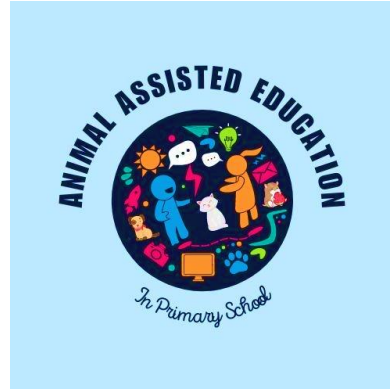




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# **Animal Assisted Education in The Primary School Teacher qualification program**

PROJECT NR. 2022-2-LT01-KA210-SCH-000101324

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## Document Classification

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The form used:

*Description of the procedure for preparation,  
evaluation and implementation of qualification  
improvement programs of the National Education  
Agency, Lithuania  
Appendix 1*

## **Teachers' in-service training programme form**

### **Programme Developer(s)**

Sigita Girdzijauskienė, Mindaugas Kazlauskas, Akvilė Girdzijauskaitė,  
Hartwig Kraft von Wedel

### **Title of the programme**

Animal-assisted education in the primary school

### **Programme annotation (relevance, rationale, priority)**

Educational activities with animals and animal therapy have been growing rapidly in recent years. Different types of animals - dogs, guinea pigs, rabbits, horses, alpacas - are included in educational and therapeutic programmes. Scientific evidence supports the benefits of animal assisted interactions (AAI) for the psychological and physiological health of people in different settings. In many studies, AAI has been linked to positive health outcomes such as pain relief, reduction of depressive symptoms, and neurological rehabilitation. Positive effects have been observed in children and adolescents hospitalised for acute mental disorders, reducing emotional and behavioural symptoms and increasing general competence and psychological well-being. A number of studies confirm the benefits of animals for children's overall development. A survey of teachers in Austria, the USA and other countries who have been assisted by animals in educational activities has shown benefits for children's attention, motivation, mood and well-being, and social, emotional and cognitive development.

However, bringing an animal into the classroom or going to an animal's habitat is not enough to develop both cognitive and socio-emotional competences in students. Teachers need to be competent in the physical, psychological and behavioural characteristics of animals and in animal welfare. Teachers must be able to plan and implement educational activities with animals to achieve the educational objectives.



The involvement of animals in education requires certain attitudes and qualities from educators: the educator should respect nature and wildlife, assess the educational environment and react quickly to changing circumstances, holistically approach the pupil, cooperate with animal owners, encourage communication and cooperation between pupils, but not focus solely on academic performance. Educators should recognise that animal-assisted education is a collaborative approach between teacher(s), pupils, animal(s) and owner(s) of the animal, in which experiences in authentic situations are interacted with reflection.

The qualification programme consists of the following parts: theoretical and practical aspects of animal-assisted education; animal welfare, experiential activities with animals; development of lesson plans for animal-assisted education, construction of activities with animals and presentation of these activities to the group.

### Objective of the programme

To develop teachers' professional competence in the implementation of animal-assisted education in primary education classes.

### Programme outcomes

1. To introduce the understanding of the definition, principles, methods, activities and assessment methods of animal-assisted education to educators.
2. To develop teachers' competences in developing lesson plans for animal-assisted education and to implement them in primary education lessons.
3. To introduce animal welfare in animal-assisted education and to develop teachers' competence in the responsible management of the living and non-living natural environment for educational activities.

### Programme content, duration, teaching methods (methods used)

Nr.	Topic	Lectures	Practical activities	Self-study	Total	Methods of teaching



1.	Experiential activities in the natural environment for participants' introduction		3		3	Activities in an environment with animals Discussion
2.	Sustainable development and animal welfare in educational activities	1	1		2	Interactive lecture Outdoor activities Discussion
3.	Animal-assisted intervention: therapy, education, activities	1	1		2	Interactive lecture Outdoor activities Reflections
4.	Animal-assisted education in the primary classroom: environment (tools), subject content, methodology, reflection (assessment)	2	4		6	Interactive lecture Outdoor activities Reflections
5.	Animal-assisted education activities for children		4		4	Outdoor activities Discussion Reflections
6.	Developing a lesson plan for animal-assisted education: objective, competences to be developed, activities, tools, assessment			8	8	Self-assigned task
7.	Developing a portfolio of animal-assisted educational activities			8	8	Self-assigned task
8.	Presentation of the lesson plans. Feedback		4		4	Tasks are presented in the group of participants



9.	Presentation of animal-assisted education activities		4		4	Tasks are presented and implemented in a group of participants
10.	Benefits and risks of animal-assisted education for the psychosocial development of children, children with special educational needs.	2			2	Interactive lecture Discussion
	Assessment of acquired competences		1		1	Reflections
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>44</b>	

