GUIDELINES ON INNOVATIVE LEARNING SPACE

CASE STUDIES

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"Teaching learning spaces competence from early childhood education"
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Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships for school education

Project partnership:

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Context: Kindergarten

Age of children: 3-6 ani

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Title of your contribution	**Space case studies**
Typology of learning spaces	**Inner common spaces.** The modified space presented in this study was an indoor one, originally used for various festivities and transformed as a result of intervention in the hall for physical education and other activities specific to the Psycho-motor Domain.
Development domain	**Psychomotricity domain** The most relevant area is physical education.
Area of focus	**Curricular area of the psycho-motor domain, having as dimensions of development**: coarse motricity and fine motricity in learning contexts specific to physical education; sensory-motor conduct, for the orientation of movement, eurythmia; practices on personal security.
Terms, acronyms and abbreviations	**List of all the key concepts, acronyms and abbreviations used in the case study:** - harmonious, healthy physical development; gross motor skills, fine motor skills; sensory-motor skills; coordination, balance, endurance, independence; emotion management - self-control; personal security skills. ALA - Freely Chosen Games and Activities; DPM - Psycho-Motor Domain; ADP - Personal Development Activities; ADE - Activities on Experiential Domains; RFIDT- Fundamental landmarks in the learning and early development of the child from birth to 6/7 years.

Description of the case study	Aim and objectives of the intervention project: The creation of a learning space specific to the pshiho-motric domain, fully equipped with the support of the local community, which fosters the development of a good physical health of the child, as a support element of all his learning experiences in kindergarten. Location (country & city): Romania, Iasi **Background and context** *How did you come up with the innovative idea?* The growth and development of children in the first years of life is decisive for the evolution of the later adult, for how the little one will interact with the surrounding world, manage relationships and integrate socially. Qualitative leaps, in short intervals, require, from adults interested in the full development of the personality of the young child, increased attention in the way they build the educational environment. The child needs to be exposed to a learning-promoting environment that stimulates him simultaneously in all areas of development: physical, social, emotional, cognitively or language development and to provide equal opportunities for development. The child learns holistically, so that each area influences the others and none operate independently. Especially in recent years, education tends to become competitive and educational actors, even if they do not openly recognise it, show a particular interest in the performance achieved in areas such as communication and mathematics, which are also the main subjects for stage examinations at many levels of compulsory education. Focusing on any of the areas and ignoring the others harms the harmonious development of the child. That is why early education structures its curricula not on objectives, but on fostering the formation of further competences, with a balance in the holistic approach of

all areas of development, putting the child at the heart of concerns with his or her individuality and specific needs.

How was the intervention project developed?
Explain briefly the process and who was involved, highlight the participation of service users, if the case.

The kindergarten had an surplus space used for optional activities or other educational events

but did not benefit from adequate space for the physical education activities, which took place in the group rooms, where the existing furniture had to be regrouped, the work space obtained being often insufficient, and

there were always concerns about ensuring the physical safety of children.

Also, the rounded structure of the kindergarten - two groups with 52 children, most of them representing

social cases, attended the kindergarten weekly, which meant that they came on Monday and left on Fridays, sleeping the night in the kindergarten, not having sufficient movement in classroom spaces and too little outdoor movement.

These aspects and the fact that the educational establishment did not have an outdoor space for physical education activities led teachers to the idea of the urgent need to organize a specific space dedicated to activities arrondated to the psychomotor field.

The teaching council analysed RFIDT and the curriculum for DPM and established the teaching materials necessary for the training of basic motor skills and their pre-school qualities.

Children were asked what activities involve movement and what games they would like to play more in kindergarten. Parents were also not excepted from consultations. They were invited to reflect on the types of physical activities their children do and what they would like to change in this regard (quantitative, qualitative).

So the idea of organizing such a learning space belonged to teachers but was developed together with our educational partners, children and adults.

Main achievements

What where the main achievements of the intervention project (quantitative or/and qualitative)?

When we talk about physical education, the thought inevitably goes to movement, but movement itself never has just a physical component.

The formation of basic motor skills and their qualities also involves the manifestation of psychic processes that lead to the development of children's intellectual capacities (observation, analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization).

