



# BOOK OF GOOD IDEAS

The title is rendered in a bold, bubbly, graffiti-style font. 'BOOK' is in red, 'OF' is in yellow, 'GOOD' is in yellow, and 'IDEAS' is in green. The letters have thick black outlines and drop shadows, giving them a 3D appearance. The background is a white brick wall. Scattered around the title are several grey line-art icons: a document with a checkmark, a target with an arrow, a lightbulb, a megaphone, a pencil, a speech bubble with a checkmark, and a paintbrush.

**STUDENTS PROMOTING THEIR  
VOICE AND PARTICIPATION**



**FORUM ZA  
SLOBODU  
ODGOJA**











# Impressum

## TITLE

Book of Good Ideas – students promoting their voice and participation

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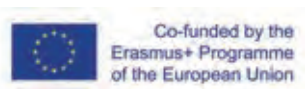
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# Foreword

This is the collection of school project stories that represents the work of young people who, together with their teachers, engaged in activities so that their voices would be heard and their ideas for change implemented through school projects, thus contributing to concrete changes and solutions that young people wanted to see in their schools and communities.


The stories shared in this publication happened within the 3 year-long Start the Change project during which the partner organizations coupled with school teams from 15 schools in three countries (Croatia, Portugal and North Macedonia) to implement various activities like trainings, workshops, networking, and exchange of ideas with teachers, students and parents. In the second and third year of this project, the young people of the participating schools initiated and carried out different school projects generated by their volunteering initiatives that contribute to solving the problems that they recognized as important. The projects initiated positive changes mainly in their schools, but to some degree in their local communities as well.

It is particularly important to highlight that these activities started in the beginning of 2020 and went on until the end of 2022, which was a period of multiple global crises that still have negative effects in each country separately (the covid-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine military conflict, the refugee crises, etc.). These generated circumstances were marked by an increased influx of refugees following military conflicts in the wider environment, relations between the majority and the

minority that became increasingly tense, deepening certain radical attitudes and some varieties of extremism. In addition to all that, students spent most of the 2020 and 2021 attending online classes. In such a period, intensive work was done on the topics of supporting the students' involvement, their voice and active participation. Workshops for teachers and parents were organized on those and various other topics, such as: Socio-emotional competencies and mental health, Intercultural competences, Youth initiatives and actions, Volunteering actions, Media literacy, Digital reality and education, etc. After acquiring some knowledge and skills, teachers were able to support young people in designing and running student-initiated school projects.

This book contains one story about each school's activity that was a product of young people's initiative. Those initiatives came about after students expressed the need for the change they wanted to see, implement and share in public. Each story contains the same parts that describe the following: the description of the school; main issues identified by their student focus groups; the goal, objectives and motivation for the project; the project methods and key steps; and what made students especially proud of their project. The authors of most of these texts are students themselves, and during the editing process of this book, their ideas, thoughts, and information about the projects that they wanted to highlight as important were minimally edited.



A light-colored brick wall serves as the background for the top and bottom sections of the page. The bricks are laid in a traditional pattern, with some mortar visible between them. The lighting is soft, creating a warm and textured appearance.

One of the many inspiring messages in the essays created by the students is: “Be the change you wish to see in the world”! With this in mind, the only way to be a person with values that imply more understanding, empathy and humanity towards others is to be persistent in promoting the fundamental human rights, social justice, active citizenship and solidarity.

It has been a pleasure and great joy getting to know more closely the activities of the youth in three different countries throughout this book. Although they belong to different societies, young people everywhere have similar or same priorities regarding changes that lead to a better life that they want for themselves and others in their schools and communities.

Therefore, we do hope you will get inspired after reading each story told by students themselves and that you will think creatively and out-of-the box when getting your students more actively engaged in the school's life, particularly in these challenging times. We hope you and your students will join our community of changemakers in a world that needs all of our voices and active participation.

The editing staf

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This publication was created within the project “Start the Change – creating a generation of changemakers through intercultural education and volunteering” with the objective of preventing radicalization and extremism among young people through the promotion of democratic and EU common values, fundamental rights, social inclusion, intercultural understanding and active citizenship. The project was implemented from January 2020 to January 2023 within the framework of the Erasmus+ Programme (KA3, Social Inclusion).



# Partners



**Forum for Freedom in Education, Croatia**



INTERNATIONAL  
INNOVATION  
FOR GROWTH  
INOVA+

**INOVA+ INNOVATION SERVICES, Portugal**



**Macedonian Civic Education Center, North Macedonia**



**Network of Education Policy Centres (NEPC), Croatia**



**SIRIUS Policy Network on Migrant Education, Belgium**



**Ivan Meštrović Primary School in Zagreb, Croatia**



**Secondary Municipal School „Nikola Karev” – Strumica,  
North Macedonia**

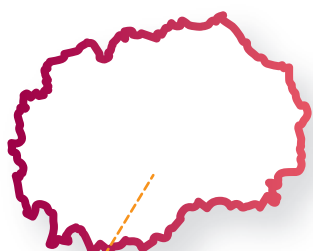


**José Estêvão Cluster School, Portugal**



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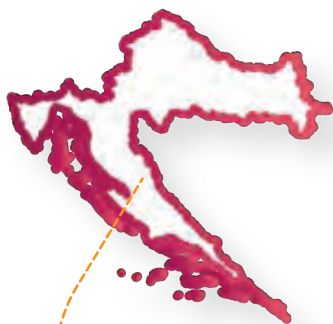
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# North Macedonia



## **Brakja Miladinovci** Secondary School of the City of Skopje, Skopje

286 students attend our school, 5 of whom are students with disabilities who follow the teaching process within a specific programme.

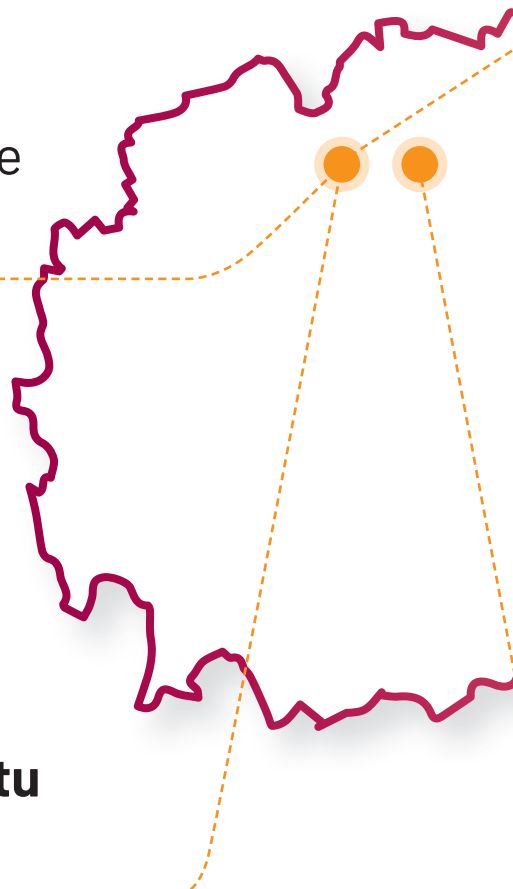
This vocational school is one of those city schools where dual classes take place, which ensures that both agricultural and veterinary technicians are profiled here. After finishing the vocational education here, the graduated students are much more competitive in the labour market of our country.



## **Kuzman Josifovski - Pitu** Primary School, Skopje

There are 638 students in our school. This school is open towards accepting, encouraging and supporting all students, including those with disabilities. As far as students with disabilities are concerned, everything is provided for uninterrupted access and education.

Our school is located under the slopes of Vodno Mountain, at the foot of the city of Skopje. Generations of clear and sharp minds have been filled with knowledge and skills, and hearts with warmth and countless nice memories.







## **Brakja Ramiz i Hamid** Primary School, Skopje

The school has a total of 2056 students, 15 of whom are students with disabilities. The total number of teachers is 120 and the teaching process is conducted in the Macedonian language. Our school building is located in a Roma settlement and more than 90% of the students are of Roma ethnicity.



## **Nikola Karev** Secondary Municipal School, Strumica

Our school has a total of 1,200 students, out of which 10 are students with disabilities. The total number of teachers is 90, and the classes are held in the Macedonian language. The students are of mixed ethnic composition: 77 students with Turkish ethnic background and 1,123 students of Macedonian origin.



## **Pero Nakov** Secondary Municipal School, Kumanovo

There are 829 students who attend classes in our school. The salient feature of our school is that we take classes in two languages. 525 students attend classes in the Macedonian language in the main building located at No. 4 Pirinska Makedonija Street, while 304 students attend classes in Albanian in a dislocated building in Bedinje (former Christian T. Karposh barracks). In both facilities different subjects are taught within two different branches: 1. economics, law and trade and 2. leather, textiles and other similar products.







