Summary

Under the Erasmus + Program, Colégio Guadalupe has been implementing the "Persona Dolls" methodology since 2015.

In a partnership with other European schools, our school has invested in this subject because it considers it essential to develop communication strategies so that our students can overcome the obstacles that arise in their daily lives. Preventing and acting early by teaching the child to develop the skills necessary for balanced growth is one of our priorities and the main motivation for us to engage in the coming of Persona Dolls to our classrooms.

To implement this methodology, pre-school rooms were selected, with a total of 120 children (approximately),  between the ages of 3 and 6 years old. It is in these ages that children begin to become more aware of their actions and the dolls, with their different personalities, can positively influence their growth process, helping them to accept difference and build empathy with those who are facing adversity. Your ability to believe allows unique moments of sharing and endows our students with communication tools that they can use throughout their lives.

Currently Guadalupe School has four dolls (Valéria, Tomé, Maria Eduarda and Carlos), all with a unique life history. The construction of their personalities was elaborated by all the educators/teachers that collaborated in the project and widely debated to reconcile the characteristics that would be more beneficial to our students and the objectives that we intended to reach.

Issues such as racial differences, eating problems, aggressive behaviour, overweight, hyperactivity, physical differences (among others) were worked through the methodology and developed a different perspective on these issues among the people involved (children and adults). In addition, the coming of the dolls to our school, the project has also promoted other enriching challenges that we have been developing over the last three years, continuously adding more benefit to our learning path.

The activities were developed with the collaboration of educators, primary teachers, English teachers, music teachers, parents and others. In addition to the school, we considered the family as a fundamental partner in the role of teaching to think, to feel, to know, to accept differences. Therefore, whenever possible we asked the collaboration of the Parents/Guardians  to be involved in our project.

Besides the methodology, the contact with the partner countries has proved very enriching. Knowing different schools and countries, with new cultures and other realities was an important asset of the "Every Child is Special" project.

In the future, we will try to continue to implement the methodology with new students of the school and disseminate in Portugal what we have learned over the three years.