Children gain knowledge of their own body (body scheme, anatomical, functional aspects),

familiarise with new objects (spalier, fixed scale, string, sticks, weights, gate, pennant, flag, obstacle etc.), learn the name of the acts and discover particularities of human motor actions (walking, running, jumping, throwing, catching, crawling, transporting, balance, climbing, traction, pushing, etc.) and human interrelationships (partner, teammate, opponent, team, rule, winner, loser, competition, collaboration etc.), all aspects listed, and others, expanding children's knowledge and increasing their vocabulary.

Through exercise children are getting closer and closer to the correct spatial-temporal perception (direction - right, left, forward, backward, oblique; position - up, down, front, back, side, above, below, near, under, between, over; time - now, first, then, after, at first, at the end etc.), notice the differences in rhythm - slow,

accelerated, fast, uniform, variable; appreciates dimensions - large, tall, wide, long, deep); recognize shapes - round, square, rectangle, triangle; they are intuiting formations – one/two/four at a time, in a circle, in pairs; identifies colors, counts etc.

Socio-emotional development is determined to a good extent by the identification, recognition and management of one's own emotions or of partners/teammates/adult teacher. The palette of emotional states present in dynamic games evolves from emotions such as insecurity, fear, sadness of failure, frustration, anger, joy of success, personal or collective satisfaction, enthusiasm with which children respond to teaching tasks.

Once the motor skills are acquired, they are applied, practiced, perfected in dynamic games / relays / applicative trails / complex exercises / competitions, which, through tasks such as compliance with the rules of conduct, meeting the established requirements, execution in front of colleagues or in relation to them etc., contribute to the education of positive attitudes and positive character traits such as: listening / attention,

courage / boldness / determination, prudence / patience, collective spirit / opening up to others /

generosity, sincerity, altruism, initiative, diligence / conscientiousness, modesty / restraint, optimism / enthusiasm, self-critical spirit / discernment, self-control/resistance/ self-control, self-confidence etc., all of which cause beneficial behavioral changes both in DPM specific activities and in all learning activities related to other areas of development, becoming important acquisitions for the training of future skills in any field.

Key factors

What where the key factors that facilitated the success of the intervention project?

a. Careful analysis of the needs of the school community.
b. Their presentation to the Representative Council of Parents and the Board of Directors and the survey of what local authorities can provide, in accordance with the budget allocated and the need to cover other needs of the school community.
c. Identify potential financiers/businessmen in the local community (other than parents of children attending

	kindergarten) and persuade them by raising awareness of the children's real needs. d. Presentation of the development project with details on non-sessing materials, their usefulness in the instructional-educational process, costs, necessary quantities, deadlines for realization. e. The conclusion of the sponsorship contract. f. Purchase of materials according to the development plan submitted to the funder. g. Implementation of the development project within the prescribed period. h. Highlighting the usefulness of the progress achieved by submitting an activity report to the funder. i. Sharing examples of good practice in carrying out activities in the new learning space. j. Ensuring the sustainability of the project. **List of useful equipments/resources needed** All materials used belong to the category of approved ones intended for children. The resinous wood and beech timber were used, rounded on the cants, the sleepers of the gym equipment being incorporated in the side by means of an industrial press, glued with special adhesive and trapped in the holzscrews. The oval shape of the bars and the ecological lake ensures greater adhesion to the palms, thus avoiding the risk of injury by slipping hands off the trellis bar. The fastening of the trellis to the wall was done with 2 solid wood sleepers with a thickness of 33 mm, with the help of 3 holzscrews. All wooden appliances have been varnished with colorless, matte and environmentally friendly (water-based) varnish in 3 layers. The gym benches have been designed to ensure the stability of walking on a narrow surface, the support elements being arranged in such a way as not to allow injury. All protective articles have a high quality vinyl surface and are treated antibacterial and antifungal.

