

DESCRIPTION OF SUCCESSFUL READING PROGRAMME <b>PROGRAMME TITLE: "Reading and Media Clubs in Germany and Israel"</b> <b>PROGRAMME ORGANISER(S): "Stiftung Lesen" (German Reading Foundation) and the Center for Educational Technology (CET) in Tel Aviv</b>	
<b>Description Created by LiRe Partner Institution: UPRC</b>	
Time & Place	Target Group(s)
2008-2010 Germany & Israel	10 schools in Israel & 10 schools in Germany Addressed mainly 3 risk groups of pupils (in terms of media and reading habits): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children from families with lower education level</li> <li>- Boys</li> <li>- Children with a migration background</li> </ul>
<b>Short Description (Max. 200 words)</b>	
<p>The Reading and Media Club is an extra-curricular activity for school children and it is meant to bridge the gap between school and leisure time. A separate room in the school or a space within the school library is equipped with books, newspapers, comics, games as well as with audio-visual and computer-based media, establishing an environment for reading and learning without pressure to perform. The Reading and Media Club gives pupils a place to develop interests and skills that are neglected by their families and in their social milieus. Especially in Germany, the club is a leisure-oriented concept. It intends to motivate students to read and to get familiar with literature and texts as a means of getting access to topics of interest. It does not only intend to develop reading- and media-competence but social competence as well, bridging the gap between different cultures and lifestyles and encouraging communication and integration. In both countries reading of books, newspapers etc. was the main activity during the club meetings, followed by role plays, theatre, use of PC and Internet and – especially in Germany – creative work.</p>	
<b>Objectives (General &amp; Specific)</b>	
<p>The programme intended :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To motivate students (especially those in risk groups) to read and to get familiar with literature and texts as a means of getting access to topics of interest;</li> <li>• To develop reading- and media-competence and social competence as well;</li> <li>• To bridge the gap between different cultures and lifestyles encouraging communication and integration.</li> </ul>	
<b>Scheme of Reading Promotion Actions &amp; Activities</b>	
<p><b>Selecting the Schools</b></p> <p>In autumn 2008, in Germany as well as in Israel, 10 Reading and Media Clubs were established. The Reading and Media-Clubs are located in schools, in which the majority of the pupils are considered as weak readers. Schools with a high number of children belonging to the risk groups were chosen. Especially in schools with many pupils from families with low socio-economic status and with a migration background Reading- and Media-Clubs were</p>	

implemented. Migration background in this study is defined as children themselves or at least one of their parents being born abroad.

### **Setting up and Equipping the Clubs**

In the beginning, each club had an amount of 5,000 Euro to buy books, magazines, comics, digital equipment, games, furniture, material for handicrafts etc. During the two school years, the clubs twice got smaller amounts of money, e.g. to undertake excursions or to buy further books. In the schools, especially in Israel, the clubs are located in libraries, whereas in Germany only four clubs are integrated in the school library. In Germany five of the clubs are located in school rooms which are used by other pupils for lessons as well as for other school activities. Only one club in each country has its own room. In Israel the amount of available books depends on the inventory of the school libraries. Therefore the number differs from 500 to 4,000 books. In Germany most of the clubs have about 100 to 300 books available. One club has access to 12,000 books, according to the inventory of the school library. Between 6 and 7 clubs have magazines. Only two clubs in Israel do not have a PC. All others (in Germany and Israel) have at least 1 PC with internet connection. Each club has a digital camera, but only 1 club in Israel and 5 clubs in Germany have video equipment. Almost all the German clubrooms were designed by the club leaders and members themselves. The German children have been more involved in designing the rooms than the children in Israel.

### **Selecting and Training the Club Leaders**

In Israel every club has only one club leader, whereas in Germany there are sometimes two leaders. In Israel for each club one person (teachers and volunteers) was trained – 10 altogether. In Germany, some clubs had one, some two teachers who cared for the clubs and who were trained for the project (17 altogether). In Israel only half of the leaders are teachers and even more than half of the leaders are not part of the school staff. In Germany all club leaders were teachers or trainee teachers. Some of the leaders in both countries had worked in similar projects before.

### **Club Meetings**

For the project, the clubs initially were planned for a period of two school years. Actually after the project is finished, most of the clubs are being continued by the schools. Most of the club meetings take place once a week in the afternoon, with a duration of 90 minutes on average. In Germany 9 children were present at every meeting (in average), in Israel 15. In both countries reading of books, newspapers etc. was the main activity during the club meetings, followed by role plays, theatre, use of PC and Internet and – especially in Germany – creative work. Club leaders promoted the pleasure of reading and literature as well as media competence in a non-formal way, encouraged personal development and social competence and tried to integrate children with migration background and socially disadvantaged children.

### **Evaluation**

The clubs were evaluated by a set of quantitative as well as qualitative methods which were repeated several times over 2 school years. Evaluation tools included written surveys, observations, polarity profiles, group discussions, and telephone interviews.

