.).

II. Assessment

The overall assessment of ECEC providers lies under regional responsibility (state or territory regulatory authority), though it is supported by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) and the NQF. The NQF provides an assessment and rating process along with the National Quality Standard (NQS), which outlines 7 quality areas (ACECQA, 2020). Though not an extensive focus, there are still aspects of SEL being assessed, such as Standard 5.2: Relationships between children, which is further divided into elements of collaborative learning and self-regulation (ACECQA, 2020).

Early development is also assessed on an aggregated level in Australia using the Early Development Instrument that was first developed in Canada. The instrument uses teacher ratings and includes assessments of variables relevant for SEL such as social competence, emotional maturity along with communication skills. The

assessment takes place every three years. The programme as a whole is called the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) and is a government initiative (Australian Early Development Census, 2019). Data from AEDC is also used in research, such as the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (Growing up in Australia, n.d.).

Another form of assessment that is available for practitioners and researchers in Australia is the Early Years Toolbox; a collection of early childhood measures packaged in an application designed for use with a tablet. The application offers several assessment measures, including the Child Self-Regulation and Behaviour Questionnaire (CSBQ) for measuring self-regulation and social development, using Australian norms (Howard & Melhuish, 2017).

III. Intervention

A wide range of SEL programmes are available in Australia, though recommendations have been made to support the use of efficient and effective evidence-based programs in practice (Bowles et al., 2017; Laurens et al., 2021). One initiative that aims for progress in this area is the previously mentioned Be You, which also contains a programme directory. This programme directory has surveyed many of the programmes available in Australia. Although the common denominator is mental health and wellbeing in education, these kinds of programmes often overlap with SEL. These programmes are searchable, summarised and provided with a rating of evidence and implementation, such as available support and acceptability of the program (Be You, n.d.b). Note that this programme directory doesn't necessarily contain all relevant programmes available in Australia.

Since Australia has a large proportion of native English speakers, there are many options in importing existing SEL programs without the need of translation (one previously mentioned example being Second Step), although cultural adaptations may still be necessary. There are also programmes being developed and evaluated directly in Australia. One previously mentioned example is Animal Fun, a universal program consisting of modules where children train movements based on animals, with the last module focusing on social and emotional skills, such as promoting laughter, relaxing, identifying and labelling feelings (Piek et al., 2015).

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Abstract

Canada offers a multitude of initiatives regarding social and emotional learning (SEL) for early ages, though there does not seem to be a clear agenda for it on a federal level and can therefore be dependent on the territory or province. Still,

this literature search will discuss the progress that has been made, giving a brief overview by providing a few examples of developments that either stem from, or are available in Canada.

I. Development

Canada is a federation that consists of 13 provinces and territories. The main responsibility for education and early childhood education and care (ECEC) lies with each province and territory. As such, ECEC is not organised on a federal level (Friendly et al., 2020). This also means that there is no national agenda regarding SEL (Guyn Cooper Research Associates, 2013). Funding, research, development and provision of SEL is instead more typically concentrated on the individual ministries, universities and other types of organisations (e.g. commercial or non-profit). For example, The University of British Columbia developed a database for resources regarding SEL (<http://www.selresources.com/>). British Columbia also has examples of how SEL is embedded in the curriculum and teacher training (Hymel, Low, Starosa, Gill & Schonert-Reichl, 2018). Another example is Ontario's kindergarten programme that features SEL in several areas, such as chapter 2.1 Thinking about belonging and contributing; or chapter 2.2 Thinking about self-regulation and well-being (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016).

This doesn't necessarily preclude any federal or other nationwide initiative to further the development of SEL in Canada. One example of this is

the Mental Health Commission of Canada who also addresses early childhood mental health. Their activities include (Mental Health Commission of Canada, n.d.):

- Consulting with caregivers and persons who work with young children and families;
- Identifying major challenges and opportunities in services, policies, programs and environments that support infants, young children and their caregivers;
- Identifying national priorities in early childhood mental health;
- Supporting and spreading best practices and programs for early childhood mental health.

Note that Guyn Cooper Research Associates (2013) issued a brief, summarising the responses from 23 interviews with various people working with SEL. Several recommendations were made, such as creating a nationwide SEL network, supporting programs, rigorous evaluations, and aligning with federal or provincial initiatives.

II. Assessment

As previously mentioned, SEL activity directed at ECEC does not typically emanate from a federal level in Canada. Any large-scale, formal assessment of social and emotional factors concerning ECEC would most likely be conducted on a provincial or territorial level primarily. Again, using Ontario as an example, kindergartens are expected to gather and communicate evidence of learning through various sources, such as observations or samples of the child's work. As it is linked to the kindergarten programme, one of the primary goals is to assess and develop self-regulation (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018).

There are also more quantitative methods for large-scale assessment. The Early Development Instrument (EDI) includes social competence and communication skills and is an example of a measure that is both developed in Canada and has seen extensive use on a population level and

in research, even internationally (Early Development Instrument, n.d.; Janus, Harrison, Goldfeld, Guhn, Brinkman, 2016).

