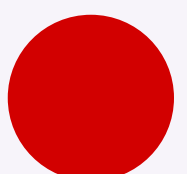
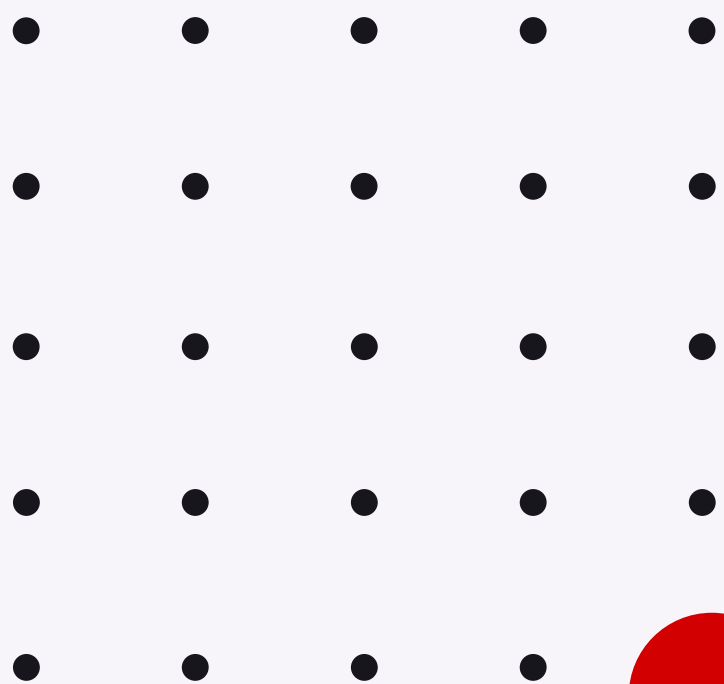
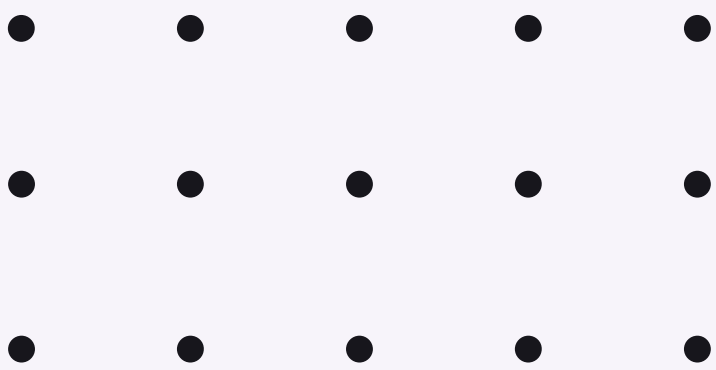


General overview

„Designing
Green growth learning aids for
young persons with disabilities.
Short Term Joint
Staff Training “Youth in support to
green growth and persons with
disabilities“