### Results / Indicators of Success

- After several months in the club, in both countries more than two thirds of the children indicated that they enjoyed reading more than before the club started.
- After half a year in Israeli clubs the amount of children who perceived themselves as good readers was higher than in the beginning.
- The clubs showed those children who had been non-readers that reading can be fun; this is indicated by statements of club leaders.
- Children often became curious and were motivated to read simply because books suddenly were available in their surroundings.
- In Israeli and German clubs, reading of books, magazines etc. was the activity practised mostly in the club sessions. This shows, on a very general level, that the clubs fulfilled their main task – to bring children in contact with reading media.
- 29 % of the boys in Germany and 43 % in Israel in Israel stayed in clubs over the whole period of the project. 39 % of the children with migration background in Germany and 54 % stayed in clubs over the whole period of the project. This shows that the clubs did not manage to retain their target groups as a whole, but did retain an important percentage of students who were identified from the beginning as being “at risk” in terms of reading and media habits.
- After half a year in Germany as well as in Israel a remarkable part of the club members indicated that they used computers more often for research and for writing, that they were better able to work with the computer and more successful in research. Among the boys and in the group of children with migration background the short-term effects quite often could be increased once more in the second year of their club membership.
- The experiences of the club leaders show that the increase in the use of the computer is not just motivated by the wish to use an electronic device instead of books. In contrast, the children learned to find a more balanced way to use books and electronic media on the one hand and to use different applications of the electronic media (e.g. research vs. games) on the other hand.
- The clubs often encouraged children to read aloud. This is indicated by statements of club leaders and is also indicated by the observations.
- In the written surveys the club leaders noticed in children’s ability of fluent and comprehensive reading – especially amongst boys, in children’s reading concentration – especially among the Israeli boys, and in children’s emotional response personal relationship to texts.
- Reading competence systematically improved in both countries.

- Especially for boys reading activities that had not been relevant for them before became attractive.
- Many children indicated that they borrowed more books since they became club members.
- Having the option to arrange their activities freely had a positive effect on children's media use and media behaviour.

### CONCLUSIONS (WHAT WORKED WELL AND WHY)

- The Reading- and Media-Clubs obviously have effects that have been intended by the concept. These effects cannot be shown systematically for all indicators in all target groups. In many cases there are short-term effects (half a year), in some cases also medium-term effects (one or two years). From the large number of short-term effects one may conclude that also a part of those children who left the clubs after half a year or one year has been influenced positively.
- The clubs' combination of print and electronic material helped children to find a more balanced way to use books and electronic media on the one hand and to use different applications of the electronic media (e.g. research vs. games) on the other hand.
- A major reason for Israeli as well as for German children to join the club was curiosity. In both countries also social interaction – doing things together with others – was a motivating factor for becoming a club member. Both can be seen as a prerequisite for successful implementation of such programmes.
- An important reason of the wish to read more is the availability of books.
- After six months, in Germany as well as in Israel a lot of club members indicated that they used computers more often for writing (short term effect). This could mean that such programmes establish a connection between reading and creative writing.
- The challenge is to make these clubs more attractive over a longer period of time to avoid that especially children from the risk groups leave before the clubs begin to be effective.
- The effects of the Reading and Media Clubs to a large part seem to depend on the

atmosphere in the clubs. The time children spend in the clubs is related to positive impressions and experiences of open-mindedness, to being accepted and integrated, to spending time for meaningful activities but without pressure. The effects occur not so much in immediate changes of behaviour (e.g. that children read a lot more than before) but on an emotional level. Because of that, as future adults, the pupils might have positive memories and a more positive image of reading and reading media than without the club experience. In this sense the Reading and Media Clubs have a potential for sustainable long-term effects.

- Other reading promotion programmes could learn from the solid evaluation methodology applied in this project. Evaluation tools were quite effective and the evaluation process was intense and well-organised, taking into account the different types of reading promotion effects:
  - i) direct / immediate effects (e.g. children do not want to go home),
  - ii) short-term effects (e.g. after a few sessions children are confident enough to read out loud),
  - iii) medium-term effects (e.g. children develop joy of reading for a longer period of time),
  - iv) long-term effects (e.g. as adults the children still like to read).

#### REFERENCES

Institute of Reading and Media Research (2011). *Implementation and Evaluation of Reading- and Media-Clubs in Israel and Germany A Method of Promoting Reading and Media Skills and Social Integration Comparative Study Israel – Germany 2008-2010*. Stiftung Lesen.

#### LINKS TO FURTHER MATERIAL

This case study and many more are described in the Reading Worldwide website at:  
[http://www.reading-worldwide.de/zeigen\\_e.html?seite=9359](http://www.reading-worldwide.de/zeigen_e.html?seite=9359)

The “Reading Media Clubs in Germany and Israel” website (in German):  
<http://www.stiftunglesen.de/index.php>

The CET (Centre for Educational Technology) website: <http://cet.org.il/pages/Home.aspx>