**Competences to be acquired upon completion of the Programme:**

<b>The programme will provide knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes</b>	<b>Competence(s)</b>	<b>Learning model (teaching methods and techniques)</b>	<b>Assessment of the competence(s) acquired</b>
Knowledge and understanding (theoretical part)	Competences for professional education activities: - Competence in recognising the differences and capabilities of learners; - competence in planning, implementing and improving the educational environment;	Leading activities  Interactive lectures, Presentation sheets Group discussions	Formative assessment  Oral questionnaire Lesson plan developed



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- competence in the design and implementation of the educational process</li> <li>- competence of communication</li> <li>- competence in creativity</li> </ul> <p>Learn about the principles of animal-assisted education, animal welfare, research on the effectiveness of animal-assisted education, its applications, risks</p>		
Skills (practical part)	<p>Will be able to apply the principles of animal-assisted education in primary school pupils' world knowledge, life skills, Lithuanian and English language classes.</p> <p>Be able to develop a lesson plan for an animal-assisted education activity (lesson).</p> <p>Be able to implement animal-assisted education activities.</p>	<p>Outdoor activities with animals,</p> <p>The development of a lesson plan,</p> <p>Implementation of animal assisted activities in the field.</p>	<p>Feedback on the lesson's plan, and animal assisted activities</p> <p>Reflection</p>
Attitudes (values, ethical-professional attitudes)	<p>Reinforcement of the importance of ethical and responsible behaviour in educational activities with animals.</p> <p>Strengthening the attitude on ensuring the welfare of the animal</p> <p>Provisions on the opportunities and benefits of outdoor training</p>	<p>Outdoor activities with animals,</p> <p>Small groups and general group discussion</p>	<p>Reflection</p>



## Teaching materials and technical tools:

### Teaching material (title, form (presentation, publication, video, scope, etc.)

Topic	Teaching material	Scope
Sustainable development and animal welfare in educational activities	Methodological guidelines „Beginners guide to Animal Assisted Education“. (2023).  Handbook on Animal Assisted Therapy (2019)  Animal Assisted Therapy in the School. (2019)	3- 8 p.
Animal-assisted intervention: therapy, education, activity	Methodological guidelines „Beginners guide to Animal Assisted Education“. (2023).  Animal Assisted Therapy in the School. (2019)	9 - 12 p.
Animal-assisted education in the primary classroom: environment (tools), subject content, methodology, reflection (assessment)	Methodological guidelines „Beginners guide to Animal Assisted Education“. (2023).	12 - 17 p.
Animal-assisted education activities for children	Methodological guidelines „Beginners guide to Animal Assisted Education“. (2023).	22 - 35 p.
Benefits and risks of animal-assisted education for the psychosocial	Brelsford V. L., Meints K., Gee N.R., Pfeffer K. (2017) Animal-Assisted Interventions in the Classroom – A Systematic Review. Int. J. Environ.	Publication





development of children, children with special educational needs.	Res. Public Health, 14, 669; doi:10.3390/ijerph14070669	
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### Technical tools

The programme is delivered both in a natural environment and in a group-work setting with a computer, internet access and projector. School supplies, materials available in the natural environment.

### References and other resources used for the development of the programme

1. „Beginners guide to Animal Assisted Education“. (2023). Methodological guidelines. [www.ekominis.lt](http://www.ekominis.lt)
2. Fine, A. H. (Ed.). (2015). Handbook on animal-assisted therapy. San Francisco, CA: Elsevier Academic Press.
3. <https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/things-do>
4. Knowles C., Shannon E.N., Lind J.R. (2021). Animal-assisted activities in the classroom for students with emotional and behavioral disorders. Children and Youth Services Review 131. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2021.106290>
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9. Bert, F., Gualano, M. R., Camussi, E., Pieve, G., Voglino, G., & Siliquini, R. (2016). Animal assisted intervention: A systematic review of benefits and risks. European Journal of Integrative Medicine, 8(5), 695–706.



10. Gee, N. R. (2011). Animals in the classroom. In McCardle P., McCune S., Griffin J. A., Esposito L., Freund L. S. (Eds.), *Animals in our lives: Human–animal interaction in family, community, and therapeutic settings* (pp. 117–142). Baltimore, MD: Brookes.
11. Lewis H. and Grigg R. (2021). *Tails from the Classroom* (2021).
12. Brelsford, V. L., Dimolareva, M., Gee, N. R., & Meints, K. (2020). Best Practice Standards in Animal assisted Interventions: How the LEAD Risk Assessment Tool Can Help. *Animals*, 10(6), 974.

### **Qualification requirements for lecturers**

Lecturers implementing the programme must:

- have a university degree in education, science or psychology;
- have competence in animal-assisted education;
- have experience in developing and/or implementing in-service competence development or qualification programmes.

### **Requirements for participants**

Primary school teachers, psychologists, special education teachers, speech and language therapists



**Erasmus+ cooperation project:** Animal Assisted Education in Primary School

**Project no.:** 2022-2-LT01-KA210-SCH-000101324

**Consortium:**

- NGO Eko mintis
- Šaulių Vinco Kudirkos primary school
- Hartwig Kraft von Wedel Sanchen Alpacas

Project website: [www.ekomintis.lt/projects](http://www.ekomintis.lt/projects)

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