



Co-funded by
the European Union

A210-SCH Small-scale partnerships in school education

Partner countries: Estonia, Germany, France

Parents' school

2021-2024

Strategic Plan

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Introduction

The strategic plan provides an overview of the Parents' school project. As well as guidance on workshop structure, with useful questions for the discussion and audience management methods. The strategic plan was the main tool for the three project partner schools to plan and implement the workshops with parents.

Executive summary

The number and the diversity of the international families was growing in all partner schools in Estonia, France and Germany. It is important to highlight the challenge of effectively communicating information to parents about how the school systems operate, particularly due to differences in cultural backgrounds. These differences lead to varying expectations among parents regarding communication methods, school visiting hours, and supporting their children at home. The primary goal for all partner schools is to establish common ground with parents and teachers to better support the children and help them understand the reality of school life.

The project aims to achieve several goals for parents, including:

- Increased involvement in school and community life (civic engagement and participation)
- Better understanding and integration into the local school system (inclusion and diversity)
- Improved ability to support and understand their child at home (common values)
- Enhanced cooperation with teachers and school staff to create a positive environment (supporting teachers and school staff)

- Participation in intercultural learning activities with other parents (inclusion and diversity, civic engagement)
- Additionally, support materials will be developed for other organizations to utilize, including workshop guidelines and video situations.

Project Objectives

The project aims to achieve several goals for parents, including:

- Increased involvement in school and community life (civic engagement and participation)
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Project Management

Each project partner is represented by a manager of project activities who worked on developing the existing application and will take on local project management responsibilities. In addition, school psychologists, social workers for consultations, and other support, are involved in the project management activity. Partners will focus on Project management prior to the project, during and after.

Reaching the target group

The target groups are the parents of each partner school. It is applicable to communicate with the focus group via school specific platforms or emails for the protection of the personal data. As for the general reminder of the planned event, publishing the prior and after event details and reflection can be one of the ways to reach the target audience.

Video scenarios

The scenarios of the videos should be written and elaborated by the students. Scenarios should describe the potential real situations at school. It is important to maintain the scenarios close to reality as the videos will be materials for teaching and learning – for the parents and students.

Workshop guidelines

The workshops should be designed in accordance with the general guidance. The strategic plan does not limit the participants to not only follow the workshop guidelines but add the activities according to the needs and abilities of the attendant parents. It is vital that the workshop introduces local culture, provides parents with an insight into the school system and daily operations, and motivate them to get involved in school activities.

The subjects covered shall include how to help a child, parenting that is composed and encouraging, active listening, and critical thinking. The sessions are recommended to include priorly filmed videos. It is important to provide workshops and videos on the same topic. If the organizers decide to make it otherwise, then there should be a thematic alignment and video material should be used as an additional support material for the workshop.

For achieving better results, partner schools set up the guidelines and structure. The workshop guidelines were generated with the consultation of the project partner school psychologists and workshop facilitator.

The workshops had the following structure:

- Brief introduction to the workshop topic and objectives
- Presenting the video
- Questions to initiate discussion for each video and workshop
- Advice from the expert/professional

3.1 Questions for the workshop based on the video “Screen addiction”

- Do you recognize the behavior seen in the video?
- Do you know how to support your child’s screen addiction?
- Do you know the ways to set rules about screen time?
- Do you know how to set an example for your child and entire family to manage screen addiction?

3.2 Questions for the workshop based on the video “Bullying on social media”

- Is it possible for a parent to notice if a child is bullied on social media?
- What to talk with a child to keep them safe from social media bullying?
- Is it possible to recognize a social media bully in our child?
- How to provide first aid after social media bullying?

3.3 Questions for the workshop based on the video “Bullying at school”

- Is it possible for a parent to notice if a child is bullied at school?
- What and how do you talk with a child to keep them safe from bullying at school?
- Is it possible to recognize a bully in our child?
- How to provide first aid to a victim of bullying?

3.4 Questions for the workshop based on the video “Support at home”

- How do you currently support your child's learning outside of school hours?
- What challenges do you face in supporting your child's learning at home?
- Are there specific subjects or topics that your child finds particularly challenging?
How do you address these challenges at home?
- How do you communicate with your child's teachers about their progress and any areas of concern?

3.5 Questions for the workshop based on the video “Support language learning at home”

- How do you currently incorporate language learning activities into your child's daily routine at home?
- Are there specific language skills or aspects of language learning that you feel your child needs additional support with? If so, how do you address these areas at home?
- What resources or materials do you find most effective in facilitating language learning activities at home?
- How do you collaborate with your child's teachers or language instructors to reinforce language learning goals and strategies at home?
- What challenges do you encounter when trying to support language learning at home, and how do you overcome them?

3.6 Questions for the workshop based on the video “Mobbing”

- How aware are you of the signs and symptoms of mobbing (bullying), and how do you talk to your child about it?
- Has your child ever mentioned experiencing or witnessing mobbing (bullying) at school or in other environments? If so, how did you handle the situation?

- What strategies do you use to support your child if they are being bullied, and how do you encourage them to seek help if needed?
- Are you satisfied with how your child's school addresses incidents of mobbing (bullying), and what improvements would you like to see in the school's approach to prevention and intervention?
- How do you foster open communication with your child about their experiences and feelings regarding mobbing (bullying), and what steps do you take to promote their well-being and resilience in such situations?

Audience Management

The workshop should be discussion oriented, where parents will have a chance to express themselves, share their opinion with each other and be given the professional's support and advice. Parents should be given chance to attend the workshop in English or the local language, to practice it.

Establish Expectations: Establish ground principles that promote courteous dialogue and attentive listening first. For instance, "Let's make sure everyone has a chance to speak, and we'll take turns sharing our thoughts."

Encourage Participation: Actively invite input from all participants to ensure everyone feels included. Use phrases like, "We'd love to hear from everyone, so please feel free to share your ideas," or "Does anyone else have thoughts they'd like to contribute?"

Time management: Keep track of speaking time and gently guide the discussion to ensure everyone has a chance to speak. You can say, "Let's hear from some others before coming back to you," or "We'll need to move on to the next topic soon, so let's hear from a few more voices."

Manage Interruptions: If someone is dominating the conversation, politely intervene and redirect the discussion to ensure others have a chance to speak. You can say, "I appreciate your input and wish to contribute, [participant's name], let's hear from others now."

Create Opportunities for Written Input: Provide alternative ways for participants to share their thoughts, such as through written feedback forms or online surveys, to ensure quieter individuals have a chance to contribute.

Express Gratitude: At the end of the workshop, express gratitude to all participants for their valuable contributions and reinforce the importance of diverse perspectives in the decision-making process.

Conclusion

The strategic plan gives guidance on workshop planning and facilitating. The potential user of the strategic plan and the workshop materials is recommended to follow the steps of the guidance as we the partners have implemented them and got a relatively if relevant and needed, develop their practices even further when needed. The strategic plan gives one of the proved ways on how the video materials with specific questions can bring the best out of the parents' school. It is important to highlight that using the workshop materials may not necessarily result in an identical impact in your parents' community. The nature of the workshops' impact may depend on the needs and the characteristics of each focus group.