Open School Doors: Developing diverse School/ Parents communities through innovative partnerships

Open School Doors Guide of Inspiring Practice

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Leading partner: B:O

Content

1. Introduction

1.1 Scope of the document

The aim of this document is to describe a set of inspiring practices from the undertaken activities during the two phases of implementation in schools and to give also guidance and recommendations for policy makers and training curriculum developers. During the piloting of the practices presented in this guide in various countries and school contexts, the authors have defined a desired way of engaging parents, but also realised that this is not yet possible in all school systems and school cultures. Thus, we have decided to present practices as inspiration in the Guide that was originally planned to be of good practice not to discourage anybody working in a school not yet ready for fully implementing practices for engaging with parents from using the guide for developing their local ways of working with parents. However, it is important that your final goal should be to progress towards parental engagement and develop your ways of working with an equal participation of parents for best results.

Adults' engagement with new technologies identifies three key concepts (Tagg, 2018):

- Resourcefulness describes how and why people pick up and incorporate them into their communication repertoires.
- Remediation describes the ways in which existing social practices and processes are remediated by new technologies.
- Polymedia describes how users exploit the affordances of new technology in order to manage their emotions and their relationships.

These concepts of respect for diversity and opposition to prejudice and stereotyping should be supported by new technologies in order to facilitate an effective way and provide a rich set of opportunities for the engagement of adults and parents in schooling.

Therefore, we present inspiring practices and how to use the OSD framework to plan and implement an action plan.

1.2 Open School Doors purposes

The general purpose of this project is to reduce disparities in learning outcomes affecting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds especially migrants and refugees. More specific aims are the following:

(i) OSD tries to inspire and motivate teachers and school managers for cooperating with parents with a migrant background and creating constructive and sustainable partnerships with them.

(ii) To train teachers and school principals, so that they acquire positive mindsets and skills that will enable parents' motivation to get also engaged in schooling.

In the frame of OSD a Training Framework has been designed after examining the skills, needs, local conditions and obstacles that teachers should be able to deal with in order to engage parents with a migrant background. This Framework aims at qualifying teachers to deal with foreign cultures and their specific features in a sensitive and goal-oriented way. OSD does also launch an innovative approach (on pedagogic and technical levels) to train teachers (using online tools apart from face-to-face sessions) as well as social networking applications to connect them with the parents of the participating schools' pupils.

There are two main aims of parental involvement/engagement that are explored in inspiring practices and related literature. One is the engagement of parents in the learning of their own children for better learning outcomes, the other is engagement in school life as a form of active citizenship [1].

2. Background Policy and Research

Several reports and studies confirm that significant obstacles still exist in the educational pathways of children with a migrant background in the educational systems of the EU Member States. Most EU Member States have developed, to some degree, educational policies for migrant children, however differences in the depths, extent and support of these measures show major differences (MEMA 2017). There are major differences between countries on the scale of considering all foreign-born population, as well as those children, whose parents were born abroad or third-country nationals only.

At the same time successful, mostly local or municipality-level initiatives show that there are effective solutions for these issues that are best tackled together. Some countries have implemented effective national policies for inclusion in education (e.g. in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Ireland, UK, Sweden), but the only country where there is a systemic approach to migrant parents' inclusion in place is Ireland, implemented by the national parents' association, NPC-p with financial support by the government.

All successful projects and initiatives in the field of parental involvement include an element that helps to overcome language barriers, many of them have a language learning offer component. As most parents with migrant background need to develop language skills to acquire a certain level of competence in the majority language of the country, these initiatives support inclusion of the parents themselves. However, successful, long-term engagement programmes often build on the acceptance of differences in languages, and value the use of mother tongue(s) in school settings.

Another type of programme that is in place in many local contexts is aiming at raising cultural awareness and create mutual understanding by that. Inviting parents into school settings to introduce their home cultures create more trust in school. This is especially important in the case of parents who have low levels of education or negative school experiences themselves. It is often necessary for school staff to leave their comfort zone and the school premises for successful outreach to parents with migrant background.

The most successful and best sustainable programmes (e.g. SEAs or Schools as Community Learning Centres) tackle the whole community as one, consider language and cultural differences, but offer a holistic solution.

3. Resources and Evidence

At the beginning of the project a user needs analysis and focus groups in the participating partners' countries were conducted, to identify the current status of parental involvement / engagement focusing on schools with migrant / refugee pupils, taking into consideration migrants' / refugees' mobility factor by using both, theoretical and empirical input; to this end there was conducted a literature review both at national and international level, to identify research work and good practices on this subject area. All these results are presented in the OSD User Needs Analysis Report [1] and summarises national policies and initiatives among the partnership concerning the parental engagement / involvement of migrant / refugee parents toward school life.

3.1 Outcome of Needs Analysis

Desk research analysis and focus groups findings [1] have led to a set of conclusions, categorised in the sections that follow; such grouping aims at presenting in a more concrete manner, what has to be taken into consideration, when designing OSD training framework on the one hand and on the other highlighting certain gaps that need to be covered.

- **Leadership:** Home-school interaction with refugees/recently arrived families are most effective when leaders ensure specific environmental conditions.
- **Underpinning principles:** Refugee/ recently arrived families and carers are most likely to feel included in home-school interaction when schools fulfil some requirements.
- **Priorities for Teacher development:** Home-school interactions with refugee/recently arrived parents work best when teachers are well prepared and have the opportunities to act in an appropriate way.

The Needs Analysis report was accepted for a paper presentation at the biennial conference of the European Research Network About Parents in Education (ERNAPE). Researchers from ERNAPE found the theoretical basis very solid and relevant. The activities presented from the training framework were understood as being in line with the underpinning principles and answering the challenges named in needs assessment.

The approach has been proven to be the right one, not only in view of discussion directly related to OSD, but it was also reinforced by research finding by others. Gill Crozier's new research with very involved migrant mothers clearly showed how important it is to assess attitudes and mindsets. Teachers, if not trained properly, are very often prejudiced against them, and it also has a direct impact on how teachers approach their children.

A programme established at the University of Malta is also based on research showing that there is a need for conscious, elaborate work on setting the right mindsets of teachers. In this respect a self-assessment when working with migrant parents can be a very useful starting point.

Several researchers are doing work on digital practices and their research also echoed OSD principles and also validated the work done in the project. Research shows that digital tools are widely used by newly arrived migrants, both parents and children, and their proficiency levels are often higher than that of teachers.

