

**THE IMPACT OF  
THE NANSEN MODEL FOR INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION  
ON GOCE DELCHEV ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, GOSTIVAR,  
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**



**Report from research carried out by**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Concept for Intercultural Education was developed by an expert group established by the Nansen Dialogue Centre in Skopje in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia and financially supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway. Since 2016, the Nansen Dialogue Centre (NDC) Skopje team, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and Science, has focused on the implementation of the proposed model of intercultural education in seven selected model schools with a multi-ethnic profile of students, teachers and parents.

In spring 2017, research was carried out in these selected schools, in order to evaluate the various levels of co-operation between students, teachers and parents of different ethnic backgrounds both inside and outside the schools. The sample consisted of students, teachers and parents who were not included in the Nansen Model for Intercultural Education (NMIE).

This current 2018 research has been commissioned by the Nansen Dialogue Centre to do an evaluation in one model school, Goce Delchev Elementary School in Gostivar, of the teachers and students (and their parents), who have been part of the Nansen Model for the past three years. This was in order to assess whether and how their attitudes, values and behaviour regarding intercultural elements, have changed, especially in relation to the students, parents and teachers who have not experienced the model.

## **THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research was carried out on 20 and 21 February 2018 in Goce Delchev Elementary School, Gostivar, where teaching is carried out in either Albanian or Macedonian during two shifts - for Albanian students in the morning and Macedonian students in the afternoon for two weeks, after which the Macedonian students are in the morning shift and the Albanian students in the afternoon shift, on a rota basis. The Nansen Concept for Intercultural Education was conducted after the end of the morning shift and before the beginning of the afternoon shift so that both Albanian and Macedonian students could access the project together.

The target group for the evaluation was the three groups of students, teachers and parents who were involved in the Nansen project delivered through extracurricular activities over the past three years. The first group of 40 students are now in Grade 6. They participated in the Nansen Project for three years from 2014/15 to 2016/17 but not during the current school year 2017/18. The second and third group, consisting of 48 children now in Grade 4 and 45 children in Grade 5, have participated in the Nansen Model for two full years since autumn 2015.

Qualitative data was collected, recorded and analysed from students, teachers, parents and the school management team. The research began on Day 1 by interviewing the Principal and the school management team. This was followed by two observations of two different extracurricular activities each taught by 2 tandem teachers, one Albanian

and one Macedonian. Finally six teachers, consisting of three teacher tandems were interviewed about their experience to date. Day 2 began by interviewing 9 Albanian students from Grades 4, 5 and 6 who had been been involved in the Nansen model. This was followed by parallel observations of two extracurricular activities by two pioneer tandems. Interviews were then held with 9 Macedonian students from Grades 4, 5 and 6. The final interview session was held with 18 Macedonian and Albanian parents whose children had experienced the Nansen Model for Intercultural Education.

The comprehensive and excellent 2016 research, 'Identifying Interculturalism in Multiethnic Schools in the Republic of Macedonia', was taken into account when preparing the questions and types of areas to explore during the 2018 research and evaluation. This was very helpful in understanding the context of Goce Delchev Elementary School as well as the other model schools. It helped to provide an idea of the kinds of values, attitudes and behaviours, in terms of interethnic and intercultural elements, that were prevalent in the pre-Nansen time in the school. In this way, current attitudes, values and behaviour could be explored and compared in order to ascertain the benefits, influence and impact Nansen had made over the past 3 years.

The Concept for Intercultural Education document itself was also crucial to understanding the background of the Nansen Model by outlining the principles, objectives and mission of intercultural education and clarifying the context for intercultural education, in the Republic of Macedonia.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS ANALYSIS**

Notes from the interviews with the Principal, Management team, teachers, students and parents, as well as notes from the extracurricular tandem teaching Nansen sessions were collated in line with most of the categories from the 2016 research. Direct quotes (as translated) from individuals were recorded where possible to give a better insight into participants' views, feelings and thoughts about any impact, benefits or influence of the Nansen Model in Goce Delchev Elementary school. These research notes are outlined below, followed by the summary of the evidence, the final conclusions and some issues for future consideration.

