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**THE UNESCO SCHOOLS COOPERATION NETWORK  
HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMME**

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## **Introduction**

My purpose in submitting this article is to give a comprehensive description of the work which I carried out for the Human Education Programme, a presentation for which I gave at the IIPE (International Institute of Peace Education) Conference held at the University of Haifa in Israel at the end of July and beginning of August 2008. Thus the following report seeks to give a description of a UNESCO schools cooperation network health education programme which took place and was entitled: "Human rights education and children's rights - Though different, girls are equal to boys", conducted at Marasleio second experimental state primary school in Athens, Greece. This project has been conducted during the last two successive academic years among a group of twenty-four Year Three primary school pupils from Greece in 2006-07 and in 2007-08, among twenty-three Year Four primary school pupils from Greece and for a period of five weeks, nineteen Year Four primary school pupils from Germany via e-twinning. The programme has been a combination of projects comprising "Health Education" and "Human Rights Education" respectively, and has taken place over a period of four months during each of the last two academic years.

## **Key features of the Health Education project**

From the beginning, it was pointed out to the pupils that there is a correlation between education and a state of well-being and freedom from illness, insofar as the former can make an important contribution to the latter. It was then pointed out that another contribution to a person's state of well being can also be made by eating nutritious

food which is free from artificial preservatives. The contribution made by breathing fresh air and regular exercise was also stressed. In addition to these factors, other factors contributing to a state of well being were underscored, such as the importance of being treated by human beings with the necessary respect regardless of country of origin, colour of skin, sex or age, on the basis of the understanding that we are all individuals and “different”<sup>1</sup>. In turn, there was also emphasis on human co-operation and its contribution to the notion of “sustainable development” in the light of universal environmental concerns and the impact of the environment on our health and its importance to peace and human rights education.

In terms of methodology, the teaching was child-centered. Activities engaged took into consideration the educational theory of multiple intelligences put forth by psychologist Howard Gardner<sup>2</sup>, whereby he identifies eight different kinds of intelligence. Dialogue and co-operation between the pupils was encouraged in order to elicit joint decision making. Through the use of role-play activity and group work, the pupils were encouraged to engage in a variety of multidisciplinary activities linked to key nationally prescribed lesson subjects including among others Greek Language Studies, Environmental Studies, Religious Education, and from Dorothea Sir’s audio visual material<sup>3</sup>. The intended outcome was that pupils would acquire faster and more effective learning skills.

## **Key features of the Human Rights Education project**

More than ever before, the importance of international co-operation and peace throughout the world has become an essential learning aspect in the school education experience<sup>4</sup>. Beginning with nursery schools and primary schools, respect for human rights must be incorporated into the education system and offered at all levels. Indeed, the correlation between peace and human rights can be compared to a living body, where Peace represents the “skeletal structure and muscle fibre” and Human Rights represent the “nervous system and circulation of the blood”. Human rights can also act as guidelines to make it possible for humans to live together in peace.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, it must be taken into consideration that no provision as yet has been made for third- and fourth-year primary pupils in Greece to receive instruction in Citizenship Education as a subject lesson per se. Consequently, our project in essence represents a specifically designed project as well as an introduction to a wide variety of extracurricular activities.

Among the aims of the project were to gain knowledge of certain human rights documents, create an awareness among the pupils of specific human rights charters, help them understand that all the rights are necessary for human well-being and development, make them aware of human rights issues, give them instruction on prejudice and tolerance, help them develop a sensitivity to injustice, help them

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<sup>1</sup> Sir, D. (2004). pp. 1-2

<sup>2</sup> Smith, Mark K. (2002, 2008), Frantzy, A. (2005)

<sup>3</sup> Sir, D. (2004). pp. 2-3

<sup>4</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> UNESCO / EURED. (2005)

<sup>5</sup> Van Eeden, P. (2004). p.9

develop the skills and attitudes necessary to stand up for the rights of others as well as take action in defence of human rights per se.<sup>6</sup>

In terms of methodology, my Human Rights Education project sought to elicit pupils' stimulation and input by basing the activities on their own needs, interests, personal experiences, background, age and level<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, a holistic approach of the world was adopted. In addition, the project was student-centered and orientated towards problem-solving; it was open to real life, orientated towards the future and applied psychologist Howard Gardner's eight types of intelligence educational theory. Moreover, the project was multi-disciplinary in nature, covering a wide scope within prescribed lesson subjects gleaned from the national curriculum, such as Greek Language Studies, Mathematics and Art, with the implementation of role-play activities and games.<sup>8</sup>

## Activities and Examples (2006-07)

Section one: Preliminary Activities<sup>9</sup> for third-grade pupils from Greece.

Beginning in the 2006-7 academic year, the first part of the project got underway with a set of twelve games and activities to elicit mutual co-operation among the Year Three pupils.

- (a) To begin with, the whole class was split into six groups and a preliminary co-operating game was conducted.
- (b) The second activity, entitled "Graffiti", got pupils engaged in writing down salient individual characteristics. By way of example, one of the pupils, Panayota, wrote: "My name is Panayota Vaidani. I am good at volleyball and History".
- (c) The third activity, called "This is me", elicited pupils engagement in thinking of and writing down other salient characteristics, such as "Something positive about myself: I am good at all subjects", "Something I have succeeded in: In my first term report, I got A grades in everything", "Someone I admire: I admire my mother and father", and "Something I like doing: I like playing volleyball and playing with my sister" (i.e. Angelina).
- (d) The fourth activity, called "In my grandmother's trunk, I found..." had the pupils in one group engaged in a game in which they had to think of and remember the names of objects in sequence. By way of example, one of the pupils, Natalia, remembered "...a poppy, a horse, a juice, a drawing, a daisy, a pencil, a vole", and added "a pussy-cat".
- (e) The fifth activity was a game called "Pass the balloon" and had the class arranged into two groups.
- (f) The sixth activity, called "Searching for..." involved pupils engaged in individual writing. For the one of the tasks the pupils were to "write down the name of someone who has the same colour eyes as you" (one reply being "Marianna"). Another task was to "write down the name of someone to whom last week a person told him/her that he/she loves him/her, or that he/she is unique" (i.e. one reply being "Nefeli"). A further request was to "write down the name of a person who walks to school" (e.g. one response being "nobody"). Other tasks included

