



EMPOWERING INCLUSIVE TEACHERS
FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

EiTTT

Case Studies



Funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Case study:

Inclusion Through Education – Students
from Refugee/Migrant/Socio-economically
Disadvantaged Backgrounds

Anthoupoli Primary School K.A., Nicosia, Cyprus



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: www.mie.ie/eittt OR EMAIL US: eittt@mie.ie



Context

The fifth Learning Activity of the EiTTT project was held from the 23rd– 27th of April 2018 at Anthoupoli Primary School K.A. in Nicosia, Cyprus.

Anthoupoli Primary School K.A.

The Primary School of Anthoupoli opened in September 1977, three years after the Turkish invasion in Cyprus and the construction of the refugee settlement of Anthoupoli. The school sheltered refugees from 83 different occupied communities. Many of the families of these refugees still live in the Anthoupoli settlement. Others sold or rented their flats to non-refugees, but most families living here still experience socio-economic difficulties.

For all the above reasons, the vision of the school has been set as follows:

“We promise to work together under the values of cooperation, respect and creativity. To build a learning environment where everyone will be happy. Teachers and pupils will work with zeal, comfort and creativity.”

In our school there are 138 pupils between 6–9 years old (Grades 1st, 2nd and 3rd). The staff of the school consists of one Head teacher, two Deputy Head teachers, seven permanent teachers, one visitor teacher, two special needs teachers, two speech therapists, one assistant to a child with mobility problems and a school secretary who is shared with the adjoining Anthoupoli school K.B.

The school year begins every 1st Monday of September and ends on the penultimate Friday of June. We have 12 public holidays, Christmas Holidays (about 15 days), Easter Holidays (15 days) and Summer Holidays (e.g. this year begins on the 25th of June and ends on the 2nd of September).

EiTTT Learning Week

The fifth Learning Activity Week of the EiTTT project was attended by a team of twenty two people, comprising project partners and colleagues from their schools and institutions. The focus of the Learning Activity was to observe and contemplate the delivery of in-school supports as a method of inclusion. On their first day in the school the project team met the pupils and staff of Anthoupoli Primary School in a morning assembly.

The observation of in-school support in practice played a central role in the Learning Activity. In the course of the week there were possibilities to observe in-school support either by classroom observations or by school supporters such as the School Inspector, the teachers of the school and members of the Parents' Association. Since the care of children of socio-economic problems continues in the afternoons, we had the chance to see in practice the Private Institute and the All – Day School where children do their homework and spend constructively their time. Experts on migrants, refugees and special education gave us information in order to apply it in our schools and fulfil our goals on in-school support.

What is “School support for Inclusion”?

School support for Inclusion is a strategy where the school makes its best in order to make sure that all children have something to eat, have clothes to wear, they are happy and then they learn at their maximum. School support is not only an in – school care, but it continues after the end of the school day. In this way, school brings together all aspects of the community, such as parents, church, supermarkets, clothes shops and donators. It aims not only in equality but also in equity. That means that every child has different needs and school has to do its best to fulfil these needs in order to give him/her the chance to progress in all aspects of his/her life.

Rationale

The approach of “School support for inclusion” is essential for our school and for any school that includes children with socio-economic problems, since it takes into account first the well-being of a child and then its progress at school. If a child feels hungry, sad or neglected it can't concentrate to its lessons. If its parents can't fulfil these needs, then the school, as a second family, has to find ways to overcome the obstacles of hunger, sadness and neglect in order to fulfil its learning purposes.

This strategy was introduced in our school since we had a number of children coming from families with socio-economic difficulties. The school couldn't close its eyes towards pupils who didn't have a snack to bring from home, who couldn't buy a school uniform, who didn't have money to follow schools' excursions or educational visits or who didn't speak Greek in order to communicate with their classmates and teachers. Because the school itself is public, it doesn't have its own budget in order to decide how to manage its own money. It was essential to search for collaborators, official and non-official, in order to help those children.

Our strategy is based on the theory of “The sensitive teacher” which takes into account the bonding between the teacher and the child. This bonding offers to the child security, it helps the child to regulate its emotions, it takes perspective of the child, it helps the child to set its own goals and the child trusts its teacher because he/she is always sweet, smart and kind. In this way we promote the mental, physical and social well-being of the pupils, as a lifestyle, on the one hand, with the development of personal and social skills and values, on the other hand with collective action on upgrading their social and natural environment.

Learning

> Our agenda: Day 1

Our pupils along with their teachers welcomed our Erasmus+ partners at a school gathering. The pupils sang and danced welcoming in their own way our European friends.

After that, all partners were divided in six groups. Each group entered a class in order to observe a lesson that it took place at that time.

The next step was to observe some lessons through video watching. That gave the chance to all partners to observe the same lessons and to have a common ground for discussion later on.

Since it is essential for a visitor to understand some facts about the country that hosts him/her, we thought that it would be a good idea to have a tourist guide in order to give specific information to our partners. Mrs Maria Achniotou managed in a half an hour to present Cyprus under its geographic and historical scope.



