

LLP Comenius RESCUR Project - First Consortium Meeting

24th January 2013 (9:00 – 17:00)

Location: University of Malta (Education Boardroom)

Attended:

Sweden: Charlie, Birgitta

Italy: Roberta, Assunta

Portugal: Celesta, Paula

Greece: Anastasios, Marisa

Coatia: Renata

Malta: Carmel, Paul

Introduction of Members:

- Prof. Carmel Cefai (Malta) - Head of Department of Psychology and Director of the EuroCentre for Educational Resilience at the University of Malta. Main role for this project comes from the Euro-Centre for Educational Resilience.

- Prof. Paul Bartolo(Malta)- Department of Psychology University of Malta, Main interest is in inclusive education . Trained teachers as inclusive educators (produced a teacher's handbook).

- Celest (Portugal) - Faculty of Human Kinetics (Dept. of Education) Research Centre for Health Promotion, Worked on Resilience. Quantitative and Qualitative study (funded by the National Foundation for Research) developing a program for the promotion of resilience in the lessons with special educational needs.

- Paula (Portugal) - Works a lot with Celest and was also involved in Peer Mentoring Programs.

- Anastasios (Greece) - University of Crete. He is a School Psychologist, implementing socio-emotional learning, involved with parent- training, kindergarten prevention problems, in socio-emotional learning. Working on a new model for training school psychologist, how to consult with teachers in terms of consultation and student problems. In the last couple of years was also involved with parent training.

- Marisa (Greece)- Child psychologist, dealing with kids with socio-emotional problems and provides

counseling sessions. Currently providing Socio-emotional learning among kindergarten children.

- Renata (Croatia) - Head of Psychology Department at Zagreb University, Psychologist, Chair of ENSEC, Chair of ENSEC (ZAGREB) Conference
- Charlie (Sweden) - Professor in Public Health, Main interest: implementation research, Socio-emotional learning very much linked to this, 'Health & Learning' in Sweden.
- Birgitta (Sweden)- Orebro University, Psychotherapist and Psychologist and Special Health teacher. Conducted Qualitative & Quantitative Evaluation, been working on Socio-emotional problems for the past 20 years.
- Roberta (Italy)- University of Pavia, Researcher & Family Psychotherapist, Coordinator of Italian Lab of Giftedness. Worked on Emotional Development and to support families of these children. Worked on Resilience with family. Work with addicted people by using a resilience framework
- Assunta (Italy) – Professor of Developmental Psychology, Pavia University; areas of specialisation: developmental psychology, Social Emotional development, Language Developmental and Speech Comprehension.

Main Project Deliverables:

- 3 sets of programs (each one building on each other- interrelated)
- Curriculum (spiral & developmental) – to create 1 UNIVERSAL curriculum with addition OPTIONAL curriculum (ex: specifically targeting ROMA people – focused specifically upon a social context).
- Each set will include a teacher handbook (the idea is that the teacher will be teaching the curriculum), classroom resources and as well as a parent's handbook.
- The idea is that the Resilience curriculum will be a core part of the school curriculum. Each week a lesson will be held (based on the resilience curriculum).

Project Plan:

Year 1: Development of the program. A tentative draft will be developed of the following:

- a. The Universal Curriculum
- b. Optional Curriculum
- c. Parents' manual & Class room resources (will be developed at a later stage)

Year 2:

- a. Piloting of the project
- b. Translation of the draft into our own purposes (for EU purposes)

Each country will be implementing

- Translation
- Training of trainers (Greece) where 1 member from each country will go to Greece for training.
- Each trained person will then train 20 teachers (to implement within 6 weeks). After the training there will be the evaluation.

Year 3:

- Continuing finalizing the piloting
- Evaluation of all countries together
- Once we do that we translate it and produce it in various forms.
- Each country will organize a national conference in order to promote the project in their country.
- Finalizing the curriculum and present it to the EU Commission.

Each country will have €500 for resources expenditure (i.e. handbooks, packaging & materials).

Work Packages:

- **Work Package 1: Project Management**

Coordinator – Malta, Greece Critical Friend¹ (CF)

- **Work Package 2: Curriculum**

2a) Core Universal Resilience Curriculum

Overall Coordinator – Malta, Sweden (CF)

2b) Early Years Curriculum

Overall Coordinator - Greece, Croatia (CF)

2c) Primary School Curriculum

Malta, Sweden, Italy (Early Primary), Portugal (Late Primary)

¹ Role of Critical Friend – will be providing consultation and reviewing/ providing feedback.
The Coordinator – will be having the main role of the activity.

- **Work Package 3: Optional Resilience Curriculum**

Overall Coordinator- Italy, Portugal (CF)

3a) ROMA students

Overall Coordinator– Croatia, Portugal (CF)

3b) Refugee students

Overall Coordinator – Malta, Sweden (CF)

3c) Disability & Learning

Overall Coordinator – Greece, Portugal (CF)

3d) Gifted students

Overall Coordinator – Italy, Malta (CF)

- **Work Package 4: Parents' Handbook**

Overall Coordinator – Croatia, Portugal (CF)

4a) Early Years

Overall Coordinator – Croatia, Italy (CF)

4b) Primary School

Overall Coordinator – Greece, Sweden (CF)

4c) Optional Manual

Overall Coordinator – Italy, Malta² (CF)

- **Work Package 5: Curriculum Piloting**

5a) Translation of Curriculum

² The number of days for this work activity may be distributed/coordinated among the four (4) sets of partners (OPTIONAL).

