



esa magazine

JULY 2018

Sharing knowledge
and experiences
within Europe



European School
Heads Association

ESHA magazine is the official magazine of the European School Heads Association, the Association for school leaders in Europe. ESHA magazine will be published nine times per school year. You are welcome to use articles from the magazine but we would appreciate it if you contacted the editor first.

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The ESHA e-magazine is free of charge. You can register through the internet at www.eshamagazine.com

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ESHA is an Association that consists of 35 Associations of School Heads and Educational employers in 21 countries in primary, secondary and vocational education.

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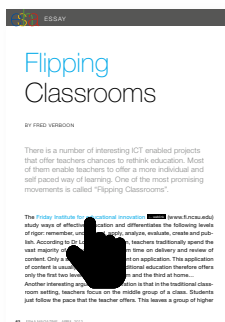
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Some articles in this issue contain direct links to websites. **Simply click on the coloured text and you'll be automatically linked to a specific website or videopresentation.** Try it yourself and enjoy.





Exam reform
is needed
to ensure our
young people
are equipped for
the real world

We come to it again, that rite of passage for tens of thousands of young Irish men and women: the Leaving Certificate. As if it were running to an annual schedule, early June's balmy weather signals two weeks of last-minute cramming, late nights, early rises and frayed nerves.

For decades, teachers, parents and students have debated the merits of these examinations and the curriculum that supports them. As a set of tests designed for factual recall, they are hard to fault. But there's a reason grown adults still have dreams (or nightmares) about sitting their Leaving Certificate. Revising for exams is gruelling at the best of times, but when you're repeatedly told that a fortnight in June will determine the rest of your life, it's no wonder young people spend much of their school life in perpetual anxiety.

Few teachers disagree that a school curriculum that hinges on terminal exams is flawed. Even some of the most brilliant, creative minds can falter under test conditions. All of us know people who did poorly in or even failed certain Leaving Cert exams, but are otherwise extremely intelligent. On the other hand, a system that depends entirely on rote learning can be easily gamed. Learn the facts, know the marking scheme and you can quite comfortably achieve high points even if you're academically disinclined. Many students pick their Leaving Cert subjects solely on the perception that some subjects are "easier" than others, thus providing a safety net of guaranteed points to enable progression to their chosen course in university.

This is a highly pragmatic, albeit cynical, strategy. After all, what use is a six-year secondary education if it only serves as a springboard to third level? Without teaching young people the fundamentals of knowledge, critical thinking and philosophy, the Leaving Cert provides very little grounding for lifelong success in the real world.

These aren't abstract gripes. College lecturers continuously complain that Irish students lack the study and thinking skills required of them at third level, especially in scientific and mathematical subjects. Further education asks a lot more of people than the Leaving Cert, like original thought, innovation, argumentation, and an ability to read between the lines and understand context. Indeed, because of their deficits in these areas, many fresh-faced undergraduates who otherwise excelled within the boundaries of the secondary system receive a nasty shock when their first college assignments receive middling marks.

REDESIGNING THE SENIOR CYCLE

There is a growing appetite for reform of the Irish education system and, thankfully, a growing desire to sate it, which has accelerated in recent years.

The junior cycle and the Junior Certificate are already undergoing extensive changes. Younger students are now assessed continuously over the course of the junior cycle, learning important skills like coding and digital media literacy in shorter, term-length modules.

In 2019, computer science will be examined as a Leaving Cert subject for the first time, an essential subject considering Ireland's growing influence as a global tech hub. The new politics and society course will be examined for the first time this year.

These are big strides forward, but we must do more to address the problems at the very core of the senior cycle. Critics, myself among them, have long argued for more continuous assessment, including practical and presentation work—much of which is the norm in Europe—spread out over the two years of the course. Continuous assessment, aside from reducing stress, gauges a wider spectrum of knowledge over a longer period of time, rather than the two- or three-hour snapshot terminal exams provide.

We also need to ensure subjects remain up to date. Technology changes regularly, so the Leaving Cert computer science course must change with it. Likewise, existing courses must make use of digital and online platforms as much as possible. History and French do not only need to be taught with textbooks.

On a practical level, the biggest issue is resourcing. Offering students a new course is no good if there are no teachers with the necessary skills to teach them. Teacher learning in these new fields needs to be prioritised and fast-tracked. Their knowledge spread must also be spread out across the country so that every student, not just those in the cities, can enjoy equal access to an enriched curriculum.

While the Leaving Cert has its critics, many of them justified, it's also familiar having been in use since 1924. That's 94 years and multiple generations who have become accustomed to how it operates and works. But familiarity is not a reason for it to continue in its current flawed format.

Change is coming. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment has now begun to review the exam with an eye to reform. Whatever the final approach adopted it has to be supported by those to whom it matters most for it to succeed - students, parents, teachers and colleges. Making these groups, through extensive engagement and consultation and a long lead-in time, comfortable with all changes to the Leaving Cert is essential.

Reformers must now start that process by making a strong case to schools, students and the Government that change is needed and is the right way forward. The campaign for reform starts here.

ESHA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

While the poor Irish students were taking their final state exams I attended the ESHA General Assembly which took place in Noordwijk, Holland on the 14-16th June. During a packed agenda the 37 delegates from 18 countries participated in school visits, took a full part in the final conference of the Breaking the Silence Project, considered the ESHA 2020 strategy document but still found time to mix and mingle as well as sharing good practices among one another. Our Estonian colleagues briefed delegates on the Tallinn Conference and you can find further details and registration details on <https://esha2018.eu/>. As my term as ESHA President comes to an end Barbara Novinec from Slovenia was unanimously elected to succeed in the role of President. Barbara has had experience on the ESHA Board and has also worked with the European Federation of Education Employers

(EFEE). She is a worthy successor and will do a great job leading ESHA for the next number of years. I would like to thank all members for their good wishes and their hospitality as I visited member associations during my term. As summer beckons I hope you have the opportunity to get a good break, to renew the energy levels and return refreshed to your school in the autumn. Mind yourselves! ■



Clive Byrne, ESHA President

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Agenda 2018/2019

2018

SEPTEMBER 2018

21st Experimenting Educational Structure, Paris, France

OCTOBER 2018

16th ESHA General Assembly, Tallinn, Estonia

17th – 19th ESHA2018 biennial conference, Tallinn, Estonia

18th – 19th NAPD, annual conference, Ireland

2019

SPRING

General Assembly ESHA

ESHA General Assembly meeting in Noordwijk

On June 14th -16th, 2018, the ESHA General Assembly meeting and European Conference was held in Noordwijk, The Netherlands.



At the general assembly meeting, 37 representatives from their national school leaders associations from 18 European countries joined. At the ESHA General Assembly meeting the ESHA strategy 2020 was discussed by the ESHA members and results from these discussions presented. ESHA will promote job shadowing programs among a larger number of members.

All members are invited to the biennial conference in Tallinn, Estonia held October 16th -19th, 2018. More information can be found at: <https://esha2018.eu/>



It was also announced that Barbara Novinec, from Slovenia was elected and confirmed as Incoming President for the next mandate. Barbara will take over the some presidential duties from Clive Byrne during the remainder of his term, including at ESHA 2018 in Tallinn, before formally taking up the role of President as of January 1st 2019. ■

School visits

The ESHA General Assembly meeting started off with school visits in the area to the Primary School Gevers-Deutz Terweeschool in Oegstgeest and to the Secondary School Northgo College in Noordwijk.

CONSTANTINOS MICHAEL, EFTYCHIA THEOCHADOUROS,
SCHOOL LEADERS CYPRUS

During our visit to Noordwijk in The Netherlands for ESHA General Assembly Meeting (June 2018), we had the opportunity to visit a primary school in Oegstgeest. We visited Gevers-Deutz Terweeschool, a public primary school founded in 1930, in the heart of Oegstgeest. The school has a student population of 330 children in the age of 4-12 years. 'Peace, regularity, cleanliness and respect, with a good organization, guarantee a pleasant and safe living and learning environment. It is an active school and there is attention for varied activities during the school year. Director of the school is Mrs. Dera Petter.



