

PROJECT

Inter
Community
learning



Program Comenius
Regio Partnerships





Lifelong
Learning
Programme

Inter-Community Learning – University/School/Community Learning Partnership –
University Students Supporting Children at Risk of Educational 'Failure'
through Targeted Learning Support

Varaždinska
županija



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Petrijanec
Primary
School

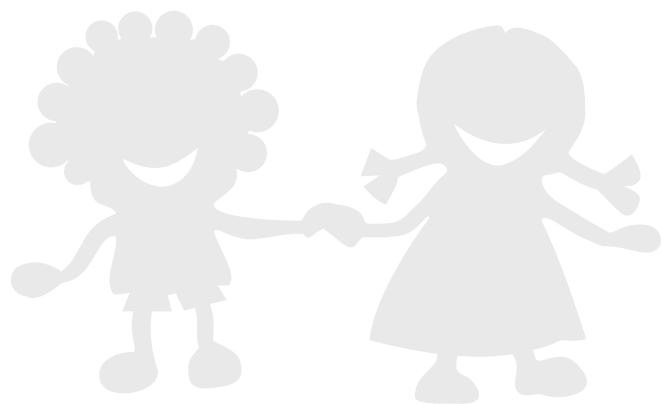
Yeading
Junior
School

foi
SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU
FAKULTET
ORGANIZACIJE I
INFORMATIKE
VARAŽDIN

 bucks
new university

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Regio Partnerships

1. Introduction - About the Project

Partner Regio 1	
Coordinating Organisation:	Hillingdon Borough Council (UK)
Partner Organisations:	1. Yeading Junior School 2. Buckinghamshire New University
Partner Regio 2	
Coordinating Organisation:	The County of Varaždin (Croatia)
Partner Organisations:	1. Petrijanec Primary School 2. The University of Zagreb, Faculty of Organization and Informatics

The Project was started by the County of Varaždin and its partners in the UK: the Hillingdon Borough Council, Yeading Primary School, Buckinghamshire New University, Petrijanec Primary School and the Faculty of Organisation and Informatics in Varaždin, to provide increased support for children from minority communities who are faced with lower educational attainment, and for public administration (county and municipality) to improve knowledge and institutional culture by providing volunteer assistance for the education system.

The project results are expected to influence the increase of intergenerational economic welfare at the local and regional level, improve community cohesion and increase public/professional respect for at risk communities by understanding their need for 'educational justice' and lifelong learning strategies. In addition, the development of successful projects implemented at regional levels has impacted on academic achievements. We hope

that this will result in the weakening of stereotypes attributed to certain communities (groups) and potentially enable administration to raise additional funds from national and the EU funds.

We would like that partner cooperation continues on a school level, with the use of the IT and websites increasing understanding among children and with the assistance of volunteers and partners from other cultures to demonstrate the diversity of cultures and their mutual respect. The Project will enable all participants to become involved in common learning through reciprocal visits and by watching videos of meetings between pupils, volunteers and mentors. It is also an opportunity for international teams to get to know each other personally at conferences and seminars and to exchange valuable experience on their work in multi-national communities.

Expected Project Outcomes:

- Improve the performance and self-confidence of pupils aged 5 - 11 who are below average (those at risk of repeating a year) in the United Kingdom and pupils aged 7 - 11 in the Republic of Croatia.
- Improve the self-confidence, achievement and educational aspiration of pupils who participate in the project.
- Create better relationships among schools, communities and local institutions of higher education.
- Promote the concept of volunteering as essential within communities.

Expected Main Outcomes:

For Children in Schools:

Increase self-esteem and measurable academic achievements in basic skills (literacy/verbal expression and comprehension of the official majority language in the region); the level of knowledge in arithmetic/reading in groups of children identified as 'at risk' with which there is a higher probability of low educational achievement at the national level.

Ensure more extensive understanding of options and possibilities of higher education in groups of children identified as 'at risk' (and their families/communities).

To introduce 'non-traditional' role-models to children and communities with student-volunteers who can serve as a model inside the community.

Improve children's knowledge of other cultures/communities from partner regions.

For Schools:

Improve results achieved by children who risk lower educational attainment in basic skills at KS2 (UK) (Key Stage 2) and similar evaluation levels in the Republic of Croatia.

Improve relationships with several local universities which are already implementing the school-community projects or other such programmes that might be developed in the future.

Receive support in mentorship/training from students who, in turn, could consider teaching as a profession.

Improve knowledge of staff on available support/information resources and advice from institutions of higher education in different academic domains.

For Universities:

Establish closer relationships with local schools and communities.

Enable students to develop their mentoring and training skills through volunteering and utilising this develop skills and provide opportunities for employment for students in the national labour market.

Receive information on specific child support needs in communities where there is a present risk of academic failure which may lead to identification of institutional 'general goals' and the development of learning and teaching strategies.

2. Educational System within the Republic of Croatia

The system of education in the Republic of Croatia has four levels: pre-school education, primary education, secondary education and higher education (Figure 1).

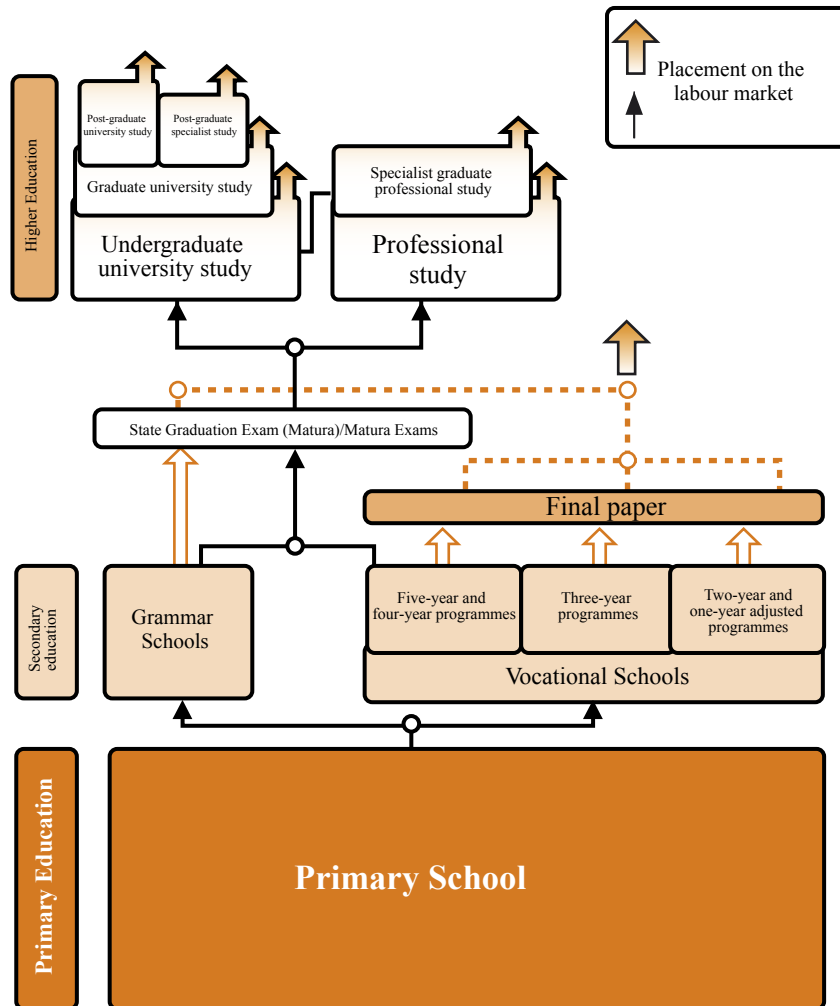


Figure 1: Croatian Education System [Ministry of Science, Education and Sports]

Pre-school education includes children aged from 6 months to those starting school. The work is organised in nurseries and kindergarten groups. Children who are not participating in any pre-school educational activity start the so called 'Little School', one year before starting primary school. Little School lasts 250 hours, from 1st October to 31st May. Before starting primary school 98% of children are involved in different forms of pre-school educational activities.

