

FACULTY OF EDUCATION



PROJECT SUPPORTED BY UNICEF KOSOVO PROGRAM

IMPLEMENTED BY FACULTY OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA

Continuous professional development for integrated early childhood care and education. A necessity and need of in-service educators

Prepared by: Salie Gajtani-Osmankaq



June, Prishtina - When Oskar Wilde said that "The best way to make children good is to make them happy", he certainly knew that parents and teachers are the first who influence directly the happiness of children.

To make every child in their group feel good and happy, over 280 educators who are working in Preschool Institutions (PI), for several weeks now (weekends) are following the Training Modules for the provision of integrated services in early childhood, organized by the Faculty of Education at the University of Prishtina, with support from UNICEF Office in Kosovo.

Mimoza Morina-Veseli, from the Preschool "Xixëllonjat" in Prishtina, is just one of them. She and many of her colleagues from different parts of the country, have returned to the Faculty to be part of professional trainings that bring exchanges of experiences and methodologies from the latest practices, the implementation of which makes children feel as equals, learn and grow their personality through play and above all be happy while at preschool.

Sitting in chairs, working in groups, as once during their studies, they feel lucky that they are being offered these trainings.

Mimoza says that she recently attended the third module titled "Development of values and gender equality in early childhood." The other two modules she had already completed were "Development in Early Childhood" and "Learning through play". By the end of the year, she will be part of three modules with very attractive topics for her.

The whole training program has been very welcoming for the staff of preschool institutions, she says, adding that "in the beginning, there were only two educators, but then at our request and seeing these training as very useful, was included a large part of the staff".

She stated that despite the prior preparation and experience that educators have in PIs, trainings are more than necessary because according to her, things are changing very quickly and the technical-technological development that is affecting children, is having its own effect.

"Despite our experiences, how long they are, we have noticed that we need changes in our work during daily life with children, especially in the psychological aspect. Many times, we thought that we are performing well and motivating the children when we gave them rewards, but we have never considered another angle to this; including how other children could be hurt while we praised with this we only one child", says Morina-Veseli.

She had realized this aspect after attending the trainings.

"We have completely eliminated this method now and thanks to the training, we found forms and methods on how to balance these examples," she adds.

Zejnije Sahiti is a supportive educator, who works with children with special needs in IP "Dardania" in Gjilan. After a tiring week at work, she travels from Gjilan to Prishtina to join the training offered by the Faculty of Education. She says that this is the fifth training she has attended over the weekends in this institution. According to her, the trainings offered to educators is extremely welcomed, because they are providing IP staff with updated and innovative concepts.

FACULTY OF EDUCATION



I can't wait to attend these trainings, and the knowledge I get here I tend to apply immediately and practice during my work."

Specifying a concrete change that she has already begun to practice at work, she mentions eliminating the possibility of children being deceived that their parents are leaving them alone for a short time in kindergarten and that they will return to pick them up very quickly.

"We have had frequent cases when parents have brought to the kindergarten the child who refuses to be separated from them, telling her/him that they (parents) will come to pick her/him up at 12 o'clock; all the while parents would wink to staff, informing us that they won't take the child before the end of working hours ", said Sahiti.

She added that during the training she realized that this is a very harmful practice, which she has eliminated and no longer allows children not to be told the truth. She said that this was accepted by both parents and children when it was explained to them that such behavior is not in the interest of either the child, the parent, or the educator.

This, according to her, is a value derived from the trainings and has been observed to have reflected very well in practice.

"There are a lot of other values that we have learned here and that we are practicing on a daily basis while working. Even though these trainings are being carried out on weekends and we are missing on the weekend break, I can't wait to come and attend the trainings them because they are very useful and valuable. I agree that not only should they continue to be provided but they also should be expanded, especially the trainings focusing on children with developmental delays or disabilities", she said.

Adelina Pocesta is another educator who is attending these trainings. She has a long experience as a supporting educator in PI "Ardhmëria 1" in Gjilan. She has returned to desks and learning after many years since graduating, including 15 years of work experience.

She says that attending these trainings has refreshed her and revived in her the need for new knowledge. She considers this an opportunity for advancement and a necessity for any educator.

She said the latest training being offered by the Faculty of Education is coming from professors who have a wide range and a lot of knowledge in the field of early childhood that is transferred from abroad as well.

She mentioned a discussion they had about a case of a child with disability and she was challenged when the parents did not admit that their child has special needs. "I am aware that I was not an adequate person to diagnose the child, but I had an obligation to inform the parent about the difficulties the child had, who was not developing alongside other children in the same age group. ", said Pocesta.



She further added that "I found it very difficult to communicate with the parents because they did not accept it. But after the training I attended here, I changed my approach in communicating with parents, gaining knowledge on what to say to the child's parents in order for them to be convinced to send their child for diagnosis." she has expressed. According to her, after a long period of parental rejection, she has managed to convince them in very few words, to send their child to diagnosis. She considers that such training is necessary and should not be stopped in any way because this is affecting the advancement of the working methodology with children at an early age.

