

# Introducing the 2020 APEEE board

## Giles Houghton-Clarke, President, Coordinator IT Working Group



I am pleased to be elected President of the APEEE for a second year. I will endeavor to use this time to support the APEEE Board in working effectively on the many areas in which we are involved, not least addressing the chronic overcrowding, and all the consequences this has on the pupils, teachers and parents.

The parents association plays a key role in the European schools, very different from a national school. Here we are key stakeholders; a voice in the decision making process on behalf of pupils and parents in forums as varied as education issues, pupil well-being, educational support and health and safety, to mention just a few. We are also responsible for running all the transport, catering and after-school activity services, which amounts to a small business in itself with a not insubstantial turnover. It's rewarding, engaging and also at times frustrating - but vital to maintain the great school and great school community that we all want for parents, pupils teachers and everyone who is part of it.

I look forward to getting to know as many parents as possible over the coming year. Please get in touch if you have any issues you want to raise, or you just want a chat about the APEEE. My email address is [giles.houghton-clarke@woluweboard.eu](mailto:giles.houghton-clarke@woluweboard.eu)

## Tatiana Almeida, Vice-President Pedagogical Affairs



I joined APEEE Board for the first time in January 2019, representing the Portuguese section.

I am the very proud mother of three girls (P4, M2 and a future student of our school).

As we are all well aware, European schools are currently facing enormous challenges, from overcrowding to infrastructural hurdles, from pedagogical reform to adjustment to a whole new generation of communications and interaction.

I believe it is my duty as a mother and as a member of the school community to get engaged and actively participate in the ongoing dialogue about the present and future of our school.

APEEE plays a very important role in promoting personal, academic and civic standards of excellence among the school community and I am thrilled and honored to contribute to this objective in every way I can.

I am also particularly interested in the development of new inclusiveness strategies and policies for students with special needs.

In addition to participating in some of the horizontal APEEE working groups (Communication, Budget, Enrolment policy, Educational Support, Compliance and Risk Assessment and the new task force for Digital Privacy Awareness), I contribute to the work of our wonderful team as Vice-President for Pedagogical Affairs.

As always, I would love to hear from you!

Please feel free to contact me at: [tatiana.almeida@woluweboard.eu](mailto:tatiana.almeida@woluweboard.eu)

Bettina Schmidbauer Mogensen, Vice-President  
Administrative Affairs, Coordinator Canteen Working Group



I have been at the Board five years now, in various positions (Primary coordinator, pedagogical vice president). This year, my last one, I was elected to take over the Vice President Administrative Affairs. This is quite an important job, it has to do with making sure our APEEE runs smoothly and respects the law and stays updated within it. We are a non-profit organization, but one with a non-negligible annual turnover. That needs proper people management and financial control. After years at the board, I believe, I have gained insight and knowledge on how the "boite" works and will work hard to bring out the best of the services to benefit our children. A big project for the next future is the introduction of a new overall financial workflow system and cashless payment possibilities.

I also continue to coordinate the canteen, one of our core businesses, which is a challenge especially now, with an overcrowded school, but it is also a very rewarding and interesting job. I love cooking myself, my family has a history about "refined cooking" and I'm simply passionate about good food and healthy diets. A lot is going on with young people nowadays, an increasing number of teenagers are becoming vegetarians. Still, we try to accommodate change but keeping an eye on balanced meals. Focus on organic and local where we can and trying to avoid food waste as much as we can. We'll organize more information events for parents and continue our work on better communication in the future. On the website you will also find a brochure with an overview of the canteen.

Apart from that, I'm working at the Commission in DG MOVE, in the international field. I am also a painter and love ceramics.

Bettina Schmidbauer Mogensen  
with children at S3 and S4 DE

Vanessa Aulehla, Treasurer, InterParents delegate,  
Coordinator Budget Working Group



This is my fourth year at the APEEE board. My daughter did her BAC two years ago, my son is in S5.

As Treasurer and coordinator of the budget working group, it is my responsibility to ensure the full respect of sound financial management principles and detailed rules for money matters, which are already well established in our organization. The AGM has voted for the budget 2019/20 and we need to implement it accordingly. The task of setting a new, balanced budget for the school year 2020/21 lies ahead of us.

Furthermore as a member of the secondary and Interparents working group, I will continue to follow closely the envisaged changes of the BAC and to help finding a parents position at our board and with all the other European Schools on the different reform ideas which are currently being circulated.

