

BiMo

Bilingualism in Monolingual Contexts

Erasmus+ Programme

Strategic Partnerships for School Education

CONTEXT

In today's society, the learning and mastery of a foreign language is recognized as a necessary and indispensable skill for the new generations that will undoubtedly have to develop in social and professional environments in which to have linguistic competences in more than one modern language. In particular, to master a language of international recognition will be decisive in their lives. Although there are many efforts by public administrations, schools and families to achieve this goal, there is often a certain lack of coordination between the different stakeholders involved.

The BiMo project delves into the situation and the needs of the main stakeholders involved in bilingual programmes. One of the groups that undoubtedly plays a prominent role in this issue of learning a foreign language and which, however, is often left out of the decision-making organizational circles and also of the academic research that is carried out on the achievements of bilingual education programmes, are families of children enrolled in public and private schools with bilingual programmes. Families must constantly make decisions regarding the education of their children (at what age to start learning a second language, how to do it, what educational center to choose, etc.) and in the vast majority of cases it is not an informed decision as parents do not know in advance what it really means to join a bilingual education programme. This situation is particularly serious in the case of societies with a monolingual tradition in which parents, because they do not have prolonged contact with situations of bilingualism in any of its aspects, are liable to make uninformed decisions about the education of their children based on mere impressions and partial information from the social environment.

TARGET GROUPS and NEEDS

The project target groups are:

- School teachers
- Students
- Parents

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the BiMo project is, with the help of secondary school headmasters and teachers, to deepen the views, impressions and needs of the parents in monolingual societies with implemented bilingual education programmes, and to establish synergies from societies with greater experience in everyday bilingualism and bilingual education programmes in a foreign language. Thus, it is expected to set in motion several lines of action that allow the transfer of information and sharing of experiences between typically bilingual social contexts (in Lithuania and Romania) in an international and/or foreign language towards typically monolingual social contexts (in Spain and Italy). The general assumption is that families and teachers living in societies with a bilingual/multilingual social context, like that of the Lithuanian school due to its Russian language background, and the Romania with a multilingual context, will show a more engaged understanding of bilingualism and bilingual education as compared to families and teachers in typically monolingual contexts (Spain and Italy), where they are starting to question the effectiveness of CLIL bilingual programmes.



The information gathered through this project will contribute to the development of necessary competencies so that the secondary school management teams, bilingual programme coordinators, and teachers in bilingual secondary schools following a CLIL-based model can inform and help families before they enroll their children in bilingual schools and once they have been enrolled.

BiMo will look into and find solutions for the current situation in monolingual contexts in places like Spain and Italy, where teachers and families are starting to question the positive effects of CLIL programs for the cognitive development of youngsters and their capacities in their first language.

BiMo is expected to bring positive and long-lasting effects on the participating organisations, on the policy and educational systems of the countries of the partner institutions as well as on the organisations and persons directly or indirectly involved in the organised activities. BiMo will result in the development and implementation of innovative practices on bilingual schools systems at local, regional, national and European levels thanks to the participation of institutions from different parts of Europe and the attendance of local, regional and national stakeholders to the multiplying events.

RESULTS and IMPACT

The project will produce the following main outputs:

1. 3 MOOCs addressed to headmasters, CLIL teachers and families. The intellectual output consists in a set of three different MOOCs, Massive Online Open Courses, addressing the themes of the benefits and importance of bilingual education, bilingualism and CLIL in school education. Each MOOC will address a different target group among the ones identified as key for the full exploitation of bilingualism and CLIL in school education.
2. Policy Recommendation Book. As a result of the experiences put into practice during the phase of information gathering, containing reflections from all participants involved in bilingual communities (teachers, parents and school boards), BiMo will be able to develop a Policy Recommendation book with guidelines that can be freely available to anyone interested in the complex issue of bilingualism and bilingual education. This book containing guidelines can be available to any stakeholder in other countries or regions in Europe interested in implementing bilingual programs. In order to develop these guidelines, not only testimonies and reflections from parents, teachers and school boards will be taken into account, but also some international experts in these areas of research will be contacted and interviewed. This way we intend to break the common situation in which authorities and policy makers often make decisions without taking into consideration both academic experts and real beneficiaries of their political actions.
3. Collection of case studies of exemplary best practices. The intellectual output consists in the collection of case studies analysing exemplary best practices in the application of CLIL and bilingual curricula at school to be used as a reference by teachers.

The project will therefore achieve the following results:

- Enhance the capacity of Higher Education curricula to prepare students for being future active and aware protagonist of social interventions to promote equity, diversity and integration of women migrants
- Strengthen the cooperation and the creation of networks between academic organizations and the third sector and public administrations dealing with migrant women integration
- Encourage dialogue and the exchange of knowledge to raise awareness about human mobility and gender in Europe and promote social, labour and citizenship participation and integration of the migrant population.

