Experimental programmes

An experimental program may be carried out by a school with a view to testing the value of new educational contents and/or forms and working methods and/or new teaching equipment. Experimental program contains: goal, objective, educational results, content, place and procedures for the implementation and a timeframe for the implementation of the program, facilities, personnel and other conditions, monitoring and evaluation procedures and financial means required for the implementation of the program. Currently, the Health Education Curriculum and the Civil Education Curriculum are implemented experimentally in primary schools.

Alternative programmes

Educational activities using alternative teaching programs/methods can be carried out in primary schools in accordance with the Act on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools (Official Gazette No. 87/2008, 86/2009, 92/2010, amend. - 105/2010, 90/2011, 5/2012, 16/2012, 86/2012 – consolidated text, 12620/12, 94/2013, 152/2014) and following a positive opinion by the agency responsible for education or vocational education. There are two Waldorf primary schools (in Rijeka and in Zagreb) and one Montessori Primary School currently operating in Croatia.

Waldorf Elementary School

Waldorf pedagogy focuses on the child and its holistic development. The didactic and methodical approach is established following the didactics and methodology of individual developmental phases. This approached relies on the principle of the provision of education that corresponds to the child’s age and individual developmental specificities. In a Waldorf primary school the child is taught by one teacher throughout the child’s eight-year education. No standard assessment system is applied and the measure of grade retention is not implemented. Instead of using textbooks, which are avoided in the first years of education, pupils design their own workbooks with their teachers. Waldorf schools aim to foster a harmonized intellectual, creative, artistic, practical and social development of the child’s capacities.
Montessori Elementary School

The Montessori Primary School was founded in 2003. The program provided by the school is the program that was adopted by the relevant ministry, but it is implemented using the Montessori Method. The Montessori Method entails learning using specially designed Montessori didactical materials for mathematics, languages, cosmic education (science and social studies, geography, history, biology, botany, zoology, art history etc.) and emphasizes the preparation of the teacher and the learning environment for the process learning. Montessori didactical material is uniform in all Montessori institutions regardless of the country they operate in. The children learn by bringing together contents of the subjects that are in other schools taught separately. The activities are personalized, which means that the teacher works with each child individually, respecting the child’s pace and capacities.

International Programme

A primary school can implement an international program and/or a curriculum in a foreign language. International plan and program and/or curriculum is a standardized program of an international organization or institution implemented in different countries. International programs are carried out in three primary schools in Croatia, following an approval by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.

In the Primary School Matija Gubec in Zagreb the classes are carried out following the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, while the remaining two primary schools follow the international program in English (The British International School) in cooperation with The International Primary Curriculum and according to the British National Curriculum (Creative Development Primary School and International Primary School Bright Horizons, both in Zagreb)

Religious Schools

The religious communities (Churches or religious communities) who signed an agreement with the Croatian Government on the issues of common interest can found religious schools. Nine religious primary schools are active in Croatia in the school year 2015/2016 (eight Catholic schools and a Jewish one). The classes are carried out in accordance with the national curriculum and teaching plan and program approved by the relevant ministry. The Croatian Government and the Croatian Bishops’ Conference signed the Agreement on Catholic Primary and Secondary Schools in 2011. Following the agreement, the internal organization of the schools is in compliance with the conditions provided for in the legislation of the Republic of Croatia and it adheres to the basic principles of Catholic education. Catholic schools are entitled to implement educational programs in accordance with Catholic moral principles. The objective of the Catholic schools is to offer a comprehensive approach to education based on Christian values and taking into account all aspects of a person and life: physical, emotional, intellectual, religious, social and spiritual.
Education in the language and letter of national minorities

National minorities have the right to receive education in their script and language pursuant to the Constitutional Act on The Rights of National Minorities (Official Gazette, No. 155/02, 47/10, 80/10, 93/11). The education of ethnic minority pupils is implemented in primary schools with classes being taught in the language and the script of the minority, in accordance with the terms and the conditions and the procedures prescribed by the ministry responsible for education. Education of the ethnic minority pupils can be organized in one of three modules.

Type A: all classes are taught in the language and the script of the ethnic minority with compulsory Croatian language classes in the same number of hours as the language of the ethnic minority. The pupils have the right and the obligation to learn additional content that is important for the minority community. This module is implemented in special institutions that teach classes in the Croatian language, but it can also be implemented in special departments of regular schools which have classes held in the language and script of the ethnic minority.

Type B: classes are taught bilingually. The group of SMT subjects (Science, Mathematics and Technology) is taught in the Croatian language, while the social sciences subjects are taught in the language of the ethnic minority. The classes are taught in special departments of the institutions that teach classes in Croatian language.

Type C: classes are taught in Croatian language with additional two to five hours devoted to the language and culture of the ethnic minority. Additional five hours per week include the education in the language and literature, geography, history, and the music and art of the ethnic minority.

Teaching plan and program in the language and script of the ethnic minority, in addition to the general part, contains the part related to the specificities of the ethnic minority, including the mother tongue, literature, history, geography, art and music.

Education of the gifted pupils

Schools are obliged to systematically identify gifted and talented children throughout the school year, to work with them using a special program, to monitor their progress and to report on it based on the conclusion by the school’s expert team. Activities for talented pupils are implemented through programs of various difficulty and complexity levels through: differentiated programs within the class departments or learning groups, creative and /or research workshops, elective courses, group or individual special extracurricular activities, comparative, more detailed programs, or by providing access to specific resources. A program for talented pupils requires an increased engagement of the teacher; procurement of necessary learning tools, equipment and literature; access to specific resources; state and international competitions for talented pupils organized by the ministry responsible for education and other institutions following an approval by the ministry responsible for education; and funds for the pupils’ scholarships, awards etc.
Education of pupils with learning disabilities

Special programs for children with disabilities are carried out in primary schools for the children following special education program and in primary schools with regular programs. Most pupils with disabilities are integrated into regular class departments and attend classes following the regular Teaching Plan and Programs (Official Gazette, 102/2006). Pupils with disabilities, depending on the disability, can also attend the regular or special program for children with disabilities in the special class departments created in the primary schools following regular programs...

Home Schooling or Schooling in Healthcare Institutions

Following the approval by the relevant ministry, a school can organize education at home for pupils who cannot attend regular classes due to physical disabilities or chronic diseases or in a health institution if the pupil is hospitalized for a longer period of time. The pupils are given the possibility to take all of the required school exams. These types of classes are conducted in the form of distance learning (virtual classes), employing electronic communication. The school provides the required equipment for distance learning classes, in accordance with its means..

Additional/remedial classes for pupils commencing or continuing education in Croatia

Schools are obliged to provide special assistance to the children who are entitled to education in Croatia, but who do not speak Croatian or whose knowledge of the language is insufficient. The schools are also obliged to provide special assistance to the children for whom education is compulsory under the Act on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools and who have a registered address in the Republic of Croatia, and are members of a family of workers who are citizens of the European Union and who are or were employed or self-employed in the Republic of Croatia. In order to ensure successful integration of these pupils, schools provide individual and group teaching and learning activities allowing the pupils to become fluent in the Croatian language and to make up for the gaps in the knowledge of certain subjects.

Croatian classes abroad

Classes of the Croatian language and culture – Croatian classes abroad – are provided as additional educational programs for Croatian citizens living abroad. The classes are carried out in accordance with the curriculum for Croatian classes abroad, pursuant to the Act on Primary and Secondary Education, international agreements and the legislation of the host country. The Republic of Croatia provides didactical materials for the implementation of the programs of Croatian language, science and social studies, history, geography, and music classes for schools abroad that teach classes for the
children of Croatian citizens.

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