3.2 OSD Framework and Inspiring Practices

The OSD framework [2] developed enables teachers, either individually or collectively, to better support refugee or recently arrived children by helping them to develop more effective strategies for working with parents, carers and families. The framework enables teachers to:

Explore and evaluate

- Models of parental engagement: Joyce Epstein provides six types of parental involvement, including sample practices, challenges, redefinitions, and expected results [3]. Very important is the teachers' self-reflection phase, so as to understand where they stand, what is the current situation in their learning settings. With this knowledge they then can proceed with their own action plan [4].
- Social and cultural issues that impact particularly on the experience of refugee and recently arrived parents
- Issues related to literacy and digital skills that frame interactions between schools and refugee and recently arrived parents

Self-assess

- Their own communication capabilities and capacities and identify their own training needs – particularly in relation to digital literacy
- Their local context, identify needs and agree priorities and aspirations for development
- By undertaking collaborative analysis and evaluation of existing practices, successes and areas for development

Develop

- A personal learning action plan [4]
- Plans for class/year/school level development (dependent upon roles and responsibilities) that identify roles, structures, resources and training needs
- Success criteria that articulates and 'quantifies' aspirations for impact

- Strategies for development, interventions, programmes etc

- Approaches to bringing the wider community on board and working collaboratively with other teachers, managers, parents, governors and young people

- Structures to support successful implementation

- Approaches for securing adequate resources – people and supporting stuff

- A strategy for piloting and reviewing activities and understanding impact

Evaluate and review

- Activity and identify future goals and aspirations

The OSD framework also presents practices to illustrate possible implementations and might be used as starting point. Some of these practices are described hereafter in short. The **selection criteria** for inspiring practices can be as follows:

- Easy to implement and easy to adapt to (national) circumstances

- No extensive preparation and training required

- Positive feedback by users (schools)

- Good results and acceptance by target group

- Sustainability

- Success in local/regional environment

- Acceptance of stakeholders/partners

- Impact

Literacies

- **Promoting home language/mother tongue - Information provision in migrant spoken words** [IPA parenthelp.eu]

  For many migrant families school is the only official institution they have a constant contact with. In case the school manages to build a trustful relationship with parents, they are likely to turn to teachers for information not directly related to school. At the same time teachers are often not equipped with information. On top of that, very often vocabulary is also quite special, and migrant parents may not have the necessary set. Thus, ParentHelp was set up to help teachers use IT and provide information to parents. Information for parents of children of any age in fields of

education, health care, social care, citizenship, customs and traditions, travelling and many more are available in English, the majority language of the country as well as the most common migrant languages for most European countries.

- **Get Parents on Board with Social Media [IPA @Intl_parents]**

Parents can be tremendous advocates for 21st-century instructional approaches or formidable impediments to their use. It depends largely on how well the school conveys the fundamental principles of partnering to parents and stokes their enthusiasm with evidence of their child's success.

Schools need to engage parents in a dialogue about the world in which their children live, the knowledge and skills required for success in the new economy, and how education must use all of the tools at its disposal to assure success for all children. Parents need to talk with their kids frequently to hear about what they are doing in school, what they are learning, and how they are learning it.

One way to facilitate that conversation is to make sure that the school models the use of social media technology in communicating with parents, sharing information about students and their work, and soliciting engagement with parents and the community through new interactive technologies— Facebook, Twitter, blogs, wikis, and web pages. Some schools even provide podcasts, video clips, webinars, and video conferencing as a way of reaching the largest possible parent audience. Of course, these are best when they are actually produced by students—a sure way of getting maximum parent involvement.

- **Engaging Your School Community Through Social Media** [edutopia.org]

A school leader shares his strategies for connecting his community via the school website, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, WeChat, and staff blogs. Overall, the move toward digital engagement has been successful. The community is much more connected. The parents stay informed through our website and Facebook. The teachers interact and share through Twitter, and they continue to seek new ways to engage our community through the tools that are available to them.

Spaces and places

- **Inspiring space/place examples from the European Parents Association** [IPA]

Music as a means of connecting - This practice is an example from Dublin, Ireland. In a neighbourhood where a high percentage of parents were out of employment, and many of them had bad personal examples with their own schooling, the school head decided to make the school attractive for parents using music. It seemed to be a passion many parents shared, but they couldn't afford to buy musical instruments. Before the programme the school was surrounded by a double fence that he

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demolished and made the school open for parents. They used a room in the middle of the school building that can only be reached if you walk through and pass several classrooms, thus have a feeling of what schooling means to children. The room was equipped with a wide variety of musical instruments. Parents were told they can come and use them anytime when the school is open. Teachers were also encouraged to join the parents in their gap hours and play along, also using this opportunity to informally discuss matters around their children. The programme has helped to build a relationship and trust between parents and teachers, helped parents to overcome bad feelings about school, and helped children's learning.

Handicrafts afternoons for involvement - In this initiative the goal is to engage the parents in conversation in an environment they feel more comfortable. The example comes from Budapest, the original target group was Roma parents, but as it is based in skills most migrant mothers are likely to have, it is suitable for this target group, too. The school organises 2 handicrafts afternoons per year. They pre-finance necessary tools and material as well as refreshments. Parents are invited to spend the afternoon in the school producing objects (eg. bookmarks, greeting cards, decorative boxes, etc.) together with teachers that are then sold at a charity fair, the income covers preliminary costs and the extra is spent for improving something in the school chosen by the participants. The teachers participating in the handicraft activities always have a 'hidden agenda', they are prepared to steer the conversation by the table to discuss educational matters. This makes it possible for parents with low levels of education and often a very limited vocabulary to discuss issues related to their children in a non-threatening environment.

Reggio Children open all year - Reggio Children is a long-established kindergarten and primary school in Reggio Emilia. The school gates are open all year, children and young people are invited to use the sports grounds in the afternoons and during holidays. For older children and adults, the school building offers a café in the entrance area that looks like a typical Italian piazza. It is a meeting point for the local community, many of them migrants, and most without children in that school. Teachers organise sport contests for local youth (way beyond the schools' age group) that the parents are happy to attend as audience. They also often go to the café, so the centre became a local community hub where people go to spend time, meet and also to obtain information.

Communities and cultures

„We can't do without parents- and we won't do without parents." Parents' Office at Schulzentrum Am Stoppenberg, Hauptschule, Essen", GermanyWinner of the EPA ALCUIN award 2009 The parents' office was created and adapted to the special needs of this school: many children with a low socio-economic background and low educated parents. All parents were challenged to do their best and they supported the school for the educational process of their children. Parents experienced that they got support with their problems, answers to their questions.

E.g. serving snacks, tea during breaks, helping in the school library, offering playing games, tutoring workshops, supporting pupils individually, participating in the committee of school development and in cultural activities…

This approach also made it necessary to have sufficient space for parents and these activities. This led to new forms of voluntary involvement of parents, transparency, higher levels and more depth of communication and initiated training courses for parents and teachers about rights and duties, quality assurance, conflict management, nursing courses, support group for ADD/ADHD and many joint activities between parents, pupils and teachers.

