

# **SHPRESA PROGRAMME**

## **An Evaluation of the Paul Hamlyn Funded Project**

**March 2012**

Introduction	p. 2
Summary of findings	p. 4
The Shpresa Programme Albanian School Project	p. 7
1) Management structure	p. 7
2) Project staff	p. 8
Impact of the Paul Hamlyn Funded Project	p.10
A) Children's achievement	p.10
B) Children's cultural knowledge and involvement in cultural events	p.15
- Public events and performances	p.15
- Children's voices	p.18
C) Parents' knowledge of the education system	p.19
- Women's voices	p.26
D) Workshops for teachers	p.28
E) Training and mentoring support	p.30
- The Somali project	p.30
- The Portuguese project	p.32
- The Lithuanian project	p.33
- The Polish project	p.36
Conclusion and recommendations	p. 38
Appendices	
A) Children's cultural knowledge, involvement in cultural events & classroom observation	p.42
B) Parent's Knowledge of Education & women's voices	p. 60
C) Training and mentoring supports	p.80
D) Interviews with mainstream school and community leaders	p.104

## **INTRODUCTION**

Shpresa (meaning *hope* in Albanian) was set up in 2003 to meet the needs of the community of Albanian speakers, from Albania and from Kosovo living in the area of east London, many of whom arrived around the year 2000 as refugees.

The organisation runs four main projects: a children's project, a youth project, a women's project and a resettlement project which works to develop the skills of volunteers and deploy them in the community. It currently has 500 paid upmembers, over 2000 people use its services over a year and 900 people use them every week.

The present report brings together and updates three earlier interim evaluations produced in October 2010 and in March and October 2011. The report outlines the organisational structure, the staffing relevant to the present project and the systems in place for supporting and monitoring the organisation's work. The body of the report is organised around the five agreed outcomes, four of which were to be evaluated in the first year of the project.

While wishing to remain close to the agreed outcomes, the report draws on a range of evidence: visits to partner schools, interviews with stake holders, observations of teaching sessions with children in Shpresa classes as well as in those run by groups mentored by Shpresa, women's groups and events, analysis of children's achievement data provided by partner schools and families, reports of focus groups with women and children, a review of the organisation's records and policies as well as many interviews and informal discussions with women, young people and staff in the course of visits to Shpresa activities.

The way in which Shpresa works with children and young people, builds partnerships with schools and develops volunteers in the community, together with its high level of professionalism, makes it a role model for other organisations and this has been acknowledged by the groups who have been mentored by Shpresa in the course of this project. Shpresa also offers a strong model of good practice in developing genuine community cohesion in a diverse society. It is a credit to the work of Shpresa that its partnership with Gascoigne Primary School was selected to be promoted as an example of good practice by CILT, the National Centre for Languages ([www.ourlanguages.org.uk/working/case\\_studies/CaseStudy137](http://www.ourlanguages.org.uk/working/case_studies/CaseStudy137)).

Throughout the evaluation there have been opportunities for both formal and informal discussions with women and children of all ages. In my role as evaluator I am grateful to all those who offered evidence for this report. However beyond the usual thanks to all involved I wish to comment on how inspired I was by the commitment, enthusiasm and dedication of the volunteers I spoke to. They talked openly about their feelings of disempowerment on arrival in England and how they coped and gradually took control of their lives. These women are ambitious for themselves as well as for their children. All expressed their gratitude to the staff of Shpresa Programme who supported them and provided role models they could aspire to. They were grateful for the courses that helped them understand the English education system and help their children achieve in school. A number talked of the privilege of being able to 'pay back' to both their own and the wider community for the support received. The children were equally inspiring. They were confident and articulate, considering with great sensitivity the issues of identity raised by their dual heritage, the importance of their personal friendships across communities and welcoming the opportunities offered to them by Shpresa, through performing and campaigning, to become ambassadors

for their community. I wish to thank them all for their patience and courtesy in facilitating my observations and answering my many questions.

Throughout the period of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation grant, Shpresa Programme worked to train and mentor four organisations: the Shire Foundation, the Portuguese Group, the Lithuanian Project and the Polish Mypolacy group. The evaluation has had two aims with respect to these groups: to identify and explore the role played by Shpresa in training and mentoring volunteers to establish these organisations; but also to provide a snapshot of their development, the challenges they faced, how these were addressed and lessons that may be useful to other groups in the future. The Toolkit produced near the end of the project reflects the process and offers both mainstream teachers and community members guidance on building productive partnerships.

The high quality of the work of Shpresa Programme, in terms of its procedures, management, teaching, community development and partnerships, has been recognised nationally through the awards of the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education. Shpresa Programme received the Bronze Award in 2009, the Gold Award in 2010 and the rare and sought after Special Distinction Award in 2012.

I would like to thank the children, teachers, parents and community organisers who have shared their thoughts and ambitions for their projects and made me welcome in the course of my visits.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Sneddon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Raymonde Sneddon  
March 2012

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## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### A) Children's achievement

The SATs results for 20 children in June 2010 and June 2011 have been obtained either directly from schools or from children's reports. As the children attend 12 different primary schools it has not proved possible to obtain data for any meaningful comparison across ethnic or linguistic groups. In 2010 92% of the girls and 100% of the boys are either at or above the national norm of Level 4 for reading, the national benchmark (87% of girls and 81 % of boys achieved this nationally). In 2011 90% of girls and 90% of boys achieved level 4 (86% of girls and 77% of boys achieved this nationally). Results for Maths in 2011 are higher with 100% of pupils achieving Level 4 or above compared with an 80% national norm. This indicates an excellent result for the children given that most of them entered the school system speaking mainly Albanian and is significantly higher than the target set for the Paul Hamlyn funded project. A GCSE exam is not yet available in the Albanian language, but negotiations are currently underway between Shpresa and the OCR Exam Board.

### B) Children's cultural knowledge

100% of the children who attend Shpresa classes have participated in at least one of the following: assemblies and performances in mainstream schools, local theatres, conference halls, teachers' centres, at TELCO events (East London Communities Organisation), Refugee Week events, local festivals and shows and major theatrical performances. Several have also represented Shpresa at the Treasury Office and the House of commons and participated in local and national campaigns.

Most of these events involved dance, drama, poetry, video presentations in celebration of the Albanian culture and language. In focus groups both younger and older children have talked about the importance of their bilingualism and their pride in their identity. They have also described the impact of Shpresa on their everyday lives: the access to a wide range of free activities, opportunities to socialize with friends in a safe environment. They especially value having their voices heard and the opportunity to become ambassadors for their culture through public performances and campaigns, such as the ongoing campaign to obtain a GCSE in Albanian.

### C) Parents' knowledge of the English Education System

A total of 141 women have attended training sessions on the English Education System (40 in 2010, 51 in 2011 and 10 in 2012). 116 completed pre- and post-course questionnaires. The women report a highly statistically significant improvement in their knowledge of the system. They indicate that the course enabled them to support their children more effectively, to become involved with their children's school and to make more informed decisions about their children's future.

As a result of the training programme, 52 women carried out extensive placements as volunteers in mainstream schools or in Shpresa classes. Several obtained full-time paid employment in mainstream schools and other agencies. 43 obtained NVQ TA Level 3. 7 parents completed the Working with Children and Young People NVQ Level 2. The target set by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation required 38 out of 50 participants in the English education

programme to have increased levels of knowledge and 10 to be placed in mainstream schools. The target for women placed as volunteers in mainstream schools was exceeded.

#### **D) Workshops for teachers**

Although Shpresa entered into negotiations with their partner schools, none of them could fit a dedicated session on the topic of working with refugee pupils in their in-service training agenda for teachers. However workshops were held for teachers, teacher educators and academics at Barking Teachers' Centre, the University of East London and Goldsmiths College. Workshops and events were also held for children on refugee and migrant issues at Mayfield Secondary School in Barking, Gascoigne Primary, Upton Cross Primary, Portway Primary and Plaistow Primary schools. The Toolkit was produced with an accompanying DVD to support the development of partnerships between mainstream and supplementary schools.

#### **E) Training and mentoring support**

This target was set to be evaluated in 2010-2011. From 2009 to 2012 Shpresa has worked with four organisations, all of which have set up complementary schools or youth projects. In all cases Shpresa provided extensive support to set up and register the organisations and ensured they had all policies and procedures in position and were fully trained to run activities safely with children. The co-ordinators of all groups have reported that they have been very well supported and advised by Shpresa. They have been particularly grateful for the opportunities offered to network with other organisations and make their presence known within the wider community. Feedback from their users as well as from community organisers indicate that they are clearly meeting a need and have begun to have an impact on their communities and, in the case of the Portuguese organization, on relationships within the school. All organisations are in an advanced state of development although all would benefit from further support to address issues of funding, premises and staffing.

The original plan to mentor a Somali organisation to set up a supplementary school in Barking was modified as the identified co-ordinator preferred to work with the Somali community in Haringey. The co-ordinator and six volunteers were trained and mentored to set up a community organisation and registered it as a charity. The Shire Foundation was able to raise funding to lease its own premises and to run a six month project for young people which had an impact on the Somali community. It held a high profile and successful event attended by 200 people. In 2011 the organisation obtained funding to continue the youth project for a year and is currently preparing bids for projects commissioned by Haringey Council.

The original plan was then carried out with a group from the Portuguese speaking community who were keen to develop a supplementary school in Barking. A coordinator and six volunteers were trained and mentored to run a weekly supplementary school for children and additional classes for parents. With support from Shpresa, the Refugee and Migrant Forum of East London (RAMFEL) and Gascoigne Primary School, the group has run well-attended activities, special events and classes. The group works in close partnership with Gascoigne School although no contract has been signed as the headteacher of Gascoigne School has indicated that he prefers to work on trust.

Shpresa's support for the Lithuanian community has proved complex. Initially two coordinators were supported to identify community needs and work towards setting up an organisation in Barking that provides classes and activities for children and health events for families. In the event a third co-ordinator was trained and, after a successful pilot project with

20 children, classes for children have been set up in partnership with Gascoigne School and Mayfield School in Barking. Members of the community have joined up with the Portuguese group to attend English classes and joint events with the other Shpresa sponsored groups have been organized.

In the Summer of 2011 Shpresa mentored a Polish co-ordinator to set up a pilot school project initially on its own premises in Plaistow. In September the complementary School opened formally in office premises in East Ham. The project offers advice and support for families and runs classes for children aged 5 to 15 in two 3 hour sessions, taught by volunteer teachers. The Polish project also organizes special events in conjunction with Shpresa and the other groups. It has just recently found a partner school willing to offer free premises to expand its activities.

### **The Shpresa Programme Albanian School Project**

The Albanian School Project (ASP) was first started in 2003 in recognition of the very high value Albanian families place on education. It organises Albanian classes and a range of dance, drama and sporting and cultural activities for children and young people aged 5 to 14 in after-school, week-end and holiday programmes. In addition it provides opportunities for young people to perform in public at cultural events to a range of audiences. It carries out these activities not only on its own premises but, significantly, in

close partnership with mainstream schools. These partnerships enable schools to create, with respect to the Albanian-speaking children who attend them, two of the key conditions that are considered important to ensure the academic success of pupils from minority ethnic communities: the incorporation of their language and culture within the school and a close relationship between families, community organisations and the school.<sup>1</sup>

The Project aims to:

- Improve children's language and literacy skills in Albanian
- Improve children's attainment in their mainstream school
- Improve parent/child communication within the family
- Improve parent/teacher communication
- Raise awareness of Albanian culture in the community

The following section offers an outline of Shpresa Programme's management structure and of the staff involved in the Albanian School Project.

## 1) Shpresa Programme's management structure:

Board of trustees

Project director

Women's and volunteer development  
Educational development  
Children and youth development  
Admin and finance worker

Volunteers

Sessional staff and volunteers

Sessional staff and volunteers  
Volunteers

Shpresa has a **Board of Trustees** of 11 members with a range of expertise. This includes an accountant, housing advisers, a consultant on refugee issues, a representative of current users, a representative of the volunteers.

The full-time **Director** is **Luljeta Nuzi** who has been with the organisation since its beginning, initially as a volunteer then as a part-time development worker and since 2004 as a full time worker.

Currently the full-time **Albanian School Development Worker** is **Flutra Shega**, who set up the Albanian school project in 2003. She started working on the project in a voluntary capacity and experimented with different ways of best running the service. Since November 2004 she has been responsible for the running of the children's project as a paid employee of Shpresa Programme. She has developed partnerships with schools and personally runs projects in Newham, Enfield, Bounds Green and Barking and Dagenham. In addition she has a cross-London role managing projects in Redbridge and Haringey as well as the above boroughs and she has co-ordinated a new project in Hammersmith.

**Ermir Disha** took on the role of full-time Youth and Children's Development Worker in November 2004, and works alongside Flutra Shega.

**Evis Bodlli** took on the role of the full time worker in 2003 as the development worker for the women and volunteer project.

## **2) Teaching staff**

**Flutra Shega**. Albanian School Development Worker November 2004. Sets up partnerships and teaches classes. Flutra Shega completed a four year university-based primary school teacher degree in Kosovo, with additional qualifications in I.T. and taught in the country for four years before coming to the U.K.

**Evis Suka** is a volunteer teacher in schools in Edmonton and Bounds Green. She has taught in Albania and completed a teaching assistant's course in London.

**Mirdita Dedgjonaj** is a volunteer teacher in St. Thomas of Canterbury in Hammersmith. She has taught in Albania, completed a teaching assistant's course NVQ level 3 in London and is currently working as a full-time teaching assistant in this school.

**Vera Pulaj** is a volunteer teacher in schools in Redbridge and East Ham. She has taught in Albania, completed a teaching assistant's course at Empowering Learning in London and is currently working as a part-time teaching assistant in a primary school.

**Ermir Disha** is a paid youth development worker. He is responsible for developing and tutoring a range of activities such as dancing, kickboxing, football and basketball and organises performances and running the dancing session.

**Saime Dushku** is a paid teacher working in Newham. She is a qualified teacher of Albanian language and literature with 20 years experience.

**Sheribjan Suli Team leader** is a volunteer teacher working in the project's schools in Bounds Green. She has completed NVQ level 3 in TA.

**Brodinela Mema** Team leader in Tottenham. She has completed NVQ level 3 in TA.

**Volunteers. For 2011 to 2012 There are 58 volunteers working at Shpresa programme. 47 of them** volunteering at the Albanian school project. Some of them have completed NVQ levels 2 or 3 in child care and teaching support, some of them are studying NVQ levels 2 or 3 in child care or teaching support.

## **3) Policies and management procedures**

The organisation has clear management procedures and policies that are regularly evaluated and reviewed and well organised records. A comprehensive review of documentation was carried out by the evaluator in 2008 and updated in 2010. A description of policies and management procedures as well as a list of all records and files available can be found in Appendix E. This includes staff records, job descriptions, staff training and supervision,

policies for Health and Safety, Safeguarding Children, Equal Opportunities, Volunteers, Vulnerable People, Complaints Procedure, , Risk Assessment Procedures, Environment policy, Confidentially policy and procedure, Disciplinary procedures, Maternity policy and procedures, Financial Management and Procedures and Reserve policy.

The Shpresa Programme was presented with the Gold Award from the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education's Quality Framework in 2011.

## **The Paul Hamlyn Funded Project - Impact**

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation awarded Shpresa a grant of £100,934 over a period of three years from April 2009 to support the development of the Albanian Supplementary School and to promote community cohesion. Five outcome targets have been agreed for the first year of the project:

- F) Children's achievement
- G) Children's cultural knowledge
- H) Parents' knowledge of the English Education System
- I) Workshops for teachers
- J) Training and mentoring support (this to be carried out in 2010-2011)

The report includes quantitative data collected in evidence as well as direct observations of events. However it has a strong focus on the voices of the children and the women who participated. As well as confirming the more formal evidence from the data collection, these voices offer the most powerful evidence of the impact of Shpresa.

### **A) Children's achievement**

Shpresa's Albanian Supplementary School Project aims to provide young Albanians, aged 5 to 18 with mother tongue language classes and opportunities to use the Albanian language in order to:

- increase their skills in the Albanian language
- increase their skills in the English language
- increase their confidence and self esteem
- develop their knowledge and pride in their Albanian cultural heritage and ethnic identity.

Shpresa planned to provide weekly Albanian classes, Albanian dance classes, sports sessions and a range of cultural and leisure activities for children in schools which are willing to provide their premises free for the purpose.

The following outcome target was set for children's achievement:

*50% of at least 20 KS2 children attending weekly Albanian Supplementary School sessions will achieve a greater improvement in their SATs levels in the summer of 2010 compared to those predicted by their mainstream teachers at the start of the school year; and a greater improvement on average than children from Albanian and other Eastern European cultures attending the same mainstream schools, but not attending Shpresa Supplementary School.*

#### **1) The Schools**

From April 2009 and in academic year 2009-2010 classes have been carried out for 258 children. In the year 2010-2011 380 children attended classes, and 465 attended in the year 2011-2012. A further 100 children attend are involved in special events and rehearsals for performances in 2009-2010, 150 in 2010-2011 and 300 in 2011-2012.

**Gascoigne Primary** (2 hours after school on a Thursday from 5-7)

There are 43 children attending in 2009-2010; 65 children in 2010-2011; 60 children in 2011-2012.

**Mayfield School** Children attend on Sundays (10am to 4pm), coming from several different schools. There are 49 children attending in 2009-2010; 110 children in 2010-2011; 135 children 2011-2012

**Cleveland Junior** (after school club)

There are 17 children attending the Albanian club in 2009-2010, all of whom come from Cleveland School. 15 children attend in 2010-2011

**Gladesmore Community School** (Saturday class 10 am to 2pm). There are 75 attending in 2009-2010; 95 children attending in 2010-2011; 105 in 2011-2012.

**Bounds Green School** (Wednesday class)

There are 17 children attending in 2009-2010; 35 children in 2010-2011; 75 children in 2011-2012.

**Churchfield Primary School**(Friday afternoon class from 3.30 to 5.30)

There are 57 children attending in 2009-2010; 60 children in 2010-2011; 60 attending in 2011-2012.