Primary school is mandatory in Croatia. It is attended by children aged 6 to 15 and is organised in 8 grades divided in two segments: grades 1 to 4 lower primary, and grades 5 to 8 upper primary.

The development of the educational structure at other levels is shown in the presented diagram.

The learning of a foreign language is organised in pre-school groups. About 69% of kindergarten children aged 4 to 6 attend early learning programmes for foreign languages, of which 81% learn English.

In primary school, the first foreign language is learned in grade 1 and the second from grade 4 or the first year in the upper primary school. Here as well English is the most common choice. In the Croatian education system almost all pupils learn English.

All details stated in this text have been taken from the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport of the Republic of Croatia Website.

3. Project Partner Institutions



Visit of Guests from England to the Petrijanec Primary School (October 2012)

3.1 The County of Varaždin

The County of Varaždin is a regional government unit in North Western Croatia which represents local community interests (6 towns and 22 municipalities). The County seat is in the City of Varaždin. The County actively participates in improving the quality of life for its population by planning and providing development in areas of health care, education, zoning and urban planning, traffic infrastructure, economy and development of a network of educational, social and cultural institutions. Its impact has become especially significant during the period of informing and involving the population in Croatia's integration into the EU processes and adopting of the *acquis communautaire*.

The County Department for Education, Culture and Sport is in charge of setting up guidelines and organising and financing activities in the institu-

tions of primary, secondary and higher education, culture, science and sport. Through these activities it promotes various community projects whose goal is to improve the standard of education and to offer lifelong learning to as many inhabitants as possible so that they can become part of a competitive labour force.

There are 75 schools throughout the county (14 secondary schools, 33 primary schools and 30 subsidiary schools). Six Excellence Centres organise work with talented students in the areas of Mathematics, Physics, the Croatian Language, Entrepreneurship and Computer Sciences. The programme covers 762 pupils and students of primary and secondary schools.

3.2. London Borough of Hillingdon

Covering 42 square miles Hillingdon is the second largest London borough and with some 250,000 residents, also enjoys one of the lowest population density ratios of any London borough. Whilst it is an often used cliché, Hillingdon really does epitomise a diverse and contrasting borough. The north of the borough is semi-rural, with green belt land around Ruislip, whilst Heathrow, the United Kingdom's only hub airport and the Uxbridge/Stockley Park concentration of high-tech multi-national industries are concentrated in the south.

Hillingdon is a diverse borough with established and successful suburbs clustered around a number of town centres, plentiful picturesque green belt and open spaces with access to a network of waterways and lakes as well as successful and thriving business;

We have two universities; Brunel University and Buckinghamshire New University We also have one of London's best performing Further Education Colleges, Uxbridge College, several train-

ing providers, 18 secondary schools, 65 primary schools and 6 special schools.

The borough is home to Heathrow Airport, the busiest international hub-airport in the world with over 64 million passengers a year and the largest single employment site within the U.K;

Uxbridge is the main urban centre and there are a further 15 town and neighbourhood centres and 46 local parades; and Hillingdon has a very large economy by national standards. Significantly, the economy is larger than average when compared to London as a whole, ranking 5th out of the London boroughs and encompassing one of the most highly developed local knowledge economy in the country.

Hillingdon is one of the greenest London boroughs with over 5,000 acres of open countryside including 4,970 hectares of Green Belt and 200 parks and open spaces. It is a suburban borough containing areas of 1930s development and typical "Metro land" estates with the most common house type being semi-detached (40.3%) followed by terraced (27.9%); and

4 Hillingdon's heritage in includes 30 conservation areas, 14 Areas of Special Local

Character (ASLC), 409 statutory listed buildings, 292 locally listed buildings, 5

scheduled ancient monuments and 9 Archaeological Priority Areas.

Hillingdon has some of the busiest parts of London's strategic road networks. There are National rail communications into central London from Heathrow (via the Heathrow Express and Heathrow Connect service) and West Drayton and Hayes (to Paddington) and West Ruislip, South Ruislip and Ruislip Gardens into Marylebone. The borough contains 13 tube stations on the London Underground network and 3 Crossrail Station are planned within the borough at Heathrow, Hayes and West Drayton.

3.3 The Petrijanec Primary School

The Petrijanec Primary School is located in the Municipality of Petrijanec, North West of the City of Varaždin. The Municipality includes the villages of Petrijanec, Strmec Podravski, Zelendvor, Majerje, Nova Ves Petrijanečka and Družbinec.



Petrijanec Primary School Welcome Show (October 2012)

Close to Strmec there is a Roma village which partly belongs to the Municipality of Cestica and partly to the Municipality of Petrijanec. The listed villages are homes of pupils who attend the Petrijanec Primary School.

The first data on the development of education in Petrijanec was recorded as early as 1638. This is when a first school-teacher, who was also a bell ringer, was mentioned. School-teachers mostly taught girls while boys worked, helped with domestic chores and worked in the fields. Many school-teachers/bell ringers came and went until 1785, when the construction of the first school was completed and the school was opened for both boys and girls (Zorković, 1995). Education in Petrijanec de-

veloped with the continuous growth in the number of school-children. Today, pupils in Petrijanec have classes in a building which was extended and renovated in 2007. The building provides enough facilities for all curricular and extracurricular activities. Besides the centre of excellence in Petrijanec there are subsidiary schools in Strmec and Nova Ves. During the 2012 - 2013 school year the Petrijanec Primary School is being attended by 557 pupils (in the main and subsidiary schools) divided into 29 forms. Forms from grade 1 to 4 are attended by pupils aged 7 to 10 and grades 5 to 8 by pupils aged 11 to 14. Many pupils, i.e. 168 of them or 30.16%, are Roma Minority pupils which is a special feature of the Petrijanec Primary School compared to other schools in the County of Varaždin. This requires specific approach to education based on multiculturalism.

3.4 Yeading Junior School

Yeading Junior School is a large, multicultural school with over 480 pupils on roll, situated in a diverse community in the London Borough of Hilling-



Yeading Junior School

don. The pupils have a variety of home languages. Different abilities of the children are supported in an inclusive environment where children attain well.

There is the highest of expectations for all children. The school offers children the opportunity to develop intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially to the best of their ability, in a happy, secure and challenging environment.

The ethos is one of mutual respect, encouragement and cooperation where children thrive. The strong links with parents are valued and there is pride in the partnerships that have been established with local groups and other organisations such as local schools, colleges, Bucks New University and a personal finance education charity to name a few. Through work in financial education a school currency was designed, known as 'Yeadoes'. Personal finance education is threaded across the curriculum.

The school recognises the importance of the partnership between home and school and seizes every opportunity to involve parents in the life and work of the school so that they can support and enhance their child's learning. Great value is placed on the development of high self-esteem and the involvement of children in their learning.

