

# Newsletter 2

April 2021



## Let us Remind you what CICADA is ...

### An acronym, a project, an idea, a partnership, a quest!

CICADA is an EU funded project titled “Children’s life quality: participation, recreation and play” aiming to empower teachers and policymakers for the optimization of children’s quality of life. It was launched in October 2019; it runs for 24 months and is coordinated by the University of Cyprus. The partnership consists of the Commissioner for Children’s Rights (Cyprus), the University of Crete (Greece), the Center for Social Innovation (Cyprus), the Sociedade Promotora de Estabelecimentos de Ensino LDA (Portugal) and the Observatory on School Violence-Cyprus Pedagogical Institute. The project has investigated children’s options and choices regarding leisure, cultural, artistic and play activities and examined the environmental, educational, social, and cultural factors that affect their decision-making. Based on these findings, a series of training packages for teachers has been already developed, consisting of learning material, activities, tools, and content (based on the ECVET framework).

### In this Newsletter ...

1  
Check out a new publication:  
CICADA Curriculum & Open Resource Toolbox

2  
Learn about the Interactive Online Learning Environment of CICADA Curriculum

3  
Read about the CICADA 5-day training seminar held online in March 2021.

4  
Be informed on the Training and Policy Adaptation Guide (Interactive eBook)

### Big Events for CICADA scheduled for May and June 2021!!

- ✓ National Multipliers Seminar (May 2021)
- ✓ International Conference (1<sup>st</sup> of June 2021)

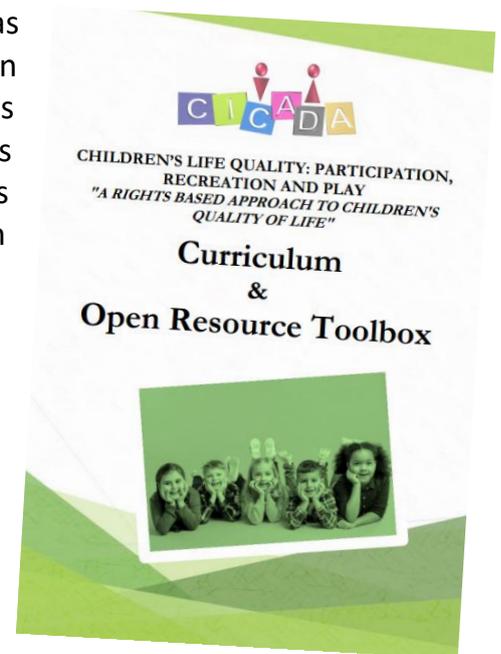
*Even though children’s quality of life is diverse among children around the world, it remains both a process and a product, but also a standard, for which we need to “fight”.*



## 1. New Publication: The CICADA Curriculum and Open Resource Toolbox

The CICADA Curriculum and Open Resource Toolbox that has been recently published, on March 2021, is one of the main and innovative outputs of CICADA project. In light of CICADA's aims, the Curriculum has been developed for helping teachers and education professionals on how to address children's quality of life challenges and facilitate their participation in decision making related to their life status.

All partners of CICADA project were involved in the development of the Curriculum while the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), EQAVET and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) were considered. The Curriculum is composed of six interrelated chapters covering themes related to children's quality of life, such as children's wellbeing and children's rights, active listening for addressing children's needs, children's active participation, children's free time, and action research in schools and the community for promoting a high-level quality of life for children. You can read a summary of the chapters below while you can access the whole Curriculum [online](#). All modules are available in English while selected key parts have been translated in Greek and Portuguese.



### **Chapter 1: Children's Wellbeing and Quality of Life: Conceptual Framework and Dimensions**



Chapter 1 focuses on the concepts of wellbeing and quality of life and how these influence law and policy-making, states, and international organizations regarding children. Various indicators are used to evaluate the issue while laws and conventions are used as tools to ensure it. However, chronic problems as well as rapid changes pose obstacles in the process of achieving a good Quality of Life for Children around the world. Therefore, chapter 1 includes training activities addressing those concepts aiming to sensitize educators to be able to recognize the obstacles that children face and find ways to improve the situation.

Prepared by the Center for Social Innovation (Cyprus)

### **Chapter 2: A rights-based approach to children's quality of life**

Quality of life is a multi-faceted concept, translated in pragmatic terms as a continuous effort in various domains to achieve adequate levels of well-being and prosperity for all human beings. Chapter 2 enables the reader to better understand quality of life from a rights-based approach. The first part of the chapter contains a theoretical background, providing a thorough description of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its principles and how these relate to quality of life. The second part entails five lesson plans aiming to provide teacher trainers with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to understand children's quality of life from a rights-based perspective and to become able to apply that knowledge in real case scenarios.