**St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School** (from 15.30 to 17.00p.m)

There are 23 children attending the Albanian club in 2009-2010, all of whom come from St Thomas' School; 28 children attending in 2010-2011 and 35 children attending 2011-2012

## 2) SATs results

It is important to note at this point that providing data for individual children for research and evaluation purposes is a considerable additional burden on overstretched assessment co-ordinators in school. Records are kept in different formats and databases in different schools and authorities and not all schools are happy to hand over data (even with guarantees of confidentiality) to a researcher without written permission from parents. While achievement data are analysed by recorded ethnic origin, these categories are broad and all European children are likely to be found under the "white-other" category. While children's home language is generally recorded, there is no statistical data available on achievement by language. The researcher greatly appreciates the time voluntarily given by the co-ordinators but notes that it was not possible in most schools to obtain data that enables a comparison between Albanian speaking children and other language groups.

## 3) Some baseline data

The following data on children's achievement in their mainstream school in end-of-year tests for 2009 was collected to provide an overall picture of ethnic Albanian primary school children's progress. These became available to the evaluator after analyses by the schools' own assessment co-ordinators in the Autumn term 2009. The two sets of data below come from a school which has worked with Shpresa for some time and one which is new to the partnership.

**Gascoigne Primary School in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham**

The school have been in partnership with Shpresa since 2007 and has made available detailed statistics on children’s attainment throughout the primary phase.

There are 84 ethnic Albanian children in the school and test data for reading in English were made available for 77 of these, for each year group. The data below is recorded in Average Point Score (APS) format to enable statistical analyses. The national norm of 27 for Year 6 represents a Level of 4B.

Year	Nat. norm	Alb n.	Alba mean	Shp n.	Shp	Non Shp n.	Non Shp
1	13	13	11.15	5	8.6	8	11
2	15	14	14.57	7	14.14	7	15
3	19	17	19.82	5	22.6	12	19.58
4	21	16	20.25	7	20.7	9	19.88
5	25	11	24.09	4	27.5	7	22.14
<b>6</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>25.66</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>24.6</b>
		77		29		48	

Gascoigne School data

The number of Albanian pupils in Gascoigne school is substantial and the data available detailed, making it possible to compare the scores of ethnic Albanian children who attend the classes with those who do not. Of the 77 children for whom data are available, 29 attend Shpresa classes. The table above indicates that Albanian children as a whole are performing just under the national norms, except in Y3 when they exceed it. Given that the vast majority of the children are new to English when they start school, this is a very positive achievement and an indicator of future success in school. Comparing the children who attend Shpresa classes with those who do not, the younger attenders perform less well than those who do not, however this is significantly reversed for all year groups from 3 to 6. In these groups the attenders not only have higher scores than the non-attenders, but they also reach or exceed the national norms.

Year 6 data (in bold on the graph) represents children’s score on the SAT test. The score for attenders exceeds both the school mean of 26.67 and the national norm of 27, however this is not significant as there was only one child in this group.

### **Churchfield Primary School in the London Borough of Enfield**

The school is a full primary with a nursery and classes from Years 1 to 6. It has very recently started working in partnership with Shpresa. There are 28 Albanian children in the school, 15 of which attend the Shpresa classes which take place immediately after school on Friday afternoons. The children have a 2 hour session split between literacy teaching and dancing. A further 20 children from other schools attend these classes. A few children also attend week-end classes in Barking.

The data made available from the school was limited to the reading and writing scores of Albanian children only (with written parental permission) and did not include the children who had been in their final year when they sat the tests. It has therefore not been possible to make comparisons with children from other ethnic groups. The data for all years show an

unusual closeness between scores for reading and writing. Scores for children in Year 2, based on their end of KS1 assessment at the end of Year 2 are, at 16, above the national norm of 15, but these data are based on two children only. In all other years the children are a little below national norms, although the group of 5 children in Year 3 come very close in both reading and writing with a score of 20.5 against a norm of 21. There is little difference between the children who attend Shpresa classes and those who do not and small numbers in each year group mean a detailed analysis is not appropriate.

**4) Test results for 2009-2010**

The interim report for 2010 was considerably delayed by the difficulty of obtaining data from schools. The data in the following table have been obtained directly from only two schools. Children attending other mainstream schools made their end-of-year reports available. This method of data collection does not allow comparison with other groups of children within each school. However as numbers of Albanian children at Year 6 in most schools is low, such comparisons would not have been appropriate. To enable comparison the children's level for reading has been chosen as the best measure of their achievement in English. The norm expected of children nationally is Level 4b. Several schools do not offer the sub-scores but indicate in the reports that the children at Level 4 have achieved the national norm.

School	Girls	Boys
Churchfield	4b =	
	4b =	
	4a +	
Gascoigne	5c +	5c +
	4c -	
	4a +	
Cleveland	4 =	
	4 =	
St Edwards		4a +
Goodmayes	4b =	
Manford		5 +
St Vincent	4a +	
Becontree	4a +	
Parkway	5b +	
Bounds Green		5 +
		4 =
Edmonton	4a +	
		5 +
Ripple		4 =
	13	7

**Children's reading levels at the end of Year 6 in 2009-2010**

The table above indicates children who are at the norm, below it or above it. This indicates that 92% of the girls and 100% of the boys are either at or above the national norm. Nationally 87% of girls and 81 % of boys achieved level 4 for Reading. This indicates a remarkable result for the children given that most of them entered the school system speaking mainly Albanian.

**5) Test results for 2010-2011**

In view of the difficulty of obtaining test data from a number of schools it was agreed that, for 2010-2011, families would be asked to provide copies of the end-of-year reports for children in Year 6, which include the SAT results. SAT results for June 2011 were obtained from parents for 20 children, 9 girls and 11 boys. The scores provided in the report did not offer sub-scores (4b is the norm expected) but indicate in the reports that the children at Level 4 have achieved the national norm. All reports included overall scores for English and maths and 17 of the 20 reports also included a teacher assessment of children's level in science.

The data obtained comes from children who attend Shpresa's after school or week-end classes and who attend 13 different schools.

### KS2 results for 2011

School	Gender	English	Maths	Science
Gascoigne	G	4	4	4
Gascoigne	B	3	4	4
Gascoigne	G	4	5	5
Gascoigne	G	4	4	4
Gascoigne	G	3	4	3
Cleveland	B	4	4	4
Cleveland	B	4	4	4
Lathom	B	4	4	4
Monteagle	G	5	5	5
Mayfield	G	4	4	4
Mayfield	B	4	5	4
Glenbrook	G	4	5	5
Glenbrook	B	5	5	4
Earlsmead	G	5	4	4
Churchfield	G	4	4	4
Raglan	B	4	4	4
Chadwell	B	4	4	4
St Edward's	B	4	4	
Berger	B	4	5	
Noel Park	B	4	4	

**Results for English:** the table above indicates that 15 children have achieved the national norm of Level 4, , that 3 have achieved Level 5 and 2 Level 3. The results are broadly similar for girls and boys with 8/9 girls achieving Level 4 or above (88%) and 10/11 boys achieving Level 4 or above (90%). This compares with the national norms of 86% for girls and 77% for boys for 2011.

**Results for maths:** in many cases these are higher than for English with all children achieving Level 4 (100%) or above and 3 girls (33%) and 3 boys (27%) achieving Level 5. Compared to national levels of 80% for both girls and boys.

**Results for Science:** these are available for the 9 girls and for 8 boys. All but one girl have achieved level 4 or above, and 3 achieved Level 5. All boys achieved Level 4.

This is a strong result for all the children. What is most remarkable about the result for English is that results for boys and girls are very similar. This contrasts with a national picture where boys achieve at a significantly lower level in English than girls. The children are strongly above national norms in mathematics, where language use is less significant than for English.

## 6) The GCSE campaign

Shpresa Programme started a campaign to obtain a GCSE qualification in Albanian language in 2009. Students were heavily involved in organising and presentation a petition which gathered signatures nationwide. In 2011 the Albanian students joined forces with Somali and Eritrean students to campaign for their languages to be recognised at examination level. Supported by Martin Pinder of the Newham New Deal Partnership and Ben Pollard from CitizensUK and academics in the field of multiliteracy, the campaign received very positive coverage in the education press

(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2011/sep/23/community-way-with-languages>)

(<http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6116531> ). This led to an opportunity to meet with and enter into negotiations on the subject directly with the Chief Executive of the OCR Exam Board. Three young leaders of the campaign were interviewed in February and this formed the basis of a short article for the Bulletin of the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education ( in Appendix A)

In addition to the quantitative data above the present report includes observational data from the evaluator's visits to Mayfield School and Gascoigne School. This provides a flavour of the teaching environment, the teaching style and children's responses in the Albanian literacy classes. This can be found in Appendix A.

## B) Children's cultural knowledge and involvement in cultural events

The opportunity to take part in public performances is very popular indeed with all the young people who attend Shpresa. All of the children who take part in the classes have taken part in events: school assemblies, performances in schools and public venues. Additionally children who do not regularly attend classes commonly participate in rehearsals and performances.

The following outline target was set:

*100% of at least 220 pupils attending weekly Albanian Supplementary School sessions will take part in one mainstream school assembly or showcasing event during the year and will develop greater knowledge and understanding of their culture compared to baseline testing by an independent evaluator at the start of the year.*

### 1) Public events and performances

The following public events and performances by children and young people took place in 2009:

- 9<sup>th</sup> April 2009 - Gascoigne School assembly (29 children)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2009 – Performances at Cleveland School (17 children)
- 4<sup>th</sup> May Performance at a TELCO (East London Communities Organisation) assembly (20 children)
- 25<sup>th</sup> June 2009 – Performance at Churchfield School (45 children)

- 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009 – Performance at Credon Centre in Newham (20 children)
- Refugee week 2009 festival at Little Ilford Youth Centre (75 children)
- June 2009 “Too busy to be in trouble” at Eastbury School in Barking (140 children)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2009 Dance Around the World at Cleveland School (13 children)
- 4<sup>th</sup> July 2009 at Mayfield School Refugee event (15 children)
- 8<sup>th</sup> July 2009 – TELCO event (7 children)
- 11<sup>th</sup> July 2009 – Newham Mayor’s Show in Central Park (11 children)
- 8<sup>th</sup> October 2009 – Young mentors’ presentation (2 children)
- 26<sup>th</sup> November at Treasury Office and House of Commons – Shpresa 7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (17 children).
- 28<sup>th</sup> November 2009 – Flag Day celebration at Eastbury School.
- 29<sup>th</sup> November 2009 - Flag Day celebration at Bounds Green School.
- 20<sup>th</sup> December 2009 – Children’s Congress (see report below).

In addition to the above the children were involved in the following public events: on 29<sup>th</sup> November one young mentor represented Shpresa Programme at an event organised for Flag Day by an Albanian magazine. An article was written which highlighted the interpretation of a poem by the mentor and the impact it had on the audience. On 6<sup>th</sup> December 15 young people took part in a consultation event organised by the Children’s Services in the London Borough of Redbridge held at Mayfield School. Twelve of them were elected as members on the panel of Redbridge Children’s and Young People’s Trust. On 17<sup>th</sup> December 4 young people presented the End Child Detention campaign at 10 Downing Street.

#### **Public events and performances in 2010**

- 20<sup>th</sup> February 2010 – Our Dreams Show at Stratford Circus. 125 children presented to an audience of 300 parents and guests.
  - 14 October 2010 – Presentation by a young person and staff at “Sharing model and working in partnership” event.
  - 14 October 2010 – Stalls at an event in Redbridge
  - 14 October 2010 – Young people took part at a dance competition for Black History month at Gascoigne school
  - 16 October 2010 – Performance by young people at a Consultation Event
  - 28 October 2010 – Performance by young people at the TELCO Assembly
  - 25 November 2010 – AGM presentation of case studies by a mother and a young person.
  - 28 November 2010– Flag Day Celebration, Stratford Circus
  - 18 of December young people celebrated End of Year at Gladesmore School.
  - 21<sup>st</sup> of December young people organised a Mask Party. They raised money at this event for another young person who is suffering from cancer and needs financial help to continue his treatment.

#### **Public events and performances in 2011**

- 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2011 young people took part in a performance at Kosovo’s Independence day celebration at Barking and Dagenham CVS.

- 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2011 young people performed a dance in Greenwich which was filmed to be part of the Olympics presentation.
- 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2011 young people took part in a performance at a Chinese church in London as part of TELCO's campaign on Refugees and Asylum seekers.
- 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2011 young people kept a stall at the Vicarage Shopping Centre in Barking promoting services in the area. They also performed and put on a little show for people visiting the stalls.
- 12<sup>th</sup> of April 2011 an event was held with the Eastern European Supplementary Education project and young people from Shpresa Programme offered a presentation and performance. Young leaders from the Redbridge area performed at this event and also gave a short presentation about the work they are doing to making Albanian language an Asset Language.
- 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2011 young people performed at International Women's Day celebration event run by Newham Refugee Forum.
- 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2011 we celebrated St George's Day, an event organised in partnership with the Gascoigne children service and other organisations.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2011 young people performed at a TELCO Assembly.
- 11<sup>th</sup> of May performance at UK Youth Diaspora with presentation of work on the Albanian language GCSE campaign.
- 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2011 : The Children's Congress at Mayfield School.
- 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2011 young people took part in the Refugee Week Festival organised in Newham. Volunteers helping with setting up the venue, running the event and preparing food.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 2011 camping at Lambourne End. Young leaders from Redbridge area took part and they helped in organising and running games.
- 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2011 young people took part in the Redbridge Carnival.
- 24<sup>th</sup> of September young people performed at the Peace Event held at Ilford High Street.
- 13<sup>th</sup> of October 2011 young people went ice skating in Redbridge.
- 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2011 young people participated in a workshop by KPMG informing them of options they have for students 18 – 25 years old.
- 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2011 Let's Celebrate together event for Independence Day. Young people performed and delivered a 3 hour show at Stratford Circus with. 300 guests.
- 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2011 people from Redbridge are took part in the TELCO Assembly.
- 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2011 10 young people attended the Jack Petchey awards.
- 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2011 young people took part in the London Diaspora Citizens UK and performed at a large audience.
- 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2 young took part in the MacDonald's Living Wage Action Campaign accompanied by their parents and support staff.
- 8<sup>th</sup> of December young people took part in the End of year Celebration event.

### **Public events and performances in 2011**

- 12<sup>th</sup> of January Shpresa Programme's 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration and launch of the Toolkit at Portcullis House.

## 2) **Children's voices**

Baseline and repeat testing did not seem to be the most effective way of obtaining a measure of children's understanding of and involvement in their culture. Visits to schools and formal and informal opportunities to talk to children offered the most compelling evidence of the impact of Shpresa's educational programme for young people on their everyday lives. One of the most telling pieces of evidence on the impact of Shpresa is the importance to all young people of the Children's Congress. Data from interviews with young people are included in Appendix A.

### 2) **Children's voices: Shpresa Children's Congress – 20<sup>th</sup> December 2009**

One of the most telling pieces of evidence on the impact of Shpresa is the importance to all young people of the Children's Congress. Informal conversations before the event indicated how much the young people were looking forward to meeting each other, to sharing experiences of events, achievements and campaigns in which they had been involved. The turn out alone in appalling weather was an indication of the value young people placed on the opportunity to celebrate the Albanian part of their identity together.

The first Children's Congress was held in 2008. It brought together all the children who participate in Shpresa's activities for young people and provided an opportunity for them to meet each other, evaluate their projects and offer suggestions for future development. Like its predecessor, this congress was held at Mayfield High School in Barking. The congress was timed to follow the Shpresa AGM, starting at 11.30.

The day before the Congress there had been a heavy snow fall which had frozen. On the day it was very cold, the roads were icy and travelling conditions were atrocious. Nevertheless the school hall was packed with children and their parents when proceedings started at 11.45.



The full report and evaluation of the Children' Congress is to be found in Appendix A.

## **C) Parents' knowledge of the English Education System**

The third aim of the Paul Hamlyn funded Shpresa project was to integrate Albanian families in the local community by developing a structured volunteering programme which would enable Albanian speaking parents to gain knowledge of the English education system and experience of working in mainstream schools. The programme developed enabled volunteers to work initially at Albanian Supplementary Schools and then, once they had gained confidence and experience, to volunteer in mainstream schools through-out the week.

Training sessions covered the English Education System, Being a Healthy Parent, Good Enough Parenting and Volunteering.

The following outcome target was set:

*38 out of at least 50 parents attending a training session on the English education system will develop greater knowledge about their children's schooling after the session, compared to a baseline testing before the session takes place; and 10 out of at least 20 parents who attend a more structured volunteer training programme will be accepted onto a volunteer placement in a mainstream school.*

### **1) The programme and number of attendees in 2010**

40 women attended the English Education System session, the Being a Healthy Parent course, the Good Enough Parenting session and an intensive 5-day training as volunteers and Teaching Assistants. 18 of these women obtained the NVQ TA Level 2. Thirty five of the women volunteered in Shpresa classes. Thirty of the them carried out extensive placements as volunteers in mainstream schools and 20 of these obtained NVQ TA Level 3.

The women have been in the country between 7 and 12 years. They all have children and these are aged between 5 and 18 years. The women attended the course in two centres: in Ilford and in Barking. All of these women completed a baseline questionnaire.

A further 26 women, all of whom have children who attend Shpresa classes, attended training that included the English education system and an introduction to working as a Teaching Assistant. Six of the women obtained NVQ TA Level 2 and 2 obtained Level 3. Eighteen of the women had work experience placements in either Shpresa classes or mainstream schools.

### **The English Education system baseline testing**

A baseline questionnaire was completed by all 40 women who attended the English Education course, half of them at the Little Ilford Centre and half at Mayfield School in Barking, to establish how much they knew about this prior to starting the course. The questionnaire covered their knowledge of how to support their own children, their relationship with their children's school, the different stages of education, the curriculum, activities beyond school and options beyond compulsory education. The final questionnaire was completed at the end of the course by 39 of the same women as well as an additional 3 women. A statistical analysis was carried out for the 39 cases for which both sets of data were available.

