

2015-16

Project Magazine I















Erasmus+



1.-INTRODUCTION

THE SCHOOL WE LIKE TO LEARN IN

PART- NERS:	SCHOOL	LOGO	WEBSITE
AUSTRIA 	NNÖMS Mistelbach 2		http://nmsmi2.at/
CROATIA 	Graditeljska, prirodoslov- nairudarskaškolaVaraždin		www.rudarska.hr
ITALY 	IstitutoIstruzione Superiore Roma		www.itccalamandrei.it
LATVIA 	Mālpilsnovadavidusskola,		www.malpilsvsk.lv
PORTU- GAL 	Agrupamento de Escolas de Amare- leja		http://agvamareleja.drealentejo.pt
SPAIN 	I.E.S. DONOSO CORTES Don Benito		http://iesdonosocortes.juntaextremadura.net/



OBJECTIVES

- To exchange and improve partners' best practice for friendly school environment improvement as an essential pre-condition for early school leaving prevention;
- To improve the students' social and civic competencies and skills regarding their contribution to a cohesive local and international society by using innovative and student-centred pedagogical approaches, networking of schools and holistic collaborative approaches to teaching/learning;
- To improve cooperation internally as well as with parents and other external stakeholders.

TARGET GROUPS

Students, teachers, school's staff, parents and schools supporting institutions, i.e. public authorities, social service institutions and other stakeholders.

We want to support the collaborative learning and critical thinking of all the school communities, students, staff, parents and families, and help them in adjusting their usual lives to different ones.

ACTIVITIES

Regular meetings and joint workshops for situation analyses, finding, testing and evaluation of new methods for the early school leaving prevention (students, teachers, parents, psychologists, social services, public authorities' representatives). A questionnaire for parents, colleagues and pupils "What special things we do/ should do at our school to create a friendly school environment?" Simultaneously social and civic competences are tested in all partner schools, their results are analysed, and tasks for the further work are defined. Virtual brainstorming "How to combat bullying, mobbing and intra-school violence". Creative training workshops: "You are not alone" and "The school of my dream-no drugs, no violence, no bullying" – for different students' age groups in order to improve different aged students' communication, social, team working skills, and develop their resilience. Creating and updating project links in the partner schools' websites with summarized



best practice examples and regularly updated information about the project activities and results. Implementation and testing of partners' best practice in other partner schools. Students' Debate clubs, local regular sessions and once during the project at an international level; "Etiquette is cool!" –role play to train good manners and its video documentation; Working out of the "Friendly school rules" for different aged students and LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO REDUCE/PREVENT EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING AT OUR SCHOOLS 2017-2020.

Seminars for all students, staff and families so they can present ideas, work and strategies to help solve the problems in schools; (relevant to different aged students). Joint conflict solving/prevention training sessions (students-parents, teachers- students). Developing and testing materials/suggestions about the opportunities of the interdisciplinary approach and extracurricular activities (i.e. sport, social activities, intergenerational cooperation) for improvement of school environment and ESL prevention.





2.-RESEARCH ABOUT ESL SITUATION IN OUR COUNTRIES

2.1 AUSTRIA

Research ESL in Austrian school:

In our school, the New Middle School 2 in Mistelbach, Austria, Early School Leaving is not a big problem. Compulsory Education lasts for nine years and we are a secondary school, which pupils attend after having completed four years of primary education.

Having finished secondary school learners need to do another year of compulsory education in order to start an apprenticeship or continue further education.

As we do have a considerable number of learners with migration background, not all of them finish compulsory education. The reason is a lack of family support and a lack of interest to learn the German language, as at home young learners with a migration background are not encouraged enough to read or write in the German language. Another serious potential problem is the integration of refugee children from Syria and Afghanistan who have come to attend our school in the past three months. Most of them are unaccompanied minors whose parents have died in wars. They now live in containers near the hospital in Mistelbach. At the moment there are 17 refugee learners at our school.

Early school leaving has serious consequences for the individual and for society, also here in Austria, as in every European country. While its effects have not been sufficiently examined by Austrian studies so far, and the available data are often not detailed enough to draw valid conclusions, the following aspects are addressed.



There are also learners who come from poor families and lack support. Their parents do not or simply cannot cope with their children's problems at school. They often work for long hours and children are left to themselves. At our school we work together with local welfare organisations like Caritas etc. There are job orientation programmes and we do have youth coaching where those learners who finish compulsory education in year 8 because of having had to repeat a year, are trained and helped to find jobs. There are also a "Girls day" and a "Boys day" where boys get to know typical female jobs and girls get a chance to work in what are mainly considered to be male jobs for a day. There is also a subject called "BO" (job orientation) in year 3 and year 4, which encourages students to focus on their talents and find the right jobs.

Impact of ESL on individuals

The most frequently discussed effect is the employment effect. Early school leavers have fewer chances on the labour market. Early school leavers are 3.5 times more likely to be unemployed than people who have completed secondary education (ISCED 3-4). If they do find jobs, these are low paid. Studies show that the situation deteriorated considerably between 2004 and 2008, and poor labour market opportunities are inevitably linked with a higher risk of poverty.

Poor chances on the labour market lead to consequences, which can reach into other essential areas of life and can include unsatisfactory housing, limited autonomy, dependence on parental and/or other assistance, or insufficient resources to become independent or start a family.

Early school leaving can lead to social withdrawal (Nairz-Wirth 2011). One study describes the relevance of close social relationships as a prerequisite for life satisfaction, which is significantly lower for dropouts or young people with only compulsory education than for their better-educated counterparts. It also shows that job/profession and housing situation have the strongest influence on general satisfaction. There is a close connection between life satisfaction and education. Other studies examine the mental consequences of early school leaving and show that failure at school reduces self-esteem, which can, in turn, affect well being and health.

Impact on society

The EU's Lisbon Strategy 2000 emphasises the importance of education, knowledge, research, and development. A high proportion of low-skilled workers and early school leavers is costly and has negative effects on economic growth. While there are no figures available on the monetary costs of early school leaving, the 2012 Austrian Education Report maintains that the annual GNP growth could be raised by half a percentage point if all students had at least minimal competences (400 points in the PISA test). This alone would increase national income by 976 billion euros by 2090.