# 1. Brakja Miladinovci

## Secondary School of the City of Skopje, Skopje

As part of the focus groups formed within the “Start the Change” project, the students from our school have identified the following issues and needs:

- participation in activities using internet tools
- encouragement of teachers to discuss topics outside their subjects
- involvement of students in decision-making processes
- respect and acceptance of the youth voice concept

The following positive aspects were also identified:

- students receive the necessary support from teachers and have good rapport with them
- students feel safe in their school
- students show empathy and solidarity and they are willing to help



**3** Number of our projects/activities

Number of students, teachers and parents involved



**30** students



**15** teachers



**10** parents

### About our project activity

## “We learn about the media through the media”



**Topic:** The negative impact of the media, media addiction and the need for media education, i.e., media literacy



**Our motivation:** We did not hesitate to participate in this project since we receive a big support from our teachers. We were certain that we made a good choice by selecting the activity related to the media. The activities that followed were filled with fun, socialization and work. We participated in many activities related to the creation of “Our Medium”, which is our school’s Facebook page created within this project, such as: attending a cyber-bullying workshop and learning a lot about the violence in our country and what might happen to





everyone if we fail to take care of our personal data. We also participated in an online journalism workshop led by a well-known journalist who introduced us to the magic of the journalistic world and taught us how to recognize fake news and fake pages. The Facebook page, our new medium, enabled us to express and showcase our ideas, school activities and school events. We recognized this medium as an opportunity to present our school while promoting our talented classmates. We organize events and afterwards share them on our page so that people could visit our school and witness its particular charm themselves.



#### **Project objectives:**

1. To develop skills of media literacy as students.
2. To specifically acquire knowledge about the positive and negative influences of the media.
3. To make our activities visible via the FB page and have them serve as a model for learning about media literacy for people outside our school and wider, not only to our peers.



**Methods:** online surveys, focus groups, online meetings, media literacy workshops



**Duration:** 1 year



**Required materials:** goodwill 😊, computers for online meetings and surveys



#### **Key steps:**

### **1. Forming focus groups and conducting online interviews**

A certain number of our classmates (16) joined online focus groups and collaborated with the representatives of MCEC who led this project. We had online interviews on the topic of appropriate and civilized behaviour in the classroom and discussed whether there was any violence and insults directed towards us and other people by our classmates. We exchanged our views regarding behaviour in general, not only on the school premises.

### **2. Analysing the results and decision-making**

Our teacher, Ivica Marinkovik, who has been professionally involved in the media for a very long time, was the person who motivated us to create something like this through a constructive discussion related to media literacy. It was the first time we had come across this type of project. We aim to attract them to visit our page, get them acquainted with everything we have as a school and show them our Zoo Park, which is one of its kind when it comes to the schools of North Macedonia. We will continue to work on our Facebook page because we have achieved nothing but good results thus far.

### **3. Regular meetings of Our Media**

Every Thursday, all of us who have been involved in the project attend online meetings with our teachers to discuss the topics we want to cover and share on our FB page. We propose ideas, most of which we later realize. Our posts not only



celebrate important dates and holidays, offering explanation of the significance of the celebrated day, but also promote students who have participated in competitions, showcasing their successes etc.

### We are especially proud of:

- being students of this school
- the continuously increasing number of students we have motivated with our Facebook page
- the support and motivation we have received from our teachers by devoting their time to cooperate with us
- being able to learn something new, acquire useful and new knowledge about the world and discover new extracurricular activities
- the success we have jointly achieved



### Our message for other students:

**Be more active and engaged when it comes to this type of project, because it is such a great way to spend your time socializing and working at the same time.**

### Authors:

*Daniela Pavlovska III – 1,  
Sana Velkovska II – 1  
(school year 2021/2022)*







## 2. Brakja Ramiz i Hamid Primary School, Skopje

As part of the focus groups formed within the "Start the Change" project, the students from our school identified the following issues and needs:

- many students never express their opinions freely
- most of the students do not think that they can make a change at the school level
- students believe that it is not their responsibility nor obligation to make changes

### About our project activity

## "The voice of the youth is the voice of the future – strengthening the work of the Student Parliament"



**Topic:** Evaluating the work of the Student Parliament and looking for ways to improve it.



**Our motivation:** There are many reasons why education is very important, but what I and most of my classmates think is the most important is that knowledge gives us the opportunity to make an effective change. If we want to change something in our environment and society, we must know HOW to do



25

Number of our  
projects/activities



194

Number of  
students  
involved

it properly. Sometimes, even if we know what we want to change, we may still not know how to achieve it. After learning that through the activities within the project "Start the change" we could make our voice for change be heard, we - my classmates and I, decided to activate our student body, the School Parliament. By participating in our student body and these activities, we became aware of how important it is to utilize our right to express what we think and what we need. That was the reason why we quickly and easily agreed on the contents of the activities that we needed.



### Project objectives:

1. Evaluating the work of the Student Parliament.
2. Increasing the visibility of the Parliament in the school.
3. Developing a work plan for the Student Parliament for the upcoming school year.



**Duration:** 1 year



**Required materials:** Laptops and work motivation, as the most needed and important





## Key steps:

### 1. Motivating students to believe in themselves

I am a 9th grade student and until a year ago, I was only aware of my rights as a child, without knowing how to strive and invest efforts for my voice to be heard. I did not know how to propose a change and I was often ashamed to express my opinion. I was not confident enough; I was afraid of being misinterpreted. As the class president, I became a member of the School Parliament in the eighth grade. At first, the School Parliament as a student body wasn't familiar to me, I have only heard of it and that was the extent of my knowledge. At the focus group, when Student Parliament was mentioned, my interest was aroused because of its role and because it is an opportunity for us students to express our opinions and needs, as well as to consider opportunities for desired changes.

### 2. Regular meetings of the Student Parliament

We first agreed to hold meetings bi-weekly, though sometimes, due to urgent needs, we held them on a weekly basis. Very soon we, as the School parliament members, started to meet with the class presidents and more frequently. The mentor teachers explained to us what our role was according to the Act on primary education and constantly encouraged us to make our voices heard as well as express our views. They gave us examples of changes made by other students and found a fun way to encourage us to talk about everything we wanted.

### 3. Activities according to the Student parliament programme

We carried out interesting activities that inspired our creativity and we learned that there were no stupid ideas, as we had thought before, only ideas that we have not yet achieved. We listened to each other and shared our ideas to make them even better. In a few months, we learned how to develop work programmes, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and reports of everything we did, where and how to present things and how to assert



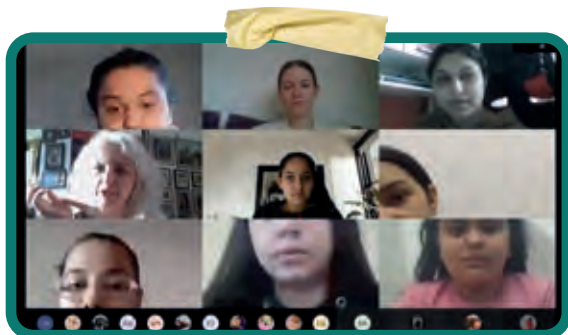
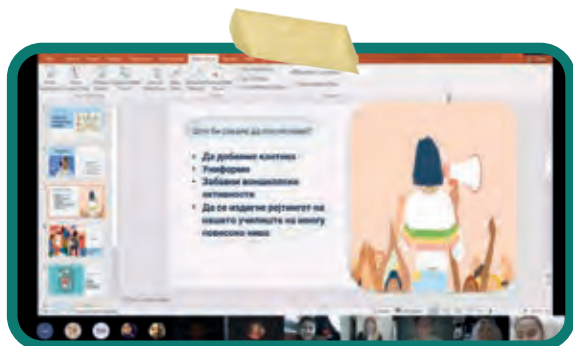
our rights. At the end of last year, we developed an entire work programme for the upcoming school year. We identified what we would work on and how to achieve our objectives. We developed everything in the programme together, as a community, by voting and listening to every idea. This year, when we think that something needs to be changed, we gather and discuss the matter with the Parliament. Then, we pass on all the information to our respective classes and start acting upon them. The last initiative that we took as the School Parliament was this year's graduation celebration. We conducted a survey and asked all the 9th grade students to think of a venue for the celebration. Then, we voted, selected a suitable venue and shared our wishes with the class teachers who were quick to accept them



and did not hold back their amazement at how organized we were. All members of the Parliament helped us to that end, not just the 9th graders. Although the 9th graders were the only ones to benefit, everyone else helped and supported us.

### We are especially proud of:

We presented the work programme for the upcoming school year to the school principal who welcomed us at a meeting and listened to everything we had to share with him. He praised us and told us that we would have his support in all our endeavours. It was specifically this moment that encouraged us to keep working hard with our Parliament. Before that, I had never thought that I would be allowed to sit at the table with the principal and instead of him talking to us, it would be us talking to him and telling him that we wanted to make changes in the school. We have shown everyone how united we are and how much power we have when we support each other. We started an unprecedented change in our school and in the community.



### Lessons we learned:

In the last 2 school years, not only did we acquire education but also the skills that will help us further in life. We also got the feeling that we have contributed a lot to our school. In addition, through all those meetings, I have become closer to students with whom I had not been friends before, and now it is impossible to imagine my day without them. The only regret I have is that I had not become part of the Student Parliament earlier. In secondary school I will continue to strive towards achieving my rights and I will not be ashamed or afraid to say what I think.