There are many options available for assessment on a local or individual level, especially when the end user's maternal language is English. Users of quantitative measures should however be aware about whether or not the measure is validated and standardised with respect to a Canadian population (where applicable). As an example, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is available in both English and French, but normative data for the general Canadian population has not yet been fully established (Hoffmann et al., 2020).

Barring this potential limitation, there are many methods available for assessing social and emotional factors in early childhood.

III. Intervention

There is a relatively large amount of interventions focusing on SEL available in Canada. Likely due to Canada's own initiatives, while also being close to the USA geographically and linguistically, where many SEL-interventions have their origin and remain available throughout North America. An example of this is Second Step, which has seen considerable use in Canada (Schonert-Reichl, n.d.).

Even if the focus is solely on ECEC, several examples of interventions remain. This is true even if criteria are more rigorous, like only choosing interventions that have faced rigorous evaluation, or interventions that can be considered Sequenced, Active, Focused, and Explicit (SAFE; Durlak, Weissberg & Pachan, 2010).

One example is The Minipally Puppet program, a structured social skills intervention. The program is aimed at children from 2 to 5 years of age, although there is a version available for even smaller children. The version aimed at children 2 to 5 year of age was recently evaluated in a randomised control trial which saw favourable results for the intervention regarding disruptive behaviours (girls only) and decreasing diurnal cortisol secretion compared to controls (Larose et al., 2019; Larose et al., 2020).

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Japan

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Abstract

Japan has several initiatives regarding social and emotional learning (SEL) in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings, although finding SEL interventions for the ECEC context is difficult. There are state initiatives along with

several research institutes advocating the development of social and emotional skills in children. Practitioners have many ways of assessing these skills. There are interventions available, though this is predominantly for school-aged children.

I. Development

There are several organisations in Japan that are actively involved with research and development of SEL in ECEC on a national level. For instance, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) accommodates the National Institute for Educational Policy Research (NIER). NIER in turn houses departments that are relevant for the development of SEL in Japan, primarily the Early Childhood Education Research Center. In addition to federal initiatives and universities, there are also privately funded research institutes. There is the

Benesse Education Research and Development Institute, who conduct their own research and development, while also supporting other institutes, such as Child Research Net, a non-profit, Internet-based child research institute in Japan. There are also several academic societies that may support and disseminate relevant research rather than directly develop practices, such as the Japanese Educational Research Association, Japanese Society of Child Science and Japan Society of Developmental Psychology.

II. Assessment

There are several initiatives regarding the assessment of SEL on a national level in Japan (Kyllonen, 2017). Regarding ECEC, the previously mentioned Early Childhood and Education Research Center is currently undertaking a project aiming to assess social- and emotional skills through questionnaires and interviews (NIER, n.d.).

It is unclear which methods and to what degree practitioners formally assess social and emotional learning or skills in ECEC. However, there are several tools that have been used in research, specifically in Japanese ECEC. One example is the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment-Mini (DESSA-mini) for universal screening of social and emotional competencies rated by teachers (Naglieri, LeBuffe & Shapiro, 2011). DESA-mini was recently translated for a Japanese study involving children from 4 to 5 years of age (Miyamura, Isumi & Fujiwara, 2021). Another ex-

ample of teacher-rated social and emotional competence in ECEC is the Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation Inventory (SCBE-30) that was used in a large multinational study which included Japan (LaFreniere et al., 2002).

Practitioners might also opt to use a parent rating scale. One such example is the Japanese version of the Infant-Toddler Social and Emotional Assessment (J-ITSEA) that can be used as a parent questionnaire for children from 1 to 3 years of age (Yago et al., 2015). Additionally, the Brief Infant Toddler Social Emotional Assessment (BITSEA) has also been translated to a Japanese version for similar use (Nakamichi et al., 2022).

While not exclusively a tool for assessing social and emotional skills, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is available in Japanese (Youth in Mind, 2020).

III. Intervention

Japan has several explicit SEL programmes available for a large age span (Ikesako & Miyamoto, 2015). While this also includes younger children, such as first graders (e.g. Matsumoto, Ishimoto & Takizawa, 2020), finding SEL interventions for the ECEC context is difficult.

When comparing integrated practices, one example that may stand out as different compared to Western approaches is **Mimamoru**; an approach where educators intentionally observe but withhold immediate intervention in a conflict

situations to foster autonomous development of interpersonal problem-solving skills (Nakatsubo, Ueda & Kayama, 2021). This practice, and similar, that are considered as listening, empathising and sharing control with children can be viewed as child-centred attitudes. However, this factor did not seem to significantly contribute to parent-rated social-emotional competence in a recent study, though it did contribute to a significant decrease on the problem subscale (Nakamichi et al., 2022).