- **Welcoming Refugee Children to Your School** [teachers.org.uk]

This page contains refugee teaching resources, booklists for primary and secondary teachers and useful websites which have been developed, used and shared by teachers for teachers, is help everyone show support for refugees, find out more about their experiences and make new connections in their communities.

The "Welcoming Refugee Children to Your School" guide (https://www.teachers.org.uk/sites/default/files2014/neu335-refugee-teaching-guide.pdf) provides information about ways in which you can create a refugee-friendly school, make an accessible curriculum and think about some principles of effective practice.

- **Parents as teachers** [IPA]

Parents act as lecturers and ambassadors of their own culture. A whole school day (4 – 6 hours) is dedicated to one country/culture/region. Parents present their country in many ways: they show their way of living, they appear in traditional clothes, sing traditional songs TOGETHER with the students, dance traditional dances, cook traditional meals, show traditional instruments, play typical games, tell fairy tales and other local stories, …

They give some basic geographical and historical information and/or descriptions of some customs and special professions in a way suitable for children.

The students can learn a few words in the mother tongue of these parents: yes, no, please, thanks, …

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Parents usually are proud to present their culture and the kids love these activities, because they interrupt the monotony of a "traditional" school-day. Parents feel acknowledged and the kids can learn a lot, although they do not realise these activities as learning units. Such an event can be a good example of playful learning.

4. Guidance for Training Curriculum Developers

Specific guidance for teachers and training curriculum developers can be found in this chapter.

How a school can use the OSD Training Framework?

Research evidence suggests that teachers and trainers generally prefer to plan and produce their own lesson plans and resources so as to work in ways that suit their own teaching styles and preferences and respond effectively to the needs of their students.

First, the teachers are trained in well-organised workshops based on the OSD training framework. The training workshop raises teacher's awareness about issues and debates in parental engagement including obstacles to successful engagement and the potential gains of an effective strategy. Each school should spend time identifying their own goals and exploring the issues and challenges specific to their context. They then design an intervention suitable for their school and an action plan that would help to implement their intervention. The implementation of the activity depended on the nature of activity, the type of school. A brief guide follows below on how to use the OSD training framework and included materials and implement interventions in the school.

STEP #1: Read carefully the OSD Training Framework

The OSD Training Framework comprises three modules that, taken together, enable teachers to explore and evaluate possible interventions for implementation in school context.

STEP #2: Design an Action Plan

Based on all the phases and materials of the OSD Training Framework, teachers will be able to design an appropriate and effective action plan, suitable for their school. The social media or tools that will be used should be known to parents. Undoubtedly if the parents are accustomed with the proposed tool(s) the action plan will be successful.

STEP #3: Implementation of the Action Plan

The final and most important step is the implementation of the action plan. Teachers should follow their action plan and try to engage the parents skipping the possible obstacles. The use of the proposed tools are compulsory.

5. Guidance for Policy Makers

Hereafter specific guidance for policy makers is described. The aim of this section is to present, based on project results, ideas and proposals for development of exploitation actions based on the experiences derived from OSD implementation.

Some of the most effective exploitation methods are centered on a number of points and methods which include:

Networking

- Adoption of the OSD training framework and materials in future national and international training academies for teachers and heads of schools, funded mainly through ERASMUS+ KA1 (School staff mobility).

- Presentation of the OSD project results to other educational providers in the EU that are interested in parental engagement. They will use OSD resources not only to support activities but also to improve the field of parental engagement.

- Development of linkage with local/national organisations and stakeholders

- Promotion of OSD results in European school networks

- Regular discussions with school leaders regarding parental engagement follow up activities based on OSD

- OSD project outcomes to be presented during suitable events dedicated to e-learning and innovative education – conferences, round tables, ICT training workshops etc.

Linkage to allied initiatives

- Collaboration with the Ministries of Education in order to reach the National educational systems about the OSD project and convince them to use project products.

- Collaboration with national and EU level education NGOs and institutions in order to integrate project training framework into their own activities, e.g.
  - Teacher Training Institutes
  - Continuous Professional Development providers
  - ESHA (European School Heads Association, https://www.esha.org/)
  - EUROCLIO (the European organisation of history and citizenship educators)
  - ATEE (Association for Teacher Education in Europe, https://atee.education/)

- AEDE (European Association of Teachers, http://www.aede.eu/)

▪ Ongoing reviews of trending issues in relation with parental engagement in collaboration with national and international parent organisations

▪ Enhancing profile (academic and applied) through further application of the OSD training framework and following this, further research on the issue of parental engagement through (social networking) tools

6. Success Stories

In the following sections certain cases of teachers that implemented some of OSD activities in their classroom in the partner's countries were presented.

In a specifically organised workshop, experiences parent leaders found the MOOC very comprehensive and suitable for the aims. Most of the activities appeared to be more useful for groupwork or as material to be used in a f2f training. They found that it would be a good idea to include recommendations to each activity on how it should be implemented, and also an estimated time requirement for completing a certain activity. It could foster self-initiated learning of individual teachers and groups of teachers.

The module on what parental engagement is and why it matters to teachers was found very interesting. The visualisation activity should work perfectly in groups as it is quite likely that at least one group member will be able to create a visual manifestation of their thoughts. For individual learning it would be great if there was an alternative for those who are more verbal, eg. a writing template.

In establishing vision and values the list of questions was found to be very well formulated and something that can lead to an action plan on managing change in relation to Vision and Values. However, it would be good to start with teacher development and community engagement needs and continue with the change management part. It would be also good to add an introduction that explains how to use the list of questions in a school context. We recommend asking school leaders to involve parent leaders in their thinking.

6.1 Spaces and Places

Digital Mapping (United Kingdom)

The school has started using digital maps to support parents in the local community. A map was formulated and used by the Family Link worker for a parent who was new to the area, showing them where the local foodbank was and how to get there. It was in this instance

used appropriately and successfully. The use of the map, is very much on an individual needs basis and the Family Link Worker is happy to use this with any families that require support.

The school are also working on a digital map for new student admissions in which they will include a printed map in their induction pack. The use of the digital map activity was also shared with the Community Development Worker who was looking to develop a map showing all the community venues. The school are planning to create their map in collaboration with Barnado's, a British charity founded by Thomas John Barnardo.

