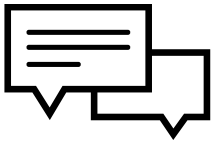


REPORT

REPORT ON THE
APPLICATION OF THE
MUTUAL PROJECT



MUTUAL

2016-1-SE01-
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PROJECT: MULTILINGUAL AND MULTICULTURAL LEARNING IN EARLY YEARS - MUTUAL

COORDINATOR: Centrum för flexibelt lärande (CFL), Hälsinglands, Sweden

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Mojca Williams: mojca.williams@hotmail.co.uk

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Implementation in Yorkshire region, UK





hello/اب حرم

The implementing organisation of the Mutual case studies in the UK was a partner in the project Tiny Signers now Language in your hands. The case studies were prepared based on the questionnaires and observations undertaken by the trainers in 7 different nurseries in the Yorkshire region. The aim of the questionnaires was to map the experiences and best practices of children in the culturally and linguistically diverse nursery classrooms after the application of the techniques and methods introduced to the child care professionals at the training within the MUTUAL project. The report is therefore prepared as an outcome of Erasmus plus project MUTUAL 2016-1-SE01-KA201-02210.

There were a total of 7 childcare settings whose staff received the Mutual Training in 2017. There has been varied success in the settings, implementing the techniques

while working with children and parents. Trainers witnessed the use of different methods with the children in several settings 8 months after the delivery of the training.

All settings who responded to 4th review after training, towards the end of the project reported that they were able to utilise the techniques learnt during training.

For the purpose of this report we are using the examples from 5 nurseries where the techniques were used most successfully.

Ducklings Nursery:

Description of the setting: Ducklings at St Margaret's is a voluntary, non-profit making, committee-run pre-school. It operates from a purpose-built property within St Margaret's Primary School in Horsforth, near Leeds. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The pre-school serves the immediate locality and also the surrounding areas. Children are cared for in one main indoor room and have access to an enclosed outdoor play area and sensory garden. There are currently 95 children on roll in the early years age range. 11 of them are from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery also supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and has successfully achieved the Leeds Quality Assurance Framework Award. The Ducklings nursery sent 4 out of 11 child care professionals to the Mutual training event.

Activities in the project: The methods were used in the setting on a daily basis. All of the child care professionals who attended the training started to use sign supported language immediately. They used up to 100 signs and have incorporated them in teaching in all 7 learning areas. For example: in the morning when the children arrived at the nursery they were greeted by good morning with the sign as well as spoken word. It was explained to them what was going to happen in the day through the signs, visual clues and words. On every occasion the childcare professionals are now using signs and words: for example: where the children are going out, when they are preparing for lunchtime, when they go to the toilet. Signing is then further supported through specifically targeted learning experiences. This means that children can consolidate and deepen their knowledge and understanding. For example, childcare professionals take turns in delivering circle time where they deliver an exciting, challenging and highly stimulating sessions with the children covering particular topic. Children are animated as they engage in music, signing and social interaction as part of the sessions.

The use of visual materials: They have used visual materials distributed to them at the training and these now form an integral part of the learning in Ducklings.

Impact on children: The usage of sign supported language has improved the quality of teaching for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and it is in the opinion of the staff that sits important to promote the learning gained from these new methods of learning and teaching. It has supported all children in their personal, social and emotional development. Children were supported to practice their communication and negotiation skills through using the signs, they were also further supported to use their independence in all aspects of their learning, particularly when problem-solving as they can communicate and express themselves better. It is assessed that their needs can be met sooner as they give the practitioners more clues about what they need, wish and want.



hug/عانع

Partnership with parents: The partnership with parents is at the core of the practice at Ducklings. Most of the parents regularly participate in activities. The aim of the involvement of parents in Mutual project was to increase the achievements of children in the area of language and literacy, in particular with children who do not speak English as their first language. This was done through purposeful engagement of parents and through offering them the knowledge and skills to support their children better. Parents were fully involved in developing the plans made for their children and in sharing all the achievements made. The parents had daily contacts with staff and have contributed to the planning by adding experiences from home to the parents sharing board. The main activity was the development of story books with signs for children to take home. They also had the microphone each.

The parents were first introduced to the story books library through a leaflet and e mail with an invitation to an evening session with a early years teacher and speech and language therapist. They were then taught how to use the story bags and the signs. The children were then taking bags at home on a regular basis. The parents were doing activities together with children, they were doing observations and making their own assessments. They have also recorded some of the activities. They very much enjoyed the activities and would like to carry on doing them. The thing is that so far there are 10 story books prepared and the nursery would like to have more of them. They would also like to have more funds for frequent involvement of language therapist. In addition they would also like to send all of the staff on the training in the future. It has been agreed with Language in your Hands that the second training will be launched in October, 2019.

Materials used: The parents and staff have used the basic signs brochure, which was printed through budget of the project, the bags with the props, books and microphones.

Domi Domingo Nursery

Domi Domingo Day Nursery was registered in 2014. The nursery employs 24 members of childcare staff. Of these, 10 hold early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including three with qualified teacher status. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It currently has 120 children on register. 64% of whom do not speak English as their first language or are living in families where there is more than one spoken language.