## **GOCE DELCHEV ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: Responses made to this researcher**

### **Responses by the Principal & School Management**

- The Principal and the Deputy Principal made the decision “to try the project”.
- The Principal noted “At the beginning it was difficult - it was more intense with Nansen than with other projects. With Nansen it was once a week, each week.”
- He also said, “Some teachers were telling me that it was so interesting for the kids that they were asking to come into the group again with the other children. It was fun. If they didn’t like it, you couldn’t force them.
- “Teachers are motivated to stay longer... their whole attitude to the school is different”. One of the team said “It brings Macedonian and Albanian children, parents and teachers together and creates a different atmosphere, a positive atmosphere
- Everyone appreciated the support for Nansen in terms of training and provision of materials.
- One teacher said that “without the Principal and Vice Principal, the Nansen model would probably not be what it is. It would probably die out.”
- The Principal acknowledged “It was not a smooth trail. There were difficulties. We had a lot of effort to make the project grow.” Then he said “Now we are having a very successful partnership with Nansen”.
- Teachers were sceptical at the start. They thought it was “just another project”. But gradually, “they realised that this is something different, deeper, more serious... mainly teachers accept it gladly. And it’s extracurricular so the kids and the teachers are more relaxed... The kids and the parents see there is a new atmosphere in the school”.
- Nansen supplies lots of resources and these resources can be used in other classes.
- The Principal said that at the start, it was difficult with some teachers but gradually it began to spread up the school into other subjects like art and languages. One of the management team said “I didn’t think we were going to get this far with the project.”
- Another said ‘We were the first school. Now teachers from other schools and teachers want to learn more... and schools from all over Macedonia are coming to our school to see it.’
- The Principal concluded “If I was asked what was the best thing I did, I would say it was the Nansen Model for Integrated Education.”

### **Responses regarding Socialisation**

- The Principal believes that the Nansen Project has definitely affected the life of the school for the better. In terms of students, there is less tension between Macedonians and Albanians. Due to parents’ support and involvement with Nansen, there are fewer problems with students.
- Albanian students interviewed all declared they had Macedonian friends both inside and outside school. In school they socialise with their Macedonian friends during intercultural extracurricular activities because that is the only time they meet during school due to the shift system - Albanian students in the morning shift and Macedonian students in the afternoon. Nansen helped with socialisation: “before Nansen I had a little Macedonian because I have a Macedonian friend but with Nansen I do sport outside with Nansen friend”.
- Students said their parents encouraged them to socialise with Macedonians - “she likes me to talk with anyone who speaks a different language.” Teachers also encourage students to socialise with the ‘others’.

- Sports activities are another opportunity for students to socialise and many boys do meet both in school and outside for sports such as football (mixed and separate teams), volleyball and handball.
- Macedonian students also said they had Albanian friends both inside and outside of school. One student said “Macedonians don’t speak any Albanian” and another said all his Albanian friends speak Macedonian. Another student said it was fun to socialise during the Nansen project and “to learn a bit of Albanian and you can ask them - sometimes we speak English. I also speak English because we don’t speak each other’s language”.
- They said parents encourage them to socialise and sometimes teachers do also; but mostly they just do so themselves.
- The parents said they thought it would help children to integrate with one another.
- One parent said that “Nansen has made a difference for some parents in cross-community socialising”.
- Teachers noted that the first Nansen students are now Grade 6 and want more Nansen classes. “Whenever they meet pupils of the ‘other’ ethnicity on the street, they hug each other”.
- Teachers see a huge difference in how students behave towards each other after participating in Nansen. They think they definitely socialise better now both inside and outside school. They see mixing with other ethnicities as natural. They work together and share things in tandem classes. There has been a big change from 5 years ago. Everybody in the school now wants it. They see it as added value. Children say they are “proud to be part of Nansen”

