

Final Report on the Project ruzovyamodrysvet.sk (pinkandblueworld.sk)

Basic Information about the Project

The project ruzovyamodrysvet.sk (*Gender Sensitization in the Educational Process at Elementary and Secondary Schools as Preparation for Future Job Desegregation*) was carried out within the European EQUAL Community Initiative funded by the European Social Fund.

The duration of the project was from March 2005 until October 2008 (after two extensions). It was part of the priority no. 4. *Decreasing of gender differences and supporting job desegregation*. **Measure:** *Gender research, gender audit and gender sensitization as the means of achieving labor market equality between men and women.*

The lead partner of the project was the feminist organization ASPEKT (principal consultants and coordinators PhDr. Jana Cviková a PhDr. Jana Juráňová), the members of the development partnership were Občan a demokracia (coordinators: Šarlota Pufflerová, Janka Debrecéniová), Bábkové divadlo na Rázcestí in Banská Bystrica (coordinator: Iveta Škripková) and the non-investment fund “Škola základ života“ at the Elementary School on Gorkého Street No. 21 in Trnava (coordinator: Marta Šmidáková). The project ruzovyamodrysvet.sk was part of the international partnership WEGA consisting of five projects. Besides the project ruzovyamodrysvet.sk from Slovakia those projects were: ARIADNA (Spain), Z odličnosti do enakopravnosti med spoloma, (Slovenia); ESS.ER.CI. Rewritten Social Contract (Italy); KLARA - Netzwerk für Equal Pay und Gender Gleichstellung (Austria).

Project Background

The project ruzovyamodrysvet.sk was a continuation of experiences and activities of ASPEKT and other project partners. The rationale of the project was the need to introduce the gender sensitive approach in education and schooling. Already before 2005 ASPEKT had had rich experiences with gender sensitization of the Slovak society in general and with gender sensitive education in particular. The human rights NGO Občan a demokracia had been dealing with introducing the human rights theme in elementary and secondary education also through further education of teachers. In their theater productions, the theater Bábkové divadlo Na Rázcestí from Banská Bystrica had been working with gender sensitive themes for several years. All these experiences formed the foundation of our considerations about further cooperation on introducing gender sensitivity in education. The Elementary School in Trnava had had experiences with various projects going beyond the usual activities and its principal and teachers enriched the project with their teachers' erudition and openness to new knowledge.

Given the limited time-frame of the project and other circumstances related to the broad scope of the theme of gender sensitization and situation in education in Slovakia it was necessary to specify particular activities so that we could follow and assess their impact throughout the project. Given the nature of the European EQUAL Community Initiative the participating organizations, and especially the lead organization ASPEKT, designed their activities and their possible impacts in the form of something like a “laboratory” so that it would be possible to “probe“ the educational system and its social context and create tools for further activities. Therefore, the theme and the operational scope of the project were planned in such form that it would be possible to further work with outcomes and outputs of the project.

The project ruzovyamodrysvet.sk focused on gender sensitization of society, specifically on gender sensitization of teachers and on increasing their professional competencies. The starting point of the project was the assumption that the gender sensitive approach in pedagogical theory and practice is fundamental to improving the quality of teaching and that the teaching process is importantly influenced by the existing social context. It is the gender sensitive approach in teaching that creates conditions for gender desegregation of occupations as it is an important factor in elimination of prejudices in the choice of further study and in occupational choice.

In the project we focused on a rather broad spectrum of target groups, but mainly on teachers, pupils, students, and experts in the area of education and schooling. However, we also wanted to address the public at large.

Project Activities

Activities of the project ruzovyamodrysvet.sk were conceived rather broadly:

Educational Activities for various target groups such as seminars, lectures, workshops, a pilot project at the elementary school, a summer school and workshop for teachers, theater performances and others.

Publication Activities that led to elaboration and publication of a number of various materials.

Research on gender sensitive pedagogy, or more precisely – gender sensitivity in education and schooling in Slovakia, which was the first probe of this kind in Slovakia.

The Transnational Partnership WEGA focused on cooperation and exchange of experiences in the sphere of development of gender democracy, gender sensitive culture and elimination of gender discrimination.

All activities of the project were interconnected: for instance the book *Ružový a modrý svet. Rodové stereotypy a ich dôsledky (Pink and Blue World: Gender Stereotypes and its Consequences)* became a starting point for further education of teachers at seminars, in the pilot project and the like. It was also published at the project website and hence became accessible to the public. The project educational activities laid the foundation of the course *Gender Equality as a Tool of Social Changes* accredited at the Ministry of Education SR.

Educational Activities

The educational activities of the project focused on direct education of teachers, students and experts working in the area of education and schooling but also of the public at large. The objective was to introduce basic themes and questions of gender relations and gender equality and to elaborate and test methods of gender sensitive and non-stereotypical education.