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<sup>6</sup> CDVEC. (2004) p.1

<sup>7</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> UNESCO / EURED. (2005)

<sup>8</sup> Sir, (2004). pp. 2-3

<sup>9</sup> Gouvra, M. (2004) pp. 5 – 21

were “write down the name of someone who was born in the same town or city as you” (“Rafael”), “write down the name of someone who thinks it is O.K. to cry” (“Our teacher, sometimes”), “write down the name of someone who has the same star sign as you” (“Angelina”), “write down the name of someone who likes the same sweets as you do”: “Rafael”, “write down the name of someone who loves laughing”: “Ion and Evangelos”, “write down the name of someone who needs someone’s help”: “Ilias” and “write down the name of someone who lives in a house where nobody smokes”: “Yiorgos” (i.e. Iasson’s answers).

- (g) The seventh activity, called “Meet your match”, had the pupils in pairs engaged in a speaking activity in which they had to think of, find and name two different things that are commonly used together, for example “olive oil” (Lefteris) and “vinegar” (Rafael).
- (h) The eighth activity, called “Find someone who...” had the pupils arranged into groups for a speaking activity “in which they had to think of and name someone who “has the same colour hair as you”, for example “dark hair” (Sofia, Andreas, Chryssa, Michalis).
- (i) The ninth activity, called “Touch” had the pupils arranged in one group for a speaking activity where they had to think of, name and touch, for example, “something blue” (“the walls in our classroom”: Andreas).
- (j) The tenth activity, a game called “Walking when you are blind” had the pupils arranged in pairs – e.g. Ilias and me.
- (k) The eleventh activity involved drawing jointly together in pairs somebody else, e.g. Yiorgos and Ion.

(l) The twelfth activity involved a game called “The mirror”, played in pairs, which was connected with symmetry in mathematics, e.g. Sofia and Angelina.

Section two: Skills the third-grade pupils should acquire <sup>10</sup>

(a) “Learning how to Communicate”

The following writing and speaking activities were intended to elicit responses which would lead to the acquisition of communication skills: an individual writing activity involving the relating of a funny incident brought about by poor communication; a guided discussion on different ways of communicating; an individual or group writing activity where a short message was to be sent either to parents, friends, head-teacher or to myself, for example, a short message from Marianna to Lefteris was: “Lefteris, Do you want to come to the cinema with us? Katerina, Trifon, Andreas, and Marianna are coming too”.

A further activity was conducted via role-playing with a piece of string attached to two plastic beakers attached to both ends to form a hand-made telephone (i.e. Iasson and Rafael). Another guided activity was the non-spoken relating of an event, e.g. “I lost my watch”, presented in pairs as a game of ‘charades’. There was also an activity engaging pupils in drawing in pairs under guidance where pupils had to communicate without talking to each other.

(b) “Me, a special person”, “Uniqueness” and “People I love”

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<sup>10</sup> Skills for Children – Basic Programme (1999)

The following drawing, writing and speaking activities were intended to elicit responses: firstly, a guide discussion, then an individual self-portrait drawing activity and a portrait drawing of other favorite people or objects, followed by a guided discussion with the whole class as a single group, based on “*a photograph of myself*”; an individual writing activity on personal features/skills, “*what I have achieved*” and “*what I would like to do in the future but haven’t done yet*”. For instance, Kostas wrote “I’ve got brown eyes. I’m not that patient. I’ve done very well at drawing. I’ve done very well at running, too. I can kick a ball far. When I grow up, I want to learn how to drive a car” and an interview of a specific person (individual writing), e.g. Nefeli interviews her sister Thalia:

- “What’s your name?”
- “Thalia”
- “How old are you?”
- “I’m five and a half years old”
- “What’s your favorite game?”
- “I like playing with dolls”
- “What do you want to do when you grow up?”
- “I’d like to be a schoolteacher or a cardiologist”
- “Which foreign language would you most like to learn?”
- “I’d most like to learn French”
- “Which country would you like to visit the most?”
- “I’d really like to go to the North Pole”.

(c) “Me: one amongst many others: similarities and differences”

The following activity was intended to elicit appropriate responses - A writing activity in pairs on the subject of similarities and differences: for example, Evangelos and Marianna wrote, “Similarities: we sit at the same desk, we have the same T-shirt size and we’ve both got thick hair” – “Differences: We don’t own any pets. We don’t have the same colour eyes. We don’t wear the same size shoes”.

(d) “Feelings and emotions - expressing them”

The following drawing and writing activities were intended to elicit appropriate responses: making an individual drawing of a happy or sad face and writing down individual emotions (i.e. Evangelos) and individual writing “I felt happy when...” – “I felt sad when...”. For example, Chryssa wrote “I felt happy when our school teacher told us there would be a trip to the beach” and “I felt sad when our teacher told us there wouldn’t be a beach trip”.

