

OBJECTIVE 03

To support reconciliation, dialogue, closer relationship and trust between the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot communities

BICOMMUNAL AND BILINGUAL SUMMER SCHOOL AND ACTIVITIES

Action by Association for Bilingualism in Cyprus



Photo Credit: Association for Bilingualism in Cyprus



THIS ACTION INVOLVED

Encouraging bilingualism in the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities

Organisation of "Literature and Translation" discussion and translation workshops in June & July 2019 in Home for Cooperation (H4C), Buffer Zone.

Organisation of a bi-communal and bilingual summer school for 5 to 11 years old children in July 2019, in H4C, Buffer Zone.

Development of the web site of the association.

Visits to representatives of two communities in Nicosia to promote bilingualism.

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION FOR BILINGUALISM IN CYPRUS

The Association aims to disseminate bilingualism in Cyprus. The association intends to create favourable conditions for learning the two official languages in Cyprus, Greek and Turkish, in both the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities.

STORY OF THE ACTION

The action aimed to “promote and encourage” the teaching and learning of Greek and Turkish to people from both sides of the island with the purpose of increasing mutual dialogue and contributing to reconciliation processes. The action intended to improve the Greek/Turkish language skills of children to encourage mutual interaction and friendship and to support Greek/Turkish translators in strengthening their professional capabilities.

The “Literature and Translation” discussion meeting held in June 2019 brought together approximately 40 translators, academics, artists, and language graduates from both languages. The meeting created the opportunity to discuss bilingualism, its contribution to creating dialogue and reconciliation, and how literacy is vital to a further and better connection among the communities.

To foster mutual interaction between the two communities at young ages, a bicommunal and bilingual summer school for children aged 5-7 and 8-11 was organised in July 2019. Twenty-eight children had the opportunity to enjoy the interactive lessons in Greek and Turkish, including speaking and listening exercises.

In July 2019, thirty-five newly graduated and professional translators attended a four-week long translation workshop programme for both communities. In each workshop, the participants studied texts on different subjects. They focused on points where difficulties arise regarding terminology. This helped reinforce exchanges on learning processes and experience.

“This kind of bicommunal events are very important and highly needed for the peace building process. In these events we try to break the language barrier by providing translation in both languages and help people to express themselves better and effectively understand each other.”

Dr. Düriye Gökçebağ

Under the Grow Civic action, the association also developed a trilingual website to reach its target group, disseminate its message and announce its activities and events, among others.

The association further visited the representatives of the two communities in Nicosia, Mr. Constantinos Yiorkadjis and Mr. Mehmet Harmancı, to advocate the importance of bilingualism and remind them of the role of municipalities in providing language courses.

RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

The action has contributed to developing dialogue and trust between the two communities by promoting bilingualism and language learning.

Thanks to the increase in the association's visibility, many families have requested more bilingual classes for children from the association. The association has gained around one hundred Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot members through the action. The action also gained support from the Nicosia local community and the Nicosia Municipality expressed being open to collaboration.

“Despite the negative atmosphere in Cyprus lately, the establishment of our association made a positive impact on people who are motivated to learn the other language and it makes us happy to witness and support this.”

Dr. Düriye Gökçebağ



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WHAT'S NEXT?

In the near future, the association will organise public discussions to increase awareness on language policies and language education systems. Thus, this will help the association make specific suggestions to the Ministry of Education of Republic of Cyprus and the related local body in the northern part of Cyprus. These public discussions will be followed by an academic symposium on bilingualism and language teaching in Cyprus organised in cooperation with the relevant organisations.

TO FIND
MORE ABOUT
THE ACTION



www.bilingualismcyprus.com



Σύλλογος Διγλωσσίας Κύπρου / Kıbrıs İki Dillilik Derneği

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