Prepared by the Office of the Commissioner for Children's Rights (Cyprus)

### **Chapter 3: Active listening: A model for teachers and parents to actively listen and act upon children's concerns in terms of their perceptions of quality of life**

Chapter 3 focuses on cultivating both teachers' and parents' active listening and empathic communication skills to actively respond and act upon children's concerns in terms of their perceptions of quality of life. Moreover, this chapter



provides a flexible framework through which teachers and parents will be trained to demonstrate such listening behaviors that will help them communicate respect and empathy with children, regarding the following 5 aspects: a) Learning/explanation of the meaning of active listening through identical examples in educational/family settings, b) discussion on the consequences of active listening for students' quality of life, c) presentation/proposal of communication and active listening strategies, d) presentation/proposal of ways and means/canals through which teachers can interact with their students' parents, and e) presentation of strategies through which their students' parents could become active listeners of their children's concerns.

Prepared by the University of Crete (Greece)

### **Chapter 4: Towards a pedagogy of play at school through the multiple intelligences approach**

Chapter 4 explains how Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory can be used as a framework for teaching to enhance children's active participation and social engagement. The aim is to provide a holistic approach to professionals working with children to equip them with the skills, knowledge and tools based on children's subjective experiences, preferred choices and ways of learning. Part A draws on the theoretical foundations of MI theory and how it enhances curriculum instruction and assessment. In Part B, a teacher training plan is proposed to inspire and guide teacher-trainers on how to promote MI framework and teaching enhancing children's development and well-being.



Prepared by Cyprus Observatory on Violence at School– Pedagogical Institute (Cyprus)

### **Chapter 5: Towards a pedagogy of free time**

Chapter 5 aims to define the basic terms of free time pedagogy and explain the value of play and leisure for the psychosocial functioning of children. It analyses the importance of free time and its use in children development. It aims to motivate educators to embrace free time as a prerequisite for children to learn and develop, through different play activities. "Towards a pedagogy of free time" assumes a notion of progress, advance, on how we perceive free time and how teachers/trainers can transmit that notion. Here resides the main goal of the chapter, which will hopefully be achieved, resulting in more joyful children and adults.



Prepared by the Sociedade Promotora de Estabelecimentos de Ensino LDA (Portugal)

### **Chapter 6: Action Research in Schools and the Community for the promotion of a high-level quality of life for children.**

Chapter 6 discusses the necessity for establishing a right's-based approach for the promotion of Children's Quality of Life (CQL) and proposes Participatory Action Research (PAR) as the optimum approach to bring all stakeholders together (children, teachers, parents, and community agents) in a joint venture towards securing CQL in schools and the surrounding community. The first part outlines the theory and the rationale of PAR in a right's based context, while the second part illustrates five workshops that teachers, as community facilitators, will use to empower participants, within and around school as well as members of the broader community towards a joint action plan to promote CQL



Prepared by the University of Cyprus (Cyprus)

## 2. CICADA Curriculum: The Interactive Online Learning Environment

The CICADA curriculum is accessible online through an asynchronous Interactive Learning Environment ([Platform](#)), which has been recently completed, on April 2021. The content collection/development, beyond text, includes images, interactive multimedia, mini games' narratives, visuals, videos, eBooks and a resource bank. The methodology of the Online Learning Environment and its tools combines authentic learning, peer support, digital literacy, use of IT tools and study visits. Before its finalization, a functionality and usability testing as well as pilot testing is performed for receiving feedback on its readability and usability. This process began on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April and will be completed on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2021.



### ➤ **Functionality and Usability Testing**

During the Functionality and Usability testing, users access the Interactive Online Learning Environment and evaluate their overall interaction with the platform and tools. Then, they are expected to leave feedback on how to improve the content, the technology tools, and the overall interface of the environment to better meet the objectives of the project by following a [link to a survey](#).

### ➤ **Pilot Testing**

During the Pilot Testing, users get the opportunity to experiment with the CICADA platform and engage with the activities of two modules of their choice. Each module consists of theoretical content, activities, and a quiz. After completing the two modules, they are expected to leave feedback regarding their experience with those two modules, their content, and activities, and whether these meet the objectives of the project by following a [link to a survey](#).

## 3. The CICADA 5-day training seminar (Partners' Staff Capacity Building)

A 5-day joint staff training session for members of the project organizations took place on March 2021. The training seminar was held on-line due to the COVID-19 pandemic for 25 hours, on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2021, 5 hours per day. The main objective of that particular learning activity was for partners to share the project's experience, methodology and provide input for the testing and finalization phases of all project's outputs.

The aims of the 5-day training seminar were as follows:

1. to learn/train adult trainers to work with the project's Learning Environment and Tools prepared under the intellectual output O1, O2;
2. to evaluate the quality and content of the training material (O1, O2) and provide feedback for improvement, along with suggestions for adaption and policy drafting at EU and national level.

To this end, each partner prepared and delivered a training session covering, among others, the content developed in a basic output of the project, that is, the Curriculum and Open Resource Toolbox. In addition, content developed in other outputs, such as IO2 (Online Training Platform) and IO3 (Training and Policy Recommendations Guide) was considered and discussed. The joint

staff training event allowed also a more in-depth exchange of views among partners on the training content in order to make the final fine tuning before its launch. For better organizing the event, a [google classroom](#) was developed, dedicated for training staff members of the partner organizations of CICADA project.

Training content featured among others: scientific knowledge, contemporary innovative pedagogies with the use of digital tools, deployment of the project implementation experience, skills assessment, recognition and validation tools and procedures, tailored coaching/counseling methodologies, tools to boost self-efficacy and motivation, orientation techniques, especially in the field of the online learning and skills development.