### **Responses regarding Joint Activities**

- The joint lessons and activities during the extracurricular sessions are very positive and successful. Teachers, students and parents all point to their importance in the life of the school. The programme has transformed teaching in the school as well as relationships between staff, students and parents.
- Children are taught together in mixed groups by tandem teachers, one Macedonian and one Albanian. They deliver the sessions in both languages and the content includes areas of study from both cultures.
- Students are involved in various activities during extracurricular sessions such as drama, preparing birthday parties with both food and craft materials, making model volcanoes etc.
- One student said he “gained new friends especially in drama” and another said “I was happy in different projects - drama was fun and interesting”. Another said “my Macedonian got better. I also learnt new games”.
- They really enjoyed the Nansen excursion to Skopje where they visited the zoo, the planetarium and the cinema. Some students on the bus sat separately from each other and others sat with Macedonian friends. All managed to socialise with the ‘others’ during the trip. One Macedonian student said “On the bus the teacher seated us in Macedonian/Albanian pairs. It’s very good for socialising”.
- All the students really enjoyed the intercultural extracurricular activities.
- A Grade 6 student said “I was very happy...did drama and funny things and interesting things. We should have Nansen in Grade 6. I miss it. I still meet them [Nansen Macedonian friends] in sport outside. In school I see them at the end of shift.”
- Another Grade 6 student said “We would like our classrooms to be like Nansen classrooms”.

- Another student said if Nansen stopped “It would be really bad... I would be really sad. I wouldn’t have new friends and activities. I wouldn’t know Macedonian.”
- Parents felt their children were “more happy and a lot engaged during Nansen... they were very happy to learn something completely different together with their friends”.

### **Responses regarding Readiness to learn the Language and Culture of the other**

- The school introduces students to the history and culture of both Macedonians and Albanians through different subjects such as ethics, civic education, RE and celebrating traditional holidays such as Easter and Bayram.
- Nansen’s extracurricular programme specifically includes lots of activities which promote both cultures. It also delivers the programme through tandem teachers, one who speaks Albanian and the other who speaks Macedonian throughout each session. Due to the tandem teachers modelling both languages, children learn some of the ‘other’s’ language while working in their mixed Macedonian/Albanian groups
- An Albanian student said he enjoyed going to the Nansen project “to have fun and to make new friends and to understand another language.”
- One student said “Macedonians don’t speak any Albanian” and another said all his Albanian friends speak Macedonian. One student noted that sometimes the teacher helps them understand Albanian.
- None of the Macedonian students said they spoke Albanian. “We don’t learn Albanian at school except in Nansen... sometimes our teacher helps us to understand our Albanian friends”. Some of them speak to Albanian friends in English.
- One of the parents said of her daughter, “she started to learn Macedonian and there was a great improvement in her language”.

### **Responses regarding Spirit of Togetherness (readiness and interest - bilingualism & language**

- Nansen training has encouraged the use of both languages within the intercultural activities. Tandem teachers model communication in both languages as they conduct the class. They also encourage the children in their mixed groups to take an interest in each other’s language. Texts are in both Albanian and Macedonian in posters on classroom walls and corridors and in students’ worksheets.
- Some Albanian and Macedonian students would like to see mixed shifts because then “we can get socialised, we can find new friends and get closer to them. Sometimes we can learn new things from them like maths or new words” and that it “would be better in mixed classes...good opportunity for us to learn”.
- One Albanian student said “My best friend learned me Macedonian words and I learned her Albanian words. She is my best friend in all ways.” Another student said “One guy heard me speaking Macedonian and he thought I was Macedonian.....I gained new friendship.”
- One of the parents said “One of the best things is that my daughter has started to learn Macedonian”

### **Responses regarding Intolerance and Enmity**

- Since the Nansen model was introduced, the Principal thinks there is less conflict between Macedonian and Albanian students.

- Teachers see a huge difference in how children behave compared to 5 years previously before the Nansen project was introduced. Students now communicate with each other better and share items in school and the atmosphere is much more positive.
- One Macedonian student said it was good to be involved with the Nansen project “mostly to make friends, socialise, don’t be racist. Even though we don’t know Albanian, it’s a good idea. Also Nansen has good resources.”
- Parents felt that children were happier and a lot more engaged in school as part of Nansen. One parent said “some conflict situations were solved very easily and Nansen helped a lot”. The ethos of the school was much better and barriers were already gone.
- One parent said “because of Nansen parents have less prejudice”.