Finally, I am interested in following and helping the school to implement the 8 key competences, in particular those connected to career guidance.

Dear parents, I would be interested in hearing from you if you have any suggestions, comments, question on these issues.

Francesca Tudini, Secretary of the Bureau, Coordinator  
Periscolaire Working Group, CEA delegate



Dear Parents,

This is my sixth year as a Board member. According to the rule, this is also my last year. It has been a real great experience and I want to get the most out of it until the end.

I will continue my job in the Bureau by contributing to keep the internal procedure smooth and effective. We are lucky because we are all working with one sole aim in mind, the interest of our children. However, sometimes the decision making process can be cumbersome. That is why we need clear rules, ensuring a democratic process where all interests are taken into consideration.

I am definitively in love with our rich periscolaire program but we can always do better. I am thinking about giving our children more opportunities of visibility. For example, why not organizing friendly matches against the other European schools at the end of the school year? Children would love it and parents would have a chance to see the results of a year of hard work. We have already made the rules clearer and presented them in a better way to parents via a comprehensive brochure. We can improve this as well and also support new families better in getting familiar with the system.

My third position, as delegate in the Enrolment Policy WG, will bring me to represent the APEEE in the Central Enrolment Authority (CEA) when it comes to the decision-making process for the new enrolment policy. My duty there will be to make sure that the interest of all of our sections is duly represented. This year, the discussions will feature the issue of how to populate the NATO temporary site. It will be challenging and it is important that we represent the whole school community as best as we can.

As a personal project, I would like to bring ahead a new idea. Every year hundreds of students leaves the 4 Brussels schools to go and study abroad. It is a stressful period: their families have to organize their transfer, look for accommodation and take care of all related administrative tasks. All of this on top of the preparations for the BAC! We can help each other via a simple platform, which puts in contact those who have already gone through the process and are ready to put their knowledge and experience at disposal of those who are looking for basic information. At the beginning we will perhaps only have a few volunteers but in few years, a critical mass

of parents ready to help each other could be established. I believe this to be the spirit we all should have.

Thanks again for your trust.

## Andreas Rogal, Information Secretary, InterParents delegate



This is my sixth and - due to our mandate regulations - final year on the board, representing the EN section, this year together with new board member Anna Yavorska. While I am staying in the APEEE Bureau as Information Secretary, my colleague Natalia Karpenko has now taken over as coordinator of our Communication Working Group. I will be continuing to coordinate the APEEE's support of the European Schools Mobility Programme (student exchanges), and I have taken up the role of coordinating those efforts on European School system level in InterParents, where I am also continuing to be one of our APEEE's delegates.

The upcoming school year will see yet another change in school management with a new Deputy Director for the Primary Cycle starting. This will give us parents the opportunity to forge close and constructive relations with the school also on Primary matters and, following on from the auspicious start we had with our new director, help her to fulfil her vision of a united school community.

Working as a freelance journalist, I am originally from Germany but have lived in the UK and in France before coming to Brussels fifteen years ago. I like playing football, an interest I share with my elder daughter.

Please feel free to contact me on any issue regarding which you think I could help you - and most importantly, if you want to contribute to the APEEE's efforts regarding communication and the Mobility Programme.

Bengt Davidsson, Member of the Bureau, Coordinator Health, Safety and Security Working Group, InterParents Delegate, Coordinator Mobility Program Task Force



Bengt is a board member since 2017. He has one child in P1 and another in P5. He represents the Swedish section in Primary. He writes:

I joined the APEEE board as I wanted to be closely involved in my kids' school developments and to contribute with my experience and my positive energy. Having an engineering and environmental management background, I appreciate good structures and green credentials.

This year, I will continue my task as coordinator for the working group on health, safety and security. This is an important but challenging task with the purpose to keep reminding school management to address the issues, perhaps not unlike a guiding consultancy. The issues covered by this working group are problems with the school's infrastructure (buildings), controlled access to the school site, and pupils' well-being.

Another area that interests me is school transport, which I believe has the potential to improve our environmental performance. I am also engaged in the nursery and primary education council (CEP&M). It is important to further bridge the gap between the parents and school management. A positive dialogue with the school is essential for good results!