Staff work hard to provide every child with a full, varied, balanced and exciting education. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities that support and extend learning in the classroom, for example the allotment area provides numerous learning opportunities and Eco Champs sow, grow and harvest crops throughout the year. Pupils can also learn a variety of musical instruments. The school offers a rich and varied range of extra - curricular activities to support all aspects of learning, for example cricket, dodgeball and chess clubs.

As a school we have an increasing number of international links with schools and colleagues both in Europe and beyond. Pupils benefit enormously from building relationships with children in other coun-

tries whether that be through visits, email or Skype. It gives the pupils a greater awareness of global issues, it improves their confidence and our link with Ecole Jean Moulin in Paris, has enabled the children to extend their speaking and listening skills.

International links have also had a positive impact on staff, for example the teachers who have worked closely with partner schools in Varaždin and Bucks New Universities on the Croatian Project have benefitted from the many professional development opportunities that have been provided.

3.5 The University of Zagreb, Faculty of Organisation and Informatics

The Faculty of Organisation and Informatics (FOI) is one of the 33 constituting institutions of the University of Zagreb, which has been operating for 50 years. The Faculty curriculum is based on contemporary world models, the principles of the Bologna Declaration and the ECTS system of credits. The FOI undergraduate studies lasting three years are Information Systems, Business Systems and Business Economics. There are four Graduate Information Studies lasting two years: Information and Program Engineering, Business System Organisation, Knowledge Databases and Information Sciences in Education. Business Economics is also taught as a graduate study. The Faculty also provides a professional study of the Application of Information Technology in Business Activities in Varaždin, Sisak, Križevci and Zabok. The post-graduate studies at the Faculty are: the Doctoral Study of Information Sciences lasting three years and specialist studies lasting two years: Business System Management, Security and Audit Management of Information Systems and Information Society Organizational Re-engineering. The Faculty

is currently attended by 3100 students at all levels. There are 125 members of staff of whom 97 are faculty, holding teaching and scientific-teaching positions. The Faculty was the first and, at the moment, amongst the rare ones which passed the evaluation conducted by the Agency for Science and Higher Education in Croatia. There were two evaluation procedures: the re-accreditation of the Faculty and the independent external analysis of the Faculty quality system, both resulting in favourable outcomes for the Faculty. There are several Centres operating as a part of the Faculty: the International Project Centre, the Application Development Centre and the newly established Volunteering Centre and the Student and Career Support Centre. The Faculty of Organisation and Informatics is fully aware of its social role within the local community. Its participation in voluntary activities proves that students and the staff alike have highly developed their sensitivity to social responsibility for the community and understand the needs of the local community and beyond, where its students will live and work as responsible citizens. It is particularly worth emphasizing that the activities of the Students' Council already include several successful volunteering projects – assistance for children with learning impairments, organisation of charity events to raise funds, etc. The Faculty also has an Office specially focused on providing assistance for the disabled students. It serves everyone who, due to their disability, is in need of certain adjustments to activities throughout the studies. One of the significant programmes the Office is conducting is 'the Implementation of Student Assistants to Provide Support to Disabled Students', financially supported by the County of Varaždin. In 2003 the Faculty became a EAN (European Access Network) Member. This Network is the only international NGO in Europe which has an important role in the

dissemination of good practice and information on projects relating to involvement of under-represented target groups of students.

3.6. Buckinghamshire New University

Buckinghamshire New University has enjoyed a long and successful history as a community education resource since it was founded in 1893. The institution has a reputation for developing close links with both the local community and industry and promoting an emphasis on employability which continues to this day and has continued to expand and develop to offer an extensive portfolio of courses spanning health, education, social sciences, creative and cultural industries, management and information management sectors.

Since 2010 social sciences and community partnership/engagement projects fall under the auspices of IDRICS (the Institute for Diversity Research, Inclusivity, Communities and Society) a grouping which provides expertise across a number of domains including education research and community development/cohesion. The nine protected characteristics as defined under equality and diversity legislation are fundamental to our vision and we seek to enhance and grow our expertise in these areas delinquency, families, gypsy and travellers, offending, partnership working, prisons/secure care, sexual orientation, substance use, young people and youth justice.

The University which has two campuses (one in Uxbridge, London Borough of Hillingdon and the main campus in High Wycombe) currently has around 9,000 undergraduate and post-graduate students.

4. Multiculturalism and Learning Foreign Languages in the Petrijanec Primary School

Almost all existing societies are multicultural and are likely to remain as such in the future. Multiculturalism can be best conceptualized neither as a political doctrine with a programmed meaning nor as a theory of a man and the world but as a view on human life.

The fundamental values of contemporary society must be tolerance, multi-ethnicity, multi-culturalism and inter-culturalism. Their comprehensiveness shall be initiated in children from a very early age. Multi-ethnicity must be learned because educational institutions and society represent points of contact between different ethnic groups. Accepting those who are different from us is the first step in the development of a responsible individual. In a multi-cultural environment, an important role is the role of the teacher who is not only aware of other cultures but can also create new relationships. The importance of learning the language as an important means of information and the transfer of thoughts, knowledge, ideas, values, emotions and events will enable not only the development of one's own culture but also enable integration into the life and work of another culture.

A multi-cultural social context requires the students to identify and understand relationships are based on different cultures and interact with numerous cultural minorities.

The core of multicultural education and growth is reserved for the young. It does not include the school alone, which is why establishing and developing relationships in other areas of education is necessary and will ensure enough knowledge, skills and experience to start a relationship characterised by cultural diversities. It is especially important to mention that the role of an educational community

is to teach contents and values, and through interaction, to teach certain abilities. This approach calls for cooperation with many partners outside the school.

Media is increasingly becoming an unavoidable assistant in education and when it comes to multiculturalism, with the right selection of content, it should be used in teaching to raise student awareness of topics of intercultural education: teaching about human rights, gender equality, their own culture and customs, non-violent conflict resolution, the media and solidarity.

The role of the teacher is more of a mediator and he/she should act as a medium for a meeting of cultures and use them to enhance the teaching material. Classes become the cornerstone for identification and understanding of relationships based on different cultures and interaction of numerous cultural minorities.

The school is a place which provides a new opportunity for the young to experience relationships between people whose circumstances are different from those inside their family. Progress which begins in the family is continued in school and changed or accepted (Perotti, 1995). It is the place where pupils make acquaintances, communicate with their peers, experience and actually develop through different types of relationships. This is where different opinions and values are transferred and adopted. It is a fertile arena for experimenting with different forms of integration which promote familiarity, relationships and cooperation which has to then be transferred into a social environment. The school should be a place of critical analysis of concepts and life, a place for the evaluation and critical integration of different knowledge,

skills and abilities (Ninčević, 2009). Interactivity and (co)relations with those who are culturally different can be simulated in classes through a wide range of creative activities and role plays (with pupils belonging to different minority groups who have found themselves in a demanding situation), by reading incomplete stories which encourage empathy and tolerance for members of the minorities and which would be completed through creative activities and development of intercultural skills.

Roma pupils attend the Petrijanec Primary School. They have to acquire educational competences but their culture and customs have to be respected nevertheless. Intercultural challenges with which the teachers are faced with can be overcome with different forms of professional training, and the importance of the role of volunteers is unquestionable. The main problems in integrating Roma children into the educational system is the educational neglect of their parents, their poorly developed skills necessary to master the teaching material, a lack of hygiene and a limited understanding of the Croatian language. On the other hand, learning a foreign language is a problem which other children at the school also experience.