Other studies present the costs of early school leaving, and show that almost half of early school leavers (ISCED 0-3c) in Austria need over two years to join the labour market. In comparison, only 10% of students who have completed at least a minimum secondary education (ISCED 3a-4) take so long to find work.

(Taken from the brochure RESL.eu – reducing early school leaving in Europe)



2.2 CROATIA

According to data provided by the president of “Pragma” and the publication editor Nedeljko Marković 3.7% of the youth are early high school dropouts.

The average percentage of construction, natural sciences and mining schools’ dropouts for the analysed period is 3.91% and thus within the Croatian average.



In our school, one of the reasons for early school leaving is weak support from families. Socio-economic status of the family is very poor. Parents are often absent from their homes because of work, and the children unattended and left to themselves, and thus are subject to destructive behaviour, which further causes the abandonment of further education. We need to be more focused on the social aspect, strengthening the family as a community, and helping them to connect with the School Centres for Social Welfare.

Statistics show that students born abroad are more likely to dropout from high-school. Students of migrant descent are faced with greater challenges in approaching and participating in education than those born in the country of schooling. Reasons may be linguistic or cultural barriers, socioeconomic segregation, limited approach to study support and others. It would also be necessary to strengthen the role of service for professional orientation, which estimates how motivated and what kind of potential a certain student has for a certain school. It is important that students have guidelines and support early on as to be able to develop their own interests and aspirations.



The school is very well connected with other institutions in the community. We hold preventive programs with the police and other institutions in the close-knit community.

www.cisok.hr



2.3. ITALY

Italy is one of the EU countries where early school leaving is a strong national emergency. The goal of 10% set by the Lisbon Strategy for 2010 has not been achieved yet. So this is the new challenge for 2020.

The main problems are particularly present in the suburbs of the southern biggest cities (Napoli, Palermo, Bari, Catania) where poverty meets illegality.

The situation is also difficult in the north of the country, where industry hires workers without qualification. In these prosperous regions, the high labour demand exerts an undeniable attraction on young people, dissuading them from completing their studies in favour of a relatively easy access to employment.

The European Union defines early school leavers as people aged 18-24 who only have lower secondary education or less and are no longer in education or training.

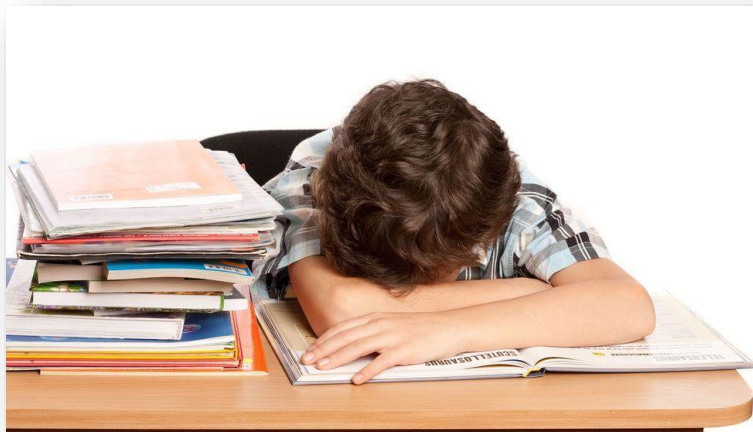
The good news is that the number of early school leavers is gradually decreasing. In 2004 they were 23% and in 2011 18.2%. The sense of urgency to 'tackle' the problem is gradually increasing.

The problem is less acute in the lycee, but very strong in professional schools and it is more acute with boys than with girls. The problem is also suffered by children and young foreigners who come to Italy without speaking the language. Different are the situations of those who are of a second generation: they are more integrated and better skilled even if they still have some economic difficulty.

There are many reasons why students leave school early.

- Family problems: if parents are divorced, no one may be taking responsibility for the child. If parents are uneducated, there may be little encouragement to do homework or to stay in school.

- Financial factors: some students want to work in order to support their families. In contrast, others may have family businesses and not see any benefit in obtaining a high school certificate.
- Problems of bullying, or psychological diseases: anorexia, drugs.
- Academic reasons: for many students, school is stifling and boring. The curriculum does not challenge them or grab their attention and they are unable to be creative.
- Learning difficulties that need specialist's help.



2.4 LATVIA

According to the research data of the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences about the reasons and risks of early school leaving of young people between 13-18 (summary of answers from 382 schools) more early school leavers are from vocational schools, from urban area schools, and there are more boys than girls, older than 16, with worse learning results and/or from families with a problematic social economic situation.

The main reasons of early school leaving in Latvia are such as: lack of motivation, indifference and irresponsibility of parents, necessity to work, difficulties to find a balance between work and school, problems with schoolmates and teachers.



There are few Internet resources for teachers, school psychologists and parents available that could help them to prevent early school leaving, to solve actual problems:

http://www.bti.gov.lv/lat/metodiska_palidziba/mediacija_skolas;
http://www.bti.gov.lv/lat/draudziga_skola <http://www.centrsdardedze.lv>
<http://www.berniemdraudzigs.lv> <http://www.lvg.lv/section/top/vide-skola-radosuma-pamats/209/>

In our school we try to prevent early school leaving by organizing different motivating activities: Competitions between classes with earning points for good behaviour and learning results; integration of pupils' with special education needs and health problems into learning activities. Teachers invite school psychologists and career consultants to speak with students and discover their strong sides and weaknesses. We pay great attention to cooperation with parents, organize regular meetings, consultations, seminars inviting popular people to speak about the actual problems.



2.5. PORTUGAL

Europe needs more students to stay on at school until 2020. It is very clear that Portugal, as well as other European Union members, is undergoing very worrying times in what schooling/dropout is concerned.

According to a recent survey by the European Statistics Institute Eurostat, in Portugal, the number of higher education graduates aged between 30 and 34 increased from 12.9% in 2002 to 31.9% in 2015, still far from the goal of at least 40% of graduates until 2020, set in the Europe Strategy 2020.

As shown in the second indicator, there are fewer young Portuguese students aged between 18 and 24 leaving school or not attending another type of course/training (numbers decreased from 38.5 percent in 2006 to 13.7% in 2015).

