



SCHOOL TEACHERS — Ambassadors of animal welfare in Romania

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Content

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- Developing an animal welfare educational program - “Children learn to protect animals”.
- Creating a schoolbook for teaching animal welfare.
- Implementing an educational program on animal welfare
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- Conclusions.



Educational system in Romania

- Since 2008 the Ministry of Education has the duty to integrate animal protection as part of the educational process in Romania.
- However this opportunity is not yet used up to its full potential:
 - Teaching animal protection depends on the teachers' capacity and sensitivity.
 - To talk about animal welfare during the school year only 2 to 3 hours are available.
 - Appropriate schoolbooks are hard to find.



Developing an educational program

- In 2004 VIER PFOTEN started the „Children learn to protect animals“ program.
- Together with interested school principals and teachers VIER PFOTEN raises pupils' attention by presenting them photos of our projects, followed by open discussions.
- The main focus of these discussions lies on animals that pupils are most familiar with: stray dogs.



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Developing an educational program

- Evaluating all the pupils' discussions and also with the help of the two teachers Sorina Cuzum and Gina Velcu, VIER PFOTEN started to create the „Close to animals“ schoolbook.
- The applied methodologies are based on active but individual learning:
 - Active participation
 - Applied learning
 - Creative thinking
 - Building knowledge



Creating a schoolbook

- The main aspects in developing this schoolbook were to involve the teachers and to consider the children's state of development between the ages 7 - 11.
- During the learning process the child operates frequently with schemes and images that facilitate information processing.



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Creating a schoolbook

- The participation is stimulated by different requests that conduct the learning process:



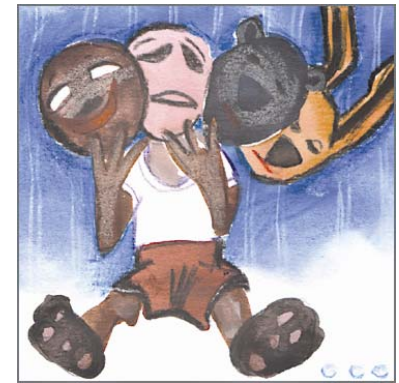
„Imagine that...“



„Group activity“



„Let's talk!“



„Role play“

Creating a schoolbook

- With this book teachers have the possibility to teach the children a new field with interdisciplinary character (nature science, geography, biology, religion, etc.).
- A teacher's handout was created for each lesson, describing the specific objectives, suggestions for teaching and expected results.
- So far the VIER PFOTEN schoolbook was translated into English, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Arabic and German.



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Implementing an educational program

- After successfully having the VIER PFOTEN school program implemented, we were able to propose alternative methods of teaching to the responsible authorities.



- For the teacher the advantage for participating to an extra curricular program means a better qualification. The involvement and the results are evaluated by the schools inspectorates.

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Implementing an educational program

- A very important part of the project's implementation was the selection of teachers and schools; in this process the county's school inspector is the key person for selecting the teachers that are running the project.
- The schools are chosen by their social background; all social levels and also lingual minorities are considered and involved in the project.



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Implementing an educational program

- The next step for developing the project is the training course for the teachers:
 - Along with the schoolbook the teachers receive the objectives for every lesson.
 - Furthermore they are trained to combine traditional methods such as conversation, speech or observation with more interactive ones. This enables children to express their feelings and to develop an empathy for animal's life and behaviour.



Implementing an educational program

- As learning strategies we chose:
 - The round table
 - Concept network
 - List of values
 - Four corners
 - Co-op
 - Inner circle – outer circle



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Implementing an educational program

- After the teachers are trained, „Close to the animals“ schoolbook is distributed to the children; the book is offered for free and the pupils can keep it.
- To support the teachers, VIER PFOTEN representatives offer different school materials and information on the content of the lesson.
- The evaluation of the project is done together with the representatives of the School Inspectorate, having two target groups: teachers and children.



Activities with children

- At the end of the project, together with participating children and teachers and with the help of the School Inspectorate, VIER PFOTEN organizes exhibitions, showing and sharing what the children have created during the project.



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Activities with children

- Within the activities developed in the classrooms, the children are subjected to interact with animals, to learn about them, to identify and find new solutions for the situations the animals are in.
- The courses follow the emotional development of the children, therefore homework is not included.
- At the end of each lesson the children have the possibility to express themselves by drawing, writing essays or doing small theater performances.



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Activities with children

- One of the most important project activities for the children is meeting the VIER PFOTEN „Dogs for People“ team.



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Conclusions

- In Romania, as in many other countries, animal welfare is still not part of people's mentality.
- The best way to deal with this fact are educational programs, which provide children with the basic knowledge on animal welfare.
- The teachers have the chance to develop pupils' sensitivity and responsibility towards animals.
- Educated children will eventually become responsible adults, who are able to take the right decision.



Thank you for your attention and interest!

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