

The Importance of Preschool Children's Portfolios in Kosovo and Their Meaning for Elementary School Teachers

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Abstract. As a transition country, Kosovo faces many problems and challenges, especially in the field of the preschool education. As an issue of the early childhood education, among the new forms of child labor documentation, the portfolios are mentioned. Teachers build a rich picture of each child, combining strategies such as using the traditional tools of child study (for example, observations, anecdotal records, checklists) with newer documentation technologies such as photos, portfolios, and recorded conversations (New & Cochran, 2007). Purpose of this research was to gather data from preschool teacher, school teachers and parents regarding the children's portfolios: the children portfolio in the preschool? How important are they for the primary school and for the parents? What the content? re some of issues that we research with this article.

Keywords: portfolio, early education, transition, teacher, preschool.

Priešmokyklinio amžiaus vaikų aplankų svarba Kosove ir jų reikšmė pradinių klasių mokytojams

Santrauka. Kosovas, kaip pereinamojo laikotarpio šalis, susiduria su daugybe problemų ir iššūkių, ypač priešmokyklinio ugdymo srityje. Vaiko aplankas tampa nauja vaiko produktyvumo dokumentavimo forma ir vienu iš ankstyvojo ugdymo klausimų. Mokytojai sukuria turtingą kiekvieno vaiko profilį derindami įvairias strategijas, pavyzdžiui, tradicines vaikų tyrimo priemones (stebėjimą, gyvenimo istorijas, aprašus) ir naujesnes dokumentavimo technologijas, tokias kaip antai nuotraukos, aplankai ir įrašyti pokalbiai (New & Cochran, 2007). Šio tyrimo tikslas – surinkti duomenų iš priešmokyklinio ugdymo mokytojų, bendrojo ugdymo mokyklų mokytojų ir tėvų apie vaikų aplankus ir išsiaiškinti, ar vaikai turėjo aplankus savo priešmokyklinio ugdymo įstaigose. Kiek jie svarbūs pradinei mokyklai ir tėvams? Koks jų turinys? Tai klausimai, kurie nagrinėjami šiame straipsnyje.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: vaiko aplankas, ankstyvasis ugdymas, pereinamasis laikotarpis, mokytojai, priešmokyklinis ugdymas

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Introduction

In the definition of the portfolio it is said that the portfolios record developing skills, dispositions and knowledge, family events, birthdays, holidays, special friends and visitors. All of this contribute to the 'funds of knowledge' (Gonzales, Moll & Amanti, 2005) that be read, revisited and shared (Peters, Hartley, Rogers, Smith, & Carr, 2009).

Another research group the portfolio is defined as follows: the portfolio serves as the resource for the teacher, child, and parents to discuss the child's evaluation through a review of portfolio contents (Isenberg & Jalongo, 2003). A portfolio can be described as a purposeful collection of artifacts that tells the story of child's effort, progress and/or achievement (Abrami & Barrett, 2005).

The portfolio, specifically the student, is a tool that can be used to show student model that demonstrates student's progress, skills, and level of work (Hajrullahu & Sylaj, 2020). Instead, another group of authors define the portfolio as a one-time picture of what a child knows, which provides a multifaceted view of what the child understands and can use (Wortham, Barbour, & Perrotta, 1998). The same authors (1998) emphasize the fact that keeping portfolios takes time. It is interesting that they also mention the contribution of the children when they say: nevertheless, children, even very young children, can take responsibility for putting work into their portfolio (Wortham, Barbour, & Perrotta, 1998).

