

Behavior and Intercultural Respect – Development in Schools

“Ionel Teodoreanu” School, Iasi

Comenius Project BIRDS join as partners 9 schools from Romania, Germany, Croatia, Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, Poland and Macedonia.

Through the implementation of this project we watch the pupils’ education on the basis of the principle of the respect of the individual’s national identity and of the interpersonal respect. The activities which will be unfolded in the partner schools will aim the improvement of the development strategies of the intercultural skills at the students and teachers as well as of the strategies of the project was launched in October 2011 at Schrobenhausen in Germany. On this occasion the partner schools were presented, the educational system from involved countries in the project, the perspectives of institutional and personal development, offered by the participation at the project of each partner. The working meeting unfolded on this occasion established the activity plan of the BIRDS project.

“International Meal” was the first series of activities in the first year of the project. The activities watched the familiarization of the students with the customs, traditions and habits of each partner countries and the understanding of the necessity to respect the cultural identity of each individual.

In order to attract more students at the activities of the project the first activity was... a party with carnival, a lot of games, carved pumpkins, mask, witches and many sweets ... all under the generic “Join us if you dare for a Halloween scare”.



148 students were familiarized with the habits and customs from the Anglo-Saxon space specific to the Halloween holiday; old legends, symbols, colors, traditions and customs of the children,



suits, games and specific songs; they applied knowledge got at the English lessons trough the performing of poems and songs of Halloween; they used their imagination in the creation of specific sceneries to the holiday and to the carnival costumes; they participated to games and contests.

“German and English Culinary Traditions for Christmas”, “Culinary Recipes from Europe”, “International Meal”, “Easter Culinary Tradition” followed, activities to which 400 students of the school, teachers, parents, and representatives of the local community

participated. Participant students at the activities did some research about history, the culinary traditions and customs of each people, they organized exhibition stands, they prepared traditional specific recipes to every involved country in the project. The pupils of the first grade too, contributed to the unfolding of the project carrying out the activity “Culinary Recipes from Europe”. Even though they just learn to write and learn, the pupils carried out, by the help of the oral guiding of the teachers, some recipes proving the craftsmanship of “the little cookers”.



The visit of the exhibition stands fitted out in the “**International Meal**” activity was followed by the tasting of the food from the rolled meat sauerkrauts to the German Wurst, to the Greek saganaki and the Turkey baklava. The team of the 6th grade went on under the same generic with the presentation of the traditional gastronomy specific to Greece, the presentation transmitted by the local TV station “Prima TV”.

The Easter holidays also occasioned the offer of information about the culinary traditions of the minorities from Iasi

County, in the context of the complex reality of the today society, represented by the coexistence of the different ethnic identities and faith.

The cultural diversity became a natural characteristics of the world in which we live in, so of the world of the school too. The ignoring or the denial of the differences between the students, the development of some actions that create segregation or inequality are harmful. Trough the intercultural education promoted in school, we must help the students to get the capacity to recognize the inequality, the prejudices, to get knowledge and abilities that will help them to confront and to change those absurd mechanisms that appear in the society today too.

“**National Minorities – History and traditions**”, “**The International Day of the Roma people**”, “**Together in Europe**”, were other activities in the project, activities that invited to the tolerance, the respect of the man’s rights, to the development of the degree of knowledge and of the understanding of the concept of the democratic citizenship.



The knowledge of some elements regarding the history and culture of the Roma people, the usage of some forms of intercultural communication, the education of the possibilities to understand, to penetrate the depth, the beauty, the subtleties of the culture of Roma people, the education of the capacity to express valuable judgments; the manifestation of attitudes and behavior based on respect and understanding, communication and co-operation were found in the activity organized on the occasion of “The international Day of the Roma people”.

For 25 states and 450 million people, EU means today less border, more opportunities, a cleaner Europe, studies abroad, equality of chances, liberty, security and social justice. The day of the 9th of May 2011 meant a holiday in “Ionel Teodoreanu” School, **“Together in Europe”**.

In the multicultural communities the life together with different minorities involves knowledge and swap of information with those of other nationalities, aspect that supposes the previous knowledge of some aspects about their way of life. The knowledge of the minorities in a dominating monoculture community becomes more difficult, urges to search, to collaboration, to communication.

During the unfolding of the first year of the project **questionnaires** were applied regarding the intercultural education. The teachers expressed their opinions regarding the benefits of the intercultural education, at the teaching methods used in the activities on the intercultural themes, at the necessities of formation on this theme, at the skills and the aptitudes necessary to the assurance of the intercultural dimension of the education. The students were asked, through the questionnaires, what intercultural education means for them, if this is important and useful and which is the impact that this type of education can have in their life.

The questionnaires emphasized the fact that 87% from the questioned students, heard of intercultural education, 49% at school, 14% in the family, 15% from media source and 22% from other sources. 95% from the subjects consider important and useful the intercultural education, 80% think that is important to study in an intercultural medium, In which you can learn about other traditions and customs of other cultures, you can share positive experiences and moral values. The students said that the intercultural education can improve the abilities of communication, tolerance upon cultural diversity, solidarity, and reciprocal respect. 32% from the questioned students consider that the responsibility of the intercultural education comes back to the teaching system and 28% think that the family must occupy with this aspect of education.

The applied questionnaires showed the fact that the students have information about the intercultural education, but the first two principles that must be applied in the intercultural education should be: the interaction with real speakers and learning through the carrying out of concrete tasks. It is necessary that the intercultural educational process to be centered upon the students, with the aim to make them aware of the existence of the differences between individuals with different cultural identities and to develop their capacity to communicate efficiently one with another.



The questionnaire applied to the teachers led to the conclusion that the instruction of the teachers to work in a multicultural context is a challenge of the present, but these are conscious of the relation between the intercultural education and the effects of the processes of social development. It is necessary the formation of the teachers through the direct confrontation with situations and problems generated by the cultural differences. Programs of instruction of the teachers are necessary, designed in such way to offer the teachers the possibility to think

critically upon their values and practice as well as upon the impact of their activity inside the community.

The activities of the project were spread in the Teachers' council, of **"The days of the School"**, in the **meetings with the parents, in the local mass-media, on site of the project.**

Through the unfolding of some actions in the school, but outside of its, too, trough the usage of the interactive methods and of the group work, the attitude of tolerance is formed at the students, but because this doesn't suppose and the interaction with the others, they always tend to collaboration and integration. The team work, inside each activity, improved at the students the ability to have connections one with the other, to understand the cultural differences between individuals and to respect reciprocally.