The study published by Eurostat also shows that the rate of early school leavers (aged between 18 and 24) defined as not having had the frequency of the 3rd cycle of basic education or other training courses has declined steadily in the EU from 17.0% in 2006 to 11.0% in 2015.

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Among these students, young girls are the ones that quit studies least (9.5% in 2015, compared with 12.4% abandonment registered among young men). The Europe 2020 Strategy dictates the reduction of rates of early school leavers in the EU for less than 10% by 2020.

In Portugal, the rate of early school leavers dropped from 38.5% in 2006, to 13.5% in 2015. As in most European countries, Portuguese female students remain longer in school than their male counterparts. In 2015, the 13.5% of all the young people who were not in school or in any other type of training, 16.4% were male and 11% female.



There is obviously still a lot to be done on this matter. However, we are on the right track and hope to reach the intended goal by 2020. For now, it is up to us, working on this project, to share good practices and knowledge in order to show that together we will get there!

<http://www.educare.pt/noticias/noticia/ver/?id=111342&langid=1>





2.6. SPAIN

In this new European project we wanted to work on Early School Leaving, which affects our students by reducing their social, cultural and economic opportunities and makes it more difficult for them to access the labour market. Therefore, it increases the individual risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

In early 2016, the rate of early school leavers dropped 20% since it has been recorded in Spain, but it didn't have the same effect on all communities because in Aragón, Asturias, Cantabria, Extremadura, La Rioja and the Basque Country the percentage rose slightly from 2014.

Early school leaving measures the 18 to 24 year-old population of students who only have finished Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) and have not gone beyond this, the Baccalaureate, nor an average degree of FP (professional training), according to the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Spain, as highlighted by the Ministry of Education, approaches the target set by the EU for 2020, which establishes that early school leavers should not exceed 15%.

One of the factors contributing to the decline in the dropout rate has been the implementation of the Basic FP (replaced with LOMCE Programmes Initial Vocational Training) and Dual Vocational School (combines processes of teaching and learning in companies).

Also the "economic crisis" has greatly affected employment in the sectors of construction and tourism, so that young people have preferred to continue studying in secondary or upper secondary and vocational training. The regional administrations are extending its offerings and the Basic FP, to help young people stay in school.

By gender, the dropout rate is well below earlier levels among women than among men, because in 2015 the data for them was 15.8% (18.1% in 2014) for women and 24% (25.6% in 2014) for men.

However, the improvement in the results of dropout has not been the same as the autonomous communities.



If the 2014 data is compared to that of 2015, the rate has increased in our region, Extremadura (22.9 to 24.5%). Still above the national average of 19.97% are the following autonomous regions: Andalusia, Balearic Islands, Castilla-La Mancha, Valencia, Extremadura, Murcia and La Rioja, in addition to the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla.

The lowest percentages were recorded in the Basque Country (9.6%), Cantabria (10.3%) and Navarra (10.8%).



However, the figures are still very far from the European target.

With this project, we aim to find teaching methods needed to contribute to the creation of an attractive school environment, increasing student motivation and preventing early school leaving. Thus, it is intended to be a useful tool for all partners to expand, from the educational point of view, the methodology being used in other schools, to check its effectiveness and

how to implement it.

<http://www.efe.com/efe/espana/sociedad/la-tasa-de-abandono-escolar-temprano-baja-en-espana-pero-suben-seis-comunidades/10004-2825390>

<http://www.elmundo.es/sociedad/2016/01/28/56aa1721268e3e3a058b45c6.html>

<http://www.abc.es/sociedad/20150922/abci-ocde-educacion-competencias-espana-201509212021.html>



3. QUESTIONNAIRES RESULTS

3.1. AUSTRIA

Parents:

Almost all our parents (roughly 80%) filled in the questionnaire and handed it back. The majority of all our pupils' parents have at least a completed a 3 year vocational school after having completed compulsory education.

More than 60% are of the opinion that school gives their children a feeling of belonging. However, some think that teachers could or should do more to encourage their children to help them feel welcomed and give them a feeling of belonging. More than half of the parents asked would love to have more time to participate in school activities and to get involved more often. They also think that the cooperation between teachers and parents could be improved on both sides. Most of them blame lack of time and stress in their working life for not being able to get more involved.

Teachers:

As the results of our questionnaires handed out to all the teachers show, the vast majority of teachers blame parents' lack of support as the most frequent reason for early school leaving. More than 90% of the teachers asked would love to have so-called "learn clubs" pupils could pick voluntarily according to their talents but also introduce "learn clubs" in which pupils could get support to pass their exams or to help them with their homework. They would also like to have more time or get extra lessons to teach their pupils behavioural and social competences.

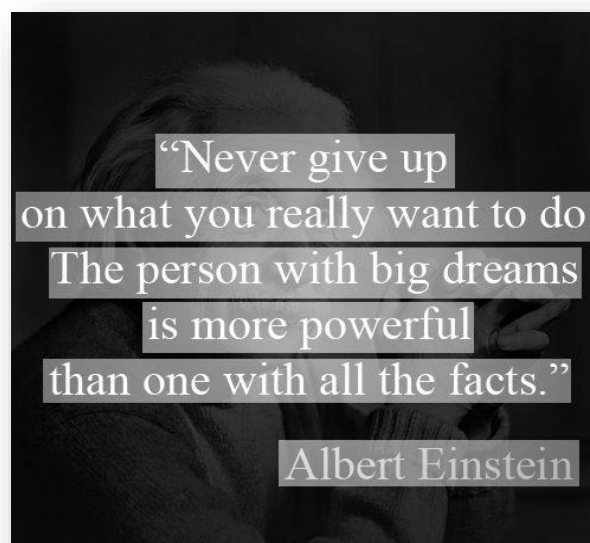
Pupils:

According to the questionnaire most pupils think that students drop out of school primarily because of lack of motivation, secondly because of health problems and only thirdly because of failure at school. They are generally happy with the way things run at our school. More than 50% claim to never have been a victim of bullying or cyber bullying. They would love to see their parents at school more often and have them participate in school activities like project days, project weeks,



sports week excursions. So pupils would love to have the possibility to socialise informally more often.

The results of the questionnaires were discussed during a teacher's conference and during the meeting of the project team. It has been agreed to invite parents to sports activities more often and to introduce an informal parents teachers meeting for each class or year where learners can present their results and parents are informed about ongoing projects.





