

Project report and conclusions of Erasmus Ka2 2018-1-DE03-KA229-047257 με τίτλο “How to talk about intercultural education – intercultural competences in the preschool pedagogy”

13th Kindergarten of Rethymno



The aim of the project is the exchange of methods and good practices related to the integration of children with a migrant background as well as the strengthening of the intercultural skills of the participants. The project involves five kindergartens from four European countries:

Coordinator

FAIRbund.e.V KITA Kohlgartenstraße from Leipzig (Germany).

Partners

- 2nd Kindergarten of Rethymno (Greece)
- 13th Kindergarten of Rethymno (Greece)
- Dimora d' Abramo Coop.soc kindergarten

«Campi Soncini» from Reggio Emilia (Italy),

- Armbands and Kättsätters förskola from Norrköping (Sweden).

The project initially had a duration of 24 months but after the extension given due to the special conditions Covid19 its duration was set from 01/09/2018 until 28/02/2021 (30 months).

Greece is one of the countries that traditionally sent immigrants to other countries. In recent years, due to political and economic changes, it has become a host country for economic migrants and refugees. Thus an ever-increasing ethno-cultural diversity in the Greek classrooms is a pedagogical and social challenge for teachers. The need to redefine the educational context is imperative with the ultimate goal not only of integrating foreign students but also exposing indigenous students to other cultures and beliefs. The educational approach that is considered ideal is based on the dialogue and the real involvement of the participants in order to prepare them to live in a multicultural society. The exposure of teachers, students and the family to intercultural environments contributes in learning about the culture and ways of others thinking, to exchange views, to respect and

appreciate the of each uniqueness. Democracy, respect, responsibility, acceptance, peaceful coexistence are basic principles of intercultural education.

Our project, therefore, takes into account all these parameters and aims at the intercultural education of its students but at the same time at the adoption of the respective principles by teachers and students' families.

More specifically, regarding our school, the 13th Kindergarten of Rethymno, and after our active participation in the project, the results can be summarized as follows:

- **Travels and live-meetings with the program partners**

The meetings we had with our project partners were very beneficial and constructive, 4 in total so far (1 final remains). The first meeting took place in Leipzig, Germany, where we met each other, observe how intercultural principles and methods have been integrated by German school, and set our first goals on an overall and individual level.

Emphasis was given

- in the development of knowledge of multiculturalism
- acceptance of diversity
- how to integrate the intercultural concept into special but also daily activities
- finding new ways for the municipality and parents to participate
- developing practical ideas for
 - ✓ integration
 - ✓ to exchange cultural experiences
 - ✓ to prevent racism / xenophobia



In the next three meetings (2nd at Campi Soncini in Reggio Emilia, 11 to 15 March 2019 (Italy), 3rd at Armbandet och Kättsätters ftersrskola in Norrköping, 30 September to 04 October 2019 (Sweden) and 4th at 2nd Kindergarten Rethymno and 13 Kindergarten of Rethymno in our city (Rethymno, 24 to 28 February 2020) we visited the schools of our partners and accordingly we welcomed them (4th meeting). The exchange of intercultural educational methods, good practices and ideas was catalytic and many of them we adopted and integrated in our own educational program.

- **Cooperation of partners**

The fruitful integration of these practices was based on good cooperation between all partners. We declare that we collaborate well and into large extent and the proof is the production of common

educational products / activities (common songs, fairy tales, production of collaborative history,



etc.). The spirit of cooperation and the excellent communication between us facilitated our work on a collective and individual level. His successful course is an example of good intercultural practice despite the difficulties we encountered due to lockdown. At the same time we developed our personal language skills especially in the field of understanding a foreign language (English) but also those related to the use of technological means of communication and cooperation through the use of the e twinning platform.

- **The adoption and integration of good practices and methods**

Our school is a Greek urban school that has already been activated in terms of implementation of European Erasmus Ka1 and E-twinning programs. It follows the modern pedagogical approach of the "Project" which we

had the pleasure to see traditionally implemented at the Campi Soncini school in Reggio Emilia, home of this approach. But we recognize that our previous approach of intercultural education was in its infancy, and in a way trapped in "traditional practices" of simply planning intercultural



activities, without coherence and the ultimate essential goal.

However, after our very first meeting in Leipzig, we had been activated by and also had realized the depth of the intercultural good practices that we came in contact with. More specifically, we have fruitfully adopted and integrated in our program the reading of books at the same time in other languages, as we saw in



KITA Kohlgartenstraße, the integration of different languages in the daily activities of children eg numbering, greetings, songs as we saw in Campi Soncini, diversity and the importance of well-being in personal development as we saw in Armbandet och Kättsätters förskola. However, we did not stop at adopting good practices, the substantial change occurred in the way we integrated the concept of intercultural education in our curriculum as it became a primary and basic goal and in a way that involves teachers, students and parents.

In other words, we understood that if we want to instill in children the principles of interculturalism, we must at the same time approach parents and we, as teachers, to practice our skills on these practices and to embrace them.

It is a fact that our school is not characterized by the significant number of immigrant children, we have a ratio of 1/6 immigrants / Greeks in the total of 35 average children per year. But we must also take these children into account in the educational process. So we moved to 3 levels, in terms of teachers, in terms of parents and finally and more importantly in terms of children.