The questionnaire was divided into 5 sections and most questions offered a Likert Scale with the following 5 options:

I do not know anything about this	I know a little about this	I have essential information about this	I know quite a lot about this	I am very well informed about this
1 blue	2 green	3 beige	4 purple	5 yellow

At the end of each section women were invited to make comments and elaborate on their responses, which a number did, in either Albanian or English. The following presents a summary of findings section by section. The full data is presented visually in coloured pie charts for ease of interpretation in Appendix B.

### **Section A on supporting children’s learning**

The responses to this section of the baseline questionnaire indicate that, while almost half the women feel they have essential information about their children’s progress, when it comes to knowing how their child is taught reading and maths and how to help their child to learn, the great majority of women report that they know nothing, or very little, on this issue. Women who had children with special needs had essential information about how to help their child obtained from their child’s school or from Shpresa.

The final questionnaire in this section shows that the women report that they “know a lot” or are “very well informed” about the issues. They reported being particularly knowledgeable about their child’s progress at school. The greatest impact was on women’s knowledge of how mathematics is taught in school and how to help a child with special needs at home.

### **Section B on women’s relationship with their children’s school**

In the baseline questionnaire only one woman has never attended the school’s open evenings, a third report that they always attend and the others attend ‘sometimes’. Only one woman reports often helping with special events in school, the majority never do. Fewer than half the women report feeling confident to speak to their child’s teacher or the headteacher. Comments clearly indicate that language and culture constitute the main barrier between women and the school.

In the final questionnaire all women report attending open evenings, the great majority always doing so and almost all women feel confident in raising issues with teachers. The majority of women get involved in school activities; those who do not explain that employment makes this difficult.

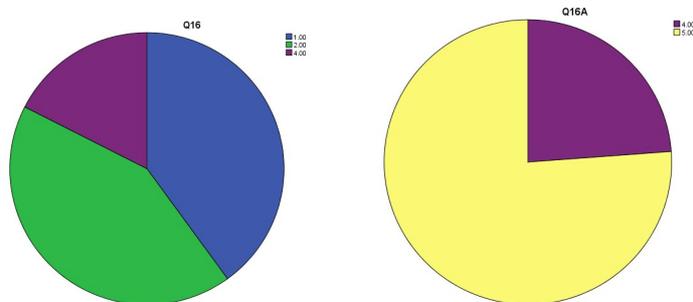
In the baseline questionnaire very few women express confidence about seeking help from the school if their child is bullied, or they are worried about his/her progress, or know how to get educational advice or make a complaint about the school. The women made a number of comments on the problems caused by the language barrier and by the differences between the education systems. Several mentioned the help obtained from Shpresa teachers or an Albanian speaking support worker employed by the school.

The data from the final questionnaire indicate that the barriers have been considerably reduced and that the great majority of women feel well or very well informed and confident about seeking help.

### Section C on the stages of education in England

In the baseline questionnaire the majority of women felt they knew little or nothing about how English education is organised, but seven felt well informed and mentioned help from neighbours and advice organisations (left hand chart). The pie charts below show that three quarters of the women report feeling very well informed in the final questionnaire.

*Do you know how English education is organised: when children start school, types of school, how to choose a school, how to apply for a place?*



### Section D on Early Years and Primary Education

In the baseline questionnaire the great majority of women felt they knew little or nothing about the Early Years and the National curriculum, the assessment of children at different stages, the records kept by schools and after school and holiday services. The final questionnaire indicates that all women are well or very well informed in this area.

### Section E on Secondary Education and beyond

The baseline questionnaire indicated that the women knew little or nothing about the transition to Secondary School, the Secondary curriculum, the choices children can make and the qualifications available, how to obtain future study or careers advice or financial support for education beyond school. As for the Primary Section the final questionnaire indicates that all women are well or very well informed in this area.

**Free comments** at the end of the baseline questionnaire indicate that the women were anxious for information and advice on all of these issues, especially those pertaining to secondary education where they felt least informed. The women are keen to support their children effectively and build good relations with their children's teachers and schools. Several women still felt the need for interpreters or English speaking friends to accompany them to school events.

The comments made at the end of the course reflect how much women feel they have learned about the education system and how this has helped them both to support their own children but also to continue into further training and discover opportunities for volunteering and for careers for themselves. Many women speak of the confidence they have acquired, how they have developed good relations with their children's school and got involved practically. They express thanks to Shpresa for the course, for helping with interpreters when they need them in school and for helping them to integrate into London society.

A number of participants failed to respond to the 6<sup>th</sup> question Section D in the final questionnaire. For all other questions the improvement in the women's knowledge was statistically significant at the 0.005 level, the standard used in Social Science research.

## 2) **The programme and number of attendees in 2011**

The data for 2011 is presented in two sections. The data in a) was based on courses carried out in the Spring and was analysed in the interim report of October 2011. The data at b) is based on courses carried out in the autumn and was made available to the evaluator in March 2012.

### a) **Programme and attendees in Spring 2011**

As a result of the training programme and workshop sessions attended by 60 parents, 22 parents obtained work experience opportunities with Shpresa programme; 12 parents were placed with mainstream schools and other agencies; 23 parents obtained NVQ Level 3 Teaching Assistant training; 7 parents completed the Working with Children and Young People NVQ Level 2. Five parents started full-time employment as classroom assistants in mainstream schools.

41 women attended training sessions on the English Education System. As in the previous cohort, the women have been in the country between 7 and 13 years. They all have children. The women attended the course in three centres: in Enfield, Haringey and in Barking. 39 of the women completed a baseline questionnaire and all completed an end-of-course questionnaire.

### **The English Education system baseline testing**

The pre-course questionnaire was completed by 39 of the 41 women who attended the English Education course, to establish how much they knew about this prior to starting the course. The questionnaire was similar to that completed by the previous cohort, with 5 sections, and reported above. The final questionnaire was completed at the end of the course by all 41 women. A statistical analysis was carried out for the 39 cases for which both sets of data were available.

At the end of each section women were invited to make comments and elaborate on their responses, which a number did, in either Albanian or English. The following presents a summary of findings section by section. The full data is presented visually in coloured pie charts for ease of interpretation in Appendix B.

#### **Section A on supporting children's learning**

The responses to this section of the baseline questionnaire reveal that almost half the women consider that they have essential information about how their child is progressing in school. However, with respect to knowing how their child is taught reading and maths and how to help their child to learn, over three quarters of the women indicate that they know nothing about this.

The final questionnaire in this section indicates that half the women feel very well informed with respect to their child's progress, how their child is taught to read and how to help their child to learn, with almost all the others reporting that they know "quite a lot" about these issues. A substantially higher number feel very well informed about how their child is taught maths at school and how to help a child with special needs.

#### **Section B on women's relationship with their children's school**

Women were asked whether their children’s schools make use of an interpreter if needed. Almost all responded in the negative, but pointed out that staff and volunteers from Shpresa offered this service to Albanian speaking parents at the various schools their children attend.

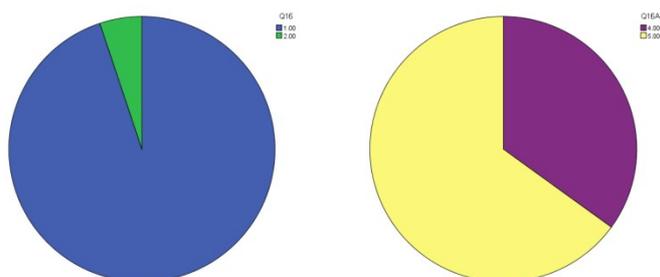
The data from the baseline questionnaire indicates that two thirds of women never attended parents’ evenings and that very few of them felt confident in talking to teachers or headteachers or in getting involved in school events. These proportions are completely reversed in the final questionnaire, with almost all women indicating that they feel confident to talk to their child’s teacher, and a large majority indicating that they always attend special events.

As in the previous cohort, comments indicate that language is the greatest barrier to communication and a number of women have called on Shpresa staff for assistance. Several women noted that they did not understand the letters their children brought home from school. The considerable difference between the Albanian and English system of education constitutes another barrier and accounts for so many women taking part in this course. One more confident woman wrote that *“it helped me to know the school by speaking to the teachers and attending meetings”* and another that *“working in the school as a volunteer helped me”*, but the most common comment remains *“I didn’t understand”*.

### Section C on the stages of education in England

In the baseline questionnaire it is striking how little the women feel they knew about the key issues that affect their children in English school. The pie charts below show the difference in the women’s perceptions of their knowledge at the end of the course, with all of them feeling well or very well informed. Comments suggest that one of the biggest frustrations is not knowing how to help their child with homework.

*Do you know how English education is organised: when children start school, types of school, how to choose a school, how to apply for a place?*



### Section D on Early Years and Primary Education

A similar pattern is repeated in this section, with women reporting very little knowledge of the curriculum, assessment and special needs in the primary school and all reporting that they are well or very well informed by the end of the course.

### Section E on Secondary Education and beyond

The baseline questionnaire indicated a similar pattern again and, with the exception of one woman who was confident about her knowledge of the secondary school system, the great majority knew little about the system.

By the end of the course the great majority of women felt they were well or very well informed about issues such as school choice, the subjects of the National Curriculum, the choices open to pupils in Year 9, careers and the qualifications that lead to them and educational options post-school.

**Free comments** made at the end of the course reflect how much women feel they have learned about the education system. They mention numerous benefits derived from the course: being able to help their child (“*I read with my child for 20 minutes every day*”), joining in activities in school, feeling confident to speak to teachers, helping in school with cooking lessons and outings. A number also mention an improvement in their English skills and the benefit they have derived from working in school as volunteers.

As the previous cohort did, they express thanks to Shpresa for the course: “*thanks to Shpresa I started work in my son’s school and doing voluntary work at Shpresa*”; “*my confidence has changed a lot and my self-esteem; thank you Shpresa and Evis, you helped me so much; I have learned a lot*”.

Due to an error in the layout of the second questionnaire, a number of women failed to respond to question 12 (Do you know how to get educational help and advice for your child?). For all other questions the improvement in the women’s knowledge was statistically significant at the 0.005 level, the standard used in Social Science research.

#### **b) Programme and attendees in autumn 2011**

In the autumn of 2011 10 women attended the classes at Bounds Green. The women have been in the country between 10 and 12 years; they have between 1 and 3 children each, aged between 1 and 14, with most children being in the primary school range. All women completed a baseline and an end-of-course questionnaire. The following presents a summary of findings. A noticeable feature of the responses from this cohort is the fact that they appear to be better informed at the starting point than previous cohorts. Far more women report knowing “a little” about aspects of education than in previous cohorts.

#### **Section A on supporting children’s learning**

Half of the women report that they have basic information about how their child is progressing in school, and over half know have some knowledge of how their child is taught reading and Maths and help their child to learn, although none rise above that level. By the end of the course the majority of women feel very well informed, especially with respect to how their child learns to read.

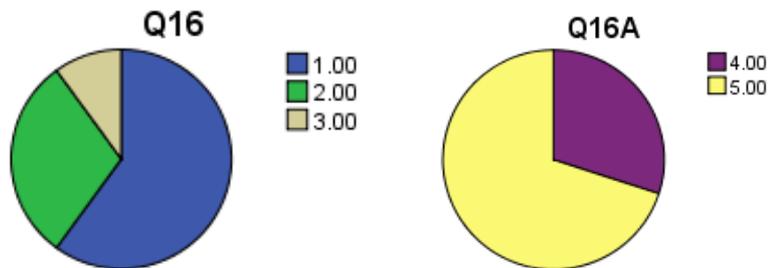
#### **Section B on women’s relationship with their children’s school**

As in the previous cohorts, women reported that the only interpreters available to them in school were volunteers from Shpresa or friends. Two of the women reported interpreting for others. The data from the baseline questionnaire indicate that two thirds of women attended parents’ evenings and that rises to all women by the end of the course. A third of women felt confident in talking to teachers or headteachers at the start of the course and this rose to all women by the end. In the same way the proportion of women involved in school activities rose substantially by the end of the course. The women in this cohort reported greatly

enhanced knowledge and confidence regarding obtaining help for their child. Typical comments include “*I’m more active in events in my child’s school and speak with teachers more often about them*” and “*This course helped me to know more about the level of my child*”.

### Section C on the stages of education in England

The organisation of the curriculum is an area in which the women felt they had little knowledge and they reported a great improvement as a result of the course as illustrated in the following pie-charts:



*Do you know how English education is organised: when children start school, types of school, how to choose a school, how to apply for a place?*

### Section D on Early Years and Primary Education

In this section half the women or more report “a little” knowledge about aspects of the Early Years and Primary Curriculum. By the end of the course all women feel well informed, with almost three quarters of them feeling very well informed about these issues.

### Section E on Secondary Education and beyond

The secondary curriculum and beyond is the area in which the women feel least well informed, very likely because the majority have children who are still in primary school and they have had less first-hand experience of issues. By the end of the course they feel well or very well informed about the curriculum and the transition from primary, but the majority report a lower level of confidence (“well informed”) on post-compulsory education and related issues.

While the rate of progress is less spectacular in this cohort than in earlier ones, the improvement in the women’s knowledge is substantial and statistically significant. Free comments at the end of the course indicate some of the areas in which information was most appreciated “*I know about Early Years, Sure Start and Children’s Centres*”; “*I learned about levels and targets and how to apply for secondary school*” and, importantly for future development, “*I know now how to learn more by checking on the internet about education*”.

### 3) The programme and number of attendees in 2012

Thirty-eight women attended the course: 10 in Mayfield School in Redbridge in January; 15 at Bounds Green and 13 at Mayfield in March. All the women report having been in the UK for ten years. They have between one and four children each. Their children range in age from 3 years to 20 and they have children in both primary and secondary schools. The following presents a summary of findings.

### **Section A on supporting children's learning**

Mayfield January group: the women's responses to the questions in this section suggest their level of knowledge is a little lower than in the Bounds Green 2011 cohort (with more "I do not know anything about this" responses) but they make a similar rate of progress and emerge just a little less confident than the autumn cohort by the end of the course.

Bounds Green March group: the women's responses in this section suggest a low level of knowledge in this area at the start of the course. They report very considerable improvements by the end. The Mayfield March group are more varied, with about half the women having some knowledge of the area and gaining confidence by the end of the course.

### **Section B on women's relationship with their children's school**

Mayfield January group: the responses to this section are broadly similar to the Bounds Green 2011 cohort, though the women at the Mayfield site are a little less involved in parents' evenings and school activities than the autumn cohort.

Bounds Green and Mayfield March group: the women in both these groups have a substantial degree of involvement in their children's school before the start of the programme, and all report being involved and having good relationships by the end.

### **Section C on the stages of education in England**

Mayfield January group: while starting from a lower level of knowledge, the responses in this section, by the end of the course, are very similar to the Bounds Green cohort 2011.

Bounds Green and Mayfield March group: the women's responses in this section are similar to those in section A, reporting a low level of knowledge in this area at the start of the course and considerable improvements by the end. As in section A, the Mayfield March group responses are more varied, with all reporting being well or very well informed by the end of the course.

### **Section D on Early Years and Primary Education**

Mayfield January group: while again starting from a lower base level of knowledge, in this section the responses from the Mayfield cohort are almost identical to those from the Bounds Green 2011 group, with the exception that they report being more knowledgeable than the latter about the primary National Curriculum.

Bounds Green and Mayfield March group: although starting from variable levels of knowledge at the start of the course, in all of this section both groups report  $\frac{3}{4}$  or more of the women feeling very well informed by the end of the course.

### **Section E on Secondary Education and beyond**

Mayfield January group: the base level of knowledge in this section is again lower than the Bounds Green 2011 cohort, but by the end of the course, their responses are similar with respect to school transition and the secondary curriculum. The women in the Mayfield group are more confident than the Bounds Green group with respects to choices at Year 9 (which may be explained by the fact that their children tend to be older), but less so with respect to post-compulsory issues.

Bounds Green and Mayfield March group: the Bounds Green group report a very low level of knowledge about secondary education at the start of the course and considerable improvements by the end. The Mayfield group report having some knowledge of the topic, but are slightly less confident than the Bounds Green group by the end.

#### 4) **Women's voices**

The voices of the women interviewed provided rich accounts of their experiences as newcomers to the UK. Four groups of women were interviewed at the end of the first year of the project: a group of three mothers' of children who attend Shpresa classes, a group of new volunteers currently training with Shpresa to work with children, a group of established volunteers and a group of women who had been volunteers and moved on.

There is no tradition of volunteering in Albania, so the concept was new. The women have strong and individual responses to the questions about why they volunteer and the benefit they get from it. For many, volunteering has been the passport to a new social life, a way out of depression and isolation, to develop existing skills in English and to learn new ones. Many had qualifications not recognised in this country and felt deskilled when they arrived but rose to the challenge: *we knew what we were capable of back there, so we wanted to prove ourselves. It can make you strong inside.* Volunteering enables them to integrate into local society, improves their English and provides experience and references that can lead to paid employment. They also talk about how volunteering in a multicultural society has broadened their horizons and their minds: *you become so open minded for everything because you learn about different backgrounds and cultures and festivals and think, I didn't know nothing! It's not just my little world I live in, there is a wider range of things around me that I didn't know.* Another comments: *You learn not to judge the person by their appearance from all these people from different parts of the world.*

*To volunteer comes from your heart. You're going to have a result. Volunteering makes you happy. It's a very good experience, you can learn, and you can give something.* The women talk with enthusiasm about the pleasure they derive from their work and many mention the opportunity to "pay back": to Shpresa for opening up new opportunities, and to mainstream society for welcoming them. Those who volunteer in schools learn how to support their own children as well as other people's. Many are ambitious for the future: *now I want to find a job and take my education higher and higher, because you are never completed with teaching... as long as we live we are going to learn.*

They are grateful for the support offered by Shpresa, and aspire to emulate the workers and experienced volunteers who offer them role models. They appreciate the opportunity to help others as they have been helped and also to act as ambassadors for their culture in public events and in the course of campaigning for refugee and educational causes.