It was a great experience for us, as we had the opportunity to point out many similarities and differences in schools' structure and organization between Cyprus and The Netherlands. It was really amazing and unexpected for us to have rich information regarding the structure, the curriculum, the budget control and the various aspects of the school's function and even of the national system in the Netherlands, by a member of the school board who was really enthusiastic and proud to give all the information. In the contrary, many of these aspects in our educational system in Cyprus, are regulated by central authorities.

As we had visited the classrooms between 2:00-3:00 p.m., the students were working on their own activities and in a way they

co-constructed their own curriculum. Some of the students were working on their homework, some were working on their own projects and others created their own creative games and activities. As teachers explained, there's no homework, as all the necessary work is carried out at school. After school the students have other activities, as sports, dance, arts etc.

The structure of the curriculum and the timetable was also a great surprise for us, as each teacher makes her/his own timetable for the day and the week based on a given curriculum with flexibility. There is only one teacher for each class, who defines her/his program. There are other teachers only for Physical education, Music and Arts.



In Cyprus, as our educational system is extremely centralized, the curriculum and the timetable are centralized defined by the Ministry of Education. There are separate lessons in the timetable, changing every forty minutes, sometimes with a different teacher. The head teachers and teachers in Cyprus are public officers and they are transferred from one school to another by a central committee and not by a local or school board.

It was an interesting experience for us, as we had noted these differences regarding the organizational structure of schools in Cyprus and The Netherlands. At the same time, we noted basic similarities and emotions concerning work with young age.

What was more interesting was the warm climate, the openness of the classrooms and the pedagogical atmosphere that allowed students to apply personal responsibility and self-regulation on their learning. Teachers were very pleased to give permission for walking in the classrooms while lessons were applied and students were very glad to talk about their tasks.

Many thanks to schools' administration, staff and students for their nice hospitality. ■

More information on the school via www.gdterwee.nl/

A school visit to a secondary school in The Netherlands by members of ESHA

SUZANNE DE KROON, ENTREPRENEUR, ESHA CONSULTANT

On the first day of the ESHA General Assembly in June 2018, members from different countries visited the Northgo College, a secondary school in the west of The Netherlands. Northgo College has about 850 students aged 12 to 18 years and is a public Secondary School for VMBO, HAVO, VWO and Technasium and has about 90 staff members. 'The Northgo College provides future-oriented education. The learning of skills runs like a thread through the school career of the pupil. For a good preparation for further study and profession it is necessary that the students also learn skills such as creativity, solution-orientedness and ICT literacy. The Technasium is a fine example of progressive education. Students work on a problem that has been brought in by a company or institution. The Northgo College does focus on internationalization. This happens in the classes, but also outside. It is important that pupils can speak, read and write English well after the MAVO, HAVO or VWO. In the substructure, Cambridge English is offered at all levels from the first grade.' The school offers mandatory subjects in



Dutch, French, German and Latin. In addition to the basic curriculum that leads to passing the exam, students can make many choices in order to expand and to personalise their school career. The members of ESHA discovered the possibilities at Northgo College and what these can bring to their students. First, the members visited Technasium. Students who choose to expand their curriculum with Technasium work together with other students on science technical projects realised by organisations within their community. Students can also choose to deepen their languages, for example by choosing Cambridge English or other language streams at Northgo College. Northgo has also shown their great sports facilities to our members. Finally, members could get acquainted with Havisten Competent. The ultimate goals of Havisten Competent are that students are better prepared to pass their exams and to succeed in higher education. The development of 21st century skills through participation in for

example business projects and internships are important to achieve these goals.

The school visit to Northgo was experienced as very valuable by the members of ESHA who are usually also a school leader. Members indicated that they were very inspired and that they can implement some ideas directly. For example, inspired by the Technasium concept, the realisation of sustainable collaborations between students and organisations in order to tackle science technical issues from the real world together. ■

Contact: Marc Janssen, Principal
www.northgo-college.nl





International conference on Breaking the Silence Together

On Friday June 15th the central theme of the European conference was sexual abuse of children and the role of the school. The conference was held in Noordwijk, Netherlands under the title Breaking the Silence Together.

MONIQUE WESTLAND, ESHA CONSULTANT



After a warm welcome of the ESHA president Clive Byrne to the 75 people that attended the conference, Natalia Fernandez of the Vicki Bernadet Foundation pointed out the importance of improving openness about child sexual abuse. The school has the task to signal that a child is in trouble. You often see multiple problems coming together in the family or in the child. The school may not be able to tackle the problem but it can signal and report. Although many school have appointed a A confidential counsellor, this may not be enough according Natalia Fernandez. Children tell when it suits them, to someone they trust. That might be someone other than the confidential adviser. That is why it is important that all teachers know how to respond and what they can do. There must also be clarity about the further steps and where it needs to be reported and who will follow up? If this is unclear there is a chance that the child has to tell his or her story again and again and that is harmful for the child.

We were very honoured to have Alida Oppers, General Director of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science giving an inspiring speech on this severe matter and the importance of the role of the school. Child sexual abuse is a difficult topic for the children themselves and parents, teachers and school leaders. As a result, child abuse is often not detected or too late. But we cannot find solutions if we are not aware of the problem. That is why it is important that we create a safe environment in which children can tell their story. Alida Oppers pointed out a few dilemmas. How far does the responsibility of schools go? Schools have relevant knowledge and expertise in-house. But they cannot do it alone, they have to work together with civil society organizations and with the legal apparatus. Child sexual abuse is a matter of shared responsibility. In addition, it is important to intervene at the right time. How do you determine that moment? You cannot accuse someone with a vague suspicion. But at the same time you cannot let it go on with the risk that the child remains in an

unsafe situation. What does this mean for the professionalization of teachers. In other words what is needed to equip teachers adequately? Or should we need to call in more aid workers in schools?

Signalling and reporting are important components in the fight against child sexual abuse, as well as the protection of children's rights. Dr. George Nikolaidis, psychiatrist and chairman of the Lanzarote Committee, set up by the Council of Europe to protect children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, argued for an interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach. Evidence-based approaches should be used based upon empirical data. Preventive activities, which are aimed not only at victims but at all children, systematization and standardization of procedures and child-friendly assistance are needed. Since the nineties we no longer look at the victim alone, but we want to reach all children. Abuse can take place in the family or in the school or in another trust environment like sports, clubs, music schools. The school and health organizations have a duty to help children. Prevention, protection and prosecution are needed at all levels. The Lanzarote Committee therefore argues for various measures that governments could take, such as good screening of professionals working with children, sex education at schools and in health centres, relocation of the offender or suspect and not of the child and minimizing the number of contacts a child must have with

Breaking the Silence Together
provides a program for schools and
the community on prevention and
detection of Child Sexual Abuse

follow-up authorities such as justice. Raising awareness in schools is one of the most important elements according to Nikolaidis. If you as a teacher are aware that in your class there also is a child that is sexually abused, you pay more attention.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN EUROPE

The project Breaking the Silence Together, of which Vicki Bernadet Foundation is the project lead, has developed a program for schools to deal with child sexual abuse and the awareness of children of their rights. Adults must respect these rights. It is important that children know and feel that way.

Good sex education is the foundation for conversations about sexual abuse. Conversations must first be about healthy sexual relationships before starting to talk about what can go wrong. We should do this in the context of regular sex education, in which we not only discuss the biological aspects but also the affective ones. In addition, children must explicitly learn what their rights are.

European countries differ in values and norms. Openness about sexuality is not always self-evident, there are countries where there is no talk about sex at all. In traditional cultures in countries such as Poland, Italy, Greece, Portugal, sex is a taboo topic. When you talk about it in schools, parents may get angry. In this context you cannot tell what a healthy sexual relationship is. There are also differences in cultures within the society of a country. Although countries and cultures differ in values and norms, the phenomenon of child sexual abuse is universal and requires action. ESHA can contribute by sharing knowledge and experiences on the subject and thus increasing awareness. Not every country will work in the same way, but we should develop and use methods and tools to protect children's rights.

