

MumDad&Me - Toddlers' Clubs

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The MumDad&Me - Toddlers' clubs project is supposed to motivate and encourage the parents and their children - toddlers working in the clubs to learn foreign languages and make foreign language learning accessible to them .

1.Aims of the project

The project goals lied in the efforts to raise the citizens' awareness of advantages of early language learning and multicultural character of the EU as well as in the efforts to make a better access to language learning for parents and their children through foreign language learning in relaxed and informal atmosphere of the Toddlers clubs.

2. Project Outcomes

There were twelve/12 / MDM Toddlers' clubs opened during the life of the 2 years project run from October2004 to 30th September 2006 : five in Slovakia, three in Hungary , two in Italy , one in Germany and also in the Czech Republic

All the clubs continue in their activities also recently. Even more , there are some new clubs opened after the project period. In Hungary one club is forming at Wekerle, In Italy the 3rd club was already opened in October and a new one is going to be established in the northern part of the country .

There is a good effective network- another of the outcomes - created among the clubs on national level almost in every country.

In majority of the countries clubs exist and work within the framework of the pilot club which co-ordinates their activities, supports them with the material, methodology tips and provides teacher training.

Effective contacts were formed among the national coordinating institutions and municipal authorities in Slovakia and Italy, bilingual kindergartens, playgroups; communal centres; cultural institutes; FMKS, mehrSprache e.V., RAA and all counsellors and kindergartens of Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband in Germany. The Hungarian partner cooperates with language teachers and kindergarten head teachers as well as with bilingual primary school and Daisy Kindergarten. The continuation of the language learning is ensured also in other participating countries - In Slovakia and the Czech Republic continuation is provided in own school kindergartens and the German partner is in contact with the French kindergarten.

4.Evaluation

Internal partners', teachers' and parents' reports gave the feedback to the coordinators at the national but also transnational level. But there were also 2 external evaluator reports . In Hungary - external evaluator Andrew Hornett evaluated the project and its activities very positively and Mrs.Stoicheva- an Bulgarian expert working for EU wrote her report which later became a part of the project final report.

5.Dissemination

During the informative and motivating campaign a lot of products and material were produced and disseminated .

Dissemination was organised through national and trans national exhibitions, meetings, conferences , www site of MDM , articles and advertisements, as well as by the radio and television stations broadcasting . at the end the Final conference in Milano / 24-26.5.2006 / organised by Italian partner concluded the project life.

Further dissemination was suggested and consulted by the EU Commission and there was a presentation about the clubs given in ELLE Krakow 10/2005 , at the EPA Final conference of Language clubs in Holland 11/2005, and also in November at the conference in Brussels.

6.Project Objectives

The project objectives lied in facilitating a better access to language learning for parents and their children and encouraging foreign language learning in relaxed and informal atmosphere of the clubs through an imaginative way of playing, singing, dancing, drama, art, craft and computers.

5.Expectations of this conference

There were the Guidelines how to teach and how to organise the work in the clubs created in Prague. In addition in Hungary Best Practice and Syllabus for 60 lessons was worked out, but unfortunately in none of the participating countries were the computers used as effectively as was expected.

Both- the Guidelines and the Syllabus provide a good material to be transformed into a digital form which will enable parents and toddlers – the target group of the project - to continue in their linguistic development .

6.Conclusion

Using the computers would be just one of other methods which would facilitate a better access to language learning for parents and their children as well as raise citizens´ awareness of advantages of language learning in early years and of multilingual character of the European Union.

We should not forget that all activities in the clubs / computers included /

allow parents to support each other to start the foreign language and to share their ideas in the groups of equal friends which will make the whole process of their study easier

break down the traditional mother's/father's role in the early childhood as it gives an equal chance to the fathers to participate and be an important part of their child's development.

enable parents and toddlers to lose the language barrier very soon and achieve the language readiness very quickly

support toddlers to learn the foreign language without any stress in the most natural way together with their parents.

encourage teachers and show them the way how to approach the target group

lead to higher awareness and understanding of the linguistic and cultural variety of the European Union countries in public

And last but not least the project might promote individual study of the foreign languages by encouraging parents to take up language learning themselves. This fact at the end leads to their personal development and smoother introduction to labour process.