## Anthony Bisch, Coordinator Primary & Nursery Pedagogical Affairs (CEP&M) Working Group



Anthony has been re-elected to the Board for the third time. With one child in P2, he represents the German section. He writes:

As coordinator for the Primary and Nursery education Council, I am committed to promote parents and children's interests through a constructive dialogue with school management. I want to favor a better communication and information flow from teachers to parents in an inclusive school. Offering support to pupils when needed while preventing violence are essential to offer a beneficial development to our children in a harmonious multicultural environment.

Furthermore, I will remain strongly involved to guarantee a high-quality standard for the transport and canteen services as well as periscolaire activities provided by the APEEE.

## Szilvia Kalman, Coordinator Secondary Pedagogical Affairs (CEES) Working Group



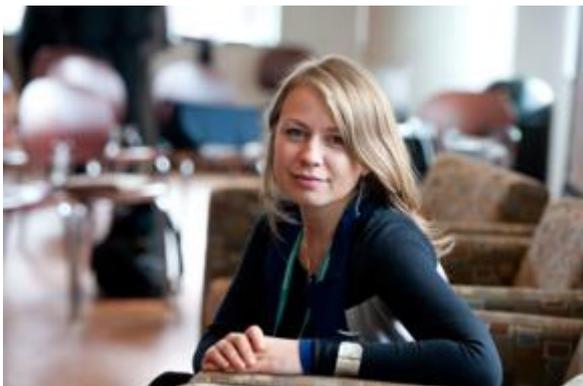
I joined the Board in 2019 representing the French section. I have two daughters in the school, in S2 and P4. I feel greatly honored to work together in the Board with many dedicated parents for the benefit of our children. For the past seven years, I have been working on education and youth policies at the European Commission/DG Education, Culture, Youth and Sport and it is great opportunity for me to look at education from a more practical angle through the eyes of parents. In my experience, there is a growing consensus on the challenges faced today by schools and the directions to go, yet I feel that practice is often far from theory. I believe that schools should equip children with the skills needed in the 21st century, which requires new ways of teaching and learning. At the same time, the well-being of our children matters just as much as academic achievement and I am convinced that it is possible to reconcile these two aspects. I would like to support the school in making further progress in these areas, in particular by making use of tools and good practices available at EU level. On the board, I am the coordinator of the secondary pedagogical working group and also involved in the work on well-being and educational support.

## Minna Melleri, Coordinator Transport Working Group



My name is Minna MELLERI and I represent the Finnish section, where I have two daughters in Primary and next year one in Maternelle. I work in a non-profit organization in the education sector, and have a keen interest in various aspects of European education systems (how they differ, how they perform in international comparison and how they all come together in the European school, for instance). This is my second year at APEEE and I am continuing as coordinator of the Transport WG overseeing the school bus service for our school. I'm also involved in enrolment policy and the secondary pedagogical issues. I would like to contribute to making the Woluwe European School an enjoyable experience for all our children, teachers and staff, and I believe the parents play a key role in this process.

## Anna Yavorska, Coordinator Learning Support Working Group



I am Ukrainian, married to an Irishman, representing the English section in the APEEE board - nothing unusual for the "heart of Europe". I truly enjoy life in Brussels and find it's a wonderful environment which also benefits the development of our children. I am convinced that our school has a lot to offer! The APEEE allows parents to contribute to its never ending improvement endeavors. It does a sterling work to enrich the learning process, facilitate the needs of the school community and even make school life more fun. Therefore, after having been a class representative for 6 years, I am now happy to join the APEEE board, where I will be coordinating the learning support WG and get

involved in improving children's well-being issues, including online security. During the years of assisting our class, teachers and parents I have come up with a lot of interesting ideas I am eager to integrate into the wonderful APEEE team. I am committed to devote my time for the benefit of both the secondary school, where our son is currently studying and the primary, where his little brother will go in a few years.

In my professional life, I am dealing with human rights defense and cultural diplomacy.

## Natalia Karpenko, Coordinator Communications Working Group



Dear parents,

This is my second year in the APEEE board where I am representing the parents of the Dutch-speaking section. My children, though, are in P3 of the Dutch-language section and the nursery class of the Italian section, thus our family is profiting from the multicultural and multilingual environment at EEB2 to the full.

