



**İZNİK İLÇE MİLLİ
EĞİTİM MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ**



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"Shadow Theatre in Preschool Education"

Erasmus+ Programme, Key Action 2

Cooperation between organisations and institutions

Small-scale partnership project - School Education Sector

Project coordinator:

Kindergarten "Mir" Mezdra, Bulgaria

Partners:

Fondatsiya "Tsennosti, dobrodeteli, integritet", Bulgaria

**Liceul Tehnologic Baia de Fier- Gradinita cu Program
Prelungit Baia de Fier, Romania;**

IZNIK ILCE MILLI EGITIM MUDURLUGU, Turkey

"Shadow Theatre in Preschool Education"

PROJECT TEAMS

BULGARIA "Mir" Mezdra



ROMANIA



BULGARIA VVI foundation



TURKEY



"Shadow Theatre in Preschool Education"

Starting from the phrase "learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together with others and learning to be", we proposed to work with other European educational institutions, within a small-scale cooperation partnership project, whose target group consists of preschoolers aged 3-7, teachers and parents. The working language of the project is English.

The objectives of the project are:

- promoting the "shadow theater" as a means of creating a favorable and inclusive environment inside and outside the kindergarten;
- strengthening the Europeanization and internationalization, the capacity of local management and international cooperation of organizations and educational institutions in three European countries (Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey);
- promoting the products and results of the implementation of the new working method at local, regional, national and international/European level, to support future similar innovative practices in kindergartens and schools outside the partnership framework.

The aim of the project is to contribute to a more inspiring, creative and inclusive preschool education by unlocking the potential for creativity and learning through shadow theater in kindergartens.

As final results are:

- step by step manual in shadow theater;
- a network of staff from kindergartens trained in three European countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey);
- a brochure with snapshots of the realization of the activities, in English, Romanian, Bulgarian and Turkish;
- creating a show using the shadow theater method in the 3 partner kindergartens;
- a common video-film with the achievements of children and teachers from kindergartens

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The first mobility of kindergarten staff took place in Bulgaria, at "Mir" Mezdra Kindergarten, between April 15-19, 2024. The activity consisted in the initiation and training of 16 participants from the four partner organisations (from Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey), in shadow theater. During the five days of training we had unique experiences with very interesting demonstration activities.



The training activity was facilitated by the experienced staff of "Values, Virtues, Integrity" foundation, based in Sofia, Bulgaria. We learned creative ways and tips on how to apply shadow theater in kindergartens.



For us as adults, and especially as teachers in preschool education, shadow theater is an activity that develops both creativity and crafting skills in children! The shadow theater proposes a game of emotions, which teaches the children to express their feelings, while helping them develop their communication skills.

The teachers could personalize emotions, challenges and solutions by creating a whole new world with light and shadow. Shadow theater is an opportunity for parents, children and educators to enter the creative world of stories. It is a way of representing stories through characters, which helps convey a more complex emotional message than just reading.

The training course was based on non-formal education, where the participants learn to make shadow theater from A to Z, and at the end they created a mini-show.

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Here are some snapshots from the training course in Bulgaria, where the adults embodied various characters from stories and the real world, different animals and birds, recreated various roles/professions, sometimes even simulated emotions (sadness, joy, amazement, disappointment).



"Shadow Theatre in Preschool Education"



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At the end of the training course, an international group of facilitators was formed who are skilled in using the shadow theater method to unlock the creative potential of kindergarten children. The training course proved to be a success, on all levels: professional, personal, emotional. Here are some of the impressions of the participants.

Dana from Romania: "For me, participating in such a training course, as well as being involved in this project, was something new and challenging. I am very glad that I was able to attend the course. It is very important, especially for us as educators, to become aware of the mechanisms to create cultural events, not just the products themselves. Thank you, and I hope we all build a more creative society, obviously through cultural training, both for our benefit, the teaching staff, but especially for the benefit of the new generation, whose personality we shape and influence their destinies."

