

## **Project benefit analysis**

### **„Customs and Traditions in Europe as an Educational Concept for Preschool and Primary Education“**

For most pedagogical workers participation in an international project was something new and unknown. At first all of us were unsure and full of fear about what was going to happen. Everything changed after the first transnational meeting in Pribram. After the following meeting in Hoorn all participants shared the feeling that our partners are our friends as well. All teachers were pleased to have been given the opportunity to take part in the project, the particular project activities, the chance to start new cooperation and friendship with teachers from Holland and the Czech Republic. During the project we managed to learn about Czech and Dutch educational system, we got to know the beauty of our countries, culture, lifestyle and last but not least our common and different customs and traditions. We concentrated on similarities and differences in education, pros and cons of the educational systems represented target topic.

#### **Benefits and innovation transfer for Czech teachers:**

- in Holland there is less children in the class and more teachers, the teachers are not obliged to follow so many rules and administrative procedures, the job of teacher is prestigious, their work is considered positively by the public
- the parents take part in school events more actively, the cooperation between school and parents was surprisingly open, respectful and rewarding, working for school was not a problem for Dutch parents
- children have more freedom in the classroom and outside, nevertheless they are educated to be independent, more than in the Czech Republic, demands on Czech children at the age are not so high compared to Dutch children at the same age, children are educated more freely, they learn by doing, decide themselves and are used to respect rules
- during lessons children are more independent, work in groups on individual tasks which they choose, children are led to be responsible for their work, this is very challenging for the teachers but during the lesson teachers have time to help slower learners, the others work at their own pace, are hindered by others and manage more work
- the surrounding in Dutch kindergartens was similar to Czech schools, the cooperation with other institutions (similar to Czech school clubs) dealing with after-school activities was inspiring for us
- less formality in dealing with parents, relaxed and non-formal table manners

### **Benefits and innovation transfer for Dutch teachers:**

- equipment of Czech classes in on a better level than in Holland (especially toys, furniture, tools, ceramic stove etc.), in every class there are musical instruments including electric piano
- in the Czech Republic simple and mainly natural learning tools used more, in Czech kindergartens standard equipment of every class is a learning corner with a carpet where children can play on their own, after a transnational meeting in Pribram, one Dutch kindergarten bought carpets for playing
- changing shoes and leaving jackets in a cloak room – in Holland children walk in outdoor shoes inside, changing shoes is not common, after a transnational meeting in Pribram boxes for shoes and hooks for jackets were installed in one Dutch kindergarten
- eating habits – Czech children have diverse food, especially warm lunch which is not a rule in Holland, Dutch children mainly have bread with cheese, ham or something sweet which they prepare themselves with the help of the teacher, Czech children are independent when eating (pouring soup, using knives and forks, cleaning tables after food, cleaning teeth etc.)
- big gardens in schools and kindergartens with sufficient number of game elements (swings, playgrounds, sand), pictures and artistic products of children are used to decorate the premises of the educational institutions (cloak rooms, class rooms, corridors)

To sum up, in the Czech Republic more traditions are celebrated. It is good that they get a lot of attention and ignoring them would be a pity. On the other hand it is necessary to stress that Dutch people are mainly atheist and therefore Christian traditions are celebrated only in particular regions.

The biggest difference between the Czech and Dutch educational system in the pre-school education. In Holland kindergartens substitute families, children attend kindergartens from the age of 5 months. Since the age of 5 years systematic preparation for school starts. Many Czech kindergartens disagree with the new law which allows 2-year old children to enter kindergartens. This project is an example of good practice that integration of children in kindergartens is possible even at lower ages than two.

Another major difference is food, in Holland consumer baskets, investment into kitchens, healthy food, diets or religion are not that a big issue, everything is the responsibility of a family.

Last but not least, this project enhanced the professional and personal development of all pedagogical works as well as other project partners and was really beneficial for all participants.