	Additional objects for the practice of various motor skills (weights - sandbags parachutes, discs, tunnels, thick / thin mattresses etc.) have double seams, have no asperities, have densitydensities conform to the standards in force and are made of high quality materials, all of which can be easily disinfected. Challenges -Identification of the possible sponsor and obtaining funding; -Price differences between the time of development plan and the time of purchase of the products; -Search for the optimal products needed, with verification of the technical specifications in order to harmonise with the requirements imposed by the specifics and particularities of the children's age (chronophage activity). **Categoria of improvements** *In which ways could the intervention project have been improved (lessons learned, crucial aspects for replication etc.)?* Beyond ensuring measures for the safety of children and the desirability of having all the necessary materials in one place, the pursuit of activities in this learning space has significantly increased the pleasure of children and teachers to perform physical education classes, the newly created space becoming an attraction for educational actors. However, although the flooring has been carefully selected, the flooring chosen being one for heavy traffic, with a thickness of 12mm, ideally it would have been to be able to benefit from a Climbing Safe flooring - which provides protection from the fall, by absolution of shock greater than 87%, or possibly a rubber floor made of 100% pure EPDM granules, but both variants are above our purchasing power. That is why we preferred to agree with the manufacturer to respect the EU - agreed design standards for the height of the trellis and ladders

	according to the height of the user and to purchase them of safety sizes, for each age level, (small group, medium group, big group) with dedicated appliances/areas. Future directions of action focus on the hiring by the Parents Association of a physiotherapist, external collaborator, to carry out specialized medical recovery activities (scoliosis, kyphosis lumbar discopathy etc.) for children who have a recommendation to this effect from the specialist doctor. We also aim to expand the space dedicated to learning activities corresponding to the psycho-motor field and in the outdoor space, especially since most of the materials at our disposal can also be used in the outdoor space of the kindergarten.
Characteristics of the innovative spaces for active learning	*a. Physical environment (design, light, surfaces, organisation, aesthetics etc.)* In the organization of the educational space we took into account the following requirements: - the design is designed in such a way that the space is fully exploited - the class has natural light - the floor surface does not allow slippage - the colours in the room are cheerful but do not tire the look/concentration of attention - carrying out training so that children know and comply with the rules for the use of work appliances and the rules of individual, personal or collective hygiene -work surfaces are well sanded, without straight corners or asperities - there are protections to enable exercises/physical activities to be carried out safely - storage of materials to allow their rapid selection by children or the teacher - the materials are introduced according to the motor skills concerned at a given time. *b. Furniture* Furniture is suitable for the preschool age and and

	suitable for the physical development of children, for the practice of various motor skills, is suitably sized for the three agegroups: small group (3-4 years), middle group (4-5 years)), big group (5-6 years), is durable, easy to handle/well anchored, made of wood painted with water-based paints, nontoxic, in vivid colors red, white, blue, yellow; green or coated with vinyl easy to sanitize after use. Finishes for wood products are specially made for children, with rounded edges, carefully polished and have elements for safe use by children. *c. Working corners/ Interest Areas* Two of the walls are fitted with apparatus for climbing/ climbing/ medical gymnastics (trellis, ladders and climbing nets) with different elevations and intermediate spaces, depending on the requirements of the age specificities of the three groups. On the left side, on which the windows and radiators are arranged, there are protective furniture to EU standards (a. wooden guards, thick sponge and vinyl for radiators, which allow the passage of heat but protect children from possibleaccidents; b. window nets) and gym benches as well as storage boxes. The fourth wall is intended for the storage of additional mattresses and other materials useful to the learning process. *d. Materials:* - *Smart toys/devices* – audio system, microphones, speakers - *Sensory materials* - multicolored parachutes with handles, tunnels various in structure and shape, balls of different sizes / consistencys / materials / textures of the surface;; mattresses of different thicknesses and hardness; various games, strings, strings, circles, pennants, flags, bowling pins, obstacles, balance supports, pompoms, sticks, sandbags of various weights, depending on age, etc. - *Other* - storage crates for storage materials, football gates, basketball baskets, swing for balance etc.

Photos of the new learning spaces design (1 up to 5)

Benefits	1.Teachers Planning, organising and carrying out quality physical education activities, with all necessary teaching materials at your disposal. Organize other DPM specific activities or sequences of activities belonging to other categories of activity in the ADE.