The motivation of pupils to learn a foreign language at school is the most important part of the teaching-learning process and the main driving force are the teachers themselves. Learning English is a long-term process which takes place in several steps: learning the alphabet, basic nouns, basic verbs, basic grammar, reading texts, learning vocabulary, learning grammar, listening and translation, writing and learning through conversation. It is good to start the first lesson with discovering English words used in the Croatian language (bend, bestseller, design, weekend). Volunteers assist the teaching of English through entertaining activities and everyday situations. Pronunciation is important because if we communicate by only writing on paper, we cannot hear sounds, stress or intonation.

Communication is a process that involves understanding other people when they talk and compose sentences and its goal is to make others understand us. The possibilities are huge, and all this together makes learning English fun, but also complex. Learning a foreign language is a challenge and the instigator should be ready for a surprise.

The system of values becomes jeopardised when different stereotypes and prejudices, insufficient knowledge and a readiness to embrace a relationship with the culturally different make our responsibility in this world of ever-changing and questionable social values more than just big. Being those who both organise and perform the educational process we have to act as holders of desirable social values which we will transfer to young people. Classes not only teach, they develop, so the value of activities achieved in classes doubles. We are responsible for training the young to establish (co)relation and communication with those who are culturally different, so that tomorrow they will be able to teach others (Sekulić-Majurec, Ana 1996)



Volunteer Training at the Faculty of Organisation and Informatics (March 2012)

5. Volunteer Training

5.1 Volunteer Training Programme

Volunteer training was conducted based on the 'Continuous Training Plan' divided into two parts:

PART I: Content of Volunteer Training Lasting Four (4) School Hours:

- The Causes of Lower Educational Attainment The Principles of Compensatory programmes (1 hour); Lecturer: Vesna Ciglar, M.Sc.
- The Volunteer Code of Ethics (1 hour); Lecturer: Assist. Prof. Valentina Kirinić, PhD.
- The Volunteering Act: an Introduction to the General Provisions of the Volunteering Act OG 58/07 (1 hour); Lecturer: Assist. Prof. Nina Begičević Ređep, Ph.D.
- Communication Skills and Volunteer Case Studies; (1 hour); Lecturer: Assist. Prof. Violeta Vidaček-Hainš, Ph.D.

Training is organised in small groups, in several cycles depending on the needs of the Project and registration of volunteers.

PART II: continuous volunteer training, at least once a month through the following methodical and organisational options:

- Formal group meetings held once a month attended by all volunteers and trainers at FOI and, if necessary, associates from the Petrijanec Primary School and the County of Varaždin. Communication is facilitated

according to the principles of supervision, case studies and the collection of feedback from the group, with actual opinions and proposals (1 hour).

- Weekly individual meetings - depending on actual questions and needs;

5.2 Methodology of Work

This section shortly describes the causes of lower educational attainment, the principles of compensatory programmes, and suitable methods of work with children of lower achievement.

How can we define and determine 'lower educational attainment'? The formal criterion is not applicable: a rating of 2 (sufficient) means success for one pupil while a higher rating of 4 (very good) is not a good enough result for another. But, when we prepare activities for a target group of pupils with lower educational attainment we usually consider pupils with a lower rating as pupils who show difficulties in mastering the course teaching material or area. The target group for this Project are exactly these pupils – pupils with low grades or who have difficulties in learning English. These individuals show large personal differences in many factors which influence school success. The special feature of the group led by volunteers in this Project is that the majority of pupils come from the minority population. They reflect all specific features of the community they come from, their mother tongue is poorly preserved, which makes it difficult for them to master language competences both in standard and foreign languages. Considering that low school success has an adverse impact on the self-perception of the pupil and his/her

social status within their form, school and wider community, it is important that these children receive help as soon as possible.

Possible reasons for lower educational attainment are numerous. One classification (Vizek-Vidović et al., 2003, pp 107) divides them into two categories: internal (insufficient mental development, sensory insufficiencies, emotional difficulties and learning impairments) and external (learning conditions, cultural circumstances, unfavourable social and economic conditions and inadequate teaching). These causes are usually interconnected. Even though most of these causes can be changed by targeted activities, lower educational attainment is generally stable and cumulative. Stable, because any intervention applied is most frequently applied only partially, helping the pupil to master the teaching material, for example, is applied to consequences instead of the causes, and cumulative because of gaps in knowledge and experience which should serve as the foundation for new learning become larger and deeper as the period of education progresses. This is why the programmes used to bring pupils onto the levels of knowledge matching their age ('compensatory programmes') should be on-going, because most of the stated causes remain even after the pupil has reached his/her level resulting in the cycle repeating over and over again.

When working with pupils of lower educational attainment, help must be individual i.e. planned according to the pupils' individual characteristics (current knowledge, personality, learning habits, etc.) and the impact of his/her environment. One of the most typical mistakes made when providing assistance to pupils is trying to teach them is to make them practice something they should know. This is similar to 'building a house without foundations'. According to Lev Vygotsky's concept on the zone of proximal development, when a child does not know something, good help means that we have to enable him/her to reach the higher level from there, to en-

ter the zone of potential development. (Sternberg, 2005) So, by starting from what the pupil knows, we lead him/her at his/her own pace and according to appropriate directions to what he/she, considering his/her respective potential might adopt and learn. The purpose of such help is not simply progress in knowledge. The pupil must be led to strengthen his/her general competencies and his/her own image, self-esteem and social and emotional status. This is why assistance should also be directed to strengthening motivation. General recommendations relating to strengthening motivation which volunteers can apply under such circumstances include (according to Brophy, in Vizek-Vidović et al., 2003, pp 253): planning small steps, ensuring success, teaching the pupil to follow, experience, encouraging his/her progress and giving effective feedback. Effective feedback is: contiguous (specifically emphasizing what the pupil has completed well), reliable (the pupil understands that information relates to him/her and why is it so), determines fulfilment of strictly defined criteria (result or effort), provides information for the pupil about his/her competencies and value of his/her achievements, describes his/her current achievements compared to previous achievements, acknowledges efforts made and success achieved in this difficult task (for this particular pupil), relates success to efforts made (showing that similar behaviour can bring success in the future), encourages the endogenous characteristics of success, directs pupil's attention to behaviour relevant for achieving progress in problem solving, encourages analysis and evaluation of behaviour when the work has been completed, etc. During volunteer training, such messages were composed and analysed to be compared with the typical ones (great, I like it, excellent...).

When working with pupils of lower achievements, and not only with them, games are highly recommended. But, be careful not to make it the main activity, but use it only to encourage motiva-

tion and enable pupils to accept and persist in solving the main task, i.e. learning, more easily. A comprehensive list of games and methods of creation and use was presented by Edita Slunjski (2003).

During training, volunteers were presented with the use of the same types of games (e.g. Magical Bag, Domino, Bingo and Ludo) for different tasks and activities.

5.3 Communication Skills and Volunteer Case Studies

Communication skills belong to the domain of emotional competencies (Salovey and Sluyter, 1999). To establish a good contact with pupils, volunteers work on self-development, developing their own emotional state and adopting high quality methods in facing other people's emotions. This means, in practice, that they will be able to identify anger in pupils, will know how to control their own emotions and how to direct them into efficient problem solving. In addition, volunteers can recognise situations in which the internal emotional state of pupils does not necessarily match his/her facial expression or the expression of their emotions. For example, a pupil who feels uncomfortable will sometimes react in a totally unexpected ways, maybe with a taunt or by refusing to answer the question. In such situations volunteers are prepared to recognise anxiousness, embarrassment or fear and create a positive image about themselves and self-appreciation of the pupil. They focus on searching for the good, positive and what the pupil knows and can, and not on what he/she does not know or is bad at.