Section three: Activities connected with the subjects of Greek Language Studies, Mathematics, Environmental Studies, History and Religion Studies:

(a) Greek Language Studies for Year Three pupils from Greece<sup>11</sup>

Among activities enacted in this section included a guided discussion based on the reading of Greek literary and language texts in which the third year pupils were asked to give responses to questions set, followed by a guided discussion on the subject of

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<sup>11</sup> Intzidis et al. (2006). Pupil’s book pp. 50-62 and activity book pp. 60-67

children of the world, in particular those children suffering under difficult circumstances in countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and so on, the various problems currently being faced there and the things that might be done to solve them, as well as the various rights that these people there have. A further activity sought to elicit a number of written responses from the pupils, who on this particular occasion were split into six groups in which they were asked to note down five human rights that they could cite, among which the most important ones emerging from one particular group were “*the right to food, water, clothing, medicine and school*”. Further guided discussion activities involved fact-finding for more information on the role and work of the UNICEF and Action Aid organizations, as well as what type of difficulties Japanese and Cypriot children are currently facing in their respective countries. A further activity entailed making doves of peace by cutting out and folding paper and then writing individual wishes on the paper doves of peace, for example Evridiki wrote down “*I wish for peace throughout the whole world. I wish for health and happiness for all the world’s children*”.

Another guided discussion activity together with an individual written task elicited responses from pupils on the subject of children who are living in extreme poverty-stricken areas of the third world and who as a result are compelled or forced to work by circumstances beyond their control. Pupils’ individual messages were written to be sent to UNICEF, Action Aid and so on: for example, “There should be peace all over the world and no war”, “To: Bush, who we hate. P.S. We are offering a reward of 15 billion Euros – From: Greece, Natalia, Kostas and Ion”.

(b) Mathematics (third-year pupils from Greece):

There was just one activity, which entailed the game of “The mirror” as presented above, connected with the subject of symmetry and played out in pairs<sup>12</sup>.

(c) Environmental Studies (third-year pupils from Greece):

These activities included a guided discussion based on the question “What are our needs?”, plus a drawing and writing activity on “What do we know about children’s human rights?” in which at least one out of “education, peace, water, love, care, rest, clothing, medicine, etc” was to be elicited. (“I have the right to play and exercise” Kimon). Another guided discussion was held in which the pupils sought out more information on the subject of UNICEF, the Greek ombudsman and the ombudsman for children<sup>13</sup>.

There followed an individual written task based on a fact-finding mission in search of more information via the Internet on the subject of young children in various countries around the world, such as Brazil and Mexico in Latin America, Pakistan and India in Asia and so on. One further talking point concerned the Declaration of Children’s Human Rights charter as part of a guided discussion in which it was mentioned that women, although different to men, have the same general and specific rights in Greece as well and then there followed a guided discussion and a role-

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<sup>12</sup> Lemonidis et al. (2006) activity book part 3, pp.15-16

<sup>13</sup> Children’s Ombudsman Leaflet (2006) pp.10-11.

playing activity, with the subject being women and men enjoying the same rights and being equal<sup>14</sup>.

(d) History (third-year pupils from Greece):

This consisted of individual written exercises linked to the subjects of peace and war.<sup>15</sup>

(e) Religious Studies (third-year pupils from Greece):

A group speaking task, a game of ‘Human Rights’, where pupils were asked to read out key words connected with human rights which were written on matchbox tops, such as “Peace and War”, “Company and Loneliness”, in order to elicit an oral response from each pupil in the form of a complete phrase or sentence<sup>16</sup>. Then there followed an individual drawing and writing task based on the subject of war and peace, followed by the pupils being asked to make written notes of their feelings related to war and peace, for example, Ilias wrote “WAR, BLOOD, HUNGER, FEAR, POVERTY, ORPHANS, TEARS – WE WANT PEACE, NOT WAR”). There was also individual interviewing (optional) of pupils’ grandparents.

Section four: Human Rights of children - two activities based on the UNICEF book (third-year-pupils from Greece)

A game entitled: “wants, needs and rights: a few people living in a city” was played where there were 20 cards describing needs and rights. In pairs, pupils were asked to choose and write down the 4 most important ones, and then later on, to add another 4 needs cards – for example, Ioanneta and Katerina chose “water, friends, recreation, quiet” and then “...fresh air, clothes, water, education, religion, nutritious food, home, medical care” – and to follow there was another speaking game with percentages: “statistical ranking”, more difficult than the previous game, with the whole class this time in one group<sup>17</sup>.

Section five: Consolidation

A visit to the theatre (third-year pupils from Greece: 2006-07)

‘Animal Farm’

The pupils were taken to see a children’s play entitled “The Animal-Farm” at a local theatre. This play was a special theatrical adaptation for a young children’s audience and based on the novel of the same name written by the prominent English political novelist George Orwell<sup>18</sup>. A “fairy story” in the style of Aesop’s fables, Orwell’s Animal Farm uses talking animals on an English farm as his main characters in order to parody Soviet historical developments and paint an ominous picture of a totalitarian world in which personal freedom is nonexistent<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Kokkotas et al (2006) pupil’s book, pp. 92-97 and activity book, p.37).

<sup>15</sup> Maistrellis et al (2006). activity book, p. 45.

<sup>16</sup> Zouras et al. (2006). p.87.

<sup>17</sup> Fountain (1994) pp. 9 – 14 and pp.28 – 30.

<sup>18</sup> Orwell, G. (1979)

<sup>19</sup> Moran, D. (2008)

At the end of the academic-year (June, 2007):  
End-of-year celebration performances (by third-year pupils from Greece: on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2007)

To celebrate the end of the school year, Year Three pupils enacted performances of the following children's stories, and we filmed it on video.

