

International Project
“International Standards for Community Schools:
Strengthening the National Capacities”

CASE STUDY MANUAL

Funded by Charles Steward Mott Foundation
www.mott.org

FOREWORD

I am delighted to commend this unique publication.

The International Quality Partnership is a group of experts from national NGOs working to support and promote Community Schools in several countries – Armenia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. Together, and with a UK partner they have devised the International Quality Standards for Community Schools which is currently being used in some 13 countries. It is a self-assessment tool which schools can use to improve their delivery. School staffs look at the Standards, together with partner agencies, parents and pupils and then identify where they want to improve and the case studies here are a sample of how some schools have achieved that. Each of these countries offer at least one example and the manual as a whole covers all nine Quality Standards – leadership, partnership, social inclusion, services, lifelong learning, volunteering, community development, parent engagement and school culture.

Here at the International Centre of Excellence for Community Schools we collect examples of best practice and we think it is worth remembering that in the last twenty years teachers in these countries have worked through cataclysmic change. They were all once member countries of the Soviet Union where the curriculum was decided centrally and where all schools tended to operate in much the same way. Suddenly, when the Soviet Union collapsed, they had to go through the demanding process of securing a public mandate for the work they do in preparing their nations' children for an uncertain future, articulating an inspiring and aspirational vision for the world that they would help shape in their adult life.

This makes this a doubly unique publication. It is not only a number of case studies about improving Community Schools from many different national perspectives - an achievement in itself, but is also a celebration of the resilience, optimism and professionalism of the teachers meeting the challenges that the dramatic historical shift has brought.

I am proud to be asked to introduce this manual to you, and hope that you, like me, will be moved and inspired by its contents.



Director, International Centre of Excellence for Community Schools

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SCHOOL PROFILE



Ryapísova Yulia, Deputy Head
Secondary School #86, town of Seversk
Tomsk region, Russia
250 students
21 teachers
<http://school86.vseversk.ru>

Many from lone parent and large families experiencing disadvantage.

The building is typical but additional equipment and facilities have been secured through sponsorship and joint partnerships and winning grant competitions.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

There are blocks of small flats around the school where the residents are mostly pensioners. There is a large company The Agricultural Complex which employs many people from the local community.

Young people leave to go to the regional center of Tomsk. Most people are Russian but 1% is Armenian and 2% Georgian.

There is a large company The Agricultural Complex which employs many people from the local community.

Most people are Russian but 1% is Armenian and 2% Georgian.

This is a “forbidden city” which means that some secret factory or enterprise is located there and only local people who live there have regular passes (to get out and in the city). It is surrounded by barbed wire and several guarded entry points. People outside the city have to order a pass to get there (for work, or visit relatives, etc).



A school is like a living organism, if it wants to catch up with new economic and political conditions it should change, become open and understandable for everyone. So it needs to take into account views and needs of parents and students and its external partners – community around it.

By discussing everything together society, state and all interested parties will be able to make a school more open for new ideas, understandable and meeting the demands of the state and society.

A School Council is a ground for dialogue for all stakeholders

Ryapísova Yulía, Deputy Head, coordinator of the program

THE ISSUE

The International Quality Standards for Community Schools have nine Standards all of which contribute to an effective Community School. One of these relates to leadership. In 2009 School Councils were established in the city of Seversk (Tomsk region). Members of the School Councils are active parents, students, teachers and community members, who realize their important role in school governance and seek to fulfill their roles. But we have to admit that at the stage of formation and initial work School Councils were not effective and successful in performing their work.

In 2009 we conducted self-assessment using the International Quality Standards for Community Schools. We assessed the following key areas: Leadership, School Culture, Social Inclusion, Parent Engagement. In the framework of Leadership the following problems were identified:

- school counselors (parents and community members) are passive in solving school problems;
- school counselors are not efficient;
- teachers and parents are not eager to take part in school governance.

PROBLEM

One of the main problems was the inefficiency of school counselors. Their inexperience did not help and so at the beginning they did very little without the assistance of the head teachers and staff. It is important to acknowledge that they are volunteers and do not necessarily have relevant professional expertise in education, management, law or business. When there is an economic crisis and social and political depression, parents, students and community members do not have enough access to information about new trends and technologies in education or about their rights and responsibilities to make informed decisions.

Another difficulty is that even those who have volunteered to become school governors are passive and reluctant to become actively engaged. They will comply with the law of education but they have no leverage with the school staff and their ideas are largely disregarded. They do not have the appetite to challenge this, concentrating instead on looking after their own families.

The lack of motivation is exacerbated by the inertia of the school, its conservative organization of the educational processes and the established economic and social relations with state education departments. For these reasons a school is not always ready to become a Community School with sufficient flexibility to meet the social needs and demands of society and have a more diverse funding base. Generally schools are “closed” to the community and potential social partners.

SOLUTION

We decided to do something about this problem and so we developed a training program for counselors and also offer more organizational and methodical support to our School Council.



PICTURE: Town Conference of School Counselors "From Something in Mind to Something in Kind". The Chairman of the Council Fedorov S. and students Matskevich A. and Sergeeva T. Presentation of the project "Territory for Rest", 2010

At the first stage an 8-hour program was developed by the school for school counselors.

In October and November 2009 three seminars were conducted for members of the School Council (parents and students): "The essence and functions of a School Council", "Activities of School Council Commissions" and "Preparation and Organization of Selection System for School Council". During the seminars every participant received an information pack on various issues of School Council functions.

At the second stage in October 2010 two training sessions were conducted for school counselors: "Functioning of the regulatory commission in School Council" and "Social partnership for school development".

The training sessions were interactive and interesting, with presentations and practical tasks. Various groups took part—parents, teachers and students. Every participant received an information pack: ways of working with social partners, recommendations on creating a project and regulatory documents of a School Council.

Responding to requests from participants consultations were organized on the following topics:

- ▣ regulatory documents of School Council
- ▣ paperwork management in School Council
- ▣ functions and competences of commissions in School Council
- ▣ methods of work in School Council
- ▣ drafting and documentation of projects
- ▣ agreements with social partners

Other schools in our town became interested in the program as they faced the same difficulties with their school Councils and so we worked in partnership with the Center of Civic Education to run programs for other schools.

As a result organizational and methodology support of School Councils was provided through:

- ▣ Training sessions.
- ▣ Remote consultations
- ▣ Personal consultations.
- ▣ Methodical materials for school counselors on the school internet site.

PICTURE:
Regional competition "Best
educational projects", 2011,
presentation of the project



THE MAIN DIFFICULTIES FACED

- school counselors do not know about the structure, goals and objectives, functioning of a modern school and the system of its management;
- it is very difficult to gather a group for training sessions because school counselors (especially parents) are very busy;
- differing educational and social levels amongst the school counselors;
- unwillingness to spend time learning new information;
- lack of experience in dealing with community and social partners;
- lack of existing good methodical materials to work with school counselors;
- we analyzed questionnaires after the seminars and training sessions and saw that they were still not enough to build the competences of a school counselor.

The third stage

Based on the needs of school counselors we gathered from the evaluation, we developed a project aimed at creating information and methodical database on the practical work of School Councils. We studied a lot of materials on experiences of School Councils activities in Russia, as well as training sessions for school counselors, and created a methodical bank on our school website.

RESULTS

As a result now we can provide organizational and methodology support to all schools in our town and the Tomsk region.



As for our school, the last three years have seen the following benefits:

- We supported the regulatory commission by analyzing the questionnaires on public evaluation of school functioning, February 2011.
- Attracted additional external resources (money [about 500,000 RUR or \$160k], facilities, furniture, bonus fund for staff pay, methodical literature) via searching and collaboration with social partners (town deputies, private business, library, agriculture holding, museum, etc.).
- Involved social partners as experts for the evaluation of school functions, school projects and programs.
- Our school counselors participated in the town, regional and Russian competitions and conferences.
- The School Council is responsible for 40% of school decisions.

All this has been thanks to the training programs we ran for our school council and then the center for Civic Education allowed us the opportunity to share our experience and make support for School Councils in the town more effective.

WHAT THEY SAY - COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

Interview with the Members of School Council in School #86, town of Seversk, Tomsk region



Ryapísova Yulia, Deputy Head, coordinator of the program

I've been training school counselors and giving consultations for two years and I've heard a lot of times these questions "Why do we need a new body at our school?" or "What's the purpose of this work?"

A school is like a living organism, if it wants to catch up with new economic and political conditions it should change, become open and understandable for everyone. So it needs to take into account views and needs of parents and students and its external partners – community around it.

By discussing everything together society, state and all interested parties will be able to make a school more open for new ideas, understandable and meeting the demands of the state and society.

A School Council is a ground for dialogue for all stakeholders in education.



Gladkova I., school counselor, a community member

It is very interesting to work in the School Council. One starts to understand and see the school from a different point of view. I got new insights in school life. If a school manages to get the "right" people into the council, attract specialists who can organize work then this school can solve a lot of issues and problems with the help of the council.



Khudyashova Natalia, school counselor, a parent

Two years ago I could not imagine that we could manage to do such responsible work. I thought we were invited only to vote for a list of issues and that was all. But we were asked to sit around a big table and discuss any issue we found important in school life. It was quite difficult to have all that responsibility but after some time we learnt not to get lost on issues of our own children but to see the whole picture of the school life, see problems and success of the school. We learnt to make decisions, plan our work, look for partners.

It's very useful life experience and we feel that the school needs us and values our work. We are still learning but we already have something to share with others.



Matskevich Alena, school counselor, a student.

I think it was most difficult for students to work in the School Council. We knew about most of the problems but it was difficult to find solutions and make decisions as well as deal with all the documents and regulations! The training helped a lot; after two years of studying and consultations everything is in its place. We learnt how to conduct surveys or represent our interests in the Council.

It is good to know that you will be listened to and your ideas will be supported – it is clear that students can contribute ideas for the benefit of the whole school.

SCHOOL PROFILE



'A leader is best
When people barely know that he exists;
Not so good when people obey and acclaim him;
Worst when they despise him.
Fail to honor people,
They fail to honor you.
But of a good leader, who talks little,
When his work is done, his aim fulfilled,
They will all say, 'We did this ourselves.'
Lao-Tzu

Secondary school № 6, Severodonetsk town, Lugansk region, UKRAINE Established 1970

I stage of schooling

–. Primary grades 1-4
Adaptation School

English and French, fundamentals of ICT. It is a full day school where children can receive speech-and-language therapy, work with the school counselor and social care teacher individually and in groups.

II stage of schooling

– basic grades 5
to 9 or Orientation
School

special and elective courses, learn optional subjects and choose academic subjects ready senior school.

III stage of schooling

– secondary grades
10 to 11 or School
for Self-Determined
Life.

Students study the subjects they have chosen with a cluster of related subjects studied in greater depth, e.g. social and humanitarian studies, sciences and mathematics, technology. The school works closely with extra-curricular institutions, local vocational schools and colleges.

Additional learning
opportunities

Our Community School offers a broad range of co-curricular activities and events for students to explore their individual capabilities: various clubs including sports, children's puppet theater, school newspaper, volunteering team Warm Hearts. Of great educational value is the school's Fame Hall celebrating the warriors who fought for our country and the Hall of Ukrainian Ethnography. Students take part in contests and knowledge competitions on local, regional, national and international levels.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

School № 6 is located in the south-western part of the town. Other institutions in the school neighborhood are:

- ▣ 7 hostels providing dormitory accommodation
- ▣ 3 vocational training facilities (Higher Vocational School № 98, Vocational Lyceum for Construction, Training School for Chemistry and Technology);
- ▣ 3 banking institutions;
- ▣ 4 shopping malls;
- ▣ Research and Production Association 'Impuls' [Momentum];
- ▣ Housing Maintenance Division № 1;
- ▣ Children's club 'Iskra' [Spark];
- ▣ A night club.

When we mapped our local community we identified a number of potential risks for our students and we feared that they could become delinquent and this was working against our efforts to help them gain a quality education to secure their future.

That is why we embarked on the path of innovation in 2006 to transform our traditional school into a community-oriented one. Since then the purpose of this project has been to foster citizenship and leadership in all areas of school life.

WHAT WE DID

Severodonetsk School № 6 in Lugansk region opened its doors for the first time in 1970. Since then it has established its own traditions and carried them up to the present. However, what makes us stand out among others is that our teachers and students are willing to take risks and settle all problems through round table discussions. We joined the Community School movement in 2006 and continue to implement this concept. From the very beginning we realized that it offered opportunities for our students to engage with the larger community and be valued members of it.

In 2009, our school became piloting site for Lugansk In-Service Teacher Training Institute and a model to demonstrate the Community School concept in practice.

In 2011, we summarized our best Community School practices and shared our expertise with other schools and stakeholders in the town. During this time we also developed the Community School Development Program spanning 5 years with a corresponding business plan.

To draft a school development plan and ensure its effective implementation, we needed to understand our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the wider community context. The SWOT-analysis for our school produced the findings which are summarized in the table below.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Human resources	
The school staff includes 38 teachers : • 75 % have the first or higher qualification category; • 5 teachers were awarded the pedagogical rank of 'teacher-methodologist'; • 8 teachers with the pedagogical rank of 'senior teacher'. The school employs qualified personnel to provide counseling on psychological and social issues, as well as speech-and-language therapy. Functional responsibilities of the staff are clearly delineated. All major school decisions are made in a participatory manner. The school implements a joint state-and-community management model.	Lack of math teachers. Need to hire more young teachers. Low parent involvement in school issues. Low level of students' social engagement. Need to establish partnership relations with sponsors
Curriculum and instruction	
Training in grades 8 to 9 to help understand aptitudes and interests so that an appropriate choice is made of subjects for higher grade study In senior grades instruction is delivered through a national curriculum with mix of compulsory subjects and elective courses e.g. sciences, law, physics-and-math. The optional part of the curriculum is structured according to the needs of students and their parents; the relevant instructional time is allocated for in-depth study of individual subjects and elective courses. Extended-day class. Home-based learning options for children with special needs. Students may take exams without attending classes. After-school clubs and sports classes.	Lack of state curricula for school clubs. Teachers are not paid for their work with external students. Inefficient student government.
Material and technical resources	
The school canteen serving hot meals, snacks and drinks. A computer classroom with unlimited Internet access. A 300m2 gym, gymnastic area and a sports ground with relevant equipment. A school counselor office and a classroom with a complete set of technical equipment and approved intervention strategies. The school library providing students with free books.	No assembly hall. Outdated equipment in some classrooms. Repair is needed for student WC facilities and the school roofing.
Procedures	
All school activities are based on the Community School concept. Procedures are in place to market the school's educational services. Student learning achievements are monitored. Staff is skilled in project work. Contacts with mass media.	Lack of a staff to monitor and market educational services provided by the school.