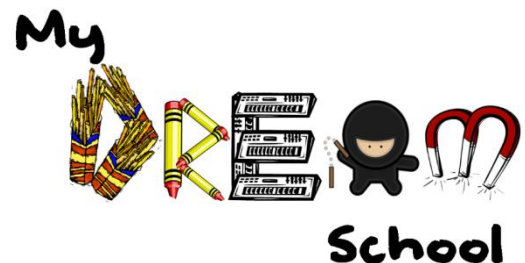
3.2. CROATIA

Which activities would you include and which would you exclude from school?

Greater supervision over children. I would include more sport. Lectures on learning problems, perils of teen violence on social networks, communication skills, abuse, dangers of drug, alcohol misuse and gambling. More field work and practical work. Questionnaire for teachers about how satisfied they are with work. I would include school house craft and combat sport. Choir, theatre group. More professional - social events. Include students in creative workshops, projects. Include scale modelling in the programme of architectural technician. Chess, a third foreign language, theatrical plays, choir, journalist and theatrical group. Drawing, knitting, study support group, decrease conflicts, dance, singing, sculpturing, photography.

What are you prepared to do to make school life better and friendlier?

More relaxed atmosphere in class, cooperation and organization of various activities which enable students to familiarise themselves better and be more connected, better mutual relationships, more interested, more studying, be more active in class, organise social gatherings as to help each other and have fun, make new friendships, cooperate with teachers more, more conversation and cooperation, more understanding from the side of teachers. Come to individual meetings more often and attend every parent teacher meeting. To enhance communication between students and teachers in class. Mutual debates, conversations, socialising or lectures of teachers, parents and students on topics of their interest. We are ready for cooperation - socialising, trips, and creative workshops. Educate students who have learning problems.



What are your suggestions to enhance cooperation between school and parents?

Mutual activities for teachers, class teachers, parents and students. Include parents in school activities. Encourage parents to come to individual meetings more often. Quality communication, continual cooperation with parents. Workshops for students and parents. Open communication



of school and parents about activities conducted in school and at home. Including parents into projects of enhancement and improvement of school infrastructure. More frequent visits of parents with their children and mutual solving of their problems. Informal socialising with students and parents in the form of workshops or sport activities. Workshops with parents about studying, violence, conflict solving etc. To create an improved web site. Open school day. More communication. More frequent meetings of parents' council.

At the parents council it has been agreed to introduce new popular topics, which are not discussed in public enough, discuss them and after that present them further to parents at teacher parent meetings and then to the students. It has been suggested to invite professionals to hold lectures about these topics.





3.3 ITALY

Here is the summary of Italian students', parents' and teachers' answers to two questions:

Which activities would you include at school?

STUDENTS:

Most of them would like to practice more sport and participate in more sports tournaments (also versus other schools). More sport projects and to organize one or more Sports day.

Many students would like to have more activities that include all the class students and not only a few.

They lack cultural trips and watching documentaries and musical activities.

They also would like to have more friendly teachers, more activities during lessons, more attractive ways of teaching, more exchange among schoolmates, more classwork and less homework.

PARENTS:

Many parents would like the school to organize more attractive and more interesting activities that include all the class students and not only a few.

It would be nice to involve families in activities with students.

It could be important to create a sort of joint venture among the school and families to make kids understand that the school with its rules needs to face life in the future.

Better relationship between teachers and students and more of headmistress' control on teachers' activities.

TEACHERS:

Many teachers would like to include more professional workshops and extracurricular experiences.



It could be very important to organize remedial, support courses and methodological lessons.

Like students and parents, also the teachers would also like to organize more cultural trips as well.

They also believe in psychological support for students and teachers in order to be helped on how to face problematic students and to promote activities against bullying, especially in the early grades.

Different way of arranging departmental and school board meetings.

[What is your opinion about why young people drop out of school?](#)

STUDENTS:

School failure, lack of interest.

Some students prefer to earn money right away even if it is not much, rather than spend years studying without being sure to find a job afterwards.

PARENTS:

Above all, there is weak motivation, lack of commitment and difficulties in accepting and respecting rules. This produces a high rate of school failure and drop out.

Then there are families that are not involved in taking care of kids, or where the father is not a pillar of support.

Social and family discomfort.

TEACHERS:

Weak family attitudes to study, combined with teachers who have not yet been trained to motivate the students, generate a lack of motivation, of cultural interests and sometimes a lack of inclusion for problematic students. We have too many students in each class with a lot of jobs to do



with all issues and items that are requested (e.g. for the national examination and graduation) and we cannot take care of all the problematic situations.

Furthermore, intermediate school is often unable to carry out orientation for students, so sometimes students make wrong choices concerning secondary school (lycee or professional or technical schools, classical or scientific or artistic studies).

There is also a lack of connection between the school and the working world.

3.4 LATVIA

We got very interesting results, and here you can read the summary of the teachers', parents' and students' answers to the question:

What kind of activities would you include in school life?

TEACHERS: More events involving students' performances. Three times more sport events and competitions, "Sports day" once a year, at least three school balls a year (with live music). More lectures on different topics, talks with interesting people. More experiments, projects, debates and discussions on different areas. Creativity workshops for teens. Hold more students' cooperation activities, also for their parents (and also teachers). More interesting, up-to-date activities preparing teenagers for "the big life". More self-exploring activities, as well as activities developing communication skills. Drama club. More physical activities. Exclude the unified examinations as a knowledge testing system.

STUDENTS: Some common activities, which make friendly school mates. More sports activities. More dancing lessons and dancing activities. We need more lessons about art or culture.

PARENTS: The amount of homework should be decreased to a minimum by prolonging a school year. The students' workload should be appropriate not to cause distaste with the learning process. To strengthen students' confidence put more attention on emphasizing good, positive features, especially in competitions. Include more group activities. More activities helping students choose their future career. Different projects that promote thinking, a desire to find solutions, not to give up at the first failure or when difficulties occur. Greater promotion of targeting individual progress. More activities where different classes cooperate with each





other. School Olympics, competitions at learning subjects. Meetings with young, interesting people, scientists (chemists, biologists, physicists), school graduates who have achieved something special, have got interesting work, experience etc. It is necessary to consolidate teachers', pupils' and parent' relationships. More entertainment for students and parents.