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Abstract

Although the provision and support for early childhood education and care (ECEC) may vary considerably, the United States of America (USA) is home to many of the pioneering efforts regarding social and emotional learning (SEL). There are various initiatives driving the development of SEL, with CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) being a prominent organisation in this field. The Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning Laborato-

ry (EASEL lab) EASEL has also developed several noteworthy projects in this scope. There are also many other organisations working with specific SEL interventions. A majority of SEL interventions in the world seem to have their origins in the USA, at least when looking at experimentally evaluated interventions. Several repositories are available in the US for aiding stakeholders in choosing appropriate tools for assessment and interventions regarding SEL.

I. Development

The USA has a large population, yet fairly low participation rates for ECEC. Federally, the responsibility for ECEC lies with the Department of Health and Human Services, while the responsibility for schooling lies with the Department of Education. Provision of ECEC is mainly conducted on a state-wide or regional level, though federal grants may fund programmes, such as Head Start, that are aimed at disadvantaged children. This may lead to considerable heterogeneity in the provision, quality and affordability in ECEC around the states (OECD, 2020). Individual states also tend to vary in their preschool standards or guidelines in relation to SEL (Dusenbury, 2015).

Despite variability in provisions, and relatively low participation rates in ECEC, much of the pioneering work regarding SEL has been conducted in the United States. Though this development may be weighted towards school-aged children, several American initiatives, that influence modern SEL, started as early as the 1960's (Bowles et al., 2017).

One of the most prominent initiatives is the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), a non-profit organisa-

tion working towards the betterment of SEL in education. CASEL has its roots in the previously mentioned pioneering work of the 60's, drawing on the results from Dr. James Comer and colleagues who saw improvements in behaviour and academic performance using principles now acknowledged as SEL. The work was expanded on by others, leading to CASEL (and SEL as a term) being founded in 1994 (CASEL, n.d.).

There have been many SEL initiatives since then, made possible by various organisations and sources of funding, such as federal grants, charitable grants, universities, non-profit organisations and private organisations. Another example is the Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning (EASEL) Laboratory that drives several projects related to SEL in ECEC, such as the Zaentz Early Childhood initiative, which seeks to conduct research in the field in order to inform ECEC policy and practice (Saul Zaentz Early Education Initiative, n.d.). The EASEL lab is funded by various organisations, both federal grants and private foundations (EASEL lab, n.d.).

II. Assessment

Social and emotional competencies can be assessed in various ways for various purposes. While some countries may have some form of nationwide assessment of social and emotional competencies in ECEC, the previously mentioned variability in provision and support of ECEC might prove a hindrance for such initiatives. Even statewide initiatives regarding this topic can be hard to find. There are, however, a myriad of tools for assessing child-level outcomes, or for screening or diagnostic purposes, as evidenced by compendiums and reviews on the subject (Denham, Ji & Hamre, 2010; National Center for Systemic Improvement, 2018). There are also resources for assessing the process and implementation of SEL in preschool settings, even on a district level. Many of these resources can be found through the SEL Assessment Guide and related features. The project was headed by

CASEL, and besides listing tools for assessment, it provides a guide for choosing and using said tools (Measuring SEL, n.d.). Their collaborator, RAND Corporation, also offers the RAND Education Assessment Finder, which acts as a repository for assessment measures in education, including social and emotional competencies in ECEC (RAND, n.d.).

In a collaborative effort to advance SEL assessment, many stakeholders worked to prioritize the following five areas (Cipriano et al., 2020):

1. Leverage existing resources and expertise;
2. Promote SEL data literacy;
3. Enable equity;
4. Engage youth voice;
5. Integrate SEL assessment at the system level.

III. Intervention

Many SEL interventions originate from the USA. A systematic review on classroom-wide social-emotional interventions for preschool children reported that 72% of the studies included were located in the United States (Luo et al., 2020). A similar review reported 67% of the included studies being in North America (Blewitt et al., 2018).

As with tools for assessment, many interventions can be found through repositories that list and assess interventions. Again, CASEL provides guidance in choosing a programme, along with providing a list of programmes, and providing a rating and summary of research evidence for the programmes (CASEL Program Guide, n.d.). There are repositories with similar interventions and functionality, but slightly different focus. For example, Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development lists programmes for health promotion and reducing problem behaviours, along with a rating to denote the level of evidence (Blueprints

for Healthy Youth Development, n.d.). To name a few examples; Positive Action (PA) and Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) are two programmes that feature a lesson-based curriculum of explicit SEL. While they started out as school programmes, they have since developed adapted versions for preschool (Domitrovich, Cortes & Greenberg, 2007; Schmitt, Flay & Lewis, 2014). Another example of a lesson-based approach developed specifically for preschool is called AI's Pals (Lynch, Geller & Schmidt, 2004). These programs often feature imagery, stories, songs, puppets and tangibles to engage early learners.

A different approach, based on workshops for teachers, is offered by The Incredible Years series. Here, teachers learn practices for promoting positive behaviours, social skills training and building relationships, and how to integrate them in the classroom (Carlson, Tiret, Bender & Benson, 2011).

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