

# DAY ONE

## Sociologic look 1

by Marine Pisani

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# DAY ONE IN EUROPE

# SETTING THE CONTEXT

The (pro)view in this document is the evaluative account of a day at the heart of the DAY 1 in Europe scheme. This account traces with sensitivity the contours of this day, the presence of the children and their involvement and the feedback from the professionals present.

In the DAY 1 in Europe scheme, partners from the educational community from the four corners of Europe - Belgium, Italy, Ireland, Malta and, of course, France - meet and talk to each other. These partners are working on projects that promote the inclusion of allophone children in their host country. These projects take different approaches and are shared through these days.

On this third and final day, a cooking workshop took place in the morning, followed by a time of cultural valorisation in the afternoon. The cooking workshop led by Yassir and Gabriella was offered to the non-native speaking children and the professionals constituting Day 1. The time of valorisation of cultures took on board the whole primary schools Ferdinand Buisson in Bègles and more. Young and old, pupils, teachers and parents exchanged ideas about different cultures. Led by a professional, sometimes accompanied by a parent, each one had built a session of about twenty minutes, fun, combining knowledge, practices, tastes ... to discover a foreign country.

Each of these workshops was punctuated by a time of evaluation allowing for the improvement of practices, the enhancement of existing practices, inspiration, and empathy with the children in order to better understand what they may be experiencing. So, what impacts have been observed in the children? How do professionals position themselves and reposition themselves?

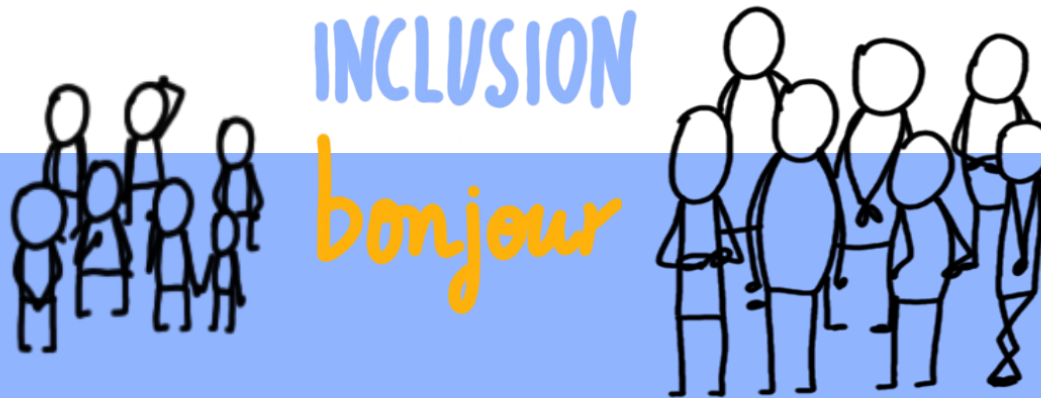
The following pages pick up the pace of this day, which ended with the promise to meet again in another country, and the gratitude for the welcome received here. They will recount the experience observed, the experience lived and the capacity for empathy of this European educational community, aiming to adapt as closely as possible to the needs of the child.





## COOKING WORKSHOP

When eating makes sense



Children, adults, adults, children. If everyone recognises themselves in this binarity, the desire is to break it down to create a meal together that we will then enjoy. For this, a simple hello introduces, but is not enough. Hello is a beginning, the start of a longer work. The discomfort of the presentation is in fact only the setting at ease for the rest of the culinary preparation and the connection to others.