Opportunities	Threats
Use of innovative approaches. The availability of local a college and a training school for chemistry and technology (which emphasizes the importance of science training in senior school as a separate academic profile). A joint state-and-community school management model (encourages community involvement in education issues at the school). Cooperation with local businesses located in the school neighborhood (raising money in addition to government funding to strengthen the school development). Cooperation with town NGOs (work on social projects).	Low birth rate. Economic recession in Ukraine. High rate of labor migration. The nearby school offering instruction in Russian. There are competitive institutions nearby inn the school neighborhood (3 vocational training institutions (Higher Vocational School № 98, Vocational Lyceum for Construction, Training School for Chemistry and Technology and a children's club 'Iskra' [Spark]); There are 7 hostels; 3 banking institutions; 4 shopping malls; Research and Production Association 'Impuls' [Momentum]; Housing Maintenance Division № 1; and a night club. The school staff believes that the local conditions are not conducive to learning and that the students are at risk of becoming delinquent. The parents do not ensure that children spend their free time appropriately. The school staff believe that the traditional positive influences on pupil behavior have been weakened, leading to moral decline.

After data collection and analysis we identified areas for improvement and development objectives for our newly established Community School. Based on the SWOT-analysis our teachers drafted the school mission, 'Helping students form the key competences (learning, cultural, health, ICT, social, civic and entrepreneurial) through the framework of community school activities. Transforming the school into the cultural and educational center of its neighborhood. Involving new partners to create a broad range of services for children, young people, families and the community.

In 2010, when our innovative 4-year project was coming to an end, we assessed the effectiveness of our strategy using the International Quality Standards as a guide. Our self-assessment showed that the school could do better in educating socially active individuals, leaders who are able to communicate effectively, make independent decisions and, most importantly, take responsibility for these decisions. A crucial activity which followed from our self-assessment based on the International Quality Standards was to devise the school development plan for the next few years. After discussion of the results of self-assessment with partners (representatives of authority and business of the town), community members (parents, inhabitants of the district), school staff (pedagogue and students), we identified the area for improvement that we are working on now: 'To strengthen student motivation for learning through the use of project-based approaches that foster individuals with active civic stand and through creative collaboration between teachers, students, parents and the community within a democratic school environment.

RAISING INDIVIDUALS WITH ACTIVE CIVIC STAND MEANS RAISING LEADERS

To become a leader, a child needs to learn to communicate and engage in a dialogue, develop critical thinking skills. Also, it is vital to teach him or her to analyze their feelings and emotions, to understand how they are seen by others. In other words, to raise a leader, empower students to explore their unique strengths and develop their personalities. This is the main purpose of our leadership training program Leadership School.



Our Community School staff and partners decided the following stages in leadership education:

- a) help students activate their capabilities and open their leadership potential, define their living space;
- b) help them clarify their own spiritual and moral priorities and values;
- c) teach the strategies for self-learning, self-evaluation, self-organization, character building and self-improvement;
- d) teach the skills for independent decision-making and encourage students to take responsibility for the results of their actions;

- e) develop communicative skills, teach independent and critical thinking;
- f) teach skills for team work;
- g) develop confidence, resoluteness, positive thinking; alleviate their concerns about the future.

Heads of the sections in the student council can refine their organizing skills at the learning sessions arranged specifically for the core leadership team. Moderated by the teacher-facilitator, these sessions promote communication skills, self-discipline, independence and initiative. The program builds on interactive teaching and learning techniques and includes both theoretical issues and hands-on activities. Student leaders play business games, take part in training sessions, discuss the operation of a children's school organization and other interesting topics, and take tests to learn about themselves as individuals.

After these sessions student leaders share their new knowledge and skills with classmates. The teacher-facilitator creates learning situations for trainees to acquire a range of skills:

- engage in self-analysis, reflect on own actions, critique oneself;
- develop their character traits;
- plan own actions and foresee their outcomes;
- find solutions to complex real-life situations.



The main objective of the leadership building activities is to help every student fully develop their potential capabilities, their competitive power, initiative and creativity.

As a result of the Leadership School training sessions, students reach a number of social and personal development outcomes:

- ▣ understanding the content and objectives of their co-curricular assignments;
- ▣ envisioning the product of their work;
- ▣ planning skills;
- ▣ ability to allocate duties and assign responsibilities for specific tasks to individuals;
- ▣ ability to supervise and provide assistance to peers, as required;
- ▣ skills to prepare for and conduct the meetings of the core leadership groups and gatherings of student units.

The Leadership School uses interactive techniques such as debates, games, training sessions, ideas auction, quizzes, conferences, brainstorming, etc. The effective development of leadership potential depends on the age of the children and also starting with a preliminary diagnostic assessment of leadership in small groups using a series of research-based tools, such as:

- ▣ Assessment of leadership abilities;
- ▣ Inventory of action-related characteristics of management and leadership;
- ▣ Leadership self-assessment. Brief quiz;
- ▣ Assessment of functional leadership in small groups.

How to make others follow you? How to make them 'buy into it'? How to organize their work?



Young leaders can find answers to these questions through their practical activities in student governance. Appropriately organized by teachers, it opens endless opportunities for on-going improvement of teaching and learning processes. Also, student governance fosters children's initiative, which becomes the source of new creative solutions and successes. Students act as facilitators and in this way they learn their first lessons of citizenship, acquire skills for social engagement, and master the sophisticated art of managing school affairs through own experience. Being responsible for different areas of school activities and taking part in different student government sectors, young leaders organize their peers to carry out various projects. They plan, supervise and check one another.

Work in student governance promotes knowledge and skills, such as management, business communication and record keeping. They have a chance to develop moral qualities and character traits, e.g. taking personal responsibility for the assignment they are given, commitment to principles. Teachers pass on their facilitation and organization expertise to students; teach them management strategies (meetings of the heads of student units).

Why students and parents choose our school

In summary, we can safely say that understanding the importance of developing leadership qualities in individuals is now growing. Raising modern leaders is an essential element of preparing the younger generation to manage their own lives. Ukraine is establishing itself as a post-Soviet modern country democratically governed by the rule of law but this will only be successful if young people are willing and have the skills and knowledge to engage actively as citizens, taking responsibility for their own actions. It is crucial to cultivate leadership qualities in students, raise them as responsible and socially responsible individuals.



Set the aim and find ways to reach it while keeping in mind that a leader is guided by moral values – these are the things I learnt in trainings at the Leadership School'

Kateryna Lysenko, the President of the School Council during 2006 – 2008 (graduated in 2008)

TIPS



- A true leader can be taught only by leaders which model appropriate styles.
- It is important to understand psychological and social needs, aspirations and plans that children try to fulfill through their beliefs and their behavior.
- Encourage students to always defend things they believe in. Remember, that what they defend is what they believe in.
- Although charisma is often a characteristic of outstanding leaders, we can all learn the skills, knowledge and acquire the attitudes to make us good leaders so that they inspire enthusiasm and trust.
- A true leader is known by the results of his or her efforts, by whether the tasks they set are completed successfully, whether the team is united or not, and whether personal needs of other people are met.



The Leadership School taught me self-management, and, first of all, being very decisive and taking responsibility for others
Sergiy Petrovskyi, the President of the School Council 2008 - 2010 (2010 graduate), leader of a youth NGO at Severodonetsk Technology College.

SCHOOL PROFILE

220 students

Nursery, primary lower secondary
school classes Family Centre

50% pupils commute
from small villages

There are many opportunities for
students to improve their green
environment and also a wide range
of optional subjects in the curriculum.
- that is what I mean

All teachers are fully
qualified and keen to
learn

New teaching methods used
The school teaches in line with the
Education Framework Plan which is a
national curriculum.
Rooms available for community
use and schools helps them in their
activities

School organizes s
cultural and sporting
activities for community

Received an award in 2010 „A Family
Friendly“ society

**Aims to be a safe and open school, a community center for
Višňové and surrounding area**

COMMUNITY PROFILE

- a larger village in the north of Znojmo region - south Moravia
- a midpoint among the towns Znojmo, Moravský Krumlov, Moravské Budějovice
- 1100 inhabitants, a predominance of older people, quite high employment
- facilities: school, doctors (a general practitioner and a dentist), chemist, post office, library, shops, pubs and restaurants, petrol station, home for elderly people, accommodation services, development of vineyard tourism
- tourist attractions: a castle with a beautiful park, a church, a windmill
- businesses: a large agri-business and several small businesses
- associations: the fire brigade, the sports club, a hunters association, a gardeners association
- there is high unemployment

PRIORITY IDENTIFIED

Through the use of The International Quality Standards for Community Schools, the school was able to identify three priority issues: Volunteering, Parent involvement and Lifelong learning.

Here are the details:

VOLUNTEERING

- ▣ creating opportunities for volunteers from among the pupils, parents and staff
- ▣ reach potential volunteers with specific requests for help (well-defined activities)
- ▣ discussions with pupils and partners about their ideas and their possible form of assistance
- ▣ strengthening the sense of belonging to the school - the internal motivation of volunteers
- ▣ Regular evaluation of the effectiveness of activities

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- ▣ change in the system of informing parents about school activities and education of children
- ▣ organizing meetings at the appropriate time
- ▣ enable active participation of parents in important decisions
- ▣ continuously identify views of parents on school activity

LIFELONG LEARNING

- ▣ Support for further education of teachers
- ▣ use of their potential for mutual learning focused on innovative methods of work
- ▣ monitoring our teaching methods and assessing their effectiveness

THE SPECIFIC PROBLEM

At the start of the process the Elementary school of some 220 pupils located in a village of about 1000 inhabitants, at some distance from large cities and where the public had a traditional view of the school acknowledged that it offered a narrow range of activities related to the academic learning of pupils which had little wider relevance to the life of the community. Parents attended meetings twice a year at the invitation of staff and there were one or two social events.

Most teachers agreed that parents should have no part to play in the education of their children, because teachers are the professionals with the knowledge and skills to do that. The teachers saw any activities other than those focused on classroom learning as a distraction. Children were not well motivated and teachers often blamed their pupils: "Those students today ...". If there was a problem, it was often resolved by a complaint to school inspectors or the local authority. Management complained of lack of funds, the school depended only on the contribution of the local authority. The success rate of applications for grants and donations was zero.

WHAT WE DID

The local authority became a partner and agreed to use the facilities for community benefit and to encourage the students to engage with community development activities for which they were responsible. They were involved, for example, in the reconstruction of a playground.

We carried out a community mapping exercise to identify community need and conducted an internal survey to identify our own strengths. This helped us attract additional, external funding.

We saw the benefit of working in partnership and have extended our partnerships to provide an enriched curriculum and a wide range of services. We now cooperate with:

- The local authority finances us and we provide: children give suggestions for environmental improvement and are actively involved in their implementation, we host and help organise the meetings of municipal representatives with elderly citizens, and we provide cultural performances and rent space at various seminars, providing refreshments and other facilities.

- The municipal authorities of other villages from which our pupils come we cooperate on such activities as a cycling tour „Visnovska 15“ we help promote the region for example, designing a post card, we encourage students to become actively involved in the life of their village, we help solve problems with transport, train employees of municipal authorities, we help network villages in the region and we also host and support their dances and other cultural events. We have created a cheerleading team.

- 2 small schools in the surrounding area • we share a examples of good practice, provide them with expertise in foreign language teaching, management and the use of ICT. We organize joint sporting and cultural events ensure a smooth and seamless transition of their pupils into our school.

- The Diagnostic Institute for children with behavior problems

together we bid for funding for various activities, the school uses the facilities of the park around the institute and train their employees in the use of ICT.

- Visnove, Center for after school and leisure time activities provide our pupils and also the wider public with after-school, leisure and recreational activities in our school.

- Local NGO's and public and civic associations such as the hunters, firefighters, gymnastics club amongst others our pupils help them with the organization of their events, our school kitchen provides refreshments for those participating in their activities, promotional materials, decorations and in return they tell our children about their work, help us financially coach our children for sports competitions.

- The National park Podyji offeres learning programmes about ecology and includes our children in conservation activities.

- Endowment Fund of spouses Klaus (Vaclav Klaus is our current president) supports us to provide IT lessons for seniors citizens.

- Středa, NGO Středa, NGO (Středa means Wednesday) – we work together to reduce risky behavior by students and to offer help in crisis situations and relevant training of teachers, parents.

- Center for working with students with learning problems in Brno and Znojmo: offer us care for pupils with SEN, methodological assistance and support.

- Faculty of Business and Economics at the University of Agriculture in Prague: we have we have a counseling center, and we organizes training through a Virtual University of the 3rd age (ducation for seniors). Our teachers deliver lectures, we help administer the service and all the materials are provided by the University.

- and on the international level with Gimnazjem Nr 2 in Racibórz (partnerschoolin Poland): we have mutual exchanges, language communication, multicultural project days and the sharing of good practice.

All this means we have a rich program of additional activities benefitting our children and which places us at the center of the community:

- ▣ workshops for children and adults (Christmas, Easter workshop)
- ▣ cultural events (social Ball, Christmas concert, theater, academy)
- ▣ sporting events (tourist march, bike ride, tournaments ...)
- ▣ holiday activities for children (suburban camp ...)
- ▣ long-term training courses for adults (English, German, ICT skills) as after school activities
- ▣ workshops for children and adults (Christmas, Easter workshop), markets to sell products created in these workshops
- ▣ cultural events (social Ball, Christmas concert, theater, school academies)
- ▣ sports events (tourist march, bike ride, sports tournaments ...)
- ▣ holiday activities for children, the organizing «suburban camp»
- ▣ seminars for the public (first aid course, driver training, seminars for parents on child development and education, lectures on healthy eating ...)
- ▣ events for other partner organizations e.g. meeting with seniors ..
- ▣ rental of rooms and facilities (a family activity center, gym exercise, local discussions and meetings ...)
- ▣ cooperation with local clubs and associations, promotion of their events
- ▣ environmental improvement projects involving students
- ▣ consultation events for senior citizens about potential initiatives
- ▣ training events for teachers at neighboring schools

Every event is evaluated. A questionnaire is distributed with sections for comments. The school implementation team looks at the successful factors and agrees how to change any shortcomings.

HOW THE SCHOOL CHANGED

With the advent of a new director, the school asked the fundamental question: "So what can we do to change this?" They concluded that one of the options is to adopt an «open school», approach to strengthen its community dimension, and to turn it into a cultural, social and educational center of the village

At the beginning the school was focused primarily on:

- ▣ facilities and their use after the lessons
- ▣ human resources - teachers and other employees who are willing as well as able to work with the public
- ▣ the possibility of the pupils participation in community activities, linking with the Education Framework Plan (national curriculum) and development of their skills
- ▣ available channels to reach out to public
- ▣ financial resources
- ▣ possibilities of using existing cooperation
- ▣ parental involvement and subsequent volunteering

BENEFITS

Through involvement of the school into the life of the wider community the school managed to bring real life situations into learning and students realized that they are part of it. The pupils naturally develop their skills in the real environments while strengthening their knowledge. A key point was that students should be active participators, initiating and organizing activities to help bridge the gap between school and the community it serves. This would not only generate innovative ideas but in the process they would acquire new skills and knowledge.

The school believed that if when students see adults return to learning throughout their lives then they would see the value of an education and understand the concept of lifelong learning.