The map has yet to be transferred to the school website – but this is in the planning for Autumn 2019. The school provided a PDF version of one of the maps they have used with parents:
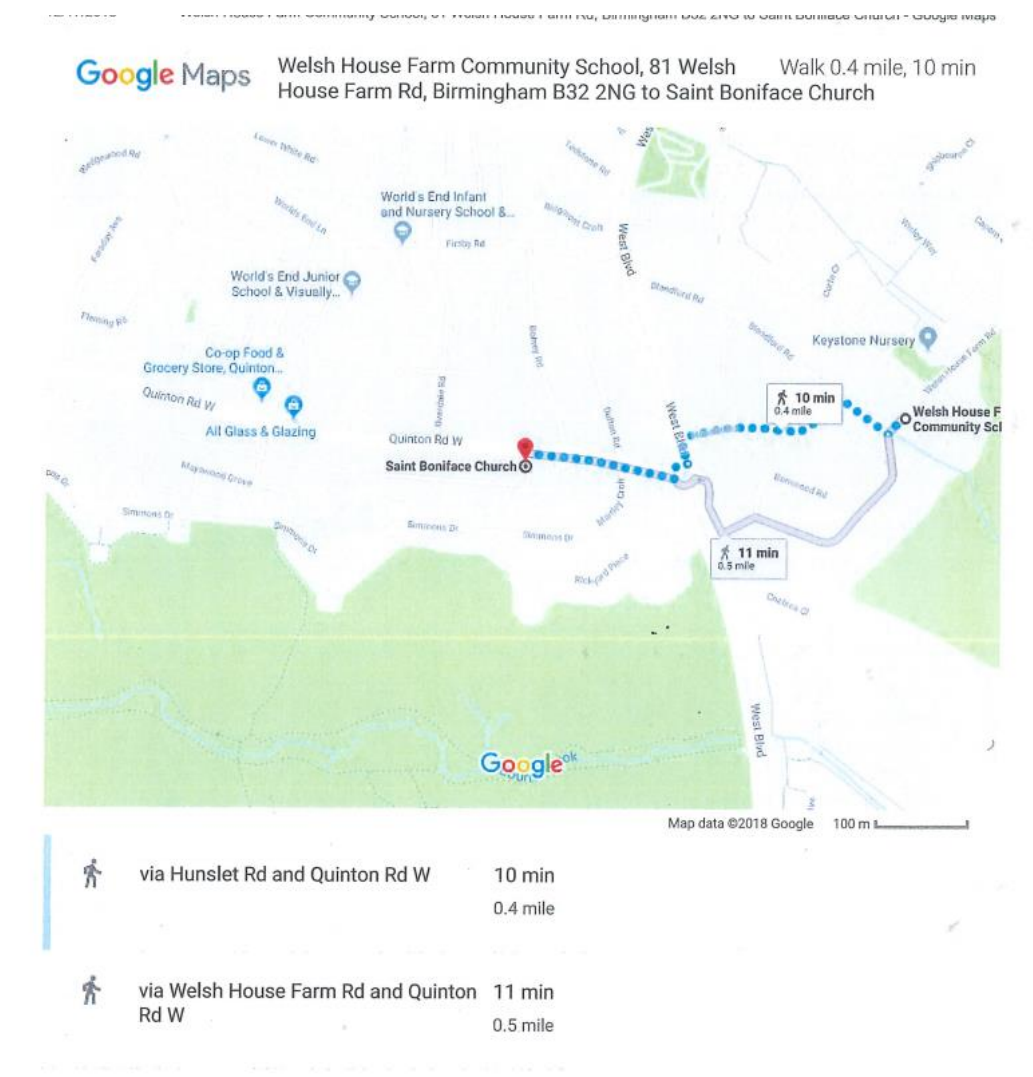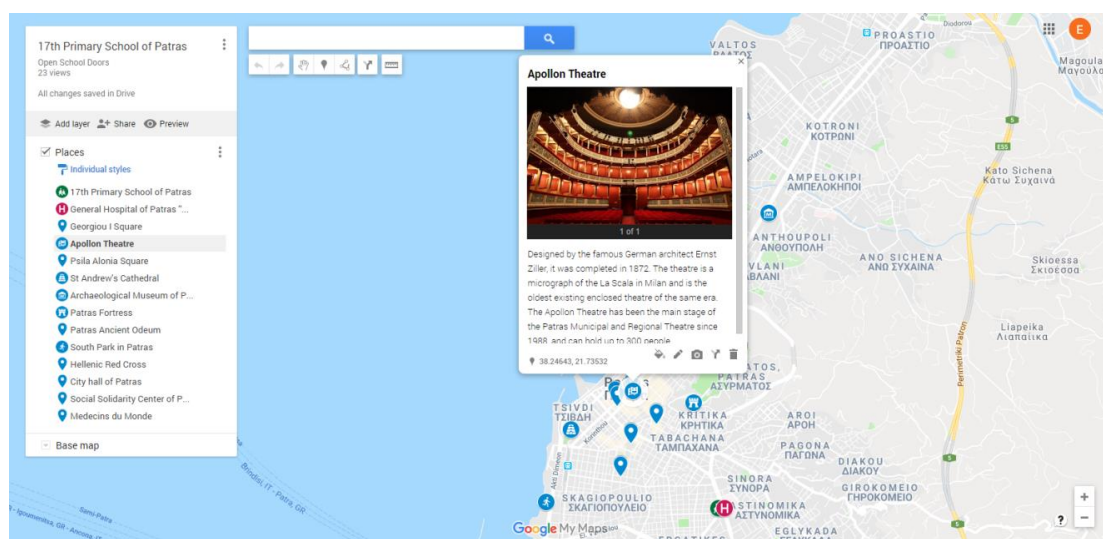

Digital Mapping with Google Maps

Digital Mapping (Greece)

Two of the participated schools from Greece –Patras choose the activity of Digital maps. In particular, the 17th Primary School of Patras as well as the 34th Primary School of Patras customized and implemented Digital maps in the following way:

The 17th Primary School of Patras identified 2 main needs: The respect to all students of all backgrounds and the possession of equal rights in education compared to the natives. In general, the school stated that the needs included: a) the collaboration & group work among teachers, parents and students, b) the improvement of school climate, and c) the improvement of migrant and refugee students' school performance.

The school chose the digital map as a mean to enrich the message to immigrant parent that they are welcome to school unity. In general, the objectives which covered by the selection of digital mar were: a) the parents' activation and participation, b) the families' encouragement and confidence, c) the students' school integration and e) the students' improvement at school.

The produced Digital Map contains landmarks of the city. Monuments, sights, and places for leisure activities. To some extent it tries to show the culture of the city to newly arrived parents. The creation of the digital map was intended to help parents discover places in the city which they did not know and generally to become part of the school community. The digital map was presented to the parents and a discussion was held on how it was looked.

The link to the digital map is:
https://drive.google.com/open?id=1qwrKmiIBgsCe39MKo9aXZ2B8UDMcjEfQ&usp=sharing

The Digital map had a positive impact to participated migrant parents. The parents are friendlier after the implementation of the activities. The implementation was the basis for a future cooperation and an indication that the school cares for them. The students were integrated into the school, because they can discuss about specific destinations with their friends and they don't feel alienated. Furthermore, parents stated that they wanted to know about some places in Patras, but nobody helped them. And the digital map activity was a positive progression. The map was printed and they shared it to others who were newly arrived in Patras. The most significant maybe was the improvement of school climate between parents and teachers.