Activities in the project: Three of the staff took part in the training. The aim of this project in the setting was to help with the welcome and support the development of the children in their care through building children's tactile and increased focus on the development of language skills. Initially they were modelling clear words through repetition and rephrasing of what the children were saying, they now started to purposefully use a lot of reference materials, with visual clues, signs, with greater emphasis on sensory development. For example, the introduction of many different shimmering fabrics, malleable materials, light sources and mirrors to explore and build children's tactile and sensory awareness. The activities are performed through the whole day, on the inside and outside areas. The nursery has also adopted a special sensory space.

Impact on children: The staff describe impact on children as very good. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, show an interest in stories and they are beginning to recognise that print has meaning regardless of their linguistic skills. Children are motivated and keen to play and explore with their friends.

Partnership with parents: The nursery has developed its own programme for parents based on the input from the training. They have decided to invite parents to come to nursery once a week to read to the children in their native language. The activity lasts 30 minutes and is usually held before the children are collected from nursery. 12 parents participate in this activity.

The activity was discussed with the parents and the letter was sent home to invite the parents to participate. The nursery has then agreed the time with the parents when the reading takes place. The parents were then invited to come to the nursery to read to the children. The books could be selected by the parents they can however also be recommended by the teachers. The reading is a part of so called circle time and can involve also rhyming, playing, talking and singing. The activities can be supported by child care professionals. They have prepared the reading library for the parents to take books home. These are the most common children's books in English, some of them are also translated in different languages. In addition to this activity the nursery also decided to have a weekly Spanish sessions. This is because they find it

useful to have an additional language that all the children are learning. All the parents were invited to take part in the activities.

Materials needed: books in different languages. Leaflets for parents.



Cliffe house nursery:

Cliffe House Day Nursery Trinity was registered in 2003 and is situated in Horsforth, Leeds. The nursery employs 27 members of childcare staff. The staff holds appropriate qualifications with three staff with qualified teacher status. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery currently has 125 children on role. 12% are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Two staff from the nursery took part in the training. They have used the methods in different rooms in the nursery.

Activities in the project: During the 8 months of the implementation period of the project the child care practitioners aimed at improving the communication skills of children. They have planned and carried out the following activities: general sign supported conversation with children speaking English as an additional language, they used signing with simple action rhymes and songs (an example is provided below) on every occasion, they are also using signing when teaching manners, story time and during all snacks.

The child care professionals expressed that they find signing very useful. They would like to send other practitioners to the course in the future.

Impact on children: Positive impacts were reported and described as 'universal' with all children picking up the signs and joining in, especially when used with songs. They were also observed using them on a one-to-one basis and in small groups. It helped younger children with English as a second language to communicate, aiding speech development. It also helped the children to feel involved, settled and happy. Although it was reported by the setting that the techniques were used with ALL children and were inclusive.

Partnership with parents: The setting provided parents with themed brochure with pictures and graphics (example provided below), not only were these displayed but classrooms also made displays showing signs and children signing for parents to see.

It was reported that settings were keeping the parents informed of what they are doing with the children and were able to share techniques with parents through displaying posters, wall displays and photographs of the children on the walls. Also uploading observations, photographs and videos on children's learning journals. Signs were used during performances for parents and particularly shared with parents of children with SEN/EAL.

Prospect House nursery:



bus/قل فاح

The nursery employs 31 members of childcare staff. Of these, 26 hold early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery supports children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. They currently have

Activities in the project: Three practitioners were at the training. One of them was special needs coordinator. They have decided to use the sign supported method as a positive reinforcement in communicating with children, and as a support in turn taking skills, listening, engagement and joining in throughout the day. They were also using it in 1-2-1's with children who do not speak English as their first language as well as with

children with additional needs. They also used music time with focused groups.

In addition to using signing they also decided to run baking sessions with children where they would bake food from different countries. One practitioner was leading this session. The activities involved in planning what they will bake, buying the ingredients, cooking and baking. They took place once every two weeks. The idea was to involve children in activities where they can learn skills like measuring, recognizing different shapes and colours in a way that everyone can join in and enjoy.

Impact on children: All children, including children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in their learning and development. Children have a sense of belonging and feel self-assured. Their own work and photographs were displayed around the nursery, which helps them to feel emotionally secure. Children enjoy choosing their own resources and leading their own play. Children become motivated and independent learners and gain a range of key skills to help prepare them for school.

Partnership with parents: The nursery has taken two steps to encourage the involvement of parents. They have invited them to share the learning with children at home and to record their achievements which were then added to the child's journey.

The nursery also decided to engage with parents through cooking activities. One member of the staff was particularly keen on cooking and baking with children. They started to provide baking bags for the children to take home and to cook with parents. In addition they provided the common cooking afternoons for the parents, staff and children to enjoy together.

Materials needed: the baking bags, online learning journal for children, the signing flashcards.



Little star day nursery Ossett

The nursery operates from a converted building in Ossett. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6pm for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 79 children on roll, the majority of whom come from the local area. The nursery caters for children who are in receipt of nursery education funding. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs 17 qualified staff to work directly with the children. The deputy manager took part in the Mutual training and has introduced it to other staff.