### Our message for other students:

**Activate the School Parliament in each school as it helps us, the students, to be heard, to know that we are part of the community and that our opinions matter. It motivates students to work together, to listen, accept and help each other, believing that we, as young people, can change the world. Each idea is worth listening to and everyone's opinion should be respected. We just need to develop the necessary skills and learn to be smart, behave nicely and never give up on the dream of making the world a better place.**

### The Author:

*Salia Mustafa class 9-1  
(school year 2021/2022)*





### 3. Kuzman Josifovski - Pitu Primary School, Skopje

As part of the focus groups formed within the "Start the Change" project, the students from our school shared views and reflections on:

- our vision of ourselves
- our voice against polluted air
- influences of media (particularly those of fake news) on our views and behaviour
- Pandemic situation and isolation caused by it

#### About our project activity

**"Open the school so  
that we could open our  
hearts!"**



**Topic:** Our emotional, social and physical health



**Our motivation:** We have never been in a situation where we had to deal with a big concern and burden like the one we faced with the pandemic, from its beginning up to now. For all of us in the family and the school, it was very challenging to cope with all the emotional and social consequences we encountered. By participating in the Start the change project, we had the opportunity to share what we feel and think, as well as to talk about the problems we are facing on a daily basis.



**11**

Number of our projects/activities



**200**

Number of students involved



#### Project objectives:

1. To understand the connections between emotional, social and physical health.
2. To see if we recognize the issues of social isolation, feelings, emotions.
3. To give personal meaning to the feelings and behaviour, and to become aware of them through activities that lead towards better mental health.
4. To raise our voices to encourage the rest of our classmates to join us in finding solutions for a fairer learning and living environment.



**Methods:** regular meetings, conversations on various topics and sharing between us, arranged in cycles



**Duration:** 4 months



**Required materials:** computers for online meetings and surveys, sets for writing and drawing



## Key steps:

### 1. Forming the group

Initially, our group, formed to carry out the project activity, consisted of 8 students, but later on it grew to 18 since we felt the need to talk about ourselves and the changes we want to make.

### 2. Regular meetings for sharing on a weekly basis

This was an opportunity for our voices to be heard and a chance to talk about the issues we had with feelings, emotions and social isolation. We also shared that we were given a chance to make friends among ourselves and to sincerely express our opinions!

### 3. Support from the school psychologist and teachers

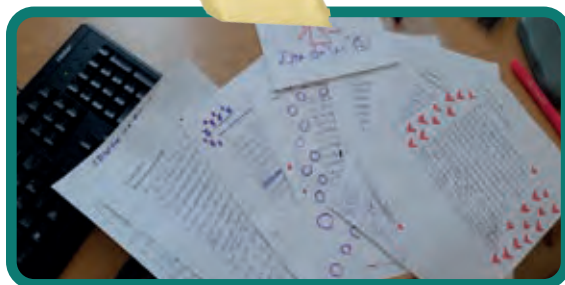
We received constant support from our school psychologist and teachers who were with us at each meeting, encouraging us to move forward on the right path.

### 4. Constant sharing and mutual support among us, school mates

For the activity in this project, we collaborated with 7th and 8th graders on the following topics: "Talking about ourselves and the change", "Opening the door to school" and "Socio-emotional development of adolescents after the Covid-19 pandemic". The groups were very friendly while socializing, everyone got a chance to express oneself, we all cooperated and it was a great way to use our free time purposely! We had a great opportunity to talk about our emotions. After listening to each statement, we realized that we weren't alone with our emotions. Sharing has allowed us to learn that we, the children of the same age, deal with same feelings and experiences!

## We are especially proud of:

- the increased mutual tolerance among us and others around us
- gaining more knowledge and understanding of the emotions of others



## Our message for other students:

**Practice the activities for improving mental health because that way everyone can gain experience in group cooperation while speaking openly and honestly in a safe environment.**

### Authors:

Milica Markovik – 8-1,  
Iliana Jancheska – 8-2  
(school year 2021/2022)





## 4. Pero Nakov Secondary Municipal School, Kumanovo

As part of the focus groups formed within the "Start the Change" project, the students from our school identified the following questions and issues:

- How to prevent environmental pollution? That is urgently needed!
- The voices of young people are not heard, particularly when online teaching takes place! We need a change!
- What are the consequences of online teaching on youth health? How to mitigate or solve them?

Also, the following positive aspects were identified:

- We did not forget the elderly and people with disabilities during the pandemic.
- We developed a sense of empathy, understanding and cooperation during the pandemic.

...



**9** Number of our projects/activities

Number of students, teachers and parents involved



**100** students



**20** teachers



**10** parents

### About our project activity

#### "Let's protect ourselves"



**Topic:** Good deeds in a pandemic. Yes, for humanity!



**Our motivation:** From the beginning of the pandemic, which made all of our lives difficult, the students, as well as our teachers and parents, faced big challenges that we had never encountered before. We had a lot to say, but we became more inaudible than ever. This was one of the reasons why we decided to join activities that the Start the change project offered. That was an opportunity to discuss the topic of humanity with our schoolmates and share our ideas and messages since we could show one aspect of humanity through our actions. At the beginning of the activity, due to the Covid protocol, we were not able to meet face-to-face with our classmates, so we managed to convey our ideas through



online meetings. Our teachers, who were present at all the meetings, helped us and cooperated with us. We reached a decision and introduced our ideas with a drawing inspired by the motto “Let’s protect ourselves”.



### **Project objectives:**

1. Develop self-awareness.
2. Raise health awareness during the pandemic by sending messages that reach everyone.
3. Develop awareness of our skills and abilities.
4. Manifest humanity by action.



**Methods:** focus groups, online meetings, individual and group work



**Duration:** 3 months



**Required materials:** goodwill ☺, computers for online meetings, sewing materials, sewing machines, decorating paints, felt-tip pens, rubber bands, scissors, templates



### **Key steps:**

#### **1. Meeting and deciding after focus groups**

In the focus groups we all agreed that all of our lives have significantly deteriorated during the pandemic. Afterwards, most of us met and agreed that what this project allows for is good. We decided to direct the manifestation of our needs through our small and important joint work, and to support those who cannot afford protective masks. We decided to make masks with drawings that brighten people up, refreshing their mood. Our intention was to reach as many people as possible through our messages, and that is how our ideas and our activities came to have a humanitarian character, doing more than just sending messages on a piece of paper.

#### **2. Organizing a series of workshops**

Therefore, on 21 May 2021, respecting all the protocols for Covid, we managed to organize a creative workshop in our school. First, we made templates for protective masks, then we cut the material according to the templates and started sewing. Though some of us didn’t do the best job possible, we were proud of ourselves because we knew our joint work would be given as a donation and be useful to someone who really couldn’t afford it but desperately needed it. We decorated the masks at the next workshops that we held on the 25 and 27 May 2021. At these workshops, the atmosphere was pleasant and there was a lot of socializing, which, unfortunately, we were deprived of for a long time due to the pandemic.

#### **3. Enjoyment during the socialization**

The messages we wrote on the masks were in Macedonian and Albanian. Since some of us don’t speak Albanian and the others don’t speak Macedonian, it was very lively and interesting for to us to learn new words in the language of our peers, as we often asked each other how those messages are to be written or read.





#### 4. Publishing the activity on our FB page

After finishing the masks, we were all proud of the products of our joint work and shared among us that we were keen on publishing it on our school's Facebook page. So, we actually did it.

#### 5. Distribution of the ready-made masks

We all agreed with the plan to personally take the masks and distribute them among the users of the Daily Centre for people living with intellectual disabilities, called "Our Message" – Kumanovo. We also filmed a video and sent a greeting "From the bottoms of our hearts in our Message" while hoping that all their wishes be fulfilled, that they become more accepted and integrated through socializing with others in their environment. We also wished them good health, particularly in these difficult days of pandemic.

#### We are especially proud of:

- our generation because though we had difficulties with the circumstances of online classes, we still managed to attend the meetings face-to-face and online
- we all functioned as one, regardless of our affiliation
- our humanity
- the fact that our products are used by people in need
- getting words of praise and support from other citizens and students by publishing our activities on the school's Facebook page

#### Authors:

Bekon Demiri, 1-10, Klaudija Jakimovska,  
1-1, Simona Kostadinovska, 3-1  
(school year 2021/2022)



#### Our message for other students:

- Only with support, motivation and desire can each individual achieve a lot.
- Don't miss out on joining all activities in group work and workshops that will be realized in the school, regardless of their character.
- Do the change that you wish to see in the world yourself/yourself.
- Cooperation and support of teachers is an important factor in youth development and the manifestation of our voices, i.e., the voice of the youth.
- It is worth sharing positive experiences with peers in order to motivate them because we become aware of the importance of the positive emotions and thoughts.





## 5. Nikola Karev Secondary Municipal School, Strumica



7

Number of our  
projects/activities



100

Number of  
students  
involved

### About our project activity

#### Student Company MATIC



**Topic:** Our long-term activity is the founding of our private Student Company MATIC (2 word abbreviation: automatic and smart).

MATIC, our student company, was founded in September 2021 by 30 students of different vocations that are taught in our school - forestry and woodworking from grades 1 to 4, and part of the students from grade 4 who specialize in IT and automation. Through our company, we, the students, are encouraged to continuously improve our entrepreneurial skills and are guided towards founding and managing a company after completing our vocational education.