By linking the school into the life of the wider community we raised our profile and made the school more competitive. This resulted in more students enrolling and more funding. By working with community organizations and with business was great advertising. Parents who are active in the school tell better understand the curriculum and what we are trying to achieve with their children.

All this has had an impact on the school culture which is now much more open and there is better trust and relationship between staff and students. The learners and teachers are partners, there is an atmosphere of trust and cooperation here. Management and other key processes in school are becoming more democratic so that all employees support the vision of the school and the direction it is taking. The main activity of teaching students overlaps with the community activity with each aspect enjoying mutual benefit.

The local authority which is responsible for the schools began to see the school as a potential partner able to contribute to improving the quality of life for people in the village rather than as a drain on its budget.

IN SUMMARY

- the school is seen in a more positive light now
- better relation between the school, its local authority and the public
 - strengthening the students' competencies
 - the school got nearer to real life so theory in the curriculum can be seen in practice
 - students and many adults have a positive attitude to lifelong learning
- the school has a competitive edge
- the school culture is more open

WHAT WE LEARNT

Once we had established relationships we found that our partners came forward with their own ideas to open up the school and saw that opening up the school supports their own agenda.

Of course, it was not always easy. At the beginning there was some initial distrust, and practical problems working out how to coordinate activities. Some people were only willing to promote their own achievements rather than share success with partners and some were simply not ready to cooperate, preferring to work alone. At first we were not precise and clear about who would do what, when where and how, and who had the right skills for the tasks.



Each activity should fit with the vision of the school.
Head teacher

The International Quality Standards was an invaluable tool in helping change the way we did things. It helped us clarify our objectives and identify our strengths and weakness, It meant we are able to focus and as a result we are far more efficient now. We gained valuable experience and we are willing to share our experiences with others.

TIPS

- Start with your key aim to become a Community School and make sure that you are clear about why this would be a good idea and be ready to lead staff, students, parents and others in the community towards achieving this.
 - Be open to all new ideas.
 - Be willing to delegate responsibilities.
 - Spend time helping staff understand the importance of what you are doing and make sure that you have a majority on side.
 - Make decision together with partner organizations, including community-based organizations.
 - All activities are agreed and planned right from the start with partners, parents and students.
 - When new initiatives are created use the experiences of young teachers, pupils, parents and community organizations.
 - Exchange relevant information with partners.

WHAT WORKED

- Involvement in joint initiatives with partner organizations
- Promotion and support of activities by partner organizations
- Pooling resources with partners on community initiatives
- Clear agreement on the division of responsibilities
- Make sure everyone knows and agrees who is the leader of the action and which specific activity is involved
 - Make sure that you advertise what is happening and the benefits and involve your partners in sharing success.
 - Encourage community members to attend activities organized by partners
 - Network with other schools locally, regionally, nationally and internationally whenever you have the opportunity.



Sometimes a small change can have far reaching consequences for the school as a whole.
Head teacher

SCHOOL PROFILE

Dibrivka complete secondary school of I-III levels under Myrgorod district council in Poltava region



2, Shkilnyi lane, Dibrivka, Myrgorod district, Poltava region, Ukraine, 37622

Tel.: +38(05355)34337

Email: teacher_znz@meta.ua, Dibrivka_znz@ukr.net, teacher_znz@ukr.net

Website: <http://www.dibrivka-znz.at.ua>

School principal: **Oleg Rudchenko**

Head of the community school council: **Olga Panchenko**

Primary and secondary **122 students**

The Dibrivka school is involved in a number of initiatives:

- a regional project which is part of the nationwide special-purpose social programme 'School of the Future';
- the international project carried out jointly by the Ukrainian Social Investment Fund (USIF) and the World Bank
- It is a member of community schools network in Poltava region and collaborates with the Ukrainian Step-by-Step Foundation within the Community School Development Program.
- the Dibrivka School has established its own educational model 'New Generation' targeting the development of leadership and communicative skills in students.

2 storeys build in 1978 with spacious corridors. Light airy classrooms, large gym. Assembly hall, two computer classrooms with internet access a workshop, library, canteen, school stadium and classrooms



The school engages in regional and national projects, takes part in conferences, workshops and training. Our activities are covered in local media (newspapers 'Prapor Peremogy' [Banner of Victory] and 'Zoria Poltavshchyny' [Poltavshchyna Sunrise]), USIF newsletters and the Internet, they are publicized through the programmes of the regional public TV and radio company, in the digest of Poltava In-Service Teacher Training Institute, the 'School of the Future' reader, etc.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

- Rural, multi ethnic, low income and high unemployment
- The local NGO 'Dibrivka' plays a key role in the school. Started by the school principal, it became one of the strongest community groups in the district. Today Dibrivka NGO is our good partner.

BACKGROUND

After the fall of the Soviet Union, traditional values have collapsed. Individuals and institutions are judged by their wealth. Schools were no longer respected as leaders of their communities, and had to plead for resources. This was true for our school. We felt that we must do something to address situation, because it undermined our ability to help build a strong democracy. A good education is essential in a democracy so that people can make informed decisions. We believed that partnership is the most effective relationships between school and community institutions and would help overcome the consequences of negative values.



The kids in our kindergarten like you a lot and are always looking forward to seeing you. They love and enjoy being part of the 'Children to Children' Program and have the best memories from the exciting and informative meetings and celebrations organized by the school. These events cultivate kindness, love and respect. Thank you! You are our best friends!"

Dibrivka kindergarten

Our school started to look for partners. We compiled a list of possible partners and contacted them with our offer of collaboration. We found that people are able and willing to help, and that it was important to make them aware what our needs were.

THE AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT THAT WE IDENTIFIED

Partnership is about close cooperation with other organizations to carry out collaborative activities through shared use of resources, information and staff. It offers benefits to all parties involved and empowers joint action to solve community problems. Partnership is mutually rewarding and requires transparency, volunteering, two-way communication, honesty, respect and equality, since the parties should have a thorough understanding of the situation, be well-informed and clear about the community needs to facilitate dynamic and efficient changes to improve learning and social environment.

HOW THE SCHOOL ADDRESSED IT AND WHO WAS INVOLVED

First of all, we assessed our work using the International Quality Standards for Community Schools to identify our strengths and weaknesses.

The self-assessment process involved 9 representatives from different stakeholder groups, e.g. teachers, students, parents, and the local community.

Our findings informed the strategic plan to develop our Community School and its priorities for the next 5 years.

For us, 'Partnership' was one of the key Standards.

This area is among the central elements in our community school development plan that contains clearly specified actions and responsibilities.

We believe that schools bring significant intellectual and material resources to offer partners. This was so in our case and we got down to work.

We created a number of groups and asked each of them to think creatively and come up with some options, e.g.: what our school can offer to potential partners; how collaboration with our school can help enhance the partner profile; and what school facilities can be made available for use, to whom and when.

After that we listed specific advantages.

Rather than worry all the time about the things we need, we realized that we have a lot to offer to others.



It's so good to have you as our partner. Our collaboration is beneficial and important to us both; it's satisfying and very positive.
Myrgorod Vocational School for Porcelain Production

We proceeded to collect information about partners, set up contacts with them, identified shared motives as the foundation for long-term relationships.

Thus, we covered all the steps of building partnerships: developed a vision of our community; assessed our options for finding partners; drew up collaboration plans; analyzed the benefits that our school can offer as a partner; pooled all the information and selected a strategy.

Then we pursued an individual approach to each of the potential partner organization. Finally, we drafted and signed partnership agreements at face-to-face meetings.



Our partners from Dibrivka community school always come to help when needed. They are sincere, honest, hard-working and positive. That's why, knowing that their students like tasty apples in autumn, we decided to contribute to their 'Week of Good Deeds' and presented them with 30 fruit plantlets.

Leonid Prokazin, Businessman

Fairly quickly we established partnerships with:

- ▣ State-owned enterprise 'Dibrivka Stud Farm № 62'
- ▣ Dibrivka Rural Council
- ▣ Kindergarten 'Prolisok'
- ▣ Myrgorod District State Administration
- ▣ Education Division of Myrgorod District State Administration
- ▣ Myrgorod District Gas Supply Agency
- ▣ Farm Firm 'Ukrlatagro'
- ▣ Local private businesses
- ▣ Young Tourist Club of Myrgorod District
- ▣ Sports School for Children and Youth 'Kolos'
- ▣ Myrgorod Vocational School for Porcelain Production
- ▣ Myrgorod Vocational School № 44
- ▣ Poltava Regional Department of Forestry and Game Management
- ▣ Poltava community school network
- ▣ Poltava In-Service Teacher Training Institute (Poltava ITTI)
- ▣ All-Ukrainian Step-by-Step Foundation (USSF)

AS A RESULT OF PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES WE NOW HAVE

■ A State factory, “Dibrovsky stud number 62” – We were given Christmas gifts for school, sugar for the school canteen, excursions to Mirgorodskii district, in the framework of action “Give me your hand first graders” is a program that provides gaming corners and stationery for students, help is provided in the wrestling tournament «Free fighter” and furniture was provided for the new intake of students.

■ from Dibrovsky village council – transported children to school from villages Stovbyno and Pokazove, students get sweet gifts during holidays, the village cultural center hosts school graduate evenings;

■ from kindergarten “Snowdrop” - working together, we helped the students make a smooth transition into school;

■ from Tourist Agency - our students have a great opportunity to travel and relax, enjoy the countryside and wildlife. The travel agency arranges holidays free of charge for orphans and deprived of parental care children as well as for children from poor families. Other children are funded by sponsors and/or parents.

■ from children-youth Center “Colos” – There is an honorarium given to the wrestling coach who runs a club at the school;



- from Mirgorodskii ceramic technical and vocational schools - 44 - students help in the design of rooms. Some pupils progress to vocational specific schools such as these.

- from Mirgorodskgaskii district department of gas facilities we have received sports equipment: table tennis, soft balls, skipping ropes and stuff, and sweet gifts for students on the holidays;

- from Poltava Regional Forestry and Hunting - received a gift of school dining furniture and made repairs to the school assembly hall;

- from local businesses: we have received get sweet gifts for the holidays, Christmas toys, financial assistance;

- from Poltava Oblast In-Service Teacher Training Institute, together with Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation facilitates a network of Community Schools of the Poltava oblast so that we have access to expertise, valuable tips, useful information, advice, consultations, they highlight our activities and successfully manage the project.

Our first need was to get better equipment and improved resources and so this is where started. Eventually we will tackle other issues and demonstrate how we can be of benefit to our partners.

Teachers take courses and attend workshops

Students participate in hands-on learning sessions and contests

Cultural resource

Information resource. Collaboration

Providing prospective students

Talks, trainings
Material and human resources

Cultural resource

Information resource. Collaboration

Providing prospective students

Material, cultural and human resources

Human and cultural resource

Cultural and human resource

Students participate in sports competitions

School takes part in contests, academic competitions, etc.

SERVICES BY DIBRIVKA SCHOOL



**DIBRIVKA
SCHOOL**

Dibrivka Rural Council

Farm Firm ' '

Local Private

Gas Supply Agency

Education Division of Myrgorod District State Administration

USSF

Prolisok'

Poltava community school network

Myrgorod Vocational School 44

Myrgorod District

Poltava Regional Department of Forestry and Game Management

Sports School

Kindergarten ' '

State-owned enterprise 'Dibrivka Stud Farm 62'

Young Tourist Club

UkrLatagro'

Myrgorod Vocational School for Porcelain Production

Poltava ITTI

Businesses

SERVICES BY PARTNERS

Information and learning resources.

Sponsorship

Material and financial resource

Material and financial resource

Material and financial resource

Sports equipment; prizes

Field trips, tours, rewards. Hands-on learning sessions and competitions

Construction materials; nursery plants. Financial resource

Sponsorship. Material and financial resource

Information resource. Collaboration

Providing prospective first grade students

Information resource. Rewards

Material and financial resource. Field trips

Human and financial resource

Interior decoration of school facilities. Career guidance

Information resource. Collaboration

WHAT WE LEARNED

We have learned to be an active leader in the community, to make decisions with confidence, skill and precision. Most importantly we are now much more effective. Through these partnerships we have also tackled a range of social problems such as: implementation of inclusive education, transportation of children to school, participation in the environmental improvement of the village, help to low-income families and support of family-type homes, mutual running of rural events, helping the elderly, veterans and soldiers-internationalists, etc.

Together with the Ukrainian Social Investment Fund 3 training sessions for the village community were conducted ("Rural budget", "My native village", "We - one family") funded by the Government of Japan and 6 training sessions for capacity building of the community ("Fundraising", "Development of business projects", "Leadership in the community", "Energy", "Barrier-free access, "Training"). The participants were representatives from: the school (teachers and pupils), the village council, the village community (parents of students, pensioners). The Public Association for inhabitants of Dibrivka village was created based at the Community School.

Annual training is provided on AIDS, Volunteering, Prevention of Alcohol Misuse and smoking, Development of oratory (during 2011-2013 these trainings were conducted by Peace Corps volunteer), Internet Security, Children's Rights, School service conflict resolution, School as a location for healthy choices are conducted for Community Schools students annually. 2 training sessions are offered for district schools (for directors and deputy directors from 20 schools) conducted at Community School on the following topics: The school as a center of community development and International Quality Standards for Community School.

We learned to conduct conferences, seminars and training. Examples are: the Regional Scientific Conference "Ukrainian

model of Community School", jointly conducted with Poltava oblast In-Service Teacher Training Institute based at Dibrovska Community School, participation of the school in the international project "International quality standards for community schools" (II self-assessment), a joint project of Ukrainian Social Investment Foundation and Japanese government that's aimed at capacity building of the poorest communities in Ukraine, increased community participation in decision-making, identify and mobilize the necessary resources. We have learnt how to work with the media (newspapers «The Banner of Victory,» «Dawn of Poltava», Journal of Ukrainian Social Investment Foundation, Internet, journal of Poltava oblast In-Service Teacher Training Institute, a collection of articles "School of the Future", etc.), which covers information about our activities.

This has made us much more confident and we continue to grow. Through using the International Quality Standards for

Community Schools, we have:

- created these partnerships
 - together with the village community we reopened the cultural center
 - established a tradition of parental evenings and open days
 - set up a computer club for the village communities
 - disseminated good practice among Community Schools
- Mirgorodskogii district
- continued cooperation agreements with universities.

We have all – teachers, students and community members - that everyone benefits from cooperation, mutual support, understanding and partnership. We have learned to collaborate, to be there for others, not just ourselves. We managed to raise the school profile, involved additional human and material resources to support our school and to serve the needs and interests of our local community; created social capital; improved understanding, trust and collaboration between different community groups, which contributes to a stronger democracy. Our Community School acts as a driving force for change and development. Working with others has opened new opportunities for us. The rewards it brings are not just about equipment but we also have enjoyable and satisfying communication with our partners. We feel safe, strong and confident in what we do, because they are not just partners but real friends, always ready to help and support us.