While we are talking about the portfolio, we must mention the fact that the portfolio is related to the evaluation, in our case, to the evaluation of the work of children in pre-school age. Until we are talking about the portfolios citing the report published by the European Commission, we see that in most countries, steering documents on ECEC provide recommendations on assessment methods to be used by settings. Only Belgium (settings for younger children in Flemish Community), Croatia, Austria and Iceland have not issued specific recommendations in this regard. In these countries, ECEC institutions are given the freedom to choose their own assessment methods and tools (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014). In the same report, the following forms for assessment in the early childhood are mentioned: continued observations, records, testing and self-assessment. It should be noted that the portfolio is highlighted as a form of records. So, the way of recording results is often decided by the ECEC institution: it may take the form of a child's portfolio (e.g. Lithuania) or a diary (e.g. Hungary) (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014). It is important to emphasize the fact that in some countries all children also receive a report upon completion of ECEC which may include recommendations for primary teachers relating to each child (e.g. Bulgaria and Lithuania) (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014). The portfolio in some countries, such as Sweden, is seen as a tool for the transition of children from pre-school institutions to the primary school. In the report published by the European Commission in 2014, the cooperation for the levels of education of children is emphasized for the transition phase in the case of Ireland, the Irish framework for ECEC underlines that transition should be organized as smoothly as possible through cooperation between settings, partnership with parents and contacts with relevant professionals (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat,

2014). The same goes for Finland. The importance of portfolios is also emphasized by the fact that in some systems the last year of pre-primary education focuses on readiness for school (e.g. in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Lithuania and Liechtenstein), and in some cases records on children's maturity and readiness for school are kept (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014).

Where this occurs, the records may be made available to primary teachers, with a view to easing children's integration into primary education (e.g. in Bulgaria and Lithuania) (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014). The cooperation of the levels of the education, that is the cooperation among the pre-primary level with the primary level, is closely related to the portfolios. In the report published by the European Commission, this cooperation should be evaluated. Finally, activities facilitating the transition from pre-primary to primary level may include children's visits to primary schools while they are still in ECEC, in order to become acquainted with their new learning environment (e.g. in Belgium (Flemish Community) and Slovakia). Close cooperation between staff of both levels through joint projects and activities is also developed (e.g. in Portugal, Iceland and Norway) as well as cooperation between staff and parents (e.g. in Slovakia, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014). In the same report (2014) it is emphasized the fact that some states, such as Iceland and Norway, coordinate pre-school level with primary school curricula. As far as the age is concerned as the only criterion for registering children in the first grade, from the European Commission report published in 2014 it is known that not only in Kosovo, but it turns out that around 20 European countries have regulated this isn't these way, only with age of children, especially these states as well: Denmark, Croatia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden and Iceland (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014).

In England, based on the framework, in connection with the portfolios and enrollment of the children on the first grade, the profile must reflect: ongoing observation; all relevant records held by the setting; discussions with parents and carers and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution (Department of education, 2017).

Another study about portfolios is done in New Zealand. Based on this research results, the transferring of information from preschool to primary school by a portfolio is necessary, because the portfolios fulfil the role of learning about each other not just in the classroom, but between home and center (Peters et al., 2009).

As far as early education in America is concerned, in a publication prepared by a group of authors titled "A guide to assessment in early childhood infancy to age eight in 2008", it is emphasized that because the early development is complex and dynamic period, the most effective assessment procedures are characterized by a combination of methods and sources of information. Developmental checklists, rating scales, caregiver interviews, and portfolios of children's work are useful methods for gathering information about progress toward developmental goals (OSPI, 2008). In the same document, when talking about assessment methods, are mentioned: observations, interviews, direct

assessment. What regards portfolios, it is said: permanent products are often included in portfolios that are organized to include observation records, photos, interview excerpts, and other sources of assessment information (OSPI, 2008). So, we can conclude that in America, portfolios are also spoken and used, as a mean of the assessment for the children of pre-school age.

In Australia, as far as portfolios are concerned, the assessment strategies are developed that include observations, anecdotal records, running records, some checklists and diagnostic tests, photographs, portfolios, work samples, recorded conversations, and other artifacts. At CK, this pedagogical documentation is shared daily and openly with parents (New & Cochran, 2007). In Brazil, the fifth objective of The Guidelines specify the following eight elements for the pedagogical plans, including: organization of evaluation strategies through the follow-up and documentation of the phases reached in the care and education of children from 0 to 6 years of age, without the objective of promotion, even for access to elementary education (New & Cochran, 2007).