3.5 PORTUGAL

Teachers' opinion

The majority of teachers feel that students show little appreciation for school and have low expectations about its importance, which added to their low cultural level, their parents' low level of education, high level of unemployment within the families and their lack of professional aspirations make it extraordinarily difficult for teachers to act in order to change the school we have into the school we like.

Nevertheless, they would like to have more availability to help students according to their specific needs and to be able to listen to them to try and understand the reason behind their lack of motivation and their negative attitudes towards school. So they suggest the promotion of cultural, artistic and musical evenings for teachers, students and parents; the creation of more moments of informal interaction between academic and non-academic staff; the organisation of more events in which students can perform for the educational community; helping to create a lounge for students; the decoration of several school spaces with students' work assignments; the sharing of knowledge between the various cycles and training sessions for parents, teachers and staff.

They consider that the joining of forces between school and the family is the only way to build something good in relation to the child/student because it is for them that we want to build a future that is always better than ours, in which respect and dialogue prevail among all the parties and therefore, in thematic meetings, invite and encourage parents to share their experiences with the whole community.

Parents' opinion

Parents believe that the harsh reality of everyday life that affects the whole society, parents in particular, makes students wonder (from a certain age) whether it is worth studying, to then become unemployed or have to emigrate.



So, in general terms, parents state that they try very hard to explain to their children that only by studying can they improve their performance and have better school results and consequently a better future, not only in personal terms but also in professional ones. They stress that only through good incentive practices like taking part in extra-curricular school activities such as trips to the cinema, concerts, travelling and others, can children have the opportunity to understand that in life nothing comes for free and that we have to work very hard to reach our goals.

They say that by showing children that the ones who work get results and those results are what define us tomorrow. It is important to think about the future and in the future and let them know that they don't have to be the best or good at everything; that they have to do their best, to be responsible, respecting both teachers and classmates; to help others and get help whenever necessary.

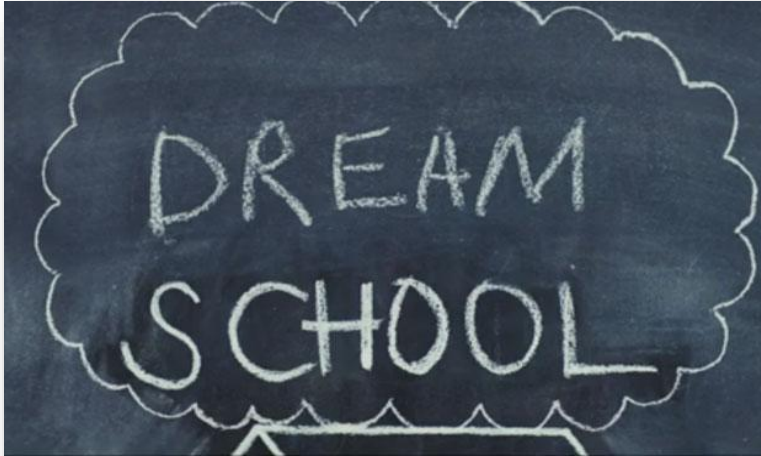
They stressed that they will always be available to give the necessary contributions the school considers necessary. However, they would like the holding of joint meetings, once a month, open to all parents, in order to discuss problems and at the same time give suggestions they consider relevant because it is of their interest to participate in the academic life of their children.

Students' opinion

Our students are unanimous in stating that they should have more free time.

They would like to have more singing/dancing lessons as well as voluntary activities; they would also like to include more sports and information technology activities in their curriculum. They would like to include more activities such as competitions among students so they could show their talents.

In the school they like to live in, they don't want any bullying! They want outdoor games; a recreation room or something like that would be a good idea; they would become happier with flashier (synthetic grass football field) and cosier spaces.



In what parents are concerned, they would like to have the school come up with something to motivate parents to get more involved in school life such as more meetings or even some lectures on common problems in adolescence and other issues such as school failure and ways to overcome them, not forgetting, of course, to include activities for

parents and students maybe more exchange activities for parents, more "family" activities for both teachers and students.

They also suggest that the school set up mini-weekly meetings with parents to discuss student performance during the respective week and to have parents invited to participate in more school activities like for example more projects in school that have to do with ERASMUS+ because in this way parents would interact more in the school community.

3.6 SPAIN

This is the summary of teachers', parents' and students' answers to our online questionnaire:

TEACHERS: To be closer to students and try to teach in a more practical manner; to be continuously open to new ideas; more activities outside the classroom; more school exchanges; not too much homework in order to spend their free time in other formative activities; it's not necessary to test students all the time; become friendlier to show them we are in the same team; to involve parents in tasks in order to share the educational process.

STUDENTS: More sports competitions against other local or regional schools; cooking lessons; less homework and more practice; not too many tests and consider participation in lessons.

PARENTS: They should collaborate more with teachers; to show them more opportunities for the future.

Motivating children every day to keep on going to school in a good mood; more interesting projects, as well as activities in groups; more practical everyday life activities; learning at school and having more free time.

More chances to be together and share different opinions about education; lack of teachers' motivation.

More contact among us; much homework to do in the afternoons which leave them no time to play or to hang out with their friends and relatives; they do not have a habit related to studies and that is the reason why they get bored in class and finally they leave school.



4. BEST PRACTICE SAMPLES

4.1 AUSTRIA

Co teaching in the core subjects English, Maths and German:

At the NMS Mistelbach 2 there are currently 9 classes with 25 students (maximum) in each class. We have two integration classes, where pupils with learning difficulties get special help from a second teacher. In year one and year two, which are run as an “NMS” (new middle school), there is a second teacher present in German, English and Maths in every lesson. This co-teaching is a great example of how teachers work together to improve teaching quality and to focus better on each individual learner.

Therapy dogs:

Another great best practice sample is the deployment of our two specially trained therapy dogs, Lucy and Lady. They are owned by two teachers, Mr. Robl and Mrs. Steinmetz and they are used in lessons for pupils with learning difficulties. Evaluation has shown that due to the dogs in the classroom weaker learners become more attentive and focussed and they are able to concentrate better as well. Pupils suffering from ADHS are calmer and more relaxed during the lessons.