During the forum discussion, 5 persons from different organisations discussed their views on Child Sexual Abuse and the role of the School Leader; Clive Byrne as ESHA President representing school leaders, Eszter Salamon from Parents International, Dr. George Nikolaidis, psychiatrist and chairperson of Lanzarote Committee of CoE, Natalia Fernandez of the Vicki Bernadet Foundation as well as Petra van Haren on behalf of the Dutch movement against child abuse. A lively discussion in which views on prevention, approach and responsibility as well as the importance of sharing experiences European wide, were shared from different perspectives.

After the forum discussions, the project group of Breaking the Silence Together presented the materials of the program. These materials are currently available via the website www.preventingchildsexualabuse.eu

After lunch break a strategy discussion was held in two groups divided into representatives from primary and secondary schools as well as researchers, policy makers. Results were presented in the whole group.

The European conference has been a small but meaningful step in the process of prevention and detection of child sexual abuse. Thanks to all who attended and contributed to the success of the conference. ■

Stop Sexual Abuse
of our Children:
Let's break the
Silence together



ESHA biennial conference 2018 Update

Over 560 people have subscribed to the ESHA2018 conference. It is expected that the conference will host at least 800 school leaders in Tallin.



ESHA Biennial Conference
Tallinn 2018
17-19 October 2018
Estonia

ESHA is happy to announce the following key note speakers:



Ralph Echemendia

For over 20 years, Ralph has delivered training on hacking and other security information to corporations including the US Marine Corps, NASA, Google, Microsoft, Oracle, AMEX, Intel, Boeing, Symantec, and IBM. His a world-renowned cyber security expert, known internationally by his alter ego “The Ethical Hacker.”



Andrus Ansip (TBC)

Vice-President of the European Commission with responsibility for the Digital Single Market. His responsibilities in the Commission include making Europe a world leader in information and communication technology and promoting digital and eGovernment approaches in national and EU administrations. Before moving to Brussels, he was a member of both the Estonian and European Parliaments. This followed almost nine years in Tallinn spent as Estonia’s longest-serving Prime Minister.

Please find the participation information and registration form together with the structure of the conference over [HERE](#). If you have already registered to the event, this letter is for information only.

We look forward meeting you at the Conference!

Toomas Kruusimägi
EKAJU ESHA-Estonia
President of the Estonian School Heads Association

Early School Leaving (ESL) Prevention: ESLPLUS Project



The European Union countries have jointly supported the EU's goal of reducing the average number of early school leavers in 2020 to less than ten percent. The EU countries are committed (Europe 2020) to reduce the average share of early school leavers to less than 10% by 2020. The need for the professionalization of preventing early school leaving (ESL) and preventing early leaving education and training (ELET) is heavily felt in all countries in Europe.

PETER DE ZOETE, ESHA CONSULTANT

ESHA is one of the 6 partners that are responsible for the ESLPLUS project. ESLPlus aims to reduce ESL % through sharing of best practices among the EU Member States. For more information about the ESPLS project check out the ESPLUS website: <http://esplus.eu/about-us>

We just launched a professional organization; The Alliance for Dropout Prevention Europe (ADPE) to bring ESL Specialist throughout the EU together. ADPE connects ESL professionals and facilitates the sharing of concrete ideas for improving collaboration within, between and beyond schools, ultimately aiming to enable all children and young people to succeed in school through social media and (virtual) event activities. ADPE aims to connect School Heads, Teachers, ESL experts, Policymakers and Families & Parents putting Learners always at the center. Please contact us if you want to become involved!

Please register for our virtual ESL community on LinkedIn and if you want to become involved with ADPE please connect with: monique.westland@esha.org

Early School Leaving (ESL) Prevention: ESLPLUS Project

ESHA participates in the Erasmus+ funded [ESLPLUS](#) project. The ESLPLUS project is dedicated to reduce ES

The ESLPLUS Project is finishing in October 2018. The final conference will be delivered in Webinar (virtual event) format on October 17th – 16:00 – 17:30 CET

You can register now! <https://zoom.us/webinar/register/>

[WN_CMze_fPKScCe7S0WE5BkPA](#)

Draft Webinar Agenda:

16:00 - Opening & ESLPLUS Update - Peter de Zoete (ESHA)

16:10 - “Maestri di Strada” – Case study from Napoli Italy

16:25 - ESL in the “Bubble” – Case study from Amsterdam, The Netherlands

16:40 - ESL perspective Portugal – Professor Joao Costa, Secretary of State of Education – Portugal:

17:00 - ESL research update

17:15 - Closing ESLPLUS - Conclusions and results

You can watch a sneak-preview of the ESL Case study from Napoly – Italy [here](#)

You can watch previous Early School Leaving Webinars [here](#)

For more information you can contact: peter.de.zoete@esha.org

Let's Play with Words

“Ebony and Ivory living in perfect harmony...”



Italian national policies and school policies are well-known for being mainly inclusive. True that some party or parties are currently determined to limit the access of foreigners to Italy, who, in their opinion, are inclined to crime and may even reduce job opportunities for the Italian natives. The reluctance to voting the law called “Ius Soli”, which was supposed to delete the idea that any native child born in Italy was no longer a “foreigner” is proof that the country is not entirely ready for a complete review of the term “foreigner” with the chance of new and positive connotations.

MARIA ROSARIA D'ALFONSO, HEADMASTER OF ICS MARCELLO CANDIA, MILAN AND IS A MEMBER OF ANP, ITALY

The Gelmini Law, that still limits the number of foreign students to 30% per class has made it nonetheless difficult for school principals to welcome the increasing number of immigrant children to their schools, despite international law requiring any country to accept migrants as political refugees. With international politics going the way they are in the post-modern and post-nuclear age, with children suffering all over the world on account of warfare, abuse and poverty, how school principals should cope with the immigration phenomenon is quite a dilemma.

As a native Italian with naturalized American citizenship, I was able to develop an open mind about Immigration and Inclusion. From the “e pluribus unum” philosophy to the Salad –bowl conception, I grew up with the democratic idea of equality and equal opportunities, which I enhanced during the years of Martin Luther King’s campaign against racial discrimination in the 60’s and Chicago’s decision- making in the local neighborhoods about “I Stay” in the early 70’s.

Through the years I experienced the homecoming phase of immigration (“rimpatro”), although my home was the USA and eradication was traumatic once my family was back home in a country where I just happened to be born and lived up to nine months of age. I completed my studies in Italy and then became a teacher and ultimately a school principal. A degree in foreign languages, with fluency in English, Spanish, French, Italian and Arabic was / is a of a special value when you are managing a school in a multicultural context with high complexity and an average of 80 % foreign students in a school population of 1,700 pupils.

It was the school-year of 2015-2016 and I was the headmaster of a school in a park formerly known as the Comprehensive State School “Casa del Sole”, located in the heart of the city of Milan. If “fair is

foul” and “foul is fair”, little did I know about the beauty of the park concealing complexity and great responsibilities. I soon found out that the district (Consiglio di Zona) was among Milan’s most difficult with continuous turnovers and problems related to poverty and survival, especially for the new ethnic groups. I also learned that I was the dean for PoloStart 2, an inter-institutional project aimed at support for immigrant families and their children.

At the time, the four Polostarts were at risk for their continuity and the local authorities had to be persuaded on their efficacy. The deal was made and the Polostarts eventually picked up their activity thanks to the contribution of the school referents, the headmasters and the good will of the local administration.