Compared with other countries, Kosovo didn't have any politics that connected preschool education with primary school. The only criterion for the enrolment of children in the first grade, as we have mentioned before, is the age of the child, so in Kosovo we do not have a connection between these levels of education (Hajrullahu, 2019). "As far as preschool education in general and portfolios of children in preschool is concerned, in Kosovo, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, we understand more, from the UNICEF report, published by Peteers in 2016. Based on this research, in Albania, there are no portfolios of children. From this research (2016), the same situation is in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Quoting Peteers (2016) we saw in services we visited in Kosovo*, like in the other three countries, few activities that provided real learning opportunities, no portfolio's on children's development and few documentation of inspiring activities (Peteers, 2016). In our opinion, this study is subjective, because the "Bleta" preschool institution is not a public institution and doesn't represent the real situation of early childhood education in Kosovo. We have many private preschool institutions for the quality of which and their number we don't have research" (Hajrullahu, 2019). It's not true for Kosovo, because from an research, results that children in preschools Kosovo have portfolio (Hajrullahu, 2019)

For the importance of portfolios of early childhood, the ideas of Lynn Cohen (1999), are worth to point out. Cohen emphasizes that as early childhood professionals, we know that the use of standardized assessment instruments such as intelligence, readiness, and achievement tests, are not the best way to evaluate the progress of young children. Preschoolers vary dynamically, from moment to moment and day to day in their ability to concentrate on what they are interested in. In addition to the other valuation methods, the portfolio is also proposed, as according to him portfolio assessment offers a variety of benefits, including:

- A record of a child's ongoing development over time.
- Information to help you design instruction.
- Children's involvement in assessing their own work
- A method of communication.

The importance of the portfolios is quite large also because he proposes that the children themselves be acquainted with the portfolio, but he emphasizes the following: as you create portfolio collections, you will learn about children's personal styles, thought processes, accomplishments, strengths, and difficulties. More important, you will get to know, love and remember your children through the portfolio process. And they will get to know themselves better, too (Cohen, 1999).

The other author, Morrison (2011), emphasizes the importance of portfolios by saying that today many teachers use portfolios – a purposeful compilation of children's artifacts, as well as teacher observations collected over time as a basis for assessing children's efforts, progress, and achievement. Morrison mentions the estimation through portfolios as a form of informal assessment. Systematic work with the portfolio gives the teacher a deeper knowledge of the child, allows him to monitor the child's development, and the portfolio is also a good tool for discussions between the teacher and parents about the child (Trávníčková, 2020). As the same author mentions, portfolio is important for self assessment: "As the author of the work in his or her portfolio, the child can follow his or her progress and enjoy it. Children can mutually assess and compare their products with fellow pupils. Therefore the portfolio is an important factor in the child's self-assessment, leading the child to independence and developing his or her self-conception"(Trávníčková, 2020).

In other words among other things, the content of the portfolio also includes his or her personal interests, photographs of events in the preschool or his or her own photographs. Sharing it with others (parents, teachers, children) further deepens the child's relationship to his or her portfolio" (Trávníčková, 2020). Even parents can become aware of the transition process of the child in the first grade as a result of participation in transition programs (Carida, 2011; Sylaj & Ramabaja, 2022). In a report from Slovenia on children's portfolio, it is mentioned that some preschool teachers, who use portfolios to monitor child development, report that they try to include children in choosing the products they want to put in their portfolios. However, such cases are rare (Report from Slovenia, 2017).

On the other hand, Grace (1992) emphasized that portfolios of preschool have great importance, as they keep track of a child's progress in other words, they follow the child's success rather than his failure. Teachers and parents can follow children's progress by reviewing children's writings, drawings logs of books read by or to them, videos or photographs of large projects, tape recordings of the children reading or dictating stories, and so forth (Grace, 1992). The same author (1992) also gives an idea of what should contain a portfolio:

- Anecdotal records.
- Checklist or inventory.
- Rating scales.
- Questions and requests.
- Screening tests.