	Easier management of the group of children and ensuring their safety during exercise. 2. Children By carrying out various activities in the special space intended for physical activity, preschoolers actively participate in activities. The ability to concentrate is obviously improved – the space being generous, the child focuses on his own movements, not especially on the physical interaction with others – the degree of fairness of the execution of movements is increased and the rhythm, harmony of body movements, the grace and taste for beauty of children undergoes significant improvements. Also, the collaboration with the game partners is more cordial, the physical exercise contributing to the strengthening of the will, the cultivation of patience, the development of self-confidence, self-control, courage, initiative, perseverance, discipline, occasioning positive emotional feelings. Moment of motion (ADP), motion games (ALA), dance (thematic, aerobic, popular) with musical accompaniment, eurythmia exercises, give a balance between intellectual demands (ADE, ALA) within the daily programme and the relaxation occasioned by play and game. 3. Parents In creating this space, the involvement of the Representative Council of Parents and the Parents' Association *"Punguța cu doi bani"* was essential. They supported the creation of such a space by purchasing materials and contributed through voluntary activities to the installation of the flooring and the arrangement of the sanitary unit related to the classroom. The logistical activities carried out in collaboration with the kindergarten management considerably improved the link between the school and the families, which made the parents feel useful and implicitly show a greater interest in the learning activities carried out by the children in the kindergarten.

	Through the participation of parents in educational/ extracurricular activities carried out in the new learning space, new ways of communication between educational partners and opportunities for real involvement in kindergarten life have been created. 4. Other categories of staff The entire staff of the kindergarten actively participated in the completion of this learning space: space sanitization, work equipment fittings, sewing and refurbishing mattresses, repairing skylights, cleaning etc.
Discussions/ Reflection (aprox. 500 words)	*Assessments of the pedagogical approach, ergonomics of the new created space, furniture and materials for learning spaces* Walking to the gym classroom is in itself a movement that pleases children, and their presence in a space dedicated to physical activity brings a lot of joy, causing active, enthusiastic participation in activities. The teaching means with which the new learning space has been equipped allow the following teaching purposes to be successfully achieved: - *climbing, nets and ropes* (children learn to climb, to gain strength and safety in their hands and feet, thus also overcoming fear of heights); - *mattresses of various sizes and densities* (are used by children during breaks/relaxations, to alleviate shocks in the situation of performing gymnastics exercises, for jumping, etc.); - *balance banks* (located horizontally, low above ground or sloping plane, anchored to gym trellies, develop balance in straight or sloping plane, allow deep jumping and are also used in the grouping of dynamic game teams); - *rocking chair* (also used in balance-keeping exercises); - *bags with different amounts of sand* (trains the body of preschoolers for effort, for the transport of weights); - *mazes and tunnels* (are used for different types of exercises: crawling, squatting, running games);

	- *mini-panels with baskets and basketballs* (used for basket-throwing exercises, for throwing the ball with both hands or with one hand, from the chest, above the head, from the shoulder); - *ropes and circles* (most often used for jumping practice jumping over rope, jumping over the circle or inside the circle, jumping back and forth, with moose or without moose, with knees flexion or without flexing them etc., but also for practicing traction); - *balls of various sizes / colors / textures* (the best way to conduct some team games, cooperative exercises, signal stops and starts, throwing the ball in a given direction, following the rules, etc.); - *gates and footballs* (useful in the smooth running of this sport on two or more teams, with simplified rules and role in the coalition of small groups, focus on the task of the team at the expense of individualism, for simultaneous practice of cooperation and competition); - *suspended objects* (for practicing high jumping); - *plastic chips representing anatomical parts* - palms/ soles - left-right (used in orientation games or in selective processing of certain body segments; in direction orientation, etc.); - *dart panels, bowling balls and bowling pins* (for practicing steering, precision, and so on); - *pennants, flags, whistles, obstacles* (for signalling); - *audio system* (for various games and eurythmia); - *storage crates* (for the organisation of materials so that preschoolers have access to them in a timely manner). The wealth and quality of the teaching resources, which covers the range of all the activities provided by the physical education/DPM curriculum, makes it easier to carry out a quality instructional-educational process. Physical activity in a bright, clean, airy, functional space that can be easily sanitized is a win for both children and their parents and teachers. The ergonomics of the learning space developed by our educational unit allows to ensure the safe conduct of