Milan was keen on a project called “Italdue”, consisting in teaching foreign students, especially the newcomers (Nai or “neoarrivati”), the Italian language as a second language. Investments and budgeting made it possible to carry out the project and so the headmasters had to agree on how to manage and which teachers were the most suitable. With the Italian law called 107/2015 teachers from all over the country were given the opportunity to teach in major towns where there were opportunities, often regardless of their qualifications and their curriculum. The teaching of Italdue was often entrusted either

The idea is that we could imagine
a world with no specific country, but
just ‘one brotherhood of man.’
(John Lennon).



to the most experienced and qualified teachers of the school or else to the new inexperienced teachers in case the demand was high. The consequences were:

- language development was slow and often inefficacious
- foreign students were more inclined to “risk” than others (school failure, drop-outs)
- the programs of the Ministry were slowing down, also on account of “Italstudio” being replaced by “Italdue”

A kind of buzz for an SOS was called for. Headmasters were in jeopardy for their reputation, accused of running unsuccessful schools, labeled as places for the poor and little people like Oliver Twist. It was then that I had just read “ Empowering Minority” Students by Jim Cummins, a book about the failure of the Head Start Program in Palos Heights, California. The author suggested that by learning

English and unlearning their native language, in this case Spanish, students were less inclined to develop cognitive abilities and would eventually fail. That's how I thought that the time had come to help the students and to suggest a new way towards school success for the "foreigners" ("NAI").

Since language learning develops at an early stage (2-6), I decided to assemble all the human resources at school at a costless price:

- the Inclusion group
- the head of the Chinese, Russian and Arabic school
- volunteers

After a seminar with the kindergarten teachers organized by the Italian Ministry's Observatory for Inclusion represented by expert Graziella Favaro fo Polostart, I was able to perceive that by telling stories children could develop language learning quicker and more efficaciously. The intuition form there was that we could think up a school project for children ages 3-5 at a pre-school level where the stories could be told in foreign languages.

Thus the five languages chosen were:

1. Arabic
2. Chinese
3. Rumanian
4. Russian
5. Rom

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The project "Let's Play with Words" was decided by the school faculty (i.e. "delibera collegio dei docenti") and it became a part of the formative offer (2015-2018) so that each expert for a week should dedicate time to tell the children a story in another language, through pictures and drama, within a playful and joyful context.

Noam Chomsky discovered that language learning comes natural (Language Acquisition Device); later Stephen Krashen introduced The Natural Approach in distinguishing between language learning and language acquisition. This was the pedagogical support of the project.

The teachers reported at the end of the school-year on the efficacy of the multilingual/ multicultural project.

The purpose was to facilitate language learning on two levels:

1. if the foreign students were keeping up their native languages, this was a better way to learn Italian (Noam Chomsky: "language learning is modular");
2. The native Italian students were given the opportunity from an early start to learn other languages of the world and the multicultural community they belonged to.

CON'S

Reluctancy towards the project came from:

- Polostart, on the basis that the kindergarten teacher were unprepared for the project and currently focused on Italdue
- the school faculty, on the basis that the project should be deleted and replaced by projects on Italdue
- the authorities (implicitly) who were investing more and more on Italdue

OUTCOME

Other than the bilingual community in Mazara del Vallo in Sicily where the kindergarten children learn Arabic and Italian alongside, the multilingual project "Let's Play with Words" was rather new to Italy and destined to a short life. In the new school-year 206-2017 it was no longer carried out, although the children were more than happy with it and so were the foreign families.



Suggestions:

There is still a lot of questioning about the “facilitator” in a multicultural school community: Who should it be? What are the requirements?

Furthermore:

- Universities should focus more on Intercultural Pedagogy and Psychology
- The teaching of Italdue could coexist with multilingual teaching
- Teachers should be more aware and qualified on the teaching of the Italian language to foreigners
- There should be a distinction between teaching “Italdue” to the Chinese, Russian, Arabic community etcetera (Università Ca’ Foscari, Venice)

- The School Curriculum should focus more on cross cultural awareness (formative offer) and eventually introduce subjects like Anthropology and Linguistics (with basic elements of Philology and Glottology)

CONCLUSION

School principals are responsible for leading schools mainly on an ethical and legal basis. Their aim is to assure that a child develops fully in the mind, in the body and in the heart, before becoming a responsible citizen of the world. The idea is that difference is beauty (Altieri) and that we should all develop a new consciousness, that is boundless and inclusive of any whatsoever form and of any whatsoever substance. (Edgar Morin). ■

<http://www.icmarcellocandia.it/>

Learning outside the classroom boosts educational attainment



Research in Scotland and internationally tells us that taking pupils outdoors as part of school education has a positive impact on learning during and after these outdoor experiences.

PROF. PETE HIGGINS, PROF. DES THOMPSON AND DR. PETER RAWCLIFFE, SCOTLAND, UK

Recent studies, building on many years of research and education policy development in Scotland suggests an improvement in attainment in literacy and numeracy through 'Outdoor Learning Hubs'¹. Published as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge to reduce the poverty related equity gap within Scottish education, the researchers worked with two primary school clusters within Livingston in West Lothian. In a 12-week programme (two hours per week) with 80% delivery in school grounds, children gained on average six months of mental arithmetic and two months of general maths against a similar cohort of children within control schools.

This type of study is in line with recent Scottish studies and other international research which is gradually adding to the evidence base on the importance of outdoor learning for educational attainment.



For example, a substantial 2004 international review demonstrated links between educational attainment and outdoor environmental learning². This was followed-up by a Scottish study⁵ of over 150 secondary school pupils on the impact of structured outdoor learning experiences on geography and mathematics, which demonstrated that outdoor learning provides opportunities for pupils to guide their own learning, and develop critical thinking skills³. Teachers also acknowledged that such an approach presented an opportunity to develop these skills, which can in some cases, be overlooked in early secondary education.

More recently, a study by American psychologists⁴, using matched pairs of lessons (one in a relatively natural outdoor setting, and the other indoors), observed subsequent classroom engagement during an indoor instructional period. They found classroom engagement was significantly better after lessons in nature than after their matched



counterparts for four of the five measures developed for the study. After replicating these comparisons over 10 different topics and weeks in the school year, this ‘nature advantage’ held across different teachers, and held equally over the initial and final five weeks of lessons.

Finally, a recent Scottish Doctoral study⁶ provides further evidence and suggests a possible mechanism. In comparison to a control group “outdoor tasks were recalled more readily and in richer detail, and were preferred for all criteria, with the experienced group returning the strongest preferences”, and that “underachievers recalled more outdoors than peers”.

The possible explanation suggested is “that ‘creative compatibility’ is associated with ‘natural richness’ and hinges on perceived compatibility, discovery and resourcefulness outdoors.” This is “*best summarised as a virtuous systemic interrelationship between affordance richness, functional motivation and positive interdependence, with significant implications for task performance.*”

This new material supports a recent University of Edinburgh ‘*Research into Action Briefing*’⁷ which summarises the evidence that well-structured outdoor learning:

- facilitates children’s development in school grounds, local areas and on residential courses;
- supports learning in all aspects of the school curriculum from 3 to 18;
- provides opportunities for pupils to guide their own learning and develop critical thinking skills in ways elusive in the classroom;
- raises children’s awareness of environmental and sustainability issues, resulting in understanding and promoting an ethic of care for our planet (directly linked with the concept of ‘learning for sustainability’)
- has direct health and wellbeing benefits.

All of this leads to high rates of ‘enhancement of challenge, enjoyment, personalisation, relevance, breadth and progression’ of learning.

In line with this, the Scottish Government has recently announced funding for outdoor learning in the early years⁸. In making the announcement the Minister for Childcare and Early Years, Maree Todd said: *“The significant expansion of funded early learning and childcare gives us the perfect opportunity to define the type of experience we want to offer our children during their early years. That is why we are committing more than £860,000 to increase the use of outdoor learning, to ensure it becomes a defining feature of childhood in Scotland.”*

In light of the evidence reported above it seems logical that comparable encouragement, policy and support should be put in place for Primary and Secondary provision to ensure such benefits are maintained.

In this, Scotland’s *Year of Young People*⁹ we hope to see such support and that much more critical research will be published in this key area. Outdoor learning in schools could be the key to unlocking the potential for a ground-swelling shift in educational attainment. Resources, Projects and Continued Professional Life Long Learning are all in place to help schools make the transition needed to regular, frequent, structured and progressive outdoor learning experiences.

