

PATCHWORLD

Project

PArenTs and CHildren Working, ORganising and Learning together
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THE EXPERIMENTATION OF THE PATHC-WORLD GAME WITH THE FAMILIES IN :

BULGARIA

The PATCH-WORLD Bulgarian National experimentation was conducted by the partner organizations Center for Educational Initiatives (CEI) and Association Roditeli (AR) for the period between January and June 2009. **The preparatory phase** started from the end of January up to end of March and included:

- Elaborating set of questions for the game and translation
- Selection and meetings with the National Committee members – Mrs. Donkova from Paideia Foundation, Mrs. Brestnichka from Association Parents and the National Child Network and Mr. Apostolov from ARC Fund and the Bulgarian Centre for Safer Internet
- Selection of 10 families for the experimentation (11 players – one pair of twins forming 2 teams) – the families are: Genkovi, Raichevi, Zorovi, Tzvetkovi, Stoyanovi, Lfterovi, Tzvetanski, Venevi, Milanovi and Tsvetkovi.

One general meeting on 14th of March with all the families for training how to use the platform and explaining the phases of the game.

The **real experimentation phase** in Bulgaria started from the beginning of April until 12 of June. It included:

- All the families played in the National phase of the game and the activity was on very high level;
- The representatives of Association Roditeli and Center for Educational Initiatives conducted daily monitoring and individual consultations where needed;
- Second general meeting on 19th of May – with the families and the National Committee members for conclusions and recommendations. All the families that were involved in the experimentation received awards \books\;
- Definition of the 2 families winners in the National level – Genkovi and Raichevi, based on common index of their activity both on the social activities and the quiz.
- Genkovi reached the first round of

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the International level quiz and Raichevi reached the second round of the International level quiz;

- Conducted evaluation questionnaires with the families involved in the experimentation.

Our conclusions: Brings family together in a positive and funny way; Parents learn lot from their children' PC skills and are surprised to discover what things their children know or do not know; Children ask their parents many things about the family; Children and parents do together some activities for the assignments \cook, take pictures and videos, sport\; The teams liked the quiz very much and checked the additional info for the questions all the time; The level of the quiz questions was high for most of the children aged 10 -13 and therefore difficult for them to play; The quiz contest was very interesting for the players aged 14-16 and for the parents.

Some general recommendations are: Different activities and assignments for the different ages /10-13; 14-16/; More time for the social network – at least 1 week for assignment; Bigger database of questions for the quiz game; Clear rules for fare play and for correct communication; Continuation of the game after the end of the project; Bringing the game format in school – in help of the teachers and in order, for

common home work to involve the parents.

ITALY

The Italian families experimenting the PacthWorld Learning Game expressed a general positive attitude towards the project's goals. Parents and children considered the learning by playing an interesting method. This methodology brought about a reduction in the gap between parents and children through a game based approach by mixing the children's computer skills together with the parents' knowledge and experience.

The children appreciated the fact that they could use the computer and be in some way their parents' teachers.

Some were surprised by the origin of their family name, by the sports practiced by their parents and almost all of them appreciated the game.

The methodology was considered very useful since it favoured play, knowledge and exchange of ideas (also for the Quiz contest) with their parents through the use of tools the children were familiar with.

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The participants recognized as positive points the format, interaction, being able to choose amongst several topics on different levels of difficulty, challenge families also from other countries. And the opportunity to bring families together in a positive and enjoyable way.

POLAND

The experience of the PatchWorld game in Poland showed that the modules for the social network activities guarantee the interest of the parents and children and their common involvement.

The quiz game proved to be popular and interesting both for parents and children. The children indicated that they have learned new things about the family, spent time together with their parents, and that for a little period could be 'teachers' of their parents at some point and showed to the parents some concrete things concerning the PC use and possibilities.

A strong point of this project approach was considered the philosophy of the game: the idea for parents and children together in front of the computer is practically working and is good way for creating

virtual space for sharing learning experience and for work toward national policy in that field.

NETHERLANDS

After working at national level in the first phase of the project, the pupils of the Triangel primary school faced the challenge of communicating by mail and chat among each other, but also in English with children abroad (in Karvia, Finland). To start with, teacher Fer Heuts introduced the children to the learning environment and stimulated their information exchange with other children. As a next step the children started writing on their weblogs with great enthusiasm and they watched messages and stories produced by their foreign fellows. In the meantime the learning game and quiz was prepared to enhance contacts between families in different countries. The questions and answers for the quiz were translated in Dutch. In a couple of sessions at the school but also in the homes of the participating families the children and their parents became more and more familiar with the technical and social aspects of the learning game:

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a great achievement for sure, especially when we take into account that the technical features of the system were sometimes not so easy to understand. To be honest some bugs in the software gave real problems at start but were overcome by interventions of the Italian software designer **and** by the perseverance of the children and parents themselves.

The quiz was tested first at national level and the European contest started. Unfortunately the 2 Dutch kids did not reach the finals, but they took their defeat in a good spirit (parent and teachers seemed to more deeply disappointed ...).

The evaluation showed that both children and parents (but also the school staff involved) enjoyed this experience at European level very much. Of course, the level of IT knowledge and skills is very different in the participating countries and it was surprising to see that those countries of which we tend to think that they are less advanced in IT development, were performing even better in the quiz than those we estimate as more advanced. Perhaps the challenge of performing as good as possible is perceived there as more compelling than in the Netherlands.

For the main conclusion of our participation in the Patchworld project we may simply refer to the question coming back again and again from children and parents at the Triangel: "when are going to play another game like this".

In terms of European cooperation we may say that we achieved a sustainable basis for (more) projects like Patchworld! The Dutch project partner likes to thank the European colleagues and the coordinator of this project for the smooth cooperation and the enriching experience of this innovative approach to ICT didactics.