

# Implementation Report Lifelong Readers LiRe



Implementation Report from LiRe Partner: Institute for Children's Literature

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## **Executive Summary (max. 400 words):**

Implementation of LiRe Project in schools and libraries is an essential part of the LiRe working programme. The second year of the project was devoted to the implementation. In Austria the Implementation took place in two schools in Vienna:

One private school (Austrian-Bulgarian Free Time School), and one school of the city of Vienna (Ganztagsschule Anton-Gassler-Gasse). In addition to that the Regional Library in Ruse, Bulgaria, implemented some specific library projects.

Promoting reading is central for the administration and the staff of both schools that cooperate with LiRe, it is central to the school's culture, policies and practices. Both schools have been very active in promoting reading for pleasure even before they started cooperating with LiRe. This is proved by their participation in other European reading promotion projects.

Previous to the implementation, informative meetings with different school directors were organised in order to select schools for cooperation. The directors of both schools were ready to cooperate with LiRe, and what is very important the staff members wanted to do something new and different from the regular school programme.

Then in-service training of the staff members took place between October 2012 and January 2013. Meanwhile some reading promotion activities, proposed by the Institute of Children's Literature in Vienna, were organised in both schools as practical examples of the cooperation between the schools and the Institute as well as practical examples of the implementation of LiRe reading promotion activities.

Both schools developed Reading Promotion Plans in compliance with their specific tasks: promoting reading and understanding of texts in German language, and teaching Bulgarian as second language.

The Whole School Reading Promotion Plans were implemented between November 2012 and June 2013.

As a result of the cooperation with LiRe both schools increased the number of their reading promotion activities. Whole-school reading promotion plans were in place; all school staff actively promoted reading in and out of class time; several reading promotion events took place during every month of the school year; pupils were involved in selecting books for reading in the class room and in selecting reading resources to supply the school library stock; parents/caregivers were offered regular support sessions on choosing reading materials and on reading with children. Regular feedback from parents/caregivers and children was received. The school library stocks were enlarged with books in different genres or other reading

material such as magazines, newspapers, comics, films on DVDs, etc. A range of dual language texts or appropriate materials reflecting pupils' diverse cultures and backgrounds is now available for pupils to borrow.

**Introduction(max. 300 words):**

The implementation took place in the second project year, starting with selection of schools for the implementation; further it continued with developing of specific reading promotion evaluation tools as well as reading habits evaluation tools; the implementation previewed training of the school staff in reading promotion; developing a reading promotion plan for the whole school, and organising, observing, and evaluating the activities embedded in the reading promotion plan. Instruments for evaluation of the effectiveness of implementation, like Interviews, Group discussions, etc. were developed.

For the use in Austria, the Reading Habits Evaluation Tools and the Training Modules were translated into German, and vice versa the analysis prepared in German for the Austrian schools were translated into English.

The Implementation aimed:

- To facilitate the efforts to train teachers, librarians, and administrators in reading promotion.
- To train together and encourage collaboration between all three categories of school staff, promoting the exchange of ideas and knowhow between them.
- To communicate the need for whole-school collaboration in reading promotion programmes, and develop school staff's ability to do so.
  
- To take the first practical steps towards the right direction, by training primary school staff in reading promotion, in all partner countries.
  
- To develop and make widely available relevant evaluation tools, both to identify where students and schools stand in relation to reading for pleasure and to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented reading promotion programmes.
  
- To push things forward by implementing reading promotion programmes in primary schools in all partner countries and reporting observations and conclusions.

**Context of Implementation (max. 400 words):**

The Implementation took place in two schools in Vienna:

One private school (Austrian-Bulgarian Free Time School, named further School No. 1) and one school of the city of Vienna (Ganztagsschule Anton-Gassler-Gasse, named further School No. 2).

It was planned to implement the project in primary schools, but LiRe offers also activities suitable for the secondary school. For this reason the students participating in the implementation were between 6 and 12 years.

School No. 1 has primary, secondary and high school levels. It is attended by some 230 pupils, who come from all parts of Vienna to study Bulgarian, the language of their parents. Most of the children are born in Austria and for them Bulgarian is a second language.