One of the challenges Europe has to face, is dealing with migration. A representative from the Office of International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Cyprus, Mr Demetris Morfis, explained the role of such offices around the world and the programmes they run in order to help communities and/or schools to deal with migrants. Mr Morfis talked about children mobility, integration challenges, integration and inclusive schools, inclusive classrooms, community capacity building, how to get a better understanding of non-migrant children, how to maintain better participation of migrant children at school and, finally, he presented IOM's projects and interventions on integration and inclusion.

Most of our partners didn't know that there is such an office in their countries, and once they learned about it, they communicated with colleagues that work in schools with a lot of migrants in order to get the soonest advices from their local office of International Organisation of Migration.



In our group we have three Universities, two from Belgium and one from Ireland. For this reason we invited Dr Katerina Mavrou who is an Assistant Professor on Inclusive Education & Assistive Technology at the European University. She presented Special and Inclusive Education in Education Sciences Degrees. She gave some brief information about Special and Inclusive Education in Cyprus and she presented the Programmes of Study at the European University.

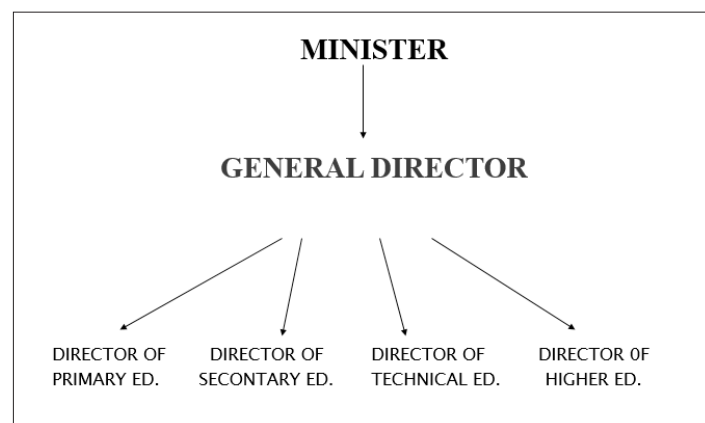


> Our agenda: Day 2

All participants observed Greek lesson at B1 Class. It was held by the mainstream teacher of the class Mrs Katerina Ioannou, along with the speech therapist Mrs Louiza Stylianiou. During co-teaching, it was obvious that the two teachers were acting as one. That was due to the fact that they have been cooperating for two years now and during this procedure they became friends. During the session we observed three modes of co-teaching. During the observation, we could draw some conclusions such as: the lesson was well prepared, both teachers were involved equally and the use of the textbook and the other resources was exemplary. The children worked for 80 minutes, full focused on a variety of linguistic activities such as finding the 5Ws (who, when, where, why, what), finding the episodes of the story, putting sentences together in order to make the summary of the story etc.

After the lesson, the school inspector of Anthoupoli Primary School K.A., presented the Cyprus Educational System and the DRASE Programmeme. Since our schools are public, our system is centralised.

So, we have:



From the age of five till the age of 17 years old, all children are educated for free by the state and their attendance is compulsory until the age of 15. The curriculum in primary education consist of the following subjects:

- Greek Language
- Maths
- History
- Geography
- Science
- English Language
- Physical Education
- Music
- Art
- Design & Technology
- Religious Education
- Environmental Education
- Health Education

Secondary Education is divided in (A) Lower (Gymnasium) where basic general education is offered. It is free and compulsory for three years. (B) Upper Secondary Education consists of two directions: 1. Lyceum and 2. Technical and vocational education.

The Inclusion Policy of the Ministry includes the following programmemes:

1. All-day schools on a voluntary basis:

- 130 primary schools, 9 special schools and 58 kindergartens
- Until 3:05 p.m. or 4:00 p.m.
- One period for lunch, one for completing pupils' homework and supportive teaching and two for the teaching of optional subjects of interest
- Priority is given to schools in low disadvantage areas
- Free lunch is given to students from families with low income

2. Activities of School and Social Inclusion

- Co-funded project 2014-2020/2022
- Participate: 15% of Pre-Primary, Primary, Secondary, Lyceum, Vocational Schools
- Selection: Research among all schools in 2016. New research in 2019.

Criteria:

- Low income population
- Low performance students
- Socioeconomic background of their families

3 Team of experts “Task Force on School Violence”

- The team is contacted by educators, school counselors, psychologists
- Their task is to develop, promote and implement a holistic action plan for each school that needs intervention.
- They provide financial support to schools in order to employ extra staff

4. Summer Schools

- 30 schools pre-primary and primary schools with 3800 students 5-11 years old (8% of the students).
- Priority to students from families with low socioeconomic background and students with special needs.

5. Extra afternoon support

- Funding afternoon activities or support the interests of very poor students. (1% of the student population)

6. Extra teaching hours

- A) For pupils that don't speak Greek or they speak very few Greek (2 year project).
- B) For pupils with low performance.

7. Free breakfast to poor students

- Free breakfast to very poor pupils (10% of the pupils population).