### **Responses regarding Communication & Co-operation between teachers**

- The Nansen model for Intercultural Education has affected the life of the school in various ways according to the Principal and management team. Teachers have developed better relationships. Teachers choose their tandem partner and they work well together.
- Teachers themselves think that the Nansen Model has definitely changed how they work professionally with their ‘other’ colleagues. Before Nansen, they used to only greet one another but not really communicate very much. With their tandem teacher they exchange ideas and are much closer. They even socialise outside of school. They work together professionally and positively, during extracurricular activities since they discovered they can do more and be more creative.
- They think that the Nansen training is of very high quality and very useful in increasing the level of their professionalism. The high quality, colourful displays in the corridors and Nansen classroom are a result of the training.
- They are also better equipped in terms of technology such as laptops, overhead projectors, laminators and creative arts materials. This enables them to teach in a more interesting manner, promoting active learning for the students which they enjoy.
- A teacher tandem said “Nansen believes in us and we believe in Nansen... the greatest success is that all the knowledge of training can be put into practice and is reflected in the behaviour of the students and in the behaviour of us.”
- The teacher tandems are very proud of the Nansen training and the work they now do with the students in school. Since September there have been many open classes and visitors. “We appreciate and we are very proud that Albanian speakers and Serbian speakers are visiting from Kosovo... so the word has spread that something good is happening.”
- The Principal shows a lot of respect for the tandem teachers which they really appreciate.

### **Responses regarding Interculturalism in the teaching process**

- The Nansen model training has increased teachers’ readiness and ability to deliver intercultural content and activities. Teachers report that the training is very good, interesting and useful and they try to implement the programme. “We have had very good support.” Other people, parents and friends think this work is useful in the long term.
- One teacher said that the Nansen training presentation on intercultural dialogue helped her get the necessary tips and hints to try to implement the same in the classroom. It also elevated her level of understanding.

- Nansen created a Macedonian-Albanian dictionary for pupils, both in hard copy and online.
- Teachers say that cross-cultural materials are better now: “In the past it was only books. Now we are using it practically.” Examples given were in the “Peace and Tolerance” discussion when the class began talking about Macedonia, then moved on to discuss Albania, then moved on to discuss Serbia and then to another subject.
- One of the parents expressed great praise for the tandem teachers - “they give great energy.”

### **Responses regarding Parental Involvement in intercultural school activities**

- The Nansen Project encourages parental involvement in the school. The Nansen team invite parents to a presentation about the programme and parents are given the opportunity to see what the programme is about before being invited to formally enrol their children for the extracurricular activities. The Principal explained that parents sign a formal agreement that they are willing to have their children engage in this work.
- Parents were fully aware of the Nansen model for Intercultural Education because they had been given a presentation by the Nansen staff and afterwards had all signed their children on to the project. They thanked Nansen for its involvement and for the materials they had never had in the past. They liked how the project was organised and how parents were involved.
- Parents responded by helping set up classrooms by painting and decorating and organising the materials. This brought teachers and parents closer together. The Principal noted that ‘without the support of the parents, this is something that is not going to happen.’
- The Principal and management team would say that parents are more engaged with the school and there are fewer problems with students.
- Parents and the wider community are invited to contribute to the learning and teaching in the school by giving presentations on topics such as recycling, traffic safety and healthy eating.
- Teachers pointed out that Nansen workshops for parents helped establish good contacts between parents and teachers. They now know each other well and communication and co-operation are very good. Parents were very positive about the workshops and have requested more such workshops.
- One teacher said when Nansen came along at first, some were ‘for’ and some ‘against’. The main thing was to get parents involved. “We don’t have problems with the kids, only the parents.” Now pupils and parents want to participate in Nansen and parents would not have a problem with mixed classes.
- One parent said “It is a pleasure to be part of this project... it’s very good especially with the communication they (Nansen) have with Albanians and Macedonians.”
- A parent new to Nansen wanted to pay tribute to the project: “It’s positive for parents and children and even the parents can become friends. We can get involved. Nansen helps a lot with friendship.”
- Parents were delighted to participate in the evaluation and were very positive about the Nansen Model for Intercultural Education in Goce Delchev School.
- One parent said they liked how it was organized: “I like that parents were involved ... Christmas, holidays, projects”.