	activities for children, in various forms of organization of the preschool collective. Part of the teaching materials can also be used in the outdoor space for individual or group activities and games.
Future directions/ Next steps	The space offers opportunities for use in other educational contexts/ for other categories of activities. For example:: • kineto-therapy activities with specialized personnel; • pedagogical practice activities; • music education – the equipment with audio system and the sound of the space allows the conduct of musical activities; • environmental knowledge - body scheme information can be successfully used in this learning space; • mathematical activities – ordering according to criteria such as color, shape, size (size, length, height, width), seriesing objects, crowd formation, counting in concentric 1-10 etc. can be practiced with materials in the gym space; • language activities – staging children's plays, recitation competitions, performances; • motion games in the category of games and activities chosen by children (ALA); • optional activities involving eurythmia etc.
Success stories and/or quotes (150 words)	*If you have a quote or statement from an evaluation or user satisfaction survey and the permission to use these quotes, they may be added here to illustrate the success of your case study.* Copii: M.N. (big group B): "I like to do activities in the gym. There we have a lot of balls and I can play football with my friends!" .D. (small group A): "Our gym is very large. It's colorful." A.D. (big group C): "Physical education activities are very

	fun. I like to climb and tie myself up with my friend on the rocking chair." C.M. (big group B): "When we go into the gym our teacher plays a lot with us. We also do competitions. I have won many times, but our teacher said it is important to participate and feel good. We're all winners!" N.S. (middle group A): "Our gym is great! I'd like to go there every day. I like to exercise on the mattress. When I grow up, I want to be a ballerina." Parents: M.E. (parent of the m.N. child from big group B): "I am very lucky that N. has a suitable space for physical education activities. I see the photos posted by the teacher on the parents' group and I can't believe that is from a state kindergarten. I'm happy with the choice I made!" N.D. (parent of child N.A. from big group A): "I've been in kindergarten for a few years and I know what this space looked like before. There is no comparison! It is now used to the fullest for the benefit of children. My child is very excited about the physical education activities." C.C. (parent of child C.D. from middle group B): "I believe that the gym is the first space in which a kindergarten should be invested. It must be child-safe and equipped to European standards. This happened at kindergarten PP26 and I am glad that my child is benefiting from this advantage."
What are the three key messages from this case study	**1.**The holistic approach of all areas of development in preschool: physical, social, emotional, cognitive or language development determines the harmonious development of the child's personality. Among these, the psychomotric field fosters the development of a good physical health of the child, as a central element, support of all learning experiences in kindergarten. **2.** The educational environment must correspond to the child's learning needs. Systematic activities of practice of basic motor skills and their qualities are necessary for harmonious development, activities that strengthen the

	will, cultivate patience, courage, initiative, perseverance, discipline, develop team spirit and self-control. 3. The educational space can be reconfigured in accordance with the child's learning needs if there is sufficient determination and involvement of all educational factors: management of the educational institution, teachers, parents, local community.
Citations (full references)	*What sources of information do you have to substantiate the above, please list:* 1. Barta, A., Dragomir, P., *Deprinderi motrice la preşcolari,* Ed. Integral, Bucuresti, 1995. 2. Cârstea, Gh., *Programarea şi planificarea în educaţia fizică şi sportivă şcolară*, Editura Universul, Bucureşti, 1993. 3. Cârstea, Gh., *Teoria și metodica educației fizice și sportului,* Ed. AN-DA, Bucuresti, 2000. 4. Epuran, M., *Psihologia educaţiei fizice*, Editura Sport-Turism, Bucureşti, 1976. 5. Herivan, M., *Educaţia la timpul viitor*, Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică Bucureşti, 1976. 6. Ionescu, M. (coord.), Anghelescu, C., Boca, C., ... *Repere fundamentale în învățarea și dezvoltarea timpurie a copilului de la naștere la 7 ani*, Editura Vanemonde, București, 2010 7. Preja, C., *Didactica educației fizice și psihomotorii învăţământul preșcolar și primar* - note de curs, 2014.