



Project begin 28/12/2008

Project end

Country of residence Greece

City

Abstract (EN)

Polydromo is an inter-university educational and research group focusing on the issue of language contact, bilingualism and multicultural education in cooperation with educators, parents, communities and local authorities. Its activities (i.e. multilingual publications, projects, conferences, workshops etc) aim to promote languages, cultures and migrant identities.

'Dialogos' was a project implemented between January and June 2011 that aimed to promote and reinforce the cooperation between school and migrant parents and their communities. <http://www.polydromo.gr/dialogos/index.html>

The 'Greek-Arabic project' (2011) promoted the contact between the two cultures and their languages in Greece, and aimed to build knowledge on the Arabic language and culture and dissolve stereotypical images of young learners <http://www.polydromo.gr/ellhnoaraviko/ellhnoaraviko.html>

Issue/challenge and goals/assumptions

'Dialogos' was based on research evidence in Greece and accounts of teachers and migrant parents about the gap in their communication. The project produced and disseminated multilingual educational and informational material regarding matters of schooling and pedagogy in early-years education. The subjects were identified through preliminary research on the interests of migrant parents. The material was written and produced in the dominant and three community languages (Greek, Albanian, Russian and Arabic) while English has been deployed occasionally as lingua franca. The project utilised theories on bilingualism, learner identities, cognitive development and intercultural education.

The 'Greek-Arabic project' stemmed from the need to empower and promote the cultural and bilingual identities of students with a Lebanese background in affiliating schools. The project fits with the initiative 'Thessaloniki: crossroad of cultures' by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism. It combined research, school interventions, art projects, a 3-day conference and a book publication. The project implemented bilingual and intercultural educational theories, learner identity theories and inclusive pedagogies.

How does it work?

'Dialogos' involved research on the informational needs and interests of migrant parents regarding the education of their children. A subject list was created and a team of specialist academics, researchers and teachers were deployed to produce the content of informational leaflets. The material (in 5 languages) was published in online (open-access) and print forms; the latter were disseminated at participating schools. The subject areas were: 'I get informed about education', 'I learn about my child', 'Family activities' and 'Informational material'. Guidelines to teachers and parents were provided through the project's website.

The 'Greek - Arabic project' included: research on the knowledge and stereotypical images of the Arabic culture in two Greek classrooms (primary and nursery); teaching of the Arab culture through alphabet and script, children's literature, art, cuisine and music; the creation and exhibition of children's paintings inspired by Arabic fairytales; the production of Greek-Arabic educational material; the 3-day conference 'Crossroads of Languages and Cultures: learning beyond classroom', the 3rd devoted to research about the Arabic world; the publication of the Greek-Arabic-English children's book 'My first book on bilingualism: between the Greek and Arab worlds'.

Results

'Dialogos' managed to make information accessible to parents who, due to their language challenges, were hindered. Awareness was raised about the issues obstructing school-parent relation; teachers were sensitized on matters of bilingualism, inclusion and communication, while parents were empowered. Participant teachers and parents found the project a useful tool in opening up communication channels.

The 'Greek-Arabic project' unpacked the stereotypical images Greek students have about the Arab world and had the chance to dissolve and replace them with new knowledge. The identities of the students of Arabic background were empowered. Awareness was raised about bilingualism and multicultural education in early-years and primary education, as well as the use of multimodal texts in teaching and learning. Students, teachers and parents participating shared very positive views.

Evaluation

'Dialogos' was assessed by teachers and parents that have primarily used the material (about 100). Individual interviews and a questionnaire (in the project's languages) were used as methods. Users of the online material were invited to give us feedback on a particular form. The project was opened to critical views by the academic and teaching community at the conference 'Crossroads of Languages and Cultures: learning beyond classroom' (8-10 May 2011, Faculty of Education, Thessaloniki). The results were very positive. The informational content was found to be helpful. On the downsides, lack of printing facilities at schools (lack of paper/toner) was brought up as a hindrance to the project.

The 'Greek-Arabic project' was assessed by teachers, children and parents. Interviews with participating teachers and parents were conducted, as well as in-classroom observations. The project was disseminated to teachers and researchers in Lebanon. The project was opened to critical views by the academic and teaching community at the 3-day conference. The project was received very positively, both regarding individual activities and as a whole. The children's trilingual book, in particular, was characterised as an innovation for the Greek context. The strength of the project was the combination of different views and aspects of the Arabic culture, in order to avoid reproduction of stereotypical images.

Who will benefit?

Target audience

- AGE
 - 40-65
 - 25-40
 - 18-25
- RESIDENCE STATUS
 - 2nd/ 3rd generation
 - Permanent residents

Source of funding and resources used

'Dialogos' had 1500 immediate beneficiaries in 3 Greek cities (Thessaloniki, Athens and Ioannina), while another 5000 have visited the online material.

The 'Greek-Arabic project' had about 3000 beneficiaries.

Both projects are available online with no possibility of predicting the number of persons reached

Organisation

Polydromo: group and periodical for bilingualism and multiculturalism in education and society

Contact person

Roula Tsokalidou

Function

Head/official representative, Associate Professor, Department of Preschool Education, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Website

<http://www.polydromo.gr>



Thematic

- **SOCIAL COHESION**
 - Social inclusion
- **EDUCATION AND CULTURE**
 - School education
 - Language competencies
 - Intercultural dialogue including interreligious dialogue
 - Cultural activities and diversity
- **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUALITY**
 - Positive action