Activities in the project: The nursery is committed that the children learn about the wider world and know more about other cultures. They have sessions where they are looking at how people live in other countries and look at some of the customs and activities. For example, children find out about India and taste different foods. Older children watch a video clip of a snake charmer in India, and make puppets which they then use in a show, moving them in time to different instruments. They use signing during circle time, while singing and reading stories, they also use it in one to one sessions with children who need additional support.

Impact on children: The staff report that they have found sound several benefits when implementing signs into the setting. Firstly it helps children with English as an additional language or a special education need to communicate as they are able to show practitioners or peers what they are wanting and aids their speech and development. They have also found that signing promotes inclusion of all children develops their attention when delivering it and helps to build relationships as it makes all children equal in their communication skills'.

Partnership with parents: parents are encouraged to take an active part in their children's learning through successful strategies. For example, links between the setting and home are forged through parents writing 'wow moments' to show how well their child has done something. This impacts positively on children's self-esteem as these are discussed in group times and practitioners use the information to build upon children's interests at home. Partnerships with other professionals support children's progress and enhance opportunities for development of their language skills.

Materials needed: Posters and flash cards materials to be used in the nursery and with parents.

Project implementation in Greece



Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

University of Thessaly

Seven preschool education units (10 classes overall) participated in the project. Of those 4 were urban (Volos city and Nea Ionia of Volos city) and 3 were sub-urban (Ano Volos, Kato Lehonía, Kala Nera).

Before the implementation of the learning activities within the school settings, the 12 preschool teachers participated in a 2-hour training seminar during which the aim of the MUTUAL project and the content of the learning activities were presented to them.

Consequently, the teachers of the participating schools informed parents of their 150 students. The 300 parents were informed about the objectives of the project along with their involvement during the implementation of the learning activities. The aforementioned process was completed by the end of October 2018.

By the end of December 2018 the implementation of the learning activities in the school settings has been completed. Finally, on June 4, 2019, we organized a multiplier event to promote the results of the MUTUAL project to the target sector of preschool and early primary school education. The event included presentations from teachers at the schools where the evaluation activities took place. The event closed with a workshop that engaged the entire audience in group work on the design of intercultural education activities for preschool or early primary education. Each group brainstormed and then presented their work for the whole audience.

The following section is a brief description of both the implementation of the learning activities and parental involvement on each of the 7 school units.

11th Volos Kindergarten

The kindergarten is a 2-class school unit with 3 preschool teachers and 35 students. The parents were initially informed about the project in person during a meeting in the school unit and they gladly accepted to contribute in any way possible.

The learning activities were implemented as planned. There was a slight differentiation regarding the personal book of the children's heroes. In both classes, the children proposed that they make a group book so that they can put it in the school library to borrow it and get to know each other's heroes and heroines. Moreover, the children attending the extended program (until 4:00 p.m.) created an extra book by the title "I want to be the hero/heroine on ...".

In total 70 parents (34 from class 1 and 36 from class 2) were involved during the implementation of the learning activities. They generally expressed great interest and helped in any way they were asked during the project. There was the case of two parents, whose children were not baptized in church and kindly asked us not to refer to that issue in front of the other children.

On the whole, it was a process that satisfied all the participants (children, teachers and parents). Furthermore, we noticed that when it comes to subjects relative to the children's personal lives, it seems imperative to involve parents during the learning activities, since we strongly believe that this is a very positive procedure for all participants. So, whenever possible we will try to involve parents in the learning activities we design for our students.

12th Volos Kindergarten

The kindergarten is a 2-class school unit with 3 preschool teachers and 35 students. The parents were initially informed on the objectives and the content of the project by a written note. At the beginning we asked them to help us on the activities about the children's name, and afterwards a send note was sent to them regarding the family tree and the heroes/heroines in the family.

The activities were implemented as planned. Yet, in both class some extra tasks were added. More precisely, we read some extra books ("Love is what is important", "The doll that wanted to have a baby", "The laughing family", and "A family for Mili"). In addition, in one of the classes the children participated in a mathematics activity during which they counted the members of their families and made comparisons between them.

Regarding the 70 parents that were involved during the project, most of them were very supportive and in general they were significantly satisfied by the way the program was implemented. We met some difficulties with some parents that delayed the delivery of the material we needed for the learning activities (photographs, name giving ceremony souvenirs, family trees), which led to a delay in the implementation of the program. Yet, all the activities were implemented as scheduled.

In conclusion, according to our evaluation of the program, it appeared that what children liked most was the presentation of their name book and their family tree. Moreover, they seemed excited when they discovered that there are common named among their classmates' families. In general, what we have learned is that it is extremely important to involve parents when it comes to subjects related to children's personal issues, as this is of great benefit for all participants.

10th Neas Ionias Kindergarten

The school is a one-class unit, with 1 teacher and 13 students. The parents were informed about the project in a meeting and they gladly accepted to be involved. During this first meeting they were informed about their involvement during the learning activities entitled "The story of my name" and then I told them some things about the second part of the activities. Since the project is divided in two parts, I asked the parents to meet once again about the learning activities on "The heroes/heroines in my family", and they agreed on that, so to be able to make all the work needed at home with their children when the time comes.