The women's own voices are a powerful witness to their experience and it is inspiring to talk to them. Substantial extracts from the interviews are included in Appendix B.

The findings of the questionnaire survey are confirmed by an interview with three women whose children attend Shpresa classes but who have had little experience of volunteering: one has just started experimenting, another suffers from severe depression which seems to greatly restrict her life opportunities and she talks to me through an interpreter. The women are all very keen for their children to be fluent speakers of Albanian and focus on the benefit to their children of attending Shpresa classes and activities. The woman who suffers from depression attends regularly as she feels supported in the Shpresa environment. She has been greatly helped by Shpresa's mental health support programme and is always accompanied by a Shpresa worker when attending hospital.

However it is discussing their children's education in English that women's anxieties emerge. They know little about the education system and are very dependent on Flutra Shega and Evis Bodli providing information and advice. N. has started helping at her son's school and found this has made a difference. Like the respondents to the questionnaire, they find their efforts to help their children at home bedevilled by the differences in the education system. N. describes her experience: *I explain one method and my daughter says 'no, mama, don't do like that. Mama I don't like to learn like this, I need to learn like in school'.*

Compared to the women who are working as volunteers, they are far less fluent in English. They explain that their opportunities for mixing with English people are more limited. Na. explains how she practises through helping an elderly English neighbour with shopping: *my neighbour says every morning 'you come and drink coffee' and sometimes I stay at her home, sometimes I give her a cup of tea, and this helps me'.*

The women who participated in these group interviews had a great deal to say about their situation and experiences. The full transcript of these has been included in Appendix B.

## D) Workshops for teachers

An important part of Shpresa's mission is to develop in teachers in mainstream schools an understanding of the needs and experiences of refugee children and their parents.

The following outcome target was set:

*Workshops on working with refugee children and families will be delivered for at least 12 teachers from mainstream schools and 8 to 10 of those attending will report an increased understanding of the needs and experiences of refugee children and their parents when assessed by an independent evaluator six weeks after the training has taken place.*

Although Shpresa entered into negotiations with their partner schools, none of them could fit a dedicated session on the topic of working with refugee pupils in their in-service training agenda for teachers. Luljeta Nuzi either presented at or was involved in the following workshops and seminars:

12<sup>th</sup> March 2009 – University of East London Docklands Campus. First ESRC seminar on Complementary Schools. Developing community cohesion and community relations.” to an audience of 40 researchers, academics and teacher educators.

2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009 – the Westbury Centre, Barking. “Shpresa: Developing the partnership at Gascoigne School”. An audience of 30 Ethnic Minority Achievement and mainstream primary teachers.

20<sup>th</sup> April 2010 - Goldsmiths College, University of London. Fourth ESRC Seminar on Complementary education. “Social inclusion and links with mainstream education” to an audience of 10 teachers, teacher educators and academics.

14<sup>th</sup> October 2010 – Barking. Mayfield School: two workshops held for children on refugee and migrant issues.

25<sup>th</sup> of June 2011 young people performed in front of their parents and for a wider audience at Gascoigne school as part of Refugee Week Celebration. Children and young people were presented with awards at this event.

26<sup>th</sup> of September 2011 young people took part in the Language Day event at Portway Primary school. The first week of October we are invited for a performance at Mayfield School.

14<sup>th</sup> of January 2012 – Barking. Mayfield School: workshop to address the issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers and understanding of the Albanian speaking communities in the UK

3<sup>rd</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> February 2012 - Upton Cross Primary School and Plaistow Primary School. Workshops with Albanian music and Albanian project called Tipped Toes .

8<sup>th</sup> February 2012 - Networking event in Newham on The challenges facing refugee and Migrant communities.

The seminars and workshops offered opportunities for questions, discussion and networking. However formal evaluations of the content of Shpresa's presentations were not available.

### **The Toolkit**

An attractively presented Toolkit with accompanying DVD has been produced by Shpresa from its own experience of developing supplementary schools in partnership with mainstream schools. It offers guidance for parents on how to start a school as well as outlining the benefits of partnership for mainstream schools. The interviews on the DVD offer case studies of successful partnerships. The Toolkit was launched at a major event at Portcullis House on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2012, hosted by the Newham MP Stephen Timms.

### **E) Training and mentoring support**

Shpresa Programme, as part of its programme of work with children funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, is working towards a model of mentoring that can support and develop

new organisations with similar aims operating in different communities. The grant approval from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation included the following outcome target.

*Training and mentoring support will be provided by Shpresa to at least 12 members of the Somali community, 10 of whom will develop their skills, knowledge and confidence in relation to setting up and running a supplementary school, at least one mainstream school will have signed a contract to host a new Somali Supplementary School, supported by Shpresa in 2010/2011.*

Throughout the period of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation grant, Shpresa Programme worked to train and mentor four organisations: the Shire Foundation, the Portuguese Group, the Lithuanian Project and the Polish Mypolacy project. The original plan to work primarily with the Somali community was modified as the co-ordinator identified preferred to work in Haringey and the identified needs of the community there suggested a different model. Shpresa Programme obtained funding from Barking and Dagenham Council of Voluntary Service (BDCVS) to provide intensive one-to-one support to train leaders from the Portuguese and Lithuanian communities in Barking to enable them to set up services for children and their families and to finance an initial programme of activities for children and classes for adults.

This section of the evaluation has two aims: to identify and explore the role played by Shpresa in training and mentoring volunteers to establish these organisations; but also to provide a snapshot of their development. Interviews were carried out with the co-ordinators in the early stages of the organisations' development and then at the time of reporting. The Portuguese, Polish and Lithuanian models, as the ones most closely identified with the concept of a supplementary school as specified in the outcome target above, have been explored in greater detail through visits, observations and interviews with volunteers, teachers, children and parents and also the head teacher and the EMA teacher at Gascoigne School as well as the CEO of RAMFEL. Photographs have been included as they gave a better impression than words of the impact of the activities.

### **1) The Shire Foundation**

Although this outcome target was not due to be evaluated until 2010, considerable progress was made in the first year. In particular extensive work was carried out with the Shire Foundation, a Somali organisation, to help them set up their own supplementary school. In an hour-long interview with the evaluator on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Samia Shire provided details of the considerable help she had received in setting up her own community organisation: sample policies, support in developing a constitution, obtaining CRB checks for herself and her volunteers, help with making applications for funding, networking etc.

Since the original support received from Shpresa two years ago, the Shire Foundation has consulted locally and decided to meet identified needs through setting up a youth activity centre and support group in the Northumberland Park area of Haringey, a very economically disadvantaged area with a substantial Somali population. In the 18 months since the last interview, the Shire Foundation has obtained charitable status, raised funds from supporters in the community to lease its own premises and obtained funding from Awards for All to run a six-month programme for young people. It has recruited and trained six volunteers and worked on a weekly basis with 20 young people and their families (50 to 60 people in all). The training and mentoring support provided by Shpresa over a period of one year has not led to the formation of a Somali supplementary school as originally intended as this was deemed not to be the first priority of the community. However Samia Shire and her six volunteers

have been provided with the skills, knowledge and confidence to develop their organisation, engage with the local Somali population and run a very successful programme for young people.

Support from Shpresa is evident in the way in which the Shire Foundation has consulted the community and engaged with young people, offering activities like football, drama, performance poetry, dance and drumming to build self-confidence and reconnect them with their Somali identity, while at the same time providing a safe space for families to meet, network and obtain information. Shire offers role models and support to young people who are underachieving at school.

As part of the Award for All funded RAJO project, an external evaluation was commissioned. The evaluator carried out extensive interviews, focus groups and observations and reports a very positive response from the users. Young people were particularly appreciative of the opportunity to reconnect with their Somali culture in an enjoyable way and to begin to bridge the divide between their generation and their parents. While no formal arrangement has been made, the Foundation has a close relationship with West Green Primary School who supported the RAJO project with a loan of equipment.

The support from Shpresa was critical in getting the organisation set up, formalised and running services. However a considerable challenge remains for the Shire Foundation. It will need to raise substantial funds to enable it to run the services the community has requested and to be able to make full use of their new premises. Further support and training in this area will be needed. However it is clear that the organisation has obtained positive publicity and begun to make an impact on the Somali community locally.

While the outcome was not exactly what was planned, Samia Shire is in no doubt that the input from Shpresa has played a very large part in the success of the Shire Foundation so far. The account of two interviews below provide details of the support offered by Shpresa and the achievements of the Shire Foundation to date, in spite of Samia Shire's original misgivings about the difficulties of liaising with Shpresa due to the distance between their offices and the area in which she preferred to base her organisation.

In 2011, as a result of the success of the ROJA project, Samia Shire has been networking successfully in the borough and is in a position to bid for projects commissioned by Haringey Council. At the time of writing this report in March 2012 she was preparing to bid for youth projects promoted by the Council in the aftermaths of the events of last August. She still has the use of her premises and has been able to furnish them with support from the community. Also as a result of the ROJA project Samia has obtained funding from BBC Children in Need to continue the project for a full year. She has also been exploring with Shpresa possibilities for joint bids for partnership working, training opportunities for volunteers and further networking opportunities. Interview data from October 2009, March 2011 and February 2012 are available in Appendix C.

## **2) The Portuguese Group**

Gascoigne Primary School in the east London Borough of Barking and Dagenham has a strong partnership with Shpresa who have operated a highly successful group there on Thursday evenings since 2007. The school has a strong record of involving the community in the life of the school. At about the same time as the Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) teacher, Sonia Walker, was trying to replicate the success of the Shpresa group with a

different community, she was approached by Euridice Dos Santos, the mother of a child at the school, seeking to set up an organisation to support Portuguese speaking children and their families based at the school.

There is a substantial community of families originating from Portuguese speaking countries in Africa (Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bissau, Cap Verde, Sao Tome) in the Barking area. Many of them have lived and been educated in Portugal. There are 32 Portuguese speaking children at the school.

### **The training and mentoring process**

In the Summer of 2010 Shpresa mentored Euridice Dos Santos and the volunteers she had recruited from the community to set up their own organisation. Throughout the next few months Shpresa offered 18 sessions of targeted one-to-one support, advice, support, training and sample policies to help the new Portuguese Group to get off the ground. Shpresa volunteers worked alongside the Portuguese volunteers and one Portuguese volunteer worked with Shpresa for two full weeks. Euridice Dos Santos also spent time in the Shpresa office to help her become familiar with management procedures. Shpresa arranged CRB checks for all volunteers. Crucially they provided advice on how to consult with the community to assess needs and wishes. Shpresa obtained £6100 in funding from the Barking and Dagenham CVS specifically to support additional one-to-one sessions for volunteers and to pay for an English teacher for parents, a dance teacher for the children and resources for children's activities. The English teacher has been organised through RAMFEL. Shpresa offered training for volunteers and introduced Euridice Dos Santos to Rita Chadha-Bolt, the Chief Executive Office of the Refugee and Migrant Forum of East London (RAMFEL).

Through the RAMFEL forum the Portuguese Group were able to raise the profile of the Portuguese community and network with other organisations.

RAMFEL provided some assistance to the group with governing documents, offered training and support for setting up as a registered charity and will provide assistance with fund-raising once this has been achieved. Gascoigne school offered free use of premises on Thursday evenings from 5 to 7pm, at the same time as Shpresa.

The impact of Shpresa is visible in the model adopted by the Portuguese Group with a focus on identifying needs, children's voice and feedback as well as working in partnership with the school. Like the Shire Foundation, the Portuguese Group faces the challenge of raising sufficient funds for English and dance teachers. They will also need to fund equipment for the Portuguese classes and develop their teaching. However there is evidence of commitment and enthusiasm and the group has already raised the profile of the Portuguese community in the borough.

### **Activities**

The group started running activities for children and classes for adults in the Autumn term of 2010. These included Portuguese language classes, games and dance and performance. The adult classes included the English classes taught by Judith Etherton, the teacher recruited by RAMFEL, and a 12 session programme of classes about parenting and the English education system run by Evis Bodli, from Shpresa.

In addition to these activities the group participated in a joint family event with Shpresa on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2010, the Dance-Off, introduced by Rita Chadha-Bolt, and held an inaugural meeting and Christmas Party on 16<sup>th</sup> December. Shpresa and the Portuguese Group have jointly organised a Sharing School event and a Fair of the Third Sector in Barking and Dagenham. They are also jointly organising a St George's Fair.

In an interview on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012 Euridice Dos Santos provided an update on current development in the Portuguese School and how she is meeting the challenges in the second stage of development of her organisation. Having established a successful range of well-attended activities supported by volunteers, Ms Dos Santos discovered that, when she found employment that prevented her from attending the Thursday evening sessions in person, her volunteers were not sufficiently confident to work effectively without her. Her absence demonstrated how very dependant the group had become on her. So, although the English classes continued for parents and activities for children, attendance dropped.

However Euridice Dos Santos' determination to make a success of the project remained strong. At the time of the interview she had negotiated with her employer to be able to attend some of the classes on Thursdays, had brought in new expertise on to her Board of Directors, including expertise from outside the community and has recruited a new volunteer. At present the organisation is running on free premises and volunteers without any core funding as the original grant has run out. Fundraising to employ an experienced professional teacher is now underway. Ms Dos Santos has very much appreciated the leadership and other training she has received and intends to focus in her group on providing high quality volunteer training and continue to develop the networking. An extract from a long interview on these topics is in Appendix C.

Sections in Appendix C provide snapshots of the Portuguese group based on four visits between October 2010 and March 2011 and interviews with key participants that offer evidence in their own voices of Shpresa's role in setting up the new group.

### **3) The Lithuanian project**

Evelina Treciokaite and a colleague from the Lithuanian organisation Do-Not-Delay were originally mentored by Shpresa on a one-to-one basis for 5 sessions. Ms Treciokaite was supported to research the needs of her community in east London. In an interview on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2010, she described the needs of her community and explained that new arrivals face many of the same difficulties as other recent migrants: they have qualifications that are not recognised and, due to language difficulties, many have access only to unskilled and semi-skilled employment. Evelina Treciokaite herself is currently employed by a Lithuanian organisation (Do Not Delay) which specialises in breast cancer awareness, a particularly serious issue in the Lithuanian community. Her research has led her to focus on the health needs of her community and support them in gaining access to health care in the UK. There are no organisations in the area that provide help or support to Lithuanians. She explains how Shpresa have helped and supported her, introducing her to BMA organisations and networks, providing advice and encouraging her to work out a written programme of what she wishes to do.

In a further interview on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2011 Evelina Treciokaite reported that she had made considerable progress with her plans to organise health care events for the benefit of the Lithuanian community. With the help of Shpresa she has been networking locally to raise the

profile of her community and their health needs and has built relationships with local health professionals. With colleagues she is in the process of applying for funding to appoint a project manager. She is developing plans to run a programme of Lithuanian classes and activities for children and health awareness and events for adults on the premises of Gascoigne School. On her partnership with Shpresa, she comments

*Shpresa is the organization which made the biggest contribution to our understanding of how a non for profit organization has to be run. Shpresa enabled us to see how important is support of community and the head of the organization, which has to be strong-willed, hard working and committed to achieving goals. We also learned how important are good relations with other organizations working in the community and that support of each other can make some work much easier. Luljeta is our mentor, who showed which directions we should go and by showing an example enabled us to try doing some things ourselves (such as English classes, parenting advise) which gave us deeper understanding of the whole problem.*

In the Spring of 2011 Shpresa started mentoring Virginia Gliebkaite who took over from Ms Treciokaitethe plan to start Lithuanian classes for children. At the point where I met her, in July, she had been working with Shpresa for three months and had just completed a six-week pilot project running classes for 20 children on the premises of Gascoigne Primary school in Barking on a weekday evening and at Mayfield School on Sundays, alongside Shpresa's Albanian classes. She explains that she was put in touch with Shpresa when she was seeking training for administrative work in the voluntary sector. She explains

*Luljeta saw me, she saw potential in me for dealing with people, to communicate with them. She took me under her wing. She taught me and I am really happy to be involved here because I learn a lot and I think it can be useful.*

The difficulties experienced in the Lithuanian community are familiar (language, knowing how the system works, understanding education and also concerns about crime, prostitution and drugs). She is particularly concerned that families, through a lack of information, often pay money they cannot afford for dubious advice. Like her Polish colleague she explains the concerns the community have about their children losing access to the family language

*I came here with my daughter, she was 2 ½ at the time. Now she is 15 and she is doing well at school. Just a little problem again that a lot of Lithuanian people have: their own language is quickly forgotten because they learn English. You have to learn the language and understand the system. So you just leave aside your language and so when my daughter got older was asking questions "Mummy, I want to learn my language".*

Virginia Gliebkaitefelt very welcome at the Shpresa offices and discovered that the Shpresa model for supporting the Albanian community would equally meet the needs of Lithuanians in east London. Virginia has been mentored to develop all the necessary policies and procedures to start up her school. Through networking with Shpresa she has learned a great deal about how the third sector works. She has been tutored in book-keeping She has observed classes, attended meetings and explains how impressed she has been with the way in which Shpresa work with children, families and volunteers:

*I really appreciate how Luljeta teaches me. She takes me to meetings. I attended the children's conference.. It was beautiful! This year it was beautiful because I saw these women's faces. They were really happy. They were receiving their awards, the NVQ. It was very important for them and every single one was called and respected and I think it is beautiful what they do. And children! How they talk. What they want. They want their parents to be involved more and all that is*

*worth... it is really something! If the Lithuanian or the Polish community can make something like this, they could be proud of themselves. Because it is something beautiful. And I am Lithuanian, I am not Albanian, but coming here I feel welcome. People just open doors for me. They welcome me. They are warm, they help with any question you have. It's beautiful.*

Ms Gliebkaite explains that she has run the classes successfully for Lithuanian children for six weeks. The children are supported by two teachers, one who teaches the Lithuanian language, another who teaches art. The children and their families are very keen to plan outings for the summer and to continue attending classes in September. She explains that the Lithuanian classes have been supported financially by a businessman who pays the teachers' salaries. However she is concerned that his vision is very narrow and that he only wishes to support the direct teaching of the language, not any other activities or any projects involving families. At the time of writing she is still hoping that, with support from Shpresa, she will be able to persuade him to fund a more creative and family-friendly programme. She hopes to create a place

*to bring people together. They are like little mice in corners and they don't want to get out because they are scared and they feel low because they don't know the language and the culture. And to bring them together. If they know they have a place where they can come and be helped, they will ask questions, they will get honest answers, not lies. So, to bring people together and to make a little community is beautiful... to bring everybody together to keep traditions alive, to keep language alive, to have these recognised in England, that would be beautiful.*

Virginia Gliebkaite is very enthusiastic about her new work in the voluntary sector. She talks about the great pleasure she gets from being able to offer advice and help to families in difficulties and gives several examples of ways in which she has been able to make a difference to people's lives. As a speaker of Russian and Polish as well as Lithuanian and English, she is much in demand in the east European community in Newham. She is full of praise for the support and new opportunities offered to her by Shpresa and hopes that her health (which is not very good) will allow her to fulfil her ambition of running a successful complementary school.

