

Parental Participation in the Life of Schools in South East Europe - from Evidence to Practice and Policy Change

Presented by Gordana Miljević - gmiljevic@cep.edu.rs

EVIDENCE

Two surveys under the Advancing Education Inclusion and Quality in SEE project (www.see-educoop.net/aeiq/outputs) funded by Education Support Program of Open Society Foundations (ESP/OSF www.soros.org)

1st Survey - Parental involvement in SEE schools – Principals' Views

- Qualitative: 16 focus groups involving 150 school principals
- Quantitative: Sample – representative, urban-rural and regional stratification 2,197 schools out of 11,293 in 8 countries
- Face to face standardised interview – 30 q, 140 items, (RO and BiH – country modules)
- Response rate: < 90%

Participating countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia

2nd Survey - Parental involvement in SEE schools – Parents' Views

Sample -urban-rural and regional stratification

- Qualitative: 60 focus groups with different categories of parents involving app 580 participants
- Quantitative
- Parents N=11122 (regular, active, and Roma booster sample) from 10 countries
- School principals N=317
- Face to face standardised interviews with sub-sets of questions for active and Roma parents

Participating countries: Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia

Some results

Schools seldom have comprehensive communication strategies for the work they intend to undertake with parents.

Parenting services offered by schools in the 06/7 school year
%, schools that offered no service at all

	AL	BiH	KS	MK	Mo	MN	RO	SER
School sessions to help parents assist their children with homework	18.4%	6.4%	29.9%	24.7%	3.4%	17.9%	13.3%	38.6%
Materials provided for parents to help their children with homework	42.4%	31.2%	73.3%	47.2%	13.7%	32.4%	26.6%	54.4%
Materials provided to monitor children's homework	49.5%	36.3%	71.3%	46.9%	16.4%	33.1%	35.4%	57.2%
Information provided to parents on creating a home learning environment	29.2%	6.4%	34.0%	16.2%	3.1%	4.1%	6.4%	16.3%
Counseling service to parents	35.4%	.8%	31.0%	13.7%	3.7%	15.9%	24.3%	32.7%
Support groups for parents.	20.4%	14.9%	37.8%	26.5%	15.3%	8.3%	31.2%	20.7%

Pop, D. et al. (2009): *Involvement of Parents: South East Europe Cross-Countries Survey of Principals' Views*, CEPS, Ljubljana.

Few parents, if at all, have any systematic engagement in education policy matters related to factors that affect the school experience and learning outcomes of their children. Discrepancy between 'mainstream' and 'excluded' parents (e.g. 50% vs 90% parents are never invited by school for an individual meeting).

Schools do not invite parents(%)

	never	1	2-3	3+
To meetings				
- class	3	9	34	54
- individual	50	14	18	19
To volunteer				
- infrastructure	70	17	9	4
- extracurricular	66	16	13	5
- curricular	86	7	5	2
- additional (library, lunch)	85	9	4	2

Schools do not invite parents(%)

	never	1	2-3	3+
To give opinion on				
- financial management	79	8	8	5
- extracurricular activities	66	16	13	6
- organization of school event	45	25	21	8
- health safety issues	58	20	15	8
- school management shifts, merger	82	9	6	3
- education issues	75	10	10	5
- violence	65	15	13	7

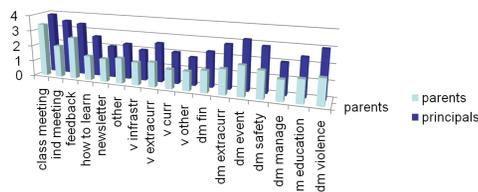
www.see-educoop.net/aeiq/outputs

Kovacs-Cerovic, T et al (2010): *Involvement of Parents: South East Europe Cross Countries Survey of Parents' Views*, CEPS, Ljubljana

Discrepancies between: the principals' and parents' perceptions

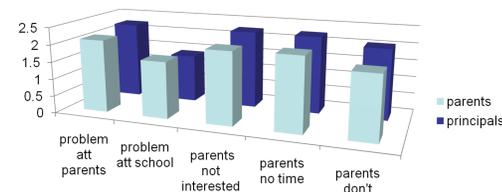
How does parent-school cooperation happen?

Systematic difference between parents' and principals' perception



How does parent-school cooperation happen?

Problem attributed more to parents than schools. Parents are perceived as motivated and competent to participate



Limited, if at all, real opportunities for cooperation and partnership between parents and school.

- Opportunities even less present for those who need them most
- Schools and parents need support, skills and knowledge to build partnerships and cooperation.

Find out more at:

- www.cep.edu.rs
- www.see-educoop.net/aeiq
- <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/esp>
- www.leadershipforlearning.org.uk

PRACTICE

Empower teachers to lead interventions to establish school – family partnership

International Teacher Leadership Project – ITL

<http://www.cep.edu.rs/en/vesti/international-teacher-leadership-itl>

- a research and development project initiated by David Frost at the University of Cambridge - Faculty of Education in 2008.