TIPS

Our experience shows, that for collaboration to be effective you need to

ENGAGE YOUR STAFF IN JOINT INITIATIVES

- Take part in solving the problems that affect the life of your local community
- Use every opportunity to attend various events and publicize your skills
- Be active in every initiative
- Get involved in the activities of other organizations that are trying to respond to community challenges.

We have been able to demonstrate that collaboration can be life-long.

Our partners are an excellent example of that. The school now plays a leading role in the community, and we believe that we will maintain this position.

Moreover, we hope that we'll build more partnerships with new friends and demonstrate the advantages of the Community School concept to other schools. In our view, the future belongs to those Community Schools that know how to realize their potential.

BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

Partnership benefits for students at Dibrivka community school:

- ▣ students and young people develop personal qualities of tolerance, sensitivity, friendliness, respect for themselves and others;
- ▣ improving the morale in individuals;
- ▣ encouraging responsible attitudes to nature as national treasure;
- ▣ motivating students to take responsibility for their own health and choose a healthy lifestyle;
- ▣ making students aware of their civic duty to Ukraine and society;
- ▣ developing skills to form and defend their own viewpoints;
- ▣ enhancing communicative skills;
- ▣ cultivating the best qualities typical of the traditional Ukrainian mindset , e.g. industriousness, deep connection to nature, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

The Community School activities and, specifically, our partnership links, helps us find our place in and communicate effectively with our local community, face any real-life challenges and resolve conflicts.

Our actions define who we are.

The number of our partners grow every year.

At our school we strive to pursue the best human qualities, e.g. graciousness, kindness, compassion, ability to empathize with other people.

We have learnt to find time and follow the principle, 'To live well among others, one should live for others, not just for oneself!'

Website: <http://www.dibrivka-znz.at.ua>

BENEFICIARY THOUGHTS, COMMENTS AND INTERVIEWS



"Dibrivka kindergarten 'Prolisok' [Snowdrop] would like to express profound gratitude to the teachers and students of Dibrivka community school as our true and friendly partner. The kids in our kindergarten like you a lot and are always looking forward to seeing you. They love and enjoy being part of the 'Children to Children' Programme and have the best memories from the exciting and informative meetings and celebrations organized by the school. These events cultivate kindness, love and respect. Thank you! You are our best friends!"



"Dibrivka Stud Farm offers our hearty congratulations to all students and teachers of Dibrivka community school on the Knowledge Day. We wish you patience, inspiration and success in your studies. May this new 2012-2013 school year help you fulfill your dreams and overcome any challenges. As your partner, we appreciate your long-term and dependable collaboration. For our part, we promise to further help and support you. We wish you well and success in all your efforts!"



"It's so good to have you as our partner. Our collaboration is beneficial and important to us both; it's satisfying and very positive. The Myrgorod Vocational School for Porcelain Production would like to acknowledge Dibrivka community school for your warm, friendly and welcoming attitude to our students who took their pregraduation internship at your school. We hope that our graduation projects will enliven your spirits, help cultivate patriotic feelings and love of Ukraine. You partner, Vocational School for Porcelain Production".



"Our partners from Dibrivka community school always come to help when needed. They are sincere, honest, hard-working and positive. That's why, knowing that their students like tasty apples in autumn, we decided to contribute to their 'Week of Good Deeds' and presented them with 30 fruit plantlets. Dear children, may these young plants grow for you and bring abundant harvest every year. And may you enjoy their fruit and gain health and strength, because 'Healthy children today is healthy nation tomorrow!' Private entrepreneur Leonid Prokazin."



Dibrovka community school is a good, honest partner for Dibrovsky village council. Students and teachers have always come to the assistance in rural holidays: New Year, March 8, Day of the village, sports holidays. Children's songs, dances and skits raise spirits of villagers. Teachers are good presenters and skillful soloists. Volunteer movement, which was created by Dibrovka community school, helps to keep in good order the park, racetrack, kindergarten and rural clinic, as well as the House of Culture, village library and museum. Computer courses, workshops and conferences for parents and villagers are caring for the community, which is provided by Dibrovka community school.

Sincerely: Dibrovsky Village Council

PICTURES



PICTURES



SCHOOL PROFILE

Theoretical Lyceum “Stefanesti”

Address: Stefanesti village, Floresti raion, Moldova

School Principal: Aurelia Bodi



*352 students in 19 classes, aging from 7 to 18/19,
and 31 teachers.*

COMMUNITY PROFILE:

STEFANESTI VILLAGE

Stefanesti village is a medium size rural settlement (about 2430 inhabitants), 30 kilometers from the administrative center of Floresti, and 100 kilometers north from Chisinau, the capital city.

The main population is mostly engaged in agriculture.

When the big Soviet-type collective farms collapsed in the 1990's and because the political situation was unstable, much needed agricultural reforms were not carried out so that many of the small farms are now inefficient.

Typically for the socio-economic situation in the country in general, many Stefanesti inhabitants have to seek job opportunities in the bigger cities or outside the country.

Thus, many parents are working in Russia, Italy, Turkey, etc., leaving their children in the care of grandparents, or sometimes even older siblings.

This situation generates many social problems, with children growing without parental care, education and love.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ARE SCHOOLS OPEN FOR ALL: THE STORY OF ION

Ion Balan is twenty seven. He is a nice young man, smart and very sociable. Presently he is engaged as IT specialist in the Community School from his home village, Stefanesti (Floresti raion), where he returned after he graduated from Chisinau University. As a Community School volunteer, he has created inside the school a Training and Information Access Center "Info-Flux", and he is administrating its web page. Three years ago a team of students and teachers started editing a community bulleting and Ion is helping with computer design. Recently Ion got an award from the National Independent Journalists' Association for his activity in promoting the development of local media.

This would have been nothing special, were it not for the fact that Ion has a physical disability and cannot walk on his own. In the conditions of rural Moldova that could have had a dramatic impact on his quality of life.

ION'S FAMILY



Ion grew up in a large, loving family. The youngest of four brothers and two sisters, he was twenty months old when he was diagnosed with cerebral palsy which was a shock for the parents and the whole family, whose way of life had to change dramatically. His parents, both farmers, had to work to provide for their large family and now things became even more difficult and complicated. Ion's mother had to look for another job that would allow her to care of him. She was employed as a nanny in a kindergarten, where she was able to take Ion with her every day. She was happy that he could mix with other children.

THE SCHOOL

When Ion was school age, the school was unable to accommodate him. Even if he had had a wheelchair (and at that time, living in a village, with the difficult financial situation of the family, plus the general deep economic crisis in the country, a wheelchair was way beyond their means), the school was quite far away and there were no ramps or other adaptations in the school building for a person in a wheelchair.

The law obliges schools to provide home education for those children who cannot attend and so teachers regularly visited Ion at home. They were responsible and sensitive to his needs and he was eager to learn and doing well academically, able to study independently but feeling isolated from other children.

His mother did her best carrying him to school for special events but as he grew, this became impossible and winter rural conditions was an additional barrier.

Ion progressed through elementary school and middle school with home tuition but one day he refused to accept any more. He told his mother: "I do not want to study at home! I want to attend school like all other children. Please, take me to school! Let's make another try, talk to the school principal, maybe there is a way for me as well!"

THE SYNERGY OF PARTNERSHIPS

Ion's mother approached the school principal. At that time (2003) Stefanesti school was selected from a number of applicants to be one of five pilot institutions for a small project on social inclusion implemented by Step by Step Moldova NGO and MSIF (Moldova Social Investment Fund, from a World Bank grant). Owing to a mini-grant from MSIF, the school managed to make basic physical adaptations to improve access, and in partnership with the Institute for Prosthetic Surgery the school acquired a wheelchair for Ion to use during his school years. His father and brothers helped him get to school, and once there he was met by friends who were eager to help.

He was attending school with great pleasure, and he knew his colleagues were always there to support him. But, in their turn, they appreciated his good nature and wisdom, his sensibility and smart advice.

These years became very important for Ion's personal development. He turned into an active, ambitious, goal-oriented person, and became firmly convinced that his physical handicap need not prevent him from reaching his goal.

He graduated school among the top students of his class, and decided to continue his education at a university in Chisinau. He became a student of two departments (with part time attendance) – History and Information Technologies – graduating in 2009 with a double major. Additionally, he attended courses on finances and banking, organized by the National Social Protection Society for Adolescents and Youth “Island of Hope”. His physical impairment did not prevent him from studying and working as IT assistant in his native school.

STEFANESTI COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Stefanesti Community School is a good example of a pro-active approach in solving community problems. Its transformation started in 2003 and was supported through the school involvement into the Community School Development project, carried out by Step by Step Moldova with the support of C.S.Mott Foundation. Along with other schools in the project, Stefanesti school was introduced to the International Quality Standards for Community Schools. Facilitated by Step by Step it was helped, through a participatory exercise that brought together various stakeholders – students, parents, community representatives – to analyze how their school might meet the criteria of a Community School. They realized how all the Standards are interrelated and support each other and how the first step they made in reaching out for those who would have been left out of a traditional school could make a difference. They realized through working with others, how goodwill alone is not enough to counter exclusion. Unless you change the school culture, demonstrate facilitative leadership, engage parents and other organizations as partner and unless the schools contributes to community cohesion and development, promotes meaningful learning and supports the life-long learning skills then all nice words about school effectiveness and relevance remain just nice buzz words. So, they decided to build on their first successful experience with inclusion and developed an action plan on how the school might open more to the needs of all children in the community who were left out, what resources, both human and material they might mobilize to help them, how to develop a supportive school culture, and how to ensure access and provide more diverse developmental opportunities for children with special needs.



I asked the school principal if there might be some job for me, and was very happy when she accepted me. Now, being among teachers, students, and other villagers is much more interesting. – says Ion.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP



Aurelia Bodi, the school principal, is a true facilitative leader, who has built a strong team of supporters in the new role of school, particularly that of a rural school as the soul of its community, in meeting the educational needs (and in many cases the social needs where there are no appropriate services provided by other agencies) of people in its own community. The school has initiated many educational projects, as well as developed social entrepreneurship that helped both provide more real-life learning opportunities for students, and brought in some additional funds for community projects.

With the joint contribution from Ion's brothers and the Community School, Ion got a new automatic wheeled conveyance which gave him more autonomy. He became more mobile, and could more actively participate in Community School activities.

RETURNING THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL INVESTMENT



At his IT Center he organizes courses for various age groups in the community on the use of the Internet. Given that so many families are separated geographically, the Internet is one of the few ways for them to stay in touch. So to it is very important for them to be able to communicate by e-mail or Skype from time to time, and it is not surprising to see grandmothers attend Ion's courses. He also is a volunteer IT resource person for several NGOs in his own village, but also for the old people's home "MAX home" in the neighboring community of Carpesti, and for an NGO administrative center in the nearby town of Floresti. He also provides help to his villagers with processing applications and all sort of other documentation. He is highly respected and loved in his community, and it makes him happy to be useful.



I am very grateful to our school principal and the teachers who supported me and helped me get here! I wish all the students to continue their studies, whatever the problems they encounter. Life is not a punishment, but an opportunity for man. – he says.

LESSONS LEARNT

The great leadership provided by the school principal and democratic ways of discussing issues and making decisions with the teachers, students, and parents helped the school to address many problems related to the access of different categories of community inhabitants to educational and social services.



Looking back, I would say that we started our process of developing into a community school from the first training that we had with Step by Step, the ones that brought a shift in teaching in the classroom from a content-oriented towards a child-oriented one, with a focus on the needs and interests of the learners. Also, the small project on 'Social inclusion of children at community level' with Step by Step and the Social Investment Fund helped us understand what real inclusion might mean. It was the first eye-opening experience, and it gave us a boost for school transformation. Then came other partners who helped us in many ways. For example, through the Community School project we learnt how to work on a community school development action plan in a participatory way; and our whole school staff benefitted from training that helped teachers promote cooperative, meaningful, and community-based learning. Also, due to this project we became beneficiaries of some substantial aid that came from a small organization of retired volunteers in the Netherlands, 'Helping Hands Moldova', who collected and donated to us school furniture, wheelchairs for a couple of children and clothes for the socially disadvantaged children and families. We are very grateful to them, as well as to all of our partners. Aurelia Bodiu.

This helped the school build self-confidence and the trust of parents of other children with special needs who could see that school is better for their children than isolation at home, even with good and careful support provided by home tuition teachers:



OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Encouraged by their success with Ion, the school has gone from strength to strength and other children have benefitted. Doina and Lly are two girls who are partially or wholly dependent on a wheelchair and had home tuition but with the help of parents and inspired by Ion, they have now returned to school



Doina is partially dependent upon the wheelchair. She used to be taught at home, but whenever she wished and it was possible, her family, the school staff and her friends helped her come to school. Inspired by Ion, she decided to attend high school on a regular basis, where she can also benefit from some special physical therapy devices that school bought from the MSIF grant.

Lly is dependent upon the wheelchair. She used to be taught at home, but whenever she wished and it was possible, her family, the school staff and her friends helped her come to school. Inspired by Ion, she decided to attend high school on a regular basis, where she can also benefit from some special therapeutical devices the school bought from the MSIF grant.

In her preschool years Olesea has suffered from a very bad trauma that caused her a severe emotional shock and left her with a mutilated left hand. Because of her poor physical condition, associated with other problems in the family, she was assigned to a special school in another village, Marculesti, where she attended grades 1 through 3. The auxiliary school was not providing a challenging enough education for the girl, besides she was far from her home village. The principal of the community school, together with the girl's foster parents, insisted upon another evaluation of the girl's general condition by the medical-psychological commission. Thus Olesea returned to her home village in 2010 and started attending the community school. Due to the support of her teachers and friends who helped her catch up academically, as well as to the care of her foster family, she got successfully integrated in the class of her peers. Through the partnership the school has with a philanthropic NGO "Alinare" in Carpinesti village, they found a sponsor in the Netherlands – the Foundation MAX Maakt Mogelijk of a private TV company – and soon Olesea will go to Holland for a prosthesis surgery.

CONCLUSION

The real inclusion of children who otherwise be deprived of social contact with their peers became possible due to the synergy through the partnerships the school has developed – with the local administration, NGOs, small businesses and many other organizations nationally and internationally.

Another important condition that favored inclusion was that the whole school embarked on a transformation process, oriented towards the needs (both learning and social) of its students and their extended families, as well as the needs of other community groups (as the school principal puts it:

If the school doesn't do it, who else will ?).

Thus, the school itself has become a model of proactive attitudes in addressing community problems and a real agent of community development.

SCHOOL PROFILE

BORIVKA COMBINED KINDERGARTEN AND SCHOOL

Established 1970 with funding from the local collective farm, closed in 1980 because there were too few pupils but re-opened with 54 pupils.

Vasyl Kotsuba became the principal in 1990 and this heralded a new era for the school with the introduction of humanistic and democratic school management approaches.

2000 it was reorganized with a kindergarten, primary and basic provision for 96 pupils and 10 pre-school children. In 2003 our school joined the international Community School Programme led by the All-Ukrainian Step-by-Step Foundation (USSF) and became one of the piloting schools.