In the past year I was very much involved in the communication between the APEEE and the parents, between different sections, between the APEEE and the school. I've collaborated on promoting and writing for the APEEE newsletter. I believe that sharing thoughts, ideas, experiences, being open to each other, getting to know each other better, respecting each other are essential for any community, and definitely for the school community of our multicultural, multilingual European school. I'm sure we all want our children to grow up in a nice environment, being a part of a dynamic, inspiring community of students, teachers and parents. A good communication between different partners is in my view essential, and I would like to continue working on that as the coordinator of the Communications working group in the APEEE board.

I have a background in education. Being a replacement teacher and an intern at the European school in Ixelles, I have an idea of how a European school functions also from within. I would like to use this understanding in enhancing a good working

relationship between the parents and the school management and the teachers. I hope my expertise can be constructive in this field.

Please feel free to contact me on any school life related issues at: [natalia.karpenko@woluweboard.eu](mailto:natalia.karpenko@woluweboard.eu).

## Elita Petraitenė, Coordinator Active Community Working Group



This is my second year at the APEEE Board. I am representing the Lithuanian section with children in S2 and P4. I am a lawyer by education with 10 years of experience in state service.

Ever since my children enrolled to the school, I have been volunteering for different activities – Christmas market, Footfest, Library, school trips, etc.

I like the things to be clear and done right. So, I would like to help improve parents' partnership with school management and the teachers and to ensure the best for our children. My goal is to contribute more to:

- helping the new-comers understand school and APEEE policy better and adapt easier,
- improving children's safety at school (support anti-bullying, anti-drug measures),
- ensuring more accessible learning support for children,
- promoting the extracurricular activities at school and ameliorating the access to them,
- promoting voluntary activities at school involving parents and children.

## Sanjee Goonetilake, Coordinator School Community Building Working Group, InterParents delegate



This is my third year in the APEEE board and my fourth year in the school. Having lived 11 years in Eritrea, Zimbabwe and Namibia on 3 EU diplomatic postings, we returned to Brussels in September 2016. Our children are in P3 and S2 in the Dutch section.

I am representing the Dutch section together with my kindred spirit Natalia Karpenko.

I am a believer of the Southern African concept of “Ubuntu” which means “I am what I am because of who we all are.” Nelson Mandela embraced it and Desmond Tutu once described it like this. *“A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, based from a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed.”*

In the same sense, I believe, we are practicing a form of “Ubuntu” by selflessly volunteering for a parent association. Some of us are single parents with many burdens, full time workers, having other constraints, caring for aging parents, having children with disabilities or health issues, challenges at work and often torn by personal dilemmas. In spite of all that, we are volunteering for the parent association and often clocking countless hours to ensure that every child at EEB2 is happy, healthy and curious to learn. There are also many other parent volunteers whom I call “silent heroes” who clock many hours in the Eureka, Library, Book sales committee, Christmas market, AGM, with translations for the school, reading for the children, accompanying children on excursions or simply helping the teachers when required. All of you are appreciated more than you know and we are very lucky to have such a warm parent community that other APEEE's are envious of.

“Ubuntu” in my view starts with “Trust as a departure point” as Ms Malik said in her recent interview. And at the school community building WG where I am the Coordinator, we aim to bring together the parents, the teachers, the students and the school administration as one community nurtured with trust. I am also working on “wellbeing” issues and I have been a member of the design team of the “wellbeing survey” of the secondary school. The partnership with the students and the school has been remarkable and we hope that the survey results soon to be released on March 10 will bring in a breakthrough in communication with our children.

I believe in promoting critical thinking skills as a life skill and one of the projects we supported is “BRUMUN”, the model united nations conference at EEB2. This year, I am planning to concentrate on further projects with School community building by improving communication with the parents through the dedicated APEEE team in the communication WG lead by Natalia. And perhaps I hope to learn a bit more about how the parent association works on the finances side by being a part of the Budget WG lead by Vanessa. I am also interested in promoting a transparent “complaints policy” system for the core services of APEEE, transport, canteen and periscolaire. This year I joined the Interparents, as a “beginner” delegate and hope to represent our parents on a European School level. There are many issues at stake for the parents but for me, rationality, transparency and trust are the keys to the path of progress.