### **New Developments in the Lithuanian School**

After the original pilot scheme, the Lithuanian Project had another change of co-ordinator. Virginia Gliebkaite's health did not enable her to continue running the group and the business sponsor ceased to contribute to the upkeep of classes. However the community recruited Milda Lileikiene, an experienced and enthusiastic teacher and the group were able to continue running classes both on Thursday evenings at Gascoigne School and on Sunday mornings at Mayfield School.

The classes were observed in both these locations in February and March 2012 and interviews were carried out with three children, four parents and Milda Lileikiene. Detailed reports with photographs are in Appendix C.

In an interview on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2012 Milda Lileikiene explains that she has been a teacher all her life in Lithuania, specialised in working with children with special needs. She is currently employed in London as a teaching assistant in a secondary school working with

children with special needs. She has not been able to obtain QTS as she has never worked as a mainstream class teacher. She enjoys her work and feels she has learned a great deal about how the English education system works. She notes how her experience of special needs helps her in planning for the full range of differentiation that is required in complementary school lessons.

She is very appreciative of the support she has gained from Shpresa:

*“Luljeta is a very special person. Very special. You always feel, feel her support... I feel very safe with Luljeta. I can call anytime and ask, Luljeta can we have this? And you know, halls are impossible to hire. She says, OK! We are having an event and then I will ask for two more hours for you, for your event.”*

She explains that the class is running without any funding and that parents contribute to some extent, some financially, some by providing paper and pens etc. She is very observant of individual children and notes how the very youngest respond:

*The small girl, in yellow. Her mum said two months ago it seems she is not listening, she just does colouring in, or something, but when she comes home, she repeats everything that happened. I was surprised, her mother said, she repeated the whole fairy tale, to me, to mother.  
The small boy over there spoke terrible Lithuanian. And then, after only a few lessons, he started to talk better. So I am very, very happy.*

Ms Lileikiene is very appreciative of the school that provides accommodation free as, and the volunteer classroom assistant who supports the very youngest children (aged 3 and 4) as, so far, she has not been able to obtain any funding to cover core costs.

Parents interviewed are enthusiastic about the classes, particularly so because their children are very keen to attend. All are anxious about their children losing the use of Lithuanian. They like the teacher's style, the content of instruction, and several mention the importance of drama and story, which are at the heart of Milda Lileikiene's curriculum. All parents work to maintain the language in the home, speaking it with the children and reading and telling them stories. Children interviewed enjoyed the classes and particularly appreciated the way in which they learned Lithuanian through drama, stories and games. Observation notes with photographs and interviews are included in Appendix C.

#### **4) Mypolacy Center: the Polish school**

While there are many long-established Polish complementary schools in the London area there are none in the vicinity of the borough of Newham, which has received a substantial Polish population since 2004. In response to local demand for advice, support and interpreting services from Polish families, Anna Zofia Palka started to provide a service to families in 2009 from a base in East Ham that she shares with a Tamil organisation. She explains that the main difficulties that Polish families face are very similar to those of other recently migrated groups: a lack of fluency in English, not understanding the law and how English society works, and the need to find employment.

#### **Coordinator interview**

In an interview on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2011 at the Shpresa offices, Anna explains that she had wanted to start up a service for children. As a mother of three children herself, she is well aware that ...

*Polish children are losing contact with Polish history, traditions, even the language, because they spend most of their time in English schools, they speak English and working parents don't have time to teach them Polish... and my idea to set up this Polish school is to bring them closer to Polish traditions, history and the Polish language. For example, my daughter, she speaks very broken Polish. I brought her here when she was 3 years old and so she started English from the beginning and that's why.*

Anna Palka had heard about the Shpresa Programme from colleagues in the voluntary sector and first met Luljeta Nuzi at a Newham Hub event on primary education. When she explained her ambition, Luljeta offered to help her set up a Polish school for children.

*She invited me to see how they run schools at Gascoigne in Barking. We have face-to-face meetings and she gives me a lot of useful tips. She is introducing me to people who can help me to network.*

Ms Palka explains how she has been guided through all the administrative procedures involved in setting up a new organisation. She has had access to sample policies and procedures and advice on how to get started. She is keen to learn from Shpresa: *I want everything to be organised well, and I believe the basics are very important. If you have the basics, proper basics, you can grow.*

Anna Palka explains that the model of operation that Shpresa uses fits well with the needs of her community. This includes finding out the needs and wishes of community members, encouraging volunteering and providing training. A particular aspect of the Shpresa model which Ms Palka hopes to replicate is the training offered at NVQ Level 3 for teaching assistants, and the opportunity for the volunteers to practice in local schools where they can learn to work in the English education system, offer support to Polish speaking pupils and advice to teachers. Like the Albanians, the Polish families have found the English education system very different from the Polish and they have serious concerns

*I've got parents who are not happy with the English education system. Because it's too low compared with Polish and they believe we can fill this gap in their children's education. They are even asking if we can run Maths classes to bring their children up to level, or any other subject to make them learn more, and support for homework so they can help their children.*

As well as offering mentoring, Shpresa was able to help in a very concrete way offering the use of their premises for Anna Palka to run a pilot scheme for six weeks for three hours on Saturday mornings. As a result she ran classes for 40 Polish speaking children of primary school age. The classes included Polish language, history and geography. The classes ran with volunteer teachers, some of whom were recent teaching trainees.

The pilot was a success and Anna Palka hopes to be able to open classes in September. In due course she would like to offer Polish dance and other artistic activities as well as activities for secondary aged pupils. Polish is available at GCSE, but to prepare pupils for the exam she would need to recruit a teacher of Polish experienced in working in the English education system and realises that she would probably need to offer payment. As soon as the organisation is established Anna Palka is aiming to prepare for the NRC Bronze Award.

Ms Palka explains that the big challenges ahead for her are mainly concerned with finding premises and with finance. Shpresa are currently negotiating with Newham schools in the

hope of finding one that would offer free use of school premises. In the meantime she could run classes from the premises she has access to in East Ham. With respect to finance, at present the organisation's funds come from small donations from the community, but Ms Palka is aware that the Polish community could not pay sufficient fees from its own resources to run the school. Shpresa have also undertaken to provide her with financial management and fund-raising training.

In the course of four visits to the project, in October 2011, January, February and early March 2012 parents, children and teachers were interviewed and lessons observed. In January 2012, Anna Palka offered an update on her project. While is still totally committed and determined to achieve her objective, from a very optimistic start, she is increasingly finding that the issue of premises and funding impedes her progress. The move to the offices in East Ham led to the loss of pupils unable to travel from Plaistow and she is struggled to find a mainstream school willing to host her classes and to obtain core funding for the project. Just before the completion of the present evaluation, Ms Palka reported having found a school willing to provide accommodation.

The volunteer teachers are well qualified and also very committed and parents are very supportive. It is clear from the parent and child interviews that the school fulfils a great need. Not only does it provide for language maintenance, cultural learning and opportunities for friendship and support, but for several children, it is the only access to education as some wait for a place in a mainstream school and others from the Roma community travel.

A report of the visits with photographs, the January interview with Anna Palka and of interviews with three teachers, six parents and seven children is included in Appendix C.

## **CONCLUSION**

The present report has sought to draw on a range of evidence. The visits, observations and interviews, the analysis of data, the many formal and informal interactions, have offered the evaluator a rich sense of the impact of the Shpresa School Project. The evidence suggests that the Shpresa Project has been very successful. By working closely with both parents and mainstream schools Shpresa has created a supportive framework in which young people can achieve academic success and become confident and proud of their identity.

With respect to the target on children's achievement, obtaining SATs data directly from schools has proved to be challenging as assessment coordinators are very busy people and the children included in the survey attended 12 different mainstream schools. For the year 2011 data was made available to me by Flutura Shega directly in the form of copies of children's school reports. For the same reason it was not possible to compare the children's achievement to other ethnic groups in their school. The small number of children in Year 6 in each school make it inappropriate to carry out a statistical analysis. However, with respect to Levels reached in the SATs, this target has been substantially exceeded and the number of children achieving at, or above, the expected Level 4 is impressive. While it is common for children learning English as an additional language to perform well on school tests in maths and science, meeting or exceeding national norms in English is particularly challenging for the children, many of whom started their school life speaking only or mainly Albanian.

With respect to the learning of Albanian and cultural knowledge, this was assessed qualitative rather than quantitative means. Particular strengths of the Shpresa Project are to be found in the quality of teaching for both children and young people and volunteers, the range of stimulating opportunities for young people to develop their skills and their civic

responsibility and engagement, for example in the on-going cross-community GCSE campaign. Almost all children and young people have participated in shows and public events and those interviewed are confident about their cultural identity and very positive about the impact of the Shpresa project on their everyday lives. Another strength of the programme is the extent to which Shpresa involve young people in the evaluation and planning of their programme and ensure that they take an active role in the organisation. These strengths are underpinned by a well-managed organisation that networks effectively. Networking enables Shpresa to make their work known, take advantage of opportunities and offer support to similar organisations.

In the long term parents' knowledge of the education system and their ability to support their children and build positive relationships with their children's school should ensure an even higher level of achievement in the community. The courses, organised for 101 women over three years, on knowledge of the English education system have been highly successful, according to the statistically significant improvements in knowledge reported by participants through the end-of-course questionnaire and in interviews. The interviews revealed the great benefit the women derived not only from the courses, but from the volunteer placements in mainstream schools and NVQ training which led to employment or further study opportunities for many women. The target for women placed as volunteers in mainstream schools was exceeded.

Although workshops for mainstream teachers on the needs of refugee children have been offered to schools (and held in the past) none could fit one into their in-service programme, that could be assessed by an evaluator. However Shpresa staff have participated in many events, seminars and conferences in which they have provided presentations on the needs of refugee pupils to a range of audiences that have included teachers and teacher educators and other relevant participants. Some of these were attended by the evaluator.

The innovative training and mentoring support programme has been very successful and reached well beyond the target set by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. While the original plan to start a Somali supplementary school did not materialise in that form, Shpresa has succeeded in mentoring volunteers from four different communities to set up organisations that are identifying needs, working to meet them and networking together to raise their profile in the wider society. The interviews and the visits revealed many strong points and successes.

The Portuguese Group worked closely to the original plan of setting up a supplementary school in partnership with Gascoigne Primary School in the autumn of 2010. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, knowledgeable, committed and efficient. She has worked tirelessly to set up a formal organisation, to recruit volunteer support and to organise events. The observations and interviews show how much children enjoy attending and value the opportunity to learn Portuguese and how much the adults value the classes and want more. The headteacher of Gascoigne Primary School has noted the early impact of the project on relationships between parents and teachers and between communities. However the Portuguese group experienced difficulties and was suspended for some time at the start of the 2011-2012 year when the co-ordinator was unable to attend every session in person and volunteers lacked the confidence to take over the running.

The co-ordinator of the Somali Shire Foundation worked to assess needs in her community, has obtained premises and operated a successful youth programme in 2010-2011 which was attended by 20 young people and their families and has raised the profile of her community

through a well-attended event. In 2011 the organisation obtained funding to continue the youth project for a year and is currently preparing bids for youth projects commissioned by Haringey Council.

In the summer term of 2011 a Lithuanian and a Polish group ran successful pilot supplementary school projects and both continued to operate successfully. Interviews with the coordinators reveal how much support they received from Shpresa to set up their organisations: mentoring at every stage of the process, availability of sample documents, guidance in book-keeping and fund-raising, the management of volunteers, meeting legal requirements such as CRB checks. Additionally a great strength of this mentoring programme is the way in which the two new coordinators were supported to develop partnerships with mainstream schools and to network with organisations in the locality with similar aims. Visits to the Polish school, together with interviews of children, parents and teachers indicate that there is a demand for the service, that children enjoy the teaching, that parents are supportive and the volunteer teachers dedicated and competent. The school is also meeting the needs of young people from the hard-to-reach Polish Roma community.

The original coordinator of the Lithuanian school considerably developed her knowledge, her understanding of community leadership and her confidence. She developed plans in consultation with the Lithuanian community and networked in the voluntary sector to make the needs of this community more widely known. When she left for health reasons an experienced teacher took over her role. Visits to the Lithuanian school and interviews with children, parents and the teacher provide evidence of quality teaching and a class that is enjoyed by children and appreciated by parents.

As an organisation Shpresa has created innovative partnerships that promote the cultural and linguistic confidence of a community while at the same time positioning it to integrate into the wider society. Where issues have been fully within Shpresa's control, the programme has gone according to plan and targets have been met and, in most cases, exceeded. Where Shpresa are dependent on mainstream schools, whether for data or for opportunities to address staff in INSET sessions, this has presented challenges. Shpresa have been successful at passing on key strengths and skills through mentoring the three projects: planning around assessed need – networking – organization, management and leadership – co-operative working and the development of volunteering – student voice and feedback.

Shpresa is in the process of developing a powerful model of mentoring which has great potential for building cohesive communities that reach across ethnic, cultural and linguistic boundaries. What is particularly distinctive about this model is that the mentoring and support offered reaches communities at the very earliest stage of development: identifying potential community leaders, building their confidence and empowering them to create organisations that can meet identified community needs at a very local level. Senior mainstream school staff and community leaders interviewed who have worked with Shpresa to support and develop their cross-community approach are very positive about the impact that Shpresa is having on the local community.

The four organisations supported, in different ways and at different stages of development, have all made a very good start. Co-ordinators interviewed have been full of praise for all aspects of the support they have received and all three have been inspired by the Shpresa model. However there are many pitfalls facing new organisations and all would benefit from continuing support in critical areas. Fund-raising is critical for all four organisations. The Lithuanian, Polish and Portuguese ones have yet to obtain external funding or sponsorship,

and they are mostly dependant on free premises and volunteer staff. In particular they need support to maintain the momentum, widen and develop their volunteer base and consolidate what has been achieved and to think strategically about how to position themselves in the wider community to attract the kind of funding they will need to continue and develop their role.

### **Some points for consideration**

A rare feature of the Shpresa partnership is the willingness of several headteachers to make their premises available free. As sessions are open to children who attend other mainstream schools, it is important that Shpresa activities remain well attended by children from the host school to ensure the continuing support of headteachers.

Shpresa need to consider the format in which they offer support workshops and materials to schools. It is possible that headteachers of partner schools may no longer feel such a need for a formal input from Shpresa given that they have so many Albanian volunteers deployed in their schools. When workshops are organised as part of other events Shpresa need to ensure that they have their own evaluation forms for audience feedback.

A concern at this point is the fact that the three new schools, the Portuguese, the Polish and the Lithuanian, and the Somali youth project are, in their present state, totally dependent on the volunteer coordinators who have set them up. This created a particular difficulty for the Portuguese school when the co-ordinator obtained employment that clashed with her school timetable. All the schools are building and developing networks of volunteers, but they have not yet reached the point where a rota of competent and confident staff is available.

Another concern is the few mainstream schools that are willing to offer free use of premises. The Polish school had great difficulty in finding a partner school in which to develop its services.

The network of mentored schools that Shpresa has created still needs some support to develop the presence and power in the community to negotiate with mainstream education and other agencies.

## **APPENDICES FOR THE EVALUATION 2012 REPORT**

### **Appendix A: Children's cultural knowledge and involvement in cultural events**

#### **3) Children's voices**

Baseline and repeat testing did not seem to be the most effective way of obtaining a measure of children's understanding of and involvement in their culture. Visits to schools and formal and informal opportunities to talk to children offered the most

compelling evidence of the impact of Shpresa's educational programme for young people on their everyday lives.

### **Children's voices: focus groups**



The group of younger children

On the morning of Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March, at the end of the first year of the Paul Hamlyn funded project, I met with two groups of 13 children who attend the Albanian classes, a group of younger and a group of older children. A deaf child in the younger group was supported by her older sister who interpreted for her using Sign Language. The groups were somewhat larger than expected, but all children joined in and expressed their opinions on all questions. They were asked five basic questions as starting points for discussion. The aim was to explore their feelings about the classes, their own sense of identity, their relationship to their culture and specifically to ask them to evaluate the programme. The following report is based on a 9,000 word full transcript of the two sessions which lasted approximately 45 minutes each. It is organised by topic and group.



The group of older children

## **1. Why do you think children come to the Albanian classes? Why do you think some Albanian children don't come to them?**

The younger children are keen to respond and all hands shoot up when a question is asked. All children responded to this question and referred to learning Albanian and the activities offered by Shpresa as their main motivation. They also mentioned learning about Albania and Kosovo and about their history: *I think the Albanian classes are fun because you get to learn your language and you get to learn about your history and you get to have lots of fun, and all the activities that the teachers plan.* This response was typical of many. The importance of the Albanian language cropped up in almost every question. Children talked about the importance of being able to communicate with family in Albania and how attending Shpresa had improved their language use.