Communication is, inter alia, all about good active listening skills. People with highly developed active listening skills do not interrupt their interlocutor, use non-verbal communication to let the

other person know they have understood and agree with what the interlocutor is saying. They will smile, establish eye-contact and maintain contact throughout the entire conversation.

Thy typical pupil's sentences 'I can't do this' or 'I don't have any talent for this', will be converted by the volunteer's highly developed skills into 'this I will try' or 'I will be able to do this' (Weisbach and Dachs, 1999). Volunteers work in teams and group work enables higher efficiency, cooperative learning and fast flow of information, sense of belonging to a group and higher motivation. In case of any conflict, volunteers use mechanisms of self-reflection and self-criticism. Dialogues provide room for changes and personal development, and they also work on objective insight into the situation through discussion at task force and supervisory meetings (Jelka, 2008).

5.4 Volunteer Code of Ethics

One of the fundamental principles of volunteering i.e. providing voluntary services or performing activities with no intention to acquiring any personal gain (financial, material, or emotional) is the principle of ethics. Ethics mean moral, benevolent and acceptable behaviour harmonised with moral principles and values of the society integrated in the code of ethics. The volunteer code of ethics (The Volunteer Code of Ethics, 2008) has been adopted by the National Committee for the Development of Volunteering in May 2008, and is based on The Volunteering Act, 2007. As such, it represents a 'collection of values, principles and standards directing the process of organised participation of volunteers for general welfare', 'promotes the highest constitutional values of the Republic of Croatia', 'lies on the principle that volunteering is the foundation of a civil society and of vital importance for the development of (participatory) democracy'. Its goal is to

‘promote the positive practice of volunteering and the implementation of the principles and standards of volunteering amongst the organisers, the volunteers and the beneficiaries’ (The Volunteer Code of Ethics, 2008).

The fundamental principles of the Volunteer Code of Ethics, 2008 are the principles of participation in social processes, the principle of voluntarism and freedom of choice, the principle of banned discrimination, the principle of solidarity, promotion and protection of human rights, the principle of personal potential development, the principle of intercultural learning and exchange and the principle of environmental protection and care for sustainable development.

The Volunteer Code of Ethics, 2008 merges the ethical standards of three key elements of the volunteering process; the organisers, the volunteers and the beneficiaries, and directs them in their mutual activities and the implementation of voluntary tasks.

According to the Volunteer Code of Ethics, the volunteer organisers design and implement voluntary programmes in the following way; they have clearly defined criteria of volunteer participation and evaluation of volunteer activities; they ensure a comfortable, safe and encouraging environment with the necessary resources; they monitor professionalism and skills of volunteers; they ensure equal opportunities for volunteer participations and respect the freedom of making decisions on the beginning and end of their engagement; they provide to volunteers all essential information and encourage their participation in decision making; they take protective measures relating to volunteers and beneficiaries, encourage organisational culture in which volunteering is desired and respected and they keep diligent records on volunteers, their contribution and activities.

According to the Volunteer Code of Ethics they have the right to be introduced to the Volunteering

Act and the Code of Ethics; to cherish and promote work for general welfare by respecting the integrity and dignity of all collaborators; work as a team; to behave in accordance with the mission and the vision of the organisation they belong to; to use only knowledge, skills and abilities which do not exceed their capabilities; to respect health and other safety standards; to respect and observe the diversity of beneficiaries without imposing their own beliefs and by trying to identify and meet their individual use; to not abuse the relationship established with their beneficiaries and refrain from activities which may jeopardise the reputation of the organiser and the beneficiaries; to respect confidentiality of beneficiary details and collect them responsibly with consent of the beneficiaries and the organiser and, in case of a dilemma or any problems during volunteering, to contact responsible persons within the organisation.

According to the Volunteer Code of Ethics the beneficiaries of volunteering they have the right to be introduced to the Volunteering Act and the Code of Ethics and other valid regulations and procedures. By accepting voluntary services the beneficiaries accept fundamental principles of volunteering ethics; they have the right to refuse volunteering services and are responsible for reporting any inappropriate or unethical volunteer behaviour.

5.5 The Volunteering Act

The Volunteering Act (OG 58/07) was adopted in 2007. The goals of this Act are; to provide a favourable social environment for the development of voluntarism; to prevent any possible misuse and to protect volunteers and organisers of volunteering and to formally determine the position of all legal entities and individuals involved in organised volunteering. The Volunteering Act regulates the

basic concepts relating to volunteering, the basic principles of volunteering, the conditions of volunteering, the rights and duties of a volunteer and the volunteer organiser, the conditions of concluding a contract on volunteering, the adoption of the Volunteer Code of Ethics, the issuing of the volunteer certificates, the national award for volunteering and the monitoring the implementation of this Act.

According to the Volunteering Act, volunteering means a voluntary disposal of one's personal time, effort, knowledge and skills to perform services or activities for the benefit of another person or for the general welfare and should be performed by people in accordance with the methods stipulated by the Act, with no possibility of any pecuniary remuneration or claims for any other material benefit for the volunteering tasks performed, unless this Act stipulates otherwise. This Act also defines everything that can not be considered volunteering; the voluntary provision of services or activities contrary to the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia and other regulations; the provision of services or activities subject to payment or pecuniary claims or other material gain, performed without official employment; professional training without official employment and activities which are typical among family members, friends or neighbours, etc.

The Act also defines the fundamental principles of volunteering: *'the principle of banned discrimination of volunteers and beneficiaries, the principle of protection of beneficiaries, the principle of banned abuse of volunteers, the principle of protection of minor volunteers, the promotion of volunteering, the principle of protection of people partially or entirely incapable of working, the principle of volunteering free of charge, the principle of solidarity and voluntary nature of voluntarism and the principle of transnationality of volunteering'*. In particular, there is *'the principle of protection of beneficiaries'* according to which the organisers of volunteering have to pay special attention to

the selection and training of volunteers who volunteer with the following groups of beneficiaries: children, the disabled, those with learning difficulties, elderly and weak, ill people or people who are entirely or partially unfit to work, and have to possess special knowledge, skills and competencies to work in these groups of beneficiaries, and there is 'the principle of banned abuse of volunteers' according to which volunteering which replaces work of employees hired according to the Labour Act and work performed by employees pursuant their employment contracts, is prohibited. According to this principle, volunteering is prohibited if it lasts longer than 40 hours a week, for a period longer than 6 months and through a continuous period of at least 6 months.

The Act stipulates the conditions under which the Volunteering Contract shall be concluded: when volunteering is linked to increased risks relating to life and health of the volunteers, in cases of foreigners volunteering in the Republic of Croatia, cases of Croats volunteering abroad which has been organised or (co)organised by institutions with a seat in Croatia or in cases of long-term volunteering for a religious community, a public institution, tourist board, state authorities and local and regional government bodies, volunteering with children, those with learning impairments, elderly and weak, ill people or people who are entirely or partially unfit for work, and when a volunteer so requires.

The Act also includes provisions on criminal punishment and misdemeanour fines in case the organiser of volunteering fails to observe the provisions of the Volunteering Act.

6. Research

6.1 Methodology of Research and Evaluation Techniques

The results of project implementation are monitored through feedback from volunteers, teachers, pupils and parents. This starts two months after the project begins and continues in three-month intervals. Actual evaluation includes surveys for pupils, teachers and volunteers and an interview with parents. Every evaluation survey consists of 4 - 5 questions or five Likert-type scales. The task of the respondents is to use the Likert scale and evaluate motivation, progress and content with assistance provided in learning English and German. Similar responses found in feedback information enable a comparison of an evaluation completed by pupils, teachers and parents. Evaluation is additionally extended by open-end questions, which provide valuable data on thoughts and subjective experience of the respondents.

