

Hand in Hand Newsletter - Issue No. 1

December, 2017

The HAND in HAND project, “Social and Emotional Skills for Tolerant and Non-discriminative Societies (A Whole School Approach)”, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Key Action 2 Programme of the European Union, provides a unique opportunity for collaboration on the international level to address an urgent EU policy problem (migrant crisis) which calls out for our prompt response.

ALL information are available at www.handinhand.si

INTRODUCTION:

The HAND in HAND project will develop an open-access systemic policy tool – an EU-based SEI (social-emotional and intercultural) learning programme: the HAND in HAND programme. The HAND in HAND programme’s overall goal is to contribute to the building of inclusive societies by improving the social, emotional and intercultural competencies of students and school staff – the whole school approach. The whole school approach engages the entire school community (in our case: students of one class, their teachers, counsellors and principal) in a cohesive, collective and collaborative effort. Even though the SEI competencies have proven positive effects on individual-level and school-level outcomes, so far they are not explicitly included in all national education systems across Europe. The project aims to change the role of SEI competencies in educational settings. The HAND in HAND project will create and apply an innovative HAND in HAND program for SEI skills development for students and school staff that will be tested using experimental design with control group across consortium countries.

PARTNERS:

- Educational Research Institute (ERI) (leading partner) <http://www.pei.si/>
- Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MESS) <http://www.mizs.gov.si/en/>
- Mittuniversitetet - Mid Sweden University (MIUN) <https://www.miun.se/en/>
- Institute for Social Research in Zagreb (ISRZ) <http://www.idi.hr/en/>
- German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF) <http://www.dipf.de/en/>
- Technical University of Munich (TUM) <https://www.tum.de/en/homepage/>
- Via University College (with collaboration of The Danish Society for the Promotion of Life Wisdom in Children) <http://en.via.dk/>
- Network of Education Policy Centres (NEPC) <http://www.edupolicy.net/>

CONTACT: info@handinhand.si; www.handinhand.si

Besides project updates and information, the newsletter will also present a collection of relevant articles on the topics, with aim of contributing in the debate and in raising the awareness about the importance of socioemotional skills development. In this first issue, the selections includes one article from the Danish psychotherapist Jesper Juul about strategies to prevent violence and radicalisation in learning environment and an academic publication about the implications of the level of oneself understanding as a key factor to understand others. The study was conducted by a group of researchers from the Department of Social Neuroscience of the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Science, in Leipzig, Germany.

[How to prevent aggression, violence and potential radicalization in kindergartens and schools.](#)

Abstract

A negative climate encircles several thousands of European children entering schools, imprinted with aggressive and racist values from their parents and their adult network. On the other hand, children from refugee families enter the same institutions in fear of exclusion and isolation. As a consequence of such atmosphere, an increase of aggressive and violent behaviour among children is to be expected. The children on frightened and aggressive European parents will be a minority in institutions where teachers will try to imprint better ways on them. These educational attempts have not led to the desired results.

For migrant children, it will be common that their parents would have a strong desire for their integration and they would feel an obligation to be responsible and kind for the whole family well-being. If they collapse under the burden, they will end in an emotional and existential disaster without any sense of value neither for their loved ones nor for society and the groundwork for possible radicalization emerges.

How is it possible to cope? Vulnerable children, like all other children, have a strong need to be seen and recognized as they are without reference to a specific and dominating cultural ideal defined by parents and educators. Professional bystanders should focus on the existential substance behind the violent behaviour rather than on its form.

The full article: <http://bit.ly/2zHtRay>

Source: Juul, J. (2016, May 17). How to prevent aggression, violence and potential radicalization in kindergartens and schools. Retrieved from <http://www.family-lab.com/about/jesper-juul-articles/item/how-to-prevent-aggression-violence-and-potential-radicalization-in-kindergartens-and-schools>

[Know Thy Selves: Learning to Understand Oneself Increases the Ability to Understand Others](#)

Abstract

Understanding others' feelings, intentions, and beliefs is a crucial social skill both for our personal lives and for meeting the challenges of a globalized world. Recent evidence suggests that the ability to represent and infer others' mental states (Theory of Mind, ToM) can be enhanced by mental training in healthy adults. The present study investigated the role of training-induced understanding of oneself for the enhanced understanding of others. In a large-scale longitudinal study, two independent participant samples (N = 80 and N = 81) received a 3-month contemplative training. This training

focused on perspective taking and was inspired by the Internal Family Systems model that conceives the self as being composed of a complex system of inner personality aspects. Specifically, participants practiced perspective taking on their own inner states by learning to identify and classify different inner personality parts. Results revealed that the degree to which participants improved their understanding of themselves—reflected in the number of different inner parts they could identify—predicted their improvements in high-level ToM performance over training. Especially the number of identified parts that were negatively valenced showed a strong relation with enhanced ToM capacities. This finding suggests a close link between getting better in understanding oneself and improvement in social intelligence.

The full publication: <http://bit.ly/2A2cce9>

Source: Böckler, A., Herrmann, L., Trautwein, F. M., Holmes, T., & Singer, T. (2017). Know thy selves: Learning to understand oneself increases the ability to understand others. *Journal of Cognitive Enhancement*, 1-13.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **26.1. – 27.1.2018, Brezovica, Slovenia: Empathy – Relationship – Dialogue (a two-day conference for professionals and parents)**

We kindly invite you to a two-day conference on empathy, relational competence and dialogue with our foreign mentors Jesper Juul, Helle Jensen, Christine Ordnung and Dušanka Kosanović. All three outstanding educators and international experts on the issues and topics discussed will join the team of experienced Familylab's colleagues from the Slovenia.

Website: <http://familylab.si/laboratorij/za-vzgojno-izobrazevalne-in-socialno-varstvene-ustanove/empatija-odnos-dialog-2018/>

If you wish to receive HAND in HAND news, please [SUBSCRIBE HERE](#).