

Innovations

1. European lifelong learning programme Comenius-**Assistantships**

2006-07 Christian Kollinger



In the framework of the **European lifelong learning programme Comenius-Assistantships** in which we took part in the school year 2006-07, in the year 2007-08 and in the year 2008-09 we had the opportunity to have in our school, the assistant professors of foreign language **Mr. Christian Kollinger** in 2006-07, **Mrs. Benthe Beckmann** in 2007-08 and **Mrs. Julia Müller** in 2008-09 from Germany. Our participation in this program was really worthy. The experience from our cooperation was positive and constitutive. Their spontaneousness, their hard work and their friendly mood, made them very lovable to all members of the school society (students, teachers and parents).

They cooperated in an excellent way with all the schools' didactic staff and they were very lovely to the students as well. We got in contact with the educational system and the culture of another country, we exchanged ideas, educational practises and methods.

We like being visited by young and older from foreign countries. It is important to meet people who speak other languages, have other religions, customs and traditions. What could be better than meeting friends from different countries? It is a real chance to exchange cultural information, sentiments and experiences. In our times, more than in the previous years, it is necessary to put the foundations for a new Europe, without walls and colours. For this reason our Intercultural School will always have its doors open for those who would like to visit it.

For us, as an intercultural school it is very important to be able to participate in programs like this one since we believe that through them we try to promote the European and universal dimension of education. We believe that through these programs the children learn about solidarity and friendship among nations. Also, they learn how bad racism and xenophobia is.

Impressions of Christian and Benthe

Christian Kollinger (2006-07):

...The past four and a half months were rich on experiences and impressions. During my practical work and all other activities I gained much practical knowledge and experiences. Especially valuable for me were in this context

- the practice in planning and structuring lessons and activities,
- the practice in facing motivational problems of the pupils and



2007-08 Benthe Beckmann



- the possibility of learning new methods and improving my analytic and practical abilities in teaching. Further on
- I gained new ideas and methods that will be useful in my future career as teacher.

At every single day I felt to be welcome and accepted at school and I see that my presence at school helped in the following fields:

- ✚ My presence at school underlined its character as an intercultural school and helped in the development of an open contact between the people without prejudices.
- ✚ My work helped in the process of intercultural education, supported the intercultural understanding and weakened the danger of racism, nationalism and xenophobia.
- ✚ In my work and in the way I choose my spoken language I emphasised the positive value of knowledge of foreign languages and showed that foreigners are interested in Greece not just as a tourist country.
- ✚ With my work I emphasised the special connection between Greece and Germany and of the equal role of Greece in Europe.

I want to thank the National Agencies Greece and especially program coordinator Vanna Kosta and headmaster Stergios Papadopoulos for the great chance they offered me and for the fantastic time I had at school. I will not forget the heartily farewell-meeting on my last day: The children gave me a dozen little presents. Representatives of the parent's organisations had come to thank me and to give me a very nice book about the town of ELEFThERIO-KORDELIO and again I was surprised by how much the parents care for all that has connection to school.

I need to thank Stergios Papadopoulos, Vanna Kosta and Maria Vritsiou who with their dedication to their work as headmaster and teachers, with readiness to listen, to support and to help me even after school did each of them their best to make this assistanship program a success for the school, the pupils and for me. They supported me in my ideas, invited me to their homes and activities and in this way made me feel well informed and accepted right from the first day. Thank you!

Benthe Beckmann (2007-08):

...Now it is time for me to look back and write about my time at the 6th Intercultural All day School of Eleftherio-Kordelio. I came to Thessaloniki at the beginning of January with mixed feelings, on one hand I was really looking forward and on the other hand I was insecure about what might come towards me.



2008-09 Julia Müller



Everyone, teacher, children and parents, affiliated me in such a nice way and even today I'm looking forward to spend my time at the school every morning. Especially my first time here wasn't always easy, there were lots of new things, the country and its culture were foreign and the most difficult thing for me was, that I almost didn't speak any greek, but thanks to the children I never had any problems with the language, because they always helped me. Meanwhile I appreciate Greece a lot, my Greek is getting better and Thessaloniki became my second home. The work in the school is a lot of fun for me and I already know, that it's going to be hard, to say goodbye. The attendance of the class delivered me a lot of insight to my later work. Even though it wasn't always easy to tell the pupils what I wanted, it was a great time because I admire children and it's a great pity that the time has gone by so fast. I would like to say thank you to the headmaster, the stuff and the parents' association, who helped me a lot while I was in Greece. I'm sure that this won't be my last stay in Greece and I definitely will visit the school, when I'll come back to Thessaloniki...