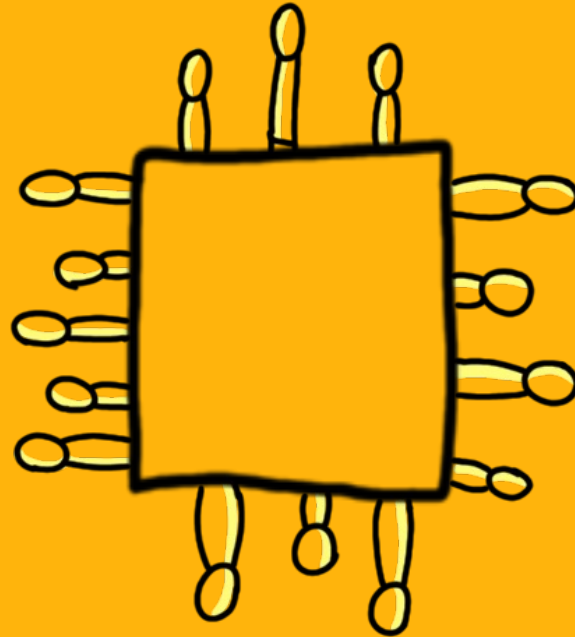
Social connection is not so simple. Coming from different countries, speaking different languages, having different cultures accentuate this difficulty to connect. Everyone remembers and observes how easily children make contact. The famous *"do you want to play with me?"* discredits all modesty and especially all fears of the other. Nevertheless, what is played out between adults and children is different; it is made of politeness and a form of shyness.

In the dynamics of the workshop proposed by Yassir and Gabriella, this time of inclusion and connection to each other is being prepared. We could compare it to the "starter" of the proposed menu. If events follow their course in its absence, the starter prepares, it sets the first tastes, the first intentions. In the case of this meeting between adults and children, the cohesive and inclusive starter is the link between times and people. And if, as adults, we are used to improvising our introductions, and there is no good solution, or ready-made proposal, a time of prepared inclusion can allow us to gain security and intensity in the encounter. This safety phase is just as important for the children as for the adults, because as the group of professionals reminded us at the end: *"we are the ones who are afraid to talk to others, they are courageous. The adult loses this spontaneity"*. These moments push us to surpass ourselves, as adults, to reconcile with our childishness.

## PREPARE THE "ENTRANCE" WELL

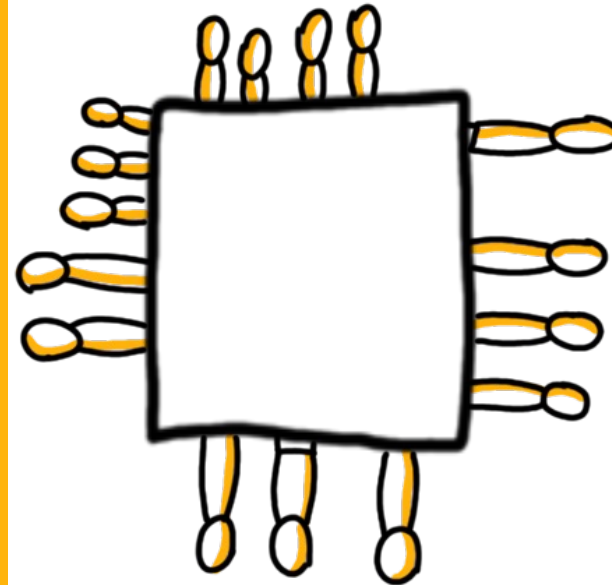
## EACH TO HIS OWN TABLE PLAN

Once the groups have been organised, everyone settles down and takes a seat around a table. Two models are then created.



### **Mixing table.**

We introduce ourselves, we play with names.



### **Discretionary table.**

We look at each other, each in his own corner, we tame each other.

But all this doesn't last long... everything gets pushed around, and very quickly the young and the old become one, exchanging good plans, ways of doing things, watching each other prepare in order to better follow their example. When finally, everything starts to move, a balance is formed.

# ON THE MENU :

## Role sharing and creative solidarity



Where the individual was only an individual, he becomes a group. Around the tasks to be accomplished and the instructions given, each person sets out to succeed and finds a place among the group. Some of them are very alert to the gestures, start, then look around, try to get closer to the person who is not doing anything. "*How can I explain it to her, she doesn't speak French?*" exclaims one of the children. Then only gestures count, a look and a smile, the link is established. Solidarity is created. "*We didn't talk much, we just smiled at each other and tried to do it together.*" In a form of social learning, each one observes, imitates, reproduces, thanks to the gestures of the other. We are out of the classroom, and there is no predefined knower whose social role has been accepted and validated by all. Everyone plays roles in turn: learner and learner.

And then, the person who until then was always in the position of a learner, finds himself or herself learning gestures and techniques, under the very serious gaze of the usual learner. Young and old swap roles, twirling around the ordinary and the usual. The children quickly move from a state of 'need' to a state of action, with the adult always there to help them, becoming the one to help. This rewarding position is not maintained indefinitely, but rather in an attentive and empathetic game, mixing the two roles and leading to mutual aid.

