

Subject: **Parents As Successful teacherS** – European Conference in Vienna
Information, invitation and call for co-operation



Vienna, May 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Austrian Parents' Associations together with the European Parents' Association (**EPA**) organised quite successful international conferences in the years 2008, 2009 and 2010. Thanks to the support of the Austrian Ministries and the City Mayor of Vienna we were able to host 70 to 100 participants from more than 20 different European countries in every of these events. As EPA had to concentrate on other organisational matters no international conference was held in 2011. In the current year we would like to continue the tradition and use the opportunity to present the project **PASS**. Our partners are looking forward to presenting and discussing the results in the attractive conference city of Vienna in the heart of Europe.

On **November 16th and 17th, 2012** we – the European Parents' Association (**EPA**), its Austrian member together with the project consortium **PASS** (Parents As Successful teacherS) – are happy to invite to this project's final conference. We will welcome participants to lunch on Friday noon and close with lunch on Saturday. Together with interested co-organisers, we are open to extend the programme.

The **PASS** project has developed materials to empower parents to introduce a foreign language to their young children (4 to 6 years old). Acquisition of a foreign language should be playful but guided by the structured support. The project is based on the *Thinking Approach*, a learning concept that intends to develop and support innovative and creative skills of the learner.

Target Groups, Participants:

Several issues will be addressed. Thematic diversity will be ensured by several parallel workshops and involving various target groups:

- **Parents of pre-school children** should be empowered to implement the European paradigm of plurilingualism by utilising and developing their competences in an informal learning environment.
- Networking between parents and **parents' representatives** – national as well as European – should reveal the importance and potential of parents' associations as stakeholder representation in civil society and create new momentum for their work.
- Experienced **Early Childhood educators** as well as pedagogues in training should be encouraged by the basic concepts of **PASS** to cope with the challenges of multilingualism in kindergarten and primary school. New project initiatives and ideas should arise.

- The project results will be discussed with **experts from educational science and pedagogic institutions**.
- Members of education and parents' community interested in approaches to developing creativity and thinking skills of pre-school learners will familiarise with a possible approach for doing it in the context of informal learning.
- We also want to reflect the concept of education with **policy makers** and approach it as a **joint venture** of formal public education complemented by non-formal learning as provided by public and civil society organisations as well as the informal learning mainly taking place in family context.

Aims:

- Sharing the experience of the **PASS** project
- Trans-sectoral dialogue of participants on innovation and development of education with the focus on
 - potential of learning in early childhood,
 - development and utilisation of non-formal and informal learning strategies,
 - improving the recognition of the parental role according to **EPA's** paradigm **„Parents are the primary educators of their children“**
- Fostering of non-formal and informal learning as required complement to formal institutions according to the European Commission's **EQF/NQF** approach
- „net-weaving“ and „net-working“ among participants and their organisations

Desired Results:

- Press conference of the organisers, possibly together with representatives of supporting institutions
- Press releases in several languages
- *Press releases by partner associations, supporters etc. are welcome*
- Documentation of lectures and presentations
- Documentation of workshop results
- Start of new civil society platforms in Austria (e.g. association of kindergarten-parents, „AUCIS-LLL“¹ [1] ...)
- follow-up projects ...

We are looking forward to the confirmation of your interest to sponsor, contribute and/or participate in this conference and are ready to answer your questions or discuss further about the project and the conference.

Kind regards

Johannes Theiner
European Parents' Association's President
Vorsitzender des Verbands der Elternvereine
an den höheren und mittleren Schulen Wiens

Dr. Alexander Sokol
PASS Project Coordinator
Academic director, TA Group, Latvia

¹ Similar to the European Platform EUCIS-LLL (EUropean CltizenShip and LifeLong Learning) the formation of a National network of civil society organisations in the field of Lifelong Learning is intended (AUStrian CltizenShip and LifeLong Learning).