The 34th Primary School of Patras identified as main needs the knowledge to be spread to every child and every family, regardless of colour, origin, religion and beliefs. Moreover, others identified needs were parents of students from other countries to feel familiar with the school environment and students and their families not to be divided into categories according to their nationality. In general, the school stated that the needs included: a) the collaboration & group work among teachers, parents and students, b) the development of empathy within the school community and c) the intercultural communication.

Thus, the schools choose digital map aiming at providing assistance to the parents of students from other countries. In general, the objectives which covered the selection of digital map for this school were: a) the parents' activation and participation, b) the students' school integration and c) the students' improvement at school.

The produced Digital Map has helped some parents even get to the school their children attend. The digital map contains hospitals, cultural venues, recreational sites, and attractions. Clicking on the map provides detailed information for each location. The user can access it either from a computer, mobile phone or tablet.
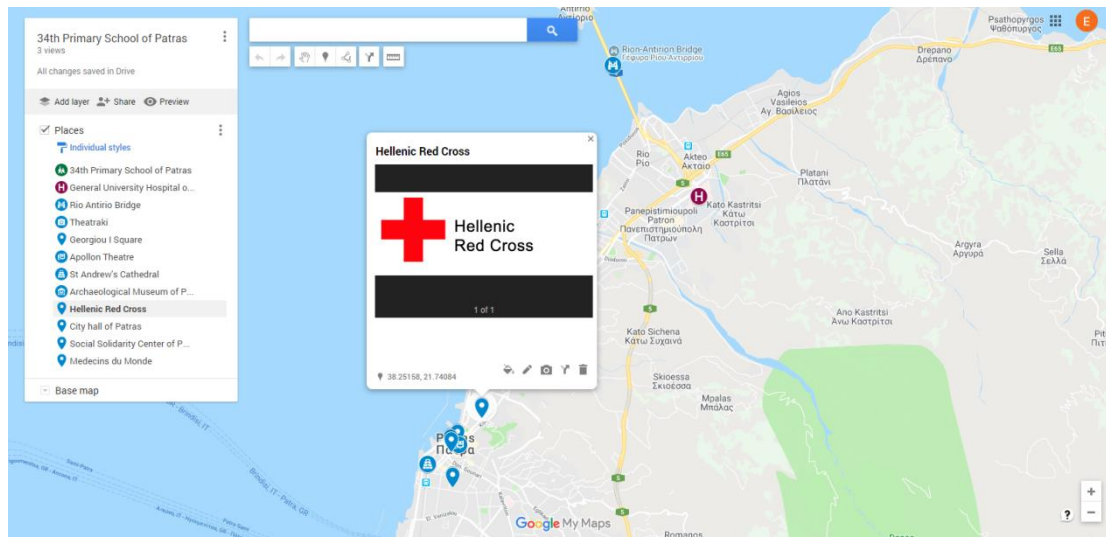
The link to the digital map is:
https://drive.google.com/open?id=1amKKseBCpnAFzHY_SzIlIMHJL5JHD1Bb&usp=sharing

The participated parents were very energetic. It seemed like they were having fun. General they felt familiar with the school and the teachers. They asked questions about specific places which they wanted to visit. Some of them wanted more details about the use of the digital map.

The main impact of the produced Digital Map was that parents felt comfortable. They were no longer alienated. They can now have a bigger contribution to educating their children. The action seemed interesting to colleagues, most parents accepted the challenge and came to the meeting. Some locals, who were more open-minded, suggested to their children to become friends with the refugees' children. A conflict-free school works best. So the normalization of situations through OSD was clearly an important step for the school climate. Maybe for some of the parents a bit demanding, but the whole process went smoothly. It was very significant that teachers and native parents cooperate with parents with a migrant background.

Interkulturelles Elterncafé / Intercultural Parents Café (Austria)

"Be yourself the change that you desire for this world." (Mahatma Gandhi)

Almost all of the participating schools offers the so called activity „Intercultural Parents Café". This project is a parental education program aimed at empowering parents in their

educational and educational skills, as well as the dialogue between the school and parents. The parents as well as the educational institutions are guided and supported by trained parents' café coordinators. In the process, experts will discuss certain topics relating to the school, such as: e.g. Austrian education system, learning to learn, language weaknesses, social media, health, bullying, pocket money, etc.

The individual parent cafés take place from October to June, once a month (2 hours each), mainly in schools but also in other educational institutions and cultural associations in Austria. This multi-dimensional program takes into account the development of children in relation to their environment and their family, with parents, educators and principals becoming partners for the promotion of children in Austrian education.

Impact targets:

- Strengthening educational and educational skills - parents learn to refine their educational and educational skills for the benefit of their children.
- Integration of parents into the school - through the involvement of parents in the school, a stable basis for cooperation (school-parent-child) is created.
- Strengthening the parents' work at the school and the intercultural opening of the school - the "Elterncafé" is an instrument to strengthen the school in its parenting work. The school gets a better access to the parents and thus also potential co-creators of everyday school life.
- Strengthening social and intercultural competences - through diversity, exchange and learning together within an intercultural framework, diversity is lived and social cohesion strengthened.
- Encouraging the social participation of parents who are particularly challenged because of their socio-economic and / or cultural background.

Some experiences from attendees and organisers of Intercultural Parents Cafés are listed below:

„(...) the parent café forms a communication bridge to the parents. The parents have the opportunity with our help to approach teachers regarding their children or to get tips on education questions. We then invite the teacher to the parents' café and, if necessary,

translate. In this way we were able to clear up misunderstandings and develop mutual understanding in the parents' café (...)."

"(...) parents are interested in the educational success of their children, but sometimes they face difficult hurdles and first have to organise and secure their lives. The language barrier is just a hurdle. Poverty, traumatisation through war experiences, persecution or flight with subsequent uncertainty regarding a secure residence in the asylum granting country are also mentioned here. Living with children is something that connects people across borders and the worries are similar everywhere. With the parents' café, we provide a sheltered space and continue to help where we can (...). "

https://www.integrationsfonds.at/fileadmin/content/AT/Downloads/Publikationen/OEIF_Folder_Elternarbeit2016_WEB1.pdf

From the parent leaders' perspective, making a film is a great idea, it offers teachers the possibility to re-introduce themselves with spaces they take for granted. The questions support this approach to watch through fresh eyes. It would be beneficial to add recommendations to the text on either filming an empty building or filming when both students and family are present (eg. beginning or end of the day). If the latter is chosen, there should be a recommendation on informing people about the aim of filming and the fact that it will not be shared, so there is no need for permission.