This is how each person redoubles his or her creativity to make people understand beyond words, or to make them understand through words. On the one hand, physical proximity is established, forming a small mutual aid group within the large group. On the other hand, original affinities are created. Affinities or solidarities. The children carry out this solidarity with brio, since one of them will translate each instruction into Italian for her adult counterpart.

This link to the other participates in the collective creation of the recipe. Then, other things happen for the children, who take on a new sense of taste. They touch, deconstruct, taste, look at the colours, apprehend the textures, share the end of the gruyère.

Finally, the link is the centre of this time which leaves room for cultural, food and other discoveries...

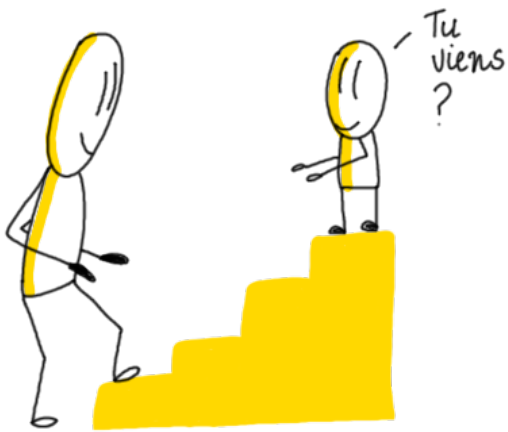
# A DESSERT OF LINKS



In all this commotion, between hubbub and silent smiles, the final verdict is unanimous among the children: *"I liked it"*, as well as among the adults. Words that they pronounce in turn in front of an assembly of adults listening to them. Words that they pronounce in several languages, and especially in English so that each of the adults understands. At ease with each other, they taste what has been created. Satisfied, mingling with this group like distant friends, from different generations, from different countries. Yet, around this circle, none of this matters. If they had started this activity session embarrassed, they are now like fish in water, playing with languages to make themselves understood, playing with languages so that everyone understands and no one is left behind. Do they then try not to reproduce what they themselves may feel at times, positioning themselves in a place of total gift? This gift from the children is valued by their UPE2A teacher, who is moved *"to see that [they] make the effort to speak English for our guests"*. Finally, the assembly concludes, *"they know what they have been through, so their empathy is very strong"*. The actions of these children then posit inclusion and equality of being as a fundamental value, without it being openly discussed, simply acknowledged.

While these values transcend the group, this gives way to a feeling of joy and benevolence among the professionals. This joy is reflected in the making itself, therefore in the technicality, in the realisation, in the production. This joy is also reflected in the sharing of this action, in the fact of making do with it. A final joy is described, that of making with one's friends, while at this moment, many strangers are present around the table. This time brings people together in depth, and for a few moments *"it was obvious, and so easy to talk to the children, as if we had known each other forever"*. As the chef who creates other chefs in this workshop says, *"food has always been a source of integration in all countries"*. Food and togetherness.

If the children do not talk about it, or not yet, this time has brought back memories of their childhood for the professionals. These memories reconnect with families, with loved ones *"I remember cooking with Grandma"...* We can then hope that such strong times as the one spent will have a positive impact, will leave a trace and a memory, whatever it may be, in the children's lives.



## TO ENHANCE THE RECIPE

*Caution is the mother of safety* and empathy leads us to put ourselves in the place of the other person in order to understand them better. If the children do not verbalise, and do not always spot what is happening for them, the adults have been able to do this inner work of paying attention to their state. This work of introspection poses some areas of attention to keep in mind during these collective, intergenerational and multicultural moments.

First of all, the stress of starting the workshop. This area of discomfort, where everything is still unknown, is generated by several factors: solitude, language, the desire to succeed in the workshop and the fear of not succeeding, an anxiety in the face of the unknown *"I don't know what I'm going to do..."*. Most of the time, this stress passes quickly, because the workshop encourages people to get into action, to create a bond, to touch the food, to test it... Of course, this stage may be accentuated by the difficulty of entering into a relationship with another person, with this other person who is unknown and far from oneself in terms of age, language... *"I was impressed by the adults", "I'm a bit stressed to be with unknown adults"*.