**Our motivation:** In our country, due to the unemployment rates in the last decade, our classmates often have to leave our country and go

As part of the focus groups formed within the "Start the Change" project, the students from our school came to several conclusions:

- Students were preoccupied with the Covid 19 pandemic, which required greater engagement from teachers and professionals to help students not only academically (with learning the subjects), but also emotionally, to deal with this problem and motivate them more.
- Regarding the students' interest in engaging in extracurricular activities and responsibilities, if they have the opportunity, they are very happy to engage, especially in eco-friendly actions.
- In terms of resolving conflicts and problems, it is very positive that all students responded that they feel safe in their school and have someone to talk to. They have the biggest support from their homeroom teachers.
- Regarding the sharing of the every-day problems they face, a very small percentage answered that they have a student body in the form of student organization/parliament. Whether there has been any positive effect so far was not shared.
- Students should be more actively involved in decision-making processes i.e., to find ways to be more engaged, their voice and their wishes to be heard and have access to more opportunities where they can create and be involved in the activities they are interested in.



abroad after they had been professionally trained in this school, and in most cases, they stay abroad permanently. After many discussions, we decided to solve this problem by self-employment in our own company since this vocational school provides us with almost full professional orientation. When this company continually operates and functions successfully, we get a sense of hope that we have the opportunity to develop our business in our homeland and stay close to our families and friends, instead of going abroad.



### **Project objectives:**

1. To create a high-quality work environment, in which we will create conditions for professional work with our own business and ensure sustainable livelihood.
2. The appearance and utility of the products enable our creativity and business leadership to be recognized.
3. Keeping in line with the advances in modern technology with high-quality design and uniqueness of products to create an attractive and favourable business climate that promises a high social status of the company (and our school).



**Duration:** It is planned that this company lasts longer, at least 5 years, during which it will expand its activities and business areas, as well as the products that will be placed market on the market.



**Required materials:** machines for processing wood and plywood, plywood, hardware, led lighting, materials for upholstery, etc.



### **Key steps:**

#### **1. Meetings**

During at least 5 meetings held in continuity, we all agreed that planning to establish our own businesses after finishing school is good, as well as managing on our own by placing professionally made, modern and competitive products on the market. We all agreed that we have enough self-confidence and many creative ideas that will enable us to start our own businesses, which is proven by other students who have already graduated from this school and who are successfully managing their own companies.

#### **2. Donation and sale of products**

Bearing in mind that our school had supplies of desks and other parts of office furniture, we decided to partially donate these supplies and our newly made products to primary schools, and to partially sell them to purchase raw materials for the production of our new products.

We continue to hold our meetings as needed and we carry on the constant mutual cooperation in order to be successful on the market and to carry out activities of a humanitarian nature, i.e., to donate when we think it is necessary. Currently, the company produces the following range of products: smart desks, furniture (classic desks with a built-in smart system for charging a mobile phone), club tables and stools made from recycled car tires and shelves/tables.



### We are especially proud of:

- the interior design of our school
- the innovation - our first smart desk
- having donated stools and computer desks to 2 elementary schools in April-May 2022.



### Our message for other students:

**It is worth to be consistent with the decision we, the students of this school, made together: All of us who possess both knowledge and skills, let's develop our creativity and entrepreneurial spirit. Also, according to the teacher's explanation, this is at the same time the reason why students decided on this project activity.**

### Authors:

*Laura Cvetkov from class II - 13 with a group of students from forestry-wood processing, mechanical, electrical and textile branches (vocation), (school year 2021/2022)*





# Portugal



## **Escola Secundária de Albergaria-A-Velha**

The Albergaria-a-Velha School Cluster has around 2000 students. Besides six pre-schools and two school centres, the cluster includes six basic schools and one secondary school. The school, in physical terms, has few conditions because it is an old school, which has not been renovated yet. Some classrooms have no projector and there is a single space for the students to be in and socialize when the weather conditions are more adverse. Even though not all the classrooms are well equipped, the teaching methods used are dynamic and creative. Teachers, technicians and remaining staff show professionalism and care. Another positive aspect mentioned by the students is that they can choose the themes they want to work on in the projects they develop.



## **Escola básica nr.2 de São Bernardo**

This school offers education to students from the 5th to the 9th grade. There is also a 1st cycle school in the annexe building. The school buildings are clean and nice. There are playing fields, a large pavilion, and a canteen. There is also a library and a student lounge. It's not a very big school, but it's a very good school!







## **Escola Profissional de Matosinhos (EPROMAT)**

This school is located in Matosinhos, on Rua Avenida Menéres, and is well known for its wide range of professional training courses. This school offers professional training courses for multimedia technicians, tourism technicians, computer technicians - systems, computer technicians - network installation and management, and interior and exterior design. The school also offers some apprenticeship courses, such as those for tourist information and animation technicians, commercial technicians, marketing technicians, and management support technicians. The school also provides food and transport subsidies for students who attend the school's courses.



## **Agrupamento de Escolas de Loureiro**

The school has approximately 900 students, from pre-school to the 9th grade. It is an active school, with many ongoing projects (Erasmus+, Eco schools, Project for Education and Health) and active associations (Civil Protection, Science, School Rock, Mathematics, School Sport). Assistants, teachers and the management are our friends and care about us. In the Citizenship class students develop their projects in different areas. We, as students, feel that we are listened to by the school management, the head teacher and other teachers.



## **Escola Secundária de José Estêvão**

This school is part of the José Estêvão Cluster of Schools, in the city of Aveiro. The school has around 1500 students from the 7th to the 12th grade. The school's projects are organised in 4 pillars/areas: Personal; Proximity and Humanism; Support and Recognition; and Sustainability. The school offers many projects to students, like competitions and such. The school organizes many volunteering actions, in which about 100 students are actively involved. We feel that the school has a very pleasant outdoor space and the terrace that students have created brings an added value because we can socialise, listen to music and relax in between classes. The students taking art courses display their work in the school corridors to cheer up those who pass by and make their day more beautiful.





# 1. Escola Secundária de Albergaria-A-Velha



**1** Number of our projects/activities

As part of the focus groups formed within the "Start the Change" project, the students from our school identified the following issue:

- The physical conditions

The following positive aspects were also identified:

- In our opinion, the best aspects of the school are that it promotes projects, professionalism and dedication of the operational assistants.

Number of students, teachers and parents involved



**13**



**Duration:** 1 semester



**Required materials:** reusable materials, glue, string, polishing paper, scissors, crayons



**Key steps:**

## 1. Presentation of the general theme

In the Citizenship subject, students are always given the freedom to select the topics they wish to address within the domains included in the national strategy of education for citizenship. The class O 8ºF chose the domains of „Volunteering“ and „Sustainability“.

## 2. Choice of sub-theme

Students chose to do a project that entails the creation of a sensorial equipment for the Multi-disability room of the school Cluster, since one student from their class frequents that room. For the creation of this equipment, students thought of recycling materials, thus combining volunteering with sustainability.

## About our project activity "New Experiences" (Novas experiências)



**Topic:** Creation of a sensorial wall



**Our motivation:** The desire to help others.



**Project objectives:** The aim is to provide students in the multi-disability class with richer sensory experiences.



**Methods:** group project



### 3. Collection of materials and analysis of the space

Students visited the multi-disability room and interviewed the technicians, teachers and other staff working there. They assessed the lack of sensorial equipment that could promote the sensorial and cognitive development of the students who use that room. Students formed working groups, split tasks and collected diverse materials in the community. These materials would have been otherwise considered waste, but they became reusable.

### 4. Production of the project

This process took place between September 2021 and January 2022 (1st semester). Tasks were divided among the groups; a calendar was defined and the required resources were listed. One group created a box of olfactory sensations, another group created a board to develop tactile sensations and a plate that helps with the development of tactile and cognitive sensorial competences.

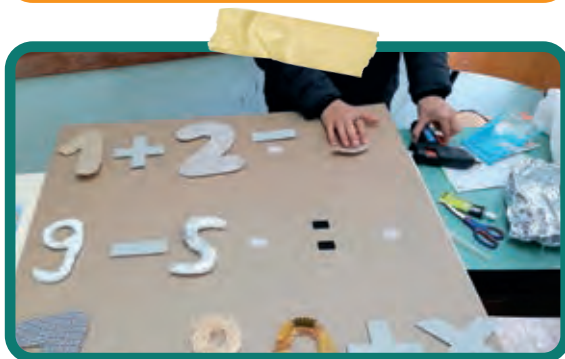
### 5. Delivering the project to the class

Students personally delivered the created equipment to their colleagues with multi-disabilities who frequent the multi-disability room of the school Cluster. This created a beautiful moment of interaction and communication, inspiring the much welcomed new discoveries.



#### Lessons we learned:

What the project has taught us about radicalisation and extremism is that by helping others, we put the ideals that are contrary to those that extremism and radicalisation advocate into practice.



#### We are especially proud of:

What we were most proud of in this project was its delivery and the feeling of happiness we saw on the students' faces.



#### Our message for other students:

... is to continue working on causes like this one, where they can help others.