6.2   Literacies and Digital Literacies

Mama lernt deutsch! (Austria)

Another implemented activity of the participating schools is „Mama lernt Deutsch!" ("Mum learns German!"). They organise and provide courses on basic skills including childcare, conducted by the NGO „Station Wien".

The basic skills classes are mostly held in kindergartens and schools in Vienna. Mothers get to know their children's institutional environment and make new contacts at school or in kindergarten. The classes focus on educationally disadvantaged women whose first language is not German. Mothers, who need to expand their basic skills, have the opportunity to learn German in this class with everyday topics such as kindergarten, school, education, work, health, authorities, and housing. Lectures and excursions on these topics are also included in the class. If women have originally learned reading and writing in a different alphabet, they have the opportunity to learn the Latin alphabet in this class. Childcare is provided throughout the classes.

Objectives are:

- Expanding basic skills in German, maths and ICT
- Improving communication with the children's school and/or kindergarten
- Learning how to better help children how to learn

Link: https://www.stationwien.org/projekte/mama-lernt-deutsch.html

Flipchart discussion (Germany)

The importance of using the flipchart-discussion is becoming more and more important. Especially after long PowerPoint presentations. Flipchart is an ideal additional tool for using PowerPoint and serves, first of all, the gradual development of information.

After Power Point presentation each group should to find solutions in the small groups to the cases which were found during the survey.

Subsequently, the results were presented to the plenary. There was a constructive discussion in which many options for the integration of parents with a migration background were proposed.

Gradually developing ideas on a flipchart, participants of the OSD trainings were able to get involved and increased attention. And also, Flipcharts allowed spontaneity and express their opinion.

As a result of this method, information is better integrated.

Working Online with the VLE (Germany)

A virtual learning environment (VLE) in OSD trainings was used based on the web platform for the digital aspects. Online tutorial on XOODLE was presented. Participants got the opportunity to explore the platform either on the digital whiteboard or by using their own laptops. VLE as a best virtual learning allows access to and use of learning resources from other OSD partners. As some teachers mentioned it helps to the lesson planning and activate the participants of parents at the school life. Participants of the OSD training had also chance to watch videos and to learn more about neighbors.

With regards to literacies and especially digital literacy the dedicated section was found to be perfect by experiences parent leaders for teacher reflection necessary to achieve the core aim of the project. It would probably be beneficial to also include exploration questions on digital technology use of children, parents and other family members. The Literacies section mostly ask teacher to review their own communication skills and practices.

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6.3   Communities and Culture

Digital communication/social media (United Kingdom)

To increase parental engagement via social media is still challenging at Welsh House Farm School. The school feels strongly that their parents rely on face-to-face communication to nurture the relationships that they have within their school community. Social media works to some extent and the school are still working to develop this. However, the school have seen the implications of relying solely on digital media; they find it to be less personal and therefore limiting the engagement of parents. To engage their parents requires a huge amount of personal encouragement that is face-to-face, alongside paper fliers for events and school letters.

In terms of messages/notices and communication about the running of school, they do use Twitter, Facebook and since the start of their involvement in Open School Doors they have started to use an app called Parent Mail. Twitter is primarily used to reach out to the wider community. They have 83 followers (including around 50 parents) and this includes local counsellors and Members of Parliament. Facebook, however, has not had much engagement or interest. The school assumes that parents prefer face-to-face engagement, and the wider community and external agencies appear to be more interested in the use of Twitter.

Uptake for the Parent Mail app has been slow and, in some cases, expensive because of the take up. 90% of parents receive text messages (which costs the school money) and 34% of parents signed up to the app (sending them a free email). The app would be cost effective if the uptake was better.

Social Media and digital communication are a whole school issue and needs to be developed over time and in response to the ever-changing nature of their highly mobile school community.

In the Autumn 2019 term they will have the opportunity to ensure that parents have provided them with correct phone numbers and emails, and ensure that they know about their Twitter and Facebook accounts. Considering the dynamics of the school and community, the school's relationships with parents and families are vitally important, and being a one-form entry, the

school is small enough to know families on a personal level and therefore they are more likely to engage in activities, to the benefit of the children, when the school has face-to-face meetings and communication. Digital communication and social media is merely a supplementary way of communicating with their parents, and one that they will continue to develop in the coming academic year.

Cultural calendar (United Kingdom)

As a result of the project the college have created their own idea - a cultural calendar in collaboration with their ESOL students (English to Speakers of Other Languages). The calendar has now been made a college-wide focus and will be embedded across the whole college and has so far been used as a planning tool for the whole year in the ESOL department. Therefore, it has completely changed their overall practice and approach - e.g. not just acknowledging 'Refugee Week' but rather making refugee cultures embedded within whole curriculum and teaching. They have strived to raise awareness with both students and staff to ensure that they do not miss anything when planning (for example: ensuring appropriate food is available for all students; that relevant displays highlight cultural activities throughout the academic year). The college are using their cultural calendar as a learning tool for all students and staff. The college have taken lots of initiatives of their own following their participation in OSD including: a Ramadan football event on a Friday night which brought together a wide variety of people from the college; cross-cultural Friday prayers which are open to everybody. They talked about the way their cultural calendar has made them think about refugee issues in a broader way and not tokenism (e.g. not just Refugee Week…. they are making it Refugee Year on a continued basis). Overall, they spoke of working to create an atmosphere where students can come and make requests in terms of what they want to see acknowledged and what activities they want to happen and to raise awareness across the college of real issues.