2013 there are 19 pre-schools children and 42 pupils who study in 1-8 grades with 11 teachers, 2 kindergarten teachers and 11 representatives of technical staff currently work in Borivka Combined Kindergarten and School.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Rural community. The total population in the village council that consists of five settlements is 628 people; among whom one-third of the population are pensioners, another third are mostly young people working outside the village, another part of the population is urban retirees who moved from the city to the village. Urban residents come for summer vacations.

The collective farm system was destroyed in the 1990s when more than a hundred people of working age lost their jobs. Lands of former farms until recently are almost overgrown with shrubs.

At present, attempts to revive agricultural production have been done, while still at the moment there is competition for the redistribution of property.

Some people are involved in the field of forestry; there are several private lumber companies, as well as a great poultry business that offers local jobs.

Therefore, the services offered by the school do not conflict with the activities of these companies, but rather activate, enhances and complements the through service for the community.

Local businesses fail because there is:

- ❑ inadequate business skills;
- ❑ insufficient demand;
- ❑ poor access to markets;
- ❑ inadequate or non-existent wages;
- ❑ a lack of manpower;
- ❑ decreasing birth rate and increase in people of retirement.

A VISION FOR OUR SCHOOL

This school is a starting point for good deeds and triumphs of its students. Without successful students there no successful school. Students can succeed better under the guidance of a successful teacher. Students take an active part and win prizes in district and regional knowledge competitions, contests, sports competitions, amateur art festivals.

Although our priority is to teach the curriculum its role is changing and gaining new facets, in addition to instruction. It means going beyond the conventional school concept. For example, in rural areas school remains the only place for cultural and social life. A Community School may serve as a resource centre for the local community and provide its members with services that are geared to their needs. Since a school exists to meet the needs of its community, one of the key principles in a community-oriented school is to make its facilities and resources available. This is true for any school, because it possesses social and intellectual capital and physical resources. In this way you add a competitive edge, find your place in the community and live up to your mission of enriching your life and the lives of others.

The staff works to create a new type of a school that pursues an integrated approach to personality development of community members with attention to intellectual, physical, spiritual, moral and social aspects.

The underlying philosophy is that a school is there for everyone, not just for children. It may be used by other groups in the community who are also entitled to benefit from this facility, which is municipal property of the district and is maintained at the expense of the taxes they pay. That's why we should try to use all its capacity, which otherwise stands idle after classes. We aim to be productive in the interest of our neighborhood. A school may provide education and a range of other services.

These services support families and offer opportunities for adult

education. A school can initiate services independently and engage other community agencies, organizations, partners to their provision. The school administration and its leadership team should share the same principles, establish partnerships and collaborate with other institutions.

This strategy will be appreciated by the local community. It is particularly important in rural areas, given current gaps between the existing needs and the available resources to meet them. Besides, it may lead to improved relationships between the school and the wider community and bring everyone together to solve current issues, which is another crucial outcome.

The program introduced by Step by Step promotes active citizenship in every member of the local community. Our school drew on its positive outcomes to become the learning place for children and adults and a centre for excellence for other schools in Ukraine. A Primary teacher Natalia Grama, was elected the program coordinator. We set up a number of co-curricular activities to support the revival of folk crafts and traditions which currently include clubs for hairdressing, pottery, carving, decorative painting, and studying the traditional folk talismans. On the recommendation of the USSF we made a film to publicize our multi-year experience and practices and disseminate them to other schools in Ukraine.

USING THE INTERNATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS

Here in Borivka we took part in the piloting and implementation of the International Quality Standards for Community Schools. After the first stage of self-assessment based on these Standards, we scored 3.6 on 'Services', e.g.:

- We monitor and evaluate services which take place on our site to check who is taking advantage of them and the benefits they are getting.
- We investigate the reasons underlying any lack of participation in services.
- We develop further provision in order to ensure access and social inclusion.
- We provide a range of services to enhance and enrich the learning of pupils, families and the community.
- We have created a strong team, assigned duties and responsibilities regarding service provision.
- In all our activities we are guided by the motto of Community School – everything we do should be useful for the community.

This was an encouraging result, but not a perfect one. So, our next step was to draft an action plan to rectify any weaknesses and omissions.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY OUR COMMUNITY SCHOOL

HAIRDRESSER SERVICES BY THE SCHOOL HAIRDRESSING CLUB

Starting from 2000, the community under Borivka village council did not have access to some of the personal services, specifically hairdressing. This situation persisted for a long time and community members were not able to change it. Borivka Community School did not take immediate action to solve this problem. Later, the findings from a community survey set our leadership group thinking about it. They designed a project, created a strategic action plan and got down to work. Naturally, the first steps were largely oriented towards children, as it was rather difficult for parents to find time to take their kids to the nearby town for a haircut. Gradually, we were offering more hairdressing services. Students, parents, community members and elderly people were coming to the school during special events and requesting them. The first stage of self-assessment based on the International Quality Standards revealed some of the issues in relation to these services.



As a result, we conducted a survey, which clearly suggested this was needed. So a decision was made to create a hairdressing club.

We had to broaden the target group of our hairdressing club by including adults, allocate space, set the working hours, draft an action plan, prepare lecture material on hair care and inform the wider community of our work. Soon these changes were supported by the villagers. Besides, we could see how knowledge that students gained during the lectures at the hairdressing club was transferred to practice: haircuts, styling, dying, drying, curls, etc. After a presentation of hairdos created by students and adults the number of potential users started to grow both in our community and from neighboring villages.



'Any woman wants to look great. And it is possible, because you can get different services and advice at our community school. Natalia Grama will help choose suitable haircuts, styles and hair color. The club also provides services to elderly people who would like to have their hair cut or dyed. Moreover, Natalia can offer professional advice on face and hand care, recommend appropriate care products...'

L. Korol'kova, head of the village council

In the beginning the club attracted 20% of the students, and 2% of the inhabitants of the village, now in 2013 – there are 70% of students and about 25% of the residents, and about 20% of the residents of the neighboring villages. Services are free because the school is not allowed to do business (making money) but has the ability to show the options for using their own resources, both human and material. That's why we conduct all the services on a volunteer basis. We held lectures, meetings and workshops with volunteer barbers from other localities to members of the hairdressing club aimed to learn about real business opportunities.

Charitable contributions go to provide the material base of the club. The kids get the skills that are used in the family, with friends, create presentations popularizing this type of service.

We are proud of this but we don't stop here because there are still more good things to do.

PHOTOCOPYING SERVICES

Teachers need to prepare assignments in multiple copies for classes. Students have to get materials ready for their studies. Hence, the issue of photocopying services became evident. Later community members spoke about it as well. Mostly these requests were expressed by senior citizens. It was hard for them to travel 30 km to the nearest town. Besides, such a trip took time. So, having considered pros and cons, our school council decided to launch this service for community members. For this purpose we bought a new copier. Today it is provided by a school employee free of charge. People can have their papers copied any time and irrespective of circumstances. They find it rather convenient. We charge for this service and the fees used for the purchase of paper, paint, and repair of Xerox. The school has found one more way to use our resources to assist them in this respect.

COMPUTER LITERACY TRAINING

Community representatives at a public council meeting asked the staff to help them learn computer skills. This issue was raised at the public council. Our school started a computer literacy club in response to the villagers' need to master PC skills. Again, we involved a volunteer who organizes practical training for those willing to learn. Training sessions take place every Saturday. Fortunately, the school has relevant resources, enough computers with required software. Following the self-assessment process we used when we adopted the International Quality Standards for Community Schools, we decided to continue and expand the work of these courses.

DISSEMINATION OF ADS AND NOTICES THROUGH THE SCHOOL BULLETIN

The school bulletin has its own history that started in 2004. Today its pages include a range of information for parents and community members, about School life, Community life, Local stories, Advertisements, Educational issues. The columns reflect themes from the life of our school, community and the historical background of local settlements. The bulletin also includes a classifieds section, discusses issues pertaining to education, raising children, etc. It serves to provide community members with objective and valid information about local developments and events. At the start, funding its publication was quite a problem for the school. Originally it was only 2 pages in black and white. Later, we had to extend to 4 pages and now produce it in color. The first stage of self-assessment based on the International Quality Standards helped identify and analyze weaknesses in the information services we provided using the school bulletin. Next, our Community School conducted a survey to find out the community needs. At present we receive information from different sources (questionnaire, interview, community correspondents, pedagogues, students) and work closely with the head of the village council.

Інформаційний листок громадсько-активної школи села Борівка
«Кожен думає про те, щоб змінити світ, але ніхто не думає про те, щоб змінити себе»



№ 38 вересень-жовтень 2012 рік
Спільне періодичне народне видання Борівської громади, громадсько активної школи с. Борівка

ШКОЛЯР

ІНФОРМАЦІЙНИЙ ЛІСТОК

ОФІЦІЙНО!

За парті в Борівському НВНО в 2012 – 2013 навчальному році сім 44 учнів із п'ятих класів – п'ять чотирьохкласників. Це: Пилипчук Олександр, Палакуча Сергій, Різніш Антон та Шаниш Андрій.

1 вересня на Свято Знани в нашу школу завітали керівники району на чолі з головою районної державної адміністрації Кулик О.І. Гості оглянули заповідник, який був оголошений заповідником ТОО «Борівська». Крім того, керівники району вчлих похвалити за успішну роботу учнів, вчителів школи та батьків дитини.

17 вересня в нашій школі відбувся конкурс читців. Всі класи презентували свої твори. Переможцем стали учні 6 та 8 класів. Мамондів.

На початку вересня на загальношкільній лінійці учасниками «Золотої осені» були вручені сертифікати – «Золотий колосок». Це учні: Блохусова В. Коваленко А., Яремчук О., Кілюк А., Сидорук О., Харченко Д., Кілюк В., Кілюк Д.

Знову до школи!

Ось і пролетіло чудове літо, яке залишило на згадку відпочинок, веселі прогулянки з друзями, роботу на городі та приємні спогляди про подальше навчання. ☺ ☺ ☺ Осіння пора поспішала всіх школярів за парті. І наші третьокласники також приступили до навчання, яке для них стало ще приємнішим завдяки спільним зусиллям батьків та класовода, які повністю відремонтували класну кімнату. Учні першого вересня відчували подив та радість, адже класна кімната повністю змінилася. В ній тепер не просто приємно відпочивати, а й навчатися. Школярі пообіцяли вчитися на відмінно на радість вчителю та своїм батькам в чотирьох класах.

Шановні батьки! Ми вам дуже дякуємо, що ви приймаєте активну участь у благоустрої школи, та створюєте комфортні умови для навчання своїх дітей!



Класовод 8 класу – Давиденко О.І.

ШАНОВНІ ВИПУСКНИКИ!

Адміністрація, педагогічний та учнівський колективи Борівського НВНО «ЗОШ І – ІІ ступенів – дитячий садок» запрошують вас на свято зустрічі, яке відбудеться 3 листопада 2012 року о 17.00, у приміщенні школи.

Вас чекає зустріч з випускниками 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967, 1972, 1977, 1987, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007 років.

ОГОЛОШЕННЯ

До уваги жителів села Борівка та навколишніх хуторів. 6 жовтня (суббота) 2012 року, з 11:00 год. в приміщенні ФАПу будуть працювати стоматологі. Бажаючих просимо звертатися на ФАП.

Зав. ФАПом Малашич Г.Ф.

As a result of the self- assessment almost every issue carries adverts and commercial materials. In this way we gained support from individuals and businesses in our community. The process of preparing and producing the bulletin involves significant contributions by teachers and other school staff; the copies are distributed by postal workers who act as volunteers. Students, teachers, community members and government officials write articles to the school newsletter. Of course, if parents or children submit an article criticizing school policies or forms of work, it will be printed if it provides truthful information.



We enjoyed the creative student products. Your work here within school and with local community should be promoted and disseminated to other schools...Viktor Kuzmenko, 1971 graduate

RENTING SCHOOL FACILITIES

(CANTEEN, GYM, ASSEMBLY HALL, WORKSHOP AND CLASSROOMS)

The members of the village community may use school facilities. Generally, they are used by elderly people with low income. They request such a service, when they need a canteen to hold a funeral repast for their relatives who passed away. It is impossible to say 'no' in these situations. We should always try to empathize with a person and give assistance. In most cases we do not charge.

In the same way, the school gym and assembly hall are made available without any barriers. It took us a lot of time and work to find partners and update sports gear. It is practically the only facility in the village, open to all community members, for exercise. Also, it is the largest one and, besides sports, it is used for other entertainment, festivals and concerts.



Grief comes unexpected. A close one dies. In winter snow drifts in piles and covers the village. You can't get to small houses. And you need to hold a commemoration meeting with meals. Where else can ordinary people find a canteen here in a village? Only school helps us out. We wouldn't know what to do without it...

Yevdokia Yankovych, member of the village community, 74 years



I can just say that the school did a great job by creating this workout place. I can come for training any time and they are always ready to accommodate me and my friends, whether it's evening, Saturday or Sunday. Everything is free. We are not required to pay for it...

Olexander Savorona, member of the village community, 22 years

MAKING AND RENTING DANCE COSTUMES

Our teachers, particularly younger ones, are creative and original designers. The school resources are too limited to buy stage costumes for drama, performances or folk art festivals. This led to the idea about making costumes for students ourselves. In a couple of years our teachers and students created a good number of them during club work and in their leisure time. Later requests started coming from the local community centre, village council and individuals who wanted to rent some of them for a short time.

Where possible we involve parents and concerned people of the community who assist in different school activities. However, the majority of classes are held in after school time and weekends. The decision to participate and work in a particular field is taken personally by teachers and community residents as it's a great contribution to the life of the community as a whole. For example, through the exchange of experience we attracted partners to work in clubs on a volunteer basis (for example, a priest from Kyiv led a club on icon-writing for community members (almost all adults) which has been running for two years; a representative of Vidubetskyi monastery, that is located in Kyiv, spent three years training children to make pottery).



'We designed and produced the costumes for children and young people ourselves based on our own original ideas. These are Ukrainian folk dresses for students from 6 to 14, both boys and girls; costumes for sport dancing for girls and gypsy style costumes. We are open to consult enthusiasts on creating any kind of costume. Also, if needed, we can loan costumes temporarily to children when they perform at various events and festivals or when our Borivka community demonstrate their talents and skills at district talent shows...'

Olga Davydenko, head of a local NGO 'Rostok'

STRATEGIES WE USED

- Search for partners and volunteers.
- Setting working hours for some of the services.
- Identifying persons responsible for service provision.
- Drafting and placing advertisements about the location, times and contact persons.
 - Using various channels (meetings, round table, presentations, questionnaire, focus-groups, and fundraising) to disseminate information about the available services.
 - Survey to identify opportunities and community needs.
 - Kids' learning.

WHAT WE LEARNT

- To use various sources of information.
- To develop strategic plan.
- To conduct timely surveys and use questionnaires to find ways for service provision, monitor and evaluate our work and project the expected outcomes.
 - To use a range of approaches to determine common interests regarding service provision.
 - To disseminate information about the services of our community school in different formats.
 - Kids' learning.

