

BACKGROUND OF IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL PREPARATION PROGRAM IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

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Abstract: *the article analyzes the situation in the pre-school education system, existing in Kyrgyzstan in recent decades. The shutdown of the preschool educational institutions in the early independence and the inability to restore the required number of kindergartens for the country led to that the children have not been prepared to school. This had negatively influenced on the further development of a student personality at high school. It is evidenced by the Programme for International Student Assessment, wherein the Kyrgyz students have been placed last. The ways of improving the availability and quality of education through the implementation of the school preparation programs in the pre-school education system had been showed.*

Keywords: *pre-school education, pre-school educational organizations, school preparation of children.*

ПРЕДПОСЫЛКИ ВНЕДРЕНИЯ ГОДОВОЙ ПРОГРАММЫ ПОДГОТОВКИ ДЕТЕЙ К ШКОЛЕ В КЫРГЫЗСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКЕ

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Аннотация: *в статье анализируется ситуация в системе дошкольного образования, сложившаяся в Кыргызстане в последние десятилетия. Закрытие дошкольных образовательных организаций в первые годы независимости и невозможность восстановить необходимое для страны количество детских садов привело к тому, что дети не были готовы к обучению в школе. Это негативно сказалось на дальнейшем развитии личности учащихся уже в старшей школе. О чем свидетельствуют результаты международной программы оценки достижений учащихся, где учащиеся Кыргызстана оказались на последнем месте. Далее в статье показаны пути повышения доступности и качества образования посредством внедрения в систему дошкольного образования программ по подготовке к школе.*

Ключевые слова: *дошкольное образование, дошкольные образовательные организации, подготовка детей к школе.*

The changes in the global educational space always influence on education system of Kyrgyzstan. A training system should be brought in line with the global trends at all levels of education in order to take a worthy place in this space. Such a need has emerged after the Kyrgyz Republic participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2006 and 2009. The results showed that about 82 per cent of teenagers aged fifteen were considered "functionally illiterate", lagging about 4 classes behind average level of their peers from other countries [5].

Analysis of the results showed that the geographical differences in education are preserved. Osh, Zhalal-Abad, Batken and Talas oblasts of the Kyrgyz Republic demonstrated the lowest scores in a PISA study.

It should be noted that after Kyrgyz Republic's independence in 1991, the education sector in general and the pre-school education sector particularly went through financial difficulties due to the economic collapse of the collective farms followed by closing of 70% of pre-school institutions – especially in rural areas – and reducing the number of pre-school educational institution students by 75%. Consequently, the number of pre-school educational institution in these oblasts is lower than the national average, and significantly lower than in Bishkek (the capital of the Kyrgyz Republic) [1].

Over the past ten years, the number of pre-school educational institution has increased in a gradual manner, but the coverage of pre-school children is only about half of the level that appeared in the country before independence. Other alternative forms of early childhood education and development – so-called community-based kindergartens – are emerged in the country. These institutions of preschool education established with the help of the local community become a cost-effective alternative form of expansion of pre-school education in the Kyrgyz Republic. However, it did not solve all the problems of availability of early childhood education.

One of the solution to the problem of increasing the availability and quality of early childhood education, its timely impact on the development and school preparation of the child, was a short-term school preparation program (100 hours) developed in 2009. This program was intended for teachers engaged in school preparation

of children aged 6-7. The target group of this program are children with no access to the various forms of the early childhood education. The program was delivering psychological readiness by formation of the training skills and had initiated the way to promote the solution to the problem of low coverage of the school preparation by the early childhood education. It was implemented by the primary teachers in August before the beginning of the school year for those starting Grade One. The fact was taken into account that the teacher is already in the workplace at that time and no additional financial cost will be required. Approximately 40,000 children (about 44 per cent of the target population) participated in the program in the first year of its implementation, and by 2010 the program covered more than 70,400 children (81 per cent).¹

The school preparation program (100 hours) had its pros and cons. The downside of the program was that the too short time did not allow equalizing the level of knowledge of the children who had the program with those who attended ECE.

In the context of the introduction of a 100-hour short-term school preparation program, in 2012 the country built on this success by introducing a 240-hour preparation program, designed and drafted to replace the 100-hour program. The 240-hour program has been developed in accordance with the Kyrgyz State Standard "Early Childhood Education and Childcare"[3], given the recommendations of teachers practitioners, school directors, deputy directors and representatives of the regional teacher training institutions. The funds saved by reducing the hours in the core curriculum has been provided for teacher remuneration in this period.

Practice has shown that the implementation of these programs with technical support from the international donors was very relevant and timely for the country as children with access to early childhood education perform better than those without access to pre-school organizations or other forms of pre-school education.

The school preparation on an annual basis was introduced into the education system of the Kyrgyz Republic. In 2015-2016 the Kyrgyz Republic has successfully launched a Nariste full-year national school preparation program [2]. This program covers almost 100% of children aged 5-6 with no access to various early childhood education programs.

Experience has shown that the country needs in a more financially sustainable and an extensive, in a qualitative sense, school preparation program.

The Government's legal and regulatory framework for education is embedded in the Law on Education (2012), the Education Development Strategy 2012-2020 (EDS 2012-2020) and the Medium-Term Educational Development Programme for 2012-2014 (MTEDP 2012-2014) define the framework for the Government's education policies and strategy, where the early childhood education and the school preparation are highlighted. It should be noted that the sooner the pre-school educational programs and organizations are given a due attention by politicians, not only as an opportunity to help working families, but as the possibility of development of the future potential of the country as a whole, the better the country is prosperous and passes into the cohort of developed countries.

As such, the pre-school preparation of children has switched from the 100-hour short-term in 2006 to the full-year in 2014.

The 480-hour school preparation program stands out from the previously developed school preparation programs for that it is based on the global framework of learning areas to be achieved by all children before starting attendance at school, and for the first time in the Kyrgyz Republic the program includes an inclusive education component. The inclusive education as a part of the school preparation program is one of the objectives of the equitable access to pre-school education and preparation programs. The 480-hour program is accompanied by methodological recommendations for teachers engaged in the school preparation classes, visual and demonstration aids, pedagogical toys. An important aspect in the promotion of the school preparation program is a teacher training and state support of the salary.

The trend of early training is pragmatic: As proven by J. Heckman [2], an investment pays off largely here than at the following levels of education. In the future, children are better able to absorb the knowledge, while the manifestations of social inadequacy is much less. In addition, the early training – part of a policy to overcome social inequities (ethnic, cultural). Its goal is that children from migrant families or from poor social backgrounds could learn at par with the others. At this age, by using pedagogical technology one can overcome many of the shortcomings in the development of children both physical and mental. 100 years later this trend would be standard.

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¹ The Target Group of the preparation program are children starting Grade One next year, but with no access to preschool institution.

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