Before starting with the implementation of the learning activities, I started a discussion about the usefulness of names. I asked the children whether they would like to get to know more things about their names, and after they positively responding, I created a histogram with their questions. Some indicative questions were: "Why do I have this name?", "Why do we have to have a name?", "Are there a lot of people by the same name as me?", "How were the names created?", "Why do some people have 2 names and others don't?", "Who gives us our names, since I was not baptized, like the others did, in a church?", "Who did I get my name from?". Afterwards, the learning activities were implemented with some extra tasks. We organized and played some name games (finding names with the same first letter, counting the letters of our names, dividing common and rare names), and also, we read and dramatized the books "My name is Dora" and "I do not like my name". Occasioned by 2 children that have not been baptized, but whose names were declared at the Registry office, we talked about the Municipality institution and about the different name giving processes, so as to appoint and accept the differences between the children. Finally, regarding the family trees, I must say that the children along with their parents made very impressive crafts.

As far as parental involvement in concerned, it was of great importance. They brought a lot of material needed and they efficiently collaborated with their children at home any time they were asked to. A lot of them showed great enthusiasm. One father even said that he will make a wooden family tree to decorate their home so as for his children to see their relatives. Therefore, parental involvement was imperative for the learning activities to be implemented. In conclusion, the cooperation between school and family is considered more than necessary whenever the educational objectives are related to the students' personal issues.

12th Neas Ionias Kindergarten

The school is a one-class unit, with 1 teacher and 17 students. At the beginning, the parents were informed during a meeting in the school unit. During that meeting, we referred in our participation in the MUTUAL project along with the goals of the program. Furthermore, during the implementation of the learning activities they were gradually informed by letters on what they had to do with their child at home or what kind of material they should bring at school.

The learning activities were implemented according to the guidelines. Yet, apart from them some extra tasks were added in the activities about the name. For instance, we played an extra game using the initial of the children's names, we used the computer to find and print the first letter of their names, and we searched for words begging with the first letter of their name. We used various books and information for the children to find out things about the origin and the meaning of their name. The two activities about the heroes and heroines in the family were implemented as designed. Yet, the family trees were made in the school, because we saw that the parents were not willing to work at home with their children.

Most of the parents said that the program was interesting. Some of them, after being invited, even came at the school and presented their child's baptism photo album and talked about that event. The only negative thing about parental involvement was their lack of willingness to make the family trees at home with their children. Instead, they gave us the information needed to make the family trees at school. Possibly, had I previously met them and explained the importance of collaborating with their children to create the family tree, they would have had a stronger motive to work at home. Further difficulties came up in the case the Romani children, since communicating with their parents was hard. However, on the whole, I would say that both children and most parents were positive towards the project. I strongly believe that the program helped the children know one another, detect their similarities and their differences, and finally it helped them know each other's families.

3rd Iolkos Kindergarten

The school unit has 1 class, 1 teacher and 10 students. Only 1 of the teachers participated in the project. At first, the children's parents were informed about the MUTUAL project during a meeting in the school setting and were asked for their permission and support. In the second phase of the program, parents were informed by an information letter about the tasks "Heroes/heroines in the family & Making of our family tree". Moreover, prior to the implementation of each of the learning activities, information notes were sent to them, asking for material such as baptism souvenirs or explaining what they had to do at home with their child etc.

Apart from the activities proposed, some elements were added during the implementation. During the learning activities about the name, we organized a baptism ceremony during which four groups of children baptized 4 dolls. During the second phase (Heroes and heroines in my family) we learned a traditional fairytale entitled "A bunch of grapes", which refers to love and solidarity in the family. Afterwards, we adapted and dramatized the fairytale, so as for the children to understand that their grandparents are the 2+2 parents of their parents, who have also had 2 parents and so on, as it was apparent in the family tree as well. That was also reflected in a handmade craft called "history line" posted in our class, in which we note various historical events so that the children have an optical stimulus about these abstract concepts. So, an attempt was made for them to understand that their parents were born during the 70's and their grandparents after World War 2, where their great-grandparents fought against the Germans in Greece. Moreover, when talking about heroes/heroines we used maps (national and universal) to observe people's movement. Finally, we created the lyrics of a new song and we used the music from a Greek song to sing it:

Our dad, mum and siblings, our grandfathers, our grandmothers, uncles and aunts, the ancestors who are up in the sky, we all love each other. We are all together a family and we help each other, we help whoever needs us humans, animals, nature...

As far as parental involvement is concerned, they generally responded positively in whatever we asked and helped in any way they could. There was a pair of parents that had not baptized their twin girls, but they have not told them, so the girls just believe that the pictures of the ceremony were lost. Nevertheless, they had no problem with the children's participation in the project.

When all activities were implemented, the parents were invited to the school to attend a short presentation on the activities that were completed. We presented the children's crafts, the dramatized traditional fairytale, we sang the song about families and we gave them home made sweets. They all attended the event and seemed very excited! We thanked them for their help

and support, and when we asked them to tell us their impressions, there were only positive comments on the project.

2nd Mileon - Kalon Neron Kindergarten

The school unit has 1 class, 2 teachers (1 in the morning shift and 1 in the extended program till 4:00 p.m.) and 21 students. Only 1 of the teachers participated in the project. Parents were initially informed about the project and their involvement on that by a written note. When the implementation of the learning activities started, we sent at the children's parents informational notes with guidelines every time we needed their support or involvement (e.g. to give their child some information, an object related to his/her name giving process, family photos, etc).