In summary, whilst there are many practical and pedagogical reasons for teaching indoors the research evidence suggests that in both education policy and practice we should be asking if we should be doing so as a norm. Given the additional health and ‘restorative’ benefits of time spent in the outdoors we should perhaps not ‘why outdoors?’, but rather ‘why indoors?’ ■

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1 <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Outdoor-Hub-Learning-Report-Dec-2017-V1.pdf>

2 https://www.field-studiescouncil.org/media/268859/2004_a_review_of_research_on_outdoor_learning.pdf

3 Christie, B., Beames, S., Higgins, P. (2016). Culture, context and critical thinking: Scottish secondary school teachers' and pupils' experiences of outdoor learning. *British Educational Research Journal*. 42 (3), 417-437.

4 <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.02253/full>

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6 Hamilton, J. M. (2017). *Relationships between Outdoor and Classroom Task Settings, and Cognition in Primary Schoolchildren*. Heriot Watt University. [ESRC CASE studentship with the Forestry Commission]

7 <http://learningforsustainabilityscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Impact-of-Outdoor-Learningattainment-and-behaviour-in-schools-LfS-Research-Briefings-No-3-.pdf>

8 <https://beta.gov.scot/news/learning-outdoors/>

9 <http://yoyp2018.scot/>

NEMESIS Novel Educational Model Enabling Social Innovation Skills

Empowering the young with social innovation skills

“Social innovations are new solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes etc.) that simultaneously meet a social need and lead to new or improved capabilities and relationships and a better use of assets and resources. In other words, social innovations are both good for society and enhance society’s capacity to act.”

SUZANNE DE KROON, ENTREPRENEUR, ESHA CONSULTANT



The NEMESIS project develops a new educational approach that will strengthen the capacity, skills and entrepreneurial mindsets of children from all backgrounds. This enables students to deal with the real challenges of the 21st century and gives them the possibility to become social change makers in a world where inequality, poverty and social exclusion still occur. Consortium partners of NEMESIS, existing of school leaders, teachers, social innovators and universities, will collaborate to develop a pedagogical learning framework for social innovation education and a ready-to-adapt methodology including necessary educational resources for schools.

Students will be involved in a collective learning model that is based on partnerships between education and the community. Their involvement is important, because it can increase interest and motivation in learning. In addition, social innovators will also be involved what is unique but necessary to make a connection with the real world. In this way, social innovators can share their own real life experiences with students. All parties, students and social innovators, but also teachers and parents are working together in what we call co-creation labs in order to develop innovative educational resources. Developed resources can be used by schools to improve the social innovation skills of students, which they need to become more socially aware and to change the society. The resources, such as guides for teachers, training materials and student projects will be published on an Open Learning Platform for Social Innovation and are freely accessible for everyone who is interested.



“I want my students to believe that they can make a difference in the world, that they can be happy and the authors of their own knowledge. And I want to be there to help them find the way”

Aline Santos, Teacher at AEMAIA, Portugal

WHAT DOES NEMESIS WANT TO ACHIEVE?

1. To develop a framework for teaching social innovation skills by combining innovative pedagogies and learning models, the philosophy of open technology, and participatory relations and processes.
2. To design a methodology that brings together students, teachers, parents and education experts with social innovators in order to collaboratively design educational projects related to solve real community and sustainability challenges.
3. To create a European community of social innovators willing to work together with the students and building bridges between education and innovation communities.
4. To develop an open learning platform to provide resources to educators interested in applying the NEMESIS model. On the platform, they can find practical information, good practices, and online courses for their professional development. The platform is also a hub for educators and social entrepreneurs to come together and to become part of an online community of likeminded people interested in education and social innovation. The online Platform will be released in December 2018.

5. To give useful resources and tips to break down organisational barriers and facilitate the implementation of the model.

ROLL-OUT OF NEMESIS AT SCHOOLS

NEMESIS is being rolled out from September 2018 to June 2019 at schools in Greece, Spain, United Kingdom, France and Portugal. The experiences from this pilot phase should improve the NEMESIS model and make resources workable for all schools in Europe. A second pilot will take place from September 2019 to June 2020, in which more schools are invited to join the project. NEMESIS expects to involve 400 students and 100 teachers in a direct way, and to involve more than 5,000 students and 2,000 teachers in an indirect way.



“The whole aim of the project is how we can create materials for teachers and students that will encourage them to become more socially aware and innovative, and foster their participation in the society. And the way of doing that is via the co-creation labs, where all participants are equal contributors.”
— Aristidis Protopsaltis, Researcher at the Friedrich-Alexander Universität and NEMESIS project manager

At the end of the project, NEMESIS expects to have developed around 50 educational resources, all of which support the implementation of Social Innovation Education at schools.

Do you want to know more about the NEMESIS project? Read more on our website www.nemesis-edu.eu. If you want to be inspired regularly, you can follow us on Twitter and Facebook. ■

@nemesis_edu

@futurechangemakers

Active citizenship, cultural awareness and sustainable development

The new EU Council
Recommendation on key
competences for Lifelong
Learning (May 2018)



IRENE BALDRIGA AND MARINA
IMPERATO (ANP, ASSOCIAZIONE
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E ALTE PROFESSIONALITÀ DELLA
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Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

There is some very good news on the field of lifelong learning: after the proposal issued on January 2018, the Council of the European Union has adopted, on May 22nd, a new Recommendation on Key Competences which substitutes the previous document approved in 2006. During the latest twelve years, major changes have come, bringing huge impact on the educational context. Commonly discussed topics, such as the poor basic skills of many students and adults (especially in mathematics, science and learning) and the increasing pace of digitalization, are the starting issues considered in the recommendation. The whole document is inspired by the leading idea of creating a European Education Area (EEA) where the fostering of the development of competences is for sure a strategic priority.

A strong focus on sustainability at all levels (not only through the environmental perspective, but towards a wide social view) seems to be the main pillar of the Recommendation, as well as the need to strengthen Europe's resilience as the most effective response to the dramatic challenges of post-modernity. A direct quotation (p. 6) from the 4.7 goal target of the 2030 *Agenda for Sustainable Development* points out the approach encouraged by the Council:

EU RECOMMENDATION 2006

- Communication in the mother tongue
- Communication in foreign languages
- Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology
- Digital competence
- Learning to learn
- Social and civic competences
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- Cultural awareness and expression

EU RECOMMENDATION 2018

- Literacy competence
- Multilingual competence
- Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering
- Digital competence
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence
- Citizenship competence
- Entrepreneurship competence
- Cultural awareness and expression competence

At a quick glance, the comparison between 2006 and 2018 Recommendations' shows a strong concern for complexity, communication and resilience. Individuals are required to develop new competences to face change with adequate intellectual and practical resources to achieve professional objectives, but also to better more general social issues. The development of digital competences, for instance, is now associated to the granting of an effective level of democracy, peer opportunities and social equality. The attention given to communication competences is particularly interesting: the command of the mother tongue and of foreign languages (which was mainly connected to an idea of a "technical" proficiency) shifted to a much more articulated kind of skill, which involves not only the mastery of communicating but the understanding of culture, the interpretation of feelings, the ability to mediate.

Generally speaking, the Recommendation tries to encourage the development of creative thought through a constant application of knowledge and abilities, facing real context of life and getting familiar with the complexity of globalization and multiculturalism. Citizenship competence has now achieved a space of its own: it appears as a specific competence which must include an awareness of diversity

“We want a Union where citizens have new opportunities for cultural and social development and economic growth”

(Rome Declaration, 25 March 2017, p.2)

and cultural identities, but also the “ability to engage effectively with others in common or public interest, including the sustainable development of society”.