It must be said that all parents provided their written consent that their children be included in the implementation of the Project. Volunteers give monthly reports on pupils' attendance, completion of course material and methodology of work. The evaluation was also conducted following the response of the public and dissemination of information through media, which will be presented in detail in the concluding sections.

6.2 Respondents

Collecting data on the effects of activities realised throughout the Project was done with three groups of respondents: students, volunteers and English teachers.

Teachers

There are three English teachers working with pupils involved in the project main activity i.e. assistance in learning English: Barbara Hunjek, Ljiljana Mavrek and Valentina Žiher. They assessed the effects of volunteers' assistance on activity and success of pupils in a mandatory course: the English language.

Volunteers

The group of volunteers who worked with pupils and assessed the pupils consisted of 7 female and 4 male volunteers. They represented a diversified group of emphatic individuals: employed, college students and secondary school students whose common desire is to put their time, knowledge of English and other competencies at the disposal of those who can benefit from their help. As it often happens in such situations, by their act of giving they became wealthier themselves.

The data on the pupil sample were collected from 75 respondents. The majority of them are pupils who showed difficulties and had lower ratings (ocjene) in English. There are also those whose attainment was fine but wanted to participate in the group and work extra. The boys/girls ratio is well balanced: 53% boys and 47% girls, and they were in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th year (razred). The class representation is unbalanced, with 12% of pupils attending from the 2nd year to 28% of them attending from the 4th

Pupils

Class	Boys		Girls		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
2	6	66.67	3	33.33	9	12.00
3	14	70.00	6	30.00	20	26.67
4	9	42.86	12	57.14	21	28.00
5	9	60.00	6	40.00	15	20.00
6	2	20.00	8	80.00	10	13.33
Total	40	53.33	35	47.67	75	100.00

Table 1 Pupil Sample

6.3 Collection and Processing of Results

Data was collected by questionnaires specially designed for this Project (Author: Assist. Prof. Violeta Vidaček-Hainš, Ph.D.). These questionnaires are: English Teachers' Evaluation, Volunteers' Evaluation and Pupils' Evaluation (enclosed).

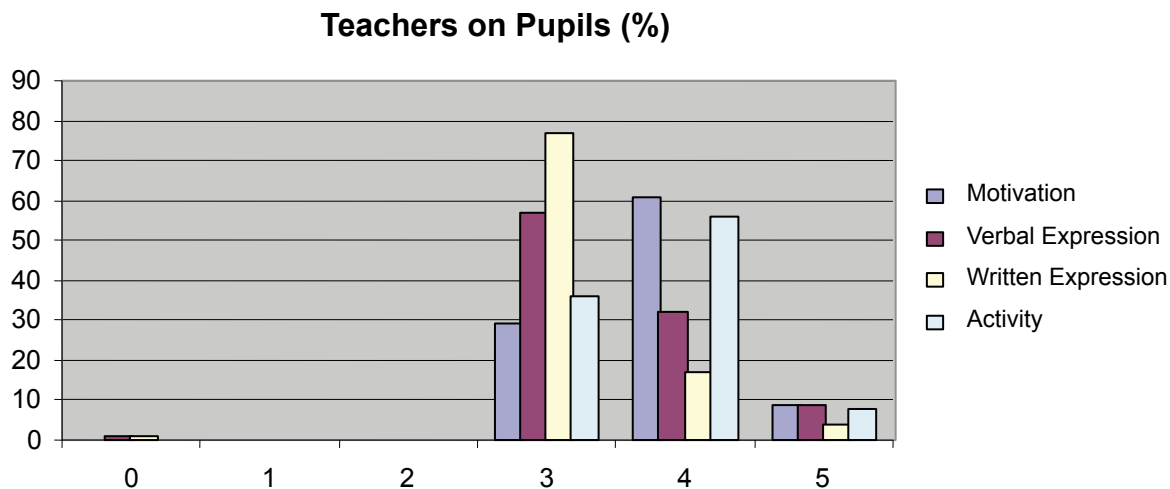
Teachers' and Volunteers' questionnaires include 4 equal tasks: assessment of changes of motivation, success in verbal and written expression and activities resulting from the initial state. These were elements according to which teachers assessed pupils about the mandatory English language course and volunteers assessed them about extra classes when they received help.

A database was created to enable entering, processing and use of these data (author: Assist.

Prof. Valentina Kirinić, Ph.D.). Considering the nature of this data, heterogeneity and the size of the sample and volunteers, the use of complex statistical procedures was neither justified nor reasonable. Therefore, data were processed by determining percentages of individual categories of answers. Even though both teachers and volunteers assessed analogue elements as a part of their respective questionnaires, comparison of these elements using statistical procedures to identify the significance of differences (or similarities) is not justified because they relate to different situations: conventional classes and assistance with learning.

The content of individual questionnaires is presented in section 6.4 Interpretation of Collected Data, and the questionnaires are enclosed.

6.4 Results and their Interpretation



Graph 1: Diagram of data collected in the questionnaire English Teachers' Assessment (Abscissa: categories of possible answers; Ordinate: share in percentages)

Teachers on Pupils

Motivation

In 29% of pupils teachers did not notice any changes in motivation for learning English. A slight increase of motivation was noticed in the majority of pupils, 61%, and significant increase was noticed in 9% of pupils.

Verbal Expression Skills

According to teachers' assessment verbal expression skills remained at the same level in 57% pupils, one third experienced a slight increase and

in 10% pupils a considerable increase in the level of expression was noticed.

Written Expression Skills

The same changes, with slightly different numbers were noticed with verbal expression skills: in 77% of pupils they remained at the same level, a slight increase was noticed in 17% of pupils and skills were considerably increased in 4% of pupils.

Activity

In case of assessment of activities, the results are similar to those of motivation: about one third of pupils do not show any changes, over half of

pupils showed a slight increase and 8% of pupils became significantly more active.

Remarks

Teachers point out that pupils like talking about working with volunteers, that they like the volunteers and the activities they do.

Conclusion

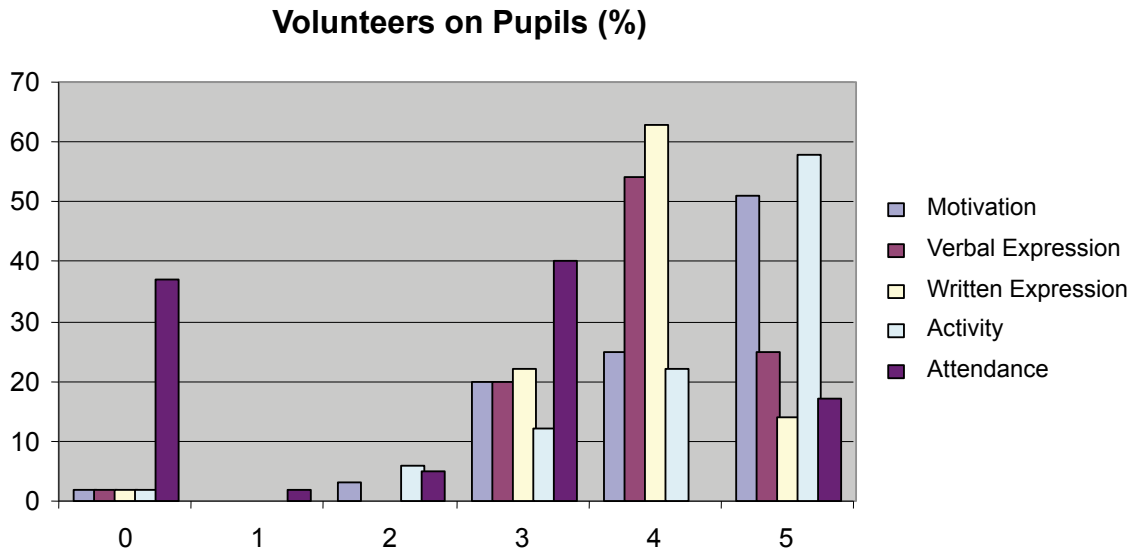
The results of teacher assessment showed a slight improvement of language skills in pupils who worked with volunteers. However, it should be taken into consideration that activities lasted briefly