Should you have any questions or would like to volunteer for the school, you can reach me at [sanjee.goonetilake@woluweboard.eu](mailto:sanjeer.goonetilake@woluweboard.eu)

## Suzana Roseiro, Coordinator Welcome Committee



This is my first year as a board member, representing the Portuguese section together with Sara and Tatiana. Having moved to Brussels last school year and, planning to stay until the end of secondary school, I wanted to play an active role in my kids' education and contribute to an engaged school community through exchange between sections, students and parents. In Portugal the parents associations don't have the same level of responsibility, since the school provides also the canteen and

extra-curricular activities, so I see this model as an extra reason to be involved.

Tiago is in P5, Pedro in P1 and even with all the challenges the European schools face now, I feel we are privileged to be able to integrate in this multilingual and multicultural education project that fosters our cultural identity and promotes cooperation and communication between European cultures. We had a rather easy integration process, mostly because of the welcome from other parents, teachers and staff, so it seemed natural to try to give back and do the same for others. That's why I decided to co-coordinate the welcome service and work with the communication and community building groups.

I am also interested in participating in the dialogue about the future of the school and the educational challenges arising from the current overcrowding situation, in cross-section dialogue and fostering sustainable mobility practices within the school community. The moment is right to be optimistic and try to leave better cities for our children to live in, not only more environmentally friendly but with more space to play, walk and be safer (#bikeforbrussels). And they have to be involved in the change.

I am always reachable via [suzana.roseiro@woluweboard.com](mailto:suzana.roseiro@woluweboard.com) so please feel free to say hello.

## Christine Thomas, Coordinator Welcome Committee



Dear parents,

I am very happy to join the APEEE Board for my first year, representing the FR section with Szilvia and Raquel. I will coordinate The welcome and community service, together with Suzana. Don't miss our invitations for the events and join us !

I am Belgian and I am the mother of a girl who is in S1. I have always been an active parent , you probably know me as the Christmas fair organizer. I am a teacher and I am interested in pedagogical matters, educational support, ICT, communication , extra-curricular activities and of course digital privacy.

I am at your disposal for any questions so please, don't hesitate to contact me on [christine.thomas@woluweboard.eu](mailto:christine.thomas@woluweboard.eu)

## Roberta Maggio, Coordinator Compliance and Risk Assessment WG



Dear Parents,

This is my second year as a Board member and I am very honored to continue to be part of the APEEE.

I am the proud mother of two girls. The big one is in P2 of the Italian section and the small one, hopefully, will join EEB2 in 2021. Italian of nationality, I have lived in Hungary and Estonia before landing in Brussels in 2016, just in time to enroll my daughter to the European School.

Our school is big, articulated and challenging and at the same time, full of opportunities, experiences and open to the world. The European School is a project to believe in. It is a philosophy and life style to follow. Our children are having the possibility to meet the world everyday, to learn from different culture and tradition and to enrich their life by learning several languages.

I have learned with direct experience that the APEEE is a fundamental element in the school life and in the life of our children. Not only are we providing vital services like the canteen, bus transport and after-school activities, but we contribute concretely in creating a safer and enriching environment by promoting a community spirit.

As member of the Board, I would like to work towards ensuring that the time spent at school is a good time, giving the opportunity to our kids to learn and grow in a safe and welcoming environment.

I am a passionate lawyer and I have been working in the EU system for a decade. For the second year I will be the Coordinator of the Working Group on Compliance and Risk Assessment, and in addition I will represent the Italian Section in the pedagogical committee for primary, participate in the WG for the canteen, the after school activities and the IT infrastructure.

I am very interested in hearing from you any suggestion, idea and obviously proposal for improvement. You can contact me at [roberta.maggio@woluweboard.eu](mailto:roberta.maggio@woluweboard.eu).

Thank you for your trust!

## Sara Roda, Coordinator Digital Privacy Awareness Task Force



I am a Portuguese lawyer, living in Brussels since 2009, and currently working on a PhD in the area of data protection and innovation.

I have two children in Primary School, P1 and P5 - PT section.

I have been in the APEEE Board between 2016-2017 to push forward the discussion on the prevention of violence in the playground in our school community and is great to hear that our School Management is continuously working to address this matter.

Currently, I would like to raise awareness about the need of teaching (digital) privacy and personal data at school. Children and pupils need to be prepared for the digital society that surrounds them, realizing that we are all contributing to the 'datafication' of their lives, which can have vast implications and possible long-term consequences for their well-being.

School education needs to prepare pupils to become better (and confident) digital citizens, with sufficient knowledge to understand what to share or not, while respecting others – this will be my goal and I hope to count on your support.