School No.2 is a secondary school. It is situated in the 22 Vienna district and is attended by children from the district. About 400 pupils attend the school every year, the majority of them with another mother tongue, different from German. For this school the focus is on German

language acquisition. The fact that the children are the whole day at school gives opportunity for many additional activities of which reading promotion is on the first place. By the way, one of the reading promotion activities applied in this school is so successful, that it is repeated every year, and was also introduced in the LiRe catalogue with suggestions for reading promotion activities.

While in the School No. 1 the parents pay for the education, the School No. 2 is a public school.

Due to the above mentioned specificity of both schools, promoting reading is central to them, and they work actively in this field. The teachers are happy when they are offered additional reading promotion material.

Both schools have already been very active in reading promotion. They have participated in other European reading promotion projects, such as BARFIE, EDM Reporter, EPBC II, EUMOF, ABC - The Art of the Book, etc. School No. 1 is also participating in projects organised by the Bulgarian educational authorities for the Bulgarian Schools abroad. The school No. 2 is one of the most active schools in organizing the District's Reading Week.

Additionally the regional library in Ruse (Bulgaria) applied some library activities and the Sofia City Library (Bulgaria) was interested to implement librarian activities at the beginning of the school year 2013-2014. Both libraries are among the biggest libraries in Bulgaria with active and well developed children's departments.

#### **Description of Training Modules (max. 600 words):**

Meetings with the directors of both schools in order to get their agreement to make the LiRe Implementation in each of the schools preceded the training of the staff.

The training took place between October 2012 and January 2013. Meanwhile some reading promotion activities, proposed by the Institute of Children's Literature in Vienna, also took place in both schools as practical examples of the cooperation between the schools and the Institute, and of the approach towards developing a whole school reading promotion plan. (See Annexes 1 and 2)

The training in the School No. 1 was provided by the representative of the Institute Lilia Ratcheva, while the training in the school No. 2 was divided between Lilia Ratcheva and the School coordinator Karin Veit.

In the School No. 1 three teachers took part in the workshops, two of them primary school teachers, teaching children between 8 and 10 years, and one secondary school teacher, in whose classes children are between 11 and 14 years.

In school No. 2 the workshop participants were 6 – four of them teachers of German and two – teachers of English. The age of the children they teach is between 11 and 14 years.

Altogether between 5 and 6 working meetings took part in each school.

All the participating teachers had university education.

Only two of the teachers had less than 20 years of teaching experience. All the rest were very experienced teachers, who have been entering school class rooms already between 25 and 34 years.

As it becomes clear from the above said, both schools focus mainly on reading and their teachers are experienced in reading promotion.

This fact influenced the training modules. The training was made in an informal way – as working meetings with the teachers, exchange of ideas and taking decisions together. Two workshops instead of three were made. The first workshop took 2 hours, the second – 2.5 hours. Besides, about 3 or 4 short informal meetings with the teachers of each school took place.

The book presentations to be done by teachers for their colleagues that were previewed in the Training Modules were not included in the workshops. All participating teachers have university education. They have done such presentations during their studies or in their everyday work as teachers. What is good for students and inexperienced teachers is unthinkable for an in-service teacher with university education. Besides, the Institute for Children's Literature works in close cooperation with these two schools recommending books and even supplying books for the school library.

During the informal training the teachers were:

1. Informed about the LiRe project, its main idea and purposes. "Reading for fun" was the slogan repeated many times during the training.
2. The Reading Promotion Evaluation Tools and the Reading Habits Evaluation Tools were distributed to teachers, filled, analysed and discussed during the next session.
3. Most of the reading promotion activities were shortly presented to the teachers. Those in German translation were distributed or sent them on-line in order to get acquainted in details with some activities. The guidelines for a book discussion were presented to the teachers and distributed among them.
4. The teachers exchanged experience and ideas which was an essential part of the training.
5. The reading promotion activities that already took place in both schools were highly appreciated.
6. During the on-line sessions the teachers who understand English got acquainted with the rest of the activities on the website.
7. Together with the instructor Whole School Reading Promotion Plans were developed.
8. During the implementation of the Reading Promotion Plan, the instructors had at least three or four meetings with the teachers, discussing with them details of the activities and helping them with books suitable for the topic.