### **Response regarding Co-operation with the pedagogical & psychology service in the school**

- The school psychologist is currently undertaking Nansen Model training.



### **Responses regarding the Intercultural dimension of the school**

- The iconography in the school has definitely changed since the Nansen Model began to be implemented, according to the teachers. Lessons are prepared in both languages - Macedonian and Albanian. Both languages are reflected on one page for worksheets, posters on walls, in Nansen classrooms and corridors.
- Students are introduced to the history and culture of Macedonia through ethics and religion and in the extracurricular activities, e.g. learning about different ethnic weddings, celebrating different holidays together.
- One student talked about doing new Nansen activities about Albania and flags and all about Macedonia -“a perfect activity... and this year we learned about our mothers’ and our grandmothers’ jewellery and we had a lot of fun together.”
- There are joint celebrations for religious holidays e.g. Bayram and Easter when children bring in traditional dishes from home and teachers and children eat them together.
- One parent said “All children should be involved in it [Nansen]... It’s excellent for all of society. In the past we had integration between our neighbours. This project helps a little bit more with integration between our children.”
- Most parents felt Nansen should be rolled out across the whole school from Grade 1 to Grade 9.
- One parent (a kindergarten teacher) said “It should begin even before Grade 1.”
- All parents agreed with the parent who said “Make Nansen obligatory in ALL schools, including secondary.”

## **SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE**

**The impact, influence and benefits of the Nansen Model on school leadership, students, teachers and parents in terms of changes in attitudes, values and behaviours in the area of interculturalism.**

### **1. Leadership**

'If I was asked what was the best thing I did, I would say it the Nansen Model for Integrated Education' was the key message from the Principal. In terms of the impact that Nansen has made on the school, the Principal and the Management Team were very open about the fact that their initial scepticism about the introduction of the Nansen Model into Goce Delchev Elementary School had changed to a deep appreciation of the benefits of Nansen in terms of bringing Macedonian and Albanian children, parents and teachers together and creating a different, more positive atmosphere in the school. The Principal outlined the problems and difficulties at the beginning. In the past, many projects came into school and then stopped. With Nansen he now feels they have a very successful partnership which he thinks will be long term. He also saw how quickly the teachers embraced the project in spite of the extra work involved for them with no extra pay. Teachers reported back to him that the children were so interested that they wanted to attend more extracurricular classes. Teachers themselves were motivated to stay longer and their whole attitude to school changed and became more positive. The behaviour of the students is much improved and there appears to be less tension between Macedonians and Albanians. Members of the Management Team acknowledged the important role of the Principal and the Vice Principal in promoting and supporting the project, thereby helping make it such a great success. There was a sense of pride that their school was the first to begin to implement the Model and that schools from across Macedonia were now coming to see it in action.

### **2. Socialisation & Intolerance and Enmity**

There have been many more positive responses about socialisation since Nansen was introduced. All the students encountered appeared to have benefited from the type of contact during their extracurricular activities which helped their cross community friendships both inside outside school. Before the project parents said the students didn't socialise in school, only outside school. Parents also thought that the project would help children integrate with one another. The Management team too thought that the students didn't socialise sufficiently in school prior to Nansen. Teachers see a huge difference in how students behave with one another after they have participated in Nansen. They think they definitely socialise better now both inside and outside school. They think the students see mixing with other ethnicities as natural. They work together in tandem classes and share with each other. According to the teachers this is a big change from several years ago, pre-Nansen. The children say they are proud to be part of the Nansen project.

Previous research suggested that parents, teachers and older Macedonian students thought that there was frequent conflict and tensions due to environment and mass media. Younger children and management said there was no enmity and rare verbal conflict. Older students said that enmity existed in the form of threats, insults and fights. Since Nansen, the Principal thinks there is less conflict between Macedonian and Albanian students. A Macedonian student thought that Nansen was a good idea and

helped people not to be racist. One of the parents thought Nansen helped a lot and thought that some conflict situations were solved very easily because of it.

