

EVALUATION OF THE CULTURAL AWARENESS QUESTIONNAIRES

Our cultural awareness test which consisted of two different parts was filled in by 99 students at our school. The questions of the first part were based on minorities and cultural diversity while the second part was constructed in connection with local culture.

In the first part we were interested if students at our school have prejudices against minorities and what they think about the situation of minorities in general. Although many of them believe that cultural diversity is an advantage for the development of a country and they believe that Europe respect cultural diversity, for the question whether Hungary respect cultural diversity 43% of the students had negative answers. Moreover while many of them think that it is important to involve minorities in cultural events, only a few of them have ever been to a cultural event organized by the local minority, and nearly half of them have no friends belonging to a minority group at all. 50 % of them are aware of the fact that the Municipality of Hódmezővásárhely has done a lot for the integration of the Roma minority in accordance with the ethical and moral goals of the European Union. It is satisfactory to know that many students have heard about the public educational reform in Hódmezővásárhely which created equal education opportunities for cumulatively disadvantaged children, however it is sad that many of them seem to have no idea how to treat each other with dignity and respect, how to be open and sensitive to our differences.

This part of the questionnaire has confirmed us that we have the urgent task to make students understand that they should not only in theory but also in practice embrace human diversity in order to build bridges to harmonious, vibrant community. We firmly believe that this project will help us to make our teenagers be more aware of the fact that people from different paths and perspectives enrich the tapestry of our lives together. When such encounters take place in an atmosphere of respect and mutuality, then new understanding and cooperation can emerge.

The second part of our questionnaire was based on local culture. We aimed to find out how many students have adequate knowledge about their hometown and their school. We asked them about the origin of our town name, statues and monuments in the main square, famous people in Hódmezővásárhely, the town library, the colours of the embroidery of the town, festivals organized here, when our school was built and so on so that we could judge how aware they are of their local culture. The answers in general show that we also have an urgent task in this field to enable students to look outside of themselves and be aware of the cultural values, and customs of the culture they are in. Due to our project we have the

possibility, at least we believe so, to make them open not only others' but also their own cultural values as well as make students understand what may be normal and acceptable to them, may be unusual or unacceptable in another culture. When we travel and take part in the partnership meetings we meet different people from different culture and we need to be aware of their beliefs and customs and respect them.