## Michael Teutsch



This is my first year in the APEEE board and also my children's first year in our school. I have a daughter in S1 and a son in S3, in the German language section. Both are very happy about their new school! My third child, aged 15, has special educational needs and goes to a Belgian school. When we inquired about schools for her more than ten years ago, the European schools were not yet ready to admit a child with Down Syndrome. I very much hope this would be possible today!

I have joined the APEEE board hoping that this will allow me to contribute to developing our school into a learning community of pupils, teachers, other staff and

parents. I think that together we can make the school an even better place for learning, teaching and personal development. As I work in the area of education, and more specifically on schools and multilingualism in the European Commission, I hope to be able to use, as a parent, also some of my professional background for the discussions in our school. This could concern questions such as how to best promote competence based teaching and learning, learning in the digital world or inclusive education. I am looking forward to working together with everybody interested in these (and other pedagogical topics) that are important for our children and our school. My email address is michael.teutsch@woluweboard.eu

## Renate Repplinger-Hach



Dear parents,

I am a lawyer and Commission official, working in the European Commission in the Road Transport Unit of DG CLIMA. My husband and I moved from Bonn to Brussels in 1996 to work for the European Union.

Our daughter passed the Bac at EEB2 last summer, and our son attends S6 of the German-speaking section.

This is the second time I have joined the APEEE board. I was Member before from 2011 to 2016 and Vice-President for Pedagogical Affairs during the last 3 years.

My motivation to rejoin the board is to help make parents' concerns heard and push, through APEEE, for a consistent application of the new marking system and transparent information of students and parents. I also want to work together across schools to demand fair conversion tables by Member States. Parents need to jointly insist that the BAC marks resulting from the new marking scheme are converted into national systems in a fair manner and that university access for our children does not become more difficult.

I am also interested in dealing with pedagogical issues regarding secondary school in general.

Best regards,  
Renate

## Raquel Jimenez Lopez



I have a son in S3FR who joined EEBII last September. I have both Belgian and Spanish nationality. I was born and brought up in Brussels. In EEBIV, I was a member of the APEEE working group on Learning Support for nearly three years.

During his/her school life, any pupil might need some sort of educational support. In this context, some arrangements can be put into place according to the difficulties encountered. They will help the child fulfill his/her full potential at school. This support, implemented for a short, medium or long term, will help the pupil continue his/her education in the best possible conditions.

I would like to share my own experience in the field of educational support in the European Schools, not as an expert, but simply as a parent. I believe it is essential to inform parents better and help them orientate around the relevant means that are available in our school system. A friendly hand and enlightened support can definitely help.

In a context where inclusiveness is more and more put on the agenda in our society, parents and the APEEE board can also collaborate to work towards more inclusiveness in our schools. Working hand in hand with the other BXL APEEE working groups would allow us to speak as one and become more effective in moving towards increased inclusiveness.

## Marjo Toivo



I am a new member in the Board, representing the Finnish section. I have two daughters, in P3 and P4. We moved from Finland to Brussels 2,5 years ago, so my older daughter started Primary in Finland.

From my backgrounds (M. Sc. In Food Sciences), food safety and also work safety are topics close to my heart. That is why I am a member in Canteen WG, Health, Safety and Security WG and Compliance and risk assessment WG. I am a representative in the education committee for kindergarten and primary and back-up for Minna in secondary. I am also a member in the Active community and School community building WGs. I am a class info representative and have done volunteer work at the school in the Primary library, at 2nd hand book sales and school-trips. I hope this gives me tools, like experience from Lean, for good work in the Board. Please, do not hesitate to contact me: [marjo.toivo@woluweboard.eu](mailto:marjo.toivo@woluweboard.eu)

## The Turandot opera building bridges across the language sections at EEB2

Roberta Maggio, an APEEE board member and a dedicated parent in the Italian section, interviews Antonella Casillo and Lucia Scoca who brought the project 'Opera at school' to EEB2



**- Please tell us a little bit about the project: what is it exactly and how it came about that the EEB2 students are participating in it?**

*Almost 1 year ago, we proposed the project to the Director Arnedo, with the great enthusiasm of the teachers of the Italian section who had already heard of this project in Italy. We wanted to demonstrate that the project could reach all the linguistic sections without any barriers.*

*We have to say that 1 year later, thanks to the support of the school direction and the effort of all the teachers, this goal is totally accomplished!*