Rightly, the aforementioned authors emphasize the fact that in early childhood education, portfolios should contain a statement of purpose and a wide variety of work samples, including successive drafts of work on particular projects (Grace, 1992). It would be even more right that with the portfolio as the basis for discussion, the teacher and parent can review concrete examples of the child's work, rather than trying to discuss the child's progress in abstract (Grace, 1992), unlike the way of communication happening at this level in Kosovo. The portfolios goals are numerous according to Wortham, Barbour & Perrotta, portfolios can be used to:

- Provide data on children's main interests, dispositions, and attitudes.
- Document children's growth in all developmental areas over time or in one particular area, such as literacy.
- Assess children's learning relative to individual benchmarks established for each child.
- Highlight children's accomplishments.
- Keep track of the processes that children use in learning.
- Provide family members with concrete and extensive evidence of children's progress.
- Enable children to reflect upon and analyze their own learning processes.
- Keep records that will accompany children as they move from one grade to the next.
- Provide information that may be useful in determining children's special needs.

Furnish data for use by teachers, administrators, and family members to evaluate program effectiveness (Wortham, Barbour, & Perrotta, 1998).

The ways of organizing the portfolios, as claimed by the aforementioned authors (1998), are numerous. Grace and Shores suggest a variety of methods for storing data collection, including accordion folders, pizza boxes, Xray folders, or manila folders (p. 21). Wortham (1995) suggests that the method of collection selected must be easily accessible to parents, teachers, and children (Wortham, Barbour, & Perrotta, 1998). For organizing the portfolios, they mention developmental approaches: Art activities, Movement (Gross Motor Development), Math and Science Activities (Concept Development) Language and Literacy, and Personal and Social Development. However, in fact, portfolios can be designed and used in many different ways (Wortham, Barbour, & Perrotta, 1998). By paraphrasing Grace (1992), we say that the portfolios should not be used to make comparison between the children, but the teacher's conclusions about a child's achievement, abilities, strengths, weaknesses, and needs should be based on the full range of that child's development, as documented by the data in the portfolio, and on the teacher's knowledge of curriculum and stages of development (Grace, 1992).

It must mentioned that developed policies on transition from preschool to primary school, stress that transfer of information using templates or portfolios is only one element of the transition process (O'Kane, 2016). Also, developing portfolios by telling stories about learning assumes that adults and children work together on their creation and critical interpretation and connect with each other in developing a shared under-

standing of learning and the creation of meaning (Krnjaja & Breneselović, 2016). Since we're talking for Kosovo, we must mention that based on existing literature in Kosovo, there was one preschool institution around 1908. In this kindergarten, Mikelangjela and Sapijenca Qoba worked. Mikelangjela, educated in Zagreb for working with children, worked with her sister in this kindergarten from 1908 to 1918 and later to 1941 (Rexhepagiq, 2002; Ramabaja & Sylaj, 2020).

Methodology

Research design

In this research, at first we have used a quantitative approach, because the quantitative approach originates from philosophy of rationalism, and it follows a range of exploring procedures that are inflexible and prior structured and defined, that aim the determination of the quantity of change in a phenomenon; it focuses on measuring the variables and process objectivity; it trusts the support of the truth on the basis of the sample size; it gives validity and credence to findings and it imparts the findings in the analytic and synthetic form, drawing conclusions and meanings that can be generalized. (Kumar, 2014). This study adopted a survey research design with mixed methods. Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed for exploring preschool educators opinions, parents opinions, and the primary school teachers about the importance of the children's portfolios in the preschool institutions. Also, in our research we used the qualitative research, with which we have analyzed portfolios of children, as well as the other issues related to cooperation between the primary schools and the preschool institutions about the children's portfolio. For this purpose, we used content analysis and in depth interviews as qualitative techniques.

We used protocols for analyzing the portfolios of children in the preschools and the semi-structured interviews with directors of the preschool institutions and the directors of primary schools, as well as for the focus groups. Also, in this study we used interpretative analysis, in which case we interpret the answers of respondents. This method of our study was necessary for recognizing the depth of the raised problem. Also our study is an observational analytic one. It gathers data to document and analyze a certain phenomenon within a certain population. One of the tasks of the project was to develop two questionnaires for teachers' opinion and parents' opinion about the children's portfolios. This implies the use of the teachers' questionnaires, and parents' questionnaires that measure the use of the children's portfolio towards the implementation of them by primary schools. To have a better image for this research, we have used a mixed method, semi-interviews and focus groups.

