

**MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND**

2008 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw, 3 October 2008

Education and awareness-raising in the promotion of human rights

The realisation of ideas of human rights in schools, the education of tolerance and mutual respect of individual and societies' rights are the educational priorities of Polish educational system.

I.

Every year National In-service Teacher Training Centre has got a wide range of various proposals of trainings, conferences, workshops which are complemented by publications dealing with this subject matter.

The beneficiaries of the trainings are: methodological advisers, consultants, school headmasters, teachers, educators, representatives of the pedagogical supervisory board – school inspectors, children and pupils' rights in schools and institutions co-ordinators, volunteers and non-governmental organisations.

The participants are familiarised with the subject matter in an active way (by learning through experience, discovering and understanding). The substantial matters concerning the human rights are presented in the form of lectures done by experts in this field.

The main issues of programmes connected with the education about human rights are:

- dissemination of knowledge about human rights and freedom of people in the school society,
- support in securing the quality of school work taking into consideration standards of human rights,
- shaping respect for rights and principles which are valid in democratic society,
- counteracting the discrimination, violence and aggression,
- upbringing in tolerant and peaceful environment.

Among the actions have been made by National In-service Teacher Training Centre this year there are the following projects (about multicultural and global education dealing with the subject mater of human rights):

1. The project “Different does not mean Strange – from unwillingness to acceptance”
which is a part of the programme “The memory for future”

The aim of the project is to create the positive social ideals, develop sensitiveness for the cultural, ethnical and religious dissimilarity. The actions taken in this project were to shape and promote the openness, altruism, solidarity and disagreement for indifference.

They were also to help in building the intergenerational bond and making young people more sensitive to the threats which stem from fanaticism and lack of tolerance. Moreover, the significant aim of the project was to give young people the knowledge about multicultural heritage of Poland.

The realised educational actions due to the project included:

- a) **The training for teachers** “Different does not mean Strange – from unwillingness to acceptance”
- b) **Literary Review** for pupils from secondary schools - to write an essay entitled „*Meeting with an Alien*”.
- c) „**Multicultural History of Poland**”

During the trainings the participants are equipped in the knowledge and skills indispensable to teach about the History of Jewish Minority in Poland and the History of Holocaust and its results. We also enrich their training workshop; give them methodological and substantial support in this field; counteract the same

anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance shaping the openness for other people, understanding and respect for distinct cultures and customs.

2. The project “Co-operation for the Development and Democracy – developmental education”

The aim of the project is to disseminate and promote global education, developmental education in the school environment. A part of that are:

a) The training (for methodological advisers, consultants and teachers) on the subject of global education, which opens the eyes and senses of people on the reality, enlightens the need to create the world of justice, equality and where human rights are respected. The problems raised during the training are developmental education, the education about human rights, the education for sustainable societies, the education for peace and preventing the conflicts and the multicultural education.

b) The conference – to promote of developmental education among headmasters and the staff of the institutions perfecting the skills of teachers from Poland and establishing the co-operation with the non-governmental organisations dealing with the subject matter.

3. The governmental project of Ministry of Foreign Affairs

“To search for similarities – to understand the differences – multicultural education in schools”

The project is addressed to the group of Ukrainian teachers and consultants who are employed in regional in-service teacher centres and the headmasters of schools interested in the co-operation with Polish schools. During the educational course there will be prepared the network of multicultural education leaders, ready to realise the trainings in the subject matter in their local society.

4. The project “The regional partnership of schools in promotion of the Global Education Week”

The project is the continuation of the system action popularising the developmental education in the school societies which started the previous year. Supporting and perfecting the leaders of developmental education and conducting trainings addressed to teachers are being continued in 2008. There are going to be created regional networks of schools, co-operating in realisation of local educational initiatives in The Global Education Week. By creating new educational materials and establishing e-learning platform it is intended to deliver new ideas about ways of sharing knowledge about human rights in Polish schools.

The general aim of this year’s project is to create the global partnership for agreement for the development in which the developmental education creates the humanitarian ideals, empathy, joint responsibility for the future of the world and which motivates to actions for the more just world where the human rights of all people are respected.

The aim of the project is also to disseminate and promote global and developmental education and Millennium Goals of Development in the school environment.

5. In National In-service Teacher Training Centre there was prepared and published the Polish version of the guide of Council of Europe “**Democracy in school management**” which is a part of the EDC/HR Pack.

6. It is also worth mentioning that Methodical Centre for Psychological and Pedagogical Support accomplishes issues dealing with the topic “Education and dissemination of knowledge about human rights”. The aim of them is to equip teachers with skills and tools which might be helpful in putting into practice children’s rights at schools. The aim of Methodical Centre for Psychological and Pedagogical Support is to elaborate and popularise model solutions in this field.

7. Most of assignments of Methodical Centre for Psychological and Pedagogical Support are congruent with the assumptions of The National Working Plan in favour of Children, which is a

document aiming to put into practice legacy of Convention of Human Rights. That might be observed in these three programs have been realised by the Centre:

7.1. Dissemination of integrating and inclusive teaching

Disabled pupils should have the right to learn together with able-bodied pupils in the common educational system, to get the support which takes into account their special educational needs. There should also be tolerance, understanding and the mutual respect between pupils, teachers and parents.