As for the teachers, the development of relevant skills. The organizational planning

13^η Νηπιαγωγεία Ρεθύμνου
Καμφοστράτου 43
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Σχολικό έτος : 2019/2020
Viti shkollor: 2019 / 2020
العام الدراسي: 2019/2020

Αγαπητοί γονείς
Στο ξεκίνημα της νέας σχολικής χρονιάς 2019/2020 θα θέλαμε να σας ευχθούμε εύκολα καλή σχολική χρονιά και να καλωσορίσουμε όλους τους μαθητές μας. Πιστεύουμε ότι, με τη δική σας συνεργασία και την προσπάθειά όλων μας, η χρονιά θα κυλήσει πολύ όμορφα.

Të dashur prindër
Në fillim të vitit të ri shkollor 2019/2020 ju dëshirojmë një vit të mirë shkollor dhe i mirëpresim të gjithë nxënësit tanë. Ne besojmë se, me bashkëpunimin dhe përpjekjet e të gjithëve, viti do të jetë shumë i bukur.

الأباء الأوفياء
في بداية العام الدراسي الجديد 2019/2020 ، نود أن نشقى لكم
سنة دراسية جيدة بكل المخلص والفرح بجمع طلابنا. نحن نعتقد أنه
تعاونكم وجهتنا جميعاً ، ستكون السنة جميلة جداً.

and implementation was an easier task because we were already ready to do it. We already had the relevant teaching techniques and methods and all we had to do was look for new ways to reframe them as well as strengthen our communication skills with immigrant families. An important activity was the fact that now we started to take into account the parents who did not read or speak Greek and so we informed them about the operation of the school, about the

events etc with notes in their language (which we translated in collaboration with other foreign parents who they knew how to write and read Greek). In this way it became easier for them to understand that our school thinks "interculturally". They feel more secure about their children school and familiarity with us.

So there was a big challenge **for the parents** and their direct involvement in the intercultural context that we wanted to adopt. One way we found was to open our classrooms to parents. We asked them to be actively involved in various intercultural activities with



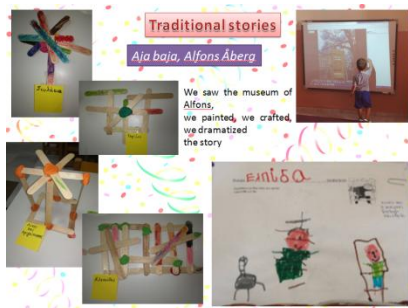
their children in the classroom, during the lesson. Initially, the activities concerned the acquaintance of the cultural background of parents from other countries (songs, games, food, customs, language). Later, however, as the program progressed, local parents began to get involved in similar activities (reading stories from around the world, celebrating world



days, etc.). In addition, at the beginning and at the end of each school year we informed all the parents about our project and we invited them to suggest new ways to strengthen the intercultural profile of the school. It is a fact that the current year, an effort is made, with the collaboration of the parents' association of our school, to enrich our school library with foreign language books.

These books can be borrowed by everyone, parents and children of our school. In the long run and under suitable conditions, the loan could include students from neighboring schools.

As far as children are concerned, the big addition we made was that intercultural activities have now been integrated into the daily curriculum. At this level we moved in addition to 2 sub-levels, the children of immigrants and the children of the natives. On the



one hand, we developed activities that enhanced the cultural presence of immigrant children, e.g. we greet, count, say the date, read books in their language, learn about their customs and habits when the occasion was right. On the other hand,

every day we have activities based on the principles of equality, democracy and mutual respect regardless of gender and origin and highlighting the common elements of cultures and people (common songs, fairy tales, games, customs, etc.) In this way all children understand that cultures are a product of interaction and exchange.



Some very typical activities that we do almost every day are to visit via google earth a place in the earth and learn about it various elements, e.g what kind of land and houses people there have etc. Another activity is to search every time for something we learn if it exists or is valid in another country and for its people, for example : do children all over the world play football? Through these activities we have reached the point where children, on their own, ask to learn how to say a word in the language of their friends to communicate better with them without considering that it something strange or special. It is natural for



with calm movements, as suggested by our Swedish friends, and we involved more nature connection activities in the context of enhancing children's well-being.

Finally, we tried to inform our indirect social environment about our program. What we have managed so far is to present our work to all the colleagues of our region in meetings implemented by our Educational Project Coordinator Mrs. E. Simitzi-Della and the respective director of education P.E. The Municipality has been informed about our work and in fact helped us a lot in the implementation of the reception of our partners in our city, offering space for a meeting. In addition, the university of our city and especially the department of pre-school education through its president and professor Mrs. D. Kontogianni welcomed us at their place and talked to us about intercultural education in our country during the reception days of our partners. Finally, the local press is always happy to host articles and announcements related to our work.



In conclusion, we would say that our school, as a whole, now consciously works towards the goals of intercultural education in a substantial and long-term way. We will continue in this context after the end of the project because we realized that these practices pay off, benefiting in total the personal development of children and teachers, the teaching skills of teachers and the cooperation of a family school, regardless of cultural context.

them not to be all the same but to be equal at the same time with special needs and interests. In addition, the educational program was enriched with children's relaxation activities combined

with calm movements, as suggested by our Swedish friends, and we involved more nature connection activities in the context of enhancing children's well-being.