Research questions: Do the children in Kosovo preschool institutions have a portfolio? With which documents do children enroll in primary school in Kosovo? Which are the practices of drafting and implementation of portfolios in the preschool institutions in Kosovo? What kind of cooperation exists between the primary school and the preschool institutions on the portfolios of children when they enroll in the first grade? Where will

the portfolios of children be filed after they complete preschool education in preschool institutions?

Research object: The importance of the children's portfolios in preschool education.

Research aim: To gather data from preschool teachers, school teachers and parents about the importance of the children's portfolios.

Participants

Our sample consists of three layers: (1) the preschool institutions the preschool teachers, the directors, and the portfolios of children; (2) from the primary schools we have the teachers and the directors, and (3) the parents. For the wider representation, in relation to the place, we have divided samples into 5 cities and 3 smaller cities. Also, in these cities, randomly, we have choose the primary schools. The selection of the preschool institutions and the primary schools was random. In the primary schools, the questionnaires are completed by the teachers (43) that in the school year 2020/2021 have taken the first graders. Also, with all directors of those primary schools, which were sixteen directors, the semi-structured interviews were undertaken. In all preschool institutions that we have selected, the questionnaires have been completed by the 58 educators (averagely 8 educators in each preschool institution). Our questionnaires have been completed by 160 parents whose children have been attending the above-mentioned institutions. Besides these steps, in each preschool institution, we took 20 children's portfolios for the content analysis with 10 portfolios of children of male gender and another 10 portfolios of children of the female gender, and with 5 portfolios in each age group: 2–3 years old, 3–4 years old, 4–5 years old, 5–6 years.

Table 1. *The children's portfolio and age of the children*

Age of the children	Number of the portfolios	Female	Male
3 – 4	20	10	10
4 – 5	20	10	10
5 - 6	20	10	10

Based on Cohn, Manion and Morrison (2001), the population of the study must be divided into homogeneous groups to achieve reliability. Based on this data, we consider that this requirement is met, since the educators, teachers and the principals have the same character in the professional field. All the primary schools and preschool institutions are managed by the director. Also, all children have similar characteristics: the preschool age, attending the preschool education in preschool institutions. The common characteristic of all parents, is that all of those parents have had in the past, or they have currently their children in the preschool institutions. Regarding the regional side, since the rural areas have no preschool institutions, we are obliged to take into account and consider only the urban areas.

Research instruments

Our study targeted educators of the preschool institutions in Kosovo, teachers who are engaged in teaching with first grades, and 180 parents that have had children in the preschool institutions.

In this research, we have used these instruments and techniques: surveying with questionnaire as technique of the research; interview with protocol of the interview; focus group; content analyzes with protocol of the content, and scaling with Likert scales.

Data collection, processing, and analysis

One of the tasks of the project was to develop the questionnaires on meaning and importance of the preschool children's portfolios, based on the preschool teacher opinions, primary school teachers and children's parents, testing them with at least 250 respondents. Respondents were asked to rate statements of the behaviors described as appropriate for them using a 5 point Likert scale (from 5 to 1, which was completely characteristic of them).

The type of the research design is a case study; it is done just in Kosovo, therefore, the results of the study are not generalizable. The average time to complete the survey was not specified, however, questionnaires were fulfilled in about 47 minutes and in more than 50 minutes by somebody. IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 28) and Microsoft Excel 2016 software were used for data analysis. The study considered all ethical research standards in accordance with the General Data Protection Requirements. The survey was anonymous.

Results

The results of the preschool teachers opinion about the portfolios

Based on our research with 58 preschools teacher, results that the children have portfolios in pre-school institutions in Kosovo. From the preschool teachers surveyed, 72.4% of them reported that children have a portfolio in their preschools, while 27.6% of respondents said that children in the preschool institution where they work do not have a portfolio. So, from this result, we can conclude that in the preschools institution in Kosovo children have portfolio.