#### Authors:

Students from the class 8°F  
(school year 2021/2022)





## 2. Escola Profissional de Matosinhos (EPROMAT)



**7** Number of our projects/activities

Number of students, teachers and parents involved



**300**

As part of the focus groups formed within the “Start the Change” project, the students from our school identified the following issues and needs:

- very heavy workload
- the timetables are not fixed
- students are absent a lot
- no common room
- no lockers in the school

The following positive aspects were also identified:

- student-teacher relations are good
- the staff are always ready to help
- the school management is open to our suggestions
- the school has good facilities and equipment
- the school is very active and does many interesting activities

### About our project activity “EPROV – Volunteer Group”



**Topic:** Collection of goods (clothes, shoes, toys, hygiene products)



**Our motivation:** We wanted to do this activity in order to help people with some social needs.

By organizing these activities, we found that students gained more autonomy and responsibility, and became more active citizens of society.



#### **Project objectives:**

1. To collect the goods for helping Ukraine due to the war.
2. Make students aware of the problems of war in the world.
3. Reach as many people as possible with the donations.



**Methods:** creating posters, promotion, decorating, sorting of collected goods



**Duration:** 1 month



**Required materials:** cardboard boxes, corrugated paper, hot glue, glue tape, Computers



#### **Key steps:**

1. The students from the Multimedia T. course made the project's dissemination posters.



**2. The Tourism students promoted the project in their classes, presenting it in the classrooms.**

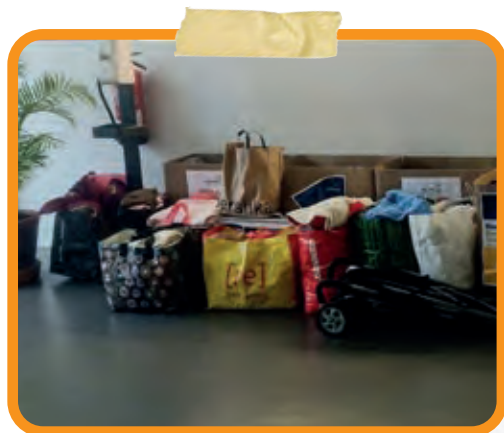
**3. The students of the Vitrinismo course decorated the boxes for the collection.**


**4. The Commerce course students counted and organized the goods and created an Excel file.**

(Helping-Collect-Goods-Solidarity)

**We are especially proud of:**

The unity, as students from the various classes collaborated on the same project.



 **Our message for other students:**  
**Respect others and help people that have needs in life.**

**Authors:**

*Students of the Class MUL20: Beatriz Dos Santos Silva, Bruno Filipe Almeida Oliveira, Marco Filipe Da Silva Reis, Nádia Rodrigues Pereira*





### 3. Escola básica nr.2 de São Bernardo

As part of the focus groups formed within the "Start the Change" project, the students from our school identified the following issues and needs:

- The physical conditions...
- Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the student lounge was closed, and we haven't enjoyed it since.

The following positive aspects were also identified:

- The teachers are friendly and available, and the staff help us whenever we need them.

#### About our project activity

#### "You're beautiful"



**Topic:** Gender equality



**Our motivation:** We had to address the topic of Gender Equality in the fields of Citizenship and Development. We think that the collaboration with the Arts (music, dance) facilitates the internalization of the messages so they stay longer in our minds. We think that this was also a way for all of us to participate.



**5** Number of our projects/activities

Number of students, teachers and parents involved



**28** students



**6** teachers



**2** parents/guardian representatives



**Project objectives:** The choreography intends to show that we are all the same and that we live in a society of which we are all part.

We must work together, and collaborate, to achieve a better world.



**Duration:** 2 months



**Methods:** team meetings, debates in the context of the team and the class, activity planning



**Required materials:** Video camera, CD, CD player





### **Key steps:**

- 1. Choice of music**
- 2. Letter analysis**
- 3. The creation of choreography**
- 4. Presentation of the same to the school community**
- 5. Dissemination of the choreography video on Yammer**



### **Lessons we learned:**

Whether through human rights, gender equality, solidarity or volunteering, our Voice says that we are all equal and entitled to the same opportunities, regardless of race, colour, religion or sexual orientation.



### **Our message for other students:**

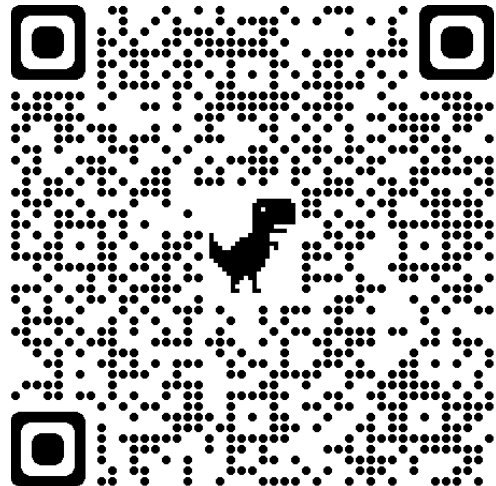
**We must always believe in ourselves, in our abilities. In addition, it is important to realize that we are stronger together and that even what at first may seem unattainable, can be achieved.**

### **Authors:**

a group of students (school year 2021/2022)

### **We are especially proud of:**

- the fact that we have managed to work together on a common goal
- the fact that we presented the choreography to the school community on 25 May (Group Day)
- the positive feedback we receive on Yammer



<https://web.yammer.com/main/threads/eyJfdHlwZSI6IiRocmVhZCIsImkljoiMTc1M-j03Mjg3MT EyNDk5MiJ9>





## 4. Escola Secundária de José Estêvão

As part of the focus groups formed within the “Start the Change” project, the students from our school identified the following issues and needs:

- Our projects do not always come to life; we feel that we are not always heard.

The following positive aspects were also identified:

- In our opinion, the best aspects of the school are the outdoor spaces and the freedom to enter and leave the school whenever we need to.

### About our project activity

## “Futsal competition”



**Topic:** Practice of sports, organization of a futsal competition



**Our motivation:** We wanted to do this activity because during the pandemic we were unable to hold inter-class tournaments. Tournaments have always been a tradition in our school.



**4** Number of our projects/activities

Number of student and teachers involved



**47**

students



**4**

teachers



**Project objectives:** We want to remember how sport moves many people and has unity in its focus.



**Methods:** Instagram and Yammer (to promote/advertise the tournament), the questionnaire forms (for team registrations) and the draw for the teams (through a live stream on the students’ association page)



**Duration:** The activity took about 2 weeks to prepare, and the competition took place one whole day.



**Required materials:** We used mainly computer equipment, with the exception of the day we had to use scoreboards, whistles, stopwatches, balls, game bulletins (paper), etc. We asked two students from the professional photography course to participate and they created a photographic report of the event.





### Key steps:

1. Advertise
2. Plan
3. Organize
4. Play



### Lessons we learned:

The project has taught us about radicalisation and extremism and that we always need to respect others.



### Our message for other students:

**...is to continue proposing activities that you think are important to carry out. Believe that you can achieve your objectives. Try to work as a team and allow everyone to participate in the projects.**

### We are especially proud of:

- We think this was the best school activity all year long.
- What we are most proud of in this project was the number of students who were watching the whole tournament. The pavilion was always full and at no time was there any need to intervene in order to maintain cordiality.
- The students always maintained respect for everyone.

### Authors:

*a group of students  
(school year 2021/2022)*







**6** Number of our projects/activities

Number of students and teachers involved



**300**

## 5. Agrupamento de Escolas de Loureiro

As part of the focus groups formed within the “Start the Change” project, the students from our school identified the following issues and needs:

- (...)some physical conditions, such as walls or benches are old and have been degraded. Some classrooms need to be painted and need to have heating in the wintertime. Some lavatories also need remodelling as they have also deteriorated.

The following positive aspects were also identified:

- In our opinion, the best aspects of the school are the projects and associations in which we can participate; the fact that we can develop different activities; and the teachers and school assistants that care for us and help us.

(individually or in groups) make proposals for the improvement the school, based on a budget.

➔ **Our motivation:** It is a chance for us to improve our school, to choose what we want to improve and to involve all students in the voting for the best project. We can see that our opinions really count.

🎯 **Project objectives:** The ultimate goal is to improve something in the school. We think that this project also aims to develop the students’ critical attitude, the ability to analyse what needs to be improved, to present a proposal based on a budget, to analyse different proposals and to participate in the voting for the winning project.

⚙️ **Methods:** meetings (prepared by the teacher to present the budget), pair/group work, debates (to present the different projects of the class so that we could choose the best one to represent the class)

🕒 **Duration:** 1 school-term (approximately 3 months)

✂️ **Required materials:** All kinds of material that we want, from computers to research the price of things, trying not to exceed our budget, to the apps or digital tools to present the projects in the classroom. Then, preparation

### About our project activity

## “School’s Participatory Budgeting”



**Topic:** This activity is designed for students from the 7th to the 9th grades. Its aim is that students



of posters posted around the school with the projects of each class for dissemination and final voting (paper and pen).

