

Newsletter December 2013

Starting the project “Learning to be a good mentor”: Kick Off Meeting in Zug, Switzerland.



From the 31st of October to the 3rd of November 2013, the Kick Off meeting of “LeGMe – Learning to be a good mentor” (Lifelong Learning Programme - Grundtvig Learning Partnership) took place in Zug, Switzerland, with the participation of 8 European partners: Consorțiu International LSDGC (Romania, Coordinator), VereinMUNTERwegs (Switzerland), DeutscherKinderschutzbundLandesverband Mecklenburg-Vorpommern e.V. (Germany), CESIE (Italy), ŠIUOLAIKINIŲ DIDAKTIKŲ CENTRAS (Lithuania), Grimstadkommune/Kvalifiseringstjenesten (Norway), ZdruženieOrava pre demokratiuvovzdelávaní (Slovakia) and Forum zasloboduodgoja (Croatia).

The project – that will be completed in 2015 – focuses on the figure of *mentor* and all *mentoring* programmes in the various contexts in which this figure works (e.g.: in adults education, education for children and adolescents). The main goal is to prepare the pedagogical and human resources for partners in order to establish effective *mentoring* programmes to support the communities of the whole partnership. Furthermore, the skills of the aspiring *mentors* and their *coaches* will be enhanced, as well as sharing good practices of the *mentoring* experiences of all organizations involved in the project. Finally, adults – like pensioners, unemployed people, university students, migrants – are supposed to be involved and they will find out the importance of their “guide” role for other people, valorizing themselves and their capacities, thus giving an important contribution to the society where they live

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The whole partnership will analyse the *mentoring* programmes existing in every national context, developing afterwards a common *framework* and guide lines for programmes addressed to training and enhancement of *mentors* and their *trainers*, merging together in a future online *booklet* at the end of the project. Moreover, every organization will organize its mentoring programme according to its target needs.

During the meeting, partners discussed about all aspects of the project in the next 2 years, defining the details of this important common work. Next appointment will be in Palermo, on the 6th and 7th of February 2014, in which the partners will compare the national analyses of *mentoring* programmes in order to find the common features through which they will be able to establish the future programmes to “learn to be a good mentor”.

Text: Alberto Biondo, CESIE – Centro Studi ed Iniziative Europeo

Mentoring program MUNTERwegs

From October 31st 2013 to November 2nd 2013 all LeGMe partners met in Zug in Central Switzerland for their Kick-Off meeting. These days gave participants time not only to get to know each other but also to explore the mentoring program MUNTERwegs in more detail (www.munterwegs.eu).

This mentoring model, run by the host organisation MUNTERwegs, recruits children aged 5 to 11 years and matches them with adult mentors. All mentors act as volunteers and most of them are senior citizens from any professional background. The aim of the MUNTERwegs model is to give a positive role model through a personal relationship and thereby strengthen the child's confidence in its own potentials and abilities. For the mentors this relationship offers a unique understanding of social, cultural and ethnic as well as generational diversity. It also provides an interesting insight into collaboration of complementary institutions like schools, teacher training, educational authorities, therapists, NGOs etc. In particular, this social project MUNTERwegs presents interesting learning opportunities and various activities that are worthy of note especially for its mentors of various age groups.



After short presentations of each partner organisation and its respective link to mentoring the group discussed project management issues. Fortunately every partner was very well prepared. Therefore it was easy for the group to agree on the various presented tools and plans as well as on the logo. Thanks to excellent coordination the partnership could finish their agenda this first day successfully and spoiled itself afterwards in a nice restaurant in Zug's historic centre.

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The following day the group traveled from Zug to Rotkreuz to meet with mentors, mentees and their families, and staff of Munterwegs at the location where the first “matching” meeting of a new group of mentors and mentées took place. All project partners had the opportunity to interact with mentors, mentées and their families, and to observe the introductory activities of this “matching” meeting. After that meeting LeGMe partners drove on to Lucerne.

As they explored the city by foot, they crossed the legendary „Kappelbrücke“ – a wooden bridge from the 14th century and discovered some points of interest of this picturesque medieval city. Some participants had a refuelling stop in a typical pastry shop and tasted the delicious Swiss chocolate cake. While others couldn't resist to find out good places to buy some souvenirs and enjoy the sunny November afternoon at the lake side. So really, everyone had their exploring expedition! But still, the boat trip over Lake Lucerne with volunteers from the MUNTERwegs program was an experience not to be missed. Therefore, the group enjoyed their farewell on the lake surrounded by the Alps. Finally the sun disappeared exactly in the direction the LeGMe partners are going to meet for their next partner meeting: it will be Palermo in Sicily and everybody is already looking forward to this reunion in February 2014!



