

F.1.14 Zlin Region

Curricular Reform

Kindergartens from this region participated in the *MRKVICKA* project for environmental education. In cooperation with the city of Zlin kindergartens implemented projects focused on improving the environment in kindergartens (*Garden Furbishing* – in cooperation with the Foundation for Children, Youth, Culture and Sports; *Revitalisation of Garden Playgrounds*) As regards purchasing new equipment, founders of kindergartens drew resources from regional grants for the maintenance and reconstruction of buildings.

Gifted Children, Pupils and Students and Children with Special Educational Needs

Kindergartens in the Zlin Region carried out projects with a view to including pre-school children in the life of school *Becoming School Pupils* and *A Trial School. Kindergartens* in this region also implemented school projects aimed at mutual relations, communication and behaviour of children among their peers (*We Are Friends*). Kindergartens from the Zlin Region took part in the republic-wide project *Materinka* aimed at developing the creative skills of children.

F.2 Basic Education

Projects implemented by basic schools reflected the specificities and focus of individual schools. They supported teachers by providing guidance and met the requirements incorporated in SEPs. They also developed the legal and civil awareness of pupils, supported the sense of justice, solidarity and tolerance leading to respect for an ever increasing social and cultural diversity. Applications for projects to be covered from the European Social Fund were prevented for several reasons: low experience of head teachers as applicants; disproportionate financial demands for a founder to co-finance projects; fear that schools would not be able to meet all the requirements and that payments from ESF could be delayed, and last but not least the large administrative burden. Therefore some schools used specialised agencies for drawing up their projects.

There were large differences in the approach of individual schools towards projects. Some schools have implemented many projects, but there are still a high number of schools which have not yet initiated any projects. Well organised projects were beneficial not only for pupils but for the school as a whole. And the benefits were also financial. They enabled active involvement of pupils beyond curricular activities. Schools received financial support from their founders, regional authorities as well as from other organisations (for example some projects were funded by an energy company - CEZ). In 2007/2008 there were several cases when several schools associated with several founders and together applied for a grant. In very rare cases schools developed their individual projects, on the basis of which they managed to get money from ESF.

The benefits of already implemented projects for schools were mostly better technical resources, enhancement of teachers' competences, extension of educational provision and thus increased competitiveness. Nevertheless, not all projects brought about the expected effect. But it is clear that schools which had already implemented a project had gained experience and were able to apply for more projects and were ahead of the others. The reason why other schools were lagging behind was mainly the fact that resources provided by the government and the founder were just sufficient to cover operations and maintenance costs