

A project for the development of educational resources for additional language training of primary school students whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian



WHY THIS PROJECT IS IMPORTANT

The majority of students who are at risk of dropping out of school in Bulgaria (or who have already dropped out) are Roma. They are part of a “closed society”. Bulgarian language proficiency is a crucial prerequisite for their success at school, social integration, and personal development.

According to statistics, over half of all Roma families in Bulgaria do not speak Bulgarian at home and 19% of Roma adults are illiterate. Bulgarian is not the first language of nearly 20% of all children who start school.*

This puts Roma children in an extremely disadvantaged position as they enter the education system.

Teach For Bulgaria teachers work with students whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian in almost all regions of the country where the organization has partner schools. So far this amounts to approximately 1,823 children. In order to provide adequate support, teachers need educational resources for teaching Bulgarian as a second language and such methodology hasn't been developed yet.

This is why there is an urgent need for effective specialized concepts and educational resources for teachers working with bilingual children, so that these students have an equal start at school. All teachers who work with bilingual students acknowledge this.



*According to data quoted by Deputy Minister of Education Denitsa Sacheva in 2018 at Forum: Education for Future

PROJECT GOALS AND PHASES

The main goal of the project is to develop functional, practical, and useful Bulgarian language training tools for primary school students.

This initiative builds on the best practices from a previous successful Erasmus+ project called Language Against Dropout (LAD) (project № 2015-1-BG01-KA201-014306) in partnership with Heidelberg University. The educational resources “Bulgarian for Multilingual Children with Drako and Mimi”, which support Bulgarian language training for children aged 5, 6, and 7 (preschool and first grade), have been developed as part of this project.

Partnering with the authors of these resources at EducArt, our goal is to develop a language acquisition program for older students - grades 2, 3, and 4.

PHASE 1

The development of a specialized diagnostic tool for determining the level of Bulgarian language proficiency for primary school students whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian.

PHASE 2

The development of educational resources, divided by age groups and levels of Bulgarian language proficiency, starting from second grade.

PHASE 3/4

The development of educational resources for bilingual students in third and fourth grade, mirroring the process for second grade students

1

6 months

2

2 years

3

1 year

KEY ACTIVITIES

1

- The development and testing of a specialized diagnostic tool for determining the level of Bulgarian language proficiency for primary school students whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian. The diagnostic tool will be developed to measure children's initial level of language proficiency and track their progress during the school year.
- Collecting empirical evidence: the diagnostic tool will be used to conduct a language screening (the levels of Bulgarian language proficiency of 60 children whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian are going to be compared and analyzed). The data from the language screening will be used for the development of educational resources (identifying problem areas where new skills and knowledge should be introduced very gradually).

The development of educational resources, divided by age groups and levels of Bulgarian language proficiency, starting from second grade.

These resources will be a system of didactic games (divided into four cores: vocabulary, grammar, reading, and speaking). The games will come with detailed methodological instructions, audio and visual materials.

2

The educational resources will be tested in four groups for all four levels during children's after-school program (3 times a week for 45 to 60 minutes at a time). All teachers who test the materials will provide feedback throughout the entire process. They will also go to teacher trainings every three months where they will receive new materials and provide feedback on the ones they have just used. Their feedback will be integrated so that these educational resources improve over the course of the trial period.

The development and testing of the diagnostic tool and all educational resources for second-graders will be completed in two years.

First year: the development of the diagnostic tool (6 months) and the beginning stages of the development of all educational resources.

Second year: the development, testing, and finalizing of all educational resources after complete integration of teachers' feedback at the end of the school year.

3

The development of educational resources for bilingual students in third and fourth grade, mirroring the process for second grade students.

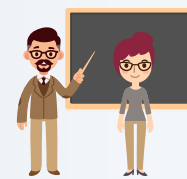
IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Impact on students' language skills:



- With a diagnostic test (developed especially for this project) conducted at the beginning and at the end of the school year.
- A control group of students will be tested in the same way. Their results will be compared with those of the experimental group.
- Students' language skills might also be measured with a rubric for classroom observation at the beginning and at the end of the school year.

Impact on teachers' professional development:



- by a self-evaluation form and a didactics test conducted at the beginning and at the end of the school year.

PARTNERS:



Find out more about this project
and how to support it here:

www.zaednovchas.bg/en/impact/bulgarian-as-a-second-language/