

Newsletter Shaking the habitual - Bassa Reggiana March 2017

Wednesday 29 March - Novellara

During the morning we visited the 0-3 year old preschool “Birillo” and the 3-6 year old preschool “Arcobaleno” in the municipality of Novellara. Guided by the pedagogical coordinator Mascia Marconi, we observed the preschool indoor and outdoor contexts, the spaces and the materials as well as the pedagogical documentation.

After the visit we sat down for an introduction to the theme of participation with Giliola Belli and Simone Armini, speaking about participative processes in the preschools in Bassa Reggiana district.



After the lunch break each partner held a presentation about the focus theme: “How do we involve caregivers and parents in our norm critical work and gender awareness?” The presentations gave different points of view about family engagement related to questions regarding gender but not only and together they opened up for a rich discussion.



At the end of the day we visited the balsamic vinegar production “Acetaia S.Giacomo” in order to know some of the local areas traditional products.

Thursday 30 March - Reggio Emilia

We started the day with a guided visit at the International Loris Malaguzzi Center, where we had the opportunity to see different exhibitions about early childhood, education and learning. We also visited the Ray of Light Atelier, to experience another way to approach science and arts.

After lunch we met the historian Antonio Canovi that guided us for a walk in the neighborhood, telling about the history of the preschools in Reggio Emilia from a social and gender perspective. At the end we sat down in a park for an interesting discussion about the importance of also having a historical awareness when speaking about preschool and gender issues.

Later on we went to the self-managed social space Casa Bettola for a meeting with “Non una di meno”, a network of women help desks, LGBTQ associations and feminist groups. During the meeting with the title “Preschool and society: theories and practices to go beyond stereotypical norms starting from early childhood” all partners held a short speech, telling about the curriculums (both national and specific for the school) and how gender issues are treated in them, sharing parts of their educational approach and also how they collaborate with civil society. We also focused on violence against women and how we can prevent it beginning from early childhood and by collaborating between different institutions and social actors. The meeting was very participated and generated an interesting debate.



Friday 31 March - Reggio Emilia

Final Evaluation of the week and planning

We divided into three small groups to share our point of views on the week and then gathered to share them all together:

Interesting program with a good balance between different topics and type of activities. Interesting to include a historical perspective. The encounter with the self managed place Casa Bettola gave a better understanding of the social dimension of the topics that we approach in our project and it gave us the opportunity to reflect about how both social movements and institutions are necessary to create changes in society. It's important to create networks and listen to different subjects of society that all strive towards the same goals.



The perspective on the theme of participation has been wider than just parents and caregivers: we have broadened the discussion to civil society. “It takes a village to raise a child”.

The quality of the dialogue and the discussion within the project group is increasing for each time that we meet. During the last months of the project we have become a group and we feel comfortable together. We often return to the same topics but we go more in to depth as we proceed. We have lots of inputs that help each one of us to evolve in our daily work.

We have built a common language, which was one of the objectives in the beginning of the project. We've also noticed a great development regarding gender awareness and norm critical practices in the early childhood settings of the project partners.

The participants of the project desire to see the schools in action in order to understand the framework better.

It was good that the schedule was quit open, leaving space and time for exchange and dialogue.

Next project meeting

Reykjavik 13-15 September, with Job shadowing during the same days as the project meetings.

Theme:

*How are body norms created and recreated in schools and in society?
How can we counteract the body norms in school?*

Book:

We also took some time to look through the structure of the book, making some adjustments:

0. introduction

- Common text about the project

1 . values/philosophy/approach...

Production, reproduction and shaking of “the habitual” – Bassa Reggiana (Cristian)

The life circle – Stockholm (Lotta)

Pink pedagogy – Härryda (Siv and Annika)

Svandis or Margarete Paula





2. observation/documentation/reflection as a tool to create awareness and go beyond stereotypical norms in preschool

Observation and self-evaluation as a strategy for improving the preschool from a gender equality and norm critical perspective – Stockholm

Mapping of spaces, materials and children's play – Bassa Reggiana (Giliola and Roberta)

Power structures in documentation – HARRYDA (Anette and Annika)

Food eating and normality constructions- (Anette. HARRYDA)

Power structure and body respect – (Sigrun danielsdottir. Iceland)

3. materials/spaces/contexts

Outdoor spaces – HARRYDA

Open materials – Bassa Reggiana

Childhood literature – Stockholm

4. processes of change inside and outside of the preschool

Science challenging stereotypical gender norms, example of Science Center – HARRYDA

Research on male preschool teachers – Stockholm (Kristian)

Girls empowerment, example of “Bet she can” – Bassa Reggiana (Marie Maddelain Gianni)

Margarette Paula – go girl!

5. what are the challenges and possibilities for the future?

Conclusive chapter with open questions, challenges and possible pathways for the future – a common text (could be a transcribed and edited version of a conversation between us.