The average response to claims about the possession or not of portfolios from preschool children is presented in Table 2 according to which the average answer is: 1.2759 (DS=.45085).

Table 2. *The educator opinions for the possession of children's portfolios*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviatio
Have the children the portfolio in your preschool institution	58	1.00	2.00	1.2759	.45085
Valid (listwise)	58				

In our survey, we were interested in extracting data about the contents of the children's portfolios in preschool institutions. By our research results, 31% of educators say that the children's portfolio contains photographs, drawings and illustrations of each child; 22.4% of educators say that the portfolio contains photographs, drawings and illustrations of each child, handiwork, standardized forms from MEST with data on child development; 19% of educators say that the children's portfolio contains photographs 12.1% of the educators say that the portfolio contains only photographs, drawings and illustrations of each child, standardized format by MEST with data on child development; 1.7% of educators say portfolio contains photographs, drawings and illustrations of each child, handiworks. It's necessary to say that the standard deviation from this question is 1.5862 (DS=.69464) (Table 3).

Table 3 tells us that the average response to the portfolios content category assertions was 1.5862 (DS=.69464).

Table 3. *The differences about the preschool teachers opinion on the content of the children's portfolio*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Stan. dev
In your children's portfolio there has:	58	1.00	13.00	1.5862	.69464
Valid N (listwise)	58				

We find out some answer from respondents regarding the importance of the portfolio. For the importance of children's portfolios, general frequency analysis has been performed. From the our data, we can see that 53.4% of educators claimed that the portfolio is extremely important, 36.2% of them stated that the children's portfolio is very important, 6.9% said they were important, while only 3.4% stated neutrally. There were no answers for the other options.

Research findings from the survey statistics show that the average response to the importance of portfolios by the educators was 1.6034 (DS = .77096). (Table 4).

Table 4. *The differences about the preschool teachers opinion on the importance of the children's portfolio*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Stan. Deviation
How do you rate the children's portfolio?	58	1.00	4.00	1.6034	.77096
Valid (listwise)	58				

The results of the parents' opinions about portfolios

In our research, parents' opinion about their children's portfolios was very important. From their responds about their knowledge of the portfolios, our findings indicate that

out of 154 surveyed parents, 99.4% of them had knowledge of children's portfolios. Out of this score, 48.4% of parents agreed that they had knowledge of the portfolio, while 51.0% fully agreed that they had knowledge of the child's preschool portfolios. The average response to parenting requirements for children's preschool portfolios was 1.4870. (DS 50146). The parents' opinions about the importance of the portfolio were very interesting for this research. For this issue, the analysis of the frequency of family assertions has been carried out. From this point of view, the analysis of variables related to the importance of the portfolios indicates a high level. The data from our research report such a situation. Of the 154 households surveyed, 99.4% of them perceive the portfolio as important for children. We do not have families that consider the portfolio as unimportant. The results show convincingly that the families of children appreciate the importance of the portfolio.

The results of teachers of primary school for the preschool children portfolios

Regarding preschool teachers and parents' opinions about the portfolio, we decided to have also opinions of the teachers of the primary schools for the children's portfolio. The data on the answers of the teachers on taking children's portfolios from preschool institutions when registering children in the first grade are in Table 5. There are the result from the teachers: 55.8% of them said that taking up the children's portfolios from the preschool institution would not help them, as opposed to 37.8% of them who thought that taking portfolios from preschool institutions would help them to better know children, and 6.9% of them say they do not know.