and that a large number of pupils who participated in this Project have been learning English for many years and that their 'deficits' are more expressed. Encouraging and ensuring an added value to volunteering with pupils increases their motivation to learn English and increases class activity, which are all changes that ensure further progress.

Volunteers on Pupils

Motivation

In 29% of pupils the teachers did not notice any changes in motivation for learning the English language. A slight increase of motivation was noticed



Graph 2: Diagram of data collected in the questionnaire Volunteers' Assessment (Abscissa: categories of possible answers; Ordinate: share in percentages)

in the majority of pupils, 61%, and significant increase was noticed in 9% of pupils.

Verbal Expression Skills

According to teachers' assessment, verbal expression skills remained at the same level in 57% pupils, one third experienced a slight increase and in 10% pupils a considerable increase in the level of expression was noticed.

Written Expression Skills

The same changes, but with slightly different numbers, were noticed with verbal expression skills: in 77% of pupils they remained at the same level, a slight increase was noticed in 17% of pupils and skills were considerably increased in 4% of pupils.

Activity

In case of assessment of activities, the results are similar to those of motivation: about one third of pupils do not show any changes, over half of pupils showed a slight increase and 8% of pupils became significantly more active.

Remarks

Teachers point out that pupils like talking about working with volunteers, that they like volunteers and activities they do.

Conclusion

Results of a teacher assessment showed slight improvements in the language skills of pupils who worked with volunteers. However, it should be taken into consideration that activities lasted briefly and that a large number of pupils who participated

in this Project have been learning English for many years and that their 'deficits' are more expressed. Encouraging and ensuring an added value to volunteering with pupils is the increasing motivation for learning English and increase class activity, which are all changes that ensure further progress.

Volunteers on Pupils

Motivation

Half of those volunteers participating noticed significantly higher motivation than at the beginning of their work together, with one quarter of them it was slightly higher and 20% of pupils remained unchanged. Loss of motivation and withdrawal resulted in only a small number of pupils, 3%, which for this type of population is a significant success.

Verbal Expression Skills

In activities led by volunteers 54% of pupils improved their verbal communication skills a little, 25% improved considerably and about 20% of those remaining in the system kept the same level of skills.

Written Expression Skills

In case of written expression skills, according to assessment made by volunteers 63% of respondents achieved a little improvement, 14% achieved significant improvement and 22% did not show any changes.

Activity

Active participation of students at English classes held by volunteers was significantly increased in

58% of students, slightly increased in 22%, while 12% kept the same level of activity.

Attendance

The majority of pupils who started attending activities held by volunteers carried on and are generally regular attendees.

Conclusion

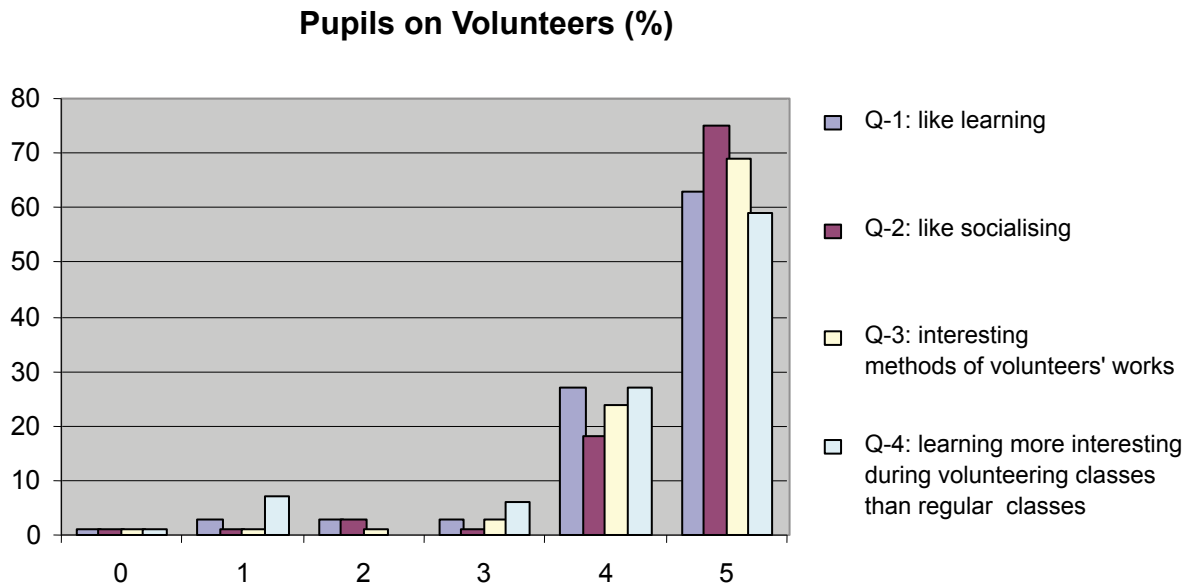
The comments made by volunteers pointed out that children were happy about their arrival and their work together. Some children were direct in their communication whilst a few felt intimidated. Volunteers often noticed that some pupils needed continuous encouragement and appraisal to get

involved. Volunteers were encouraged and highly motivated by pupils and girls more frequently who, although soon aware of limitations resulting from their living conditions, showed determination and persistence to succeed nevertheless.

According to volunteers' comments, some of them will receive individual treatment and their target will be to ensure their possible progress.

Assessments of volunteers state more positive improvement than the assessments of teachers. This is understandable because volunteers monitored different work and always outside of classes. This type of work always gives more opportunities for entertainment, play and fulfilment of pupil's wishes, adjustments of levels and there are no formal results which have to be measured.

Pupils on Volunteers



Graph 3: Diagram of data collected in the questionnaire Pupils' Assessment
(Abscissa: categories of possible answers; Ordinate: share in percentages)

Pupils assessed all elements in the questionnaire on volunteers and learning English outside classes ('how do you like learning English'? 'how do you like socialising'? how interesting is it?' 'is this type of learning more interesting than learning in classes?') mostly with two highest scale categories: about one third of assessments included 'I like it' and about two thirds included 'I like it a lot' answers. The number of answers in the negative part of the scale was negligible.

Work with volunteers can be best described by the high 86% of pupils involved in the Project who want to continue these activities.

Conclusion

Pupils like volunteers personally '... they are good, they play with us, they help us, they are nice'... They also like the way volunteers work. They especially appreciate that volunteers are ready to talk to them about their problems or the issues that interest pupils, and that they show interest in them. Pupils were especially excited about the teaching material that volunteers prepared for them and games they played: 'Hangman!', 'Guess Who?', 'Memory', guessing games, exercise sheets...

