

# INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION :

## Paideia, Polity, Demoi

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INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION: Paideia, Polity, Demoi  
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## ΒΕΒΑΙΩΣΗ ΣΥΜΜΕΤΟΧΗΣ

Βεβαιώνεται ότι ο/η

**Marios.P Koukounaras Liagis**

συμμετείχε με εισήγηση στο Διεθνές Συνέδριο:

«**INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION: Paideia, Polity, Demoi**»

το οποίο συνδιοργανώθηκε από το **International Association of Intercultural Education (I.A.I.E.)** και το **Ινστιτούτο Μεταναστευτικής Πολιτικής (Ι.Μ.Ε.Π.Ο.)**, υπό την αιγίδα της **UNESCO**, στην Αθήνα, 24–26 Ιουνίου 2009.

Τίτλος εισήγησης:

«**Religious Diversity in Greek Schools. An Educational and Social Research into the role of the Theatre-in-Education Programmes (TIE) in intercultural communication**»

Εκ μέρους της Οργανωτικής Επιτροπής

Nektaria Palaiologou, University of Western Macedonia  
General Chair of the IAIE 2009 Conference

“Religious Diversity in Greek Schools. An Educational and Social Research into the role of the Theatre-in-Education Programmes (TiE) in intercultural communication”

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The role of culture in the social and political everyday life is a main point that the contemporary thinking tends to research. That arises the supposition whether intercultural communication can be elevated with the mediation of a cultural action and whether this action may achieve to germinate ideas and create perceptions. This presentation describes a socio-educational research with this subject, which was conducted to study the students' viewpoint on cultural/religious diversity prior to and

following the application of a TiE project. The poster defines the relevant to the research which was conducted in secondary schools of Thessaloniki and Thrace, in the period of 2006-07. Furthermore, the research fields and approach method, the variety of methods, the participants and the quantitative and qualitative analysis and evaluation of inquiring data are discussed. It finishes with a conclusion of the value of TiE for social change and a discussion of how to promote the role of TiE in the education and especially in religious education of young people. It has also be mentioned that the conclusion includes proposals for a necessary and obligatory religious education in an intercultural context.

Key words: diversity; intercultural communication; Re-education; research.

This contribution describes a research which was conducted, in the period of 2006-2007, in secondary Greek schools to maintain a PhD thesis in the Religion Department of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

### ***Hypothesis***

Whether intercultural communication can be elevated with a mediation of a Theater-in-Education Program and whether an educational action may achieve to germinate ideas and create perceptions.

### ***Research's goals***

- to study the students' viewpoint on cultural/religious diversity prior to and following the application of a TiE program.
- to explore how is it possible to apply an educational action in the contemporary Greek school? Is school ready for such a theatre programme?

### ***Research's facts***

**Time line:** July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006 – May 30<sup>th</sup> 2007

**Location:** Thessaloniki and a city of Thrace

**Approach method:** Research-Action included four case studies and application in ten schools.

### **Sample:**

- Phase one: Two groups of Lyceum (High School) level one in Thessaloniki and two groups of Lyceum level one in a city of Thrace where Muslims live permanently. *Total number of participants: 90 students and 4 teachers*
- Phase two: Ten classes of different types of schools and different levels of secondary education in a city of Thrace. *Total number of participants: 212 students and 18 teachers.*

### ***Research methods***

- Observation of the TiE group during the process of research;
- Anonymous written questionnaires were filed in two phases (seven days prior to the application of TiE and three months following the performance);
- Recorded interviews were taken from the teachers;
- Diary was kept by the teachers throughout the research;
- Students gave interviews to focus groups of five (The first was given prior to TiE program and the other two after it, one per month);
- Observation of students' responses when the program was running;
- Two out of the written activities were assessed;
- The teachers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase delivered a written evaluation of the program.

The facts were analyzed based on quality and quantity.

## *The Theater-in-Education programme*

### *Five smudged afternoons*

- is designed by a team of specialists after thorough research.
- addresses to young people from 15 to 20 years old.
- is divided in two parts, a short performance and a combination from drama in education activities, and it lasts 2 school-hours (1:30h).
- after the application, the TiE facilitators give to the teachers the “teacher’s package”, a compact material that includes ideas, stimuli for discussion and various recommended activities for further action and negotiation relevant to the program’s subject.



### *In the performing part*

The students meet a young boy at the age of seventeen, who is a student of Lyceum level 3, and his religion is different from the community he lives in.