The most important change, made in the system of education, is the opportunity for disabled pupils to learn in:

- a) integrated schools and classes (integrated education),
- b) general schools (inclusive education)

The change assumes that optimum educational conditions should take into account individual needs and capabilities of disabled pupils.

Currently, in Poland there might be noticed very dynamic development of numerous forms of integrated education at every level of education. Teachers of kindergartens and integrated schools are complementing their qualifications in various forms of skill upgrading courses. More than 2 500 teachers have been trained on new approach to pupils with special educational needs, so far.

Advantageous conditions created in the integrated classes, contact with the disabled peers, less numerous classes, the presence of the additional teacher with special training, employing specialists (speech therapists, psychologists, etc.) were the cause of the big interest of parents in this form of education and the increase of the number of disabled pupils learning in the integrated classes.

As inclusive education is the way to prevent social exclusion as well as the discrimination of disabled pupils, **a programme “School for everyone”** was launched. The main aim of it is to create the right conditions for inclusive environment, which means that disabled pupils can learn in common schools, feel being a part of a school society and have real relationship with able-bodied peers. As a result, the conditions for their success are created. On the other hand, that is the opportunity to teach other pupils tolerance and respect for others.

7.2. Dissemination of the programme “Golden Five (the effect of the International Project Comenius 2.1.)

The aim of the programme, directed to teachers and lower secondary school students is to create a supportive environment at schools; popularisation of the supportive model of teaching and upbringing to achieve the school success and personal development by students, especially those who are threatened of exclusion.

The specific aims are:

- To equip teachers with tools and skills to deal with the diversity within a class and to counteract the stigmatisation, intolerance and rejection;
- To strengthen the societal integration in classes;
- To improve climate in classes by building interpersonal relationship between teachers, pupils and parents on the base on mutual respect and trust and by teaching crucial life skills.

Since last year there have been trained 38 instructors and 122 teachers.

7.3. Dissemination of the programme “School Promoting Health”

The strategy of creating schools which promote health, on the base of the commitment of all members of school societies in diagnosis of the problems and creating projects for their solution, has been disseminated in Poland for 16 years.

There has been developed a model, which may be a guidepost for schools, which is featured by a set of standards. One of the most important standards of these schools is to create societal atmosphere conducive to:

- health and development of pupils and teachers,
- participation, partnership and cooperation of the members of the school society, parents and local communities.

Methodical Centre for Psychological and Pedagogical Support assists the programme by organising annually trainings for coordinators and groups supporting local network of schools promoting health; by

disseminating examples of good practice in periodical publication “Health education and promotion of health at school”; by making methodical materials as well as the experience of other countries, accessible by schools.

II.

It is worth underlining that both the binding Core Curricular of General Education at every level and the one being under preparation, contain matters increasing the awareness about the knowledge concerning human rights, matters which help in shaping mutual respect, tolerance and understanding and the peaceful upbringing.

(Here are few examples: a) Pupils completing their first year of education (at primary schools), are conscious that they are not allowed to tend to fulfill their needs and wishes by limiting others freedom and by damaging the environment.

b) Pupils completing their third year of education are tolerant towards people of different nations, culture, tradition; they also know that all people have the same rights, regardless of the outlook, race, beliefs, etc. They understand that people have equal rights, regardless the place they were born, their beliefs, economical status, etc.; they pay respect to the old).

III.

The Polish Council of Ministers has declared governmental programme to level the educational chances for children and the young, entitled “The activation of local government units and non-governmental organisations”.

The aim of the programme is to create the conditions suitable for the development of the system of out-of-lessons and out-of-school activities for pupils and extra educational-protective lessons for children in the kindergartens. Such lessons, inter alia, help in shaping and developing among children and the young positive public spirit and a sense of belonging to a local community.

The Ministry of National Education has been currently working to implement the programme titled “The training of social and life skills, shaping of the proper relationships between people”. It is realised due to the governmental programme titled “The development of the education in the rural areas in the period 2008-2013”. Preparations have been made to enable children and the young from the rural areas to participate in activities dealing with:

- shaping of the basic life skills of communication, critical and creative thinking and building a high self-esteem of the young generation,
- supporting the sustainable development through development of interests, talents and skills,
- supporting the activities and initiatives of children and youngsters for school societies.

IV.

Commissioned by the Ministry of National Education, nationwide research on dissemination and respecting children rights at schools has been made. It covered four selected rights to: information, privacy, express own opinions and freedom from being humiliated.

The results of the research enable to create a strategy for educational action in the area of respecting children rights at schools, adequate to the indicated problems (e.g. a network of human rights education trainers, who assist teachers, the young and children in finding innovative solutions to their problems).

V.

Program Discovering Humanitarian Law – by the integration of knowledge from the fields of different school subjects (the polish language, history, civic education, pre-military service), contributes to general civic education of young generation.

It is placed in upper secondary school as a part of pre-military training lessons.

In the Ministry of National Education, the proceedings of establishing a group for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the program at schools are in progress.