A mentor and his mentee

Soon after the kick-off meeting in Zug, the partners started collecting relevant data on existing mentoring programs for disadvantaged children as well as for youth, and analyzed the mentors' training programs in their respective countries. One of the best practice examples identified by our Swiss partner in Central Switzerland is the mentoring program MUNTERwegs (www.munterwegs.eu). Through interviews with the project management staff, mentor trainers and experienced mentors, MUNTERwegs collected information to document this exemplary practice. One of the interviewed mentors described his personal experiences as a volunteer, revealing his deep commitment towards his mentee, a 7-year old Tamil boy. Many thanks to Fredy Heer, who generously shared with us his rich experience as a mentor, a genuine source of learning for fellow mentors.

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„Munterwegs“ – a meaningful project

From mentor Freddy Heer, Baar (Switzerland)



To put it straight away: the project „Munterwegs“ is something of the best I ever got to know. Looking after a child with migration background is both for the child and his mentor very enriching and precious. It is not about material things: it is central to build and maintain trust and a mutual relationship between a young person from a foreign culture and the mentor.

Is there anything more beautiful than giving affection and time to an inquisitive child that is thirsty for knowledge? To play with it and to stimulate his imagination. To show him our wonderful nature in all its beauty and to open his eyes for it. To give the child an understanding of characteristics of trees, names of plants, animals, rivers, lakes and mountains. The child should get to know and learn to appreciate his new homeland and our culture.

Children are direct and honest. They express their gratitude and joy through bright eyes. To see a happy child is the best reward you can get as a mentor. I often remembered my own childhood in these moments, or also experiences with my sons when they were the same age. It is like a beautiful dream that you remember again.

By the project „Munterwegs“ I also knew better Samanthan’s family. It is a precious experience to obtain insight into their culture and customs.

I was particularly impressed how lovingly the parents take care for both their children and provide them a beautiful home.

The careful and competent introduction and the accompaniment of the mentors by the project manager Miriam Hess was very help- and useful. Even as a grown man I could learn a lot of new things and implement it directly into the care of the child.

I can recommend the project „Munterwegs“ with the best conviction. For elderly people it offers many opportunities to share their life experience with children, to broaden their own

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horizon, to get to know a foreign culture and to experience many happy hours at the same time. It is a greatful fillment to make a child happy. It is the best and most sensible investment that you can make as an elderly person!

Text: Miriam Hess, MUNTERwegs

Next Steps of LeGMe Project:

February 2014: Second Meeting in Palermo, Italy.

All partners will share the collected information on mentoring programmes and analysis of the mentors' training/coaching programs&guidelines in order to develop the mentors' training/coaching program.

FromFebruary 2014 to June 2014:

All the partners will organize meetings at local level to discuss the guidelines for mentor coaching programmes and develop a new version of the draft of the Guidelines. Moreover, all the partners will select mentors to test this coaching method in order to understand both the weakness and strong sides of the new developed mentoring program.

September 2014: Third Meeting in Norway and Lithuania

For the third meeting of LeGMe project, there will be two meetings at the same time. In fact, the partnership will be divided in two sub-groups of partners for more effective communication on the topic of the project.

The meetings will be held:

- 1) In Norway for the Norwegian, Swiss, Slovak and Romanian mentors and organization representatives;
- 2) In Lithuania for the Lithuanian, German, Italian, and Croatian mentors and organization representatives.

Both the sub-groups will discuss about mentor recruitment models, mentee recruitment and about the monitoring and evaluation of mentors coaching programs.

October 2014: Second Official Newsletter

Another Official Newsletter will be sent on the web, with updates about the project and the next steps of the last part of LeGMe, which will last until July 2015.

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In the meanwhile, if you want to contribute to our analysis of mentoring programs you can find our form to fill in the attachment. If you work in a institution or organization providing such programs, contact the National responsible of LeGMe project (you can find the contact list at the end of this page) and give your personal contribution to our work.

Follow us [on our blog](#) and on [Facebook](#) not to miss any update about the development of our mentoring programs!

The LeGMe Team

Attached: Analysis of the existing mentor training programmes.

Country	Institution	Contact
Romania	CILSDGC	ariana.vacaretu@vimore.com
Switzerland	MUNTERwegs	info@munterwegs.eu
Italy	CESIE	alberto.biondo@cesie.org
Slovakia	ORAVA ADE	Marcelam@projectorava.sk
Norway	Kvalifiseringstjenesten Grimstadkommune	Arve.Konnestad@grimstad.kommune.no
Croatia	Forum for Freedom in Education	jperak@fso.hr
Germany	Deutscher Kinderschutzbund (DKSB) LV M-V e.v.	spies@dksb-mv.de
Lithuania	Šiuolaikiniūdidaktikųcentras (Modern Didactics Centre)	asta.matonyte@sdcentras.lt

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