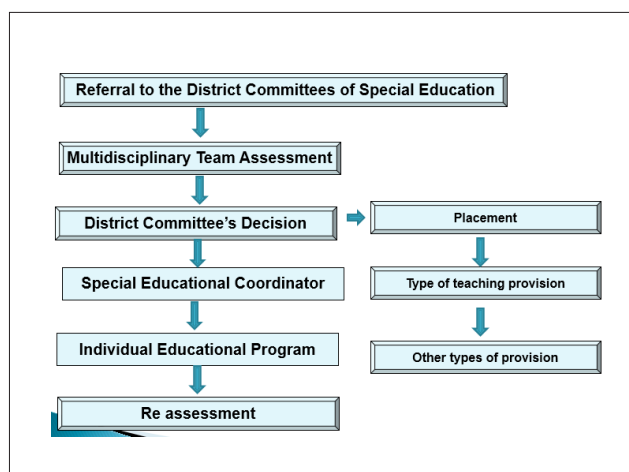
8. Co-Teaching

- › Both teachers need to know very well the profile of all pupils (family background, performance, student interests, etc.).
- › Personal aims and short duration aims are set for each pupil.
- › Both teachers follow the appropriate methodology.
- › Both teachers help all pupils.



The following presentation was held by Dr Maria Constantinidou, an officer in the department of Special Education at the Ministry of Education and Culture. She emphasises that the Laws for Education and Training of Children with Special Needs (1999-2014) are the legislative framework which regulate all matters regarding the education of children with special educational needs. Thus, all children, regardless of gender, ethnic origin and irrespective of the residential status of their parents, are entitled to have access to free public education and are eligible for additional educational support. Special Education may be provided in public schools from the age of 3 years old. District Committees are responsible for the assessment of the children and decide upon their placement in different educational setting with provision of both teachers, care assistants, educational resources, special equipment, assistive technology etc.

Special Education in Cyprus:



Special Education Reform:

- › The Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) is in the process of an educational reform in special education (new policy and new legislation).
- › The help from experts has been obtained (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education).
- › The MOEC is in the process of consultation with all stakeholders.

The next step, was to present Anthoupoli Primary School KA. Evidiki Papageorgiou presented the community in which the school is situated. Then, she went back in time in order to give a broader framework of the circumstances that created the need of building the specific school.

To be more specific, the Primary School of Anthoupoli operated in September 1977, three years after the Turkish invasion in Cyprus and the construction of the refugee settlement of Anthoupoli. The school sheltered refugees from 83 different occupied communities. During the first year of being established, it had 362 pupils, with 254 pupils being enrolled the following year. Within three years, the school had 751 pupils.

The classes consisted of 32-40 pupils. Years full of difficulties, pain and poverty. The school was called upon to fulfil its social role and tried to help pupils and their families with the many problems they faced as a result of the Turkish invasion.

The large and ever-growing pupil population made it difficult for the school administration to create new housing needs. The first three school years, the school functioned as one. Under the noble sponsorship of Mr. Evangelos Valaris, a new building was added. The school year 1980-81, the school operates in two cycles with separate principals and teaching staff.

In 2004, earthquake resistant works were carried out and the school was radically renovated. Architectural changes were made and the workshops were moved to the first floor. The school became well-equipped in all laboratories. The closed gym functioned in the school year 2010- 2011.

The school has been demonstrating a myriad of activities aimed at improving pupils' personalities, enhancing self-esteem and improving their learning outcomes. Rich activities, targeted, cultivate opportunities for learning with experiential workshops and exploiting the talents of children in Art, Music and Theater. At the same time, practices are implemented to prevent and reduce delinquency through the cultivation of communication and conflict resolution skills.

School support to facilitate the inclusion of pupils from refugee/migrant and socio-economically “disadvantaged” backgrounds.

The programmes our school runs:

1. Greek Language Programme offered by the Ministry of Education to non - Greek speakers.

For the establishment of immigrant pupils proficiency level is taken into account:

- › the ability for reading comprehension and writing-speech production
- › their communication skills, and
- › the acquisition of grammatical / editorial structures and vocabulary.

In addition to evaluating pupil progress throughout the school year, a final evaluation must also be done. Competent to judge each time, which children need support and to what extent, it is

the class teacher, the school director, the school inspector and the educational psychologist who collectively examine the case and judge accordingly.

In our school there are eight non Greek speaking children. One beginner and seven non beginners. To these children an enhancing Greek language teaching programme is offered for a period of two years. Both, the beginner and the non - beginners, are taught Greek twice a week.

2. Breakfast to destitute pupils

Free breakfast is provided to pupils who need financial assistance and fall under the categories of beneficiaries designated by the Ministry of Education. The humanitarian effort of the Ministry of Education has been supported by various operators. This school year, part of the programme is co-funded by the European Refugee Fund (ERF). In our school 35 children are given a sandwich during the 1st break.