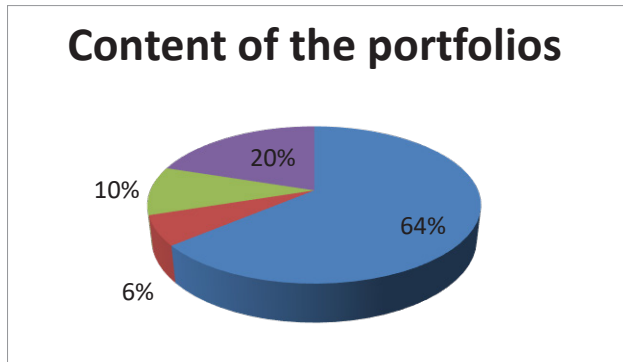
Table 5. Teachers' answers about their opinion on the children's portfolio from preschool institutions

	Frequency	Percent	Percent valid
Yes	16	37.2	37.2
No	24	55.8	55.8
I don't know	3	6.9	6.9
Total	43	100.0	100.0

The results of the children's portfolio

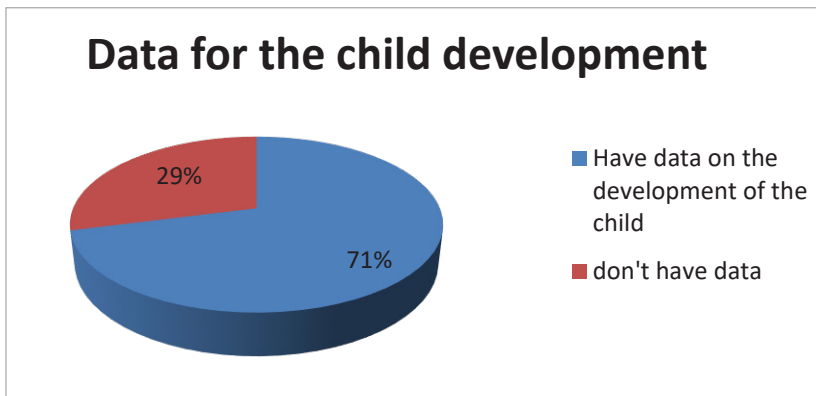
Here we present the results from our research, based on the findings of the analysis of child portfolios in preschool institutions, starting from contents, formats, and data that are inside the children portfolio.

As far as portfolios are concerned, from N = 180, we have the following results: 63.9% of children's portfolios in preschool institutions contain drawings, illustrations, handiwork, and surveillance protocol, 6.1% children's photos, 10.0 % didactic material, and 20.0% all (Graph 1).



Graph 1. Content of the children portfolios

The other point we analyzed during our research was the data on the child's development, and their structure; of the total simple $N = 180$, 63.9% of them have data on the development of the child (surveillance protocol), and 26.1% don't have (Graph 2)



Graph 2. Data for the child development

From our research, specifically from the analysis of the observed portfolios, we have obtained the following results with respect to the format of the portfolios: out of the total number of $N = 180$, 90% of the portfolios are of the simple format A4, while only 10% of them are boxes, A4 format, also.

Data from interview with directors and focus group

From semistructured interviews with the directors of preschool institutions, 63% of them emphasized that since 2014 the document called the Observation Protocol was implemented in the portfolio of children in the preschool institutions. The same was emphasized in the focus group by the directors of the preschool institutions: "The surveillance

protocol is implemented in our preschool institution starting with children from the age of 2 which will must to be as a document for the first grade”.

In the portfolio the observation, estimation should be done in 3 categories by the educators to assess the pupil for the first grade. It is a good base for teachers to better know their students enrolling in the first grade. However, it is incumbent upon MEST to issue a portfolio skeleton so that the document then be transferred from preschool institution the primary school“(member 1, focus group). From semistructured interviews with the directors of preschool institutions, results show that 62% of them make at least one visit with the adult group (children of 56 years) in the nearest primary school. From our research with directors of primary schools and teachers of primary schools, 97% of them claim that the primary criterion for enrolling children in first grade is the age.