The Recommendation also pays a valuable attention to the cultural heritage and to art expression: the description of “*cultural awareness and expression competence*” focuses on the importance of a deep knowledge of all cultural forms and the “*ability to engage in creative processes, both as individual and as collectively*”. To this regard, we would like to remind the strategic importance of “Faro Convention” (2005), the first European document which emphasizes cultural heritage as a “*common value*” which is able to strengthen human rights and democracy. Some aspects of the new recommendation on the key competences are strictly coherent with a wider and more challenging conception of “*cultural identity*” and “*common heritage*”: we



find here the reflections of the innovative idea launched in Faro to support “*heritage communities*”¹ and to consider cultural heritage as a “*source of remembrance, understanding, identity, cohesion and creativity*”.

On a more practical perspective, the EU Council also suggests a few strategies to support the development of key competences for lifelong learning. Most of all, we appreciate the attention given to teachers and educational staff in order to encourage innovative teaching methods and to obtain more effective learning results. A more courageous engagement to develop teachers’ soft skills (especially in communication, entrepreneurship and team working) might be a strategic to get a real improvement of European Education Area (EEA).

Moreover, the Recommendation points out a very strong vision in which education and culture are drivers for job creation, economic growth and social fairness as means to experience European identity in all its diversity and richness. The European Commission has been working hard, trying to produce documents where Europe has shown itself able to shape its future. The Recommendation’s goal aims at an ambitious plan, where education and culture can and should be the first solution to tackle such hard challenges:

- flaring-up of populism and xenophobia;
- strengthening the sense of belonging together to a really shared identity;
- the need to integrate a culturally diverse migrant population avoiding the risk of violent radicalisation;
- the future of work, together with consistent needs for new skills and new competences;
- the need to keep up with technological progress and continued digitisation;

- facing new social media and patterns in communication by promoting media literacy among all citizens;
- the strong need to reduce inequalities (including gender inequality).

Anyway, it sounds ‘natural’ that investing in education is both a priority and a shared interest of all Member States of European Union: our such continental long-millenary history and culture lead as airway beacons through a foggy and stormy present toward a hopeful future of well-distributed growth. Furthermore, it has to be said that education and training systems in Europe are in general of good quality, but there are also some short-comings: too many pupils acquire only a low level of competences. To avoid them a future full of serious problems on the labour market, EU needs:

- to ensure quality and updated education;
- to make sure that the education systems, including the vocational ones, impart all the knowledge, skills and competences that are deemed essential in today’s world;
- to ensure equal opportunities to young people living nowadays in our continent.

The idea in the background concerning what quality in education really means is full of social and political sense: in the article 14 (“Right to Education”) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, yet Recommendation pushes forward by ensuring all the pupils get the support they need for them to achieve good results in life.

Nowadays, Recommendation declares social, civic and ‘learning to learn’ skills more important than ever for young people to participate fully in quickly changing societies. The bricks of which this building is made of are languages, or rather the learning of languages. A real



integration process calls for acquiring good languages competences: on one hand, Europe is a continent full of different languages where almost half of its citizens speak and understand just their own mother tongue, on the other the vast majority of Member States make the learning of two foreign languages compulsory for all students in general education during their schooling.

A vision for 2030 should make Europe a continent where spending (a part of) life in any Member State – also different from the own State of birth – would become the standard, but also a continent in which people have a strong sense of their identity as Europeans.

In other words, Europe invests in young people, in education and culture: an ambitious project shared by all the Member States that should gradually remove early school leaving and increase higher

“Ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”.

education diplomas. Another step toward a true unity passes necessarily through cross-border validation of training and lifelong learning certificates: we know European Commission works basically for coming this aim less far.

In XX’s latest years Europe moved its first steps starting from a cultural perspective built upon ‘knowledge society’ (Lisbon Process): almost twenty years later Europe steps forward a new inclusive perspective whose pillars are ‘key competences’ and ‘lifelong learning’, in union with ‘social equality’. No doubt that expectations are ambitious and huge: working hard for reaching these goals requires – first of all – a strong will in which each ‘subject’ (States, politics, schools, teachers) accepts to wear ‘new glasses’ for seeing an overtaking future in which complexity will be the *fil rouge* of our lives.

We hope that the adoption of 2018 Recommendation by each European State will be quick in one hand but the result of a “bottom up process” on the other. Nowadays, educational reforms should be inspired in any member state by a real knowledge of needs and of the effective resources available, undertaken through an active listening and sharing-perspective. The strengthening of the awareness level of school leaders and teachers starts from involvement and professional development. ■

See also:

<http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9009-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

Notes

1 According to Faro Convention, a “heritage community” is a group of people who share and value specific aspects of cultural heritage in the perspective of a sustainable transmission to future generations.

How Italy deals with early school leaving



MARIA BRUNETTI,
HEADTEACHER OF THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL OF
CARIATI, ITALY.

If you lose the children at risk, a school is no longer a school. It is a hospital that cures the healthy and rejects the sick¹.

With these words Don Lorenzo Milani described in 1967 his vision of inclusive school; he already knew what were special educational needs and how the school, beyond any pedagogical theory, should act to make everyone equal.

Education is for everyone, as stated in the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* (art. 14), and all countries must remove the economic and social obstacles that prevent its implementation. The school is considered to be “at the center” of educational policies, so that it becomes the space of all communities.

Every school is called to its highest task: make education accessible for everybody. In this task the school is not alone, but it must cooperate with local municipalities and organisations that specialize in early school leaving.

The management of early school leaving should be a joint action of local municipalities, organisations specialized in early school leaving and, above all, the parents.

Early school leaving represents complex phenomena whose origin is to be attributed to various causes: from economic difficulties to psycho-physical, social, cultural problems to specific evolutionary disorders, which sink the roots in the student’s background.

These difficulties today are identified as BES: Special Educational Needs, a macro that includes all the different nuances of disadvantage as an evolutionary difficulty, in the educational and learning field and that needs specific educational actions.

THE PHENOMENON

The phenomenon of early school leaving concerns all European countries. The statistical data on school dropouts in Europe are not comforting, so the Europe 2020 Strategy has set the achievement of specific training objectives by the Member States and the European Council has identified as a priority the objectives that must be realized in the educational sector. According to Istat, in Italy, in the 2016, the percentage of early school leavers², that is, of young people between 18 and 24 years that after having achieved the media school title have not obtained neither a professional qualification, nor a secondary school diploma of second degree, is at 13.8%. Europe 2020 objective is to reach a level of 10%³.

THE TOOLS TO CONTROL AND COUNTERACT THE SCHOOL DROPOUT

Italy's actions to control early school leaving are part of a European-wide Action: the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Many European countries have developed specific measures at national level to quantify dropouts and leaving, based on administrative registry or statistical surveys. In Italy it is possible to quantify the phenomenon of school dropouts at national level thanks to the National Register of Students (NRS).

The National Register of Students was established by the Legislative Decree of April 15, 2005 No. 76 in order to promote the right-duty to education and training, and the supervision of the fulfilment of the compulsory schooling; subsequently, Ministerial Decree No. 74 in 2010 has given complete implementation at this Decree.

The main purpose of the Registry is to monitor and, consequently, to provide tools to prevent early school leaving. RNS is not the only available instrument for Italy to counteract the phenomenon of dispersion. The National Operational Program (PON) of the Ministry of Education, University and Research, entitled "For school-skills and learning environments", financed by the European Structural Funds, contains the strategic priorities of the Education sector for seven years: from 2014 to 2020. There are a lot of calls issued for the specific objectives of the education sector concerning inclusion, integration and development of basic skills.

Similarly, the POR (Regional Operational Program) acting at a regional level, gives schools the opportunity to use funding to support pupils with particular fragility.

In Italy, the law 107/2015, called "Buonascuola", gave a strong impulse to the prevention and contrast of the scholastic dropout, conceiving the school as an active community, open to the territory, able to develop and increase the interaction with the families and with the local community⁴.



POR Calabria 2014/2020 “Fare scuola fuori dalle aule” (School in the outside) is a project realized by Comprehensive School of Cariati during this year as a Science and Citizenship Laboratory in the woods of Pollino (Calabria).

THE SCHOOL IN THE MIDDLE

“La scuola al centro” (The School in the Middle) is a ministerial project, financed by Law No. 440/97, for the realization of interventions for the prevention of school dropout in suburban areas of metropolitan cities characterized by high dispersion rate school.