The organization *Občan a demokracia* in cooperation with ASPEKT organized 12 one-day seminars (November 2005 – March 2007), a summer school (July 2006) and a summer workshop (July 2007). The seminars focused on five themes: gender stereotypes and their consequences, gender stereotypes in school, parenthood – motherhood/fatherhood, the beauty myth, division of labor between women and men and women in politics. Each theme was repeated in 3 towns – Bratislava, Vrútky and Košice, to provide the educational opportunity to teachers from all parts of Slovakia. On average, the seminars were attended by 15-25 teachers of various specializations. Several of them had already taken part in seminars organized by *Občan a demokracia* on human rights and liberties. In terms of methodology, the seminars were based on interactive learning with active participation of all attendants.

In 2006 the summer school of gender sensitive pedagogy for teachers encompassed lectures, discussions and interactive workshops. It was attended by 26 teachers from various

regions of Slovakia and various types of schools. Its objective was to introduce the fundamentals of gender sensitive pedagogy and increase teachers' gender sensitivity in their everyday work with their students. The objective of the summer workshop organized in 2007 was to prepare the teachers for the application of gender sensitive approach in education. The participants learned the basic theory of interactive teaching and principles of creation of participative methods. In cooperation with experts on gender issues, the participants took part in creation of gender sensitive methods that they could utilize in their own teaching.

The seminars for experts in education and schooling and for the broader public focused on various topics such as gender sensitive pedagogy in the choice of occupation, gender sensitive didactics, the beauty myth, gender sensitive approach in fine arts education, violence against women, gender aspects of language, gender training etc. They were organized by ASPEKT and led by experts from Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Austria.

The pilot project at the Elementary School on Gorkého Street 21 in Trnava was carried out by ASPEKT in cooperation with the teachers from the school. A part of the project were regular continuous seminars for a stable group of 9 teachers, visits to classes, cooperative elaboration of teaching materials, consultations, mapping of textbooks and other activities. Some activities were attended also by other teachers from the Elementary School on Gorkého Street 21 and other elementary schools, students of the Faculty of Pedagogy at the Trnava University and others. Each seminar dealt with one central topic: gender and sex, gender division of labor, gender stereotypes in behavior and attitudes of teachers, invisible histories of women, gender sensitive pedagogy, gender socialization, the role of toys in gender socialization, norms of masculinity, gender stereotypes in Roma communities, prevention of violence in schools, the beauty myth and advertising and others. These were also complemented by other topics. The outputs of the project are: elaboration and testing of the curriculum for further education of teachers in gender sensitive pedagogy, collection of various materials on gender stereotypes (e.g. in school textbooks), records from classes, practical experiences with gender sensitive approach in education as it was applied by teachers in different classes, new ideas for working with children etc.

One outcome of these educational activities of the project ruzovnyamodrysvet.sk is the accredited course **Gender Equality as a Tool of Social Change**. It was prepared by a close collaboration of Občan a demokracia and ASPEKT. Together with other experts they elaborated the main modules of the course, their content and methodologies. The course contains eight themes organized in eight modules each of 10 training hours. Participants can take either individual modules or their combination or they can take the whole course. The course consists of lectures, discussions, model situations, analyses of documents and learning by experience.

An integral part of educational activities were also theater productions on gender themes. Theater plays for children *Anička Ružička a Tonko Modrinka alebo Ako sa z Aničky stala faganička a z Tonka babec* (*Annie the Rose and Tony the Bruise or How Annie Became a Tomboy and Anthony a Pantywaist*), as well as *(Ne)poslušné macíky* (*Dis/obedient Teddy Bears*), deal with gender stereotypes in children's upbringing. The theater productions *Pavlin príbeh* (*Pavla's Story*) based on a book by Pavla Cebocli *Pavlin príbeh* (ASPEKT 2005), *Prečo nie som anjel* (*Why I'm Not an Angel*) based on a book by Aglaja Veteranyi *Prečo sa dieťa varí v kaši* (ASPEKT 2005), *Polica posledných vydýchnutí* (ASPEKT 2006) and *Prečo nie som anjel* (ASPEKT 2007); Júlie Meinholmové: *Citová výchova hadej ženy - Hra o tajomstvách mám a ich dcér* (*The Meinholm Family Women: The Emotional Upbringing of a Snake Woman. A Play about Secrets of Mothers and their Daughters*) experimented with creation of gender sensitive theater language. They worked with gender themes in an innovative way and presented them to the broad public. Thorough the Theater na Rázcestí the

participating organizations cooperated with teachers at the Matej Bel University (Faculty of Humanities and Faculty of Pedagogy).

