



ABSTRACT

WORKSHOP 3

Education of the public and particularly children

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By means of family neglecting, children are regularly witnessing animals' suffering: stray animals, animals scarified in public or private places, molested pets, wild animals used as „models”, locked animals within zoos and circuses, ceased animals with no restrictions etc. Adults' indifference towards animals is unfortunately an example for the children. Animal protection organization VIER PFOTEN developed „Children Learn to Protect the Animals” project, its proposal being to show that, by means of education, in time, this attitude can be changed. Adapting to the Romanian education system, the project targets teachers and pupils and from primary school, 3rd and 4th form, as one of the most important educational level, involving them in a project that aims to show that the study of animal welfare is necessary in schools, since it comes to support the children's education, by sensing and responsibility towards animals – emphasizing that animals protection must be a part of their basic education. For this purpose it is offered an interactive schoolbook - “*Close to animals*”, training course for the teachers based on alternative teaching methods, teaching guidelines and activities that make the children interact with animals. The methodologies that are applied are based on active learning that offers for the pupils a chance to develop different behaviours, such as active participation and creative thinking. Pupils are encouraged to have their own suggestions and to propose new interpretations to specific problems, applied learning. They are also enabled to apply a learning strategy and to build knowledge. A pupil will therefore be active and fulfil tasks that will lead him to a higher level of understanding and internalising the information.

The methods of teaching that are specific to the interactive groups: learning method on small groups, brainstorming, the round table, four corners, group portfolio, group research project. The teachers, as key persons in guiding the pupils to ethical, moral and social values have the chance to develop new methods that will lead children to positive attitude towards animals and environment, being known that if children are thought to have empathy towards animals, they are more likely to display the same empathy towards humans, later in life as adults.

Caring for animals becomes a link to children's sensitivity and responsibility and a social catalyst that surpasses cultural and social boundaries. As one of the most respected person in the primary school years is the teacher - she/ he has a great duty in starting this process.