Some children referred to being bored at home on a Sunday before they discovered Shpresa. All refer to the activities they enjoy: learning to dance so that they can take their place at family weddings and perform in public, kick-boxing, karate. They appreciate their teachers' work in preparing activities and several refer to the high quality of teaching as a reason for their attendance; lessons are fun, never boring: *I like the classes where Miss Vera teaches us because she tells us nicely what we are doing and she explains it properly.*

When asked about why some children do not attend, several suggestions are made: they are not interested in speaking their language and don't care where they come from, they know all about Albania already, they want a day off, they might be embarrassed to wear traditional costume in performances.

The importance of making new friends was a high priority for the group of older children *if we didn't come here, none of us would know each other.* They talked enthusiastically about the wide range of activities, the dancing, the drama workshops, the camping, the trips, the performances and the shows in which they were involved. Like the younger children they come to avoid boredom at home. They raise two important. The first is the importance of activities being free as it enables them to sample and pursue a wide range of options that their families could not afford to pay for. The other is that they spontaneously raised the issue of safety: *we feel safe in this environment because all around us there are people that we know and our parents know. If we went somewhere else they would be worried about us, like, constantly, because they think what are we doing, what are we about.* They are concerned that, because their parents are protective, they would not be allowed the same freedom to meet friends without the support of Shpresa.

The older children also value the opportunity to learn Albanian, to learn about their culture and traditions: *when I go to Albania my grandparents always like looking at me dancing and they like to see me knowing the actual culture of Albania.*

Very significant for the older children is the opportunity to be part of campaigns. They talked with great pride of visiting Parliament and speaking in front of MPs, of visiting Birmingham, of having their video shown in public, of going to Oxford: *I'm thankful for that opportunity that I get from Shpresa. I want to be someone. I want to be known. When we were in Oxford, we were really known. People were asking questions.*

## **2. Do you think knowing two languages makes a difference to your life?**

The younger children came back to the topic of the importance of knowing their family language. They are in no doubt that, even though it is not their strongest language, it is the most important one. They feel the language is a bond between generations and several talk about their intention to teach it to their own children. A girl notes that, in that context, it would be best to use entirely Albanian in her home to counteract the considerable influence of English in the environment and she regrets that her own mother did not enforce this policy. One of the girls attending was deaf and had no speech. She was supported by her sister who interpreted for her. She explained, through her sister, that she knew BSL, but was also learning Albanian Sign Language so she could communicate with family in Albania.

One of the older girls commented: *before we started Albanian classes here, most of us couldn't talk Albanian properly.* She talks of the embarrassment of going to Albania and not being able to communicate with grandparents. The main benefit of being bilingual for this group was the advantage it gave them in learning other languages. Several were learning both Spanish and French. They noted the relationship between the languages they knew and how cognates helped them to learn new words. They were well aware of the advantages that languages offered them in the labour market and one also noted the cognitive benefit: *the more languages you know the more active your brain is.*

Later in the discussion several children mention how languages are used within the family and how parents encourage them and some even insist on the use of Albanian in the home. This leads one girl to explain how, while her mother helps her to learn Albanian, she is able to help her mother with her English studies at college. This leads to a brief discussion of homework issues, and how some parents try to help, but the methods they use are very different from those used in English schools: *I tried to tell my mum and my dad that the method that I use in England is different from Albania. So they don't actually know it, so I go to my teacher to help.*

### **3. How is feeling Albanian different from feeling British?**

One of the younger girls: *I think it's all about your heritage and culture. Even though maybe you are born here, your heritage is from Albania or Kosovo, you can say I'm British, I was born here, Albanian as well, British-Albanian.* They return to the theme of language being transmitted through generations. They express the same feeling about identity and culture *because our parents are Albanian, we are Albanian too.* They are proud of their identity and comfortable with both cultures.

Several of the older children refer to the way in which they feel different depending on which country they are in: *when I'm in Albania I represent England when I'm in England I try to represent Albania to my friends or anyone.* The closest any of them come to discussing really personal feelings is the girl who says *I am proud that I am Albanian and my home is in England but my heart is in Albania.* None of the pupils mention a lack of belonging and, in the context of this question, they focus on their Albanian identity. Many talk about the pride they take in advertising it: *I am proud that I am Albanian and my home is in England but my heart is in Albania.* Another boasts: *The whole college, they know about me. I make sure that, I'm not one to be, like, embarrassed about being Albanian. I am proud and I even wear a necklace to show it.* Later in the discussion he comments: *We used to think, ah, since we are not in Albania, we should start, we should know more about the English culture. And now that we come here, we're more leaning to the Albanian side.* Another talks about how, although she was born in Britain, and has a British passport, she feels more Albanian.

#### **4. How do you think the classes could be improved? What other activities would you like to have after school?**

The younger group deal with this question very briefly. While two children indicate they would like more Albanian language taught (*more Albanian, because then you learn more*) others are adamant that the balance of activities is just right: *I don't think so, everything's perfect already! - Things are perfect, you don't have to change anything, even in the classroom. -It should never change 'cos it's really good.*

This issue led to some debate about possible additional activities, although none were specifically named, but a consensus was rapidly reached that the range of activities was wide and satisfactory and that any additional activities would make the day too long. A few participants indicated that they would like to be able to bring a friend from mainstream school. One specifically mentioned his Somali friend who envied him his sporting activities: *he don't have that chance. We have a great chance here to have something like this.*

#### **5. How safe do you feel in this environment?**

In response to this question the younger children indicated how important the issue was for them: *you won't have fun if you don't feel safe*, and explained how staff watched over them on the school site, which is used by other organisations, ensuring they were accompanied as they move round the building. They expressed great confidence in the adults who supervise them and one commented *they are like our second parents*. The discussion on safety led several children to talk about the experience of being bullied in their mainstream school. One girl explained how Shpresa had intervened to support her in her mainstream school.

The issue of safety had been covered spontaneously by the older children in the discussion concerning their reasons for attending Shpresa activities.

When I asked the children at the end of the session whether they had any questions to ask me I was slightly surprised that they wanted to know about my own background, where I had been to school and how I felt about my own personal identity. When I explained that I had travelled a lot and gone to 13 schools, they asked how I had coped with losing my friends so frequently.

#### **4) Shpresa Children's Congress - 20<sup>th</sup> December 2009**

##### **Context**

The first Children's Congress was held in 2008. It brought together all the children who participate in Shpresa's activities for young people and provided an opportunity for them to meet each other, evaluate their projects and offer suggestions for future development. Like its predecessor, this congress was held at MayfieldHigh School in Barking. The congress was timed to follow the Shpresa AGM, starting at 11.30.

The day before the Congress there had been a heavy snow fall which had frozen. On the day it was very cold, the roads were icy and travelling conditions were atrocious. Nevertheless the school hall was packed with children and their parents when proceedings started at 11.45.



### The congress

In the main school hall tables have been assembled to create large areas around which children sit, some with their parents, in their project group. There are chairs round the sides where more parents sit with small children in push-chairs. At the front is a large bank of audio visual equipment and a projector and screen.



Flutra Shega is the organiser and she introduces procedures and presents the agenda for the day. Two of the main themes to be addressed in the Congress are the issue of the detention of children and cyber bullying both of which have been the focus of research and action by groups of older pupils.



Flutra introduces two groups of young people who take the microphone and speak with remarkable confidence about the campaigns and the events that they have organised.

At 12 noon, in spite of the freezing temperature all parents and children file out into the playground in the snow and ice for a candle vigil in protest at the imprisoning of children in detention camps.



The children have organised an "End Child Detention Now" campaign within the Albanian community and have handed in a petition to Downing Street.

Back in the warmth of the hall Flutra Shega again addresses the audience. She thanks the children for their achievement, for keeping their language and traditions alive. She celebrates successful new activities such as

new sports, like Karate, the Kosovan anniversary concert, the “Too busy to be in trouble” show, the Seventh Anniversary event at the House of Commons. She thanks all the children involved in petitioning at the Treasury for an Albanian GCSE, at Downing Street against child detention; the teachers, the volunteers, the Jack Petchey Foundation, the older children who support the younger ones. She revisits the highlights of the 2009 children’s programme on a Power Point presentation and appeals for more volunteers to come forward so that more children’s clubs can be opened to be meet the demand from the community.



A succession of children and young people take to the microphone to talk about the highlights of the year, the projects they have been involved with and the impact Shpresa has had on their lives.

A Youth worker raises the issue of cyber bullying with a Power Point presentation, and involves the audience with questions and role play.



A student who had been regularly in trouble with the police explains how Shpresa helped him to change his ways and put his life back on track.

A recorded story is played told by a small child about the impact that Shpresa has had on her life.

All of Flutra's introductions and presentations are in Albanian and all the children's are in English.

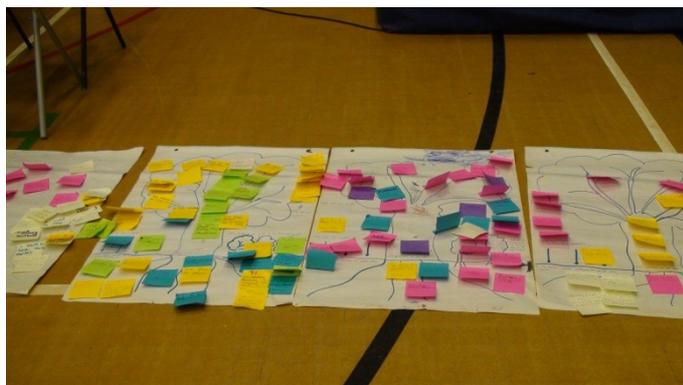


Two groups of students present Power Points on how to attract Albanian speaking visitors to London for the Olympics. These have been entered into a competition with a prize to be awarded by the University of East London. These have been produced in Albanian and are practical, imaginative and technically accomplished.

For the evaluation activity each table has two facilitators, a large poster with an image of a tree whose branches depict areas for evaluation and suggestions. The children are given post-its and pens. Younger children are supported by their parents or by the facilitator to write their ideas. Apples are handed out to the children while they are working.



The children stick their suggestions on the poster and a child is chosen from each table to present the findings to the audience. There is some discussion between Luljeta and Flutra Shega about the presentation of the feedback, and not all groups feedback to the whole audience.



At 2.35 Luljeta Nuzi offers a comment on the feedback and focuses in particular on the issue that not all children can be involved in all campaigning activities as for some events, numbers are strictly limited (such as a visit to Downing Street).

At this point the younger children are becoming restive. Many of the parents have moved to the gym and the children have been in the hall with their teachers and volunteers since 11.30. Although they have been told lunch will be available, no refreshments other than apples have been offered up to this point. A few children have snacks in their bags and have been eating them during the proceedings.



A large quantity of high quality presents have been made available to Shpresa by the London Business Alliance for distribution to the children. These are unpacked and piled up at the front of the hall. The procedure is explained to the children: they are to complete an evaluation form, in exchange for which they will be given a numbered ticket which entitles them to a Christmas present. The evaluation forms are handed out and facilitators asked to help younger children. The forms only require a tick with optional comment, but they seem more relevant to adult users of Shpresa than children. The children have some difficulty with these and some younger children tick all the boxes. They form a long line in the middle of the hall and hand in their evaluation in exchange for a ticket.

Children are then sent back to their seats. The presents are in two piles: one for boys and one for girls and each has a number. Ticket numbers are called individually and children again line up to collect their present. This takes up till 3.30 at which time children and parents are invited to move to the gym where a hot lunch is served.



Children and parents are back in the hall at 3.50 and are entertained by a large group of traditional dancing.

After the dancing Flutra organises the election of the Chair of the Children's Forum. Four children, aged between 9 and 11 come to the microphone and set out their pitch. Two of the speeches in particular are very well structured and all are confidently presented.



While they are talking, ballot papers are handed out to all children. At the end of the presentations children are invited to hand their papers to one of four teachers, each of which represents a candidate. The newly elected chair of the forum is a 14 year-old boy.

The Congress ends with the presentation of certificates. All those who have attained the yellow belt in Karate get a certificate and attendance certificates are awarded to all children who attend classes. Group photographs are taken and then the disco starts.



## **The Children's Congress – an assessment**

### **Strengths**

The impact of Shpresa is evident from the sheer numbers of children and their families who have turned up in challenging weather conditions, some of them having travelled considerable distances from north and east London. It is clear from the atmosphere that the occasion provides a welcome opportunity for networking and socialising within the Albanian/Kosovan community. Parents less directly involved in the proceedings are alternatively talking in groups and circulating among friends in the hall and in the neighbouring gym.

The reports from Flutra and the children and young people themselves outline an impressive and wide-ranging programme of activities throughout the year: from language classes to karate through campaigning on issues that directly affect the refugee community. However it is not only what was said at the Congress that was impressive, but the manner of presentation.

There is a great deal of evidence that children's voice is at the heart of the programme for young people. Most of the reporting on the year's events came from young people themselves. The many opportunities they have for performing and speaking in public have ensured that even the youngest speak to a large audience with considerable confidence. They have also received the support needed to enable them to produce presentation materials on

Power Point to a very high standard. There is evidence from the children's reports of very active engagement in the planning and delivery of services and it is greatly to Shpresa's credit that children are not afraid to question decisions.

A particular strength of the programme is the way in which it encourages the active involvement of young people in the democratic process through the organisation of campaigns on issues that affect them and educate them to become effective British citizens.

There is evidence that Shpresa's aim to support young people's developing identity through the provision of cultural activities that both values their Albanian heritage and provides opportunities for effective participation in mainstream British society, has a positive impact on their identity and citizenship. It is noticeable that, in the course of the event, all speeches and most instructions given by Flutra were in Albanian, while young people addressed the audience mainly in English. The young people have become dominant in English and need the opportunities offered by Shpresa to meet socially and attend language classes to ensure their continuing bilingualism.

There have been enormous organisational skills involved in the planning and delivery of such a very well attended and successful event. Especially in view of weather conditions that must have raised the possibility with organisers of considering cancellation. The range and variety of presentations and the high level of engagement from participants throughout ensured children's involvement and attention, for the first half of the programme.

### **Issues for consideration**

Two issues impacted somewhat negatively on some children in the second half of the programme:

- Children had been in the hall from 11.30 in the morning. Some had been there longer if their parents were involved in the AGM which started at 10 a.m. By 2p.m. they were hungry and had been sitting at their tables for some considerable time. While it was wonderfully comforting to be offered well prepared and tasty hot food, the meal came far too late in the proceedings, at 3.30 in the afternoon, given that most children would not have had any food or drink since breakfast time.
- It was an excellent idea to link the evaluation of the event to the offer of presents to the children. However the procedure for handing out the presents, while ensuring fairness, involved the children waiting twice: once to queue to hand in their form and get their ticket, and then to wait in their groups till their number was called to come out to the front and receive their gift. Given the large numbers of children present, this took a very long time.

### **Recommendations:**

- It is recommended that a break for refreshments be scheduled much earlier in the proceedings
- That a more rapid procedure be devised for handing out presents to children.
- That an evaluation form be designed that is more relevant to the children and young people's involvement in the Shpresa Programme and that is more readily understood by the children. This may require two forms, one for younger and one for older children.

With congratulations to Flutra Shega and the Shpresa team for a successful and very productive event.

Raymonde Sneddon 8<sup>th</sup> January 2009

### 5) **The GCSE Campaign**

#### **Students campaign for a wider range of GCSE s in community languages**

(article written for the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education Bulletin)

At a time when mainstream schools find it difficult to motivate pupils to study French and German, young people in east London are campaigning to make qualifications available in a wider range of languages. Interviewed in February 2012, three young campaigners from Shpresa Programme explained why a GCSE in Albanian is so important to them. Two themes emerge from their discussion: the importance of making a public statement about the value of their language to their personal identity, and the practical one of having a document that proves they are fluent and literate in Albanian that can contribute to their profile when they apply to university.

Arnold talks about the passion he has for his language and culture

*I was born in Albania, so I grew up there, so I feel it is important for me to be able to speak Albanian properly and be able to read and write it. That's why I would like there to be a GCSE.*

And Deni adds

*I think it means a lot for us. All the other communities, they all have their languages, Somali, Chinese, so why don't we get this. I know we are a minority group, but we should have the same rights as everybody else to get our language as a GCSE. We need a qualification to prove that we know our language. What's the point of learning a language if you can't use it in a university application or we can't prove that we know this language?*

The idea of a campaign emerged from an evaluation meeting at Shpresa Programme where young people discussed issue that they wished to take forward. The campaign was launched with a petition on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2008 on the occasion of the first anniversary of Kosovan independence. The campaigning group were supported by TELCO and CitizensUK. Arnold explains the strategy "*originally it was to actually set up a meeting with an exam board*". However that process proved elusive as the chair of the exam board OCR seemed unwilling to meet the campaigners.

The campaigners were joined by young people from the Somali and Eritrean communities, also keen to develop qualifications in Somali and Amharic and they started supporting each other and sharing tactics and building power together across their communities. They sought support from academics who have researched the benefits of bilingualism. Letters to the Guardian newspaper and the Times Education Supplement (1) led to a very positive article in the TES (2) which gave the young campaigners a national profile.

Mark Dawe the Chief Executive Officer of the exam board OCR eventually agreed to meet representatives from the campaign, supported by Luljeta Nuzi from Shpresa Programme, Ben Pollard from Citizens UK and Martin Pinder from the Newham New Deal Partnership.

Arnold explains his surprise at finding that discovering that which languages could be examined at GCSE level was not an educational, but a commercial decision: substantial amounts of money would need to be raised by the community to meet start-up costs and guarantees offered about the number of annual entries.

*I was so shocked. I didn't have the whole concept of how you make a GCSE. I mean they were talking money to me. I was thinking money! I'm the government funder?*

In spite of this, the young people felt positive about the meeting and the fact that Mark Dawe agreed to meet them again and provide them with detailed information about the (very considerable) financial requirements.

For the next meeting the campaigners prepared a mini-assembly in the CitizensUK style. Mark Dawe was welcomed by 75 young people from all three communities and thanked for his interest in working with them to find a way forward. He was entertained with dances, poems and songs and Alban from Shpresa, Guled from Somali Youth United and Meti from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church offered testimonials about the importance of their language to their identity and future achievement. In the meeting which followed the substantial financial cost of a GCSE and the need for a sustainable demand were discussed. The alternative Asset qualification could be achieved more easily and rapidly, however it would only be of equivalent value to a GCSE if included all four language skills.

