

## Shaking the habitual

Newsletter from the project week in Bassa Reggiana

*23rd - 27th May of 2016*

### **Job-shadowing in the preschools 23rd-25th of May**

Monday 23rd of May teachers from Stockholm and Härryda began their job-shadowing in the preschools of the municipalities Boretto and Poviglio. During three days they participated in the everyday life of the preschool, observing the school environments, the educational context and the relation between children and teachers. Tuesday 24th of May the teachers gathered in the afternoon together with the pedagogical coordinators of the two preschools to share reflections from the experience of job-shadowing.

### **Wednesday 25th of May**

During the morning Cristian Fabbi, the director of Azienda Servizi Bassa Reggiana, held an introduction of the preschools system of the Bassa Reggiana district, underlining its historical, social and political dimension.

In the second part of his lecture *Early childhood and late modernity\**, Fabbi highlighted some characteristics of contemporary western society in which education and preschool are framed today. Referring to the theories of Bauman and Bateson he argued that late modernity is an era of uncertainty, both in individual and collective life, and post-modern age is characterized by dismantling of structures and liquid models that change continuously.

In this context, what kind of education a learning context can we offer to the next generation of children? How can we offer them the possibility of change on one hand and the stability on the other hand? How can we sustain both their processes of learning and unlearning? How can we make sure that children experience freedom, not only individual, but collective freedom?



\*slides of lecture available in the “materials” section



In the afternoon the three partners shared experiences and observations made around the common theme: *how do the environment, the materials and the expressive languages accompany and support the shaking of stereotypes in the construction of creativity and in the relationships?*

Teachers and pedagogical coordinators shared documentation from their preschools, highlighting situations where we reproduce stereotypes in our preschool setting and viceversa, where we have created situations and generated processes that “shake the habitual”. Photos and videos from the preschools helped us to open up for interesting discussion and deep reflections.



In the late afternoon, after the group presentations and the moment of reflection, we went to visit the new infant toddler center, built in Guastalla after the earthquake that had a strong impact on the region in 2013.





In the afternoon Marie-Madeleine Gianni, President of the Foundation *Bet She Can*, held a presentation of projects that aims to offer tools and means to develop personal awareness and their own potential to preteen girls (8-12 years old).\*

Starting from the World Economic Forum Gender Gap report - 2015 where Italy's ranking number 111 out of 145 countries regarding economic participation and opportunities, Gianni showed different projects designed to contrast gender discrimination and support the empowerment of girls.



\*slides of lecture available in the “materials” section



## Friday 27th of May

In the morning we gathered in the garden of the preschool La Ginestra in Poviglio for a workshop together with the atelierista Simone Armini.

We divided in small groups in three different spaces; one with recycled materials, one with nature materials and one with clay. Within each group we read conversations held between children about the public spaces of their cities, and then we tried to interpret and re-build these spaces with the open-ended materials at our disposal.

The workshop generated an interesting discussion about the importance of choosing materials and creating educational environments that offers creative and collaborative opportunities with the possibility to go beyond a stereotypical usage.





The last appointment of the week was the official presentation of “*Neither this, nor that*”, the book edited by LIBRE, that the project group of Shaking the habitual have contributed to create. After the presentation of Cristian Fabbi, the two authors, Giuseppe Vitale and Simone Armini, shared the way that the book has been created showing the different steps of writing and drawing and highlighting the way that they tried to go beyond stereotypical norms.



### Final evaluation of the week

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

Interesting days with many impressions, both in the preschool environment and in the social and cultural context.

The presentation of the Italian context helped to have an **idea of the social, cultural and political framework**, and the introduction **to the national, regional and local school system** was useful to have a deeper understanding of how the schools are organized and enable comparisons between our different educational experiences.



It was interesting to speak about **research methods** connected to our preschool contexts.

The presentations from each partner on the common theme all had a high quality.

The presentation of “**Bet she can**” was **very appreciated** by the whole group.

**The workshop was a fun and interesting** way to work together.

**Good welcoming and arrangement** with transport and food.



### **Proposals for the future**

*Divided in our local project groups we shared ideas for the future of the project and the four upcoming meetings. Eventually we all gathered to plan together.*

We should have **more reflection moments**. A good habit to stop now and then and **divide into small groups for sharing and discussion**.

We should find a way to give more value to the experience made in the preschools during the job shadowing and create a stronger relation between the project group and the job shadowing group. One idea is to have a **common focus also for the colleagues that are doing job shadowing** and ask them to write a report.

We thought about other possible ways to structure the exchange weeks, but in the end we confirmed the framework that we have had so far.





Find a good combination between **the reflections made during job shadowing, the discussions on the common theme in the project group and the lectures from the academic world.**

**It's important to continue to have a “homework”** in order to involve the staff in each preschool the most possible.

It would be interesting to speak about **family participation** both in general and in specific; how do we engage families in our preschools and how do involve them in gender questions and norm critical education in our preschools?

It would be interesting to **highlight the changes** that we are trying to make or that we have done during the time of the project, thanks to the exchange with the other partners. A way to make our good practices become more visible to ourselves and others.

After one year of the project we have created a great relation and we can try to be **“critical friends”**, sharing also the critical point of views with each other.

Important to take care of all of our reflections, ideas, practices and experiences. **Collect the different voices of the project in a book** with articles from the partners and researchers from the Universities with whom we have been collaborating. Besides the book we could also make a short video documentary with interviews and shootings from the meetings and the lectures.

Its important to **share all the presentations from the week on E-Twinning.**

**The E-Twinning site have not increased in numbers of participants.** It's important to invite other persons to participate and to keep the site updated. If we need help we can contact Crister.

### Time plan for upcoming meetings

- 12-14 October **Stockholm**
- 1-3 February **Harryda**
- 29-31 March **Bassa Reggiana**
- 31 May – 2 June **Reykjavik**

### Common theme for the next meeting in Stockholm 12 – 14 october

*How do the preschool work to enforce the empathy and emotions of the children?*

