



Italian RTM-Volontari Nel Mondo celebrates conclusion of 3-year education project in Palestine

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BETHLEHEM (Ma'an) -- On April 28th 2018, the Italian NGO RTM-Volontari Nel Mondo- celebrated, through its final seminar in Ramallah, the end of its first three years-long project implemented in West Bank: Alliance for an Inclusive and Qualitative Early Childhood Education (AEPIC).

AEPIC was funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and co-funded by the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI). The project was realized in partnership with the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) and with two Italian partners: the Municipality of Reggio Emilia and Reggio Children s.r.l., a worldwide recognized institution whose mission is to promote and disseminate high quality education. Furthermore, AEPIC project involved four local partners: the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Greek Catholic Patriarchate of Jerusalem and Ibdaa' Cultural Association of Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem.

The project's mission was to increase the quality of early childhood education in West Bank through exchange experiences with preschool institutions of Reggio Emilia. The Reggio Emilia Approach to early childhood education is an educational philosophy, based on "the image of the child as an active human being, as possessing strong potentials for development and as a subject of rights who learns and grows in the relationships with others."

The two concluding seminars of AEPIC took place on April 26th and 28th 2018 in Bethlehem and Ramallah respectively and brought together people from all the Directorates of Education involved in the project with the goal to give all them the chance to participate in the events. The attendance at the seminars was over 70 in Bethlehem and 100 in Ramallah. Moreover, in Bethlehem attended as authorities and institutional actors: Mr. Sami Kamel Mroua, the Director of the Directorate of Education, and Mrs. Veronica Bertozzi, the Representative for the development cooperation projects of the AICS. In Ramallah, H.E. Dr. Sabri Saidam, the Minister of the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, H.E. Fabio Sokolowicz, the Consul General of Italy and Mr. Marco Giallonardi, the Communication officer of AICS Jerusalem attended to the event.

Each seminar hosted an exhibition which mainly displayed the educational processes experienced by the AEPIC's seven pilot public and private schools in Bethlehem area. Through these exhibitions, the schools themselves with the support of RTM had the opportunity to communicate those processes in an innovative way, focusing specially on the works chosen and realized by the children and the teachers. The exhibitions had panels with children's drawings, graphic and photographic documentation and reserved a space to show the non-formal and raw materials used within the larger educational framework of the Reggio Emilia Approach. These materials include different kind of fabrics and papers, natural plants and flowers, small rocks and wood sticks which encourage the ability to discover as well as the expressiveness and creativity of each child.

Strengthening the public and private partnership in early childhood education sector in Bethlehem area was the AEPIC project specific goal. Related to this aim, one of the most important results achieved is the constitution of the FORUM, a network between the seven pilot schools in Bethlehem. The FORUM is a project pilot experiment that aims at enhancing

the dialogue, at exchanging educational experiences and at sharing best practices between the public and the private schools of the project. During the seminar in Bethlehem, the FORUM's Memorandum of Understanding was jointly signed by Mr. Sami Kamel Mroua and the directors of the pilot schools.

Another important AEPIC dissemination tool for sharing good practices and learned lessons was the final project PUBLICATION entitled Experiences of change , realized during the first two years of the project thanks to the important collaboration between RTM and all the partners. It is focused on the experiences of changes of the schools partners and aimed at supporting teachers and educational specialists to re-read their own experiences in a perspective of exchange and dialogue with other contexts.

Thanks to the constant relation with the project partners and to the support of AEPIC donors, RTM is also pleased to inform about the launch of the new three years-long project PACE - Partnership for a New Approach to Early Childhood Education. PACE will be implemented in West Bank, funded by AICS and will start in June 2018 with the purpose of guaranteeing the continuous support of the Palestinian early childhood education services.