At this stage it was agreed that while they would still like to obtain a full GCSE, the young people will support a campaign to have the Asset qualification included in school performance tables; encourage the take up of the existing Asset qualification in Somali; gain support for an Asset qualification in Albanian to be available by 28<sup>th</sup> November (the anniversary of Kosovan independence) and campaign for an Asset qualification in Amharic and other community languages.

An important message for all complementary schools that teach community languages to bear in mind: if pupils are not entered for national exams in sufficient numbers, the qualification may be withdrawn. The campaign continues....

- (1) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2011/sep/23/community-way-with-languages> and <http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6112964>
- (2) <http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6116531>



**Meeting with Mark Dawe on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2012.**

#### **6) Classroom Observations**

While the data provided by schools records children's achievement in English and suggests that they are progressing very well from being new

learners of English when they start school to performing close to or above national norms by the end of primary school, it is the observations in the schools that bring the whole project to

life. I paid extended visits to Mayfield School and Gascoigne School and was able to observe at first hand the enthusiasm of children for their classes, the warm relationship they had with the Shpresa staff and volunteers, the high quality of teaching, of teaching support and of the learning environment. In all of these schools I had opportunities to talk to children and their mothers, both formally in focus groups and informally.

**1) Observational visit to Mayfield School on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2010.** The class of 22 older children is being taught by Vera Pulaj with the assistance of two volunteers who are training for their NVQ level 2 as teaching assistants. Other activities available on the premises: Drama, karate, football, traditional dancing, singing, games.

### **Overall learning environment**

Shpresa's Programme for young people is delivered in a large single-story modern school on Sundays from 10 a.m. till 4p.m. A gym and a large hall are available, a toilet block, several classrooms and a staff room which offers a teaching and meeting space with computers and kitchen facilities. There is extensive outdoor space available. A church runs services and activities in another part of the building with a separate entrance. Many of the children's mothers and volunteers attend a training course to become teaching assistants. On arrival the children are allocated to the adults who are running the



particular activities which they have chosen. They are lined up and accompanied to the appropriate hall, gym or classroom. Children do not move unattended around the building.

The



classroom used for teaching Albanian is spacious, light and spotlessly clean with paired desks deployed in a horseshoe formation facing the blackboard. There is room for moving furniture around and sufficient floor space to accommodate different activities in the classroom. There is storage available for the children's books and folders and other teaching resources. At the front of the class is a white board, an IWB, a computer with an internet connection and a CD and tape player. The furniture is in good condition and of the right size.

### **Teaching, learning and resources**

There are two Albanian classes, both lasting one hour, for younger and for older children. I observed the class for older children. There were 22 children in the class, the majority are girls. They settle quickly when they enter the classroom and Ms Pulaj introduces the lesson and the learning objectives in English and then switches to Albanian for the rest of the lesson. She has provided me with her register, her scheme of work, copies of hand-outs and a hand-written English version of her lesson.

The lesson starts with Verona showing a clip on the IWB from the award-winning Power Point presentation in Albanian language that she and her friends put together for a competition about introducing visitors to London when they attend the Olympics. She introduces it in English and is congratulated and cheered by the class.

The lesson is a reading comprehension exercise based on the text *Më një klasë*. Children take turns at reading the text, answering questions which they are encouraged to do in full sentences. They work in groups of three to identify grammatical features and discuss complex words that occur in the text. They then answer questions in their books. The last activity is differentiated from basic sound/letter and vocabulary work, to sophisticated grammatical analysis.

Ms Pulaj has a very lively manner, with expressive body language and keeps the children engaged and the lesson moving at a good pace. The children are praised and encouraged. She delivers part of the lesson from the front of the class using the white board then circulates among the children, offering explanations and checking work. The two volunteers circulate the whole time, supporting individual children and engaging groups in discussion. English is only used occasionally in instances where children fail to understand a new word.

As I walk



around the classroom I notice that all children are fully engaged with the lesson. When a question is asked, many hands wave in the air. The lesson becomes very interactive with children moving up to the whiteboard to demonstrate a point or provide an example. Questions are reworded in different ways, quieter children are encouraged, the teacher encourages the use of mime to support understanding. Groups of children are using cards and word games, supported by the volunteers and offering suggestions to the whole class. Several refer to material they have found earlier on the internet. Two thirds of the way through the lesson the children get out their folders. They all have books and work-books. Ms Pulaj calls out individual names and sets writing tasks. As the volunteers circulate, she supports two new arrivals. The lesson ends with a brief plenary in which several children are invited to share with the class what they feel they have learned during the lesson.

The register of attendance includes an individual assessment of children's engagement and performance in the lesson. The teacher's scheme of work is an adaptation of the ABETARE materials, a comprehensive literacy programme published in Albania which includes extensive materials for activities including audio resources. Ms Pulaj supplements the materials with resources she prepares herself to meet the needs of individual children.

The class ended with the teacher reviewing with the children what had been learned and reminding them about what they needed for the next session. The children put away the materials tidied their space, pushed in their chairs and then moved on to their other activities for the day as the next group arrived.

**2) Observation visit to Gascoigne Primary School on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2010 from 4.45 to 7p.m.** On the premises of Gascoigne Primary school in Barking. Present were 40 children, 15 of the children's mothers, Luljeta Nuzi the Shpresa Director, Flutra Shega, the Schools' Coordinator and Saime Dushku and Ermir Disha, teachers. I spoke to the co-ordinator and the director, 13 of the women and two groups children, aged 7 to 10 and 1 teacher. I observed Ms Dushku's Albanian language class and Mr Disha's traditional dancing class.

### **The learning environment:Introduction**

I arrived early at Gascoigne School, just before families and their children started to arrive. As five o'clock approached families started arriving at the same time as the two teachers, the volunteer, the Director and the Schools' Co-ordinator. Children and their mothers were ushered into the school where the headteacher and the EMA co-ordinator who were still

working on the premises, talked to them for a few minutes. When the last of the children had arrived, the doors were secured.

Twenty-five younger children went to the Albanian Language classroom with Saime Dushku. A volunteer who is training for her NVQ level 2 took the 5 youngest of the group into a communicating side room and worked with them on oral activities. Eleven older children followed Ermir Disha into the gym for their traditional dance class.

A group of fifteen women sat on benches in the school hall with Flutra Shega. She was informing them about the government scheme to provide free laptops for school children from more economically challenged homes. This was a lively and informative session (Luljeta explained the content to me) with many questions asked and answered. The application process was explained to the women and they were urged to apply immediately as the scheme operates on a first-come-first-served basis. Flutra went on to talk to the mothers about the importance of reading regularly at home with their children, making at least ten minutes of quality time available, even where children were able to read for themselves. She urged them to make use of the school and the public library.

I was introduced to the group and it was explained that I would be asking them some questions about their use of Shpresa services and the classes for children in particular. I had the opportunity to meet with two women individually but the remainder expressed the wish that I talk to them as a group. We moved to the comfort of the staff room for this purpose.

### **Talking to the mothers**

The women took turns at talking about their children's motivation for attending the class: all mentioned the importance of learning their language, but in particular they reported that the children enjoyed the opportunity to mix with each other and to socialise in the context of cultural activities. Several mentioned that the children were proud to be connected to their culture, that they enjoyed the traditional dancing, but also that they loved the opportunity to take part in the large public events organised by Shpresa which enabled them perform poetry, drama and dance on stage and gave them a great deal of personal confidence and pride. Several mothers also mentioned that being bilingual helped the children to learn other languages, such as French, more easily in school.

Several mothers mentioned that the children valued their "second school" and the opportunity to learn to read, write and recite poetry in Albanian.

The mother of a seven year old explained how her daughter spoke no English when she started school, but that she was now fluent in English and Albanian, enjoyed performing in public, and was confident both in her mainstream school and with family and friends when she went to Albania on holiday. Her mother is proud that she keeps up the cultural traditions.

The mother of a girl aged 9 was delighted to find that her daughter was reading and writing in Albanian within a year of joining the class, being able both to speak on the phone confidently and to write to family in Albania. She enjoyed writing stories in English and translating them into Albanian.

An older sister recounted her own experiences of arriving in the UK at the age of 14 and the help she received from teachers to pass her GCSEs. Her younger brother joined the Albanian class aged only 4 and is now very fluent and literate in Albanian

There were also some concerns. The mother of two children aged 8 and 10 was a little disappointed at the children's slow progress. While they were happy in school and enjoyed both classes, their learning was slow both in mainstream and in the Albanian class. However she felt the Albanian teacher was very good and kept her closely informed on the children's progress. She would have liked there to be two teachers so that the children could be taught in smaller groups. Another mother of children aged 7 and 9 who have been attending for 2 years was also disappointed at the children's progress, especially at the fact that although her children understand her perfectly when she speaks to them in Albanian, they generally respond in English (a very common issue within linguistic minority families). However she notes that, although her daughter's progress in reading has been slow, she has learnt all the poems by heart is proud to recite them, and that she loves the dancing.

Mothers discussed the importance for them to be able to meet when they bring their children and to socialise at Shpresa events. They also greatly appreciated the information and advice provided in sessions such as the one I witnessed earlier in the evening.

Recurring themes have been children being able to communicate with family in Albania, the love of dancing and performing, the children's personal confidence and pride in their heritage, and the appreciation that mothers have for the quality of the teaching of both literacy and dancing. All women, even those who are a little disappointed in their children's progress praise the literacy teacher's professionalism and the detailed reports that they receive on their children's progress twice a year. Several of them mentioned that they would like more time for the children to learn.

### **Talking to the children**

I had the opportunity to speak to 20 of the younger children (not the very youngest) as a group at the end of their literacy class. The children explained that they enjoyed coming to the class because they learnt more Albanian, got a chance to meet their friends, learned poems, played games and learned the traditional dancing. Two of the children explained in great detail how they were learning about the letter M, how to blend it with other letters to make words and poems associated with the letter. They all chipped in when asked to explain the school rules. The children were not very inspired when asked what could make their classes better and one suggested snacks, which seemed a popular idea with the other children.

I spoke to the group of 11 older children at the beginning of their literacy lesson. Their responses were similar to those of the younger children in terms of their reasons for attending and what they liked about the school. They stressed the importance to them of poetry and drama and particularly appreciated the opportunity to perform in public which they felt made them very confident. They also knew the school rules and stressed the importance of respect for each other and not using bad language. They had a lot of ideas on how to enrich their learning: more drama, include art classes in the sessions and one child would like to be taught curriculum subjects through Albanian. However all of these suggestions would require a longer teaching time.

**The learning environment:**

Gascoigne School was built in the 1970s. The majority of the classes are on the ground floor, they are fairly spacious and light. There are attractive displays of the children's work on the walls. Shpresa's classes have the use of the hall, the large gym, toilets, one classroom and a side room attached to it and can use the staffroom with adult sized furniture for meetings. There is also access to secure outdoor space should it be needed. The space is fully accessible and offers a safe and secure environment for children. Children and parents are admitted personally and doors are kept secure. At home time-time, all children are assembled and kept supervised in the hall until collected by their parents.

In the teaching classroom the tables and chairs are suitable for most children, though they are a little low for the oldest. The teacher has the use of a whiteboard, a flip-chart, a tape recorder and some storage space. There is enough space to alternate work at tables and group work on the carpet and to vary the lay-out of the furniture. There is no EWB in the room. The room is orderly and clean and the children leave it as they find it, picking up stray papers and pushing in chairs as they leave at 7p.m. The teacher brings her own resources, which are extensive: pictures, maps, games, artefacts, card games etc. She has a large storage box in which she keeps stationary, books, and individual clear plastic folders for each child's work which include the children's work books with their individual plans.

The hall and the gym have benches on which parents and children can sit. The dance teacher has a large CD player for use with dancing classes.

It was obvious from the relationships at the beginning and end of the day and in the sessions observed that there was a very good relationship between pupils and teachers. The children appear to be very keen on their classes and I did not see any time-wasting behaviour. They are well behaved in class, responding rapidly to teacher instruction in the dance class and raising their hands and waiting in the language class.

The children, when asked, knew the rules of the school. They could tell me about being friendly and kind to others, about not using language that upset others, about not running in corridors and keeping their work and the classrooms tidy. In the course of a two hour observation I noted that the children did move sensibly from one room to another and when a whole class moved children were lined up and accompanied by a teacher. The children responded to the adults' expectations of good behaviour.

**Teaching, learning and resources**

I observed part of the lesson with the 20 younger children. The end of the session was very interactive. The children were learning a poem and were enjoying performing it in a group. There was a lively and enthusiastic atmosphere at the end of the session. A range of visual resources was being put away, children tidied their files and affairs and lined up to move on to their dance class.

There are 11 children in the older group (3 boys and 8 girls). The teachers' file included a substantial scheme of work, very detailed plans for her lessons. and targets for individual children. The lesson was based on the history of education in Albania and the story of the very first Albanian language school. It was delivered entirely in Albanian. Visual material included a large map on the board and individual handouts with illustrations for each child. The teacher has a clear and authoritative voice and expressive body language and uses the visual material well, so that it is possible for even a non-Albanian speaker like myself to

follow the gist of the lesson. The lesson involved an extensive discussion of and guided reading of the handout. Children were then asked to underline unfamiliar words which were discussed and explained. While the activity was the same for the whole group, the teacher responded to individuals with varied explanations. All children were clearly on task and interested in this part of the lesson.

The teacher keeps a register of attendance which also includes an individual assessment of children’s engagement and performance in the lesson. There are folders, text and work books for each child. These form part of the ABETARE scheme of work, a comprehensive literacy programme published in Albania which includes extensive materials for activities including audio resources. The teacher supplements, updates and adapts her resources to the needs of individual children with material that she makes herself.

I observed the last 20 minutes of the dancing lesson. All the younger children (25 in all) were positioned in the gym in dance formation. Ermir Disha was modelling the steps of a dance, counting the rhythm and instructing the children. They were totally intent on following the instructions. Some of the younger ones had difficulty maintaining their personal space and the teacher moved over to assist them. As the children found the pace and the rhythm, they practised the steps without guidance, the teacher only maintaining a clapping rhythm. The children, even the very youngest, were totally intent on performing the moves correctly and in unison.

At 7 p.m. the children helped the teachers to pack away their equipment and moved into the main hall where their parents were waiting. The teachers checked that all children were safely with family members before they left.

## **APPENDIX B - Parents’ knowledge of the English Education System**

### **1) The programme in 2010:** Comparing responses to a baseline questionnaire taken before the course with a final one taken at the end.

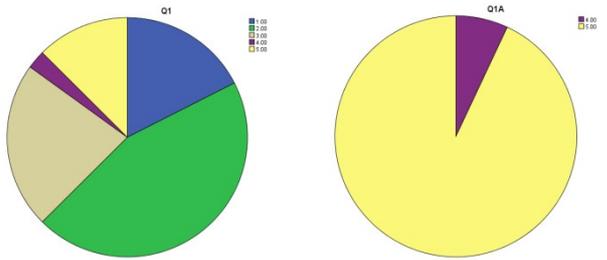
Respondents: 40 women completed a baseline questionnaire at the start of their course. 39 of the same women completed the final questionnaire as well as an additional 3. The following charts illustrate the difference between the baseline and the final questionnaires for the 39 women for whom both sets of data were available. The baseline data are represented on the pie chart on the left and the final data on the pie chart on the right

The following responses were available for each question:

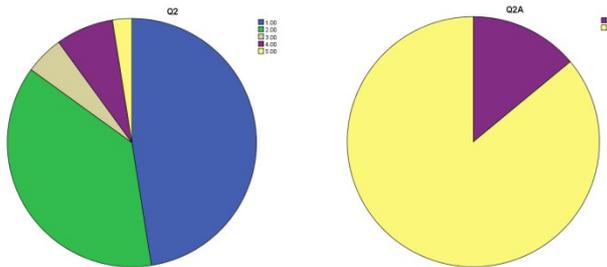
I do not know anything about this	I know a little about this	I have essential information about this	I know quite a lot about this	I am very well informed about this
1 blue	2 green	3 beige	4 purple	5 yellow

## Section A – Supporting children’s learning

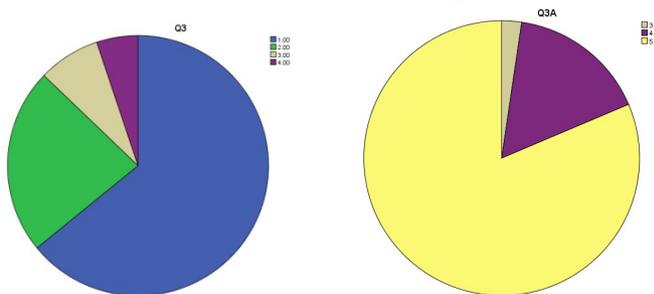
Do you know how your child is progressing at school?



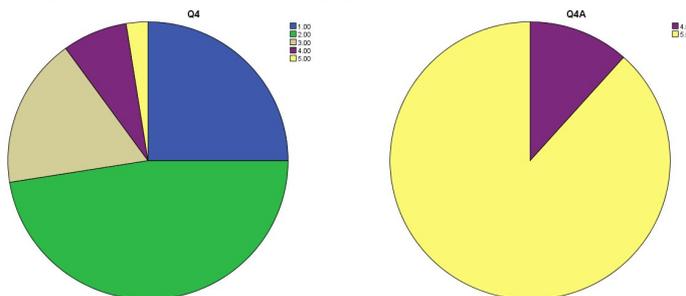
Do you know how children are taught to read in school?



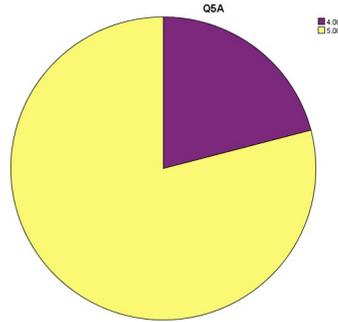
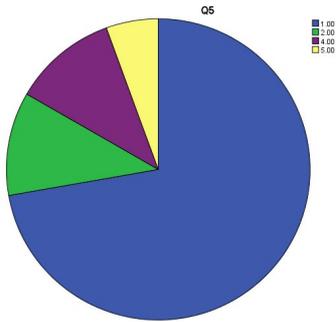
Do you know how children are taught maths at school?