Youth coaching / job orientation:

But how do we deal with learners who have completed compulsory education at the age of 15? In our school there is a mentoring/coaching system, which encourages and helps these learn-



ers to find jobs. In workshops they are taught how to write CVs and letters of application. Charity workers come to school once a week and accompany them on their way to find a job. In our school we also have a subject called job orientation in year 3 and year 4. In this subject potential analyses are carried out. The teachers offer educational information, pupils get a chance to have work experience for 3 days. Bosses of local enterprises come to our school and offer application training. We also visit higher schools or take excursions to local companies. The girls/boys day is very popular among our students. Every year the girls get a chance to work in “typical” male jobs for a day. During that day the boys learn how to carry out “typical” female jobs like ironing, sewing or cooking.

Autonomous learning / learning boxes:

At the NMS 2 teachers encourage autonomous learning with so-called “learning boxes”. Once a month our year 1 and year 2 pupils work with these boxes prepared by their teachers. They work individually according to their own speed on a topic they have chosen themselves (Biology, German, English, Maths...). After two lessons they present their results. Moreover, the introduction of children-parent-teacher-meetings in the 2nd term instead of the traditional parent – teacher meetings has proved to be successful.

Healthy school / healthy snacks / moving classroom:

Since last year our school has decided to focus on the topic “Healthy School and Movement in School”. Teachers encourage movement in the classroom as well as more exercise and movement during breaks. We also prepare healthy snacks at break time for each class. Once a week a class prepares healthy snacks for all the other classes and distributes them during breaks.

We are very grateful to our parents association, which enables children of poorer families to take part in skiing project weeks or school activities by donating money to these children and helps underprivileged pupils to be more integrated. Moreover, it supports our school financially and supports events and projects.



4.2 CROATIA

The Croatian employment bureau – conducts a survey on occupational interests of the primary school's 8th graders and conducts occupational briefing with the goal of discovering students' needs for specific services of occupational briefing in decision making of the most appropriate choice of the educational programme and occupation.

CISOK– Centre for career information and orientation – conducts professional informing, workshops, it represents the labour market, possibility of employment etc.

Centre for Social Welfare – support for families with behavioural problems.

Disciplinary centre – support for students with low motivation for school and school obligations.

From school year 2013/2014 Croatia has started with **e-immatriculation** according to which each student can choose ten educational programmes in five different schools.

Prevention programmes in the realms of the school – lectures and workshops for parents and students in cooperation with external institutions.

Individualised approach and adjusted programme – for students with medical problems (those students have the possibility to take class exams at the end of the school year because of their absence from school due to their health problems).

Adult education – dropout students have the possibility to gain high school education later on in life but with a financial compensation.

Subsidised transport for students.

Project “Živimživotbeznasilja”(Living a life without violence) – students have watched a documentary promotional film followed by a class debate on violence and its prevention. Students have created a poster for the students' hall about this project with the link to Facebook a site where they will offer support to victims of bullying.



Project “Zdravza 5!”(Healthy as a horse) – The police conducts the project and holds a lectures in all 1st classes for students and parents of high school with the topic of addiction and violence prevention.

A day for sport- students play football and volleyball with the teachers.



Students council of Varaždin county organises public discussions on topics of their interest.

Humanitarian action “Ludbreškosunce”– every year students, in cooperation with their teachers, create Christmas decorations and raise funds for the association around the time of the Christmas holidays. Students develop empathy through humanitarian activities and by helping others strengthen friendship and collectiveness.



4.3. ITALY

INCLUSIVE TEACHING

1. All our special students share the classes with the other students. We think that these students have different abilities than others, so their presence in the classrooms can enrich all the schoolmates in terms of acceptance, inclusion and flexibility. To answer to the specific demands and needs of families with disabled to include their children in sport and in other activities, various Paralympic sport activities such as the baskin are played. Baskin is a sport where abled and disabled play together in the same team with particular rules and where it is impossible to win without the contribution of all the participants of the team.

2. We have 106 foreign students in our school, so we provide them with an Italian course as L2.

3. Frequency and Punctuality Awards.





NEW STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING:

1- Forum theatre method is a form of contemporary theatre, participatory art that creates the possibility of interaction with the public. The public can replace characters to produce a realistic change, intervening during the play by a clap of hands. The actors will "freeze" until the person in the audience replaces the actor in the play. The other actors will improvise on stage taking into account the main features of their characters and the new situation. In our school we have done FT in several subjects such as Biology, History, Law, French, and Economics.



2-Flipped classroom: FC inverts traditional teaching methods, delivering instructions online out of class and moving homework into the classroom. Concept engagement takes place in the

classroom with the help of the instructor. Two examples: History in a 4th class with work about Galileo Galilei, Economy in a 3rd class about the different forms of the market.

3- Cooperative learning: It is an instructional method in which students work together in small, heterogeneous groups to complete a problem, project, or other instructional goal, while teachers act as guides or facilitators. This method works to reinforce a student's own learning as well as the learning of his or her fellow group members.



SPORT ORIENTED CLASSES

According to the time flexibility afforded by each school, some subjects dedicate hours to address topics related to sports: Sport journalism, Anatomy, Doping, Sport agreement, Sport management and, of course, a lot of other sport activities!





WORK EXPERIENCE

In order to increase job opportunities and orientation for students from the school year 2015/2016 our school has implemented the Alternating School Work Course, according to the National Law n.107/2015.

Our school has extensive experience with companies, professionals and corporations where students can improve their skills and abilities.

During the school year, in accordance with company partners, our school offers short stages (training internship students) whose transversal and professional goals are subject to evaluation of the Class Council and of the Company Tutor.

4.4 LATVIA

Communicative and team building games in November/2015 organized by students of the grades 10th-12th for the youngest, in the grades 3rd-5th.

Annija: "There were 4 groups, each group got a different situation with appropriate things, and they communicated and cooperated. This lesson was really fun and also interesting for pupils."

Viktorija: "I was in the grade 3rd. 25 pupils took part in this game. Kids really enjoyed the game and they became friends with each other."