Finally, the strongest and most delicate risk to accompany is the emergence of fear. *"I can't understand, I can't connect, because I feel afraid, alone frightened"*. Whether an adult or a child, the challenge is not to let the other person isolate and close himself. They would then face loneliness and the inclusion issue of this workshop will create its opposite by generating a feeling of exclusion.

Inclusion is more delicate than integration. It pushes us to understand each person in order to create a place for them. It leads to values of equity and solidarity.

### **And why not?**

- ⇒ Work on this inclusion, beforehand, with the allophone pupils, to create a welcome time that reflects their image and thus put them in a position to say "welcome" to others. By proposing that they take the lead during this time of inclusion, this can in turn enable them to feel more comfortable in this position of knowing for the rest of the workshop.
- ⇒ Propose a small exercise in creating links, before the workshop, so that everyone can exchange. Possibly in groups of 4 (2 children and 2 adults), this first time would allow for an understanding of the possibilities of exchange and creativity in discussing with and/or without words. Possibly via a small game, for example the choice of an image (same type as the memory game, we get together in pairs: one child and one adult) and discuss the chosen image together. This can create prior connections (same image, same imagination...)
- ⇒ Formalise the "dessert", taste it together and talk about the sensations, during the cooking and then at the moment of tasting. "What foods do I recognise now that they are cooked? Possibly leave with the recipe, to be made at home, if they can and feel like it.



KEEP IT SAFE ...



*"what is  
created in  
the  
workshop  
will grow  
elsewhere*

Not everyone has the chance to experience a "live my life", especially with emotions, and not only with everyday facts. And yet, this is what some of the professionals tested during this workshop. Arriving in a foreign place, with (partly) strangers, not understanding what is going on or what is being said, not being able to communicate spontaneously, not being able to explain what is going on for oneself... It was therefore a real moment of empathy in part, but also for some to find themselves in the place of these children who are arriving in a foreign country, and starting school, which they have sometimes not known. This difficult learning process sheds new light on the methods to be proposed afterwards, and on the ways of dealing with these children individually and their inclusion.

Thus, the methods proposed in this workshop are to be valued and transposed to other contexts. In the manipulation and creation, with the arrival of something good, good or beautiful, whatever the choice of mediation, on the one hand; and in the educational method of putting children in a situation of transmitting knowledge, know-how and interpersonal skills to adults, on the other.

# JUMP FESTIVAL



## An ant farm start-up

The bell rings. Everyone in the courtyard looks for their citizen passport colour. *“Is this the same pink?” “Is that my group?”* A gentle jumble of children looking for each other, adults organising, children getting lost and finding each other, never disoriented. Like an “ant farm” that sets out to discover new territories.

# Sequences between intimacy ...



The classrooms are requisitioned and transformed into a discovery of countries, decorations, flags, music, everyone has taken over the space. The atmosphere in the room is very different. In some, everyone talks at the same time, tests, moves and shakes. In others, everyone is sitting quietly, listening, ready to ask a question, to share a memory, to tell an anecdote.

The cultural differences here are not confused, on the contrary, they are amplified, for the better. Specific cultures are honoured, and the child, sometimes a representative of that same culture, can tell his or her story.

*"I come from that country, one day I will go back there."*

*"my mother makes me pastries like this for my birthday"*

*"You can also eat it with honey or jam!"*

*"I speak Arabic at home".*

For other children, this sometimes creates a desire to "be there". *"I too have been there", "I know a few words of Arabic too"*. The "me too" then takes on a real sense of creating links. If until then there was not necessarily the recognition of a similarity other than that of being human, the introductions and exchanges initiated during these practically intimate sequences generate other connections to the other, other traits of similarity. *"I've been to Ireland"*.

And if the children share naturally and without constraint of educational posture, the adults, parents and professionals, also take part in the game. The professionals reveal a part of their intimacy, share with the pupils what they are not used to sharing. Memories, journeys, and their personal history too. Some start speaking in their native language.

As for the families, the parents who intervene have made themselves "beautiful", sometimes coming in traditional dress, speaking the language of their country, to make the children listen to the music. More or less shy, they are accompanied by the professional at their side to find their place.

