

INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THE NETHERLANDS



In the Netherlands there are a lot of organizations working in, with and for the nature. In this respect, Quarter Mediation is partner with Stichting Veldwerk NL, the initiator of the Grundtvig multilateral project "*Nature for Care, Care for Nature*". The project resulted in highly appreciated activities where young students met elderly people (in care homes, at senior clubs, independent elderly still living on their own or even elderly just sitting in parks) to talk, to interview, doing activities or visiting woods, garden centers or a museum. Based on 10 years' experience with the input of nature (eg. natural stories) it became obviously that the main element wasn't nature, but the intergenerational approach. For sure nature is a good mean, but for the welfare of elderly and in educational view for the children in fact it doesn't matter which item you choose.

Old and young liked to cooperate very much and the nature was a very good background for all the activities and the students were more motivated to learn. They form really good teams with the elderly adults, even in situations whereby young students work together with elderly with mental disabilities. Teachers concluded the value in terms of: good citizenship, shared responsibility and pedagogical & educational values.

In view of the biggest challenges for the coming decades, our ageing societies, it's necessary to enhance social cohesion. In our view it's not possible to fulfill this on voluntary basis. Our European societies have to look for means to solve this problem. One of the most promising approaches is to involve VET schools. That means that there has to be "something to learn" during the activities or to learn something from each other. Not as an extracurricular activity, but as part of the curriculum with elements of the school subjects. "*Nature for Care, Care for Nature*" proved it. It will also work if students of vocational educations go out of the classrooms for doing specific formulated tasks within their discipline together with elderly or share the results of this fieldwork with elderly or bring them products in case of self-made home grown vegetables or fruits. First step is to involve schools.

Therefore, **Quarter Mediation** and Stichting Weldwerk NL decided to use the success of the project "*Nature for Care, Care for Nature*", to implement and to transfer to Portugal, Italy and Turkey the inter-generational approach in a Leonardo da Vinci new project for transfer of innovation.

One of the remarkable results of the "*Nature for Care, Care for Nature*" project is the amazing feedback of teachers who spend almost more time with the children than their own parents and think they know the children very well. Most teachers are very proud how their children behave in the nature and in the presence of elderly, how patient the children are to explain the elderly about activities or findings they have done.

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