Aims'

- to establish programmes of support for teacherleadership that are appropriate to a range of different cultural / national settings and
- responsive to the particular challenges that arise in those settings
- to explore how the development of teachers' professional identity and their modes of professionalism can contribute to educational



- reform in a variety of cultural / national contexts to create and/or enhance knowledge networks for teachers;
- to create and/or enhance a network of experts (academics, local government staff, NGO staff, policy activists, experienced teachers and school principals) who can continue to provide support for teacher and school development
- to promote and foster inclusive educational practices
- to contribute to the development of democratic civil society

It is now a large scale enterprise with a project team consisting of over 50 experts / people supporting around 1,000 teachers in 100 schools in 17 sites in 15 countries: Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, New Zealand, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Turkey and UK.



Interventions/projects

- Role of Parents in the Education Process – Mutual Cooperation
- Parents as teachers
- Let's Learn Together
- Plans for Parent – Teacher Meetings
- Letters from Home
- Workshops for Parents



Drawing ethnic minority families into the life of the school in Kosovo

Zana was concerned with low enrolment of ethnic minority students, their early drop-out and a low level of parent involvement. She invited colleagues to meet to discuss how to address the problem. They realised that parents from the minority community may not be well educated but they are good at playing various instruments, so they decided to establish the 'Music Lab'.

They invited the teacher of Music and parents from the community and made the plan together. The floor of the room was remade to make it appropriate for dancing. Musical instruments and traditional outfits from both communities were bought. They made a schedule for rehearsals where parents would come and help the teacher of music. They decided who will play instruments and who will help with dancing lessons. In cooperation with the principal, they organized an event where students, with the help of teachers and parents, sang, danced and played instruments. Through this event they were able to distribute

information about the Music Lab to parents, teachers, education department officials and teachers from other schools.

Frost, D (2011), ITL report

ITL has empowered teachers for other innovations in their work, liberated their creative potential, boosted their sense of self-esteem and created the culture of cooperation and sharing.

"I caught myself participating in discussions with all my heart, getting excited about "the most ordinary" talk between colleagues from our school and the colleagues from Hrasno. I understand that I really like the atmosphere, although I come quite exhausted after school."

We are not overburdened with questions, demands, deadlines, etc. Because of all that, I feel free to formulate my thoughts with no pressure. So, with no pressure and set demands, I easily get to some ideas which were in me, but something was blocking them to come up on the surface. The positive atmosphere the leaders create is the key. Exchanging ideas, listening to each other with respect, giving support to each other, one gets tremendous self-esteem, and that is all I need. So I managed to go beyond the limits of my previous work, I set my goals on a higher level. Having seen the results of what I initiated with my idea in cooperation with my colleagues, I am encouraged to make new ways to continue something that improves the quality of work with children, which encourages me personally, thereby making me happier. Children need the same thing we had at the seminar, and that is flexibility in work, agreements, talks, listening, respect, many words of support, and results are unavoidable."

"I learned that we should appreciate ourselves and our work more, because every change, no matter how small, is very important and big." Teachers' reflection on the programme, Bosnia and Herzegovina

POLICY

Secondary analysis of research data through ESP/OSF Fellowship to provide deeper understanding and inform regional and national policies. Papers available from dpop@osieurope.org and phugycz@osi.hu.

- Bosnia and Herzegovina: The project prompted the establishment of the Association of the Parents' Councils of the all primary schools in Sarajevo Canton (Jan 2009). The work of association is financially supported by the Kantonal Ministry of Education and Municipalities.
- Kosovo: The National Parents Council became active in 2009 after several years of mere formal existence
- Macedonia: The project partner designed and implemented trainings "Parental and communities involvement in schools" for principals, teachers, parents and community members. 70 schools have received the training so far. The trainings are funded through USAID 'Primary Education Project.
- Moldova: the project partner designed and implemented training "Parents involvement in school life. The strategies for advancing the involvement level and for educational impact". These were funded by World Bank under the "Education for All: Fast Track Initiatives."
- Romania: The written communication between school and parents (on monthly basis with parents abroad and on semester basis with the others) established within school/community based action to be mainstreamed by the national Inspectorate.
- Serbia: The main provisions of the Law on Foundations of the System of Education (passed in August, 2009) namely the section Basic Principles of the System of Education (Article 3) envisage that, the system of education with its organization and contents shall also ensure 1) effective cooperation with the family by including parents i.e. guardians, for purposes of successfully accomplishing the set goals of education, and 2) various forms of cooperation with the local community and broader social environment in order to achieve full harmonization between individual and social interests in education. Setting up Municipal Parents' Councils in Serbia, Initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science www.mpn.gov.rs; www.cipcentar.org (2011)



Teacher led development work, communication with parents and building school - family - community partnership are to be the elements of the national qualification frameworks for teaching profession currently being developed for the 4 Western Balkan countries in the project "Advancing Teacher Professionalism for Inclusive, Quality and Relevant Education" (ATEPIE) implemented by Center for Education Policy (www.cep.edu.rs) with the support of the ESP/OSF.