#### **Description of Reading Promotion Plans (max. 300 words):**

Both schools developed Reading Promotion Plans in compliance with their specific tasks:

School No. 1 – teaching Bulgarian as second language

School No. 2 – promoting the reading and understanding of texts in German language.

The Reading Promotion Plans were designed based on proposals and ideas by different teachers, and on previous reading promotion experience. The results of the Analysis of Students' reading habits and the recommendations of the Instructor were also taken into consideration.

Both schools have implemented all points of their Reading Promotion Plans. (See Annexes No. 1 and 2 for details)

During the implementation of the Reading Promotion Plans it became clear that some of the planned or recommended activities could be slightly changed or combined.

For example:

15 Minutes Reading for Fun Every Day was enlarged and became 15 Minutes Laugh Every Day, thus combining the following activities: 15 Minutes Reading for Fun Every Day, Humour Marathon, Book Discussions and Reading aloud (School No. 1).

Or, the activity "Cacao Book Discussion Club with my Favourite Book" combined the suggestions to Forming Reading Communities with book discussions and book exchange among the peers. (School No. 1)

#### **Description of Data Collection Activities (max. 300 words):**

Different forms of data collection were used:

- Feed back was received during the discussions and exchange of experience.
- School staffs completed Workshop Evaluation Sheets before and after the Implementation.
- Pupils answered the Reading Habits Evaluation Questionnaire.
- School staff completes Workshop Evaluation sheets.
- Several visits of the instructor in schools took place during the implementation in order to personally observe the process. (The Institute provided 5 visits to the School No. 1 to observe the activities; in school No. 2 the instructor from the school was charged with closely following the activities.)
- Interviews were made with two teachers and two parents.
- Additionally two interviews were made with a discussion group of parents.

The quantitative analysis of the collected data concerning reading promotion evaluation or reading habits evaluation was not relevant as the sample was very small – 4 classes in the one school and three classes in the other. The qualitative analysis of the data gave a rich material for research in the field of children's reading preferences, about the books they read, about the use of technical means in reading, about the family reading, the role of the parents in reading promotion, etc.

#### **Data Analysis (max. 200 words):**

The reading habits qualitative analysis was made for each class separately in order to get a general view of the level of reading in the class and to help teachers determine specific reading promotion strategy for each class.

The comparison of the data analysis (Evaluation of Reading Promotion and Evaluation of the Reading Habits) shows some development. The trends noticed before the start of LiRe implementation gain at the end of the implementation clearer form. Among the primary school children the reading interest is growing and enlarging. Their reading preferences slightly change.

A bigger variety of books is quoted in the Reading Habits Evaluation Questionnaire after the implementation. The number of books quoted is also increased.

The self-confidence of the children (even of those who do not read) is bigger and they claim the reading is not at all difficult and they understand what they read.

Children start finding pleasure in reading aloud.

They already discuss with each other what they read, some of them do it even every day.

More genres are quoted as reading preferences. For Example, books about old times appears already often.

#### **Findings (max. 700 words):**

Promoting reading for pleasure was central to the schools' culture, policies and practices.

- As a result of LiRe Implementation the School No 1 **increased the number of reading promotion activities.** A whole-school reading promotion plan was in place; all school staff actively promoted reading in and out of class time; several reading promotion events took place during every month of the school year; **pupils were involved in selection books for reading in the class room and in selection of reading resources to supply the school library stock; parents/caregivers were offered regular support sessions on choosing reading materials and reading with children. Regular** feedback from parents/caregivers and children was received. (This conclusion is based on the Reading Promotion Evaluation Tool before and after the implementation of LiRe)

**The school library stock in School No. 2 was enlarged;** the library stocks offer now books in many different genres or reading material such as magazines, newspapers, comics, films on DVD, etc. A range of dual language texts or appropriate materials reflecting pupils' diverse cultures and backgrounds is available for pupils to borrow. (This conclusion is based on the Reading Promotion Evaluation Tool before and after the implementation of LiRe)

Both schools made it possible that pupils (in School No. 1 also families) from diverse cultures and backgrounds participate in promoting reading.