### **Key steps:**

- 1. The teacher presents the programme “School’s Participatory Budgeting” to students**
- 2. Students form groups to gather ideas and clarify doubts regarding the project**
- 3. Brainstorming about the school: what can I do to improve my school? What needs to be done?**
- 4. Tour around the school building to check the previous ideas**
- 5. Group work: compiling proposals/ideas on what really needs to be done and what is feasible**
- 6. After setting the goals, research on what we want to change and the associated costs**
- 7. Filling in the form with the project each group wants to implement**
- 8. Presentation of the different projects/ recommendations to the class**
- 9. Class debate to discuss points of view, discover information and explain the reasons behind the project and its viability (defence)**
- 10. Voting for the project which best represents interests of each class (which is the best project to represent the class)**
- 11. Elaboration of a campaign poster (one per class involved) to expose the projects and get votes**

### **We are especially proud of:**

What we are most proud of in this project is being able to see that our ideas are important to the school and that we are the ones who decide what will be improved.

- 12. Deadline for dissemination and analysis of different projects (1 per class) in order to vote for the project that will represent the school.**



### **Lessons we learned:**

What the project has taught us about radicalisation and extremism is that everyone should be listened to and that, in order for our idea to win, we must be aligned, united and come to a conclusion together. Everyone has something to say and every opinion counts.



### **Our message for other students:**

**In order to be heard at school, we must first listen to others, and we must all collaborate to improve our school.**

### **Authors:**

*Students of the classes 8ºD e 7ºB  
(school year 2021/2022)*





# Croatia



## Commercial and Trade School Bjelovar

A vocational school following the motto: *If you can dream it, you can do it* (W. Disney). 270 students attend this school, which offers two educational training programmes: one for sales assistants and one for commercialists. There are 21 students with disabilities in the school (8%). We are proud of numerous preventive programmes, health and civic education programmes, student cooperatives, training companies, Erasmus accreditation and the school's openness to the community.







## School of Administration Zagreb

This school operates in the educational sector for economy, trade and business administration, offering educational training programmes for business secretaries and administrative officers in the duration of four years and for administrators in the duration of two years. In the school year 2020/2021, the school had 488 students, 48 members of the teaching staff and four professional associates. The school is the seat of the Association of Croatian Secondary School Head teachers, the Association of Administrative and Bureau Technical Schools of the Republic of Croatia and the (inter)county professional council of business administration teachers; accordingly, it organizes professional development programmes at the county and state levels. So far, the school has participated in six Erasmus+ projects, and in the implementation of the project "Multilingualism in a digital and multicultural environment" financed by the European Structural Fund.



## Nursing School Vrapče

This school is located on the premises of the University Psychiatric Hospital Vrapče in Zagreb and has been operating as an independent school since 1991.

At the beginning of the project implementation, 359 students attended the school. The school implements numerous national and school projects. Students have access to the Globe programme, volunteering, humanitarian, sports and other extracurricular activities, as well as cooperation with civil associations in accordance with the students' interests. The motto of the Vrapča Nursing School, *Times change and we change with them*, motivates and obliges all school employees to make changes that contribute to preserving the recognizable positive values of the School as an educational institution.





## **Ivan Meštrović Primary School**

Ivan Meštrović Primary School has been operating in Zagreb since 1969. Currently, 737 students in 33 class departments attend this school. The school leadership have invested a lot of time and effort to embed key values into the school ethos, because they want students to leave the school with both the knowledge and values needed to lead a successful and happy life. The school implements different projects and activities related to topics such as promotion of diversity, tolerance and active citizenship.



## **Dugo Selo High School**


This school has 689 students attending 11 educational programmes (three-year and four-year vocational programmes and a general gymnasium programme). The students of this school belong to different ethnic, linguistic, national and religious groups. The school has participated in various projects, and we would like to highlight those focusing on diversity, tolerance and active citizenship.







# 1. Commercial and Trade School Bjelovar

 **6** Number of our projects/activities


Number of students, teachers and parents involved


 **120** students

 **24** teachers

 **32** parents

## About our project activity "Colours are in us"

 **Topic:** Arrangement and improvement of school spaces according to the wishes and needs of students.

 **Our motivation:** The students expressed that they wanted to have more space for sitting, remove excess lockers from the corridor, paint individual walls and lockers, decorate the outdoor classroom and get a machine for soft drinks and snacks, a panel with information about the work of the Student

As part of the focus groups formed within the "Start the Change" project, the students from our school have identified the following issues and needs:

- poor availability of information regarding school events
- insufficiently valorized student work in school activities
- students do not see the purpose of the Student Council

The following positive aspects were also identified:

- openness of the school towards the community
- various extracurricular activities and projects
- good-natured and understanding teachers

Council and activities in which they can create something. They expressed their wish to achieve better mutual relations through informal gatherings with teachers: through the implementation of their proposals, they would receive confirmation that their opinion is important and that they are heard.



### Project objectives:

1. To investigate students' attitudes about the desired changes in the school.
2. To implement students' ideas related to the arrangement of the school premises and the initiation of certain activities (financial literacy, healthy snacks project #samozdravičips - #onlyhealthychips).



3. To present the results of the research to students and teachers.

4. To plan further work at the school level.



**Methods:** online research, focus groups, meetings of the Student Council, meetings of the decorating teams, NV sessions (information about activities), involvement in the activities of production and sale of products / dried fruit



**Duration:** 3 years



**Required materials:** computers for online research, furniture for decoration, machinery and accessories for the production of healthy snacks



**Key steps:**

### 1. Conducting research on focus groups and the main research

Following the research conducted by external researchers on focus groups, we conducted a school survey that covered 73 % of the school's students. The research was aimed at examining concrete desired changes in schools that would improve the quality and culture of school life.

### 2. Analysis of results and decision-making

The analysed results were presented in all class departments, and at the Student Council and the Teachers' Council sessions.

The project team made up of students, members of the teaching staff and the Student Council considered possible activities in the school and suggested decorating the school, buying machines for snacks and soft drinks, organizing activities in which students would actively participate, banning smoking in front of the school and introducing a new school subject, Financial Literacy.

### 3. Implementation of the proposal

Students worked in teams.

The team designated for decorating

the school considered the decorating options, analysed the most optimal solutions, researched offers and prices, and proposed their ideas to the school head teacher. They helped with removing wardrobes and installing new seats (two-seaters and stools) and panels, as well as in their decoration. In addition to the central lobby, a corridor has also been re-arranged and an additional space for socializing has been provided.



Also, the students initiated the arrangement of space in the school yard in order to create an outdoor classroom. Since the construction of a garden pavilion (fire escape route) is not allowed, stump seats were purchased in cooperation with the Forestry Department, while the Cool-Collective student cooperative sewed cushions for seating.

Given that students highlighted the need to acquire knowledge in financial literacy in the surveys, the elective subject Financial Literacy was introduced in the school year 2021/22. The related training sessions for teachers and students were previously held, while parents were introduced to the new subject during parent-teacher meetings.

The students examined the possibilities of purchasing and installing machines for snacks and drinks, and the legal regulations regarding their installation, sent letters and held a meeting with the head teacher. Due to the lack of infrastructure, it was not realized, but



students got acquainted with the process of realizing an activity.

The anti-smoking campaign in front of the school was carried out, interviews were conducted with all class departments, posters were put up, and the compliance with the rules (not to smoke in front of the school) was constantly highlighted, as well as the harmfulness of smoking.

Given that the students of this school highly rated the existence of the student

county fair of student cooperatives, and the end was marked by a field trip gifted to all those who actively participated.



### Lessons we learned:

- that it is important to say what we think
- to cooperate and work with other students
- to listen to each other and work together
- that it is worth being persistent and that what we want will come true (just like the motto of our school "If you can imagine it, you can do it!")
- to encourage and not be afraid of changes
- to be persistent
- some entrepreneurial skills



cooperative and expressed the need to create something themselves, they were given the opportunity to work in the COOL collective's student cooperative project #samozdravičips - production of healthy snacks, healthy light meals. The project included research on healthy nutrition, presentation of results, education of students, procurement of drying machines and other necessary equipment, information on conditions (sanitary libraries and standards), procurement of apples, cooperation with family farms (OPGs), preparation and drying of fruit, weighing and packaging, sales and marketing activities. Cooperation was achieved with the school training company, family farms, fruit producers, schools (participation in the Sports Day of the Bjelovar Technical School), kindergartens (Health Day at the Bubamara Kindergarten), the association OSIT (people with intellectual disabilities). A notable performance was achieved at the





### We are especially proud of:

- the fact that we have the opportunity to learn more about financial literacy
- the fact that everyone cares about us and that we do well at school, and be safe in these uncertain times
- the student cooperative "The cooperative is the first league"
- ourselves and our school, the teachers, all employees...
- the fact that we fought for a place to sit/hang out in the school corridors ("The best investment in a school is the arrangement of that space for resting and hanging out.")
- the fact that we know that our teachers and the head teacher listened to our suggestions and helped make them come true
- participating in the improvement of the life and work of the school



### Our message for other students:

- **Let your imagination run wild!**
- **Your opinion matters! Express it!**
- **Everything is possible when you want!**
- **You should never give up on your goals!**
- **Appreciate others, but also yourself!**



### Authors:

*Antonija Tomić, Ana Knežević, Leona Broz,  
Katja Davinić - 2. b; Slavko Valenčić - 3. a;  
Mislav Katić - 2. a; teacher Ivana Štiglić,  
pedagogue Ornela Malogorski  
(school year 2021/2022)*





## 2. School of Administration Zagreb



**4** Number of our projects/activities

Number of students involved



**25**

### About our project activity "Menstrual poverty"



**Topic:** Menstrual poverty in Croatia and at school



**Our motivation:** Following the example of some secondary schools in Croatia, to provide female students with basic hygiene items at school.



