

iDecide



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Ethnic, cultural and religious diversity; a case study



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The school

➤ 24th Primary School of Peristeri in Attiki

➤ 180 students and 27 staff and is situated in a lower to middle class area of Athens with a high unemployment rate.



➤ Principal :
Athena Giannogkona

➤ Vice-principal:
Eirini Troulinou

Snapshot of the school

Class Name		A	B	C	D	E	F
Pupils belonging to religious minorities		1	3		6		2
Roma pupils, Travelling community		2	1		1		1
Intellectual Disabilities	Cognitive Functioning			2			
	Adaptive Behaviour				1		
	Social Development	1	1	1	1		
Learning Difficulties	Dyslexia			2	2	1	
	Written Language Deficits			1	1	1	1
	Math Underachievement			1			
	Social Skills Deficits	2	2	4	1		
	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder		1	1			
Autism Spectrum Disorders	Autistic Disorder (Autism)	1	1	1	1		
Communication and Language Disorders	Language disorders	1					
Physical disabilities	Congenital malformation of the bones and joints		2	1			
Pupils from deprived backgrounds	Single-parent families	3	1	2	2	1	2
	Poor families	2	2	3	1	1	2
	Families with many children	2					
Migrant, Refugee, Asylum Seeker Pupils	Migrant Pupils	4	3	7	6	1	5
Pupils with health issues	Asthma		1				
	Epilepsy	1					
	Myopia		1		1	1	2

Variety of reasons for using the toolkit....

- **Strategy** - *how do you form an antiracism school policy?*
- **Training** - *how do you train school staff to deal with pupils facing an issue ?*
- **Campaigning** - *how do you raise awareness with regards to a health issue ?*
- **Communication** - *how do you establish regular parent – teacher meetings ?*
- **Informing experts** - *what do you say about the pupil to the school psychologist ?*
- **Development of suitable material /adoption of alternative ways of teaching – how do you develop visual aids or use ICT tools ?**

It serves a philosophy...

We want to help pupils reach their potential by creating an atmosphere of safety, creativity and joy for every pupil. So that he or she can come to school without fear, without fear of characterization or marginalization. iDecide has contributed towards this effort by offering new ways that we can exploit and I think that's why this undertaking was successful.

School Principal

We believe we are an inclusive school, in terms of mentality, we believe we were an inclusive school even before the application of the iDecide toolkit which is rooted in a philosophy that we share that all children have rights, and within a school first and foremost is the right to access knowledge and the facilitation of conquering knowledge to the extent that this is possible for each child.

School Principal

It educates and supports...

A few years back, an average teacher did a really good job. Today within the classroom as it has changed, the same person is inadequate. We have seen so many changes in the past years, one has to diversify the way he or she works ..why? because the audience is different!

School Vice Principal

The problems we face are numerous and complex..... the toolkit gives food for thought and lets you know that there is a way to overcome this

School Vice Principal

Ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in Greece



How it all started....

- Two Turkish-born Muslim brothers arrived in Greece with their parents as refugee asylum seekers. Their knowledge of the Greek language was very limited and they immediately joined the reception class. Communication with the parents was only possible through Google Translate.
- Shortly before the Orthodox Easter holiday, the parents were informed of the upcoming school break. On the last day of school, the two brothers came to school carrying sweets for the whole class as well as individual sweets and cards for each one of their classmates.
- It was originally believed that one of the brothers had a birthday. However, the children wanted to wish their classmates happy Easter holidays.
- The school staff felt that this gesture should not go unnoticed but rather highlighted. An opportunity emerged to strengthen students' relationships and cultivate empathy and acceptance of diversity.



Organise school events, projects and visits that promote intercultural understanding and take into account the cultural sensitivities of migrant pupils. Avoid events of the “folklore” approach (e.g. multicultural festivals with traditional cooking, dancing and singing by the ‘foreigners’), as these may lead to the intensification of stereotypes by putting migrant or refugee children under the spotlight because of their backgrounds. Such events also promote an essentialist view of cultures, which takes identities as fixed and permanent rather than fluid and changing.

Implementation process

Aim:

- learn about the ethnic, cultural and religious background of foreign students
 - encourage intercultural communication among children and among their parents
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- School staff organized a series of presentations on different religions, showed relevant videos or parts of documentaries from the National Television Archive and held discussions during which children could talk about their thoughts and experiences.
 - At the 'end of the school year' celebration, the students presented what they had learnt to parents, students from other classes and the rest of the teaching staff.
 - Emphasis was placed on creating a culture of tolerance that allows for cultural and religious differences

Impact

- The students showed great satisfaction and stated that they were happy to learn new things about the life of foreign students.
- The reaction of the parents was particularly important. The majority of parents further encouraged their children's communication with foreign students and stated they wished to maintain contact outside school.
- The students were most curious to learn more about the social customs and culinary habits as they were too young to fully understand the doctrine of each religion.

Challenges

Approaching this issue in a way so that:

- There was no suspicion of proselytizing
- there was no categorizing of religions as 'good' or 'bad'
- comparisons were made only in the interest of showing diversity
- religion was discussed *only* because of its ties to ethnicity and culture

Key Messages

- Implementing the iDecide toolkit does not have to constitute a response to a negative incident ! Any opportunity can be taken to practice inclusive decision making at class or school level.
- A proactive approach is necessary. The school staff must be familiar with the contents of the iDecide toolkit and also be familiar with the characteristics which might put their students at risk for marginalization.
- Interventions have to be age-appropriate and goal-oriented.
- Any effort including all stakeholders (parents, staff and students) can achieve an amplified effect.

My best friend....



iDecide



Thank you!



Erasmus+

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