We believe that all these additional activities provide opportunities for our children to learn in different ways, enriching the curriculum. Children learn to work in order to have a mature, socially active attitude to life, interest in work. Their involvement in work and cultural life helps them become active citizens and also prepares them for the world of work.

TIPS

- ▣ Remember that every person is an individual.
- ▣ Look for common interests in order to solve important issues in a positive way.
 - ▣ Publicize your activities and your strategic plans.
 - ▣ Don't ignore problems – tackle them.
 - ▣ Make sure all records are prepared and kept properly, including written agreements with partners.
 - ▣ Your work is driven by your motivation.

While a small rural school, we have a great potential that can be used efficiently and to the advantage of our community. We analyze the community needs and provide services. In doing so, we realize the value of our work and the importance of believing in ourselves and in those who support us. We perform these services independently, e.g. determine the community needs, draft and implement action plans and analyze the results. The 'Services' is a significant factor, closely related to social cohesion and healthy relationships between people in the community and between the community and the school.

As a result of using the International Quality Standards for Community Schools, we learned to review potential, define and evaluate achievements, create and plan the development of the school as a center of community development.

SCHOOL PROFILE

Republic of Kazakhstan, East Kazakhstan oblast, Zharminskii district , Malaya Karasu Village, Malaya Karasu Public School



115 students, Mostly from low income lone parent families
School director: Erzat Kanapyanov
26 teachers covering a wide range of subject
e-mail karasu63@mail.ru

Although this school is a member of a network of 19 in the region that has decided to improve its volunteering work, it has secured the best results because its staff and the local mayor have had training about Community Schools and has used the International Quality Standards.

COMMUNITY PROFILE



This Community School is in a very small rural settlement Malaya Karasu situated in the Zharminskii district of East Kazakhstan administrative region. There are 918 inhabitants: 92 of them pensioners, 192 are women, 115 are youth. 390 people are single. This village is situated 100 km far from city and district centers. With severe climatic conditions (-40 in the winter and lots of snowstorms) students and working youth have trouble reaching this village for almost 8 month in the year. 12 km far from Malaya Karasu there is another village with 115 inhabitants Askaraly, which is a branch of the Karasu rural district.

THE ISSUE

Using the International Quality Standards for Community Schools 19 schools in the district agreed to cooperate and identified volunteering as an aspect they would like to use as their focus. Boys are inactive and, and because teaching is largely a feminized profession there are few adult male role models at school. The Parent Teachers Association has only 12% men. Few fathers attend parent meetings saying that they have no time and are busy at work. The Akimat – which is the village council – decided to work with the school to involve men in the social life of the school and the village.

Using the International Quality Standards from, Community Schools showed us that we did not do sufficient monitoring and evaluation. We knew that there were Oralman. (This is the general name for repatriates. They are Kazakhs but they have been living in China or Mongolia for many years having fled during the civil war in the 1930s. Although Kazakh, their written script varies according to the country from which they have returned.) During this time they clung to old traditions and whereas Kazakhs who have not lived away have modernized many of their ideas, these Oralman groups have retained old values. Their return has strained community cohesion. This is a very delicate issue. They cling to traditional values in many respects. For example, they prefer to live in yurts in the summer, they do not buy furniture but prefer to use handmade rugs and cushions and eat from low tables. They tend to be more religiously observant and wear traditional dress. Likewise, they will have traditional notions of appropriate activities for girls and boys. They do not speak or read Russian which is the language used by officials. This means that their children need additional support in school. The differences cause some tension and the indigenous population often believes that they attract more than their fair share of government support. On the other hand, their traditional way of life and the handicrafts they make could be a beneficial tourist attraction for the country and so

changing their way of life could prove counter-productive.

Some of the returning groups have had poor access to education previously and are interested in what is offered here. However, they have very strongly held ideas about what is appropriate for boys and girls. For 70 years since Soviet times the curriculum has been different for boys and girls in some cultural and technical subjects and remains so today and is not considered discriminatory. Although the International Quality Standards are read and understood, it is difficult to challenge this stereotype.

OUR PLAN

We convened a general meeting at the school and asked participants why parents do not become involved in sufficient numbers. We discussed “Asar” which is a Kazakh concept of working together as a community to create something new. For example, we see “Asar” working when people come together to help build each other’s homes, joining together for celebrations or helping individual families in a crisis.

The school set a goal to attract newcomers to volunteering in the community. The task was to develop new methods to attract not only the usual parents but the Oralman in the activities of the school. A plan for more volunteering, properly monitored and evaluated was introduced in the hope that it would improve the relationship between the school and the community. A campaign was launched to motivate people to come forward and help the school make an action plan. Because there were to be a larger scale project with 19 schools in the region we were able to involve a number of other agencies: a rural NGO called the «Development Fund of Village Malaya Karasu», the Akimat and a group called the «Club of grandmothers» which already had older volunteers involved. We also included the advisory board of teachers which is an association of class teachers. From Pervomaiskii, another rural village in other district of East Kazakhstan, two partnering NGOs -Community Foundation of Life-Long Learning and IT volunteers (iTimurovets) of youth Association “School of proactive School (SAY)” also helped to engage volunteers. Together with school board (which includes parents, students, teachers) we developed goals and objectives as well as the volunteer program for the school.

Together, this group of schools, community and partners involved volunteers and made a plan which included increasing the motivation for volunteering increase the numbers of volunteers and to include Oralman groups. We wanted them to support the educational work of the schools and also the Volunteering School program which involves 19 East Kazakhstan rural and

urban schools. It helps all students to participate in bigger social projects, meet other young people from rural and urban areas and have a great exchange of the ideas, experience and intercultural communication between youth from the different cultural backgrounds of East Kazakhstan. This helps them to choose a career and also helps train them to become future workers in NGOs. Malaya Karasu member of this network of 19 Community Active Schools (Community Schools) and has been supported for 15 years by two NGOs in Pervomaiskii, - Community Active Schools and UKP as well as by the Community Foundation of Life-long Learning.

PROBLEMS WE ENCOUNTERED

The Oralman group were not familiar with the concept of volunteering. It did not help that their children were availing themselves of volunteer services at school whilst their parents were not willing to help out. Also, they were reluctant to demonstrate their traditional skills because the souvenirs they made were a source of income and they feared competition if they gave away their trade secrets.

The extra, unpaid workload was not welcomed by some teachers.

There were inadequate resources for inviting trained volunteering coaches and to encourage volunteers.

Not all parents were enthusiastic

Teachers did not have enough understanding of the benefits and purpose of volunteering to be able to work persuasively with parents and the wider community.

HOW WE OVERCAME THE DIFFICULTIES

We ran a series of workshops and lectures to help build an understanding. We worked with partner organisations and delivered to parent associations pupils groups, teacher's advisory boards and at the Akimat. We used classroom time to work with teachers and their pupils.

Then there were special workshops on specific skills to encourage adults to become involved. Eventually some individuals were willing to run sessions for others. Some parents ran needlework sessions, A father (Azamat Asembek) taught children leather processing and weaving Kamcha (traditional tool - whip for horses) and Elkenov Marat teaches about Kazakh traditions and customs, where boys learn the art of producing horse armor: saddles, bridles, whips.

A successful meeting with the «Club grandmothers» was held. Members were retired teachers, who took over the mentorship over young teachers and underachieving students, as well as to carry out work with troubled parents.

The school is the only public meeting space and so is used for public meetings and for meetings with the mayor. It is also used for meetings about school issues.

THE PROGRAM WE DEvised INCLUDED:

Through our work we developed the Volunteer School program:

- Conduct schools, students and the local community Needs Assessment
- Create of the Program of the volunteer movement
- Conduct training sessions, workshops, master classes, which will help to prepare new volunteers and involve parents in the school life
- Experience exchange, organization of specific green projects
- Civic education to help students consider issues such as patriotism and to enhance their life skills.
- Increased awareness and dissemination of information about the school and the community
- Development of online volunteering
- Organization of local volunteer projects
- Strengthen communication between parents, schools, NGOs, engaging them in activities of the school and the community.
- Promotion of sustainable development.
- Volunteering School operates twice a month, the first and third Wednesday of the month.
- It involves 25 parents, 45 students, 10 grandmothers, six members of the «Community Foundation Malaya Karasu», 12 young people of the village and 19 online volunteers from the «Networking Adaptive School»
- Classes are held separately for parents, students and community volunteers. Seminars on the needs assessment conducted by representatives of young people aged 14-18 to which a representative from the Akimat and the senior management of the school are invited.
- On volunteer training sessions with invited partners and other volunteer coaches, usually attract 25-30 people - students, parents, teachers, Akimat and representatives from the local community.

■ We focus on Asar – members of the community helping each other to counteract some of the individualistic messages inherent in the new economic system of capitalism. About 150-60 people get involved regularly.

■ CAS also conducts online training for people with disabilities, involving them in the life of the community and volunteer activities.

■ Some parents run master classes on a range of practical topics.

■ Some volunteers support Oralman children to learn Russian.

■ There is also support for elderly people.

■ In this program we involved other agencies:

- professionals from experienced NGOs, from educational institutions (universities),
- from the Department of social protection.

■ Teachers volunteer to help to the “Volunteering School” to involve school children with behavioral problems, they are now also involved in the evaluation and monitoring.

Schools invite elder volunteers to share their skills and expertise, representatives Akimat, the initiative group, as well as experienced volunteers from other NGOs.



When we arrived in Malaya Karasu, from China, it was difficult. We were assisted by volunteers, children and students. Now that we have adapted, we can also make our own contributions to this community. I am attending Volunteering School, I have learned what it means to volunteer, I learned a lot, I met new friends, I learned more about public school, I learned about the friends of my kids. I have gladly given master classes on making rugs and embroidery. I also felt that I could benefit the school, other young people, and other families. Now they also can make crafts that will help make money in future. I saw through volunteering that we, parents, can be more stronger, we can be also involved in school life, our children can help us now, we learn together to help needy families.

Oralman Kazakh

There has been a great deal of study and interest in the development of volunteer programmes in Kazakhstan and the expertise gained is used to help identify the needs, problems solutions and opportunities.

RESULTS

“Volunteering School” has helped our school to improve academic performance. We know this because the results of the Unified National Test, held in each school at the end of the 11 grade has shown improved performance of the students. In particular, many students from Oralman families have gained better results on this test and now they are studying at Universities.

It has improved the school culture and the relationship between teachers and pupils. We have been able to solve problems of poor behaviour amongst some children. We have also reduced the tension between Kazakh children who believed that the Oralman children received greater support and privilege from the government. The Oralman children themselves become more actively involved in the lives of not only the school but also the whole community especially during national holidays and they are opening up their yurts for holiday makers as a contribution to the tourist industry. Increased civil initiative. Parents through volunteerism have become more involved in school life and increased mutual aid and self-esteem.

Our fathers and brothers have helped us in construction of sport field for hockey and in the organization of parties. This increased the number of men involved in volunteering. Most importantly for the proper functioning of the village volunteers have helped clear the roads from snow, because we usually have every day in the winter blizzards and tons of new snow, and the cleaning transport comes irregularly from the depot 100 km away.

Thanks to the workshops and sares the school has become more open for the public.

It has helped community cohesion because the Oralman have become actively involved in the school and community. This has helped to solve the problem between the Oralman and local residents, who thought that Oralman are only users of social benefits.

The International Quality Standards for Community Schools helped us compare the old concepts of volunteering with new modern volunteerism. They have also given us the opportunity to acquire new knowledge, introduce new Volunteer Actions and paved the way for new initiatives. School with their parents have learned to participate in changing lives of the community for the better. This all has raised the quality of teaching. We know this because teachers and administration (local and regional) have constantly monitored the quality of education. They have noticed better that students have more extensive knowledge and understanding and that they have become more tolerant. We have found that the incidence of smoking has decreased and students commit fewer offenses. Elders have volunteered and supported those experiencing problems with learning and those who tend to misbehave.

TIPS

- self-assessment should involve not only teachers, but partners and representatives of the wider community;
- believe in success to have a good team of volunteers;
- use the information from the training manual which accompanies the International Quality Standards for Community Schools to understand more about methods of volunteerism development and adult education;
- establish a system of volunteer performance evaluation, to plan future work based on the results.



We learned how to organize seminars, organize parties for younger students. We learned how to write successful projects. I became active, and therefore become more involved in all competitions and I have received lots of prizes. I think the "Volunteering School" gave me new knowledge and skills, which influenced my study in positive way. In addition, I realized that I like to work with children and I like to teach, so in the future I choose the teaching profession.

Aigerim Tleubaeva, 15 year old, Malaya Karasu's public school's student-volunteer.

CONCLUSIONS

School self-evaluation by the International Standard community school project, «How well we are doing?» made possible for the school to achieve new progress not only in the educational work of teachers, but also in the social life of the village. Participation in the project helped us to identify the weaknesses of school system and has helped to find ways and solutions to these problems.

SCHOOL AND ITS COMMUNITY

Nesterova Natalia, accountant of Community Schools Association, School #4, town of Chernogorsk, Khakassia Republic, Russia.

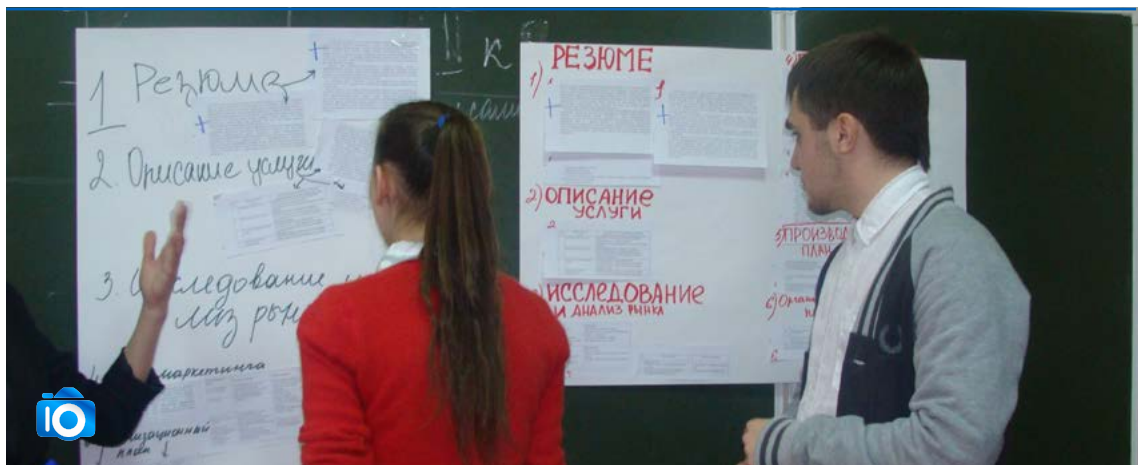


503	pupils
183	from large families
138	from low-income families
126	from lone parent families (mostly mothers)
62	from unemployed families

School #4 of Chernogorsk is located in a town district where most people are regarded as vulnerable and disadvantaged. These data show that social-economic situation in school community is not very favorable. If we have a look at young people aged 20-25, we can see that 35% of them living in this area do not have regular and well-paid jobs, from time to time they go to the Employment Center and they face financial problems.

