

FRANCE

Local development

Location

Pays du Velay

Programming period

2014 - 2020

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion

Measure

M19 – LEADER/CLLD

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 5 246

RDP 4 197

Private 1 049

Project duration

2015 – 2017

Project promoter

CIDFF - Centre d'Information sur les Droits des Femmes et des Familles

Contact

direction-cidff43@orange.fr

Website

<http://hauteloire.cidff.info/>

LEADER support for an arts in education project that promotes gender equality among school children in rural areas.

Summary

The local action group GAL du Velay decided to launch a project to introduce gender equality as a topic in local primary schools. The project aimed to respond to evidence showing that girls living in rural areas - compared to those living in urban areas - tend to limit their professional ambitions to “traditional” and stereotypical female roles.



The project's activities included training for school teachers, the sourcing of appropriate facilitation material (i.e. children's books on gender equality), the design of creative sessions for the students and also communication and dissemination activities within the local community.

Results

223 hours were delivered by CIDFF in order to manage the project and train 8 adults

84 children participated in the project (44 girls and 40 boys)

A short video was produced in 2016 containing interviews with several participants.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Promoting gender equality, especially in rural areas, is an enduring issue and awareness-raising activities should start at infancy.
- ❑ A very interesting and challenging aspect of the initiative was to bring local elected representatives and educational teams together in order to seek consensus on how to move the principles of gender equality forward.

Context

The Centre for Information for Women and Families Rights of Haute-Loire is an educational organisation that promotes gender equality. The Local Action Group covering the area, decided to launch a project to introduce gender equality as a topic in local primary schools. This was in response to evidence showing that girls living in rural areas - compared to those living in urban areas - tend to limit their professional ambitions to “traditional” and stereotypical female roles. The idea was to provide opportunities for children to work together in teams and to reflect on their understanding of gender issues in order to promote mutual respect.

Objectives

The aim of this project was to offer children the possibility of engaging with gender issues via creative play and arts activities, and to widen the scope of their personal development through questioning each other on the topic (i.e. can a boy play with a doll or can a girl play with cars? Is it wrong for a girl to be a “tomboy”? What will his father say if a boy wants to become a hairdresser, etc.)

Activities

The project was carried out during extracurricular time, in 3 main steps:

- **Training of teachers**, sourcing suitable facilitation tools (i.e. children’s books on gender equality), designing creative sessions for the students.
- **Facilitation and awareness-raising for children aged 7-10**: developing arts projects in groups (panel drawing, sketches, games, video, etc.). Each group session lasted between 1 and 1.5 hours; starting with the collective reading of a children’s book on gender issues and leading to open questions and group discussion.
- **Communication and dissemination**: presentation of the projects’ results through mini-exhibitions and videos to the children’s families and the wider local community.

The financial support from the RDP was primarily used for the first step of the process.

Main results

The initiative was carried out in 4 schools (Saint-Paulien, Vernassal, Borne and Blanzac).

Step 1: 223 hours were delivered by CIDFF in order to manage the project and train 8 adults

Step 2: 84 children participated to the project (44 girls and 40 boys);

Step 3: A short video was produced in 2016 containing interviews with several participants and students of the Vernassal primary school performed a short play to families during a school gathering.

Even though there has been no formal assessment of the project, the educational team that were involved have since incorporated their new skills and knowledge into their daily classroom practice; meaning gender issues can be more consistently addressed in the future.

Key lessons

In remote areas, stereotypical gendered behaviours and sexist attitudes are more commonplace than in urban areas; they also start to emerge very early in life.

This awareness-raising initiative specifically targeted children and sought to create opportunities for them to explore notions of gender equality, diversity and mutual respect. It also aimed, through group discussion and role play, to confront children with the potentially differing opinions, experiences and ideas of their peers.

Even though the long-term impact of such awareness raising initiatives is difficult to measure, the observed evolution in the children’s thinking is sufficient motivation to launch further, similar activities in the field of equal rights and gender issues.

The most interesting and challenging aspect of the initiative was to bring local elected representatives and educational teams together in order to seek consensus on how to move the principles of gender equality forward.