

Questionnaire Germany

1. Context of the country

Population of Germany: 82,000.000

There is no official figure on how many people are illiterate in Germany. The Federal Literacy Association estimates the number of 4,000.000 illiterates in Germany. In the International Adult Literacy Survey 1995 10% of the German population were found to score at the lowest level, another 30% at the second lowest level. This result was confirmed by the PISA study: 23% of the 15-year-old are at risk.

2. Aim of the project/Concept of Family Literacy

Prevent future drop-outs by promoting children's reading and writing skills. This is done by supporting parents to assist their children at home and enhancing a culture of literacy in the family.

3. Target population/cultural and social context and languages

Mostly migrants who sometimes speak little or no German. 5-6-year-old pre-school and school children and their parents.

4. Programme design

The project started in autumn 2004 in 7 schools and 2 kindergartens in different – all socially disadvantaged – areas in Hamburg. The project was started as a cooperation project between the Institute for Teacher Training and School Development (LI) and the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE). The project became part of the programme "Promotion of children and young people with migrant backgrounds" financed by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research and the participating Federal States until 2009. The teachers who provide the project are a team consisting of a "normal" primary school teacher and a teacher with a special qualification in language promotion. In some schools there is "special" staff, e.g. a psychologist and an early childhood expert. Every school is free to carry out the programme according to its conditions (in some schools, a family literacy activity takes place once a week, in others once a month). The programme consists of three pillars:

- 1) Inviting parents into the classroom (opening the schools for parents)
- 2) Working with the parents
- 3) Joint parents/children activities, often outside school

The perspective of the project is to have an impact on educational debates in Germany that started after PISA. The issue of involving parents to prevent future drop-outs, opening schools and establishing a closer relationship between schools and families has been enhanced through the project.

It is not in the hands of the project coordinators to decide if it will go "on scale". The project coordinators would like to continue with small projects to have the possibility to try out new approaches (e.g. working on parents' skills).

5. Teacher training

Teacher training is provided at a monthly seminar where all participating teachers come together. They are given input and exchange experiences among each other. The curriculum is developed together in the seminar by collecting best practice examples.

Apart from the monthly seminar, the project coordinators (and in some cases also teachers involved in the project) present the project to experts and decision makers) to disseminate the approach.

6. Focus

The focus is on the children and their parents. However, the main target group are the children as the programme does not enhance the literacy skills of parents.

7. Curriculum

There is a flexible curriculum which is being developed together with the teachers. It consists of best practice examples which are collected by the teachers. The curriculum covers the following modules:

Reading

Phonological awareness

Writing

Story-telling and listening

(Selected) methods from adult education

8. Methodological approach

Process-oriented

Regarding the work with the parents: low-scale, action-oriented, taking into consideration the individual

9. Monitoring and evaluation

The programme is being monitored and evaluated “externally” by the programme through which it is financed and “internally” by the Institute for Teacher Training. The “external” evaluation looks only at the benefits for children while the “internal” looks at the benefits both for the children and the parents. The evaluation uses both quantitative (language tests for children) and qualitative instruments (questionnaires, interviews, case studies).

10. How is the project financed?

The Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) and the participating Federal States

Staff costs are paid by the LI/UIE

11. Partnerships

UIE-LI

UIE-LI-BMBF-Ministry of Education, Hamburg, University of Hamburg

UIE-LI-Basic Skills Agency (Consultant to the project)

UIE-LI-BürgerStiftung-Grüner+Jahr

12. Best practice example (something that works particularly well)

Parents writing family stories

Learning with different “stations” to experience letters with all senses