Finally, this sequence reveals the intimate side of each person, so that by starting from differences, by confronting them, by exposing them, it creates the opposite effect: a connection. This sharing is mixed with learning, whether it be knowledge or sensory.



There is the well-known maxim "the truth comes out of the mouths of children", which reflects their unconscious wisdom when they exclaim in the middle of an explanation by the teacher-parent duo "you don't understand when you don't know! And indeed, in some classes, the distant seems so foreign and the not so naive questions come from all sides.

*"Are there any animals?"*

*"and what language do we speak?"*

*"Do they really eat maggots?"*

Here again, knowing becomes a source of rapprochement, or a desire to discover. From the near and the far, what seemed foreign until then awakens knowledge and becomes proximity.

The organisation of these sessions is playful and brings with it its share of tests and experiments that help children discover and make their own what was foreign and distant. In fact, just like the morning's cooking, the different encounters in the afternoon's countries bring the children's senses into play. In some cases, a local dish is tasted. Sometimes there are grimaces, often "huum", mostly "what's in it? In others, they try on clothes, listen to music and guess the language in which the song is sung, draw, play cards or theatre. All means are good, and the pupils are captivated. The collective investment creates a harmony where everyone finds their place in a multicultural learning process during which each pupil encounters another culture as much as his or her peers or a person telling about that culture.

The "personification" of these different cultures makes the knowledge transmitted more palpable, and brings emotion and sensibility to what is usually "cold" knowledge, difficult to grasp in terms of human proximity.

Thus, as the discussions progress, learning takes place. *"Did you know that the red on the Lebanese flag is blood? Did you know that the red on the flag of Lebanon is blood?" "The leaf on the flag of Canada is what we use to make maple syrup! Thus, through the prism of laughter, it is finally knowledge and discovery that are initiated in each person, and the discovery of new interests, of distant landscapes, and of humans so close.*

...  
discovery  
and  
activation of  
the senses

"It is  
by forging  
that one  
becomes a  
blacksmith".

*"On the first workshop we tested, in the second we made some changes, in the third we were better."*

You can only improve by experimenting. Thanks to this method, which was ultimately iterative and incremental, each of the workshops was modified as the children passed through. The first time was to test it, the second to improve it, the third to feel comfortable with it. Thanks to the children's feedback and actions, the professionals adapted and took possession of their workshop to modify it.

The playfulness proposed in these sessions makes it possible to address the fundamental issues of cultural differences by proposing a human connection. The sense of a cultural bond that transcends borders is brought to life in small everyday items, such as a birthday cake, or a song that crosses borders and languages, such as "mon petit navire", which was sung in Greek and French in one of the sessions.



### **And why not?**

- ⇒ Allow yourself time to experiment with the workshops beforehand. By taking advantage of the group of professionals present to test your workshop in small groups.
- ⇒ Can a role be envisaged for working with children. Upstream or downstream, to enhance their knowledge of this culture. Could a specific time be envisaged for them?



# FINALLY

This three-day cycle within the DAY 1 in Europe scheme was marked by a real collective energy. The commitment of each professional provides a benevolent framework and gives free rein to constructive feedback. This commitment also allows the child to evolve freely, to find a place, and to have the possibility to change.

The proposals made within the framework of Day 1, developed by the professionals and observed during this day all highlight the interest and the impact of these actions on the inclusion of the allophone child. They are multi-faceted and therefore make it possible to touch the different intelligences and sensitivities of everyone. As a form of reconciliation with learning, they divert the injunction to cold knowledge in a playful way, to make the relationship with knowledge human, and thus give back the possibility of discovery and curiosity.

These days offer a time to highlight individual perceptions of otherness. Through this benevolent space, each person can freely find his or her bearings to acquire new ways of communicating in an experiential, practically self-taught manner. Between multi-language, body language and sensoriality, bridges are built between each other.

Sometimes the bridges are crossed and propose other modes of identification: European, global, human, childlike.

Day 1 seems to build the solid foundations of a professional educational community. A place, a moving space where "we feel that we have a place here", thus a real European educational community "we feel that we have a place here". In this space, the children will surely be able to find their own place in the future, and perhaps be accompanied by this community to invest themselves in this system.