Since participating in OSD the college have also joined up with Francis from Erdington Academy (another school in the project) and shared their cultural calendar with the school as well as doing visits to one another's school/colleges to look at ESOL provision for newly arrived refugee children and young people. There has therefore been a linking institution to share inspiring practices.
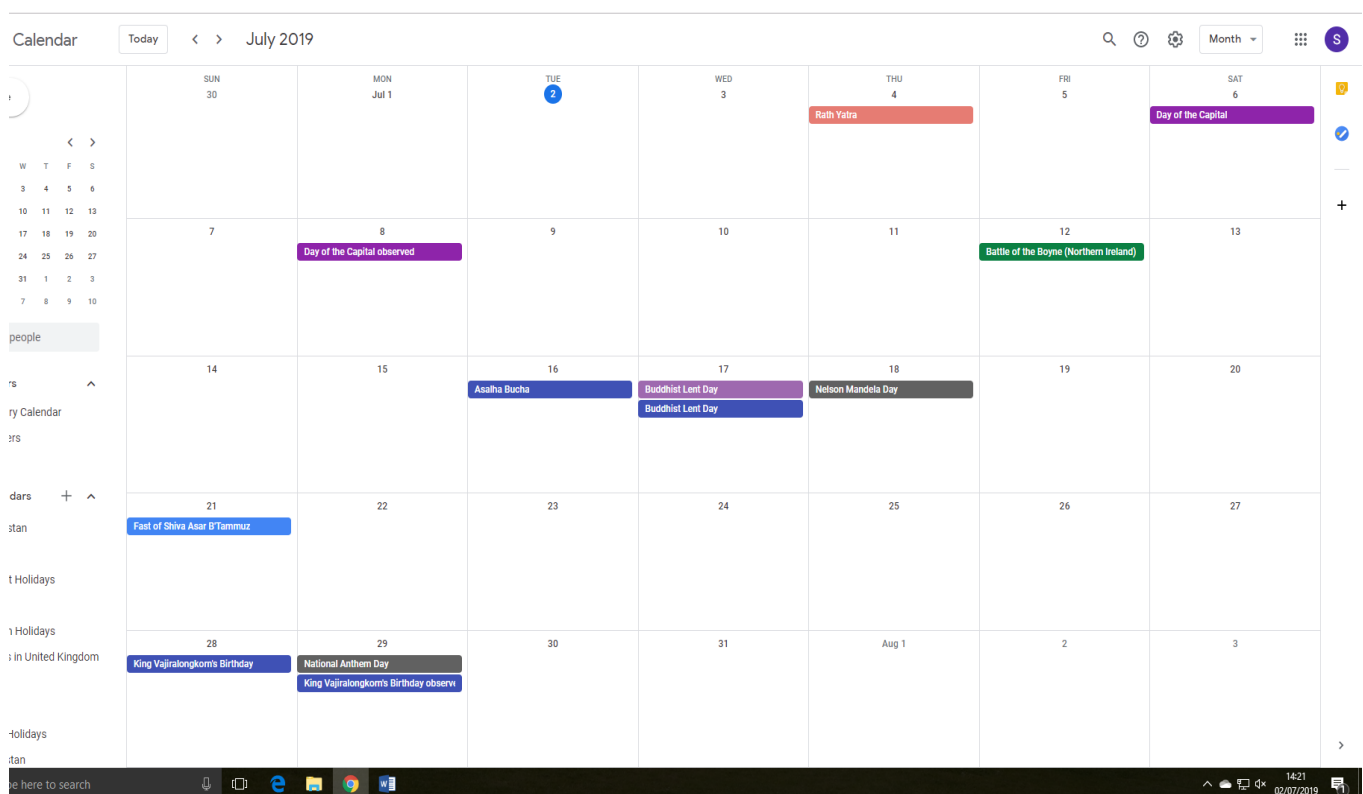
Screenshot of cultural calendar which has been created on google mail and is now used as a curriculum planning tool.

Mystery objects (Greece)

Playing with mystery objects is a great way for participants to talk and think. The game encourages observation and discussion skills and can give a practical introduction to a topic.

A series of objects, the use of which is not obvious to most people. Mystery objects give clues to their identity through their design, shape, material or age. Items should not be old or expensive. There are many modern mystery gadgets. The best places to look for them are the stores that sell kitchenware, pharmacies and grocery stores. Ideally you should look for items that are used by different cultures or that have to do with the customs of the country / place where the attendees are located.

Circle the group. Begin by passing the mystery object around the group and ask each person to make a comment about it. For example, participants could indicate its colour or weight

(heavy or light). Allow only statements about properties that you can see, hear, smell or feel at this stage.

While the first phase is about observation, the second is about interpretation. Pass the object again and ask each participant to say a phrase about how the object was operating, that is, what it might possibly be used for.

Did you analyse what the object is? Summarize statements and make it easy for the team to draw conclusions. Depending on the group, the discussion between the participants may begin before you reach the whole group - this is acceptable when it is already clear what the object is.

Ask if anyone knows and / or uses similar objects or tools in their daily lives. Do these tools work the same or in a different way? If you were able to collect and prepare different designs in advance (eg different types of nutcracker), show them to the participants and compare them. Can you find out which technical and / or physical principles apply?

Working together

In the Second Chance School of Korydallos, the "mystery objects" activity was implemented with the participation of 8 parents. Various items were presented to students, without telling them their use. Students discuss the possible use of items and try to guess how they might be used. In the case of Second Chance School, students are imprisoned, they are of refugee and migrant origin and most of them are parents. There is a real need for the development of empathy within the school community, intercultural communication and encouragement of tolerance, acceptance and dialogue.

The activity resulted in increased activation and participation of parents and cultural osmosis and understanding. Due to the special character of this school unit, no live media were used, everything was in paper. The participating teachers were encouraged to test the applicability of OSD activities to different national and cultural contexts.

Multisensory experience (Greece)

This activity is aimed to work especially well. if you bring people from different cultural background. It can work as an activity for families in a parents' meeting, it can work well as a first introduction to a team of people who plan to work together or a first day in the classroom. The aim of the discussion is for the facilitator/teacher to point out the importance of bringing down prejudices and stereotypes that people may have before meeting each other. We are made out of memories from the places we have been, the food we have tasted, the things that we have acquired and what is special to each person might not necessarily relate to where she/he was born and so on.

In our case, we devoted less time to this activity than it was foreseen, however it gave us the opportunity to discuss its potential, how educators could work with such a scenario, the possible variations and the interaction both with students and parents; all agreed that both exemplary activities are very useful, easy to implement and offer to the educators the opportunity to engage people belonging to different cultures in a very smooth and effective manner.

Discussing the activity

WHAT YOU NEED

Communicate with your participants in advance of the meeting and invite them to bring with them the following:

- One photo of a location that means something to them (they can either print it and bring it with them, send it to you in advance or bring it on a memory stick),

- One taste that they really like (food, drink, dessert)

- A smell that they are very fond of (you can give them ideas to understand what is meant by suggesting spices, coffee, perfume, plant and so on)

- An object that participants can touch that means something to them

Ideally the space should be prepared in a form that it is inviting and not very official. Put chairs in a big circle, have space behind each chair for people to place what they have brought. Depending on the size of the group this activity may work.

You need to clear the room from tables. You need to have chairs that people can move them easily. Ideally for the minimum amount of people (6 people) you need about 10 chairs to have enough to create eventually the circle.

Ask participants to present first their photo to the others. Why did they choose this one? Why is this place special to them? Once this is done move to the smells, the objects, the spices. People can stand up and move around to the 'table' of each person who is presenting what he/she has brought

Group discussion, if this activity takes place in a classroom setting, photos and object can remain in one corner of the room. This way the room becomes more relevant, more familiar for the participants.

Puzzle (Greece)

The 17th Primary School of Patras customized and implemented an additional activity proposed by OSD, the Puzzle

The school wanted to be an open school to the community, which eliminates any inequalities. It wanted also to develop the empathy within the school community as well as the intercultural communication.