The Italian government has allocated, 10,000,000.00 euro to this experimental program of integrative and innovative didactics to be realized during extra-curricular time in the state educational institutions in Rome, Milan, Naples and Palermo.

The objective is to reduce early school leaving and and improve the transition from one school year to another, as well as the reduction of

the number of repetitions and educational liabilities in the secondary school, the number of days of absence and number of disciplinary penalties. Further objective is to reduce the phenomena of social discomfort that often characterizes the peripheral areas of the large metropolitan areas. The types of interventions planned by the schools must provide, in synergy with associations, organizations, families, specific didactic trails, as well as the prevention of discomfort; strengthening the basic skills; the integration of students with non-Italian citizenship.

RISK AREAS AND WITH STRONG IMMIGRATION PROCESS

Another tool available for educational institutions for the prevention of dropouts is the fund for schools assigned by the projects so-called «Risk Areas and with Strong Immigration Process», with which schools can prevent early school leaving. For the current year the financing amounts to 23.870.000,00 euro shared among Italy Regions.

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Further information on early school leaving is published on:
www.eslplus.eu

- 1 Don Lorenzo Milani, Lettera a una professoressa, Scuola di Barbiana, Libreria Editrice Fiorentina, Firenze 1975
- 2 MIUR – Ufficio Statistica e Studi La dispersione scolastica nell'a.s. 2015/2016 e nel passaggio all'a.s. 2016/2017 Novembre 2017
- 3 http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework_it
- 4 art. 1, comma 1, lettere l), m), n), Legge 107/2015.



The Open School for Open Societies project

The three-year Open Schools for Open Societies project (OSOS-project) encourages an open school approach at more than 1000 European schools to enrich the learning experiences of students. An open school is a more engaging environment for students and will raise their motivation: student projects are connected to real needs from the community and can draw upon local expertise and experience. In addition, an open school will be inspired by its community and they can use these new insights to innovate their education.

FRED VERBOON, ESHA DIRECTOR



Different European organisations, such as universities, schools, policy making organisations, science centres and organisations representing school heads and physics, are participating in this European education project.

The OSOS-project will enable schools to:

- Reach out to members of their community and build lasting relations
- Offer students the unique possibility to learn from real life projects
- Develop students' competences such as team work, problem solving, presentation and entrepreneurial skills
- Improve students' motivation and self-esteem
- Build a network of stakeholders and benefit from their knowledge and resources

FIRST YEAR

The Open Schools for Open Societies project aims to support 1.000 schools in 12 countries to become Open Schools. What has the OSOS consortium achieved during the first year of the project?

At the end of the first year, 129 schools have joined the OSOS adventure. During the next two years, these schools will be empowered to act as the core of different school networks, called school hubs, and they will expand to 1000 schools. Such a hub, an open and curious environment, will support the development of open school activities and the implementation of the open school approach. In addition to the school hubs, supporting tools, such as teacher training, have also been developed. Finally, 35 inspiring projects have been collected, which are now being tested and improved by the participating schools. This means that the schools of the second year can choose from many excellent tested inspiring projects.

Schools can count on:

- support around curriculum, pedagogy and assessment;
- guidelines and advices on different issues such as staff development, redesigning time and partnerships with the community;
- a range of possible implementation models;
- and a database full of successful 'open school' projects.

WANT TO BE THE NEXT PARTICIPATING SCHOOL OF THE OSOS-PROJECT?

Every primary and secondary school can join the OSOS-project and thus join a network of schools that all want to open up to their community. Our national coordinators can help you to come in contact with these existing networks of schools. They can also help you to become an open school. If you are interested in OSOS, you can attend one of our events which will be organized in all participating countries. These events provide information about the project: what does it deliver to a school, what does it require from teachers and students and what are the steps that each school takes? There is certainly a chance that the event is action-focused, which ensures that you can take the first steps to an open school immediately after the event. An example of such an active approach is that you are talking to other schools about working together with the community. You exchange experiences and you get new ideas of collaborations with stakeholders that have been discussed.

Are you interested in joining the events? Please take a look at our website: <https://www.openschools.eu/join-osos/> or contact your national coordinator.

SCHOOL-PARENT PARTNERSHIP

The Open Schools for Open Societies project can help both parents and school staff work more cooperatively. Together they can ensure that children develop the necessary skills and competences of the 21st century. Previously, the European Parents Association have outlined their vision of a 21st century education system. The Open Schools for Open Societies project offers excellent tools to realise this. It provides parents and schools with the guidelines and examples on how to work cooperatively in a pleasant way.

If your child's school is not yet taking part, our national coordinators can help you to bring that school into contact with this project.

'It takes a village to raise a child – Parents, grandparents, family members, neighbours, local businesses, youth organisations, libraries, museums, sports clubs and of course schools are all part of this village. Parents have a special role, some may not be aware of. By law, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is the parents (and not the school that many think) who bear the full responsibility for the upbringing and education of their children. It is thus not enough to decide which school to choose for your child, but you need to be there to shape, support and evaluate their work to ensure the best interest of your child. School is changing by cater for these relatively new needs, but sometimes they need a little push from responsible parents.' — Eszter Salamon, President of the European Parents' Association

INSPIRING OPEN SCHOOL PROJECTS

The OSOS-project already includes interesting 'open school' good practices. These good practices are called accelerators and are a very important part of this project. They will contribute to the transformation to an open school. Project partners collected inspiring projects, which are tested and improved by schools of the first phase. This results in excellent good practices for the participating schools. A short description of these projects can be found on the [OSOS website](#) and the complete projects are on the OSOS portal.

The next two years, we will continue to collect inspiring projects, so that our database will remain interesting for the current schools. If you have an activity or project that might fit into OSOS, please share it with us. Find more information about sharing inspiring projects at the bottom of this page: <https://www.openschools.eu/inspiration/>

OSOS SUMMER SCHOOL 2018

Are you a school head or a teacher seeking to bring innovation to your school and open it to the local community? The OSOS Summer School aims to offer a high-impact and transformative experience in personal and organisational level through a series of workshops, good practices and challenges. Contributing to your own professional development, we will provide open school strategies and tools to implement the necessary changes in order to introduce openness in your own school. During the OSOS Summer School, personal and individualized support will empower you to engage in innovative practices. Instead of suggesting a one solution fits all approach, you will learn how to choose existing or design new open school activities addressing real needs of the local community.

More info about the training and the Funding opportunities of Erasmus can be found at <http://osos.ea.gr/> or please contact osos_summer@ea.gr for further information.

CONTACT

Do you want to know more about the Open Schools for Open Societies project? Read more about it on [our website](#) or [contact your national coordinator](#).

If you want to be inspired regularly by experiences and good examples from our OSOS-project, you can follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

Parents International introduced

OECD, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of Spain, organized the first ever Education Policy Reform Dialogues in Madrid, Spain, on 11-12 June 2018. The purpose of this high-level forum was to create and strengthen a learning network of senior actors who are the key bridge between the political and technical worlds within a Ministry across OECD and non-OECD countries, in order to promote active exchanges of experiences and discuss lessons learned from OECD's work on education policy on a yearly basis. The first part of the event was a Forum on stakeholder engagement and Parents International was invited to represent parents as main education stakeholders there.

ESZTER SALAMON, DIRECTOR PARENTS INTERNATIONAL



The main aims of the peer-learning event were to:

- exchange on country experiences and the latest trends in education policies being implemented across the OECD area to address common challenges;
- explore how countries are using evidence for policy reform or policy consolidation available to them as well as the transversal learning lessons that could be drawn
- develop principles of policy change or consolidation in specific topics, based on comparative international evidence, to help countries reach their goals.

Participants came from a diverse group of OECD countries from Austria to Turkey (in alphabetical orders). The event was moderated by the former Minister of Education of New Zealand, Hekia Parata with special contribution from former Assistant Deputy Minister

of Ontario, Canada, Mary Jane Gallagher. The outcomes of these discussions will also inform the future policy work of the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills according to the organizers.

