

PROJECT SUMMARY

The project START is an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership in the field of School Education running for 30 months, from September 2016 to February 2018. In line with European Commission priorities, the general objectives of the project are:

- to ensure a good start in education for all children, by enhancing the quality of ECEC and by ensuring that the benefits of ECEC are carried through to other school education levels;
- to support teachers to adopt new methods and tools for dealing with complex classroom realities and diversified groups of learners.

In the context of the needs identified at local and transnational level by the partners involved, the project proposal aims to DEVELOP INNOVATIVE APPROCHES, METHODOLOGIES AND TOOLS FOR FACILITATING CHILDREN'S TRANSITIONS across home, ECEC services and school institutions. Within this framework, the specific objectives of the project are:

- 1) to examine existing transition practices with different focuses at each project location in order to take into account the diversified needs of target groups in each context;
- 2) to involve teachers, families and local stakeholder in designing innovative practices for smoothening transitions, with special attention paid to the school success of children facing complex situations (eg. socio-economic disadvantage) and to the engagement of families at risk of social exclusion (eg. Roma);
- 3) to increase the competence of ECEC/school professionals by involving them in action-research and experimentation projects, with the support provided by experienced researchers;
- 4) to promote the educational innovation of ECEC and school institutions by experimenting new pedagogical approaches and educational methodologies that support children – especially those who are most at risk of school failure – in facing successfully transition processes;
- 5) to identify principles of good practices that could contribute to trans-national exchange and learning as well as to the improvement of educational policies at local, regional, national and EU level.

The partnership consists of 10 partners - university/research/training organisations as well as ECEC/school institutions – located in 4 countries:

- ERI and OS Tisina (SL),
- UNIBO and DD Vignola (IT),
- Pen Green Research Base, Rockingham Primary School, Our Lady of Walsingham Junior Infant and Nursery School (UK),
- VBJK, Mezenestje day care centre and Kolva kindergarden (BE).

The International Step by Step Network (ISSA) and the 'Mensen voor mensen' poverty advocacy group are associate partners to the project.

The project methodology builds on participatory action-research and on international research evidence showing that continuing professional development interventions that are integrated into professionals' everyday practice are the most effective in enhancing educational quality and in improving children's

learning. Transnational training activities stand at the very core of the START project as they lay the foundation for the design of effective action-research and experimentation projects within ECEC/school settings and - at the same time - build a solid framework for the exchange and transferability of good practices (SUSTAINABILITY OVER TIME).

The main areas of activities and outputs carried out within the project are:

- 1) desk research pertaining early years transitions and educational continuity (Output: literature review);
- 2) development and experimentation of innovative pedagogical approaches and educational strategies for improving transition practices in contexts of socio-cultural diversity (Outputs: 4 case studies);
- 3) elaboration and dissemination of educational resources and training materials (Output: Training Kit);
- 4) elaboration and dissemination of detailed guidelines contributing to the advancement of transitions practice in Europe and beyond (Output: Recommendations for policy and practice).

It is expected that the project will impact at national and international level contributing to the IMPROVEMENT of EDUCATIONAL TRANSITION PRACTICES and POLICIES. Long term benefits are expected for CHILDREN, FAMILIES and LOCAL COMMUNITIES.