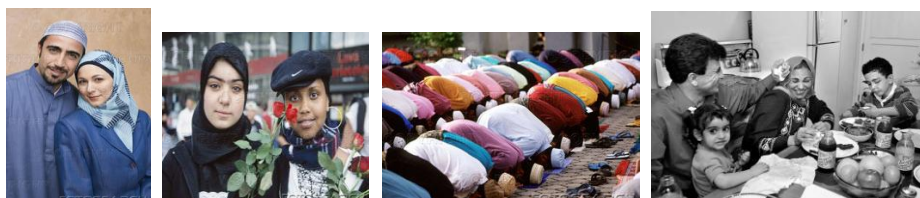
### *The objectives of the programme were:*

- To empower the acceptance of difference in our society and to respect the “other” with his/her individual features.
- To contribute to the sensitization and the questioning of the youth in relation to the position that a community concedes to the “others” and how this affects their psychology. In addition, to motivate them into questioning themselves about their own attitudes and typical behaviour on diversity in everyday life.
- To clarify that each and every person has the right to choose a religion and accept it as the one and “true belief”. No one has the right, at any extent, to confront people with different or no religion as not equal members of the community.

## Results

The impression for the “others” was measured by photos, without mentioning at any point neither any roles religion.

- Prior to TiE, 58.8% had positive to extremely positive impression and after the experimental application the percentage stood at 67%.
- Moreover, those who have negative to completely negative impression constitutes 52.2% before TiE, while after TiE this percentage was diminished to 32.2%.



Then religion is declared (Islam) and their opinion is asked:

- Those who answer, before the application of TiE, very to absolutely positive for Muslims constitute 28.8% of the total. After the application of TiE program the latter percentage increases to 40.00%.

The record of the opinions concerning Muslims proved that our intervention caused a tendency to move to less negative impressions and more positive opinions.

Furthermore, data were drawn from the relevant question of the questionnaire. This constitutes the combination of proposals that describes the attitudes, with answers gradated in scale, and of Bogardus' scale of social distance. After the codification of the questionnaires seven groups result that describe the tolerance towards Muslims.

**Table 1: Children's attitudes towards Muslims. n=90**

		EXTREMELY TOLERANT														total
		Group 1							Group 7							
		1,00		2,00		3,00		3,50		4,00		4,50		5,00		
level	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A		
1	1 <sup>st</sup> of Thrace	0	0	2	0	4	5	3	2	0	1	2	1	0	0	18
2	2 <sup>st</sup> of Thrace	1	2	0	0	3	1	4	3	3	1	1	0	1	0	19



3	East Thessaloniki	3	0	0	1	3	3	6	2	1	0	4	1	8	2	27
4	West Thessaloniki	4	0	3	0	1	3	3	1	11	2	5	1	0	1	26
	total	8	2	5	1	11	12	16	8	15	4	12	3	9	3	90

- Prior to the application of the program, the attitude of students at a high percentage didn't demonstrate tolerance towards other religions and the tolerance level was different between those who had met Muslims personally and those who hadn't.
- Not at all tolerant were 57% of the students. The non tolerant on Thessaloniki were more (East: 70% West: 73%) than in Thrace (1<sup>st</sup> Lyceum: 27.7% 2<sup>nd</sup> Lyceum: 47% ).
- Extremely tolerant attitude in an absolute level was presented to 24.4% of the respondents. After TiE application the percentage of the extremely tolerant increases to 53.3%. This result mostly emanated from the answers of the two schools in Thrace.
- Finally it should be noted that the drop of non tolerant created more positive attitudes to the non tolerant, almost tolerant and tolerant.

This shift is a significant element for the value of TiE program's intervention in the attitudes and the tolerance of specific students.

## Conclusion

- The Theatre in Education Programs offer the 'scaffolding', as Wood, Bruner and Ross mentioned, so as to reinforce the positive changes in the attitudes of students towards religious differences, whether the students know personally people who belong to a different religion or not and to develop socio- ethical virtues and attitudes that are inspired by the respect to the difference.
- They can contribute to the moral and political education of the youth in sensitive social issues, as the one of religion diversity and differences in general.
- On intercultural communication and education especially it seems the relevant goals can be achieved. Simultaneously the study showed that the students in the framework of their education should learn about religion, on a mandatory basis, set from the government, so as to learn about other religions and develop a relevant respect to those who follow them. Secondly, the research has shown that the school remains the main educator on religion studies.
- The entire procedure of production and application showed that a theatre pedagogical team today may be created and operate in Greece, but there is no appropriate frame, in order for the same to cooperate with the Secondary education schools.

Bibliography is not contained, but is available upon request.

Koukounaras Liagis Marios studied Theology in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and Greek Philology in the Democretian University of Thrace. He owns an MA in Pedagogy and he obtained a PhD on Sociology of Religion from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He has been a RE-teacher in Secondary Education since 2003 and has also been working as a Consultant to the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs since October 2007. He has taken part with announcements and proposals in Greek and international scientific conferences and magazines.