3. Optional All-Day Primary School

- › Participation to the programme is free, but parents pay €60 a month for the lunch of their children.
- › Timetable of the Optional All – Day Primary School
- › 40 minutes lunch (13: 05-13: 45)
- › 40-minute study of homework or reinforcement teaching (13: 45-14: 25)
- › 40 minutes of engaging in a subject of interest A (14: 25-15: 05)
- › 1. English or other language: 2 periods (e.g. Monday-Thursday)
- › 2. Computers: 2 periods (e.g. Tuesday-Friday)
- › 3. In case there is not a computer lab, Health Education (Health Education, Environmental Education, Traffic Education) is offered.
- › 15-minute break (15: 05-15: 20)
- › 40 minutes of interest in a subject of interest B (15: 20-16: 00)
- › On Wednesdays, 40 minutes of interest C.
- › Optional (periods of interest) A, B AND C (15: 20-16: 00) 6 periods total weekly

› **They select three of the following:**

1. Athletics (specific sports): 2 periods
2. Music (specific musical instruments): 2 periods
3. Art (visual arts, photography, etc.): 2 periods
4. Drama: 2 periods
5. Design and Technology: 2 periods.
6. Folk Dance: 2 periods

4. Health Education

In our school pupils seek, not only to learn about the physical consequences of certain behaviors, but also to judge the factors that influence their behavior, to practice communication, cooperation, conflict management and coping skills pressure of friends, tackle social stereotypes, manage issues such as security, consumer education, rights and obligations, use and abuse of substance dependence sex education, etc.

5. Classroom Management

We aim to improve children's behavior towards "visitor teachers". To involve all school teachers, administrators and parents in the effort being made. To seek for close cooperation between classroom teachers and "visitor teachers" for exchange of information, good practices and support. To define a common - school processes in order to have consistency and continuity in all classrooms. Pupils need to behave with equal respect to all teachers in the classroom and in the courtyard. Pupils should maintain the same effort in all subjects. Parents need to develop interest and ask about all the lessons and communicate with all teachers.

6. Co – Teaching

Since we entered the EiTTT programme, we included the co-teaching in the main programme of the school setting stable hours on the pupils' weekly programme.

Our criteria of starting Co – Teaching in a class are:

- › We choose classes that have more than one pupil of special education programme.
- › We take the teachers permission to participate in the programme.

- › We try to have join time for programming and setting the goals for each lesson.

7. Promoting Literature

Literature is an important means of combating social exclusion and at the same time as a means of improving learning outcomes. We urge pupils to read for pleasure either on their own, in groups or elder pupils reading to younger. We organise weeks or days focused on literature. During those days, pupils meet writers, book designers and they visit bookstores. They enjoy reading while they eat a fruit or a cookie and drink a glass of juice. Sometimes the whole school reads the same book and children are involved in drama activities connected with that book.

8. Occupied Cyprus

We focus on three parameters

1. I learn about my country. This target emphasises the necessity of our students to know their history, traditions, legends, myths and customs and to get to know to various areas of our country, both free and occupied.
2. I do not forget my occupied land. The dominant position in our educational programme is the effort of preserving the immaculate memory of our occupied villages and cities. Our occupied land should come to life in the eyes of children through the development of programmes / actions / initiatives that will highlight, through geographic, historical, cultural and linguistic elements, the unified and indivisible of our country.
3. I claim the liberation and reunification of my homeland. The claim for the liberation and reunification of our homeland can only be continuous, expressed in peaceful ways and on the basis of the application of the basic human rights and freedoms.

9. Afternoon preoccupation – Afternoon Care at Private Institutions

One of the problems our school has been facing throughout the years, was the afternoon preoccupation of the children facing socio - economic and educational difficulties. Their background were or are parents with low income or no income and illiterate parents.

This year the school assists nine children on its own, along with four other children who are partially supported by ΣΕΑΥΠ (Coordinating Committee on Health and Citizenship Education) and the EU. Total 13 children.

The economic assistance comes through:

- › The Christmas Bazaar
- › The Christmas Bazaar is organised annually by Ms. Venetia Agroti and Christiana Gavrielidou. Ms. Venetia is responsible for the financial part while Christiana for the handicrafts. Not only parents, but also people who know the problems of the school and they want to help, give their presence to the Bazaar. Usually the profit is around €4500.
- › The Coordinating Committee on Health and Citizenship Education (ΣΕΑΥΠ).
- › The Coordinating Committee on Health and Citizenship Education has approved 4 of our pupils to get the yearly allowance of afternoon preoccupation, which rises up to €600.
- › The European Union
- › We get a yearly donation of the amount of €1500 from the European Union.
- › Donations:
 - Red Cross
 - Alkyonides
 - Local companies
 - People of the community.
 - Parent’s Association
- › Parents have been always next to school and they have been trying to reinforce the efforts of the school.

The Primary School of Anthoupoli K.A.. continues its route in time, aiming even higher.

Two representatives of the Parent’s Association, the Chairman/ President and the Vice President came to our school in order to present to our partners the structure of the Parent’s Association and the different ways they give support to the school.

In 1996 under the continuous press of the parents to have more active role in school society and legal identity, they move on to the establishment of the Parents Association Board, and be member of the Federation of Parents association Elementary schools in Nicosia District, and also member or the Co Federation of Parents association board Elementary schools of Cyprus.

The scope of Parent’s Association is:

- › Suggest to school’s Principal, and Local School board, actions that have to be done, to improve facilities and school building, but also to improve the quality of students living in the school, and better working conditions for the teachers.
- › To ensure and bond the relationship between all parents, members of the association, by sharing thoughts and opinions, and introduce them to school’s principal.
- › To be in contact and cooperation with school authorities in order to resolve issues related to the school.
- › To use financial assets in order to help school to overcome difficulties (materials and support).
- › To organise activities (educational or recreational) to bring parents together with the educational staff.
- › To promote the social, educational and national activities of the school.
- › To provide the available assets to our students that their families are facing economic difficulties.