- **Most of the children were very satisfied with the activities, especially with those that had a character of game or competition. They were excited to participate in such activities and**

everybody wanted to be the best and to win (School No. 2). (See the Interviews with Teachers)

- It was surprising that the 12 year olds, who usually are tired in the afternoon and for this reason very excited and noisy during the classes, were listening carefully to each other during the Cacao Book Discussion Club with my Favourite Book activity; they made comments, gave additional information about the books presented. “I never had such order in those classes as during the Cacao Book Discussion Club activity”, shared her experience the teacher who implemented this activity.

- Although in the Reading Habits Evaluation Tool most of the children have written they don't like reading aloud at school, during the 15 Minutes Reading Aloud in class they were eager to read aloud.

- Only very few children answered in the Reading Habits Evaluation Tool they like reading poetry, while especially in the primary school the poetry is very important in the process of language acquisition.

- Besides the positive development there are also some negative trends which deepen.

For Example:

- In summer holidays most of the children visit their grandparents in their country of origin. There they don't have opportunities to be involved in reading promotion activities. In families where parents are either not interested in reading, or not able to help in it, children do not read a single book during the summer holidays. (Reading Habit Evaluation Questionnaire).

- There are children (fortunately a very small percent) from both schools who refuse to read at all. They by no means should be persuaded to reach for a book. In teachers' interviews and in the recommendations there are some guidelines how to work with such children.

#### **Recommendations (max. 600 words):**

Children liked very much the activities which had a character of a game or a competition. Teachers would like to see more such activities.

Teachers would like to find on the website more translations in other languages in order to make the ideas and activities accessible for more teachers in the respective country.

In the future it is recommended to inform children that they are participating in an international project. They will sure be proud of their importance and will share this with their parents. (See the interviews with parents).

Involve the project results as an integrated part of the teacher education programmes, and in – service teacher training programmes, especially the Reading Habits Evaluation Tools (LiRe Questionnaire for pupils), Reading Promotion Evaluation Tools (Questionnaire for School staff), the Training Modules, the Book Presentations and the Book Discussions.

The Books used for discussion on illustration (Activity entitled “How was this Picture Made”) were very carefully selected by the Institute for children’s literature. They were illustrated by one of the best illustrators of our time who have numerous awards for illustration. Some of the children didn’t like the illustration. They explained they didn’t like the dark colours or the figures, etc. This leads to the conclusion that these children probably don’t have enough art education in the school programme. A recommendation will be to increase the possibilities for art education at school, especially in the primary schools or in the whole day schools.

- The teachers shared in the interviews that unfortunately some negative trends are deepened: There are children (a very small percent indeed) from both schools who refuse to read at all. They by no means should be persuaded to reach for a book. With such pupils it is good to try with short texts on contemporary topics that might interest them. It would be also possible to motivate such children with texts in their mother tongue (if different from German). But the teachers are overloaded with all kind of administrative work besides teaching, and they can not find time for individual work with every child. This work might be done by a librarian. The problem is: these children do not attend libraries, and so the circle closes. There is no way for such children to further develop and achieve better education. May be some free time activities, or sport activities might be combined in some way with reading in order to gain such children and persuade them to read.

**Conclusions (max. 500 words):**

The LiRe catalogues of successful reading promotion programmes and suggestions for reading promotion activities in schools and libraries are extremely reach and valuable material to be proposed to stakeholders to use when designing and implementing a reading promotion programme.

The implementations of LiRe Programme have shown the necessity of organised reading promotion and of coordinated efforts in order to encourage, guide and support reading in European primary schools. The LiRe training modules are a good basis for training the future teachers. The teaching staffs need to receive regular in-service training in reading promotion. Children’s reading habits and attitudes have to be examined in order to develop the right strategy for each school, each class or each individual child.

The work with LiRe was very motivating both for teachers and students. As a result the students became more independent and self confident readers.

**ANNEXES:**

1. Ammedneded/final tools used
2. Final Reading promotion plan as it was implemented.