The Theater in cooperation with the University also initiated the Klub EQ that offered its participants the possibility to discuss gender themes. They organized seminars, lectures, film screenings, discussion and the like. From 18 to 20 October 2007 Banská Bystrica hosted an event that was the culmination of the cooperation of all organizations of the development partnership – the festival Nová Eva/Eva Nová (New Eve). The festival was a rich mosaic of lectures, discussions, creative workshops, concerts, theater performances and exhibitions.

Publication Activities

An important part of the project was publication activities. The ideational and material starting point of the project was the book *Ružový a modrý svet. Rodové stereotypy a ich dôsledky* (edited by: J. Cviková – J. Juráňová; Občan a demokracia – ASPEKT, first published in 2003). The second edition of the book was published in 2005 within the framework of the project. In 2006 we prepared its extended version on a CD-ROM which in a modified form is also accessible on the project website www.ruzovymodrysvet.sk.

One of the project outputs is also the publication *Učiteľské povolanie. Aspekty rodovej rovnosti v škole (The Teaching Profession, Aspects of Gender Equality in School)* which brings the findings of research of some aspects of gender equality in schools studied via focus groups interviews with teachers (author: J. Filadelfiová, editors: J. Cviková, J. Juráňová).

Among publication activities of the project was also the social campaign *There is Only Work that Needs To Be Done* the objective of which was to disseminate the outcomes of the project to the public and to contribute to cultivation of gender sensitivity in society especially focusing on gender division of labor.

Information about the project and materials created within its framework, and outcomes of educational activities are published on the website www.ruzovymodrysvet.sk conceived as a portal of gender sensitive pedagogy. The website publishing materials not only on gender sensitive education but on gender issues in general is the largest outcome of the project. At the moment, the website has about 3000 visits per month; during the campaign the number was a hundred times higher. The electronic news bulletin *Njuvinky z ruzovymodrysvet.sk* was regularly distributed to all elementary and most secondary schools, methodical centers and other institutions that have to do with gender equality and education.

Research

Research on gender equality in education consisted of the overview of literature from Slovakia and the Czech Republic, analysis of semi-structured interviews with the teachers involved in the pilot project and analysis of questionnaires on gender sensitivity.

The largest output of the research activities is the book *Učiteľské povolanie* containing selected parts of the final analysis of focus groups interviews with teachers (the research was collaboratively carried out by ASPEKT, Institute for Public Affairs and the FOCUS agency). The focus groups interviews indicated that schools perpetuate a number of gender-based inequalities. While in other countries the questions related to gender equality in education and schooling have been studied for several decades, in Slovakia the research activities conducted within the frames of the project [ruzovymodrysvet.sk](http://www.ruzovymodrysvet.sk) have been the first step in this field.

The Transnational Partnership WEGA

An enriching dimension of the project was the transnational cooperation WEGA. In addition to common activities within its framework we were also involved in a bilateral cooperation for instance Slovak-Austrian: gender training and others, Slovak-Canary Islands:

publication of the Slovak translation of the handbook designed for teachers and educators *Equality of Opportunity from School to Employment. Prevention as Both a Road and Goal*. Success of this cooperation was acknowledged also by the authors of this handbook in its introduction where they expressed their thanks to the Slovak partners (during their visit to Slovakia they were particularly interested in the publication *Ružový a modrý svet*.)

Conclusion

The project ruzovymodrysvet.sk has resulted in many outputs that can lay the foundation for further activities and help in finding the tools of gender sensitization of society, mainly in gender sensitivity in education and schooling. The outcomes and good practice of the project are accessible at the project website which will remain in place for all interested readers and it has a potential to be further developed.

In Slovakia, the title of the project ruzovymodrysvet.sk has become a “trademark“ of gender sensitive pedagogy – its advantage is that it embodies a concrete gender theme and it is not linked to concrete organizations but rather to this theme.

The project was selected as an example of good practice for a publication issued for the Closing Conference of the European EQUAL Community Initiative in Slovakia and it was also presented as an example of good practice at the Closing Conference of the European Social Fund as a short video in which some selected project of the programming period 2005-2008 we introduced.

The duration of the project ruzovymodrysvet.sk was 3.5 years and it encompassed many varied activities and generated a number of concrete outputs, findings and new knowledge. It will be important to find ways of their future application. Much will depend on the ability to utilize the know-how of NGOs in this area of activity (which still suffers from the lack of interest on the part of the official bodies) and to ensure the cooperation of NGOs and state authorities in fostering gender equality and gender sensitivity in education and schooling in Slovakia.

An important outcome of the project is also the realization that the theme of gender sensitivity cannot be mechanically implemented into education; it requires an expert and nuanced approach. The project focused not only on education of teachers but also on the inquiry into the context in which education and schooling in Slovakia takes place and on empowerment of teachers and creation of teaching methods for introduction of gender sensitivity in education. The project ruzovymodrysvet.sk does not provide a know-how that would be mechanically applicable; but it provides the knowledge of the context, a number of well-tested methods and materials and inspiration for further work.