### **3. Joint Activities**

The previous research indicates that most parents and teachers said the students at that time didn't have joint activities. Students only experienced joint activities during sports activities and competitions. Joint sports activities are important in bringing children from different cultures together. Since Nansen, the increased opportunities for joint lessons and extracurricular activities have been very successful and positive. Students, parents and teachers all consider that the Nansen activities have been an important influence in the life of the school in terms of intercultural and interethnic experiences. The tandem teachers, consisting of one Albanian teacher one Macedonian teacher, model working co-operation and respect for the 'other' when teaching during the extracurricular sessions. They deliver the sessions in both languages and the content includes areas of study from both cultures. Children are taught together in mixed groups and encouraged to share ideas, suggestions and languages. Initially the extracurricular activities were organised two of three times a week, but since the start of the 2017/18 school year this had to be reduced to one activity per week, because of the increase in the number of obligatory lessons. The increase in extra mandatory subjects over the past few years has resulted in there being less time for the extracurricular activities. The bus excursion to Skopje where children visited the zoo, the planetarium and the cinema was enjoyed by the children. They shared a bus with their Nansen friends, sometimes beside them, sometimes across the aisle and had great fun singing on the journey. Parents felt that the joint intercultural activities made a huge difference to their children's education. They felt their children were happier and more engaged at school during Nansen. They said the children were happy to learn something completely different together with their friends.

### **4. Readiness & interest to learn the Language and Culture of the other**

The non-Nansen model research indicated that most students thought they learned sufficiently about the history and culture of the others. Fewer parents thought so. The benefit of learning together in the Nansen model about the history and culture of the others is the resource of having children and adults of both ethnicities together and this creates a new dynamic in terms of awareness of the 'other'. It also brings additional knowledge and experience of the different cultures to the learning. Parents thought that the extracurricular activities also encouraged the children to learn the other's language. Macedonian students generally don't speak Albanian because they don't learn it in school. However in the extracurricular classes, they try to learn some words from their Albanian friends. Some of the Albanian students it very helpful to learn the language from their Albanian friends. They also sometimes use English to communicate with each other because they all learn English from first Grade.

In the previous research both teachers and the Management team expressed greatest satisfaction with bilingual schools, although they did think an ethnically mixed school was a greater challenge. Parents and children both felt that there should be more joint activities for students and teachers. All respondents agreed there was a need to improve dialogue among students. The Nansen Model training has encouraged the use of both languages within the intercultural extracurricular activities. Tandem teachers model communication in both languages and encourage children to take an interest in each other's language. Texts are in both Albanian and Macedonian in posters on classroom walls and in the corridors outside the Nansen classrooms. Some Albanian and

Macedonian students would like to see mixed shifts because they think they can socialise better with the 'others' and make new friends. Parents were also in favour of mixed shifts.

## **5. Communication and Co-operation between teachers & teaching process**

Last year's research indicated that teachers wanted joint planning of lessons and other curricular and extracurricular activities. In effect, this is precisely what the Nansen model gave them the opportunity to do. The tandem teachers plan their Nansen classes together. They find this enables them to exchange ideas and work more creatively. Teachers clearly think that Nansen has very definitely changed how they work professionally with their 'other' colleagues. Pre-Nansen they used to only greet one another but they did not really communicate with one another very much. Nansen training has changed their way of teaching. Their pedagogy is less didactic and more focussed on active learning during their intercultural extracurricular activities. The active learning involves the students physically, cognitively and emotionally. Both the teachers and the students have responded very well to this approach which in itself is crucial for the encouragement of intercultural education. Teachers think the Nansen training itself is of very high quality and has been very useful in increasing their levels of professionalism. It has increased teachers' readiness and ability to deliver intercultural, interethnic content. The Nansen training on intercultural dialogue gave one teacher the necessary tips and hints to try to implement the same in their classroom. The informative and colourful displays in Nansen classrooms and corridors are a result of the training and resources provided by Nansen. They are also better equipped through Nansen in terms of technology such as laptops, overhead projectors, laminators and creative arts materials. The tandem teachers also feel that the cross-cultural materials are better now and are being delivered practically now, not just taken from books. The 'Peace and Tolerance' module during which there were discussions about Macedonia, Albania and Serbia was given as a good example of this. Parents were very fulsome in their praise for the teachers involved in the Nansen model and said the teachers had great energy. Parents said that children were happier on the days they have a Nansen session. They are more engaged, learn something different and make new friends.