- (1) "The Happy Meadow"<sup>20</sup>. Once upon a time there was a beautiful field resplendent with daisies. Suddenly one day, up sprouted a poppy in the middle of the daisy field. What were the daisies to do? Some daisies said that they should pull out the poppy and get rid of it, as a poppy had "no business" being in their field of daisies they said. The other daisies disagreed and wanted to leave the poppy alone. Life in the daisy field would never be the same again. Through this 'flowery' parable, Nikoloudi talks to children about the importance of showing tolerance and understanding for otherness.
- (2) "Elmer", based on the illustrated children's story by David McKee<sup>21</sup>, is a lovable patchwork elephant who loves to play with his friends in the jungle. Elmer is different – he is wonderfully multicolored and though this makes him a very special elephant, he thinks everyone is laughing at him simply because he is different, so Elmer tries to make himself the same as all the other elephants. This is another message to children about the importance of a sense of self and the ability to retain one's self-esteem while at the same time holding on to the individual qualities which make one unique<sup>22</sup>.
- (3) "Something else", written by Kathryn Cave and illustrated by Chris Riddell<sup>23</sup>, is a children's story about a lonely creature called 'Something Else' who is left out of everything because he looks and behaves differently. But when an even stranger creature comes along and tries to make friends with him, Something Else doesn't want to know - until he realizes that the stranger is perhaps not so different after all. In 1997, for "Something else" Cave was awarded the first international UNESCO prize for Children's and Young People's Literature in the Service of Tolerance. The story, much like "The Happy Meadow" and "Elmer the patchwork elephant", gives the pupils a chance to think about and personally relate to similar situations or emotions in their own lives, and indicates acceptable behaviors and ways to prevent bullying or exclusion<sup>24</sup>.

## Activities and Examples (2007-08)

Section one: Preliminary Activities (Year Four pupils from Greece and from Germany via e-twinning)

Two brainstorming sessions were held amongst the Year Four pupils: the aim being firstly to ascertain what the pupils knew about 'Human Rights', by means of a guided discussion with the whole class staying in one group. The second question asked was

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<sup>20</sup> Nikoloudi, F. (2000)

<sup>21</sup> McKee, D. (1997)

<sup>22</sup> Andersen Press. (2008)

<sup>23</sup> Cave, K and Riddell, C. (1997)

<sup>24</sup> Penguin Books Ltd (2008)



what the pupils knew about ‘Children’s Rights’ also conducted orally with the whole class in one group.

Section two (Activities for both sets of fourth-year pupils from Greece and from Germany via e-twinning)

The first activity was a guided discussion and subsequent written and drawing task on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a brief summary of its articles. Pupils were asked to come up with at least five human rights and sketch one of them in groups<sup>25</sup>. Examples of responses elicited include: “Healthy food, school and education, to be treated well, to be rescued first, freedom” (Group: “The checkers of the Neckar”, from Germany).

With regard to the subject of children’s human rights, a guided discussion and written task was conducted with a UNICEF poster as the stimulus, in which pupils were asked to come up with at least more than five human rights and one drawing - one of which in groups, based on the UNICEF poster of 2005. Examples mentioned were “We have the right to play, to education, to have food and water, to rest, to be taken care of and to be loved, to have friends and to kill Rafael” – (Group: “Dolphin of the ocean”, from Greece).

To consolidate the above, a crossword puzzle was given to fourth-grade Greek pupils to solve to provide stimulus for the whole class put into one group to elicit some discussion of human rights:

The crossword clues: 1. .... and rest are also two children’s rights. 2. No hitting and no slapping in the face! I have the right to live without....! 3. My ....., surname and nationality are features of my identity. 4. My private space, my personal belongings, what I think and .... is part of my private life. 5. I have the right to be ....., 6. Children with special needs need special ....., 7. If I am abused, I have the right to ask for help and ....., 8. I have my own personality and I have the right to be..... 9. When I don’t feel well, I have the right to call the .... to get well. 10. I have the right to talk about anything that concerns me. Thus, people have to listen to my ..... and pay attention to me. 11. Nutritious .... is also one of my rights, because it helps me to grow. 12. All children have the right to live in a safe ..... 13. I have the right to go to school and ..... . 14. All children, both boys and girls, no matter what language they speak, no matter what their religion is, the color of their skin or their appearance, are .....

(KEY: “play, violence, name, write, well-informed, care, protection, respected, doctor, opinion, food, home, learn, equal”).

## **Activities and Examples (for the fourth-year pupils from Greece only)<sup>26</sup>**

A words and pictures matching activity was conducted with a set of forty cards and involved pupils matching pairs of these cards. Half of these cards showed pictures of

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<sup>25</sup> CDVEC. (2004) p. 2

<sup>26</sup> United nations (2004) pp. 53-77

human rights and the pupils had to match them up to the other twenty cards which described these rights in phrases or sentences. At the end of the game, pupils were put in groups and asked to write: “Which human rights were the easiest to match up?”, “Did you find some of the symbols difficult to match up”, “Can you draw a better symbol?” Among responses elicited were “we found human right (1), to own things, difficult (2) to take part in elections and (3) to own a home”, (Group: “The informers” – from Greece). Pupils were then asked to bring to school a picture from a magazine or newspaper illustrating a human right they wanted the class to remember. This was given as a homework task<sup>27</sup>.

Following this was an individual writing activity linked to children’s literature: a fairy-tale linked to the subject of human rights and based on a Greek fairy tale by Angeliki Varella<sup>28</sup> about a child with special needs:

The fairy-tale tells the story of a poor shoemaker and his wife who had no children of their own and as a result were very unhappy. The tale goes as follows: “One day, a basket was left outside their house with a foundling inside it. A note was left in it which read, “My name is Ilias. Please love me....”.

Naturally, the shoemaker often made shoes for all the other children, but as Ilias started to grow, the shoemaker realized that the poor child couldn’t walk. The shoemaker would often go to the river and cry: “Why oh why God, why did this happen to me? Why can’t Ilias run about just like the other kids?”

Ilias’ mother was also very sad about it and kept saying to him “when you were baptized, the angels from heaven didn’t hear your name very clearly and as a result, you fell down. This is the reason that you can’t walk”. Ilias would listen to this tale and felt better, but obviously the problem wouldn’t go away: he was a child who couldn’t walk. Since then, Ilias himself started to make up a tale about every pair of shoes his father made. Some of the tales were funny, and some of them wise.