Lectures about the safe use of Internet were organized for the grades 5th-8th and 9th-12th. Pupils got a lot of useful information, and the lecturer also gave many useful links for teachers for further work with these topics. A few of them can be found at:

<https://prezi.com/9r9p9nuxec3t/realitate-virtualaja-vide-2016/>

<http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/2013/09/09/3842009.htm>

<http://money.cnn.com/2015/02/09/technology/security/samsung-smart-tv-privacy/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvbNOHJ-7hI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITGqR50Pfv0>

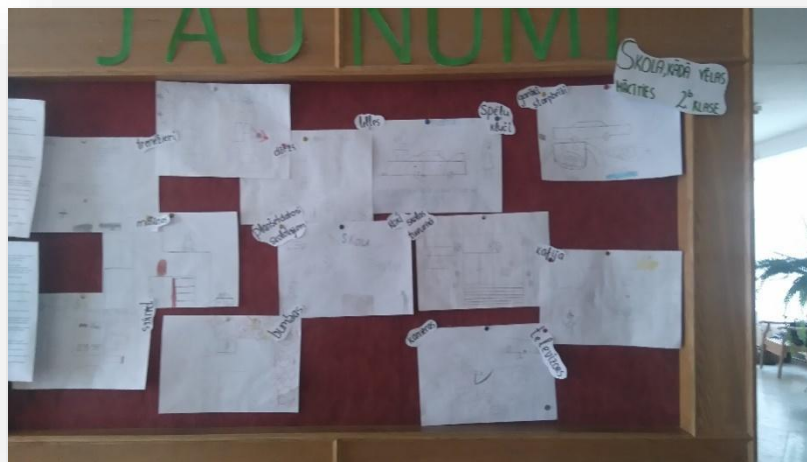


<http://drossinternets.lv/page/19>

<http://drossinternets.lv/page/340>

The school of my dreams

Santa Madara: We visited 2b grade pupils, to clarify the topic the school they want to learn in. Each student was given white paper and they had to draw a shape of the school on it. Then we asked pupils to swap their drawings with their classmates and draw only one thing, they would like to change in our school. Now you can see a collage of drawings on the school's news board on the 1st floor.





4.5 PORTUGAL

Between 15th and 19th February 2016 our school held an Erasmus + Training Meeting under the great theme of "Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices: the school we like to live and to learn in", with the participation of 3 students and 2 teachers from a school in Mālpils, Latvia and 4 students and 2 teachers from a school in Don Benito, Spain.

For the first time in the history of our School, the parents of seven of our students, received and lodged international students in their homes, thus encouraging a series of good practices from the promotion of the art of hospitality, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, the enlargement of the spirit and personal fulfilment to the enhancing of cooperation and of the role of learning in society nowadays.

On the first day of their stay, the joint work session began at approximately 10.15 am, in the small gym at the school headquarters where the welcoming reception took place. It featured a small performance, in English, by the students of the Drama Club, followed by the speech delivered by our headmaster, Francisco Pereira, and by moments of dance by two gipsy students as well as music and singing with the performance of some of the students of the Music Club specialised in Cante Alentejano (a traditional world heritage way of singing typical of the region of Alentejo). During the reception, awards of excellence were given to some students for their excellent academic performance in the previous school year.

During the afternoon, our guest students attended classes with their Portuguese colleagues and the teachers participated in a presentation of our school and of all projects and activities currently in progress and attended a training session, organized in partnership with the AENIE (National Education Association for Inclusion and Innovation in schools), under the theme "The use of new information and communication technologies in the classroom" where reflecting on early school leaving was on the main agenda and led us to conclude that teacher development is the way to go in order to achieve students' own development and therefore avoid early school leaving. Throughout the session, teachers had access to several documents of extreme importance in the dealing of the



subject under analysis of which No more failures – Ten Steps to Equity in Education stood out as a document of reference.

This meeting was enhanced by moments of learning and socializing between teachers, students and families taxed certainly by some linguistic barriers, which were undoubtedly overcome by everything that lay in the essence of a project of this nature.

Our guests took with them the friendship of our students and teachers, the sympathy and hospitality of the whole school community and of the host families as well as the knowledge of a part of our culture and Portuguese educational reality.

The moment of departure caused a few tears to run, a sign that language wasn't a barrier and that our involvement went further than previously thought...

We were unquestionably more enriched!



4.6 SPAIN

Red shoes:

To fight against Gender-based violence, shoes were collected to be painted in red during the Art lessons. It is a metaphor of the blood of innocents who represent all women who die unjustly because of her partner. Next to each shoe the names of all the women who died in 2015 was written as a tribute.



After that, a public act was performed, where red shoes were exposed in the central playground, forming a cross and laid on A4 papers.

Finally, a student read a manifesto for the whole school.



TALKS ON TRAFFIC EDUCATION

Staff of AESLEME (Association for the Study of Spinal Cord Injury), dedicated to the prevention of accidents that cause spinal cord injuries come to our school. The lecture was divided into two parts: in the first one a nurse talked about the types of injuries. In the second part, a victim of a traf-

fic accident talked to the pupils about his/her experience on how life was like before the accident, about the accident and how life was changed in a second. These talks stimulated the reflection of the students.



Talks on cyber bullying

Staff of our local national police force is responsible for giving a talk to raise awareness among students about the dangers of the Internet.

In this talk, explanatory videos are shown about real cases, which have occurred in very nearby locations, in order to help students grasp the true and actual risk of surfing the net without any control.

<http://donososchoolwelike.blogspot.com.es/>



5. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

5.1. Mistelbach, AUSTRIA, October 26th - November 1st 2015

a) 1st transnational project staff meeting

Our first transnational project staff meeting took place in Mistelbach, in Austria from Oct. 26th to Nov. 1st 2015. On Monday, October 26th the project coordinators of the five partner schools arrived in Mistelbach.

On the next day the Austrian school organised a welcome party during which the local inspector of education, Mrs. Brigitte Ribisch, the headmaster Mr. Christoph Eckel and the Austrian teachers welcomed their partners by symbolically shaking hands (each partner school had prepared a paper hand with information on the schools to literally shake hands with each other).

