

## MULTICULTURAL TOLERANCE IN SCHOOL - IN RELATION TO MIGRANTS

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## PRIMARY GOAL OF THE PROJECT

- development and implementation of an educational program of multicultural education of primary school pupils and verification of its effectiveness as to the development of tolerance and prevention of discrimination and racism of pubescents in relation to migrants
- verification of effectiveness as to the development of multicultural knowledge, skills and attitudes of pubescents, by means of various didactic forms, methods and devices, as well as psychological training (interactive games, role playing, model situations, workshops, debates, project teaching and panel discussions) - within the process of instruction, in a close and active cooperation of teachers, parents and pupils, with the emphasis on deepening the understanding, accepting and tolerant behaviour towards migrants.

## SECONDARY GOAL OF THE PROJECT

Development of multicultural skills of pupils in the fields of:

- **knowledge:** acquisition of knowledge on foreign cultures, habits, customs, religions, political systems, world outlooks, values, norms of behaviour, especially as for the countries of origin of the present and potential migrants
- **social communication:** improvement of social skills, constructive ways of interpersonal conflict solving, cooperation ability, empathy, change of undesirable stereotypes and prejudices, self-acceptation and acceptance of others, tolerance to different opinions, feelings and experience of others
- **attitudes:** change of the existing attitudes of intolerance, discrimination and racism in relation to diversities to the attitudes of tolerance, acceptance of diversities, elimination of prejudices and stereotypes in thinking, development of mutual understanding.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

The project of the Government of the Slovak Republic "Multicultural Tolerance in School" was implemented at a Private primary school in Bratislava predominantly dealing with education and training of pubescents with learning and behaviour disorders, with its conception being based on humanization of education and training and implementation of preventive and developing programmes (the programmes of emotional intelligence development, the programme of tolerance development, the programme of effective conflict solving), namely in the period of May to December 2007.

## SELECTED RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

In the fields of:

- development of pupils' knowledge
- development of social communication of pupils
- change of the pupils' attitudes

## DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE

Within the subjects of history, geography, Slovak language and literature, civic and ethic education, by means of suitably selected projects and their processing on the basis of professional literature and internet resources the pupils acquired new, by that time unknown knowledge for them on foreign cultures, habits, customs, religions, political systems, world outlooks, values, norms of behaviour in the countries of origin of the present, but mainly potential immigrants to Slovakia.

Both individually and in pairs, or smaller groups the pupils worked on the projects concerning the inhabitants and their styles of life in Ukraine, Rumania, Poland, Hungary, Albania, but also China, Cambodia, Vietnam.

## DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE

- The component part of development of the pupils' projects represented also the discussions with the migrants from Russia, Arabia and Albany. The form of experience and the possibility of straightforward asking of questions on the lives, views, attitudes of the immigrants, their experience and impressions from their stay in Slovakia, considerably enriched the pupils' knowledge and information.
- Consequently the pupils together presented their projects to their teachers and parents, thus raising the proactivity of the target group. The best projects were marked and they represented the school when presented on a panel during the conference that took place under the auspices of the mayor of Bratislava –Ruzinov

## DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

Within the social-psychological and communication training in the extended ethic education (1 lesson a week), implying psycho-games, discussions, role-playing, the pupils improved their social skills, they developed constructive ways of interpersonal conflict solving, cooperation ability and empathy and gradually they transformed the undesirable stereotypes and prejudices and they achieved good levels of self-acceptation and acceptance of others, as well as tolerance to diverse opinions, feelings and experience of others.

## DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

We were pleased to learn that after the programme the satisfaction of pupils and the social cohesion of pupils in the class got considerably positively increased.

It means, the programme had a considerably positive influence on social relations in the class and the mutual acceptance of diversities as well (positively in relation to two Roma class-mates as well)

## CHANGE OF ATTITUDES

The results of the pupils' attitudes to members of other nations, nationalities, or ethnic groups (Slovak, Hungarian, Roma, Vietnamese, Arab, immigrant) before the programme confirmed the negative or indifferent attitudes of our youth to people of other nations, nationalities, or ethnicities.