When Ilias was 6 years old he started school. However, the poor shoemaker was still sad because Ilias couldn’t walk. One day another boy’s father said to him at the school “you don’t need to worry too much about Ilias because my son, to take an example, is not a good pupil, just like Ilias. Just read the fairy-tale Ilias wrote at school about the gardener”. From then on, the poor shoemaker changed. He realized that it was no good for him to go down to the river and cry. He realized that there were many poor children who felt miserable because they were poor and could not even afford a pair of shoes. Thus he started making many pairs of shoes and giving them away to poor children. “Yes”, he kept telling himself, “Ilias cannot walk but there is strength in him and he can make it”.

All his classmates loved Ilias. In the morning they helped him get to school and in the evening they wrote fairy tales with him together. In this way, Ilias would write tales about every pair of shoes his father made. At the ending for each fairy-tale he put “my name is Ilias. Please, love me...”<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> CDVEC. (2004) pp. 3 - 9

<sup>28</sup> Varella, A. (1998)

<sup>29</sup> Varella, A. (1998)

After reading this fairy tale aloud and talking about it with the fourth-grade-students, each pupil was asked to make up their own fairy tale about a pair of shoes. By way of example, one of our ablest pupils, Rafael, wrote:

“...Once upon a time there was a tiny little shoe called Little Rafael. It lived in a small village called Rafaelio. It was a remote little village. There was only one grocer’s shop and a butcher’s shop there. At school, tiny little shoe Little Rafael was quiet, except for one cold day when the teacher got angry with him and told him to leave the classroom for a little while. When the bell rang, poor Little Rafael picked up his school bag and went home feeling really sad. After this incident, tiny little shoe Little Rafael left the village called Rafaelio, leaving behind his twin brother. So they called him the tiny little odd shoe. From then on, he lived very unhappily”.

To follow up, a guided discussion was conducted which engaged pupils on the subject of peace: to kick off, pupils were asked “In a world of local conflicts and the threat of war, why do you think “peace” is important?” plus writing activity in groups on the definition of “peace” and what the relationship is between peace and human rights, for example, Ilias, Andreas and Angelica’s responses (“the snow Group”) elicited “Peace deters us from war and many other bad things. Peace is a human right for all the people”.

There followed a guided discussion on child soldiers prompted by the following questions: “Why would armed forces want to use children in warfare?”, “Which of the children’s human rights are being violated in particular?”, “How might being a child soldier affect girls and boys differently?”, “If a child manages to survive and return home, what are some of the readjustment difficulties that she/he might face?”. Our students also wrote group letters to urge the government to ratify the optional protocol on the convention on child rights banning the involvement of children in armed conflict. For instance, one letter read as follows:

“Dear Mr. President,

We would like to talk to you about the Optional Protocol on the Convention on child rights banning the involvement of children in armed conflict. We believe that children deserve a better future. Children do not deserve the future of a soldier. We would like children to be treated by society in a different way. Children deserve a home, care and attention, love, a family and not involvement in armed conflict and war.

Yours Sincerely,

Group: “The detectives of mystery”: Nefeli, Maria, Iasson, Katerina, Ioanneta - Fourth-year pupils of Marasleio experimental primary school”.

Subsequent guided discussions were conducted which elicited pupils’ responses on the subject of ‘Government and the law’, prompted by the questions “What is the “law?” and “Who makes it and why?” as well as prompting from Article 12 of the Convention on child rights which gives children the right to have an opinion on matters affecting them. “Has this right been recognized in the courts of our country?”, “Are women given equal status before the law?” “How many women lawyers are

there in our country?”, “How do these numbers affect the way women are treated in law?”

Subsequent guided discussion activities were based on other universal declaration of human rights articles such as:

equality before the law, discussion of Article 7 of the universal declaration (“Everyone is equal before the law...”) and questions were put to the pupils: “Is everyone equal before the law in our society or are some people treated differently?”, “What factors might give some people an advantage over others?” The children’s answers were: “money, social status” and “Why is equality before the law essential for a culture of human rights?” and among the children’s answers were: “Otherwise there will be chaos”.

Freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion and expression: a writing activity where pupils were split into groups and asked to list adjectives that generally describe boys or girls, for example, boys were qualified as: “good, lively, smart, “emo”, disobedient dogs”, whereas girls were qualified as: “good, pretty, trendy, naughty pussy cats” by the Group: “The dead bulls”: Evangelos, Rafael, Evridiki, Yiorgos and Kostas.

Article 16 of the Convention on child rights, the right to privacy, provides a child the right to protection from interference in privacy, family, home, correspondence and from libel or slander. Naturally a seven-year-old may not be mature or old enough to challenge for the same rights and responsibilities as a seventeen year-old.

The following is a case study read out to the class to illustrate the above point: “When is old considered to be old enough?”

“Eku and Romit first met when they sat next to each other at primary school. They soon made friends, but their friendship hit a problem. Their families belonged to rival social factions that had a long history of mutual mistrust of each other. So when Romit asked his parents if Eku could come round to his house for a visit, both of them firmly refused. Eku’s family had a word with his teacher and had the two boys moved to separate desks. However, the two boys’ friendship continued until the day Eku was sent away to attend secondary school in another town. The friends promised to write to each other, but whenever a letter from Eku arrived, Romit’s parents would shred it before Romit could even get his hands on it. Romit understood his parents’ feelings but also thought that at sixteen you are old enough to choose your own friends and entitled to receive letters and be able to keep them private”.

There followed an individual writing task, “What rights does Romit have according to the convention on child rights?” and, “What rights do Romit’s parents have?” and a discussion on how this conflict might be resolved.

Among the replies elicited from pupils were Natalia’s: “Romit has the right not to do what he is told to do, and has the right to express his opinion and decide for himself without being put under pressure by his parents. This is not right. Romit’s parents have the right to give Romit advice and guidance, but they do not have the right to

separate him from his friend and to send him to attend secondary school in another town”.