Ebru from Turkey: "During the shadow theater training course, I had the opportunity to meet beautiful and professional people, devoted and involved, and I am very grateful. I had the opportunity to participate in this event facilitated by the VVI Foundation, really valuable people from whom I learned a lot. The course was interesting, engaging, captivating, and the acquired notions were in line with the professionals who trained us."

Diana from Bulgaria: "An international team was created from different educational institutions and countries, but we reached a "common denominator" and at the same time, we managed to have a common language. We became aware of certain notions that we may have known, but not necessarily put them into everyday practice. I have accumulated new knowledge and skills, which I want to use in the future, with the new generations of children who will cross the threshold of our kindergarten."

Stanimir Kiskinov, trainer Bulgaria: "I had the opportunity to work with wonderful people with whom I interacted flawlessly. It was simply a game out of the teaching/training patterns, because participants sensed my intentions, got involved and put their soul into everything they did. It was a pleasure to be together. and learn in this environment. I am convinced the performances they will do after the training course in their institutions will be a success!"

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The team of VVI foundation, created the step-by-step manual for making the shadow theater, being one of the final products of this wonderful project. Between 1.05 - 30.06 2024, all three kindergartens involved in the project performed a shadow theater show with preschoolers. The performance was filmed in each school and a small video was made that included all three performances from the partner schools.

Between April 19 and June 30, 2024, each partner school performed the shadow theater in the kindergarten with the preschoolers. We had to choose a theme (popular, national or international story, an event from real life, etc.), each partner having the freedom to choose and implement the chosen theme with the preschoolers.



BULGARIA

"Shadow Theatre in Preschool Education"

Performing simple actions - drinking/eating, dressing up, planting onions, picking apples, washing hands, trying on clothes, etc.

This next stage is a series of individual exercises in which the kids one by one present simple actions: for example eating ice cream, brushing teeth, etc. On one side of the sheet each young actor does a specific action, while the others watching it on the other side where the audience is, manage to guess the corresponding action.



"Shadow Theatre in Preschool Education"

"Walking on the rope" exercise

While in the previous exercise the kids walk across the width of the stage, in this one they use its depth. They imagine that there is a rope on the ground, placed between the source of light and the sheet, and they are keeping balance on it. The idea is to see how their shadow changes from the moment they enter the lighted area to the moment they are closest to the sheet and vice versa. Each kid passes the rope at least twice. This exercise takes 5-10 minutes.



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What is my profession?- a teacher, a waiter, a hairdresser, a builder, a housewife, a painter, a football player, a cooker, a singer, etc.

The next step in shadow theater is to present tasks that are more complex. In the manner of presenting simple actions, the participants now have to present an occupation/profession so that the observers can recognize it. The difference is that the respective occupation/profession can be represented by more than one simple action inherent in it, until it is recognized. In the same way, participants present one or two professions during the whole session. The exercise is especially targeted for kids as a pleasant, useful, and joyful way for them to learn about various professions. It is recommended for the facilitator(s) to give to the children cards with a picture of the profession and ask them to perform the profession depicted on the card. Only one kid performs at a time. By observing the shadow, the rest of the group should guess what the profession is. The actor stops performing when the audience guesses the role right.



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"Shadow Theatre in Preschool Education"

Playing with perspective. The next exercise is also about perspective and it works in pairs. First, each pair demonstrates a real action, such as handshake, and observe how that action is reflected on the sheet. Then they do a fake handshake, where one kid is closer to the sheet, and the other is further away. The goal is to coordinate their movements and shadows so that it appears as though they are performing the action realistically, even though they are not actually making contact. Each pair tries one or the other and the exercise can take up to 15 minutes.



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"Shadow Theatre in Preschool Education"

Animals – a crocodile, a horse, a butterfly, a snail, a bird, a rabbit, a fox.