The schools choose the Puzzle in order to cover the following objectives: a) the parents of students who come from other countries get closer to the educational community b) to increase the cultural osmosis and understanding.

The Puzzle implanted as following: The participants try to solve their puzzle, but they will soon realize that it is impossible. Sooner or later they begin to look around and they need to cooperate with the other groups, exchange pieces and eventually solve the problem. This process works quicker in some groups than in others. At the end the facilitator pinpoints that first of all cooperation without speaking the same language (or without speaking at all) is challenging, but feasible.

Someone doesn't need to speak the same language in order to cooperate with other people. The participants also needed to understand the importance of looking around them; each group had to realize they couldn't just solve the problems by themselves. They needed to cooperate and exchange certain pieces, to complete the puzzles.

The parents who participated were 10, divided into 2 groups of 5 groups of 5 people each. An important moment was when everyone in the end managed to solve the puzzle and find out in fact, cooperation is vital to solving problems that cannot be solved individually.

Parental involvement in the puzzle we thought could lead to Awareness of necessity working with them balances for resolving common issues.

The participated parents realized the positive elements of the co-operation to achieve a common goal. Their contribution was very important, because without them the activity would not have been possible. Every one of them was very pleased and they engage in this activity with native parents, so the cultural osmosis and understanding could be mentioned.

The Puzzle has a positive impact to participated parents since it helped them to realize that cooperation is significant and if they are part of a big team, then the problems can be solved in easy way.

SCHOOLFOX (Austria)

During the workshop in Vienna the new OSD framework and some inspiring practices from different regions in Austria were presented. One of those inspiring practices was SchoolFox. Afterwards some of the participating teachers contacted the facilitators for more information.

SchoolFox is an app for mobile phones, which facilitates sending sick notes, school information, photos, documents and parent letters the digital way, directly on the smartphone

or computer in 40 languages. This tool has been chosen to be implemented in all compulsory schools in one of the federal provinces of Austria (Lower Austria).

Subsequently representatives of SchoolFox together with head of schools and teachers developed an action and implementation plan for their schools tailored to their individual needs. We got some feedback from the teachers which implemented SchoolFox in their daily activities at school.

"Schoolfox is a handy app that makes school life a lot easier. Communicating with parents works faster than through a bulletin board, reducing time and copying costs significantly. Especially for short-term and current events, the app is perfect. Much of the everyday administrative chaos is eliminated by the use of Schoolfox, what could be better"

"In addition to a quick and easy exchange of information, SchoolFox offers me a clear overview of all appointments and information releases and thus makes it much easier for me to handle parental work. Above all, I see this app as an added asset to the smooth communication between legal guardian and teacher."

"SchoolFox greatly facilitates my work as a teacher. Communication with parents is efficient, fast and uncomplicated. I and the parents can react immediately to current events. My school day starts much more relaxed and enjoyable, since the pasting of parent letters and checking the signatures omitted. The App SchoolFox stands for a new quality in communication between school and parents, a great thing!"

"From the beginning I was excellently cared for and got to know this innovative app and the great team behind it. The advantages are manifold: I reach parents immediately and not at the end of the day, when the children show the bulletin. You can react immediately. For trainings, a short-term change to the timetable can be announced. From the project week all parents got an information with photo that we are well. Saving paper and copies is also a valuable contribution. I do not want to give up the app anymore!"

In the section about communities and culture the parent leaders found great opportunities for mapping the community a school is working with. When it mentions 'collaboratively', it would be a good idea to recommend involving children and parents in the mapping process. The follow-up questions are comprehensive enough to plan and execute an action plan. An alternative (or supplementary) activity could be the Successful Educational Action (SEA) planning tool.

Lego Serious Play (LSP) (Germany)

We know LSP from childhood but nowadays the Lego Serious Play, the colorful parts are also used in the teaching context, such as development and teambuilding. Therefore, OSD Team at the TU Dresden decided to use this teaching method during their training with students and teachers. LSP gave a chance to participants to express their vision about parent's collaboration

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with teachers at the schools. Each group show how they see the best way for cooperation and which role plays every stakeholders and partners.

This method complies with the OSD Action Plan. The Lego sets were provided by the Media Center of the TU Dresden. Included were five sets, which could be used to create life-like situations. Participants were confronted with the task to present a situation known to them, in which the roles of teachers, parents and children with a migration background were represented. A challenge here was the partly missing practical experience of the participants. In particular, the students who already teach at schools were prominent. In groups where only students with no experience were represented, they were asked to imagine a situation they would see in the future. At first, the students worked very goal-oriented and created creative perspectives on the situations and associated challenges that they will encounter in the future. At the end of the working phase, however, it became clear that the Lego bricks were also used to play far away from the task.

The LSP method promotes innovation performance. Experience shows that this kind of "hands-on" experience supports a deeper understanding of processes and easy recognition of opportunities. LSP basically works with the principle of complexity reduction through metaphors: the simplified representation of complex and important problems or structures helps us to recognize starting points and to develop solutions. The brain focuses exclusively on the specific issue or question. There are no correct or wrong answers. LSP solves the problem that everyone understands things differently by visualizing questions and ideas.

Most participants of the trainings evaluated this method with a high score.

Networking with intercultural initiatives – the Cafe Halva Partnership (Germany)

During the OSD trainings were invited members of the intercultural project "Cafe Halva". This project was founded August 2016, 16 women - Afghanistan, Chechnya, Syria, Georgia and Algeria - bake sweet and savory delicacies from their various countries of origin.

The majority of women have a refugee background and no school and / or vocational qualification recognized in Germany. This complicates integration in the primary labor market. The "Café Halva" gives women an appreciation of their work and, at the same time, an opportunity to prepare for possible employment, to gain practical experience and to gain experience in reconciling work and family life.

In informal part of the training, participants had chance to share with experiences. Participants of the training were very happy to taste some cookies made by women of the project.

Networking with state programmes – the in-service teacher training approach

Among the participants were invited also workers of the German Ministry for Education (LaSub). It was a gut exchange of experience on a macro level though handouts and guidelines. Teachers were informed about state programmes and offers.

At the end of training, OSD trainers were invited to organize such kind of retraining courses for the teacher from other schools of Dresden. It was agreed subject "Cooperation with the parents with migration background at the schools" to include at the teaching program for retraining organized by the ministry of education.

Annex – Parent Guide

From a parent leaders' perspective the Parent Guide is a very important tool. This is already used by most participants, not only those coming from schools where OSD trainings and activitites are already taking place. This is a useful tool not only for parents to understand what to expect from an OSD school, but it can also be used for parent advocacy in order to implement the teacher training in a school.

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