Interview: we invited the father of Lefteris, a boy from our class, to come and talk to the pupils about what rights are now guaranteed by the Convention on child rights that were lacking in his childhood. We compared and discussed: “How is the pupils’ family life today different from what it was like when their parents were children?” “What has brought about these changes?”, “Do these changes represent changes in values, culture, technology or other kinds of change?”, “Which ones have been beneficial and which ones have not?” and “Have the human rights of family members improved over the last few generations?”. Some questions stemming from the interview: “When you were our age, did you have the same rights as us?” “If not, can you tell us which human rights you did have in particular?”, “When you were young, did boys and girls have the same human rights?”, “In the workplace, did men and women have the same human rights?”, “Did you have the right to play, live in peace and freedom and enjoy yourself?”, “When you were young, did you have the right to express your opinion?”, “Starting from what age did you have the right to vote?”, “When you were young, was it only compulsory for boys to go to school? What about girls?” and “How long was military service?” etc.

There ensued role-play and discussion activity entitled “They are alike”, which dealt with the subject of discrimination and stereotyping: We started off by pointing out that essentially we are all equal and equally entitled to our human rights. Equal, yet not identical: Each pupil was given an object, such as a mandarin, and asked to make “friends” with it and really get to know it. A few pupils were asked to introduce their “friend” to the class and to tell a story about how old it was, whether it was sad or happy, or how it got its shape. They also wrote individual essays, songs or poems of praise on the subject. Then all the items were put back into a bag and mixed them up together. We then tipped them out and had the students find their “friend” from amongst the common lot. I pointed out the obvious parallel: any group of people seem to be alike at first, but once you get to know them, they are all different, they all have different life histories and they are all potential friends. This means though suspending any stereotypes long enough to get to know them. It means not prejudging them. An example of a pupil’s response: “I’d say that my “mandarin” is approximately 10 years old, exactly the same age as me. It is full of light and feels very happy. I don’t think that it feels lonely because it has me to keep it company. I think I can write a poem for this beautiful “mandarin”: The poem goes as follows: “My sweet mandarin I have fallen in love with you because you are so sweet, you cannot imagine. It doesn’t bother me that you’ve got freckles. I care about you, because you have a kind heart. My sweet “mandarin”, I love you so much. My sweet “mandarin”, I will always cheer. I have also given my “mandarin” a name - “Phani”(Angelina)”.

To follow, a brainstorming session was held where pupils identified “minority groups”: “Do these minority groups, based on class or ability, experience discrimination?”

Next, I set a piece of individual writing to have the pupils come up with an example of discrimination or racism. Chryssa wrote: “Racists are people who do not know and have not understood that all people are equal, which means they do not know it

doesn't matter if someone is from a different country or has a different color skin or is a woman or a man! The first time I heard the word "racism" I was with my mother and I asked her: "Why have the Albanians come to live in Greece?" and she replied "you mustn't be racist, whether we like it or not, all people are equal". We finished this activity by role-playing an example of discrimination or racism.

We also looked at the local community and I elicited a guided discussion: "Are there cultural minorities?", "Is their culture respected?" and "Does our school encourage respect for the culture of minority groups?"

I then touched on discrimination and gender: The difference between "sex", which is determined by biological factors, and "gender", which is determined by cultural factors, was pointed out. The class was divided into four groups and asked to make a list of differences between males and females, some based on "sex" ("men have beards; women live longer") and other based on "gender" ("men are better at mathematics"). Disagreements arose ("are men naturally more aggressive?"), but the discussion helped students recognize gender stereotypes: "Men: sex: beard, penis, gypsies, smart, handsome, monks – gender: better at mathematics, football players". "Women: sex: long or short hair, breasts, pretty – gender: more graceful, better at drawing" – (Group: "The red group of the black society": Ion, Lefteris, and Kimon). We briefly looked through pupils' books and media for examples of gender stereotyping: Students discussed these and other materials they came across at school. Issues arising were: "Are there an equal number of references to males and females?", "Are females featured depicted as decision makers, physically able, creative and interested in a range of careers?", "Are male characters shown as humane, caring, helpful, willing to express emotions and unconcerned about "manly" stereotypes?" "Do the men and women respect each other as equals?", "Are the men depicted in parenting and housekeeping?", "Are the women depicted as active outside the home beyond traditionally female occupations (teachers, nurses, secretaries) or do they have low paid jobs?".

Then we treated a familiar story from a TV series, 'Ugly Maria', we discussed its bearing on beauty when switching genders. We also talked about the effects of this gender switch.

A writing activity entitled "What I like / What I do" ensued: The class was asked to write down personal responses – Three things that boys are supposed to like doing: "football" (Kostas), "swimming" (Evangelos) and "having my photo taken with all the Olympiakos players" (Lefteris) and three things that girls are supposed to like doing: "playing the psychologist" (Chryssa), "volleyball" (Natalia) and "reading" (Panayota)<sup>30</sup>.

### Section three: Activities connected with the subjects of Greek Language Studies, Anthology of Greek Literature and Religious Studies:

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<sup>30</sup> United Nations. (2004). pp. 53-77

(a) Greek Language Studies for fourth grade pupils from Greece<sup>31</sup>.

These activities included guided discussion and answering questions prompted by readings in Greek literature, for instance a poem reading related to the subject of children from countries worldwide with different skin colour and different names, followed by a drawing and writing activity in pairs entitled “Children Drawing for Children” where a pair of pupils drew a boy and girl hugging each other and wrote “Children draw for children – Give a hug to all the world’s children” (Panayota and Kimon).

To follow, there was a paired writing game entitled: “We are the same – We are different”, where fourth grade pupils wrote down two or three similarities and differences between one of their friends. Similarities elicited: “same colour eyes, similar style, athletics, acrobatics, gymnastics, mole on left ear; differences elicited: height, hair colour, nose, arm length, hair style, taste in earrings” (Sofia and Katerina).