The next part of the activity is usually very attractive to children, because they receive new and challenging tasks. The kids have to visualize an animal with their bodies, such as crocodile, mouse, dog, etc. First, they have to think about the shadow and behavior of the animal, as small details can make a big difference (between rabbit and kangaroo, for example). Another interesting aspect of this activity is that the kids can choose to present the specific animal individually or collaborate with other children to complete the task (for example, one, two, or even three of them can visualize an elephant together). However, making specific sounds of the animal is not permitted.



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Shadow theater miniatures

The last task for the kids is to prepare and perform a theatrical miniature. The facilitator forms teams of 4-6 participants, with each team assigned to produce their own mini-performance lasting 1 to 5 minutes. This requires preliminary work on the internal division of tasks/roles necessary: for example, actors, lighting (the person who turns off and on the lights between scenes), theater props manager, music arranger, assistant director, etc. Each team gets plenty of time to develop their theatrical story (in one or more scenes), create the scenario (including via a storyboard), refine the details, rehearse in front of the projector, and finally, present their production to the others.

The facilitators guide this complex process, coordinating the team effort, while giving as much as possible creative freedom to the participants. The kids might opt to perform a well-known fairy tale or to develop their own story, depending on their preferences and interests. After enough rehearsals (including a dress rehearsal), the final version of the performance will be ready to present to the larger group and/or an external audience.



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Kindergarten "Mir" chose to present "The Dance of Flowers". In this performance, the flowers are sleeping, then the Sun touches them and they wake up. The wind then swings them, and they catch each other and dance. Then the sun goes away and the flowers fall asleep again.



"Shadow Theatre in Preschool Education"

The team from Romania chose a story beloved by children, written by Ion Creangă, a famous Romanian writer known for children's stories as well as many real events from his life. The story is called "The bear tricked by the fox".

A hungry fox sat down by the side of a road, thinking of a way to get food. Smelling fish, it sees a cart pulled by oxen coming from a distance, bringing the food it wants. Slyly, it gets in the way and pretends to be dead. The ox-handling peasant notices the animal and, believing it to be truly dead, takes it to make a fur coat for his wife.

As soon as the fox sees itself in the carriage, it starts throwing the peasant's fish on the ground. After throwing out most of the fish, the fox jumps out of the chariot and collects it. Then carries them to the burrow, where it eats them. The bear, interested in the success of its 'cousin', asks the fox how to catch its own fish. The fox tells him to sink his tail into the puddle at the end of the forest. All said and done, the bear remains submerged in the freezing water all night. Unable to cope with the cold and pain, he wags his tail, which gets caught between the ice. Realizing the fox's trick, the bear goes in search of it to take revenge. The fox, however, hides in a tree hollow and avoids the bear's wrath. The children played the roles of animals (bear, fox, rabbit, hedgehog, deer), but they also played the role of the old man who brought the fish home.



"Shadow Theatre in Preschool Education"



Here is the hungry fox, searching for food, day and night...

As is known, the fox has a very developed sense of smell, but at the same time, it is also very sly. Sensing the smell of the fish, it lays down in the middle of the road, pretending to be dead.



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During this time, a peasant approaches the fox with a carriage full of fish, pulled by two oxen. Seeing the fox in the middle of the road, he does to see if it is dead. He pushed her and touched her, but when she did not move, he threw her into the carriage over the fish, planning to take her home to make a fox fur collar for his wife. The fox immediately began throwing the fish from the carriage onto the road. Then it got down and started taking the fish to its den.