At the beginning of the event Andreas Schleicher, Director of OECD Education shared his thoughts on the occasion of launching the new OECD Education Policy Outlook – Putting Student Learning in the Centre. He highlighted a number of important issues most education systems are yet to tackle such as:

- the fact that teaching reading should become teaching critical reading as you cannot surely trust a printed source anymore;
- with people spending more time online it is important to make sure we do not become slaves of the online world;
- the growing gap between the needs of societies and what school can provide;



- the fact that teaching and school-related learning time does not have a direct impact on actual learning, but rather the opposite is often true;
- the fact that while class sizes are usually smaller for disadvantaged students and countries consider that a solution for equity, the reverse is true for teacher quality: privileged students can usually benefit from having better teachers, and thus equity is not achieved;
- the necessity of cross-cutting measures in changing curricula in order to find answers to the challenge of delivering on skills for the future;
- the need to train teachers better, to give them more space and encourage interdisciplinary learning and teaching
- the need to find solutions for well-intended policies to reach classroom level;
- the need to increase the quality of vocational education and training; and
- the fact that while teachers know students learn best if they find solutions themselves, school practice and testing is still based on memorization.

The main organizer of the event, Diana Toledo-Figueroa of OECD highlighted the importance of involving both students and parents in policy discussions and reform in order to have a shared understanding of principles and goals. The perception of schools is strongly influenced by what happens outside of school. Her colleague, Beatriz Pont, focusing on policy implementation, called the participants' attention to the fact that education policy reform is not a linear process anymore. While you have to consider the context such as teacher training, resources, the necessary alignment with what is happening on the ground, you also have to be aware of possible reform fatigue, and of other processes and making synergies with

them. She summarized the 4 elements of successful policy implementation: smart policy design, inclusive stakeholder engagement, conducive context and coherent policy implementation. The goal of the dialogue is to ensure this for making change happen on the ground for better learning.

Larissa Nenning, representing European secondary school students via OBESSU shared different practices for student participation highlighting that while involvement is increasing at grassroots level, it is still stagnant on national level, and its quality needs to be improved as it is still mostly traditional and it is not clear what impact it has on actual policy.

John Bangs, representing Education International the global teacher trade union indicated the link between strong trade unions and strong learning outcomes. He emphasized that while trade unions generally feel partly engaged in policy reform, there is still a lot to be done in the field of involvement in implementation and evaluation, too.

The business perspective was presented by Miriam Pinto who advocated for alignment of education systems and the future of work, especially soft skills, and mentioned historic inertia as the main obstacle. She called for effective education reforms on policy, system and stakeholder level at the same time.

Mary Jane Gallagher, previously responsible for a highly effective education reform in Ontario, Canada shared the shocking reality that children are learning less the longer they are exposed to formal education.

She made it clear that most reforms fail on implementation level, especially because system complexity is usually underestimated, that means only a few necessary elements are tackled of the many instrumental for change teaching practices. She called policy makers to inspire greatness of all stakeholders. She also introduced the necessity to learn to direct your own

learning, otherwise you will not become a lifelong learner while it is necessary for the future.

Presenting the parents' perspective, Director of Parents International, Eszter Salamon recalled the international legal basis, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on parental responsibilities and governments' obligation to finance education systems that support parents' education duties. She called for a shift from involving the parents into existing reforms and processes towards engaging us in designing, implementing and evaluating reform. The major difference between engagement at policy and at grassroots level was also emphasized. She also advocated for involving all parents, even the most disadvantaged, as well as to implement structures – often missing today – that make meaningful rather than formal engagement of both parents and children possible. She also highlighted the important role of school heads as key actors in changing practices. She called for education reforms that have a holistic, lifelong learning approach, acknowledging all stages and forms of education: formal, non-formal, informal from early childhood to old age. Education policy should also listen to and reward non-formal education especially since there seem to be more successful equity and inclusion practices in non-formal than formal education. It is important to ask the right questions and use the right language (as well as implement non-discriminative funding) for the necessary improvement of learning outcomes regardless the form and place of learning.

OECD is planning to organize the Dialogue annually and we are looking forward to being part of it. ■

See also:

<https://parentsinternational.org/how-do-education-systems-put-student-learning-at-the-centre-oecd-education-policy-dialogues-2018/>

Inclusive practices for completing tertiary education



ESHA is part of the MultInclude project aiming at collecting, analysing and

sharing inclusive education practices that have worked in certain contexts. Towards the end of the project we will also offer webinars and build a community of practice to promote and upscale these practices. We are at the beginning of a 2-year process, and at this stage we are reaching out to the school heads' community to share your inspiring practices with others.

ESZTER SALAMON, DIRECTOR PARENTS INTERNATIONAL
AND ESHA CONSULTANT

Some countries are already diverse in many ways and will become even more so. Education systems of respective European countries were not designed for the current population. In superdiverse cities like Paris, The Hague and Brussels there is no majority anymore. These are so-called majority minority cities where the population consists of all minority groups. The previous majority also became a quantitative minority. Quantitative diversity is not a guarantee for equal opportunities in education and at the labour market. This quantitative development in combination with growing societal tensions ask for more deliberate action on one hand and a vision on inclusion on the other hand. The declaration on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education, which is the result of an informal meeting of European Union education ministers in Paris, in March 2015, needs to be implemented successfully.

But policy only is not sufficient. There is a greater need for evidence-based practices from countries and institutions that have been successful in similar developments on one hand and made a sustainable impact on the other hand. There is no need to invent new wheels. There is a great need though to successfully implement tested models of inclusive practices within schools and learning communities, with the aim to achieve impact on an individual, institutional and systematic level. Inclusive pedagogies and methodologies to support reflection processes and teaching and learning are one of the conditions to make a difference for all students in their educational pathway to success as well as their personal journey as responsible citizen in Europe.

While states, regional and local administrations are having growing difficulties to fund initiatives to enhance access and participation, educational institutions and students themselves are finding other

ways to promote greater equity. In this process different types of informal education are initiated for instance many homework support initiatives and more structured initiatives like children's universities. The EUCU.NET is an example of the great number of these examples of informal education that form a catalyst in lives of many children to start thinking about a pathway beyond secondary education. These types of informal education are supportive to the success of children in their formal and formative educational live. Seeds are planted in their young brains about educational opportunities but even more about belonging within a learning community and within the broader society.

This project is conceived to elicit, promote and disseminate some of those ideas – good IDEAS – that were developed in different parts of the world, in particular in Europe. The goal is to contribute to the dissemination of good practices. The aim is to identify ideas and proven practices that have the potential to be implemented with small investment and can be disseminated, replicated and scaled up. Proven practices that truly respond to the needs and identities of a diverse educational community. A specific focus is to look particularly for evidence of success and for evidence of flexibility – ideas that can be translated and adapted in different contexts with small changes to the specific conditions of those new contexts. We are looking for alternatives for the large-scale public investments, revisiting and trying to find ways to improve through new policies that are a better respond on the growing needs of current societies.

Once these ideas have been identified, the project intends to operationalise the lessons learned by incorporating them into the inclusion strategies of schools, as well as through teaching and learning training by teachers around Europe to better work with communities on inclusion issues.

Thus, this project is based on two assumptions. Firstly, that there is a multitude of initiatives already operated by individual schools, NGOs and universities, that have proven success in improving inclusive participation in education. Secondly, that there is a demand from schools and other educational providers to improve their equity profiles. Thirdly, that bringing together operators of successful initiatives with those of prospective initiatives will stimulate a positive feedback loop whereby they support each other in strengthening / starting such initiatives. ■

If you have an inclusive practice that has proven to result in more students successfully finishing their secondary education and going on to any form of tertiary education (university, post-secondary vocational education or other), please send a short teaser description to ESHA's MultInclude project manager, Eszter Salamon (salamoneszt@gmail.com). You should be prepared for a 30-60 minute call or Skype interview during the summer, at a time suitable for you, to help us develop a case study and analysis of your practice.



European School
Heads Association