The pupils also learned about a multicultural school in Paris via a guided discussion and then wrote individually a passage in relation to their own school (i.e. where is it, what they think of their school teachers and classmates, what they do every day at school and so on).

For consolidation, an individual acrostic and writing was based on the above text: Clues - 1. We also have a ..... for Physical Education. 2. We update our notice board when we are in a good ..... 3. Choose one ..... from our country who helped our world to become a better place. 4. We also have a teacher from our own ..... 5. We show our work as a ..... to the other groups. 6. We also learn a few ..... from each language. 7. Even if we wear the ..... clothes, we do not look alike. 8. Not everyone can go to school in their own ..... 9. Every group learns the language and ..... of its own country. 10. Some school teachers have slit eyes, and other school teachers have ..... eyes. 11. We are being taught only a few .... all together. 12. We know that we are all ..... 13. A school teacher once went as ..... as a beetroot. 14. Some of the children will become scientists when they grow up, artists or ..... (KEY: “teacher, mood, person, country, group, words, same, country, history, round, subjects, equal, red, leaders”.)

A guided discussion followed accompanied by Unicef’s poster<sup>32</sup> on Children’s Human Rights. Then one of the two groups in class made a poster connected with Children’s Human Rights highlighting “THE RIGHT TO LEISURE, OPEN OPINION, education, to be clean, to live in peace, to play, to equality, to food, the right to speak, the right to freedom, THE RIGHT TO PLAY, to sleep”. We also decided to retrieve more information about Unicef on the Internet.

Other consolidating activities included: a cryptic crossword puzzle (we must find the sentence “All children are equal”) with the whole class in one group; a speaking activity about children with special educational needs and their rights, how we must

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<sup>31</sup> Diakoyiorgi et al (2007). Pupil’s book. pp. 33- 48. activity book, pp. 41-50.

<sup>32</sup> Unicef (2005)

respect these children and their rights and a discussion with Ilias, a paraplegic, and the problems he faces. Our students also wrote group letters to the mayor of Athens to mention solutions to make the life of children with special needs easier.

For example:

Dear Mr Kaklamanis (mayor of Athens),  
We would like to say that in order to assist people and children with special needs in our city in making their lives easier, we need to change a few things: first of all, we need schools for deaf and blind children. Regarding public transport, bus stops should not only have written signs, but oral ones too. Also, citizens should not drop litter but use bins provided. It is wrong. As you can understand, this is a problem for blind people, who may trip and fall (Group: “The hysterical laughters”: Angelina, Evridiki, Natalia, Yiorgos, Ion).

Our school has also been designated a UNICEF Defender. The whole class collected and donated 100 Euros to UNICEF.

(b) Anthology of Greek Literature for fourth-year pupils from Greece

Activity: a guided discussion on a passage connected with friendship and peace in Cyprus.<sup>33</sup>

(c) Religious Studies for fourth-grade-pupils from Greece<sup>34</sup>.

Activity: writing an individual letter to UNESCO or to “*Médecins sans Frontières*”:

For example:

“Dear Sirs,

I would just like to tell you we appreciate what you do. To be honest, I would like to help you by giving you food as I am alone at home and I do not have a problem. If you want, you can call me in case of earthquake, flood, fire and I can help you. I would appreciate it if you could call me and collaborate with me.

From: Sofia Bleka, To: “*Médecins sans Frontières*” (Sofia)

Section four: Going on a visit to the Maragopoulou Foundation (fourth-year pupils from Greece)

This was scheduled three times, but unfortunately had to be cancelled in the end.

At the end of the academic-year (June 2008):

End-of-year celebration performances (by fourth year pupils from Greece: on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2008)

Pupils performed a version of “The Animal-farm” by George Orwell<sup>35</sup>, which we filmed on video.

<sup>33</sup> Katsiki – Ghivalou, A. (2006) pp. 115-118

<sup>34</sup> Zouras et al. (2006) p. 93

<sup>35</sup> Orwell, G. (1979)



## General Comments

Possible spelling, grammar mistakes or errors of expression (i.e. syntax and lexis) have not been unduly assessed or penalized throughout this study. Possible anagrams or occasions in which in certain cases pupils omitted certain punctuation marks (full stops, commas and so on) have not been unduly assessed or penalized either.

## Assessment, Evaluation and Reflection

It must be said that a majority of the aims were met at least partially. In my opinion this was an encouraging sign of progress achieved, nevertheless owing to certain time constraints our pupils have not been able to fully digest the entire spectrum of skills and attitudes necessary to stand up for the rights of others.

Nevertheless, it would represent perhaps too ambitious an aim to expect all pupils to grasp all aspects all of the time. Thus it is worth perhaps reemphasizing that Citizenship as a subject is not required to be taught at the first grades of primary schools, but Marasleio experimental school recognises the importance of encouraging a thoughtful awareness in children of the rights and responsibilities borne by all members of society, themselves included. Being able to value cultural diversity, promoting mutual respect and consideration between people, and developing a self-confident but responsible independence are all aspects of good citizenship. The fundamental principle which I have repeatedly tried to encourage in all the children is that they should treat others in the same way as they would like to be treated themselves.

To see pupils working together, cooperating with each other is an insight into a new style of teaching. I have become more open to trying new teaching methods. One thing I have also noticed is how valued every pupil felt their opinion was. For example, in the group work children wrote very insightful comments and they didn't seem to be self-conscious and clearly felt that their opinion was valid. This freedom and self confidence has infiltrated into all subjects. I have observed that they understand and appreciate that although there might be a right or wrong answer, there are many alternative ways of arriving at one, and that every avenue was worth venturing into and every opinion useful and relevant. Moreover, the children's level of maturity, co-operation and teamwork were impressive for their age.