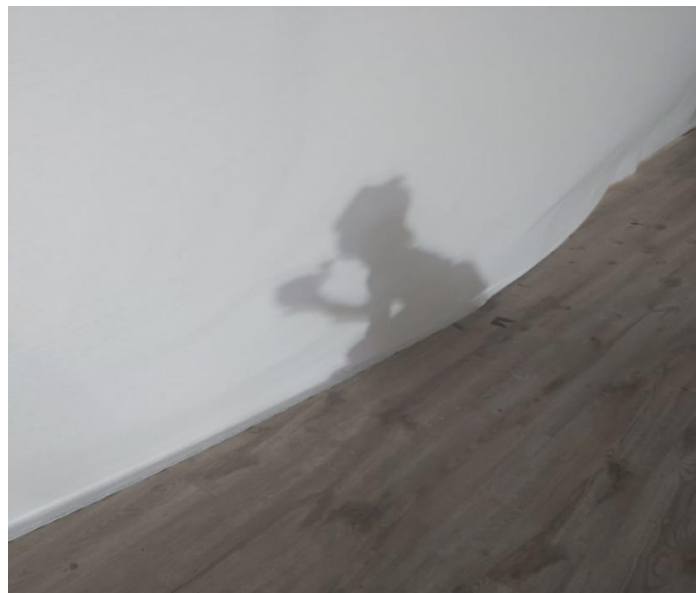


"Shadow Theatre in Preschool Education"

The fox began to eat the stolen fish with enjoyment. At that moment, a hungry bear approached it and asked to get some of the fish too, because he is very hungry. However the fox refused to share and instead sent the bear to fish himself. It tells him to go to the forest at the end of the village, where there is a pond.

- Bear, put your tail in the pond and wait until daylight, if you want to catch a lot of fish... you will see that you will catch more fish than me...

The bear thanks the fox for the advice and heads to the pond.



That evening was very cold... As soon as he arrived he stuck his tail in the puddle, just as the fox had taught him. The animals in the forest (the bunny, the deer, the squirrel, the hedgehog) were surprised to see the bear with his tail in the puddle. They tried to tell him that the fox wanted to trick him and he wouldn't catch any fish, but the bear didn't listen and stayed with his tail in the puddle until the morning.



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Seeing that he couldn't handle the cold anymore, the bear started pulling his tail out of the puddle, but the water had frozen and the bear's tail broke. He started shouting: 'They have my tail, they have my tail...' Angry, he went to the fox's den to get a revenge. Arriving there, he found the fox who asked him: 'Hey, Bear, what happened to you? Did the fish eat your tail?'

The bear took a stick and tried to pull the fox out of the den, but failed. Thus, the bear was tricked by the fox.



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TURKEY

The team from Turkey chose to stage the story: "The Grumpy Bird".



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It is about a bird with bright wings that sits alone on a tree and is very grumpy. This bird wants to be alone in the tree, but a little green bird arrives and hits her, telling her to get out of there. This bird is a parakeet. This bird says: "I want to have a conversation together... ..I want to have a conversation, repeat this."



'I have eggs, you have eggs, your wings are too heavy...' The first bird angrily kicks it out of there, repeating three times: "get out of here, get out of here, get out of here, and this bird gets angry and leaves."



"Shadow Theatre in Preschool Education"

Then came a red bird with a big beak: "Hello, my name is Red bird with a big beak. There are beautiful fruits in your tree... I would like to sit with you too, eat together, fly together!... I don't want, I don't want, I don't want, get out of here! I want to be alone, I don't want to live together, don't you understand?" - answers the first bird.



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Then another bird came... 'Hello, I'm a very friendly bird... do you want to fly with me? We'll spread our wings and soar up to the sky, spin in the air, flap our wings freely'. But the first bird shook its head and said, 'Go away, go away, go away, go away. I don't want to fly with you, I don't want to fly with you, I don't want to be friends with anyone!'



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Then a brown bird appears at the top of the tree. 'Hello, my name is Brown Bird! I will eat you in one gulp!' -he told the first bird and tried to catch it. 'Get out of here, get out of here, get out of here!' - said the first bird, but the brown bird had no intention of leaving the tree...



Frightened, the first bird called all the birds that had visited it before, asked for their help, telling them that it wants to fly with them and it wouldn't be grumpy anymore. In the end, they enjoyed a smooth flight in the clouds together!



The booklet was created by:

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