**Project objectives:**

1. To contact the manufacturers.
2. To ask for donations or models of how to provide sanitary napkins.



**Methods:** brainstorming, research methods, project work



**Duration:** 1 school year (2021/2022)

As part of the focus groups formed within the "Start the Change" project, the students from our school have identified the following issues and needs:

The results of the research done on focus groups showed that the students of the School of Administration Zagreb need quality infrastructure and modern methodological trends in order to be happier.

It is very clear that students think that the retention of knowledge in subjects that use discussion methods is higher, that they consider those subjects more interesting, and teachers more approachable. In addition, it is necessary to work on the development of the school spirit, a sense of belonging, as well as encouraging the active participation of students by explaining to them why it is important.



#### Key steps:

1. Identifying needs
2. Brainstorming at the Student Council meetings
3. Searching for possible solutions
4. Contacting manufacturers and suppliers
5. Asking for donations
6. Searching for alternative solutions
7. Presentation of the proposed solution at the Student Council meeting



The students researched and concluded that some schools in the Republic of Croatia were able to receive donations from manufacturers of hygiene products, so they first decided to contact them and ask for donations. In the meantime, they decided to explore other possible solutions to this problem, in case they did not get a positive response from the manufacturers, so they researched offers on the market and discussed alternatives. They did not receive any positive response for donations, so they devised a model through which the school could provide funds for the purchase of hygiene items by placing containers in the school corridors and collecting returnable plastic packaging. They presented the solution at the Student Council meeting. In this school year, plastic containers were placed in school corridors and returnable plastic packaging (bottles) is being collected.



#### **Lessons we learned:**

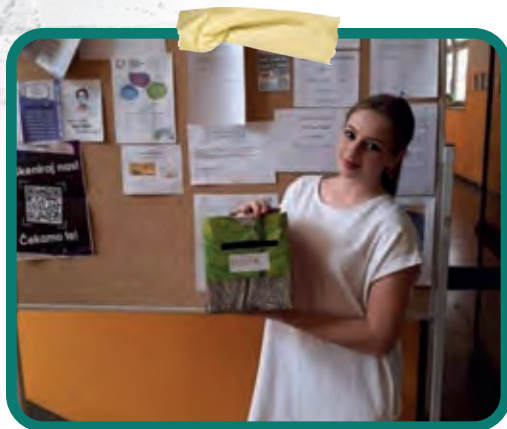
This project taught us to fight for ourselves and how to achieve goals.

We learned to listen to the voices of our students who are shy and do not have enough courage to speak out loud, i.e., suggest ideas to their colleagues.

We learned to appreciate the problems of others and try to solve them as best as possible. We tried to find solutions for many problems that arose, and we think we were quite good at it.

We have learned something new about our school.

We learned to cooperate, as well as various information regarding our school and various projects in which it participated and in which it would like to participate. This project helped us learn that if we really want something, and we are ready to work hard for it, everything is possible. And that all obstacles can be overcome with the help of the community and a common goal.



#### **We are especially proud of:**

- our teachers who work hard for students and are by their side
- the creativity of students who came up with ideas to improve our stay at school
- trying to solve problems and coming up with new ideas that will contribute to the improvement of the entire school and make it a better and more pleasant institution, both for students and teachers. Classroom painting ideas, waste separation and more have improved this school.
- our school because it participates in various projects and tries to modernize as much as possible
- us, class presidents, who actively participated in meetings and in the various realizations of annual goals
- mutual communication, sometimes between students and sometimes between students and teachers

We believe that everyone's wishes and needs were respected in the communication, and that in itself is a great success.





Visit to the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education and discussion on the position of vocational school students in the State Matriculation exams



### Our message for other students:

- **Fight for yourself.**
- **We hope that future class presidents and generations will come up with even better ideas and participate in as many projects and additional activities as possible.**
- **We want other students to understand the problems and try to get involved in solving them because all help is more than welcome.**
- **Study a lot and be responsible.**
- **Never give up on your goals; study and work hard because one day you will realize that it was really worth it.**
- **We hope that in the next school year we will cooperate even better and more successfully on making the school a better and safer place for all of us: )!**

### Authors:

Antonia Stanic - 3.d, Katarina Sigurnjak - 3.e, Anđela Boras - 2.c; Dorotea Žilec, Grobenski Lana, Matea Princip - 2. d; pedagogist Marija Hazdovac (school year 2021/2022)







### 3. Nursing School Vrapče



**2** Number of our projects/activities

Number of students, teachers and parents involved



**140** students



**10** teachers



**8** parents

#### About our project activity

##### "In my shoes"



**Topic:** Organization of panel discussions with the participation of the head teacher and the pedagogist on the topics proposed by the students.



**Our motivation:** We talk in an argumentative manner. We think we have the right to say how it feels to be in our shoes, especially when it comes to the organization of classes during the pandemic and the attitudes of individual teachers towards us.



**Project objectives:**

1. To improve the working atmosphere in the school.

As part of the focus groups formed within the "Start the Change" project, the students from our school identified the following issues and needs:

Students think that they have no right to express their opinions or that they have problems. They understand that they lack life experience, but would like to talk about problems with more mature people, even though it is important for them to talk with their peers as well.

The students pointed out the problems related to the spatial limitations of the school and the problem of being overloaded during the day. The overload refers to the schedule of classes and exercises, which additionally came to the fore during the strike of educators and the poor organization of distance learning.

The students' voice is not heard or respected enough, and the way some teachers communicate with students is unacceptable.

2. To develop a culture of dialogue.
3. To encourage students to be active in the school and connect with the Student Council.
4. To encourage positive changes in the school and make the school a pleasant place where we all respect each other.



**Methods:** focus groups at the beginning of the project, student proposals in the inbox, student meetings regarding the project, and live discussions on the Zoom and platform.

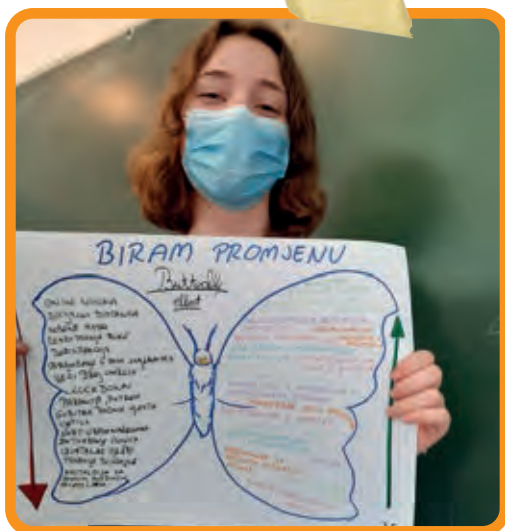


**Duration:** 2 school years



**Required materials:** good will, motivation ☺, inbox and computers for online discussions and agreements





## Key steps:

### 1. Conducting research on focus groups and interviews

Since we participated in a focus group research at the beginning of the Start the Change project, we used the obtained results as a basis for further action.

### 2. Analysis of results and decision-making

We analysed the student proposals from the inbox, grouped them, agreed on how to present them and encourage students to make proposals and complaints that they can personally sign with the guarantee of student anonymity.

### 3. Regular meetings of students and teachers regarding the project

Communication between students and teachers regarding the project in person, in the WhatsApp group and on the Zoom platform.

### 4. Organization of a panel discussion on a topic proposed by the students



## Lessons we learned:

This project helped us learn how important it is to express what bothers you and encourage change. We learned to communicate better with our teachers and realized how important communication really is.

We have seen how good teamwork is and how a team/group can achieve more than an individual.

The project encouraged us to take initiative, to stand out in the school and to represent the voice of other students. We learned how important it is to take responsibility in certain situations and that we can solve all problems through discussions.





### **We are especially proud of:**

We are most proud of the positive group work and the positive changes that have taken place. We are proud to see that we have the right to express our opinion. The most important thing that we are proud of is the realization that we can talk to our teachers in a normal manner and that we should not use our “voice as if serving guests”.

We are also proud of introduction of optional classes for 4th year students as a preparation on the State Matriculation Exam and the possibility of a discussion with the head teacher and teachers on a topic that the students propose.

We are proud that the students’ voice is respected.



