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Widening Our Perspectives: a Trip to Hungary



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Our motto:

‘New frameworks are like climbing a mountain- a larger view encompasses rather than rejects the more restricted view.’

(Einstein, n.d. in Rawlings,2008:40)





Context

- As part of EYFD a study trip to Hungary in March 2012
 - Observed provision for children
 - Became familiar with their National Core Programme; immersed in a different culture
 - CPD: engaged in professional discussions with kindergarten pedagogues, managers
- Impact:
 - Reflections, questioning, reviewing practice, examining own personal pedagogies
 - Professional discussions with colleagues, fellow students
 - Sharing experiences at Tactyc , generating discussion





Aims for the discussion forum

- To briefly outline and compare selected elements of the EYFS (DfE, 2012) and the Hungarian National Core Programme for Kindergartens (1996)
- To examine the ideas of 'excessive individualism' and 'sense of community'
- To explore and provide examples of how the 'sense of community' is achieved in Hungarian kindergartens
- To invite the audience to engage in professional discussions





EYFS (DfE, 2012)

- Statutory nationwide
- Development Matters for the different ages and stages + ELG-s
- 3 prime areas:
 1. Personal, social and emotional development
 2. Communication and language development
 3. physical development

Hungarian Core Programme (1996)

- Personalised local programmes based on the Core Programme
- Typical characteristics of development at the end of the kindergarten years
- 3 prime areas:
 1. establishing healthy life styles
 2. emotional and social development
 3. nurturing mother tongue and cognitive development





EYFS (DfE, 2012)

- Unique Child principle:

‘Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured’ (DfE, 2012: 3).

Hungarian Core Programme (1996)

- Image of the child:

A child is unique, a social being who cannot be replaced by another. A child has a developing personality which is influenced by genetics, the rate of development (maturation) and spontaneous as well as planned environmental effects.





'excessive individualism' vs sense of community

- '...excessive individualism needs to be replaced by a value system where people seek satisfaction more from helping others rather than pursuing private advantage' (The Children's Society, 2009)
- '...individuals will never lead satisfying lives except in a society where people care for each other's good as well as their own.' (Layard and Dunn, 2009: 6)
- 'individual rights matched by corresponding responsibilities for others' (Layrad and Dunn, 2009: 6)





Sense of community in Hungarian Kindergartens

- Work-type of activities (chores) is one of the types of experiences specified in the Core Programme (1996)
 - Supports personal development (self help skills, helping others, working together with peers and adults; caring for the environment and animals/plants)
 - helps develop attitudes, skills, abilities and personal characteristics essential for later life (perseverance, independence, taking responsibility, having goals)
 - Helps develop relationships and a sense of worth within a community, helps acknowledging contribution from others



Sense of community in Hungarian Kindergartens

- Family grouping (mixed age groups) from age 3 to 6+
- Mixed age grouping has positive effects on a child's cognitive, social and emotional development and social atmosphere (Umek and Musek, 1997).
- 'elicits specific prosocial behaviours such as helping, sharing and taking turns' (Katz, 1990:21)
- Mirrors a home setting





Sense of community in Hungarian Kindergartens

- Preserving cultural heritage
 - folk traditions: dances, ring games,
 - Customs and habits
 - Mother tongue/traditional tales, rhymes
- Using the local community
- Parent partnership – a sense of community amongst parents





Points for discussion

- Does the concept of the unique child distort our wider view of the child within the community?
- Does our focus on the individual inhibit their potential in society?
- Is same age grouping beneficial to the child or the education system in England?





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