

PROJECT IMPACT IN POLAND

1. What impact do you think the project had on you and your organization?

In public school there is usually no opportunity to be close to animals during lessons and other activities. Teachers and parents are afraid of bad consequences of close relations between children and animals at school. This project showed that good prepared, well controlled meeting children and animals can be safe and gives a lot of fun and good experiences for students. As we can see in case studies, working with animals can cause increase of knowledge, skills and learning abilities – and teachers and parents could see it. We could also notice good changes in children behaviour. Teachers noticed that working this way is modern, gives more satisfaction and sometimes resolve problems potentially unsolved.

Students participated in excursions to equestrian centre learnt about horses, could try to look after horses, to ride. They could meet working dogs and a lot of other animals. And one more impact – there are small animals (parrots, turtle, hamster) in some of our classes.

2. Did you involve any other target groups that are not a part of your organization and what was the impact on these participants?

Students from my school involved in our project cooperate with animal shelters in Falenica and Celestynów. They collected food and things needed in such a place and delivered it personally. Shelters' staff could learn children about responsibility for a dog or cat. So the benefits were in both sides.

We also cooperate with organization "Alpakoterapia". They visited our school with animals. Students could meet alpacas, learnt about their habits, place they live in nature. There is no way to continue this cooperation at school, but I know some parents decided to participate in such activities privately.

Our students also took part in lessons with working dogs from "Przyjaciel pies" organization. Students learnt about dogs' habits and how to behave with unknown dog, which can be aggressive. They learnt about first aid with dogs.

We also cooperate with private dog therapists "using" their dogs during our activities.

3. Did you in any way manage to transfer the impact of the project on the local, regional or international level?

We talked about our project during meetings with our local government and other local schools, showed how we realize the assumptions of our project.

Teachers involved in project talked about it during their exams for next step of professional advancement. This way they spreaded results of our work not only to local authorities but also to central educational authorities.

I was involved in international exchanging project called "Młodzież poznaje Europę". Visiting Czech Republic with group of my students we spent some time in primary school in Ceska Trebova. So I could tell local teachers about our "animal" project, about new things and new thinking in our school connected with project, about international cooperation and benefits of working with animals and having animals at school.

Two years lasting of the project gave students and teachers opportunity to learn a lot of animals, their habits, taking care of them and way they can help in education and behaviour of pupils.

For students: They learnt about animals, worked with animals during lessons and other activities. Now they know how to take care of animals and how to behave with animals they will meet. They started to visit animals' shelters and they will be continue this. They started to be more sensitive. They want to help animals in shelter by collecting food and other things needed in such a places. They learnt that animal could be not only a „person” to play with but also to learn with, to read for, to paint etc. They will continue it.

For teachers: They learnt a lot of animals. They saw and understood the impact of animals in classroom. Using Guideline and Booklet they can organize their work in class with animals. And they will do it. There are some classes want to have their own animals in classrom (turtle, bird, fish). Teachers are going to cooperate with AAT organizations and other organizations using animals in learning and therapy. Teachers will organize collecting food and other things for animals' shelters. There is one teacher wanted to learn how to be dog therapist.

For school: Using animals in teaching is something new in Polish school system, so our school can be seen as modern school, open for innowations and trying new ways of education. Thta's why the position of school in local environment is very high. Looking for the best way for the highest level of education we found – thanks to this project - new way. It's presence of animals , working with animals during lessons and other school activities.