

Parents and Children Learn Together! The Ministry of Education Promotes Co-Learning for New Immigrants and Their Children

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To continue to take care of the culture and lives of new immigrants and their children, provide friendly learning environment, help them understand local culture, and raise the public awareness of their skills and contributions, K-12 Education Administration, Ministry of Education has laid out and launched a pilot project, named "Parent-child together." This project aims to, through a co-learning approach, enhance their language ability and cultural experience of new immigrants, and help them to expand their social space and improve their status both in family and society. Several schools, such as Da-feng elementary school from New Taipei City, Gaun-ting elementary school from Kaohsiung City, Chung-hsing elementary school from Hsinchu County, and Dung-jhu elementary school from Hualian County, participated in this pilot project.

With the increasing international mobility in the age of globalization, there are already more than 500,000 new immigrants in Taiwan and the number of their

children has been increasing each year. According to the Department of Statistics of the Ministry of Education, in the academic year of 2014, of all the 2 million 55 thousand middle schools and primary school students, 211 thousand are children of new immigrants, accounting for 10.28% of the total. That is, one out of ten students is a child of new immigrants. People of different ethnicities gathered together from all over the places and have taken root in this foreign land, which has shaped the social landscape of Taiwan. Therefore, the integration of various cultures appears more important than ever.

K-12 Education Administration of the Ministry of Education made it clear that it is the goal of this project that the local resources and folk cultures from areas where the schools are located, elements like Hakka, Fujian, or indigenous traditional songs and dance, Folk Festival Parade, weaving, traditional pastries, and so on are to be infused into the project. Also, parent-child co-learning courses or activities have been arranged, so that they share a better understanding of Taiwanese culture, which would make it easier for them to fit into the local communities, remove the cultural barriers, and help develop a society of harmony and happiness. What's more, through co-learning activities, the linkage between generations would be even more strengthened through their enhance understanding of the local culture together.

Take Da-feng elementary school from New Taipei City for example, the school is comprised of students of Fujian ancestry, Hakka ancestry, indigenous ancestry, Chinese ancestry, and southeast Asian ancestry. (Children of new immigrants make up 15.4% of the total.) Under the auspices of this project, a parent-child co-dancing club was launched. As parents and children learned Taiwanese folk songs and traditional dance (of Hakka, Fujian, or indigenous origins), they would get to know more about Taiwanese local arts and traditional customs. Given that dance with obvious beats and rhythms is well suited for energetic children to learn, the joy and cheer of learning the dance will bring parents and children closer together along the process.

In addition, a group of children of new immigrants at De-feng elementary school formed "small journalists of the global village," and they were involved in photographing, videotaping, documenting and reporting what was happening on the

ground to document the co-development of both children and parents. All the photos and videos were edited with the assistance of teachers before being uploaded onto their Facebook page. In this way, the content for learning would be broadened, and the effectiveness of learning would be further strengthened.

Gaun-ting elementary school, Neimen District, Kaushung City is located in remote area where 46% of all students are children of new immigrants. To help both parents and children of new immigrants to fit well into the Taiwanese society, a parent-child course in digital information that incorporated cultural elements unique to this area, such as local beliefs (e.g. Zi-zhu temple), Sung-jiang formation, and rode-side banquets, has been offered. In order to motivate them to learn, mobile devices have been utilized in teaching, which also helped to foster teachers' ability to teach with the aid of digital tools.

Apart from the lessons in the classroom, Gaun-ting elementary school has also arranged various outdoor activities, like parent-child field trips, or tours, to guide them to recognize the local culture, history, customs, and rituals. Such activities would engage them, and help them to expand their social life and space, so that they would become more involved in society and more knowledgeable about the Taiwanese culture.

The Ministry of Education hopes that this pilot project will bring more positive learning experience to new immigrants and their children alike whose knowledge of Taiwanese culture will thus be increased. Also, the results and experience of these schools will be shared in online communities and serve as a model for other schools to follow their footsteps in the future once they see the importance of promoting co-learning activities between parents and children. By doing so, a vision for prosperity shared by a multi-culture society is not far from reality.