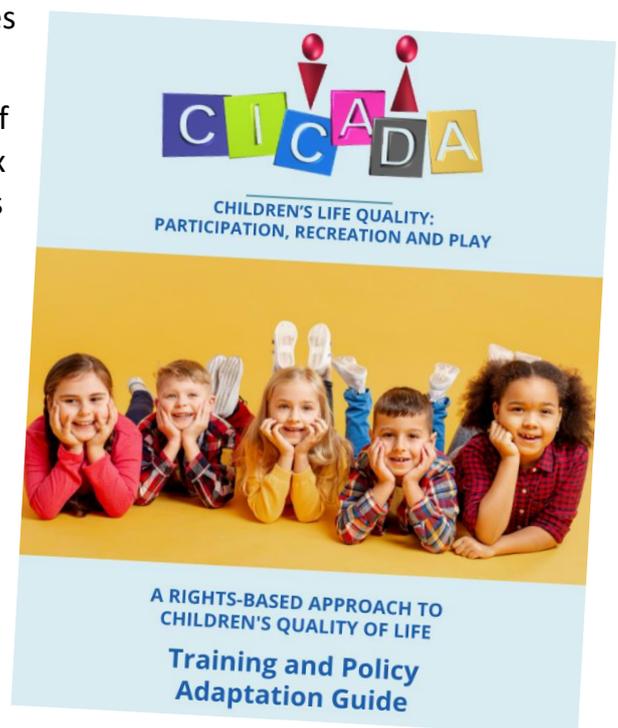
Each partner organization was represented by at least 2 related staff members who had experience in training design, development and provision, policy drafting, assessment, accreditation, recognition and validation of skills.

Following the completion of the 5-day capacity building of the project, the core members of the consortium reviewed the evaluation of the seminar and discussed the next steps: the finalization of the platform and the organization of the multiplier events (read below).

#### 4. New Online Publication: The CICADA Training and Policy Adaptation Guide

CICADA has developed a [Training and Policy Adaptation Guide](#) in the form of an **Online Interactive e-Book** that provides specific guidelines to enable the integration and alignment of the project’s outputs with the mission and the context of key stakeholders’ organizations. The Training and Policy Adaptation Guide of approximately 133 pages consists of four Parts.

Part A concerns key aspects of children’s’ quality of life, the content of which is derived from the six chapters of the CICADA Curriculum. Part B concerns research on children’s quality of life based on the mapping tool data for "children's quality of life". Part C consists of training suggestions for each of the six chapters. Some of these modes of training suggested to be used by organizations to train their staff include lectures, seminars, conferences, team trainings and workshops. Lastly, Part D includes policy recommendations for improving children’s quality of life addressing different groups of people, parties, and authorities, such as governmental agencies, educational authorities, and NGOs.



## 5. The CICADA National Multipliers Seminar/Workshop, May 2021

The intellectual outputs of the project will be disseminated via a National Multipliers Seminar/Workshop, that is scheduled to be **held online on May 2021** in each partner country. The seminars are mostly addressed to teachers as well as stakeholders from the public and private sectors. It is envisaged that, the participants in the National Multipliers seminars, as well as potential promoters and multipliers, will build a circle of influence towards various key organizations and elicit support for project objectives.

The National Multiplier Event starts at 9.00 am to 3.00 pm. (GMT+3). In the first part, an overall presentation of the CICADA project and its main outputs will take place while in the second part, participants will have the chance to attend to parallel workshops delivered for one and a half hour each. During the first round (11.00-12.30), three workshops based on chapters 1, 2 and 6 (check above) will be delivered. Similarly, during the second round (13.00-14.30) three workshops based on chapters 3, 4 and 5 (check above) shall be offered. Each participant will choose one workshop in each round to attend to during their online registration.



*Picture courtesy of the Commissioner for Children's Rights (Illustrator: Lida Varvarousi)*

For pre-registration participants may use the forms below, also available on [CICADA website](#).

Pre-registration Cyprus: <https://forms.gle/gtpKEzWdNGr5Phu6>

Pre-registration Greece: <https://forms.gle/bohnNcM1Qus2MtBe6>

Pre-registration Portugal: <https://forms.gle/5TRkzLENuyrZEsoM8>

## 6. The CICADA International Conference, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021

The final CICADA Conference, coordinated by the Commissioner for Children's Rights (Cyprus), will be held online, **on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, World Children's Day**, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm (GMT+3). The programme and activities of the Conference are to be carried out in English.

80 Educators from all levels of education as well as members of the consortium's organisations are strongly encouraged to participate.

Regarding the conference agenda, two excellent keynote speakers will address the conference, Dr Laura Lundy and Dr Monika Bullinger TBC. Four parallel workshops having a similar format (more or less) to the multipliers' event, will run. Each participant-educator will have the opportunity to attend only 1 Workshop, which includes either Chapters 1-2-3 (available Workshops A & B) or Chapters 4-5-6 (Available Workshops C & D).

More information on the International Conference will be available shortly on [CICADA website](#).