Overall Coordination - All Partners will be involved

5b) Training of Trainers

Overall Coordinator – Greece, Croatia (CF)

5c) Training of Teachers

Overall Coordination – All Partners will be involved for the training of 20 teachers for each country. Teachers must be from a combination of both Early and Primary. Training for teachers should ideally be staged/process training.

Deadlines / Target Dates:

- **31st December 2013:** First draft of the Universal & Optional curriculum must be ready. (The Universal and Optional Curriculum must be created at the same time). (The Parents' Manual can be created at a later stage)
- **January –February 2014:** Translations ready
- **February 2014:** Piloting and Training of Trainers
- **April 2014:** Training of Teachers (staged approach)
- **August – September 2014:** Implementation & Piloting (Pilot will take 6 weeks i.e. till end of November 2014).
- **February 2015:** Evaluation of the Pilot
- **June 2015:** Each Work Package must be ready and finalized (i.e. Curriculum modified, evaluation etc.)
- **September 2015:** External Evaluation
- **September / October 2015:** National Conference to be held in each country to promote the Project.
- **December 2015:** Submission of all products to the EU Commission

The project will adopt a holistic approach and a multi-level framework: child-class/teacher – whole school – family.

The General Framework for the curriculum at both Universal & Optional levels:

3 sets of programs (Each program will have a curriculum):

- 1) Kindergarten
- 2) Early Primary

3) Late Primary

Despite the fact that the emphasis and rationale of the project is on disadvantaged children everybody agreed that the argument is based that all children need the skills (Resilience & socio-emotional) to navigate in today's society.

Hence the Resilience Curriculum will be a mainstream curriculum. The project will not be targeting specific groups of children. Rather everyone agreed that this is something which all children in Europe need.

Sense of coherence/ sense of belonging:

- Comprehensiveness
- Meaningless
- Manageability

(These 3 components must be coherent)

The program will be universal, but flexible to address particular needs, by allowing different emphasis upon the different parts of the curriculum – depending upon the social context in which this curriculum is being adopted.

Main focus of the curriculum is the child:

- The skills children need to adopt in order to achieve
- Handling changes
- Problem-solving (effective of cumulative risk)
- Efficacy – high levels of efficacy
- Empathy – moderate levels of empathy
- Cooperation
- Handling strong emotions
- Humor / optimism
- Sense of belonging / school attachment
- Stress management for pupils, teachers & parents
- Skills process
- Train the teacher to build the processes

We need to have both: **skills & pedagogy** (Skills development & Attitudes – for the children and the teacher). The teacher needs to create a 'climate' in which the skills are learned by the student

We need to keep in mind the developmental stage of the children. We need to take into consideration **2 types of challenges:**

1. Situational Challenges
2. Developmental Challenges
 - Focus on risk and protective factors for Resilience
 - Help teachers to raise awareness in the classroom of risk and protective factors
 - An umbrella definition of Resilience: risk & protective factors; socio-emotional learning (SEL); stress management (mindfulness).

A broad-based approach to Resilience:

1. Resilience skills (the attitude towards life)
2. Socio-emotional skills
3. Attitude skills /mindset
4. Self-efficacy, optimistic thinking, philosophy resilience
5. Reforming perception/cognitive skills
6. Self-awareness

We can combine all the knowledge and skills and transmit them to students through stories and similar activities (ex: creating a giraffe mascot and different stories are created based on the giraffe).

We can include this bottom-up approach in the piloting.

Through the evaluation we can ask which areas are most relevant. Once the draft is ready we can distribute it to teachers to check whether it is valuable. We will take the teachers' feedback and then it is up to us to decide. (feedback from teachers by creating a questionnaire and send it via email).

Focus groups with:

- Kindergarten
- Early Primary
- Late Primary

A focus group with among the selected 20 teachers and one focus group will be conducted in every country. Focus group must be done in order to get their feedback, to help us build on the curriculum.

Training the Trainers/ Deadlines:

- We will have the manual ready – we give it to an expert and expert will do the training on how to implement this manual to us. Then we adopt this training and train the teachers.
- The decision will be taken around March/ April (after all suggestions and referees are provided).
- By the end of this year (31st December 2013), the first draft of the curriculum must be ready.
- Translation – one (1) month

Issue about criteria of how to select the trainer – the profile of trainers:

- Expert in resilience yet at the same time trainer
- Trainer must be European since the curriculum will be based upon a European framework.
- Important – teachers need to know how to implement the resilience curriculum into their classroom and to their schools.
- Queries about whether to involve an external trainer/expert.

Suggested Reading:

- a. Sweden – Manual (which was translated in English)
- b. Prof. Carmel Cefai (Malta)– working on a book – that can also be used in the project
- c. Anastasius (Greece) – Curriculum that he was working on in Cyprus
- d. Portugal – Journal on Self-efficacy and life impact
- e. Italy – Book – ‘ La Resilienza’
- f. Bounce Back Manual – a resource guide to develop activities, resources etc.