Structure of the board – Organisation:

- › Chairman-President
- › Vice President
- › Secretary
- › Secretary Assistant
- › Teller
- › Assistant teller
- › Members



The election of a new board is held at the beginning of the school year. The board calls monthly meetings and additional meetings when it is considered to be necessary.

Parent's Association Committees:

- › Committee for the all-day school
- › Health and Safety Committee
- › Ecology Committee
- › Educational Committee
- › Committee for the school Canteen
- › Committee for the poor students
- › Event Committee
- › Advisory Committee
- › Communications Committee

Support and Activities:

- › They support school by contributing financially to purchase materials that helps educational staff to do their job effectively, such as projectors, computers, stationery, etc.
- › They are in communication with local authorities, school board, ministry of education, in order to express their needs and pushing things to the right direction.
- › They support the families with financial problems by giving them food and clothing during the Christmas and Easter Seasons, covered financially to participate to all school outdoor activities.
- › In cooperation with the school, church, and specialists, they try to support families with social problems (uneducated parents, foreigners, violence in the family, etc.)
- › They organise fairs for the economic support of their association.
- › They organise charity events in order to support school's poor students.
- › They promote healthy nutrition habits by organising event for healthy breakfast.
- › They have active part to all school activities, educational, ecological or recreational.

> Our agenda: Day 3

Action Day “The Consequences of war”

Purposes of the Action Day:

1. The school wanted to show to the pupils that the war is not the solution in solving peoples' problems, because during a war a lot of people lose their lives, others are declared as missing people, many people are misplaced, they become migrants or refugees, they live in poverty, they lose their homes, their jobs etc.
2. Learn about Cyprus tradition.

The pupils, along with our partners, divided in groups and went through seven (7) stations.

Station 1: Missing people

Mrs Charita Mantoles is a woman who has six missing people in her family due to Turkish invasion in Cyprus in 1974. She told her personal story at a school gathering giving the message that the pain of the families that have missing people never ends.



Station 2: “The suitcase of a refugee”

Each group entered a refugee tent. They discussed about how it feels leaving in a tent and the difficulties one might face when he/she has to live in a tent for a long time. Then, they have to think one thing they would take with them in case they had to leave suddenly from their home. The teacher showed them the suitcase of a refugee. They named the things that they could see in the suitcase and they discussed about their importance for the person it was carrying it.



fears and hopes a mother has for her child. In many cases, these hopes are directly linked to our country and its future.

The children worked on activities that had to do with feelings.



Station 5: Short film “Omikro thetiko” (“O+”)

The movie

Cyprus 1974, a few days after the Turkish invasion, we are in a refugee camp next to the occupied areas. Hundreds of families deprived of everything are forced to live there, full of anxiety for missing people. A dying girl is waiting for a blood transfusion (hospitals only carry blood for the injured soldiers), and she also desperately desires her bridesmaid dress she left when she had to vacate her house. Her mother asks the UN representative to bring her the dress from the occupied house. The UN soldier initially denies, but after a few days he returns to the camp. He brings the dress to the girl, but then it is too late. The girl passed away.

The director of the film, Mr Michael Georgiades, was present and the pupils had the chance to talk to him. He tried to discuss the symbolisms of the film. The girl represents Cyprus, a small country that faced war. Unfortunately no country could help in order to avoid occupation. Even the help from the UN came too late. Another thing that was clear, is that in today's society, people sometimes are left alone even if they need help.

Station 3: “The dairy of an enclaved pupil”

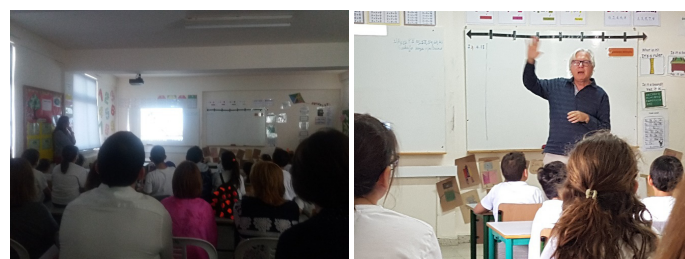
Mrs Nicky Chronia is a teacher who lived as an enclaved pupil when she was a little girl, because her village was occupied by the Turkish army in 1974. Her family chose to stay at their village instead of moving in the free part of Cyprus. She shared her experiences as an enclaved pupil and she also presented some traditional costumes of her grandparents and some handicrafts from her mother and grandmother.



Station 4: “From Earth to stars”

At the beginning, Mrs Rea Papageorgiou read a book excerpt from the book “From Earth to Stars / Dünyalar Kadar”.

The particular book is written by Marina Michaelidou Kadi and Mehves Beydoglu, while Angeliki Pilatis signed the illustration. It is, as far as we know, the first bilingual book for children, written in Greek and Turkish. The book is essentially a maternal hymn to her child. It has the form a letter that describes all the joys,



Station 6: Folk songs and dances

One of our main targets, is children to learn about their traditions and customs. For this reason, they had the chance listen to traditional songs and watch traditional dances.