6.5 Statements and Reviews of Teachers, Volunteers and Pupils

Teachers on Pupils

'A slightly more active participation was noticed compared to the beginning of the project. The pupil does not study regularly but from time to time his/her results are outstanding'

'The pupil has become more active in class, she shows more self-confidence and her written and

verbal expression has improved. She only needs little encouragement to open up'.

'The pupil is more motivated for working than before. She solves model problems accurately. She also works at home but her knowledge is still at the level of recognition'.

Volunteers on Pupils and their Experience

'I am glad to have had this opportunity to teach him the basics of English and that his progress compared to what it was before is noticeable'.

'I gained another valuable experience in my work and have proved to myself once again that with little effort and hard work visible improvement is possible with pupils'.

'Despite his speech impediments the pupil is willing to participate in all class activities. He is progressing slowly and little by little mastering the teaching material'.

'I feel useful and content to be able to help someone'.

'Being a volunteer, my expectations from this Project were mixed, I imagined things in advance, but was again positively surprised by the pupils. He showed desire for learning since the very first class and this is the best reaction we can receive for our efforts. To see the results of your work satisfying pupils after every class is an immeasurable experience and confirmation that we were doing something good'.

'The pupil is very kind, maybe a little withdrawn, but knows a lot and has only to be encouraged a little to show it'.

'Very keen and capable. She showed significantly higher levels of motivation and knowledge

and desire to overcome the 'shackles of tradition'. Fierce, determined, diligent and nice'.

'For me she was a bright example of a person who analyses and plans her life aware of limitations but determined to fight for a better tomorrow regardless of the obstacles in her way'.

'Motivated for his work. It was sometimes necessary to get his attention because he would switch topics. Kind, cheerful and playful'.

'Working with this pupil was a pleasure because he was always in a good mood. He gladly shared with us everything he was doing at home with his friends'.

Pupils on Volunteers and Volunteer Activities

'I like them. They are good fun. They are always ready to help'.

'I liked when she was explaining things to me because she is very attentive and she explained everything very well to me'.

'Good, good fun, interesting, funny. Volunteers take a really good care of us. They always bring sweets and treats'.

'I like her because she helps us and they are nice and kind. I am glad that they are so good with us and that they teach us, I like talking to them a lot because they are good for me'.

'I like them because they bring me stuff. I like them because we play'.

'For me, they are interesting, lovely and good. I like talking to them and they talk to me'.

'I find all volunteers very good and funny'.

'They are good, diligent, and helpful. I would not change everything'.

'I feel great with volunteers and I like when I have to do something they always help'.

'They are good, funny and nice to learn with when playing'.

'I like when they talk to me, when they are nice and good'.

'They are interesting, funny, and playful, I think they are fantastic. We play a lot and hang around. I like them because they don't shout at us, they are never rude and they help us a lot'.

'I think they are very good and wise. I like when we play, laugh and sing'.

'I like them because we have fun, we hang around, we play Memory, we talk'.

'Volunteers were good!!!'



Task Force Meeting at the School in England (April 2012)

7. Recommendations and Conclusion

7.1. Dissemination of Results

Dissemination of project results used print and digital media to inform the local community and the public. Internal means of informing were

used inside the organisation (the notice board, the ceremonial presentation of awards to volunteers, meetings of the Faculty Council, meetings of the teaching staff and the class teachers, school shows, meetings of forms, parent meetings etc.)



Figure 2: Dissamination of the project on websites

Figure 1 Visit by Guests from the United Kingdom, 18th and 19th October 2012 (Website: Faculty of Organisation and Informatics)

<<http://www.foi.unizg.hr/vijesti/Projekt-Inter-Community-learning-Comenius-Regio-Partnerships>> (FOI, 22nd October 2012)

Figure 2: Visit by Guests from the United Kingdom in October 2012 (Website: Petrijanec Primary School)

<<http://www.os-petrijanec.skole.hr/projekti/comenius>>

Figure 3: Visit by Guests from the United Kingdom in October 2012 (Varaždin County, 22nd October 2012)

<<http://www.varazdinska-zupanija.hr/index.php/novosti/novosti-iz-skola/3716-uspjeno-se-nastavlja-uenje-stranih-jezika-za-uenike-o-petrijanec-uz-volontersku-pomo.html>>

Figure 4: Invitation to Volunteers for the Participation in the Project Announced at the Faculty of Organisation and Informatics Website (3rd October 2012)

<<http://www.foi.unizg.hr/vijesti/Poziv-na-volontiranje2>>

Figure 5: Visit to the United Kingdom (Source: e-Varaždin, 27th April 2012)

<<http://www.evarazdin.hr/volonteri-klince-iz-skole-u-petrijancu-uce-engleski-jezik/>>

7.2. Recommendations and Conclusion

Positive feedback from volunteers, pupils, teachers and parents lead to the conclusion that this Project provided significant results for the popularisation of learning foreign languages and raising awareness for multiculturalism. During its two-year implementation, more and more students and inhabitants and pupils, i.e. beneficiaries of volunteering, joined in. The interest grew in the local community as well, mostly due to the media that supported it all the way. One of the important outcomes was the dissemination of results to local primary schools in the neighbouring counties. Volunteers developed communicative skills and professional competencies which have made them more competitive in the labour market. One of the results relates to the integration of the Faculty of

Organisation and Informatics into the EVS (European Volunteering Service) international accreditation procedure. Approved accreditation for FOI opens new possibilities to apply a new voluntary project in an international environment.

We are planning to present these results at international conferences, which will contribute to a better recognition of partner institutions. Partner institutions from the two countries plan to expand their collaboration through computer aided correspondence between pupils and students. It is our opinion that the sustainability of these activities and the plan for their expansion is one of the most important outcomes of this Project.

Our special thanks to all partner institutions, volunteers, members of the local community and media for their vigorous participation and support.



Padure Verde song at the Petrijanec Primary School (October 2012)

Enclosure

Enclosed is material for evaluation of pupil quality work. Similar questions were prepared for volunteers and English teachers, for comparison.

PUPILS' ASSESSMENT

Dear Pupil!

We would like to know how much you like learning English outside classes, with volunteers. Please answer these questions honestly by putting a circle around one answer or by writing your answer on the empty line. Your honest answers are very important for us, so then we can prepare extra English classes better.






Thank you!

Violeta Vidaček-Hainš






Volunteer(s)'s Name(s) _____, _____,

Which classroom are you in? _____






1. How do you like learning English outside classes?

				
1	2	3	4	5
I don't like it at all	I don't like it	I don't know	I like it	I like it a lot






2. How do you like spending time with volunteers when you learn English outside classes?

				
1	2	3	4	5
I don't like it at all	I don't like it	I don't know	I like it	I like it a lot

3. How interesting is volunteers' work with you, when you learn English outside classes (games, drawing etc.)

				
1	2	3	4	5
Not interesting at all	Not interesting	I don't know	Interesting	Very interesting

4. Is learning English for you more interesting now when you have extra classes with volunteers?

				
1	2	3	4	5
Not more interesting at all	Not more interesting	I don't know	More interesting	A lot more interesting

5. Describe volunteers you learn with (what you think about them, what you like about them ...)

6. Which games and activities did you like most at English classes with volunteers?

7. Would you like to continue these classes next year? (Put a circle around the right answer)

Yes No



Visit of Guests from England to the Strmec Primary School (October 2012)



Comenius Poster in Petrijanec School



Yeadung Junior School Year „ Children performing a dance at the local theatre“

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