The implementation followed the guidelines given. Yet, in each of them, some extra tasks were added. For example, during the learning activities about the name we searched for names with the same initial, tried to recognize each letter, we counted the names with the same initial and compared each group, we referred to the terms usual and unusual names and we read the book "I am a little frog, Emmanuel A. Bakaloulis" related to what names might mean. During the activities about the heroes/heroines in the family, we talked about various types of families (nuclear, single parent, extended, etc) and about the members a family could have e.g. 3 members of 4 members. We used pictures and information from the book "The great big book of families", we created a data table entitled "I have a brother/sister" where the children had to write their name in the right square if they had only a brother or only a sister, both or none. Then we analyzed the data and concluded on how name children have siblings, how many don't, of what gender, ect.

As mentioned above, in order to involve parents during the implementation, we sent an information note each time we needed their help and support. Their behavior and their reactions varied each time. There were foreign parents that asked for more information about the photographs we asked for. There were parents that asked for the photographs back so that we don't destroy them. Some parents did not cooperate at all. Most of them, with slight exceptions, did not deliver pictures of the children's hero/heroine. On the whole, we could say that parents liked the project mostly because their children showed interest and enthusiasm.

2nd Artemidos - Kato Lehonion Kindergarten

Children were given and described their name-giving process and we played extra games using the children's name cards, during which the children counted the letters that their name has

and categorized their names using different criteria (e.g. boys/girls' names, rare or common ones, first letter, etc). In addition, to make the family trees, the children worked at home with their parents, without having a specific model given by us. We must admit that their crafts were quite impressive!

Regarding the parental involvement, though at first they were surprised and enthusiastic, later on they were concerned about: a) whether the children will understand the objectives of the project, b) what they, as parents, were supposed to do, c) how much of their personal time they must spend, and, d) how they would gather the family photographs. Moreover, foreign parents (mainly from Albania) had difficulty understanding what we asked, so we also gave them oral guidelines about the information or the material we needed to collect for us to be able to work with their children at school. By the time the program was completed, the parents told us that despite the fact that they had to spend quite some time at home to complete the tasks, yet it was a great opportunity to discover information that they did not even know. Some of them even told us that they will keep the family tree that they created for their children to know their roots in the future, while others wanted to present the family tree with their child in the school and seemed very proud about it.

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The case studies were prepared based on the questionnaires for teachers from five preschools in different regions of the Czech Republic. The aim of the questioner was to map the experiences and best practices in utilizing the Good Start Methodology to support social and emotional skills of pre-school children enabling their better integration into the pre-schools. The report was prepared as an outcome of Erasmus plus project MUTUAL 2016-1-SE01-KA201-022109

Preschool Sluníčko

Public preschool Sluníčko (Little sun) is situated in a small town Roudnice nad Labem in the socially excluded locality in north west of the Czech Republic with high rate of Roman population, which suffers from the long-term unemployment. Therefore, there is an accumulation of social problems such as truancy, drugs, high rate of indebtedness, children delinquency and criminal groups. The Czech Charity operates in the locality, which is the main partner in the project of inclusive preschool education implemented by Schola Empirica.

The preschool is attended by 164 kids in 7 classes. One of the classes is for children with special needs. Children with special needs are also integrated in other ordinary classes, depending on the individual situation. The pedagogical team is complemented by the teaching assistants when needed. There are actually 8 children from disadvantaged environment (shelter housing). The pre-school is attended by 11 children from different cultural environment: 9 Mongolians and 2 Vietnamese children. The data on the methodology implementation was gathered via questionnaires (15 answers from 15 teachers).

Work with methodology: The preschool has been involved in the project of inclusive education since 2016. All the teachers were on internship in Wales (Bangor University).

Problems indicated by the teachers as the ones which they want to solve or improve via application of the Good Start methods: aggressive behaviour and anger management, tantrums, relationships between children, rule setting in the classroom, negative attitudes of parents to teachers.

Involvement of children into the program was rated on a scale 1 (immediate and smooth) to 5 (not involved) with average 2,2 which we can qualify as almost immediate and smooth. Children were active (average: 2), they cooperated with teachers (average 1,7) but with each other not so much (average: 2,6).

Regarding application of the methodology, the best rated sub-element of Good Start methodology was praising children (average 1,3), followed by work with instruments (average: 1,7), descriptive commenting on children's activities (average: 1,9), self-control and aggression, as well as anger management and calming down strategies (average: 1,9), promoting children's independence and responsibility (average: 2), reducing with negative behaviours, ignoring

negative behaviours and working with the group of children (average: 2), solving problems and conflicts (average: 2).

Activity realisation from the perspective of integrating children with special educational needs was rated as very good in terms of cooperation with teacher (average: 1,9) and slightly worse in terms of cooperation between children (average: 2,5). Teachers have mostly experiences with 2 or 3 integrated children in the classroom (numbers were: 1x 1 child, 5x 2 children, 5x 3 children, 1x 4 children, 1x 5 children).