Julia Müller (2008-09):

...It is almost one year ago that I got the information of the Comenius Programme and with it the possibility to come to the 6th Intercultural All Day School of Eleftherio-Kordelio for half a year. From the beginning, when I read the description of the school, I was very glad to go to this kind of school, where the school-life so different than in schools I visited before in Germany, with so many pupils with different culture. I was sure I would make a lot of new experiences, to learn about another school system, another culture and a new country. And now I can say that I definitely had a great time in Greece and at this school.

From the first day I felt very welcome at the school, because of the headmaster, as well as the teachers, the pupils and the parents of the children. Every day I enjoyed working with the pupils, although it was sometimes difficult because of the language barrier. But on the whole we understood what we wanted from each other. I'm sorry that my Greek is not so good yet. I was very impressed by how many activities are offered to the pupils. And for me it was also great to take part in so many activities and trips with the pupils, where I could become acquainted the children better and I also saw and learned a lot about Greece.

The last months have passed so fast that it won't be easy for me to leave the school so early. I will definitely miss the cordiality and hospitality of all, the liveliness of the pupils, the "Hello Miss"-calls, and the smiles of



the children. I got so many good new experiences and impressions, but I also experienced much about the problems in this school and in the whole of Greece. And I think this was very helpful and important for my future vocation as a teacher. I hope that all the students who will come to this school the coming years as an Comenius Assistant-teacher will also have such a great, experience-rich and helpful time, and I wish for a good cooperation between the teachers, the headmaster and the parents of the pupils, so that the pupils get the best possible education and they have a good memory on their school time. Because I have learned to know and love Greece and the people here, I'm sure this was not my last visit to Greece and I will come back to your school sometime. Thank you a lot for your support and your hospitality.

2. "Flexible Zone" programme

We should also mention that from the school year 2003/04 our school participates in the "Flexible Zone" programme. The "Flexible Zone of Inter-subject and Creative Activities" which consists part of the weekly programme, lasting for at least 2 hours, with its free subjective and its active methodology it aims at achieving a double purpose: First, to balance the inflexibility, the one-sidedness and the multi-division of school and second, to develop slowly, with its principles and proceedings, the daily teaching act.

3. The multicultural newspaper of the students on the internet



We publish a trimestral multicultural newspaper of the students of the 6th grade entitled: "The world through the children's eyes"

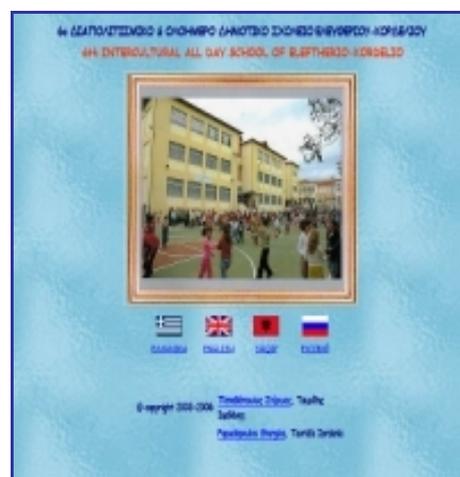
The newspaper is currently running its 8th year (it started during the school year 2002-03), being the students' initiation. We are

really proud since, it should be mentioned, it is distributed in every school in Thessaloniki. It is also on the internet, in our school's website, so everyone can read it electronically as well.

4. New Pan-Hellenic distinction for our website

Our school's network for the third year (2007-08-09) was voted as one of the 10 better school active network places at Primary Education in Greece. Since this school year, 2008-09, the website is also available in two more languages. Apart from **Greek** and **English**, now certain subjects that have to do with the school and its operation as well as the education in Greece are also available in **Albanian** and **Russian**.

<http://6dim-diap-elfth.thess.sch.gr>



5. Greek-French Postgraduate Programme Master 2: Language Awakening



The Ministries of Education of the two countries had already approved. Aristotelio University in Thessaloniki and Maine University at Le Mans cooperated and for 3 weeks, daily, 5 postgraduate students (3 Greeks and 2 French) would visit our school. For the first two weeks they attended the lessons and the third week they joined the pupils at some activities. The aim of the programme was the awakening of languages and cultures. An approach with a cross-cultural character. Its objective being the familiarization of students with the linguistic mechanism, the growth of essential skills that would allow the upper classes to learn a foreign language easily, to get deeper into the vocabulary and the structure of their mother tongue shaping at the same time a positive attitude to diversity.

