



NORVEGIJOS PARAMA LIETUVAI:
partnerystė vertybėms
kurti ir išsaugoti



IMPROVEMENT OF QUALIFICATION OVER THE LIFELONG LEARNING, ENHANCEMENT OF MOTIVATION THROUGH INTERACTIVE CREATION AND DEPLOYMENT OF TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATION STAFF, PROJECT No. EEE-LT08-ŠMM-01-K-02-014

BRIEF INFORMATION ON THE ORGANIZATION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFLATOUN PROGRAMME AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

Public Institution Trakai Education Centre in cooperation with the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences and Lithuanian Children's Fund is implementing a project, as a result of which a series of Aflatoun textbooks for pre-school, school and non-formal education of children will be translated and published. The project is based on the application of two innovative methods, i.e., interinstitutional cooperation and interactive work, and will enable preparing supervisors and educators trained to employ these methods in their work.

The problem addressed: the need to develop financial literacy in children

Today, specialists, scholars and practitioners agree that the lack of social skills is the main cause of social exclusion, which sometimes has irreparable adverse impact on the lives as well as social and professional status of individuals. Children are at the greatest disadvantage, where the lack of social skills is deep-rooted and no foundation for other skills is laid, which results in a cycle of poverty and exclusion. Both the global and European practice shows that, in addition to other social skills (such as communication, career planning, living in a family), financial literacy skills, for example, saving, accumulation, planning of income and expenses, etc. are also of great importance. Currently, Lithuania offers only few professional programmes dedicated to the development of financial literacy in children of different ages. None of the country's orphanages have ever implemented this type of project before.

The Aflatoun Programme is unique, since it is a holistic programme promoting children's rights through their empowerment by means of developing their financial, economic and social literacy, promoting their participation and making them agents of change in the life of their communities.

History of Aflatoun. Indian scholars and practitioners have developed a programme bringing children from wealthy and poor backgrounds together to learn about each other's lives. The experience has shown that children's rights education is a way of combating prejudice and discrimination. Expansion of the programme out of the city into rural areas helped the most entrepreneurial children who were leaving the country and becoming street children or child labourers in major cities to harness their energy and creativity at home. Savings groups were incorporated for this purpose. They have had a crucial impact on the development of the Aflatoun Programme. In 2005, the programme was incorporated in Amsterdam to share good practice with the rest of the world. In 2008, a campaign for Social and Financial Education was launched by the then Princess Maxima of the Netherlands. The campaign's goals were to reach one million children in 75 countries within 3 years and these targets were exceeded.

Unique characteristics and spirit of Aflatoun, value-based justification. Aflatoun curricula cover both social and financial themes. Children learn about themselves, children's rights, basics of saving, key financial terms and entrepreneurship. The main goal of the Aflatoun Programme is child-centred education where children are given space for self-expression, acting independently and dealing with practical issues in a team. All situations are handled using the *Explore, Think, Investigate and Act* method.

Children learn through singing, acting and dancing, playing together, establishing savings clubs, implementing social projects and practical initiatives of entrepreneurship.

The Aflatoun Programme is based on belief that children all over the world should have an understanding of their rights and obligations. They should also be aware of the existing financial measures necessary for the exercise of their rights. The programme covers two main poles of education: development of social skills and financial as well as entrepreneurial literacy. The core of all the curricula consists of 5 equally important components:

Individual understanding and exploration component which allows starting building children's confidence and developing their self-expression skills at the young age;

Rights and obligations component introducing children to the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;

Saving and buying component aimed at helping children understand what value is, teaching them to accumulate valuable items, while promoting broad and positive view of saving in both financial terms and from the point of view of preservation of other resources, i.e., teaching them to use natural resources sparingly and responsibly;

Planning and budgeting component designed to help children set personal financial goals, develop the ability to plan their future, learn to make the planned steps towards the achievement of their major goals;

Social and financial enterprises component developed to teach children to drive social change, explore the world and achieve their goals.