*We have many linguistic sections participating in EEB2 such as Italian, French, Portuguese, Lithuanian, Swedish, Finnish; it is amazing to see all these children from primary singing together the airs of Turandot that is in Italian. This is the music power!*

*Moreover, we have other schools involved in the project for **more than 1.000 students for this first year in Bruxelles**: EEB1 (Uccle), EEB3 (Ixelles) and primary schools of Commune Woluwe Saint-Pierre (Ecole du Centre, Ecole Chant d'Oiseau, Ecole Joli Bois Primaire, Ecole Jolie Bois Individualisé) and "Le Piccole Canaglie".*

**- What are the objectives of the project? Why do you think it inspired so many teachers to participate in it?**

*The project conceived by **Europa InCanto** is addressed to children, from 4 to 13 years old and introduces them to the magic world of Opera. The purpose is to create a new audience passionate of Opera. The method is easy to learn. Teachers and students are involved in a dynamic educational path, transforming it in a moment of fun and sharing.*

*The project, initially developed in Italy, advantages on the “easy listening” of popular melodies contained in Operas, simplified for primary school and easy to teach for normal school teachers, without a specific musical preparation.*

*The use of digital tools is also a key factor in the success of the learning process, in particular the use of a mobile app, with which as you can imagine children became immediately familiar. Most of them keep telling us that they sing everywhere: in the bus, at home, in the car with their parents.*

*This methodology since its beginning in Italy has been so successful that **more than 250.000** children have participated.*

*For European schools this project has an added value because it combines a unique moment of sharing among many linguistic sections and is a successful example of multiculturalism.*

**- What impact on the school community do you see while the project is evolving?**

We are used to come at EEB2 and the atmosphere is every time wonderful!

Children sing with hearts and faces, teachers are proud of them and accompanying them during the rehearsal. This is an immense pleasure to see all of them on the same side, pupils and teachers together inspired by the same things.

Children come to us and say us “thanks”. This goes beyond our imagination....

Through the Opera there is a full understanding of the story, a deep contact with the emotions inspired by the author, an insight of the culture, history... this is a full knowledge process and in addition, children are learning unconsciously because for them this is fun!

**- What are the next steps in the framework of the project at EEB2 after the flash mob on February 19th and the performance of the EEB2 students at WHalll on February 21st?**

We have to thank all the parents, which supported the project also singing at home, the parents’ representatives for their help in dealing with reservation of the tickets and a warm thanks to the school coordinator Cristina Piovani for her great job.

We had the chance to meet many volunteers during this extraordinary experience.

Recently, we met also a parent, Andrea Panizza (P2ITA) who will film the performance and helped us in doing a professional video for the institutional event. This is extraordinary; we could not effort without this help!

Performance and flash mob will be two major events where children from many different countries and languages will sing the famous arias from **TURANDOT by Giacomo Puccini** on the Esplanade of the European Parliament. This is a unique event. We also want to link the European Parliament to a joyful event. Hope the weather will be fine!

We encourage repeating this moment, for example during the school fete or at school exhibitions. Do not be shy!

**- There is quite a lot of interest for the project from different national and international institutions like tv channels, embassies, cultural centres, the European Parliament. How do you envision the future of the project? Is there a continuation possible for the next year, perhaps with a different opera piece?**

The project has received the support of the Ambassador of Italy in Belgium, and in Belgian schools it benefits from the OLC Programme (**Programme d'Ouverture aux Langues et aux Cultures**) in partnership with the Communauté Wallonie-Bruxelles.

*Of course, we hope to continue the big success of this year bringing more students learning Opera... stay tuned.*