6. Erasmus Program - A multicultural visit in our school

In the frames of the European educational action plan ERASMUS of the University of Thessaloniki, and after the initiative of the foreign language assistant schoolteacher of our school Mrs Julia Müller from Germany and the principal Mr Papadopoulos Stergios, our school unit was visited by 11 foreign students on the 15 of May. The students came from **England, Germany, Brazil, Austria, the USA, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Serbia and Congo.**

Most of the students are in Thessaloniki as students at the Erasmus Programme or as students of the Greek language. After they were welcomed at the school by the principal, Papadopoulos Stergio, Elsa Tsiakiridou (the school's English teacher, who translated) and the rest of the school's staff, they were briefed in depth on the way the school operates, of the various integration programmes and the several activities that take place at the school, like, participation in European programmes, the creation of a school website which specializes in intercultural education and the publication of a multicultural newspaper by the students of the 6th class, titled: "the world through the children's eyes." They were also given a leaflet in English. Later, the foreign students had the opportunity to visit some classrooms and get acquainted with our students. First, they visited the 3rd class (Γ1), where the pupils along with their teacher, Keskilidou Machi, welcomed the holding the flags of the visitors' countries and said "good morning" and "welcome" in **several languages**. Since the pupils, as was expected, were very interested to get to know the foreign students, they introduced themselves in Greek as well as their mother tongue. The rest of the time the Arab students taught some Arab words to the pupils and they all tried



to dance a funny dance using only their hands and played a game called "Human Nut".

After that, our foreign friends went to the 1st class (A1), where the young pupils along with their teacher, Artemis Kefalidou, warmly welcomed them. In order for all to get to know each other they played a game of acquaintance. The pupils performed an excellent theatrical play, titled, "**Peace Is**", which impressed the students. After the German and Austrian students taught some German songs and a game, each student received a flower as a present by the young pupils.

The last part of the visit was based on music and dance. The school chorus welcomed the students with three wonderful songs from their first CD which would be released in a few days and the pupils of the 5th and the 6th grade welcomed them with Greek and foreign dances.

Later on, two students from America and Brazil each sang a song in their mother tongue accompanied by the sounds of a guitar. At the end, students and pupils danced in Greek and Arab rhythms with the encouragement of the students from Syria and Palestine.

The departure of the students was very difficult and emotionally tense because the pupils did not want to let the students leave and the students were excited with everything that had happened all day at school. The visit of the above mentioned students was a very positive experience for the school pupils. In fact, some of the older pupils had the opportunity to talk in German and English. It is very important to meet people who speak different languages, have different religions, customs and lifestyles. What could be better than making friends with foreigners? It is the ultimate chance for exchange of civilization facts, emotions and experiences. Nowadays, more than in the past, it is necessary to build the foundations for a new world without walls and colours.

Statements of some of the students:

Lisa from Austria: It was a great and unique experience which Julia has offered me by inviting me to this school. The pupils were very open and interested in my foreign colleagues and me. There seems to be a good understanding and huge openness and curiosity for other cultures. Also, I loved the pretty decorated classrooms - a place, where kids can be comfortable and happy.

Sultan from Turkey (Courtesan): The interaction amongst the children and teachers was clearly that of a high standard. Furthermore, there was evidence of a great relationship among the pupils in a school that also encourages learning via games and a vibrant atmosphere. Ultimately, the experience I have had here has been wonderful



Anne from Germany: It has been a great and very interesting day for me. Especially because the Greek pupils are much more vivacious and they seem to be more open and interested than pupils in Germany. Also, I was impressed by the amount of activities provided by the school to the pupils. I'd have been very happy if there had been such activities when I was a pupil at school!



7. Participation in the programme of student practice of the department of German language and literature of the Aristotelio University



Three students from the department of German language and literature visited our school in order to practice teaching. This programme lasted 4 weeks. The students attended lessons and commented the teaching process in the "observation protocols" and then analyzed and interpreted the teaching process either with the German Language teacher, or with their fellow students and their university teachers. Afterwards, the students gradually started teaching. They planned and prepared lessons individually and as teams in cooperation with our school's German Language teacher. Finally, they taught a lesson and evaluated their teaching aiming in feedback.

8. Activities in the City - Against Social, Health and Educational Discrimination

Some parents and pupils of our school with the teacher of the 1st grade, Mrs Kefalidou Artemis on Saturday 23rd 2009 went to the centre of Thessaloniki to a festival against social discrimination (games, laboratories, jugglers, clowns, graffiti, skateboard and concerts). All the above activities took place as part of the activities on the issue of: Activities in the City - Against Social, Health and Educational Discrimination



9. Collaboration with the Municipality of Eleftherio - Kordelio

Our school collaborated with the municipality at the very ambitious program titled: "Meet Greece" several field trips took place as well as entertaining activities.

10. Creating a constructive atmosphere in a cross-cultural classroom through activities about human rights: **A study Case**



Keskilidou Machi (C1), Karamitrou Sofia (C2), Parsanoglou Athanasios (E1) and Dimitriadou Georgia (E2) participated in a research-study case on human rights with the following objectives:

- ✚ What is the school attitude towards better perceptions and norms from the family and the school environment?
- ✚ How can we shape a human rights based atmosphere in the classroom through teaching and experiential activities.