The same was emphasized in the focus group by the directors of the preschool institutions:”The surveillance protocol is implemented in our preschool institution starting with children from the age of 2 which will must to be as a document for the first grade. Assessment by the parent and the educator is done every four months”. From this we understand that the monitoring document is a document for the assessment of the child by the parent and by the educator

The portfolios were also highlighted by semistructured interviews with preschool institutions directors, primary schools principals and focus group members, in which 82.6% agree with the idea of transferring portfolios from preschool institutions to the primary schools. Concretely: “Portfolios are important for student assessment when coming to first grade” (member 4, focus group). From this we understand that our schools are ready to accept portfolios of children from preschool education at the time these children enroll in first grade. It is also acknowledged from primary teachers would find it easier for their students to know if they have children portfolios from preschools, so the idea of issuing a template or format from MEST is emphasized, since this strategy is implemented in several countries of the world.

Discussion and conclusions

Based on the strategies of educational systems of the most developed countries in the world, we can conclude that the cooperation of educational institutions between different levels is very important. Believing that the cooperation between the levels of education, concretely in our research, the cooperation between the level of preschool education and the level of primary education, affects the efficiency of working with children and raising the quality of education, we hope that this research will serve to higher education bodies in Kosovo, MEST, parents, educators and teachers.

This research shows that like educators also parents of children have said that children’s portfolios are important, namely from a total of 154 households surveyed, 99.4% of them perceive importance of the portfolio of the children. We have found the same opinion in Cohen, cited as: more important, you will get to know, love and remember your children through the portfolio process. And they will get to know themselves better too (Cohen, 1999). So we understand that families, or parents of children, agree and

perceive as important the portfolio of children in preschool institutions. As far as the purpose of portfolios is concerned, 32.8% of educators think that it is "A summary of all child labor at preschool institution", 25.9% of them claim that it is documentation of child labor and development in the IP, 17.2% respond that "portfolio is important because it should be included in elementary school". What regards the observation protocol, 78% of educators emphasize it as an integral part of the portfolios.

The portfolios were also highlighted by semistructured interviews with preschool institutions directors, primary school principals and focus group members, in which 82.6% agree with the idea of transferring portfolios from preschool institutions to the elementary schools. Concretely: "Portfolios are important for student assessment when coming to first grade. This is connected with this citation: developed policies on transition from preschool to primary school stress that transfer of information using templates or portfolios is only one element of the transition process" (O'Kane, 2016). Among others, in some countries such as in Belgium (all Communities) and France, preprimary and primary education is often provided on the same premises to facilitate the transition for children as well as to improve staff cooperation (Eurydice and Eurostat, 2014), despite the fact that states like Iceland and Norway, (2014) regulate the transition phase in the curriculum. Similarly, in Liechtenstein, the structure of the common curricula ensures continuity of learning between preprimary and primary education (Eurydice and Eurostat, 2014) our research with directors of primary schools and teachers of primary schools, 97% of them claim that the primary criterion for enrolling children in first grade is the age, and not children's portfolio.

This is also related to the fact that this is also foreseen by the Law on Primary Education in Kosovo that mention the enrollment of the children in the primary school must happen just by a birth certificate. Point 2 of Article 9 of Law no. Nr. 04 / L-032 stipulates compulsory education begins at the beginning of the school year after the date on which the child reaches six (6) years of age which is the minimum age for compulsory education, and ends at the end of ISCED level 2. (Level 2, according to this law, includes 1.3 Level 2: Lower Secondary Education, lasting four (4) years (normally from the age of twelve (12) years.)

Based on the above mentioned data, our research shows that in Kosovo the only criterion for registering children in the first grade, as mentioned earlier, is their age. Also, based on this research, in Kosovo there is no cooperation between preschool institutions and primary schools regarding the registration of children in the first class, and no cooperation about the children's portfolio, also. Based on our research, results show that in Kosovo, in preschool institutions, children have portfolios. Portfolios are considered very important, based on the opinion of educators and parents. The content of the portfolios consists of didactic material, children's works, children's handiwork, checklists, etc.

Primary schools do not cooperate with preschool institutions in the transition of children, they also do not cooperate in obtaining portfolios of preschool children, as a tool that makes easier the transition of children from preschool education to primary education. In Kosovo, the enrollment process of the children in the primary school happens with just the birth certificate. There are some of the issues that leave space for other research like this, and this is an important issue, especially for children.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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