By Vladyslav Olefirenko

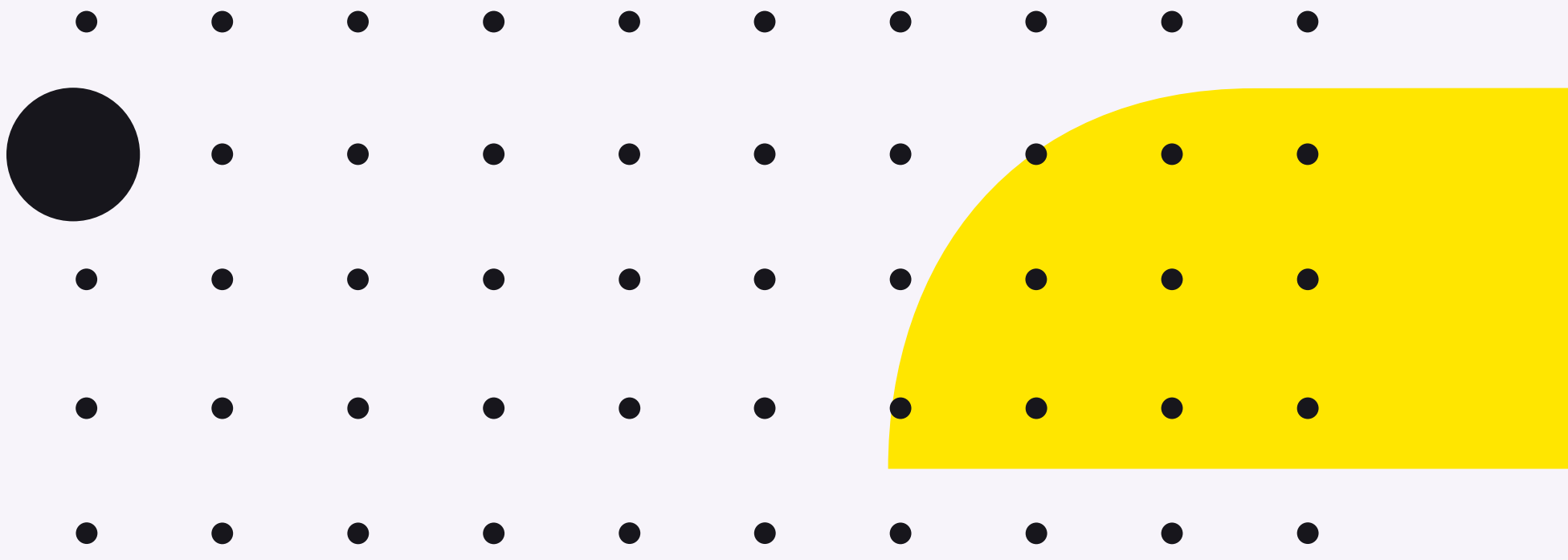




Skopje, Macedonia 21.11-25.11

Dear Sir or Madam!

After participating in the project called Designing Green growth learning aids for young persons with disabilities. Short Term Joint Staff Training “Youth in support to green growth and persons with disabilities” I would like to share my own experiences and impressions from the organization of the event by the North Macedonian coordinators “LLN” and some developments during the project according to my personal and subjective describe opinion. I would like to mention again that all the information presented below relates exclusively to my own perception and may differ slightly or completely from that of other participants. I wanted to present this review in a sequential form and structured it by the following key points: location, meetings, best experiences of the participating organizations, impression of school visits, organization of the event, general impression of the program.



key points:

location

best practices

**impression of school
visits**

**general impression of
the program.**



LOCATION

This training took place in the northern Macedonian capital Skopje, where I personally enjoyed magnificent architecture of the historically rich city of the most interesting country. I really liked the perfect combination of nature and infrastructural environment, which I was completely enthusiastic about during my free time between the events. Regarding the hotel "Continental" I would describe mostly positive impression but however there are certainly some aspects that should be considered and improved next time. First, what I personally found partially inconvenient was of course the location on the outskirts of the city, where apparently there was no good transport connection. However, my colleagues and I were always able to reach the hotel on time. The equipment of the conference hall was relatively sufficient in my opinion, at that time there were only some problems with the internet connection.



BEST PRACTICES

More detailed information about it I already submitted with use of Google form but in the sense of brief overview I would say that from each lecture I indisputably imprinted something important and curious, but still in my opinion it would have been even better if the presentations of some members were much more colorful and also had some inserted photos or videos (if any) for better understanding of the material. Otherwise, everything was good also the willingness to answer all possible questions about the lecture pleased me very much.



IMPRESSION OF THE SCHOOL VISITS

During the training we visited two state schools for children with hearing and intellectual disabilities. Also, I personally wanted to visit the school "Dimitar Vlahov" but unfortunately, according to the school representative, it was not possible under some circumstances. Despite the cancellation, Mrs. Alexandra gave a comprehensive lecture on the history and applied learning methods of the educational institution. In her commentary there was very good preparation



Dimitar Vlakhov

According to Alexandra, the school uses the most advanced learning methods with the use of modern equipment. For example, she told about a 3D printer, which is used in the school to facilitate the learning process with the help of touch sensors and not only to deal with Braille books. This is a device (milling cutter) (purchase costs were covered by the Erasmus+ program), with which it is possible to print 3D images to improve the tracing skills of the pupils. With this, children can better perceive the objects. She also gave a short speech about various cultural activities that take place in the school, among which is the music art. The 3rd of December is a day dedicated to children with impaired abilities, so every year on this day several cultural events are organized.