## **6. Parental involvement in Intercultural school activities**

The 2017 research found that there had been very little parental involvement in school intercultural activities. They were sometimes involved in Parents Council and occasional joint project activities. Parental involvement is welcomed and is seen by the school leadership as crucial in implementing the Nansen Model. The Nansen project has really enhanced the involvement of the parents in the school in intercultural activities. The Nansen encourages parental involvement and parents were delighted to be invited to a presentation about the programme. They were then given an opportunity to formally enrol their children for the programme of extracurricular activities. Parents were really enthusiastic about the Nansen project and were very pleased to be involved in helping paint and decorate and set up the classrooms. It brought parents and teachers closer together. One new parent paid tribute to the Nansen project said it was positive for parents and children and that even the parents could become friends. Other parents wanted to thank Nansen for their involvement and for supplying materials that the school wouldn't have had in the past.

Teachers said that Nansen workshops for parents have really helped establish good contacts between parents and teachers. They now know each other well and both feel communication is very good. Parents thought the workshops were very good and said they would like to have more of them. There was great interest in mixed shifts with parents talking about the benefits of these in terms of better integration for the students.

## **7. The Intercultural Dimension**

The 2017 research showed that management, teachers and parents mostly felt there was sufficient intercultural dimension in the school; but some had felt it could be better. There is currently not much overt iconography of any kind on display in the school generally except in the Nansen Model classrooms and corridors. The iconography in these areas is full of intercultural examples of different communities. Tandem teachers prepare and deliver teaching activities in both Macedonian and Albanian. Activity worksheets for students who work in mixed groups are prepared in both languages, as are many of the posters on the walls in the corridors. Students are introduced to the history and culture as part of the normal school curriculum. Nansen enhances this through the tandem teachers devising creative ways of delivering this curriculum to the children who engage more fully with their active methods of teaching. Illustrations of this intercultural learning are then used to reinforce the learning and celebrate the diversity within the school community. Joint celebrations take place to mark religious events such as Easter and Bayram and children and parents join staff in these celebrations in school. One parent felt that all children should be involved in the Nansen project because it was excellent for all society and the project helps with integration of the children. A student involved in a particular extracurricular activity involving Albanian and Macedonian flags declared that this was “a perfect activity.”

## CONCLUSION

**There is much evidence and personal testimony to show that the Nansen Model for Multicultural Education has had enormous impact and influence, particularly in the area of interethnic and intercultural education, on values, attitudes and behaviour of the students, teachers and parents of Goce Delchev Elementary School involved in the project.**

**It has also provided huge benefits to the school by way of training, provision of resources and ongoing support. This project has been transformational in terms of teacher training and in the introduction of contemporary methods of active learning, with a particular focus on ways to effectively embed intercultural concepts into the curriculum, thereby enhancing its relevance to the multiethnic society in the Republic of Macedonia.**

**The whole project could actually be seen as a tool for school improvement given its effect on the whole school ethos (ambiance). It is also an excellent model for other schools, particularly those in multiethnic and multicultural societies, to learn from.**

Issues for further consideration

- the place of the important Intercultural work Nansen is introducing may need to be considered as an essential part of the curriculum, if the outcome is going to continue to be effective.
- sustainability - enormous implications for Nansen staff in terms of training and provision of resources and support
- the vital importance of the Principal and the school leadership team training
- whole school participation in training and opportunity to participate
- importance particularly of engaging older students in the programme
- ongoing parents' workshops
- consideration of fixed shifts in school
- ongoing observation of good practice in intercultural education in Macedonia and abroad
- recognition and support for the project as a key tool in building interactive and harmonious relations in the community