## **The Turandot costume atelier in the Lithuanian section**

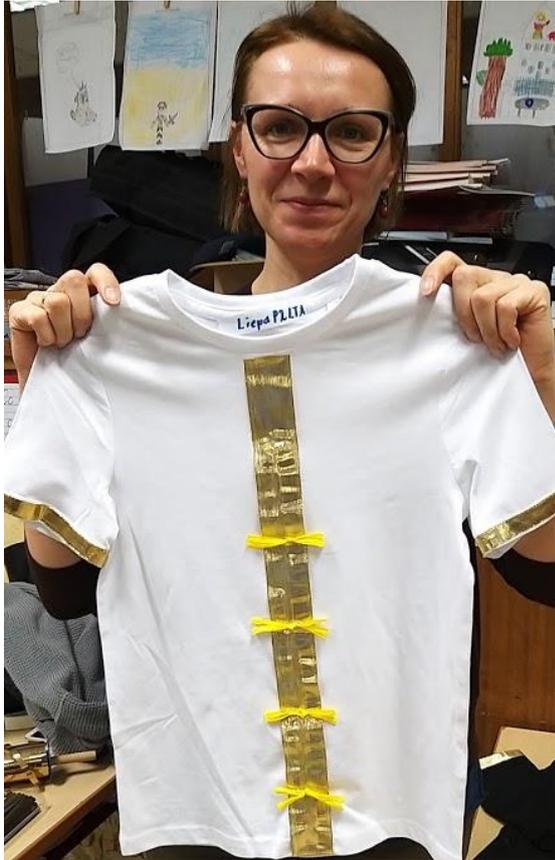
Reporter: Elita Petraitenė

Finally, costume making! It means the Opera InCanto performance is getting closer!

Andrius Jelaga P2 LTA teacher responsible for rehearsals for LT children taking part in school project is full of energy on Thursday evening, February 13th. The day before he was flying around the city with a scooter looking for materials for costumes. Well, 42 Lithuanian kids are participating! So, on Thursday evening a parent (even grandparent!) of every child passed by to help with costumes. The evening was very productive!

And some pictures:





## The Turandot costume ateliers in the Finnish section

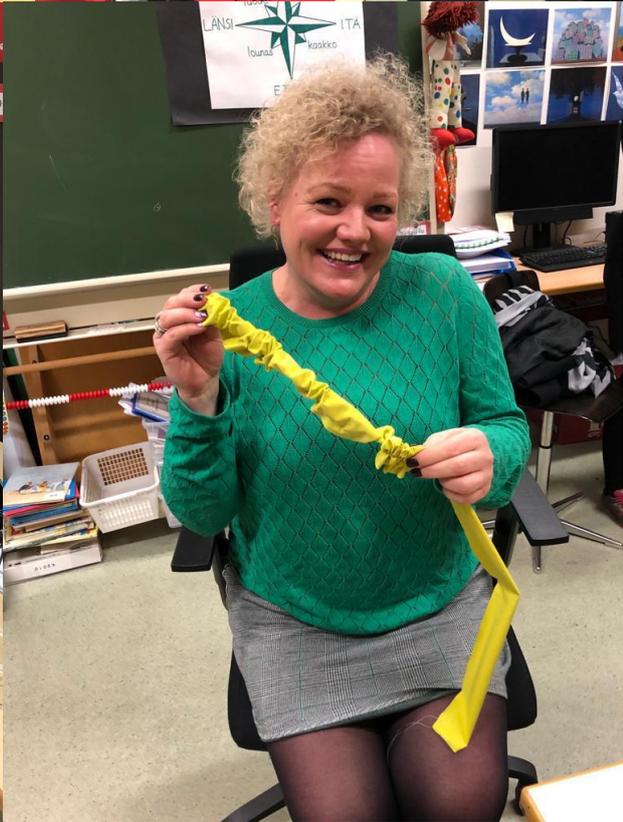
Reporter: Pia Pistol

Quite a lot of parents were present on Tuesday night, February 11th, I think around 15, plus some kids. It was a rather enjoyable event, considering that the majority of the parents joined the activities after a working day. Work got organized quite organically with people moving around to help those who were struggling with the task at hand.

I spoke to the teachers (Riina Niutanen for P2 and Niina Viima for P5). Both felt that overall the pupils were happy to participate in the project. Niina did say that some pupils of her class were less enthusiastic, whereas Riina said that her pupils were really thrilled about every aspect of the project, including the shiny golden tissue bought for the costumes (asking her: “Is this made of real gold?!”).

Both teachers felt that the project is run in a very professional manner by the organizers. Riina pointed out that the concept is quite suitable for our school in that there is a clear process to follow (and the concept had already been tried out and proven to work in Italy). This type of project is rather easy to implement in a school where there are a number of sections running more or less autonomously.





## **The Turandot costume ateliers in the Italian section**

Reporter: Roberta Maggio

These pictures have been taken in P2 and P4 ITA section during the making off phase of the costumes for participating in the Turandot show. A special thanks to all the parents and teachers who have dedicated their time and energy in this great project.