School for children with hearing impairments. "Partenija Zoografski"

This institution was the first one that we could visit, so the information presented below is based not only on the statements of the competent staff, but also on my own impression from the visit with the provided tour. The most important thing is that in this school quite proper learning methods are used according to the general program of the Ministry of Education of North Macedonia. A significant difference is only in the duration of the schooling (instead of 3 years it takes 4 years and in the mechanical-technical field instead of 4 years it takes about 5 years for the students to complete their education). This school was founded only in 1955 and in September of that year the first students were already admitted. At present, only 4 fields of study are registered (but only mechanics, textiles are available at the moment).



School for children with hearing impairments. "Partenija Zoografski"

In learning, most of the teaching is done with the help of visual materials (videos and bright presentations). In addition, as far as languages and communication are concerned, sign language and proper oral communication are used.


For the students who do not come from the capital, this school also offers full-time residences, and the places in the dormitories are made available to all under certain criteria. At present, the number of active students and the number of applications for admission in general is decreasing, therefore, the school is currently planning to collaborate with other schools, which would solve the problem of lack of applications for vacant study places. This secondary school (analogy to AHS/BHS) is the only one in the whole country that is suitable for the children with hearing disabilities, the elementary school also exists, but it is not located in the capital.



School for children with hearing impairments. "Partenija Zoografski"

We visited the following spaces that are relatively well equipped and adapted for education: a manufacturing studio, a sewing room and a computer room with facilities for clothing design. We also had the opportunity to talk to the teachers on site and to know some details regarding their work, in order to understand an awareness of the role of special education in Northern Macedonia. With great enthusiasm, the teachers told us about the achievements of their students, who have succeeded in many state competitions, including artistic festivals, contests for the production of costumes from trash and many others.

The general impression of the school was rather positive, but I personally would stay there longer to have the opportunity to look behind the scenes of specialized education in Skopje. The teachers amazed me with their attitude towards the work and the children, but the building itself needs to be thoroughly cleaned, swept and renovated, because most of the rooms I visited are really depressing and dark, which makes for an ambience of confusion.



School for children with intellectual impairments "Zlatan Sremec"

This visit was the second and the last in the program and I was completely impressed by it. The good preparation for the welcome of the guests left only positive sensation. We were very happy to talk with the school management, with which the important facts and information from the history of the establishment and existence of the institution were shared. After a warm and nice acquaintance, the souvenirs with the school logo were very lovingly handed out. From the speech of the presenters it was clear that the work at this institution is really their calling. Thanks to a training of the staff that took place a few years ago in England, the school could benefit greatly from the newly acquired knowledge of the teachers with the use of new learning methods, because the whole ideology of education in this institution was completely rebuilt.

School for children with intellectual impairments "Zlatan Sremec"

Before the transformation into a scientific center, the most important thing was not the compliance with the general educational program, but also the comfortable and appropriate to the needs learning. The priority was always the child and not his or her knowledge. In the times of the Corona pandemic, the school confronted a lockdown, which made the normal present study not possible. At that time, the school had shifted to digital format with the learning materials available online.

In addition, according to the school management, all-day support for parents and students in distance learning was offered. Several learning videos created by teachers during the pandemic were shown to us. Although some of them were barely professional, I could feel for myself how important it was for the school at that time to provide support to children in a difficult situation. Watching it, I could still feel very proud of the school administration and professional staff.

School for children with intellectual impairments "Zlatan Sremec"

After the lectures we had the opportunity to get to know the school premises about better, where we were given a comprehensive tour. The general impression of this was very positive, because the special school tries to create a maximum pleasant environment for children to make their existence comfortable. Most of the equipment in my opinion was in relatively good condition, I found the facility itself to be very well maintained. Currently, the school functions without a permanent attachment to students and is more concerned with research. If necessary, parents can turn to the school for advice, or bring their child there for professional service properly or just a few days a week.



GENERAL IMPRESSION OF THE PROGRAM

General impression of the program. I am very glad to have had the possibility to be part of this project, because thanks to it I gained a lot of new knowledge or deepened my existing knowledge in the field of special education, etc. Special education for children and youth with impairments is not at all a problematic branch of European education, but a field in which many things should be developed and significantly improved.

The future of Europe is education.

Education for all.