What I have discovered from the process:

Feedback from the pupils:

The pupils generally felt that all the instructions which had been given were clear and that the games and activities had been interesting, their meaning or intention fairly easy to grasp, though at times rather difficult to grasp depending of course on what nature of task the pupils were asked to do. Overall it was felt that doing something different to what they did routinely in a conventional classroom was stimulating. As a result the pupils felt happy and had a lot of fun in the process.

## Difficulties:

Admittedly there were a few behavioral problems, which is perhaps to be expected at this level and age. First of all there was the aspect of a few pupils' inattention, whereby pupils displayed difficulties in focusing on a task, were easily distracted by outside stimuli (i.e. looking to see what is happening in the school yard through the window, exhibited problems in organizing and completing their homework, often lost things unnecessarily for tasks or activities (e.g., paper, pencils, sharpeners)), and so on. Another problem was hyperactivity, where some pupils had difficulty in staying in their seat while in the classroom, often fidgeted when in their seat and talked excessively, ran around or climbed up onto desks at inappropriate moments such as when the teacher wanted to begin the lesson. Furthermore, among the behavioral problems also observed was impulsivity. Impulsive pupils acted without reflection, did not display sufficient patience in waiting their turn, often interrupted, and blurted out answers before questions had been completed.

Conversely, an allowance was made for what Gardner terms as intrapersonal intelligence<sup>36</sup>, which by way of a reminder is a type of intelligence which has to do with introspection and self-reflection capacities. Those who are strongest in this type of intelligence are typically introverts and prefer to work alone. Confident in their own cognitive abilities, these pupils learn better when allowed to concentrate on the subject by themselves. They would rather undertake tasks alone and are independent and self directed. Traditional understanding of intelligence assumes that our ability to learn and do things comes out of a uniform cognitive capacity, thus Binet a century ago formulated the IQ test, which could be used to analyze a child's intelligence in order to uncover his or her weaknesses. Yet students should not be judged by what they cannot do, but what they can do, and education should of course focus on bringing out the individual's potential.

## What our pupils have learned:

They have learned to appreciate the importance of helping each other, being co-operative towards each other, and working in groups. Pupils most able at or willing in given tasks were found to be more extrovert / sociable human beings / talkative / confident. This could indeed be attributed to Gardner's educational theory, whereby one kind of intelligence has to do with interpersonal skills and interaction with others. People in this category according to Gardner are usually extroverts and are characterized by their sensitivity to others' moods, feelings, temperaments, and motivations and their ability to cooperate in order to work as part of a group. They communicate effectively and empathize easily with others, and can be leaders or followers. They typically learn best by working with others and often enjoy discussion and debate<sup>37</sup>.

## What I have learned from the process:

## On fellow teachers:

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<sup>36</sup> Plucker, J. Dr. (2007)

<sup>37</sup> Smith, M. K. (2002, 2008)

Other colleagues rarely showed interest in my work unless compelled to engage in the process. Generally, the lack of interdisciplinary co-operation, consideration and co-ordination meant that I conducted the Project individually.

How the school structure and social environment influence peace education processes: There is a difference between the present era and that of twenty years ago. Place also makes a difference – in the social composition of pupils when teaching and learning in the centre of Athens, the administrative, economic and social capital of Greece, compared to small, less populated or economically and socially deprived areas in the provinces. Then we must also consider facilities available, which can make a difference between state schools and private schools.

About myself:

I discovered that the best possible design strategy for a project is not to opt for a rigid, inflexible design for the whole year. No two classes were the same, and it was not enough simply to strictly adhere to curriculum guidelines. With the new school textbooks, learning has rightly become more “stimulating”. During the first three years of primary school there should be an emphasis on playing games, reading fairy tales, conducting activities such as puzzles, crosswords, jokes and so on. All pupils can learn more effectively and tend to feel more content and relaxed. As school teachers, we also go through a learning process with our pupils through our relationship with them. In this way we derived achievement and satisfaction.

The difficulty among teachers was the lack of cooperation and assistance. This might be explained in that historically it is difficult for professionals in Greece, educators included, to join forces effectively. There is a suspicion that ‘co-operation’ has an association with ‘collaboration’ and perhaps treason or betrayal. (In the political lexicon “co-operation/collaboration” (the same word in Greek) since the Second World War occupation of Greece by the axis and the ensuing civil war, has implied an element of collaborating with the enemy and betraying one’s homeland<sup>38</sup>. As a result, each member of the educational staff jealously guarded territory and resources and did not willingly concede anything. Any effort to co-ordinate and co-operate was seen as relinquishing individualism and resources.

About peace education:

There was also an emphasis on “sustainable development”, which is largely related nowadays to environmental and health education. It is necessary first to learn how to respect everybody and to accept people as different, yet at the same time as an equal member of a multicultural society.

The central core of all skills that peace education imparts must be the skill of good communication. Communication lies at the heart of mutual trust. This does not mean communication through words only, but also through actions. (How will my actions be understood?). Communication is the condition for mediation, contracts, and all sorts of agreements. Other skills are: organizing groups, nonviolent action, humanitarian intervention, speaking different languages, moving in different cultures, and development of inner peace through meditation, yoga, various activities and

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<sup>38</sup> De Bernieres, L. (1993). Ch. 4.

mutual help. Peace education<sup>39</sup> is based on a philosophy that teaches non-violence, love, compassion, trust, fairness, cooperation, respect, and a reverence for the human family and all life on our planet. It is an interdisciplinary field embracing the development of peace consciousness on all levels and dimensions of being.

## Recommendations

There should be an emphasis first on projects related to “Human Rights Education” and teacher training. There is a widely held international belief that learning about human rights is the first step toward respecting, promoting and defending the rights of all people. Teaching human rights above all means both conveying ideas and information concerning human rights and nurturing the values and attitudes that lead to the support of those rights. Children and young people must be helped to respect cultural and racial diversity. There must at all times be tools available for educators to cultivate a culture of peace and promote respect for human rights.

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<sup>39</sup> United Nations (2008)

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