The teachers of the partner schools all presented their schools with PowerPoint presentations and allowed the Austrian students to ask questions. Later the project coordinator, Mrs. Livija Mukane gave an overview of project tasks and topics and all the teachers involved in the project got a chance to present their best practice samples on how to improve the learning environment for the students and how to prevent early school leaving. In the afternoons and evenings all the project partners met up to talk about the project budget and planned local and international activities throughout the project duration. The project coordinator presented the virtual office “Dropbox” and the project tool “Trello”. All the partners were invited to regularly publish





their information about local activities in our Dropbox office. On the last day the dates for next meetings were finalised, the main project ideas were summarized and the coordinators agreed on further project activities like Skyping, exchange of students' ideas via Facebook, Twitter, YouTube videos, e-mails or WhatsApp. They all agreed on using different social media to stay in touch and exchange pro-

ject material. For all the coordinators involved it was an honour to meet up with the PSI (district education inspector) Josef Fürst and introduce the project to him.

Short term joint staff training event

1st short- term joint staff training event in Mistelbach, Austria

From Oct. 26th to Nov. 1st, 2015 10 teachers of the partner schools met up in the NMS Mistelbach 2 for their first short-term joint staff training event in Mistelbach, Austria.

The objectives of the event were:

1. To exchange and improve partners' best practice for a friendly school environment.
2. To learn about the Austrian best experience/strategies for minimizing/prevention of the Early School Leavers (ESL) cases.



On Monday, Oct. 26th, 2015 all the teachers arrived in Mistelbach. On Tuesday 27th, at 8.00 o'clock in the morning everyone met up at the NMS Mistelbach 2 where there was a welcome party with students and teachers, followed by speeches of the Austrian headmaster and the Austrian



head of education of the district of Mistelbach, Mrs. Brigitte Ribisch. The partners then presented their schools to Austrian pupils and exchanged the prepared paper hands as a symbol for shaking hands with each other. The welcome party in the assembly hall was followed by ice breaking games and teacher training. In the afternoon the teachers were taken on a guided walking tour through the town of Mistelbach with Mrs. Christa Jakob to get to know local sights and places of interest. The teachers were also given an historical overview about the schools and education in Mistelbach. On Wednesday the Austrian coordinator, Mrs. Karin Biswanger organised a meeting in a local bank (Erste Bank Mistelbach), which works together with Austrian schools to prevent debts of pupils (high mobile phone/internet bills etc.). The bank offers the schools of Mistelbach the possibility to decorate their shopping windows which Austrian schools create for a month to present themselves in. This visit gave an idea on how local enterprises and schools cooperate in Austria. After the meeting the teachers returned to school to continue their work on the project and to present their best practice samples. Moreover, a lecture on the brochure “stop dropout – damit keener rausfällt” released by the Austrian Ministry of education was given by Mrs. Angela Braun-Tüchler in order to provide an insight into the Austrian policy of dealing with dropouts. The teachers took part in the reception at the town hall of Mistelbach where they were welcomed by the mayor Dr. Alfred Pohl who talked about the town hall and the district of Mistelbach, as well as gave a quick overview of the political system of Austria and local government. He guided everyone through the HTL Mistelbach (technical college of Mistelbach – higher school) as he is also the headmaster of that school. All the teachers were impressed with the cooperation between the secondary schools (NMS) and the high schools. As part of their training the teachers of all partner schools visited a few classrooms together with the Austrian teachers and watched English, German and Chemistry lessons. Mr. Robl, a maths teacher, showed them how he works with his therapy dog Lucy to encourage weaker learners to participate in the lessons. On Thursday the teachers’ training continued. Our guests sat in on Austrian lessons, and discussed and brainstormed with their Austrian colleagues about the project topic. The meeting ended with an evaluation of the current school environment, an analysis and comparison of the situation, as well as a discussion of the key elements we are going to concentrate on. All the teachers agreed that the cooperation between students, teachers, parents and local social partners is essential for a healthy school environment. New tools and methods to make our school environment friendlier and to prevent early school leaving will be discussed and tested in the



course of the project. On the last day the Austrian teachers and their colleagues from Croatia, Italy, Latvia, Portugal and Spain visited Vienna and inspected the Federal Chancellery "Bundeskanzleramt". There an exhibition on the "Wiener Kongress" was shown.



5.2 Malpils, LATVIA, 26th May-1st June 2016

a) Blended mobility of learners

During the Blended mobility all partners presented results of students' local and virtual cooperation during the 1st project year and got feedback on how their work for this project has been appreciated in all the other partner countries. In creative workshops they developed and tested new ideas for the friendly school environment improvement.



The first virtual communication started in April, after the guest and host students exchanged their contact information, created contacts via Facebook and WhatsApp. Therefore the meeting in May in Latvia was not a meeting of foreigners, but of well known friends.



The key words of this students' meeting were: SPORT (international mixed teams in the school's Sport day), CREATIVE LEARNING (History, Natural Sciences, Latvian language), TEAM WORK (ice breaking activities, communicative games, outdoor activities, team building training),



ART (4 creative workshops), COMMUNICATION/SOCIALIZATION/LANGUAGES (students were hosted in families and also many students from the Latvian project team were together with the guests during the whole week), CULTURE (partners prepared presentations about the traditional culture of their countries), INTERGENERATIONAL COOPERATION (games of partner countries and creative workshops in local kindergarten), EVALUATION (immediately after the last activities students evaluated the new experience).



b) 2nd transnational project staff meeting

The aim of this subsequent meeting was to discuss the project implementation with partners giving presentations about their work in the 1st project year. The evaluation of project halfway results and the project management methods used so far. This meeting focussed on actual questions



of the project implementation, dissemination and evaluation, and finalised in concrete terms the partners' tasks for the 2nd year.

Topics and decisions of the transnational staff meeting:

1. Evaluation of the experience gained during the 1st project year.
2. Evaluation of the project management tools and methods used so far
3. Interim reports and mobility tools <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/eac/mobility>
4. Discussion and decisions about the project outcomes, i.e. Friendly school rules in an innovative form.
5. Planning of the partners' tasks for the 2nd project year.
6. Information and tasks for the next short term exchange of groups of pupils in Italy from 16th until 22nd October, 2016.
7. Planning of the next international learning/teaching activities in Spain and Croatia.

We decided: Short term exchange of groups of pupils in Spain: from March 5th, 2017 -March 11th, 2017. Transnational project staff meeting and short term joint staff training in Croatia: from May 21st until May 27th, 2017.