Station 7: Balloons

We wanted to close our action day with a message of peace and love. Each child had a white balloon and it let it go up in the sky making a wish for Cyprus.



› Our agenda: Day 4

On Thursday, we visited the school of Agios Mamas, a primary school which is in the area of ours, and it includes two special units in its programme. We had the chance to observe both units.

It was clear that in both units there were pupils with different learning disabilities and ages. The lessons are highly structured in order to fulfil the variations of each child. Pictures and alternative communication is used. Sometimes pupils have the opportunity to choose themselves what to do among of 2-3 activities. Pupils don't spend the whole school day in the special unit. Depending on their abilities, they intergraded in the mainstream programme of their class.

After our observation at Agios Mamas Primary School, we went at Anthoupoli Primary School K.A. in order to continue classroom observations.

The first lesson we all observed was an English Lesson at First Grade. Mrs Koulla showed how we teach English as a second language to our pupils. The lessons of English are highly structured and they include joyful activities for the children. At First Grade, since the focus is on oral skills (children don't read or write in English until 2nd Grade), the lesson includes various games, songs, repetition of the new vocabulary and storytelling.

The second lesson we all observed was a Health Education lesson with Second Grade pupils. Mrs Venetia Agroti showed a typical lesson of Health Education. It is very common to use books and drama technics as a means of discussion.

In this case, the children were divided in groups. Each group had a picture and discussed about the rights of children and their feelings when their rights are abandoned.

Then, they listen to a story about a girl who was saving money to buy a bike. The day she managed to fulfil her goal and save the right amount of money, she was on her way to buy her bike. On her way she saw a wounded dog. She had a dilemma whether to choose a bike or to save the dog.

The teacher used drama technics to help the children realise the feelings of the protagonist in the story. They formed the corridor of thought, they formed the ladder of feelings and through empathy they made decisions.

After the lessons, we had the chance to have a round table discussion among the teachers of our school and our Erasmus+ partners. The teachers of our school gave information about our educational system in general and in particular, about our vision in our school. We emphasise that it is important for us for every child to feel safe and has a sense of belonging in order to support its needs. We do our best to have a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment for everyone. We do know that the challenges in our school make us complete persons. On the other hand, it is very common for teachers to feel exhausted because of the emotional investment they give to the school. In this sense, we need to find ways to give our teachers the time or the way to fill up their butteries so they can continue giving their best.

Optional Whole Day School (In – school afternoon programme)

In our school operates an optional whole day school. This means that if the parents would like to leave their child/children at school till 4:00 in the afternoon, they have this option. The programme is free, but they pay €60 per month for the child's lunch. Our partners had the chance to observe the programme of the school and talk to the head teacher who is responsible for the programme.

The programme of the Optional Whole Day School runs as follows:

Timetable

- › 40 minutes Lunch (13: 05-13: 45)
- › 40-minute study of homework or reinforcement teaching (13: 45-14: 25)
- › 40 minutes of engaging in a subject of interest A (14: 25-15: 05)
- › 15-minute break (15: 05-15: 20)
- › 40 minutes of interest in a subject of interest B (15: 20-16: 00)
- › On Wednesdays, 40 minutes of interest

The subjects are divided into obligatory and optional (subjects of interest) as follows:

Obligatory 4 periods total weekly

1. English or other language: 2 periods (e.g. Monday-Thursday)
2. Computers: 2 periods (e.g. Tuesday-Friday)
3. In case there is not a computer lab, Health Education (Health Education, Environmental Education, Traffic Education) is offered.

Optional A, B AND C: 6 periods total weekly

They select three of the following:

1. Athletics (specific sports): 2 periods
2. Music (specific musical instruments): 2 periods
3. Art (visual arts, photography, etc.): 2 periods
4. Drama: 2 periods
5. Design and Technology: 2 periods.
6. Folk Dance: 2 periods

› Our agenda: Day 5

The fifth day was a day of discussion, feedback, drawing conclusions and evaluation. We had the chance to organise our meeting at a conference room situated at the area called Governors Beach.

At first we were all divided in mixed groups and we discussed our learning during the past four days. We wrote down our conclusions and evaluations. Then, one by one, we announced our thoughts and what we learned from the Learning Activity in Cyprus.

The overall outcome was that we need more caring teachers in our schools in order to overcome the everyday obstacles we face in schools. Happier pupils mean happier teachers and happier teachers mean a better educational system. Teachers need to have support, flexibility and resources to feel that they have the power to respond to the needs of the pupils. School has to have a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment where all children can learn. We need to set high standards for our children and give them the message that “they can do it” because we believe in them and because we are by their side. They need to feel that they are responsible for their own learning and for this reason they need to learn how to learn by themselves. So, teachers have to engage more their pupils in the classroom activities.