Regarding outcomes the rate of solving the problem identified in the beginning was 1,9 (average), integrating disadvantaged children was good (average: 2). Teachers rated the level of education as very efficient (average: 1,7) and it was fun (average: 1,8). Teachers (93 %) were able to implement the methods as described, one teacher reported slight changes and adaptation due to the age of children in the class and the total number of activities to suit the children and the length of their focus and attention on activity. Only two teachers provided a recommendation to the methodology implementation, namely “smaller number of children in the classroom”.

Teachers were also asked on self-reflection: to evaluate and summarise the shift and progress from the previous one repeating application of a methodology Good Start. All teachers were satisfied and evaluate the program positively. The effect on children was emphasized mainly in improved cooperation between children, between children and teachers and between teachers as colleagues as well. Children were better at expressing their feelings, communicate more openly, understand and respect rules. Teachers also identified very often good experiences when working with puppets.

Cooperation and communication with parents' teachers reflected as functional, but also sometimes problematic. Methods of cooperation and communication used were for example personal letters for parents, tasks and homework (such as worksheets), evaluation of children's behaviour, planned meetings and preschool events for kids and their families (which were very popular), work with puppets, individual communication with emphasis on praising children. According to teachers cca 75 % of parents were involved in minor tasks.

Preschool Písnička

Public preschool Písnička (Little song) is situated in a small town Krupka in socially excluded locality with high rate of Roma population, the overwhelming part of which are children.

The preschool is visited by 66 kids in 3 classes, 38 children of them are from socially disadvantaged and culturally different environment, one class out of three is smaller and specially dedicated to children with special educational needs (SEN). SEN children are also integrated in other two classes of mixed age children. The preschool employs 6 teachers and 2 teaching assistants. Three children are from the migrant environment.

Information we use for evaluation were gathered via questionnaires (3 answers from 3 teachers).

Work with methodology

The problems addressed by the teacher intended to solve or improve via application of the Good Start methodology were indicated as follows: classroom rules, tantrums and other behavioural difficulties, problems of communication among children.

Involvement of children into the activities of the methodology was rated on a scale 1 (immediate and smooth) to 5 (not involved) with average 1,7 which we can qualify as almost immediate and smooth. Children participated (average: 1,3), cooperated with teachers (average 1,3) but less with each other (average: 1,7).

Regarding the application of Good Start strategies, the best rated sub-element was praising children (average 1,0), followed by promoting children's (average: 1,3), supporting children's persistence and concentration (1,7), dealing with negative behaviours, using strategy of ignoring and working in group (average: 2), descriptive commenting by teachers (average: 2,3), supporting self-control and aggression, anger management and calming down (average: 2,3), supporting problem solving skills and preventing conflicts in classroom (average: 2,7).

Activity realisation from the perspective of integrating SEN children was rated as very good in terms of cooperation with teacher (average: 2) but slightly better in terms of co-operation between children (average: 1,7).

Regarding outcomes the rate of problem solving identified in the beginning was 2 (average), integrating disadvantaged children was good (average: 1,7). Teachers rated the level of education as very efficient (average: 2) and it was fun (average: 1,0). Valuation of success in application of the methods as described was individual: one teacher rated it as successful, and the other as complicated and depending on the individual needs of each child: "It is difficult, both nurturing and educational activities, to influence children who are greatly affected by the environment in which they live."

Recommendations provided by teachers could be summarised as follows: to have closer cooperation with social workers who should bridge family and school and ensure the effective communication with family at home, to repeat more often and that some parts of the methodology are not so suitable for small class.

Teachers were also asked to provide the self-reflection: to evaluate and summarise the change from the previous one repeating the application of a method. All teachers were satisfied and talked about the program positively. The effect on children is emphasized in the terms of rules: children are able to follow them, they are also able to notice the other children's compliance and to distinguish what they are doing right or wrong. The other main positive effect was brought about by using teddy bear (a puppet) - this technique helps children to keep what they promised.

Teachers reflected as not very functional cooperation and communication with parents: teachers indicated, that parents have no interest in preschool events, some of them are impolite and even rude, and not able to fulfil the requirements. On the other side teachers admitted that there was a little change in their approach to parents from disadvantaged environments. One of them praised parents more often, which helps to establish better relationship and commendation.

Preschool Poupě

Public preschool Poupě is situated in a small town Štětí and was established by merging four preschools located in five separated buildings in town. There are 320 children attending the school, 31 teachers and 6 teaching assistants. First preschool, the newest, called Pastelka (Crayon) is for 20 children. Duha (Rainbow) is with its' 3 smaller classes for 62 children and 5 teachers and specializes on the involvement of children into decision making process regarding the program in classroom and consultation hours. Third one, Beruška (Ladybird), has 65 children in 2 ordinary classes and 2 classes for children with special educational needs. (SEN) Fourth pre-school is called Poupě (Flower-bud) with 3 mixed classrooms and fifth pre-school is called Klubíčko (Ball of wool) with 4 classes for 100 children. There are seven Vietnamese, two from Ukraine and one from Serbia. Common education aims of all pre-schools are to develop every child in physical, psychological and social terms and to guide them so that they grow up as independent and responsible persons.

Information on the application of Good Start methodology was based on five questionnaires from five teachers.

Work with methodology

The problems addressed by the teachers could be summarised as follows: establishing and following the rules, aggressive behaviour and communication between children.