## CHANGE OF ATTITUDES

Before the programme the positive traits were chosen from among the given personality characteristics and traits (e.g. kind, friendly, skilful, handsome, fighter, strong, talkative, talented in arts, noisy, witty, elegant, thief, etc.) for the Slovaks only (kind, handsome, friendly, willing to help, strong, talkative), while the members of other nations, nationalities, or ethnic groups were chosen either negative (Vietnamese, Ukrainian, Hungarian, Roma, Moslem, Negro) or neutral ones (especially in case of the immigrant who was often evaluated as taciturn, musical, shy, and strong)

## CHANGE OF ATTITUDES

It may be said that on termination of the developmental programme of multicultural tolerance towards migrants, the changes found in the attitudes towards national, ethnical and social-cultural diversities, both quantitative (percentage) and qualitative ones, were considerably positive.

## CHANGE OF ATTITUDES

As it had been expected, also on termination of the programme the greatest number of positive personality traits was chosen for the Slovak (e.g. skilful, handsome, witty, friendly), however, there was a great number of positive evaluations concerning the members of other nations and nationalities also, especially:

- Hungarian (ready to help, witty, kind, friendly, skilful, talented in arts)
- immigrant (talkative, talented in arts, skilful, friendly)
- Roma (musical, talkative, ready to help)
- Vietnamese (skilful, witty, talkative)
- Arab (shy, talkative, talented in arts, skilful)

## CHANGE OF ATTITUDES

The following is a remarkable result obtained:

- The pupils in whom positive attitudes to their own SELF were recorded after the programme (70% of pupils of the research sample) compared to the pupils with negative, indifferent and ambivalent attitudes to their own SELF, showed significantly more positive changes towards tolerance and tolerant attitudes to diversities (Roma, Arabs, Negroes, Hungarians).
- The result shows that the positive change in the attitude to oneself positively influences the changes in the attitudes to other people as well, and it indicates the importance of social-psychological trainings for young people, designed to raise the self-confidence, self-respect, self-reliance, and self-concept.

## RESULTS

- On the basis of the results of behaviour observation of pupils during lessons and breaks, the talks with teachers, pupils and their parents, as well as the results of psychological tests, it may be concluded that the presented programme was considerably successful.
- As a consequence to the programme the pupils started to apply multiple new, more tolerant forms and ways of behaviour and in a higher degree and more frequently they preferred the compromise and agreement in solving the ordinary class conflicts.
- As it was shown the pupils' self-control improved, their decision-making became more thoughtful, they showed assertive social skills, and the efforts to solve the conflict in a compromise, they expressed their feelings more openly, they improved in comprehending the feelings of others, their empathy got deeper, and the social atmosphere in the class got more positive.

## RESULTS

The pupils themselves, but also their teachers have confirmed that violent reactions of children in solving the problems got reduced (especially with pupils of other ethnic groups or nationalities) and the efforts to solve the conflicts by means of a compromise and agreement increased. Less physical, but also verbal violence was recorded in the class, the social atmosphere in the class became more considerate and a greater willingness to cooperate was observed.

## CONCLUSION

- The programme "Multicultural Tolerance in School" represents an effective programme of primary prevention, its goal being the development of social-emotional competence and proper attitudes of pupils to multicultural diversities and the facilitation of positive interpersonal interactions with people of other nations, nationalities, ethnical diversities and cultures.
- The implementation of the programme in other schools is recommended within the subject of ethic education, or in complete blocks after the lessons, with a selected group of pupils.

## RECOMMENDATIONS PROPOSED

- Professional training of teachers and prospective teachers within graduate and postgraduate study is recommended concerning the implementation of the programmes of tolerance development in pupils. The teachers themselves should be systematically educated and trained in the field of tolerance and fight against racism, discrimination, anti-Semitism, and they should be trained in application of the programmes in the educational process.
- Besides the teachers they are the school and counseling psychologists who may contribute with their professional qualification and activities to the development of pupils' tolerance, and apply the programmes either in schools, after the lessons, in school clubs, etc., or in the out-of-school environment of educational-psychological advisory centers or the centers of psychological and educational prevention.

**END**

Thanks for your attention