Key Learning during this Activity Week:

- › In African societies they say that “It takes a village to raise a child”. This proverb means that it takes an entire community of different people interacting with children in order for children to experience and grow in a safe environment. In our case, in the society of school, other partners can help in order to facilitate the inclusion of pupils from refugee/migrant and socio-economically “disadvantaged” backgrounds. Such partners are parents, the community, the church, volunteers, Organisations, the Ministry of Education etc.
- › One of the challenges Europe has to face, is dealing with migration. Since there are Offices of International Organisation for Migration (IOM) all around the world, we need to contact them and learn about their programmes. We need to learn about children mobility, integration challenges, integration and inclusive schools, inclusive classrooms, community capacity building, how to get a better understanding of non-migrant children and how to maintain better participation of migrant children at school.
- › In Cyprus a special teacher can come from both paths:
 - › A) He/She can have a first degree in special education or
 - › B) He/She can have a first degree in education sciences plus a masters in special/inclusive education
- › Teachers and Early Childhood Educators need to have a BA degree in order to be able to work at a public or a private school or kindergarten.
- › In both cases, Primary School Teachers or Early Childhood Educators, can specialise in Inclusive Education and if they wish it, they can follow a MA programme for further specialisation.
- › The Inclusion Policy of the Ministry includes the following programmes:
 - All-day schools on a voluntary basis
 - Activities of School and Social Inclusion
 - Team of experts “Task Force on School Violence”
 - Summer Schools
- Extra afternoon support
- Extra teaching hours
 - a. For pupils that don’t speak Greek or they speak very few Greek (2 year project).
 - b. For pupils with low performance.
- Free breakfast to very poor pupils (10% of the pupils’ population).
- Co – Teaching
- › In Cyprus Special Education may be provided in public schools from the age of 3 years old. District Committees are responsible for the assessment of the children and decide upon their placement in different educational setting with provision of both teachers, care assistants, educational resources, special equipment, assistive technology etc.
- › In special units that can be found in mainstream schools, there are pupils with different learning disabilities and ages. The lessons are highly structured in order to fulfil the variations of each child. Pictures and alternative communication is used. Sometimes pupils have the opportunity to choose themselves what to do among of 2-3 activities. Pupils don’t spend the whole school day in the special unit. Depending on their abilities, they intergraded in the mainstream programme of their class.
- › Anthoupoli Primary School K.A.: School support to facilitate the inclusion of pupils from refugee/ migrant and socio-economically “disadvantaged” backgrounds. The school runs the following programmes:
 - › Greek Language Programme offered by the Ministry of Education to non - Greek speakers.
 - › Breakfast to destitute pupils
 - › Optional All-Day Primary School
 - › Health Education
 - › Classroom Management
 - › Co – Teaching
 - › Promoting Literature

- › Occupied Cyprus
- › Afternoon preoccupation – Afternoon Care at Private Institutions
- › The role of Parents' Association in Cyprus:
 - Suggest to school's Principal, and Local School board, actions that have to be done, to improve facilities and school building, but also to improve the quality of students living in the school, and better working conditions for the teachers.
 - To ensure and bond the relationship between all parents, members of the association, by sharing thoughts and opinions, and introduce them to school's principal.
 - To be in contact and cooperation with school authorities in order to resolve issues related to the school.
 - To use financial assets in order to help school to overcome difficulties (materials and support).
 - To organise activities (educational or recreational) to bring parents together with the educational staff.
 - To promote the social, educational and national activities of the school.
 - To provide the available assets to our students that their families are facing economic difficulties.
- › Action Day "The Consequences of war". Although war is not a solution to peoples' problems, we have to face its consequences since there are wars all over the world.
 - During a war, a lot of people die, plenty of them are missing, others are tortured, others have disabilities and most of the people have emotional and psychological problems.
 - The economy of the country is demolished.
 - People try to be alive and safe.
 - Wherever they go, they carry their personal history and the history of their country.
 - When we have pupils from a country that faces a war, we need to have in mind all of the above, in order to plan suitable programmes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

- › In order to plan a programme about the inclusion of pupils from refugee/migrant and socio-economically "disadvantaged" backgrounds, you need to have a personal contact with the parents and the children in order to understand their case and be able to give them the best that you can.
- › You can always start from the basic needs in life, such as if they have a home to live, if they have enough money, if they have food to be fed etc. If they don't, then you need to bring them into contact with the right services and if this takes time, you need to inform the people you think they can support them to act until the services give their help. These people can be the parent's association, volunteers, the church, people from their own country etc.
- › Then, you need to understand if the parents can help their children with learning. If not, then you need to find ways to support the children.
- › Finally, you need to understand what can be done at school, in order to give them the best that you can.

What research says

A. Socioeconomic inequalities in education

Socioeconomic inequalities in education are an important issue for researchers, policy-makers and even teachers and parents. In democratic societies the ideal is socioeconomic inequalities in educational outcomes should be zero or minimal.

“The Europe 2020 strategy is the EU’s agenda for growth and jobs for the current decade. It emphasises smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as a way to overcome the structural weaknesses in Europe’s economy, improve its competitiveness and productivity and underpin a sustainable social market economy.” The two targets that have to do with education is (1) to decrease rates of early school leavers below 10% and (2) at least 40% of people aged 30–34 having completed higher education. So, the emphasis of the education target is on helping employability and reducing poverty. It is clear that both features are socioeconomic.

For Europe, it is a fact that students from disadvantaged backgrounds “fare worse in educational attainment and learning outcomes than their better-off peers”. Thus, if European countries try to offer the same quality education to children from poor socio-economic and migrant backgrounds, those children will enjoy greater chances for successful living.

