

Language Against Dropout (LAD): Bulgarian as a second language for children in the preschool and the first grade
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Benefizient: International Elias Canetti Society, Ruse, Bulgaria
Partners: Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Germany
St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria
Colegiul Național Pedagogic „Constantin Brătescu”, Romania
Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance "Amalipe"
School „Angel Kunchev”, Ruse, Bulgaria
School „Aleko Konstantinov”, Ruse, Bulgaria
Kindergarden „ Little Red Riding Hood”, Ruse, Bulgaria

Summary of the project

From all EU member states Bulgaria is the country with the highest early school leaving rates. In the last five years, about 7000 children either have not visited or left school early. This alarming trend mainly concerns children from ethnic minorities in Bulgaria, of which 22 percent remain without education. The major problem that many of these children are facing is the lack of sufficient knowledge of Bulgarian – the official teaching language in schools. This results from the fact that the mother tongue of 55 percent of this group is either Romani or Turkish. In addition, lack of necessary social behaviour patterns in order to be successful in school has been recognized. Therefore, fostering the teaching and learning of Bulgarian as a second language (BSL) in preschools and primary schools is essential for the school success of children at risk of dropout. This would provide the children with basic skills which are of a great importance for their successful integration into society, personal development, and last but not least for future job opportunities. The project's necessity is largely justified due to the fact that there are no sound and widely recognised teaching and learning concepts for children's language development in Bulgaria. The project therefore intends to respond to the individual needs of children with different mother tongue than Bulgarian.

The main objective of the project is to develop a scientifically sound approach for Bulgarian as a second language in preschools and primary schools and thus to counteract school dropout at the earliest possible stage. The LAD project contributes directly to the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy that aims to reduce the dropout rates under 10 %.

Main project activities at a glance:

- Developing of learning materials for Bulgarian as a second language for children in pre- and primary schools (i.e. respectively for 5, 6, and 7 year olds)
- Elaborating of methodology for teaching Bulgarian as a second language
- Preparing and training of educational professionals in the BSL methodology
- Developing of a model for work with parents
- Training of bilingual multipliers for working with families
- Implementing of the BSL concept in partner schools
- Promoting active parents participation in the educational process of their children
- Implementing of information and multiplier events for promoting the developed teaching and learning methods and material as part of the project's dissemination.

The project started on the 1st of September 2015 and will end on the 31st of August 2018. The lead organisation is the International Elias Canetti Society.