



Interculturalism *in* Education



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Interculturalism in Education

- *Handbook for teachers* -

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Defining basic concepts	8
Principles, goals and tasks of intercultural education	9
Intercultural dimension of upbringing and educational contents	12
Intercultural pedagogical design and environment	16
Intercultural competencies	18
Models of intercultural upbringing and educational activities	20
--- Measurement and problem solving	21
--- My nuclear family	30
--- Listening to music	34
--- Fairy tales	38
--- Light	47
--- Forces and motion	51
--- Rhythm	54
--- Europe after the French Revolution	61
--- Tempo	72
--- Ionic bond	78
--- Learning each other's languages	88
--- Cultural and religious diversity in Kosovo	92
--- Understanding and overcoming prejudice	97
--- Celebrations and festivities (religious and secular holidays)	104
--- Stereotypes	116
--- Traditional food and dishes	120

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Introduction

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IS A CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL TREND AND TENDENCY, BUT ALSO A GLOBAL CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE TO INTENSE MIGRATION PROCESSES AND DIVERSITY IN SOCIAL COMMUNITIES THAT REFLECT CULTURAL, LINGUISTIC AND ETHNIC HETEROGENEITY.



Kosovo, as a multi-ethnic and multicultural society, is facing the challenge, but also the aspiration, to build long-term sustainable and constructive initiatives for promoting intercultural education. This type of educational approach and strategy should be a key link for mutual communication and recognition between different communities. That is why intercultural education should be observed as a need, but also recognized as an opportunity to find the optimal relationship between cultural diversities and social cohesion.

Interculturalism in education should be a tool that will respond to the challenge of learning to live together by actively promoting inclusive, comprehensive educational practices, fostering democratic citizenship and human rights in the public, professional and private life. Interculturalism in education entails constructive management of differences, self-esteem, efficient communication, respect for others, intercultural understanding, etc. (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2016).

Our basic compass in creating this Handbook will be a broadly defined set of global goals, which are also closely related to the intercultural dimension of pre-university education in Kosovo, aimed at:

- building and nurturing personal identity and sense of belonging to Kosovo and its cultural affiliation;
- promoting of cultural and civic values;
- developing of responsibility towards oneself, towards others, towards the social community and the environment;
- training for living and working in different social and cultural contexts (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2016)

An important pillar in creating intercultural recommendations and solutions will also be a strictly defined set of key competencies, which will specify the relationship of intercultural values and elements with the six separate areas of competencies:

- ability / competence to communicate and express;
- ability to think;
- ability to learn;
- ability to live, work and protect the environment;
- personal skills
- civic skills (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2016)

The outlines of intercultural education will be drawn with the definition that provides a new perspective on intercultural commitment in pre-university education in Kosovo. It is an education for community, solidarity, respect, mutual tolerance, helping, trust and other universal human values (Concept for Intercultural Education, 2016).

”Intercultural education should be organized in order to realize the multifaceted task, i.e., education for empathy, solidarity, intercultural respect and non-nationalist way of thinking“ (Essinger, 1987 according to Sablić, 2014).

According to the range of intercultural skills, attitudes and values, it is necessary to emphasize the four postulates that will be our guideline in shaping the content of this publication:

1. Intercultural education is necessary to all children and students, regardless of age.

2. Intercultural education should be a naturally embedded component in the daily upbringing and educational process, regardless of the ethnic or linguistic structure of students and teachers in a school.

3. Intercultural education does not only deal with ethnic, racial and linguistic differences, but should also affect the building of students' awareness of the differences in many areas of everyday life (e.g., social status, gender, age, occupation, family background, learning style, diet, physical appearance, etc.)

4. Intercultural education does not necessarily mean the introduction of a separate subject, but should be a reflection of a cross-curricular approach, just as it should be a part of both formal and ”hidden“ curriculum (NDC Skopje, *Intercultural Steps*, 2022)

The values on which the concept of intercultural education is based have been incorporated in a number of international documents since the middle of the last century, as well as in a number declarations, reports and recommendations that provide guidelines for the development of education in Europe and beyond.

Recommendations of the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities emphasize the role and importance of education in

promoting the idea of equal rights and opportunities for each involved upbringing and educational entity and strengthening trust between different communities. ”The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities“ and explanations have been created as a broad framework that should serve as a starting point in the development of formal government education policies. These policies should be tailored to the opportunities at the local and regional level, in order to ensure equal participation of individuals from different ethnic communities in all aspects of their upbringing and education. The ”Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies“ also offer recommendations for creating integrated educational policies as a basis for achieving integration in society and for fostering knowledge, interaction and understanding between students from different communities. The Guidelines emphasize the need for countries to develop an integrated education system designed to provide equal access and opportunities for achieving educational outcomes for all students, regardless of their background (Concept for intercultural education, 2016).

Hence the universality of the global need for this type of products that will offer a structured presentation of possible intercultural upbringing and educational approaches and practices.

We sincerely hope that this Handbook will inspire and assist upbringing and educational practitioners in designing and implementing various intercultural initiatives, as a step towards transforming and enriching the school environment with an intercultural dimension.

The authors