The main reason that socioeconomic inequalities still exist in our societies is that the processes by which socioeconomic background influences educational inequality are not well understood. There is no simple relation between expenditure and equity in education systems. Different researches show that socioeconomic differences can cause either small or large differences in academic achievement, indicating that the relationship between SES and academic achievement can be either shallow or deep. Due to this, the relationship between them is also referred to as “socioeconomic gap” or “socioeconomic gradient” in different research contexts.

Gary N Marksab et al., distinguish four types of explanations based on the extent to which they emphasise the importance of material, cultural, and social factors and school systems. Material resource explanations focus on the roles of poverty, income, and wealth. We know from observation that income and wealth are related to student achievement and other

educational outcomes (Alexander & Eckland, 1974, 1975; Jencks et al., 1972, 1979; Orr, 2003; Pong & Ju, 2000). Another group

of explanations emphasise the role of social relationships; stronger connections between students, schools, parents, and the local community promote educational success. Social capital theory argues that social networks and social relationships have a substantial impact on a variety of social outcomes. However, from what has been studied, it seems that the importance of social capital for student achievement is not strong. Other explanations focus on cultural differences between high and lower status families and what this implies for student performance. It seems that cultural factors do influence educational outcomes. DiMaggio (1982) shows that US children from “cultured” backgrounds receive higher grades, despite of their measured cognitive ability. Cultural behavior was also found to influence educational attainment, college attendance, and college graduation (DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985).

School systems also figure in explanations of socioeconomic inequality in education. As Gary N Marksab et al. report, school systems that reward ability and effort rather than social origins, may substantially reduce the extent of social reproduction between generations. Many researches try to figure out the extent to which schools influence educational outcomes. School differences in achievement vary enormously across educational contexts. These differences are largest in countries with highly tracked school systems and considerably smaller in comprehensive systems (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2001).

B. The caring teacher theory

There is a long discussion about the impact of the caring behavior of teachers on pupils’ learning. Researches that focus either on pedagogical issues either on ethical issues, show that when pupils know that their teachers genuinely care, they respond by greater effort to reach their potential.

As Noddings (1992, 27) emphasised, “Caring is the very bedrock of all successful education.” It seems that pupils not just feel, but they also know when their teachers recognise their effort, spend time to understand their feelings and thoughts and respect their abilities and interests.

In which ways teachers can show their care to their pupils? Pedagogically speaking, it is been agreed that caring teachers place the children at the center of the educational process. They engage pupils actively in the learning process and this engagement is essential for learning to be fun, meaningful, and enduring. The caring teacher ensures that the needs of each student are met. A. Lumpkin, 2007

Caring teachers give positive and reinforcing comments, they reward the efforts of pupils, their learning from mistakes, and their persistence to overcome their learning difficulties. The caring teacher uses multiple instructional approaches and provides diverse learning experiences to engage pupils' interest and learning (DeCastro-Ambrosetti and Cho 2005). They use action-based or experiential learning teams and problem-based learning (Bassis 2003; DiLisi et al. 2006; Krockover et al. 2002; McCarthy and Anderson 2000).

Caring teachers reflect on their work. Reflection reinforces the importance of creating a caring, learner-centered environment characterised by positive and respectful interactions with pupils (Taylor et al. 2002).

From the care ethic point of view, 'teaching is one of the foremost of personal relations' (John Macmurray). Caring teachers establish and maintain relations of care and trust which include listening, dialogue, critical thinking, reflective response, and making thoughtful connections among the disciplines and to life itself. (Noddings 2012)

Most researchers focus on what constitutes caring teachers, what are the behaviors, characteristics, and beliefs of caring teachers, and how are they impacted by the contexts within which they work. Nel Noddings sets two more parameters. She strongly believes that when we adopt the relational sense of caring, we cannot look only at the teacher, but we also need to take into consideration pupils and circumstances. Even though she doesn't focus on the circumstances or situations that promote care in education, she focuses on pupils as much as on teachers.

If we look at the part each participant plays, we understand that the carer (the teacher) is first of all attentive. He/She understands what the cared-for (pupil) is feeling and trying to express. "The carers' motive energy begins to flow toward the needs and wants of the cared-for". On the other hand, the cared-for recognises the caring and responds in some detectable manner. (Noddings 2005)

The foundation for successful pedagogical activity is based on three steps. Caring leads to the first step which is trust. Because of the trust, pupils accept what their teacher is trying to teach. The second step is dialogue. When pupils talk to their teacher, it is easier for the teacher to learn about their pupils' needs, working habits, interests, and talents. The third step is for the teacher to be inspired to increase his/her own competence (Noddings, 1999).

Owens & Ennis (2012) considering three theoretical frameworks, moral development, the theory of relational knowing and the role of self in teacher development, they strongly support the believe that in pre-service teacher education we need to promote an ethic of care as fundamental pedagogical content knowledge. Meaning that Universities and Pedagogical Institutes need to question themselves on what kind of teacher do they want to promote, about the processes of selection and initial preparation of candidates for teaching and about how teachers are professionally supported in order to become caring.

In conclusion, caring for the pupils we teach means planning to their needs. It also means pursuing the personal and professional skills we need to grow continually in order to become better professionals, more effective teachers, and more fully developed human beings.

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