Curricula are built and improved based on the experience of more than 17 years (since the introduction of the initial curriculum in India) with 10 pilot projects being implemented in different places of the world. Curricula are carefully adapted to children from different regions and of different ages; they are also tailored to suit both formal and non-formal education. Aflatoun partners have already translated curricula into more than 30 languages and implemented them in over 60 countries. As a result of the project, textbooks will be published in the Lithuanian language, which will enable the partners to implement the Aflatoun Programme in Lithuania as well.

Further plans of the partners for implementation of the Aflatoun Programme in Lithuania:

It is planned that the cooperation of Trakai Education Centre, Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences and Lithuanian Children's Fund will allow implementing the Aflatoun Programme as a pilot project in the Vilnius Region and introducing educational staff from other regions to the possibilities of application of the program in their daily work, while drawing their attention to the need of such an attractive programme. Training results and evaluation will be regularly discussed. It is essential that direct cooperation between the local Aflatoun partner, i.e., Lithuanian Children's Fund, and the Aflatoun Secretariat in Amsterdam is used as a valuable tool. The Aflatoun Programme operates in 105 countries, which offers extensive experience and great potential necessary for our children.

Success of social and financial education mainly depends on the funding, which is closely linked to the annual planning process. The results of the programme depend on accurate planning. In the future, funding could be obtained from sponsors, foundations, etc. Additional funding is based on three key strategies: grants, cooperation with financial institutions and state aid. It is understandable that successful funding allows avoiding potential risks involved in the implementation of the project, thus it is very important to look for different sources of funding, which would provide the greatest possible protection against such risks. Since the main goal of Aflatoun is to promote social and financial literacy, banks, micro-financing institutions, credit unions being interested in financial literacy of the society seem inclined to provide funding for the programme. Cooperation with financial institutions and the integrated Aflatoun Programme that seeks to teach children how to save money at lowest cost promises great results.

Implementation of the Aflatoun Programme in Lithuania has already been launched: now, professionals are being trained to work with the Aflatoun Programme. Trakai Education Centre, Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences and Lithuanian Children's Fund select 20 volunteers from among their partners, educational institutions, financial institutions, management staff working in the field of education, etc. Usually, the basic initial knowledge does not suffice, so it is necessary to organize continuous training, follow the latest developments in the field using the resources of the Aflatoun Academy (see the link above), hold regular meetings, discussions, organize monitoring, research, prepare summaries and presentations. Later, the parties agree on ten-, three- or one-day training for the future

coaches of the educational staff. The first future coaches establish the Aflatoun Club, which supervises the implementation and development of the programme, looks for partners, takes care of funding and organizes joint meetings. These twenty participants draw up a report based on the recommendations of Aflatoun and divide responsibilities among the club members. The training participants will draw up a joint programme for participation on the International Aflatoun Day, which takes place on the seventeenth of March. This is the day when children from all over the world communicate with each other by interactive means. Steps for the inclusion of parents, etc. in the process will be planned.

Shared goals and methods:

- To become one of the leaders in the field of social and financial education for children and young people through the development of training and application of new experimental teaching methods.
- To include 10 thousand children and young people in the Aflatoun curriculum by the end of 2020; to cover at least 10 regions and implement a high-quality curriculum.
- To develop continuous professional development programme for the educational staff with a view of applying the Aflatoun Programme for the social and financial literacy of children in educational establishments of Lithuania.
- To strengthen cooperation among organizations and expand the network of partners.

The Aflatoun Programme together with the cooperation of the three Lithuanian organizations allows realizing social and economic rights of children. The work of these organizations gives hope that it will be possible to include children in the building of economic and social security within their communities. This cooperation is likely to allow comparing different visions of the cooperation process. Implementation of the programme provides opportunities to promote children's rights through the use of Aflatoun tools as well as hearing out children's opinions in the process.

The Aflatoun Programme is based on social and financial interpretation and helps to achieve the defined goals. Discussions with the educational staff have led to the expectation that working according to the Aflatoun curriculum will be mutually beneficial. Aflatoun allows comparing how education changes the understanding of the life cycle, especially in primary schools, where the age of children ranges from six to fourteen. This is achieved with the help of textbooks incorporating every stage of life, ensuring non-formal education and serving as a guarantee of education. Implementation of the Aflatoun Programme relies heavily on the support of cooperating organizations.