WHAT WE DID

We used the International Quality Standards for Community Schools in 2010 which is a self assessment tool for school improvement. We decided to work on improving lifelong learning provision. Of course, we had worked in this key area before and had implemented some projects such as “School of Active Parents” (management course for members of various councils), “School of Life” (course on computer use for community members), “Internet-club” (course on internet use (surfing the net, Skype, etc) for community members).



We identified the following problem in our local community: when a family faces financial problems it often lacks the capacity to deal with the negative social impact which results. It can become very unstable and disorganized, moral ethics and emotional connections are damaged. An unstable financial state is often followed by unemployment with life on state benefits which can lead to a welfare mentality. Long term unemployment can cause family conflicts. Unemployment can have a seriously negative impact on young people leaving school and just embarking on adult life. Although many of them have technical or higher education, it is very difficult to find a job or start a business as they do not know modern technologies or current trends such as –social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurship is regarded as a technique by which

community members can remain active and help deal with the problems which unemployment can bring. Some people believe that policy of donations from the state as well as from business has shown its inefficiency as it helps to grow a welfare mentality. Social entrepreneurship is about solving social problems using businesses approaches and which has tangible and measurable results. In a market economy, there are opportunities for adventurous people to create new opportunities, but people benefit from special training. The problem is deepened as in the region there is not a complex support system for young people who want to start a business. There is no information or methodical and educational support for young entrepreneurs, which could help them to acquire theoretical knowledge and practical skills. We should not force young people to go into their own business or give money and loans which are unsecured. We should create opportunities for developing entrepreneurial thinking so that young people become competitive, flexible, not afraid to establish enterprises and who are able to promote innovations. A lot depends on the first steps which young people will make. How they (both young men and women) start their complicated challenge will make the difference as to whether or not they will become a successful entrepreneur or fall at the first problem. The result of each case will influence the whole economic situation of the country. That's why young entrepreneurship, in the first place, needs a special support system. The importance of entrepreneurship development is constantly pointed out by the President, Chairmen of the Government, representatives of political parties and community activists.

To help young people and organize lifelong learning for local people the school developed a program "Take up a Business: a training course on social enterprise learning". It was implemented in 2012. This program was aimed at educating young people on how to start a business and included: initial idea analysis, acquiring knowledge and skills and developing a business-plan. They participated in a project contest. A lot of activities were organized on experience exchange so that young entrepreneurs could talk about lessons learnt, study



various experiences, discuss problems and their solutions. Young people had the opportunity to learn from others and communicate with a wide range of people, present their projects for professionals and experts. Here are some more details about the program.



I realized that it's not enough only to wish to open your own business, you need specific knowledge too. The lessons were interesting, we worked in small and big groups, played various games, and there were no dull lectures. I liked classes on designing a business plan and trainings. I met interesting people, some of them became my friends and we see each other quite often. I am thinking about starting up my own business later on and I am sure that knowledge and skills I got at the courses will be of great help to me.

Ratakhina Anastasiya, 23, a student, vocational college

Program "Start a business!" – a program of practical activities and contests aimed at educating young people about how to start a business using new technologies and services. Here young people acquire the overall skills of management (management, finances, motivation, time-management, stress-management, negotiations, team-building, etc.) develop attitudes for success and personal growth. All these contribute to the formation of leadership skills, positive life attitudes, responsibility for themselves and their future. This is a practice-oriented

program which gives initial skills on organizing and managing a small business. The focus is education on the basics of social entrepreneurship. It is necessary for self-determination of the participants through solving tasks, connected with choosing, designing and analyzing an idea for a business. The goal of such education – help a person to make a correct decision based on understanding specific features of the entrepreneurship, perspectives of the business idea and existing opportunities for its realization. The goal is to help young people make informed decisions about their own capability to become a social or business entrepreneur. The knowledge, skills and attitudes will benefit young people who join businesses which rely on their employees being self-sufficient and able to take the initiative.

This short program is intensive and results are achieved by using new methods – specialized tests, case studies, problem solving, team working and computer based materials. It offers information and practical skills which will help the participants choose an area of future activity but also make the first steps to start a business.

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

Promoting entrepreneurship among young people through an enterprise style program focused on social enterprise with sections on social entrepreneurship, organizing, managing and developing a business to form entrepreneurial thinking, and raise business and grass root activity of young people.

OBJECTIVES:

- Establish a specialized learning program attractive to young people and which will introduce the basics of business start-up using modern educational methods and technologies.
- Organize groups for studying.
- Promote the development of leadership and entrepreneurship, formation of a positive mentality needed by a successful entrepreneur.



I attended the course on social entrepreneurship in 2012. I liked all the activities: seminars, practical workshops, trainings, business games. I think that knowledge and tips I got from experienced businessmen will help me a lot. It was great to design our own projects, write business and financial plans, determine the time period and feasibility of every project. The most important activity of the programme was project contest, you should have seen how the participants presented their projects!!! Everybody advocated projects, stood for the ideas. We didn't have time to be bored at the classes!

Trukhina Serafima, 18, vocational college

The program was implemented in three stages. First stage – preliminary. We prepared questionnaires and information letters about the project, printed flyers and information materials for the seminars. Then we organized a promotion campaign to tell people about our program and to attract potential participants (students and young people). A potential participant had to fill in the registration form on the web-site and pass an interview. The interview was held by the programme manager and the psychiatrist, who looked for the people who are venturesome

and potential leaders. Some people did not pass the interview, some people left the course after 2 or 3 seminars as it was too difficult for them. Some students were from the vocational college and they studied at the economics department and after the course they wrote graduation papers on the topics connected with social entrepreneurship.

Second stage (main part): lessons were conducted 1-2 times a week, one could attend the lessons or study virtually. We attracted a wide range of specialists to conduct the lessons: successful businessmen and entrepreneurs, representatives of the Department of Revenue Services, Pension Fund, Employment Center, Committee of Youth Policy, Culture and Sport. These people were able to show their experience and opportunities how to start and promote a business.

Methods of work: role-play and management game, discussions, projects, brainstorming, group work, trainings, special economics and management course, studying of the Constitution and other laws, personal development training, communication trainings, practical tasks.

TOPICS:

- Introduction into free enterprise, ideas for business.
- Personality of an entrepreneur.
- Types of business organization.
- Setting the goal. Maslow's pyramid. Goals and objectives.
- Marketing. General idea. Marketing formula. Description and characteristics of an item. Three levels of items.
 - Customers and rivals. Market research. Price pyramid. Price strategies.
 - How to promote goods. PR and advertisement – place and importance for realizing a business idea.
 - Financial planning. Incomings, expenses, profit. Breakeven point. Financial flow.
 - Accountancy at small business.
 - Taxes and tax assessment for small business.
 - Business-plan for establishing a small business. Business-plan as a form of planning. IT for business planning. How to prepare a business plan. Basic sections of the business plan: summary, general characteristic of a business, marketing, organization of a business, implementation plan, financial plan. Presentation of the business-plan – important instrument to attract investors and financial resources.

After finishing the seminars, the participants developed business plans for their business ideas. At the end of this project we organized a “Business Fair” and the participants presented their business projects. At the end the best projects were recommended to participate in a grant contest of various levels – municipal, regional, etc. to help them get financial support. At the end of the course the participants had fully prepared plans and they could apply for funding and start their own business or social enterprise

AS A RESULT OF STUDYING THE PARTICIPANTS:

- got step-by-step guidelines how to start a business;
- developed plans for business;
- learnt how to do marketing analysis and write a business plan;
- got skills on efficient management of a business;
- developed managing and leadership capacities;
- gained a range of communication and negotiation skills

MAIN PROGRAM ELEMENTS:

- team-building training on social entrepreneurship which helped the participants to think over their ideas for business and document them correctly.
- education program on entrepreneurship activities which gave the participants knowledge on various aspects of establishing a business (research summary, main project idea, market analysis and marketing strategy, materials and stock, implementation place, building site, ecological evaluation; projecting; how to organize production and expenses; human resources; planning and the estimated cost of the project; financial evaluation of expenses and revenues).
- contest evaluation of business ideas developed by the project participants.

The program was designed to encourage participants play an active role in solving their own problems and do not become passive recipients of public services. It used the expertise of many professionals. Our Community School believes that the main goal of the lifelong learning is to seek together new ways to form social responsibility. The program aims to encourage as self-sufficiency, choice, decision-making and reflection. We believe that thanks to the participation in the program participants' social responsibility changes dramatically: they wished to be useful to their communities but at the end of the course they had a better understanding of potential community impact of social enterprise. Very importantly is the potential for students to become business entrepreneurs and therefore financially self-sufficient. Of course, only time will tell and often students are enthusiastic at the end of a course but we will need to wait to see if it has made a real difference to their attitudes and behavior.

SAMPLE LESSON

Nesterova Natalia, 44, an accountant,

Community Schools Association of Khakassia Republic

I am an accountant in Community Schools Association of Khakassia Republic, have experience in writing business projects, social projects, so my task was to lead practical work on writing a business plan and calculating of the leading economic indicator of an investment project. At first the participants were offered "pieces" of implemented business ideas. They had to put them in order in accordance with structure of the business plan. The participants worked in small groups, they discussed basic principles of business planning. Next task was also given to groups – design a business project. After discussions and work the groups presented projects "Rubbish Recycling Complex" and "Social Canteen". Of course, there were some mistakes in calculations but idea to start up a business themselves, without asking somebody to write a business plan, left an imprint in participants' souls. The course was enjoyed by the participants as well as by us, those who designed and taught it. They wished us to continue our work as in our area there are a lot of young people who don't know what to do and how to realize their potential. Of course, we will carry on our work, we already have some applications from local people.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TUSANJ

SCHOOL PROFILE



Students	697
Boys	357
Girls	340
Teachers	47
Students of lone parent households	45
Both parents employed	355
Both parents unemployed	40
One parent unemployed	285
Building	3.14 m2 and 3.400 m2 open space

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The school is in a small, mostly Bosnian, urban area, drawing students from outlying Slatina and Batva. Few structures are in place to encourage active citizenship. A high proportion of the population is over 50, with many residents over retirement age. There are a few private businesses, restaurants and small shops. The road condition is poor with no areas for pedestrians and a poor safety record. A local playground and sport field has been recently renovated.

THE PROBLEM

The entrance to the school grounds is badly lit and unsafe.

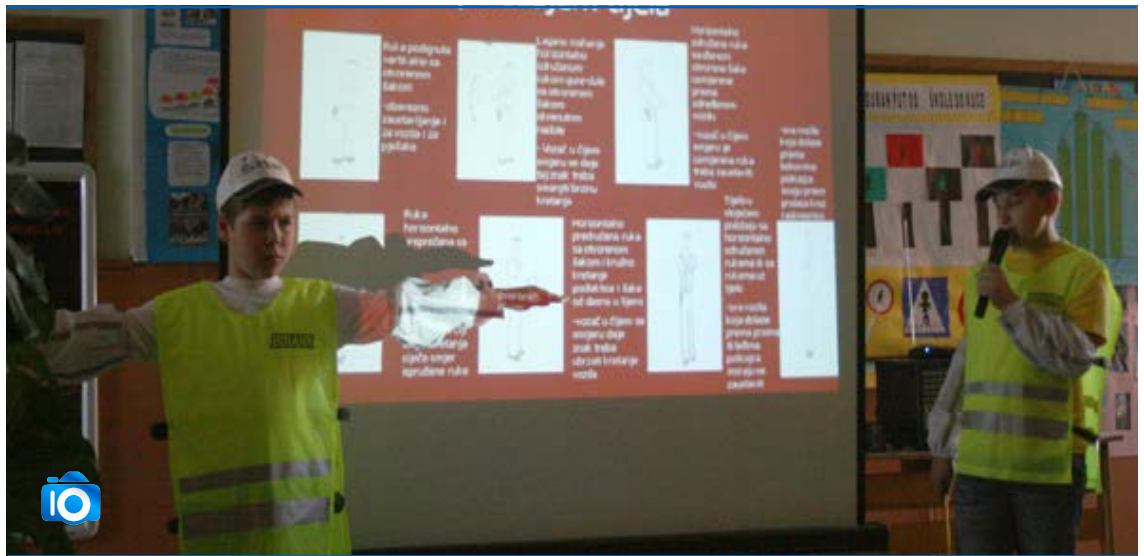
The road outside the gates is unsafe and the grounds attract unruly groups of people during and after classes.

AGREEING PRIORITIES.....

We defined these issues when we used the International Quality Standards for Community Schools Standards. Our specific focus was on the Community Development Standard. This was our response to the indicators:

Community development (The school supports the local community to identify and tackle common problems)	1	2	3	4
We offer training and support to community organizations		x		
We ensure that community organizations have sufficient knowledge to be able to contribute to decision making.			x	
Our facilities can be used by community organizations.			x	
We help community organizations conduct surveys and consultation exercises through our route to parents and students			x	
We help community organizations design and manage community based projects			x	
We offer service and support to the organizations within the community			x	
Comment School successfully cooperates with the community through different projects. We also provide school space for different to the community groups and needs, and we are available for the community as partners for different actions. We organize art events for the community residents. Local community members use our multimedia classroom for their educational purposes; we use professionals for the community for professional education of students.				
Priority actions Traffic safety around the school – service learning; Reconstruction of small part in front of the school; Cleaning of creek Tusanj - service learning; Cleaning and adaptation of community park Dragodol;				

Our problem was an issue for the wider community as well as for our students at school. It was obvious that we could not solve this alone. We realize that we needed help from the community, not only from the public authorities, but also from the community council, formal and non-formal groups and the Parents council.



As a first step we convened meetings at the school and invited members of these groups.

TOGETHER WE EXPLORED COMMON ISSUES AND AGREED THESE PRIORITIES:

- ▣ Students' and residents' road safety,
- ▣ Safety of students within the school yard and on the way home from the school,
- ▣ Ensuring recreational space within the community for all residents and youth groups.

Together with representatives of the local community we presented our case to the municipal authorities, demonstrating our determination to find a solution. We suggested several solutions such as traffic lights, which are municipality is responsible for providing. In the meantime the school took responsibility for setting up school patrols to help everyone cross the busy road outside. For this we had the cooperation of police and parents.

6th and 7th grade students ran a learning project on road safety and helped the community understand the messages. They taught younger students about road safety and traffic signs, and clarified road use rights and responsibilities for local residents.



"This is a great activity of the school and students. For me it is helpful to have assistance in crossing this dangerous street and traffic. Thanks to the school to initiate this in Tusanj."
Local resident

The students wrote and distributed road safety leaflets and produced a road safety TV show. These materials are used for each new intake of students. We are still lobbying and waiting for traffic lights on dangerous roads around the school but we have tackled other student safety issues. Poor lighting was a problem recognised by parents so the school has installed video surveillance cameras around the school building and hires a security officer. This is done together with the community council and school management and we also installed and maintain lighting in nearby streets.