Involvement of children into the program was rated on a scale 1 (immediate and smooth) to 5 (not involved) with average 1,6 which we can qualify as almost immediate and smooth. Children participated partially (average: 2,2), they cooperated with teachers well (average 1,4) but much less with each other (average: 2,6). Use of methodological tool was rated as good (average: 1,8).

Regarding the application of the methodology, the best rated sub-element of Good Start was working with negative behaviours, ignoring negative behaviour and working in group (average: 1,2), followed by praising children (average 1,4), promoting children's independence and responsibility (average: 1,6), self-control and aggression, anger management and dealing with negative emotions (average: 1,6), solving problems and conflicts (average: 1,6), supporting children's persistence and concentration (2,4) and descriptive commenting (average: 2,6)

Activity realisation from the perspective of integrating children with special educational needs (SEN) was rated as very good in terms of cooperation with teacher (average: 1,8) but worse in terms of cooperation among children (average: 2,4).

Regarding outcomes the rate of solving the problem identified in the beginning was 1,6 (average) and integrating disadvantaged children was rated as good (average: 1,8). Teachers rated the level of education utilizing Good Start methods as very efficient (average: 1,0) and fun (average: 1,8). The success of application of the methods was positive in 100 % cases.

Recommendation provided by teachers for the program was to apply the methodology more often and consistently.

Teachers were also asked to self-reflect: to evaluate the change and progress from the previous repeating application of methodology. All teachers were satisfied with the program and emphasized the use of puppets and descriptive commenting as an important tool to integrate children.

Cooperation and communication with parents was not actively supported. Nevertheless teachers are prepared to explain the main principals and aspects of methodology. One teacher emphasized praising of children when speaking with parents.

Teachers stressed the absence of parents interest in preschool events, some of them are frequently impolite. On the other side teachers admitted that they changed their approach to communication with parents only slightly.

Preschool Dobroškolka

Public preschool is situated in small town Dobroměřice in the north-east of the Czech Republic. The preschool is attended by 55 kids in two age mixed classes, three of the from different cultural environment. The children are guided by five teachers and two teaching assistants.

The main aim of the preschool is to give children free choice to perform the tasks on their own and be responsible for their choice. There is also a strong focus on the socio-emotional development of children. For example, the pre-school curriculum include topics related to emotions in the educational programme and consider communication with children as fundamental. Teachers are instructed (thanks to Good Start methodology) to avoid negative and prejudicial comments, focusing on the use of descriptive language and praise as an effective tool for shaping the desired behaviours of children.

The information for evaluation was gathered via questionnaires (4 answers from 4 teachers).

Work with methodology

Problems pointed out by the teachers as those which they want to solve or improve via application of the methodology were indicated as follows: rules, negative behaviours and ignoring tantrums, disturbing behaviours and fighting among children.

Involvement of children into the program was rated on a scale 1 (immediate and smooth) to 5 (not involved) with average 2 which we can qualify as relatively good. Children participated a lot (average: 1,3), they cooperated with teachers well (average 1,5) and relatively well with classmates (average: 2,0). Use of educational tools was rated as good (average: 1,3).

Regarding application of the methodology, the best rated sub-element of Good Start was promoting children's independence and responsibility (average: 1,3) and praising children (average 1,3) followed by descriptive commenting (average: 1,8), supporting children's persistence and focus (1,8), working with negative behaviours, ignoring negative behaviours and working in group (average: 2), self-control and aggression, anger management and calming down (average: 2,3), solving problems and conflicts (average: 2,3).

Activity implementation from the perspective of integrating children with special educational needs (SEN) was rated as very good in terms of cooperation with teacher (average: 1,3) but worse in terms of cooperation with children (average: 2,3).

Regarding outcomes the rate of problem solving identified in the beginning was 1,8 (average), integrating disadvantaged children was good (average: 2). Teachers rated the level of education according to Good Start methodology as very efficient (average: 1,3) and fun (average: 1,0). The activities within methodology were implemented with high fidelity in 100 % cases.

Teachers were also asked to self-reflect: to evaluate the shift and progress from the previous repeating application of a method. All teachers were satisfied and evaluated the program positively with emphasize on using the puppets and descriptive language. The shift was indicated mainly in getting more experienced and sure in daily pre-school activities supported by the program.

According to teachers, cooperation and communication with parents has changed due to the methodology, including regular individual meetings. They also tried to organize several workshops for parents to familiarise parents with the Good Start methodology, which supported the parent-school partnership. The activities help parents to become more inclusive and open-minded.

Preschool Mozaika

Public preschool is situated in town Jihlava in the South of the Czech Republic and was established by merging 17 separate preschools.

The preschool is attended by 1355 kids (24 from different cultural environment) in 57 classes; the preschool employs 114 teachers and 7 teaching assistants.

The questionnaire evaluating the utilization of Good Start methodology was gathered from 7 teachers.

Work with methodology

The problems teachers addressed by the Good Start methodology could be summarised as : classroom rules and how to respect them, tolerance, adaptation, belonging to a group, respect, praise and rewards, supporting child's self-esteem, improving performance qualities in a child. Involvement of children into the program was rated on a scale 1 (immediate and smooth) to 5 (not involved) with average 1,6 which we can qualify as fine. Children participated a lot (average: 1,7), they cooperate with teachers well (average 1,6) but comparatively less with their classmates (average: 2,4). Use of educational tools was rated as rather good (average: 1,7).