To collect data from the school pupils Gash (1996) questionnaire was used. After the evaluation of the results, experiential activities based on human rights were used. The material which was based on theoretical texts and exercises were taken from the Health Education Programme: **«Strengthening the students through the Human rights teaching»**

The objective was the gradual shaping of values and acceptable behavior as far as equality and respect of diversity is concerned, by creating a positive attitude in the classroom and everyday life towards foreign and Roma school pupils. Next, the pupils were asked to fill in a new questionnaire. The aim was to search for changes in the pupils' points of view after the activities. Teaching human rights is a subject that promotes respect and understanding among students regardless of cultural, linguistic, national and religious origins.

11. Educational Experiential Seminar - **Planning the Effective School: From Theory to Action**

The Educational Experiential Seminar - **Planning the Effective School: From Theory to Action** took place in our school on Friday 6 March 2009. It was organized by the School Director of the 16th District of Primary Education of Thessaloniki, Mr Nikos Akritidis in cooperation with the school principal, Mr Papadopoulos Stergios. The objective of the seminar was to inform the teachers on educational issues like effective teaching methods and activities that stimulate the pupils' interest and sensitization of pupils on social behavior issues and the improvement of the psychology of the pupils so that they would improve their social skills. **About 100 teachers from 7 schools of Eleftherio-Kordelio participated.** Every teacher attended two experiential laboratories.



12. Theatrical week at our school (8-12 June 2009)



During the week 8- 12 June, the theatrical stage of our school presented several plays which were performed twice so that every pupil would have the chance to watch them.

1. A 1: **Lets talk about War and Peace**
2. B 2: **The garden with the 11 cats**
3. D 2: **We are packed with garbage**
4. D 1: **The Lion and the Mouse (in English)**
5. All Day School Pupils: **Pansofoulis**
6. All Day School Pupils: **The brainless Sheppard**

Through the plays the foreign and home comer pupils were able to express themselves (a year ago some could not even speak in Greek) and prove that they are able and be acceptable.

13. Our school's cooperation with the Volunteer Team of the Friends of Anastasia and the Institute of Developmental Rehabilitation (ex Psychological Centre of Northern Greece - Pefka)

Around Christmas the need to offer and love is stronger. The teachers teach it at school. Hunger, misery and the acceptance of the fact that some children are different. How do you explain the diversity to kids? "**Children need images**" said Mrs Artemis, teacher in the 1st grade. And so it happened. She had the idea for a Christmas Bazaar and a visit to the Institute of developmental Rehabilitation at Pefka.

Parents and children loved the idea and the bazaar was organized. Everybody was happy to participate.

So, an unbelievable amount of money was raised. 2.450 €, although we should add the offer of 1.000 € as well the donation of sweets for the kids at the institute by anonymous donators.

Some days later a group of students and their teacher, Mrs Artemis visited the Institute and offered the generous gifts to 38 children of the Institute. This meeting will be memorable since it initiated great feelings. It helped us understand the particularities; we were moved and above all made new friends. We felt the need to continue this friendship and exchange experiences. Love, affection, care: these words are not known to some children...



14. Presenting our school's Intercultural Activities



Through the web page and our multicultural newspaper, often the rich cross-cultural activities of our school become known. Thus certain **television stations** wanted us to present all these activities and the harmonious coexistence of children from different countries in the school.



MEGA: On Christmas Eve in the live recreational airing of "A lot on Sunday" our school was live on TV for 15 minutes, in parallel connection with the Greek school in Dachau in Munich in Germany and presented some activities.



ET3: On Thursday 8 February in the mid day Central News Bulletin in a 15minute live connection the principal and certain schoolteachers of the school, our chorus and a dancing team, spoke for the various programs and activities that took place in our school.



They stressed, that the schoolteachers the children should emphasize the right of each child and each person to have other on religion, different musical hearings, cultures, customs so as to feel like one. To understand that what we live daily in the classroom and in our school, with this variety of origins- this exchange of experiences - is in the end a privilege and no social problem.

EUROPE 1: Monday of 4 April in the emission of channel EUROPE 1 the force of language and for one entire hour, the director, certain schoolteachers and students of various orders spoke for the operation of our school, for the various programs of integration of resettler, foreigners, gipsies of students and for our activities.

15. Christos Tsolakis and Sofronis Chatzisavvidis (two top linguists)

As we are sensitive to educational issues, immigration, refuges and ryes, the students of the 6th grade came in contact with two of the most famous linguists in Greece. Cristo Tsolaki, Professor Emeritus of the Department of Primary Pedagogical Education at Aristotelio University and Sofroni Chatzisavvidi, dean of the Paidagogical School and teacher of the Department of Science of Preschool Education at the same University.

