

## Chapter 3 – Researches on the Maieutic and Montessori Approaches in REACT partner countries

### **Current situation in Bulgaria**

At the present, the two approaches exist rather in parallel in the school environment and it is difficult to find their common intersection. While the Montessori approach has a wider range of applications - it is not related to a particular subject and is practiced at all stages of education (5-18 years), but with an accent in kindergartens and in primary schools (5-12 years), the Maieutic Socratic approach, we can say that as far as practiced in school, it is related to the upper grades in the age group 13-18 years and is rather used in the teaching of specific subjects of the humanities cycle - especially Philosophy and History, in whose programs topics from civic education are discussed. Another specific detail is that the Maieutic Socratic approach does not enjoy broad institutional support, but relies mainly on the methodological support of university and NGO enthusiasts and experts and their personal causes, while for the Montessori method, we can say that due to its modernity at the moment, he enjoys a strong public interest, and hence one of the schools. This means that the path of the Maieutic Socratic approach to the school passes mainly through projects. Another thing that does not help for the wider application of the Maieutic Socratic approach is that the main developments that should facilitate the teachers are highly academic and there are no trainings and trainings focused on specific pedagogical tools, interactive activities, role-playing cases:

1. [http://junior.integra.bg/bg/Socratic\\_Dialogue/docs/evelina\\_vardjiska.pdf](http://junior.integra.bg/bg/Socratic_Dialogue/docs/evelina_vardjiska.pdf)
2. <https://extremepress.net/wp-content/uploads/E-book-Lochrat-Gherdjikov-Metodika.pdf>
3. <https://ejournal.vfu.bg/pdfs/%D0%92%D0%98%D0%9A%D0%A2%D0%9E%D0%A0%20%D0%9F%D0%95%D0%A2%D0%9A%D0%9E%D0%92%20%D0%A1%D>

[0%BE%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0%20%D0%B1%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%B0%20\(2\).pdf](http://e-phd.uni-sofia.bg/news/doklad_Nikolova.pdf)

4. [http://e-phd.uni-sofia.bg/news/doklad\\_Nikolova.pdf](http://e-phd.uni-sofia.bg/news/doklad_Nikolova.pdf)

However, a possible path for the wider introduction of the Maieutic Socratic approach are the so-called **Innovative Schools**, which after the new educational law, adopted in 2016, are a great opportunity for the schools to deviate from the institutionally set rails and seek new educational approaches. The innovative school is an institutionally acquired status given by the Ministry of Education and Science to the respective school on the basis of a project submitted for approval to the Ministry of Education and Science. About 40% of the Bulgarian schools that have received this status of Innovative School from the Ministry of Education, in their innovation is set the approbation of new innovative teaching methods, Some of them rely on methods related to the development of critical thinking and include Maieutic Socratic approach as a method of work. There are already schools that develop new school subjects with own curriculums based on innovative teaching methods – exemplum Creative Thinking and Communication, where Socratic dialogue is practiced as a method adopted in Secondary School “prof. Assen Zlatarov”, Parvomay town -

([http://u4avplovdiv.com/%D1%87%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B5-](http://u4avplovdiv.com/%D1%87%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D0%BE-)

[%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%87%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE-](http://u4avplovdiv.com/%D1%87%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D0%BE-%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%87%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE-)

[%D0%BC%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B5-%D0%B8-](http://u4avplovdiv.com/%D1%87%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D0%BE-%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%87%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE-%D0%BC%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B5-%D0%B8-)

[%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%89%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD\)](http://u4avplovdiv.com/%D1%87%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D0%BE-%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%87%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE-%D0%BC%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B5-%D0%B8-%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%89%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD)

Contrary to what has been said so far, the **Montessori method**, although currently being developed as a private initiative mainly, due to the great public interest, the Ministry of Education and Science is closely monitoring and creating conditions for

support - either through the so-called Innovative schools, either through training programs, some of which are designed as masters university programs.

**Montessori training programs for preschool age in Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"** - [https://fnoi.uni-sofia.bg/?page\\_id=6871](https://fnoi.uni-sofia.bg/?page_id=6871)

- Master's program "Montessori pedagogy in the digital society - preschool stage"
- Montessori pedagogy in modern society - preschool stage "/ first and second level /

**The same and for a New Bulgaria University** - <https://cpo.nbu.bg/bg/profesionalno-kvalifikacionni-programi/montesori-pedagogika>

- Introduction to Montessori pedagogy in group work with children from 3 to 6 years
- Montessori classroom - main activities, approach and practices in school age 1-4 grade

Historically, the tradition of the Montessori Method in Bulgaria was restored in 1996, when a private kindergarten "Dr. Maria Montessori" was established in Sofia, which marked the beginning of the formation of the Montessori community in Bulgaria. 2008 Montessori education in Bulgaria takes a decisive step towards establishing the Montessori method, which should be the main and leading in education, and not to be used in the context of classical pedagogy. Pioneers in this regard are Montessori kindergarten children "(Casa dei Bambini), Children's Center "Kameleni Montessori", Children's House "Montessori. These are the first three kindergartens where teachers certified by Montessori international institutions work with children.

In 2011 Montessori kindergarten "Children's House" (Casa dei Bambini) became the first school in Bulgaria to receive a license from the Ministry of Education and Science

and from a children's center became a private kindergarten. In 2012 they received a license from the Ministry of Education and Science - "Camelini", and in 2013 - Children's House "Montessori". In 2014, the Montessori House of Children (Casa dei Bambini) became the first and so far the only school in Bulgaria licensed by the Montessori Center International, London, UK to train students pursuing their studies at the British institution. In the same year, the Children's House opened its doors to students from the Faculty of Primary and Preschool Education at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", who work with children on various projects. There is no doubt that Montessori schools are spreading the fastest in Sofia, where the conditions for private initiative create the most suitable environment, but they are rapidly expanding to the next big cities - Burgas, Varna and Plovdiv, which has its own economic logic.

In 2016, parents and teachers from Montessori kindergarten "Children's House" (Casa dei Bambini) launched a large-scale campaign to promote the Montessori method in Bulgaria. They set up a Community for Innovative and Montessori Education, working to change the education system by opening it up to new and alternative forms of learning and providing a safe and innovative environment for children. On April 6, 2016, the Community for Innovative and Montessori Education and the Faculty of Primary and Preschool Education at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" hold a round table on "Innovative education in Bulgaria - Montessori pedagogy".

After the adoption of the new law on education in 2016 and the procedure set out in the law for the status of innovative schools in the coming years Montessori pedagogy is rapidly developing in municipal and state kindergartens and schools.