Regarding application of the methodology, the best rated sub-element of Good Start was praising children (average 1,4) followed by working with negative behaviours, ignoring negative behaviours and working in group (average: 1,7), supporting children's persistence and focus (2,0), self-control and aggression, anger management and calming down (average: 2,0), solving problems and conflicts (average: 2,0), promoting children's autonomy and responsibility (average: 2,1) and descriptive commenting (average: 2,6).

Activity implementation from the perspective of integrating children with special educational needs (SEN) was not rated as very good in terms of cooperation with teacher (average: 2,8) and even worse in terms of cooperation with children (average: 3,2). In both cases two teachers marked the worst rating option which indicates a deeper and lasting problem. These two teachers ranked the program as not suitable for children at given age (they seem to be too young for them - they were only 2 years old).

Regarding outcomes the rate of solving the problem identified in the beginning was 2,7 (average, but 1,8 without the two worse ratings), integrating disadvantaged children was moderate (average: 3,4, but 2,3 without the two worse ratings). Teachers rated the level of education as very efficient (average: 2,7, but 1,8 without the two worse ratings) and it was moderately fun (average: 2,6, but 1,6 without the two worse ratings). Valuation of success in application of the methods as described was in 5 cases "Yes" and in 2 named cases "No".

Teachers were also asked to evaluate and summarise the shift and progress from the previous repeating application of methodology. All teachers were satisfied and evaluated the program positively with emphasis on using the puppets and descriptive language. The shift was marked mainly on getting more experience in using the puppet by teachers and descriptive commenting, short sentences and automatic use of effective communication. As a result of Good Start methodology children became more active and integrated.

According to the teachers cooperation and communication with parents has changed due to the Good Start methodology, including regular praising of children in front of parents and explaining the use of puppet in the classroom. Some parents followed the example on the pre-school and introduced rules at home.

Implementation of the activities - Sweden



Sign language as a scaffolding tool can be used in the preschool classroom as a method to interact and learn rules about language and communication. It requires less fine motor skills than the spoken word, it uses more of our senses, it heightens focus, the signs are more concrete than the spoken word and it slows down the speed of the person talking. Signs work as a bridge between the spoken word in the surroundings and the own body and they give the children tools to communicate with words before the spoken word is cemented.

Signs can be used in the preschool classroom to benefit all language learners but especially children that have delayed speech and those with a different mother tongue, learning their second or third language.

For implementation activities, teachers at five different preschool settings used ten different signs with a group of children to see how many signs they learned (and started using) within a three-month period. There were 49 children in the five groups and the preschool teachers used the signs for “good”, “hello”, “happy”, “sad”, “want”, “food”, “drink”, “you are welcome”, “thank you” and “love”.



thank you



you are welcome



food



hello



happy



drink



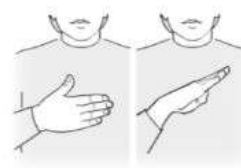
good



love



sad



want

(<https://www.ritadetecken.se/>)

At the preschools, the children selected to participate were in the two-to-three-year-old age group, in the early production stage of language learning. Some children were second language learners while others were native speakers of Swedish.

As a group activity the preschool teachers introduced the ten signs, repeating them while slowly saying the words. The children were asked to mimic the signs as the teachers were doing them and during the following weeks the teachers continued using these signs during their daily activities.

After four weeks, as another group activity, they checked to see how many children used their hands to do did the right sign for the word if the teachers only said the word, and they checked off boxes on a chart with the children's names in order to notice progress. This was repeated during the next three months and during this time, all teachers noticed that the children not only enjoyed using the signs, they became an integrated part of their daily activities and all children learned, and started using, more signs as the months went by.

The feedback from the teachers was positive and at all five settings and they said that they would keep using signs as a scaffolding tool at the preschool.

Parental involvement

It is important that the preschool and the parents have a good relationship and that the parents know what methods and materials are used by the teachers at school to stimulate language learning. Parents are the most important people in a child's life and if they get information about, and access to, tools and methods used at the preschool, they can use them together with their child in the home and this will encourage and strengthen language learning for everybody involved.

In order to share information about using signs as a scaffolding tool with the parents, we are producing a leaflet with information about why using signs is a great pedagogical tool and how to get access to the different sign, to encourage parents to use it with their children. If the communication is only effective at the preschool setting but not in the home, this may cause further frustration in a child trying to communicate. To give parents access to this is a way to strengthen the bond between the home and preschool and between parent and child. The leaflet is written in five different languages to make the information available to as many parents as possible and contains QR-codes with links to free signs where parents can learn more. We will distribute this leaflet to all ten preschools in the municipality, reaching approximately 1500 parents.



Project partners



Hälsinglands
Utbildningsförbund

Centrum för flexibelt lärande (CFL), Hälsinglands
utbildningsförbund, Sweden

<http://www.hufb.se>



Tiny Signers, UK

<http://www.tinysigners.co.uk/>



Schola Empirica, Czech Republic

<http://scholaempirica.org/>



PIA d.o.o. Velenje, Slovenia

<https://www.pia.si/>



University of Thessaly, Greece

<http://uth.gr/en/index.php>