### **Our message for other students:**

**It's always worth standing up for yourself. You always have the right to your opinion. When expressing your opinion, it is important to strengthen yourself, but the purpose of the dialogue, i.e., a reasoned discussion, is also important.**




### **Authors:**

*Drita Havolli - 4.c, Marta Gudec and Marlena Musa - 4.b and teacher Mirjana Kozina (school year 2021/2022)*





## 4. Ivan Meštrović Primary School

 **3** Number of our projects/activities

Number of students, teachers and parents involved



**40** students



**36** teachers



**184** parents

### About our project activity

## "I also have a say - the voice of the Student Council in the time of COVID-19"



**Topic:** The position of the Student Council during the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Our motivation:** Many people know what the Student Council is, but they do not know what it is for, i.e., what role it plays. The Student Council plays a key role in the participation of students in the work of the school and influences the interaction between students and the school. The law stipulates that the Student Council has to consist of representatives of all classes and that the representatives

As part of the focus groups formed within the "Start the Change" project, the students from our school identified the following issues and needs:

- unacceptable verbal communication of individual teachers
- insufficient flow of information in the relation class - teacher/class teacher - professional service
- organization of distance learning during the pandemic
- insufficient participation of students in the school life
- the students' voice is not heard nor respected

The following positive aspects were also identified:

- satisfaction with the school and its teachers
- newly enrolled students feel nice and accepted

of the Student Council are to participate in the work of the school body when deciding on the rights and obligations of students without the right to decide. This means that the Student Council representatives should be involved in the process of making decisions related to students. For example, they should express their opinion regarding distance learning, but they have no right to decide what will happen. The school's statute determines the way of working and the scope of activities of the Student Council. But does the Student Council always fulfil its tasks and is it even involved in the work of the school in such a way? These are very common questions that are sometimes not easy to answer. It was precisely because of these questions that the project "I also have a say - the voice of the student council in the time of COVID-19" was launched last year.



### Project objectives:

To investigate the position of the Student Council during the COVID-19 pandemic.





**Methods:** online surveys and focus groups, meetings



**Duration:** 1 year



**Required materials:** computers for conducting online research and - if necessary - online meetings



**Key steps:**

### 1. Conducting research on focus groups and interviews

The results of the research conducted on focus groups revealed rare but existing cases of unacceptable verbal communication, an insufficiently successful flow of information between the class-teacher/classroom-professional service, gender inequality, failure to fulfil the role of the Student Council and extremely poor organization of distance learning (which has been improved, though could have been prevented by holding Student Council meetings). All these problems could have been solved much earlier, but they were not.

### 2. Changes in the leadership and organization of the Student Council

That is why, starting this school year, the coordination and leadership of the Student Council has been taken over by a teacher who is herself one of the head people in the Start a Change in Our School project. So far, a total of 9 meetings of the Student Council have been held, 3 meetings with students from the first 4 grades, and 6 meetings with students from the 5th to the 8th grade.

At every meeting, the students pose questions related to everything they are interested in without hesitation and get an answer in the shortest possible time.

### 3. Regular meetings and work on identified problems

Topics that are often repeated at the meetings are: the traffic in front of the school, inappropriate behaviour of students, technical problems with

smart boards, tablets and computers, destruction of school property, problems with school toilets, questions regarding the repair of windows and the roof (renovation of the school in its entirety), general pollution of the school environment and more. Some of those problems are in the process of being solved, while some still await the head teacher's response, which the students will receive soon.



Meeting of the Student Council in the school yard

### The Author:

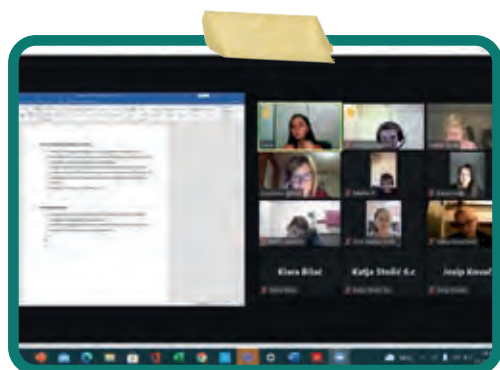
*Ema Kovačević - 8. a  
(school year 2020/2021)*

## The Reformators group

As part of the Start the Change project, the Reformators group was launched, consisting of students from the 5th to the 8th grade. The group meets every Thursday evening via Zoom and everyone can then express their opinions and proposals that are further considered with the other group members. The first project of the Reformators group was the selection of criteria for the student valedictorian, which was successfully completed within two months.



The final result is the following criteria: Success, Conduct, Participation (and Success) in competitions, Participation in school activities and competitions, Participation in school projects, Volunteering, Participation in extracurricular activities. For each criterion, a certain number of points are obtained, which are added up at the end, and the student with the most points becomes the valedictorian, i.e. the students of the generation.



### We are especially proud of:

- participating and creating a code of ethics for students and teachers that will improve their relationships
- the will and efforts of every student who participated in this project
- the criteria for the selection of the student valedictorian
- the way we designed the Open Day organized by students
- the fact that we got the opportunity to change something in the school and we helped other generations



### Lessons we learned:

- to express our opinion publicly, without shame (even though there are older students among us)
- to communicate and agree with older and younger students
- to respect other people's opinions (even when we don't agree with them)
- that opinions can change when others explain their ideas well
- how problems can be solved creatively
- how to fight for our voice
- to recognize prejudices and many injustices (which some students of our school encountered)
- how to become more open and ready to learn about new things that we were not familiar before
- tolerance
- how to connect to Zoom 😊



### Our message for other students:

- **You need to be persistent in everything you do.**
- **Express your opinion.**
- **Always present as many ideas as possible out loud, because you will come to a solution faster and complete the task successfully.**
- **Don't just sit on the benches; do something about the problem because if we make an effort and work together, we can make a change.**
- **It is better to try and fail than not to try and still fail.**

### Authors:

*Tia Lojo and Matija Dukić - 6. d  
(school year 2020/2021)*





## 5. Dugo Selo High School



**2** Number of our projects/activities

Number of students and teachers involved



**10** students



**17** teachers

As part of the focus groups formed within the “Start the Change” project, the students from our school identified the following issues and needs:

- huge stress as the result of the epidemiological situation and distance learning
- student burnout

The following positive aspects were also identified:

- students often confide in their peers

### About our project activity

## Peer Counselling Centre



**Topic:** Providing support and advice to students who will be able to write about their problem anonymously and ask for a second opinion and advice.



**Our motivation:** It was a difficult period of time due to the pandemic and the earthquake that happened in Zagreb. Students participated in distance learning and had limited time for socializing and extracurricular activities. They were interested in the burnout syndrome among students and young people. They suggested trying to help each other. The first idea was for the students to hold workshops about stress and ways to deal with it that other students in the school would attend. Then, they came up with the idea of making motivational posters, support posters and advice posters, which they eventually did. They put the posters on the bulletin boards in the corridors of the school and our website. After all of that, they came up with the final idea connected to the fact that other students might confide in them more easily than adults: the idea of a Peer Counselling Centre.



### Project objectives:

1. To raise awareness of what stress is and to learn about efficient ways to deal with stress.
2. To provide quick help with posters that present ways to deal with stress.
3. To attend trainings for counsellors.
4. To organize a Peer Counselling Centre.



**Methods:** meetings, teamwork



**Duration:** 1 year



**Required materials:** good will ☺, computers with access to the e-mail account





## Key steps:

### 1. Conducting research on focus groups and interviews

During the first meeting, the students verbalized the constant fear they feel, which is a consequence of the epidemiological situation and the earthquake.

The first meeting was concluded with a task assigned to each student in which they had to write down two ways (methods, techniques) in which they deal with stress before or during oral/written exams.

Out of all the tips, the ones that were of the highest quality and most relevant were selected. By liking posts, students selected those they found worthy of sharing with other students. Finally, they made a digital poster that we published on all the channels available to us so that the students' advices would reach other students as soon as possible.

### 2. Analysis of results and decision-making

After the students made the posters and put them up along the corridors of the school and on our website, they discussed the idea of workshops that they would conduct with the other students of the school. The idea of a Peer Counselling

Centre was born pretty soon. They believed that students would certainly find it easier to talk to their peers and colleagues from school than their teachers. Especially if they can do it anonymously. After several meetings and trying out various digital and communication tools, the students decided on the simplest one. E-mail. A student can open a new e-mail account completely anonymously and send a problem to the e-mail address of our counselling centre and receive advice and support. Before starting work, our volunteers had to undergo training with our psychologists in order to adequately prepare for their new responsibilities.

### 3. Regular Student Council meetings

For our activities, we have opened a special channel on the Teams platform that serves as our official communication tool.

Meetings are organized regularly.





### We are especially proud of:

- how students came up with the project themselves, and the school really helped them realize their ideas
- how many students got involved and wanted to be counsellors and thus help their peers
- the fact that, while helping other students, they also helped themselves because they tried some of the tips they wrote on the posters...



### Our message for other students:

- To freely get involved in projects that interest them.
- That their voice is also important and that they can influence the community in which they live.

### Authors:

*Josip Jagić, Katarina Pavić, Ivana Lucić (students);*

*Antonela Papak, Ivana Karas, Ivana Lucić, Josipa Jagić, Katarina Pavić, Lana Vukadinović, Lara Butorac, Marina Barukčić, Patricija Bajić, Teodor Bertović (students from the Peer Counselling Centre);*



### Lessons we learned:

- that we don't have to wait for someone else to initiate changes: we can do it ourselves
- that help and advice are always available, we just need to ask
- that we are capable of creative ways of solving problems
- that all of us young people suffer from similar, if not the same problem, and we are all vulnerable after all the events that occurred in the last few years

*psychologist Alka Alfired Radmanović, pedagogist Iva Hodak; teachers Martina Matosović Pongrac and Ivana Čorić*















# BOOK OF GOOD IDEAS

**STUDENTS PROMOTING THEIR  
VOICE AND PARTICIPATION**



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