This work lasted one school year. The school tracked safety issues in the community and residents reported their experience through media and round table discussions held at the school. We organized workshops for residents about safety, violence and how to prevent it which has helped them deal with issues outside school.

Residents were worried about a group of teenagers who they considered to be delinquent. Through our discussions we agree to introduce useful activities in which residents and teenagers could engage. One initiative was cleaning up and maintaining local green areas and involved the 8th and 9th grades with funds which the school raised from the local community. The Community Council has noticed a reduction in vandalism and in the incidence of flooding when it rains. It is important to note that every success is celebrated, sharing the credit with the local community.

WE HAVE LEARNED ...

By working in cooperation with the local community and external partners we solved the problems more easily and with greater self-confidence. We think school should be part of the community process since it is not possible to solve problems alone. School and residents together can advise the local authority and are stronger together. The school has worked in an equal partnership and has given facilities and skills to local residents on how to run public campaigns. We convened the meetings to share priorities, taking the lead for some activities identified. By transferring the learning process outside the classroom we can strengthen the community and build a role for our students and encourage them to care for their own community.

TIPS

It is important to be open to the community's needs and to create joint initiatives with formal and non-formal organisations for mutual benefit that brings new solutions to many problems.

This way schools provide facilities for residents and can contribute to the cultural life of the local community. Schools have a contribution to make to community development.

POSSIBLE USEFUL TOOL OR METHODS....

The International Quality Standards from Community Schools proved a very useful tool that gave us new ideas and helped us to focus on our priorities. The work we did provided many learning opportunities for our students – research, communication using a variety of media, art work and interviewing skills and including active listening techniques all in a concrete setting which had real meaning for our students. Our perception of the student need was validated by joining with the local community where our concerns were shared.

FINALLY

This was our first step and we have been pleased with all the learning opportunities it delivered. We were very happy to see the way that we were able to agree shared priorities and actions. Our next task is to offer support to residents with low literacy levels.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PROFILE



High School N119 named after Benjamin Jhamkochyan
 Address: Avenue Tigran Mets 64, Yerevan City, RA (Republic of Armenia)
 Tel. 37410 / 573740, 573730
 E-mail: ecole119@mail.ru
 School Director: A candidate of pedagogical sciences-Ohannes Karapetyan, in post 15 years

1320 students

90 staff with more advanced teaching qualifications

Sponsorship has allowed renovation and an upgrade in equipment

A hall, gym, canteen, 2 computer classes with unlimited access to the Internet, Training and working studies, Linguistic studies, library, medical cabinet

The school focused on French language, history and culture for 30 years

It is now a High School with a focus on languages, the humanities and social subjects such as psychology.

South East area of capital city

A railway station, railway administration, 5 bank branches Railmen's House of Culture, 2 supermarkets, 2 big shopping centers, 8 secondary schools The institute of teachers' qualification improvement, Anania Shirakatsi educational center, Railway technical school, Hydroland technical school in the neighborhood of the school.

The school is located in the city of Yerevan which, as the capital, is the administrative center with a population of 2 million. This School District has a little less than half a million inhabitants. There is a range of employment - offices, banks, businesses, factories, trade, etc. but unemployment is high. The retirement age in Armenia is 60 for women, 65 for men. There are very few ethnic minorities – 0.1%

Since 2003 this school has worked hard to adopt the practices of Community Active Schools to improve the quality of education for students and to ensure that the school plays its part in the life of the local community. It does impressive work in volunteering activities and working in partnership with many other professional agencies, community organizations and local authorities. The school's gym is open for community use and it has learning and recreational classes in computer education, a dance club, English club and has an accountancy training center. During these years, the school has increased its student numbers from 900 to 1320 and claims that this is because of the improved quality of education giving it a competitive edge. It has also built excellent partnerships to bring in additional educational opportunities. For example, it now includes German in the curriculum with support from the German Embassy.

IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES

The school used The International Quality Standards for Community Schools as a self- assessment tool for school improvement and identified the engagement of parents as a priority. The school administration wanted to find new ways to boost their involvement and to gain parent commitment. Parents were involved from the start, to develop the strategy. In collaboration with parents and teachers, the school decided to help parents learn more about child development and how best to support their learning. They agreed to set up a Parental University at the school which would increase parenting skills, and help parents learn about supporting their children's development, choosing their career path and preparing for adult life.



This was not an easy process and there were some negative attitudes to overcome:

- Parents' reluctance to devote their spare time
- Organizing events outside the school teaching hours since the school works with 2 shifts
 - Some teachers and students were unhappy to see the parents have greater influence
 - Some parents and students were Indifferent towards the school problems.

The school convened numerous meetings with staff, students and parents, including the Parent Committee. The school also worked closely with local authority agencies set up to increase parent engagement.

After all these discussions the Parental University aims to increase the level of parent engagement in school life through:

- Training and master classes which give parents additional skills and knowledge
- Opportunities for parents to exchange their experiences and learn from each other about children's upbringing and supporting them at home
- Information exchange about the programs and resources of the school and the community
- Strengthen mutual relations between the school and parents involving them in the school and its social life.

The Parental University takes place once a week and has a range of activities, meetings with representatives of various professions, as well as famous people of art, culture, and sport. It also organizes volunteering activities for parents and students.

Specialists from higher education institutions and trainers from public organizations are involved in the Parental University to organize training and master classes. The school teachers work with parents sharing their experience in terms of children's upbringing and support at home. Every week representatives from local government are invited to talk about the community problems with parents, to find out solutions to these problems and give information about the work they have done so far.

The Parental University has helped the school involve parents in the upbringing and teaching process, discussed important questions and issues, offered and realized initiatives, actively participated in the process of making decisions. This has proved to be very popular with parents and at one meeting where the idea of electronic communication with parents was proposed, the parents objected saying that they prefer their actual involvement as this will help their children's learning and

that they value the face to face contact with the school. The school agreed to have Open Days twice a month.



Only through mutual effort and trust can we achieve good results. We and the school have the same responsibility since we have the same interests. Thank you.

Mutual cooperation has resulted after a lot of hard work and many meetings. Staff and parents agree that they understand each other better and feel more confident about communicating with each other.

Using The International Quality Standards for Community Schools has given the school an impetus to improve the quality and relevance of its educational provision. It has helped identify weaknesses and given them a boost to find solutions. The self-assessment process has produced a plan which will help the school improve for years to come.

TIPS

- Form an active team, which involves parents
- Work out a development plan and agreed aims and objectives
- Go till the end

SCHOOL PROFILE

**Antipina L.M., Deputy Head Secondary School #3,
Town of Leninsk-Kuznetskiy, Kemerovo region, RUSSIA**

Secondary school

444 students

Had been a middle school but in 2009 became a senior school.

Located amongst private housing far from cultural or leisure activities

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Students only have access to a sports center which is 2,5km away from the school. Mostly boys take part in activities offered there.

Employment is clerical/administrative officers in the local authority or manual work. Many students come from large low income, often lone parent families.

Kemerovo is a well-known coal mining region of Russia. Komsomolets is the coal mine, local to the school and is a major employer.



We do not only learn at school, we live at school! And our life should be exciting! Nobody will come to school and make our life interesting, we can do it ourselves: not only make our school life exciting, busy and varied but we can and should provide benefit for our local community. The Student Council takes active part in school life. During the meetings we discuss our future plans, how to make them happen and how to make them interesting and useful. Every class takes part in an event, nobody is left behind. All school festivals, actions, competitions are planned together with our teachers, parents and partners (for example, from the coal mine "Komsomolets"). For three years we have presented and supported our ideas at the School Council. Parents, school members and representatives of local community listen to us and help us make our ideas come true.

Pitsun Svetlana, Head of the Student Council, member of the School Council

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Even though we are a small school we have been actively involved in the Community school movement here in Ukraine since 2000, attending network events and joining in activities. We were invited to join the international project on International Quality Standards for Community Schools. We were a little anxious at first – could we make it? Why do we need it? But having studied the self-assessment tool and read the standards and criteria, we discussed the offer at the Teachers' Council and Student Board meetings and realized that by joining this project we would have a double benefit. First of all, we would analyze the internal processes of our school, see our weak points and identify priorities for school improvement. Secondly, we would represent our small school at international level.

After conducting the first self-assessment we saw clearly which key areas we were good at and which areas needed our attention. It was impossible to hide or change information because we ran the self-assessment with students and parents who were quite critical about school activities. Our work on "Partnership" and "Volunteering" met the challenge but we saw a lot of problems in "Social inclusion", "Services", "Community Development" and "School Culture" and these areas were given lower scores. We decided not to work on all areas at once but to focus efforts on developing school culture as the problems within this area were equally seen by teachers, parents and students.

WHAT WE DID

In 2010-2012 we worked on the school culture standard. The indicators and descriptors were a useful guide:

We involve pupils, teachers, parents, the wider community and other organizations into the decision making process.

We already had a Student Board but after running the self-assessment process we agreed that it should have greater influence on school policy. We decided to merge it with a newly formed School Council which would have senior management, teachers, parents, community members and students.

So, now representatives of the Student Board as members of the School Council present and promote the ideas of students at the School Council because without support from adults it is quite difficult to solve certain problems. In 2011 representatives of the Student Board and parents joined the disciplinary committee. Now they also contribute to work with “difficult” students.

The selection of president of the children’s organization “Altair” and the Student Board were conducted at a special meeting and for the last three years the Student Board has invited independent experts to supervise the elections: teachers, parents and also representatives of the JSC “Mine “Komsomolets”. (A Partnership with the mine was established 3 years ago.) The School Regulations explain how schools should be governed.

A TEAM APPROACH IS COMMON THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL'S ACTIVITIES.

We have always tried to use a team approach for organizing and conducting all-school events, contests, conferences, seminars: teachers are a vital part of creative groups and they work with parents and students planning and running events together. Now this practice is blooming and parents who work at the coal mine have become active participants in project development. Students present their projects at scientific conferences and various contests. For the last two years more of our students have won town science contest.



In 2011 thanks to specialists of the mining industry we won IV Town Students' Contest SIBENCO-Kuzbass "My Company, My Town". We received a grant of 16,000\$ and spent this money on renovating the science laboratory and buying new equipment for it.

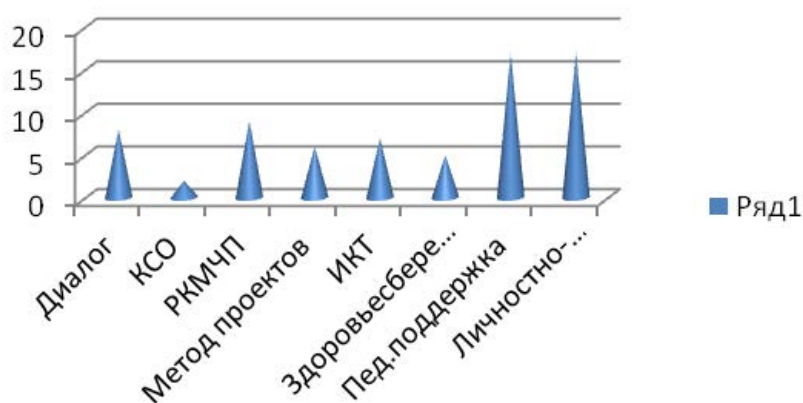
Two favorite events are *Parent of the Year* and *Leader of the Year*. These events are to celebrate best parents, students and community members who work in our team and help us address various problems.

In September, 2012 a new partner decided to join our team – kindergarten #39 and we already took part in the joint event *Safe Road Crossing*.

TEACHERS USE STRATEGIES FOR MEANINGFUL LEARNING.

For the last three years we have started to use learning methods based on personal experience more often. For example, clubs of interesting meetings, round-table discussions, meetings with veterans of the Great Patriotic War, war workers, veterans of work, Town Council of Pedagogical Work Veterans, culture specialists, writers and poets, employees of the Federal Drug Control Service, policemen, public prosecution officers, creative families and other community members. Also, people who are successful in life talk about lives and work. In 2011 our school joined and all-Russian event Lessons for Success, a wide range of people told students about their lives: top managers, heads, deputies, showmen, and simply happy mothers. In 2011 specialists from the mine "Komsomolets" ran workshops for students of 5-7 forms on handcrafts, knitting, etc. These were unusual but interesting lessons as students were not taught by their teachers but by a person who had an interesting hobby.

Teachers actively use a learner-centered approach in their work with students. Each class has a classroom hour every week and for the last three years homeroom teachers have been trying to organize and conduct these classroom hours using learner-centered approaches because in this way these classes create more opportunities for students to excel in ways other than simply academic attainment e.g. creativity.



Since 2007 our school has been a participant in an experiment Dialogue in Education and since 2010 the school has been a resource center for School of Educational Technologies. This means that we are an innovative school in which teachers put into practice modern teaching and the best way to raise children: collective teaching mode, critical thinking development via reading and writing, person-developing dialogue, project method, health saving technologies, classroom teaching methods. The chart shows data on using technologies and interactive methods by teachers (22 teachers, 17 of them – homeroom teachers).

THE SCHOOL ACKNOWLEDGES ITS ACCOUNTABILITY IN ITS REGULAR PRACTICES.

The school is open to the public and informs interested parties and community members about its results and achievements. One can hear about school activities and results at parents meetings, Student Board, Parent Board, School Council, parent conference and information boards at school. We post information on the school website, Community School movement site, prepare a public report, print the school newspaper "Sirius", also our partner, the mine "Komsomolets", post at their site information about collaboration with school. We take part in regional, zonal, Russian and international conferences, for example we attended *Civic and Patriotic Education in Life-long Learning: Achievements and Perspectives*, Kemerovo, 2010 and *Education: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, Orenburg, 2011. We also disseminate our experience by taking part in All-Russian festivals such as Open Lessons and Pedagogical Innovations.

WHAT WE LEARNT

As a result of the self –assessment we systematized our approach in developing our school culture. Of course, we had always kept track of some criteria but sometimes points were forgotten. After the self-assessment, together with our partners, we pinpointed the problems which had been left aside and coordinated our activities to make our work more effective. After the first assessment we scored 3.2 for School Culture and after the second one – 3.4. we are not complacent but keep working on this Standard as well as other key areas.



I know from my sons that school life is bubbling. We work as a team at the school. Together with teachers and students we work on creating better opportunities for children development, and we are active partners and participants in joint backpacking trips, beautification works, sports events, charitable actions of our school. Partners from the coal mine “Komsomolets” play active role in schools life, they support children development and actively participate in school events. At our school we do actions all together and for everyone! Kind and welcoming atmosphere of our events does not leave anybody indifferent and a lot of our school-leavers keep coming to school...

Nemtsova Lyudmila, member of the School Council

TIPS

- Treat the self-assessment process seriously because it will help you to see what stage you've reached in each key area and what you've missed
- Do not be afraid of parents and community members; their perspective on school activities is valuable and helpful.