Do you know how to help your child your child to learn?

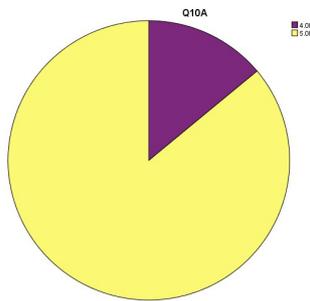
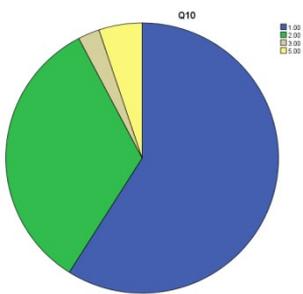


If your child has a special need do you know how to give help at home?

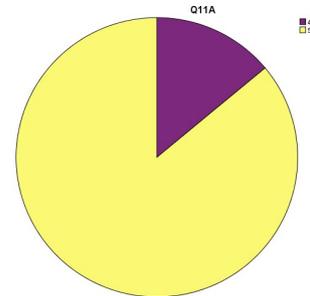
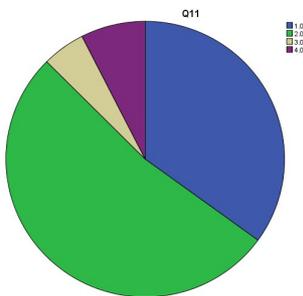


**Section B 1 – Relationship with children’s school**

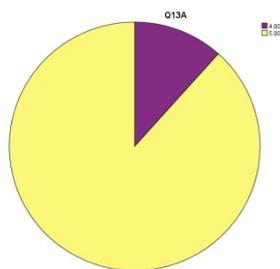
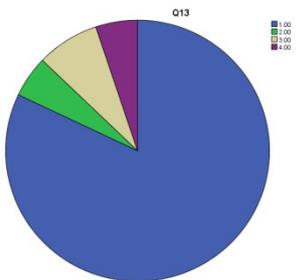
Do you know how to get help at school if your child is bullied, or has behaviour or attendance problems?



Do you know how to get help at school if you are worried about your child’s progress in school?

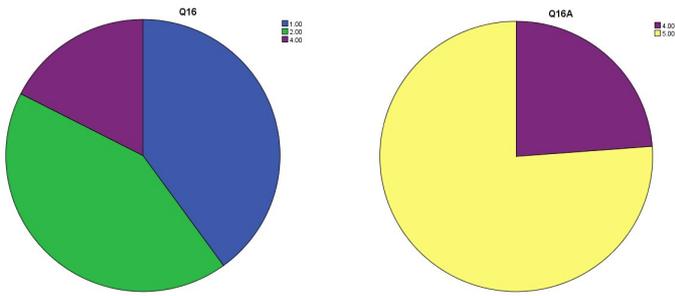


Do you know how to make a complaint about the school?



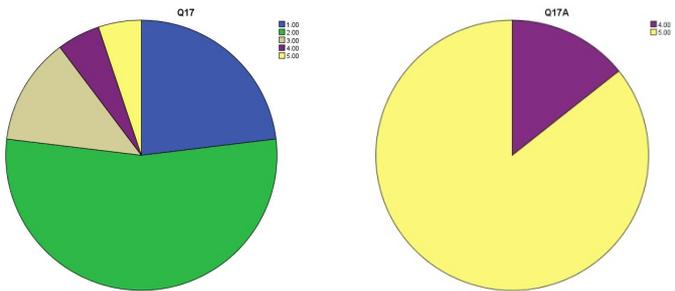
**Section C – The Stages of Children’s education in England**

Do you know how English education is organised: when children start school, types of school, how to choose a school, how to apply for a place?

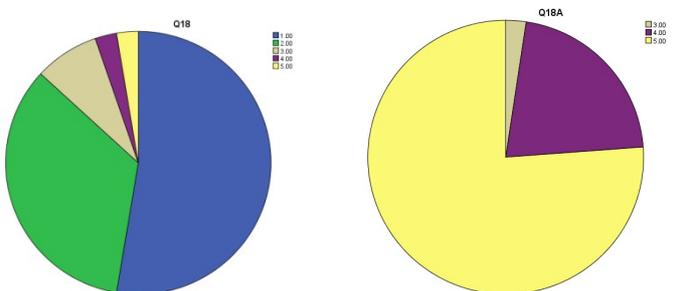


### Section D – Early Years and Primary Education

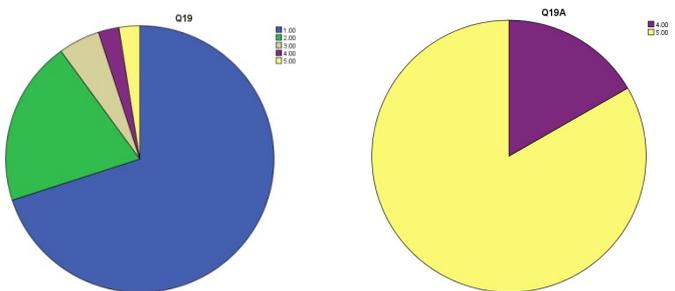
Do you know about Early Years education choices: nurseries, playgroups, reception classes, Sure Start Children's Centres?



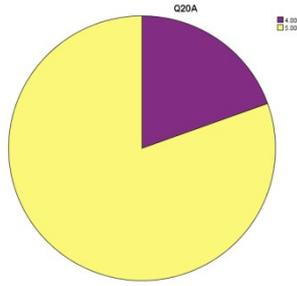
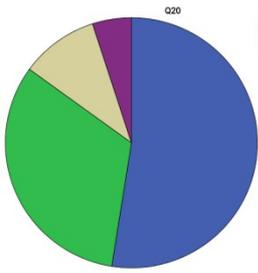
Do you know about the Areas of Learning and Development and how children are taught in the Early Years Foundation Stage?



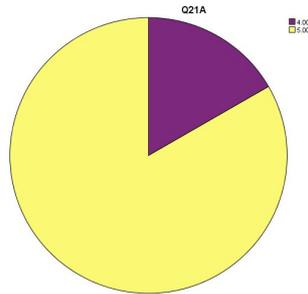
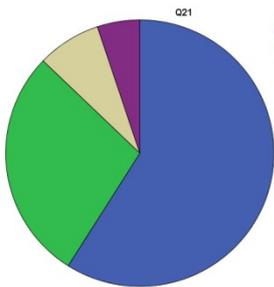
Do you know how children are assessed in the early years?



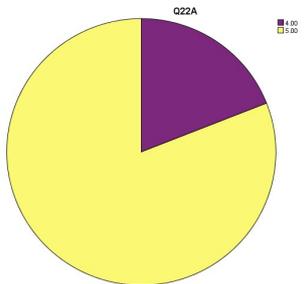
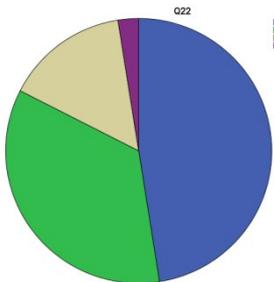
Do you know about the National Curriculum in primary schools?



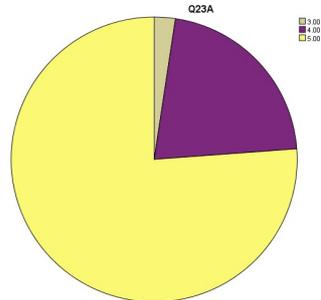
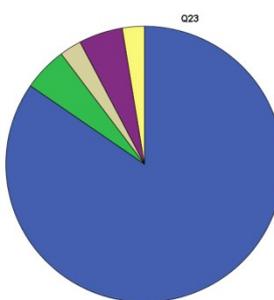
Do you know how children are assessed in KS1 and KS2, by the teacher and through tests?



Do you know what records the school keeps about your child?

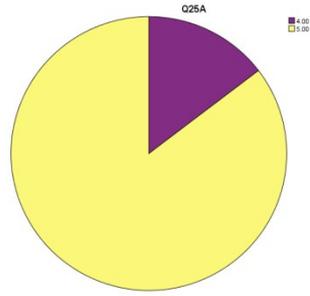
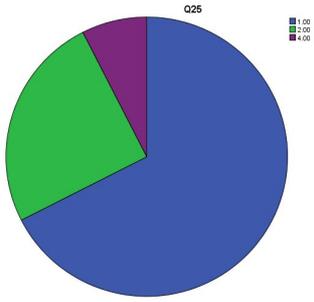


Do you know what how children are assessed for Special Educational Needs and what support is available? Who to contact if you think your child has a special need?

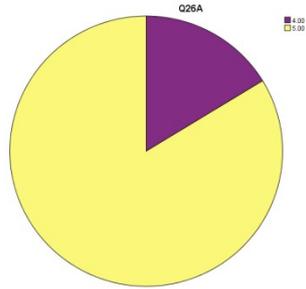
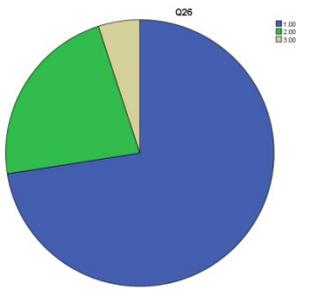


### Section E – Secondary Education and beyond

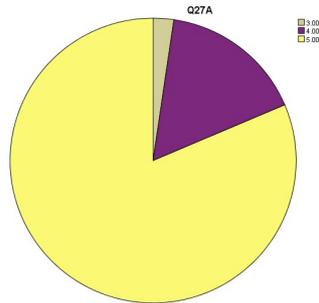
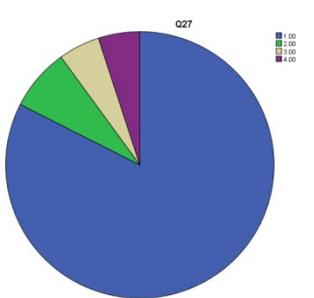
Do you know how the transition to secondary school is organised: how to choose a school and when?



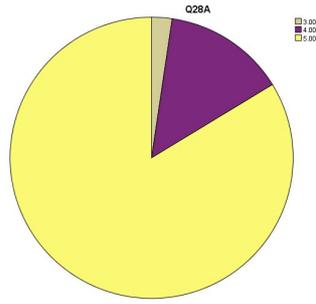
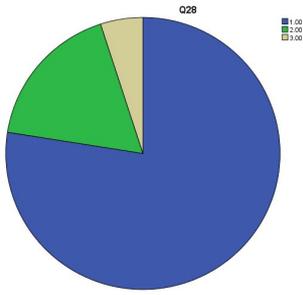
Do you know about the National Curriculum at Secondary school: what subjects are compulsory, which children can choose?



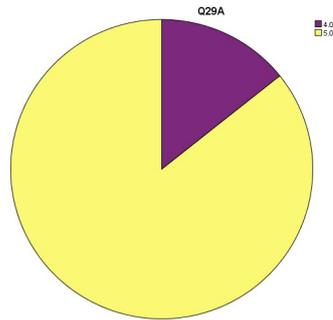
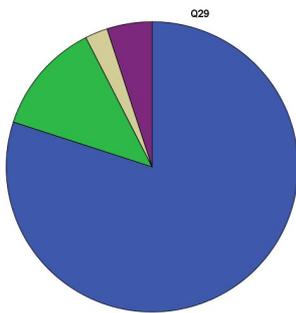
Do you know what choices your child can make in Year 9, what qualifications are available?



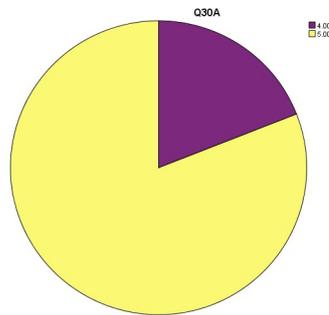
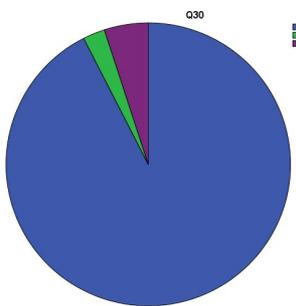
Do you know how to get advice about careers and the qualifications that lead to them?



Do you know about study options after school (sixth form, further education college, apprenticeship, university) and how to apply?



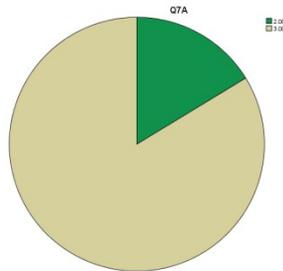
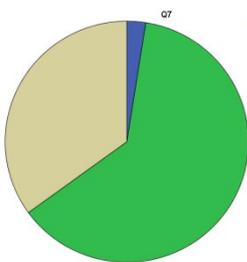
Do you know how to get financial support for education (EMA, grants and loans)?



## Section B 2 – Relationship with children’s school

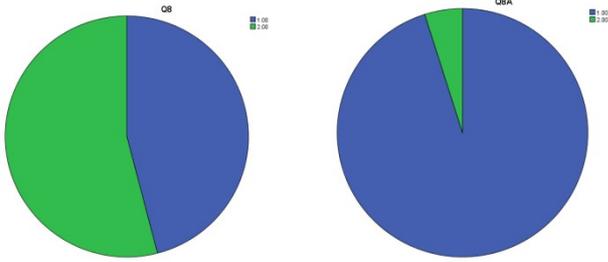
Do you attend parents’ evenings and events?

This question had 3 possible responses: never=blue; sometimes=green; always= beige

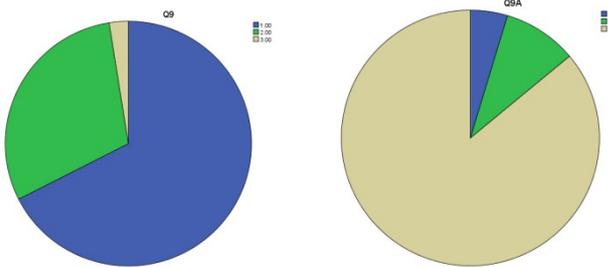


Do you feel confident about talking to your child’s teacher or headteacher?

This question had 2 possible responses: yes = blue; no = green



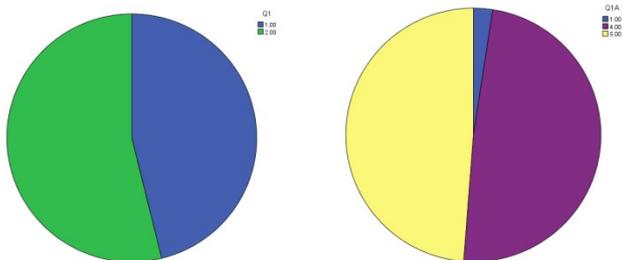
Do you get involved in school activities, helping for special events or outings?  
 This question had 3 responses: never=blue; sometimes=green; often= beige



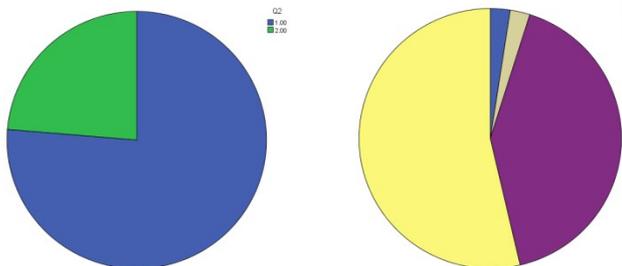
**2) The programme in Spring 2011: Comparing responses to a baseline questionnaire taken before the course with a final one taken at the end.**

**Section A – Supporting children’s learning**

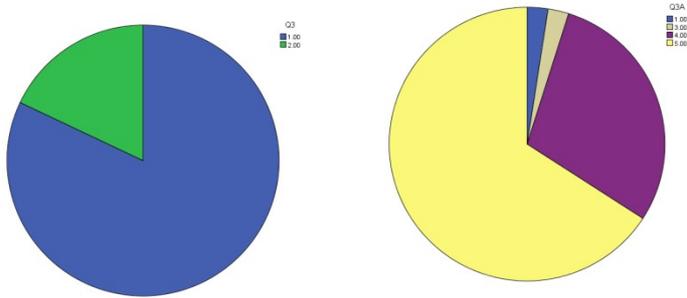
Do you know how your child is progressing at school?



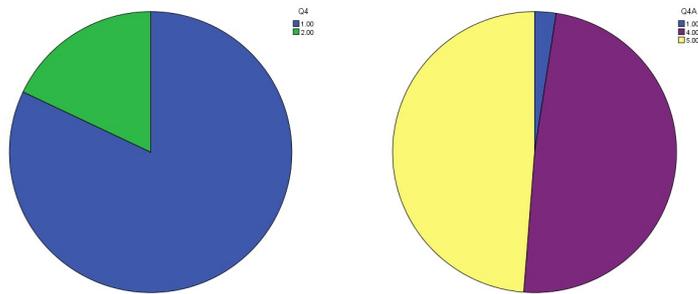
Do you know how children are taught to read in school?



Do you know how children are taught maths at school?

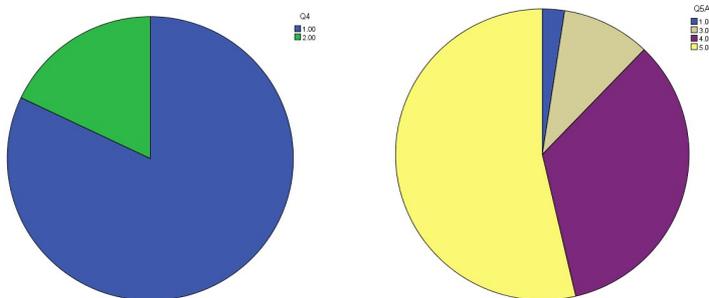


Do you know how to help your child your child to learn?



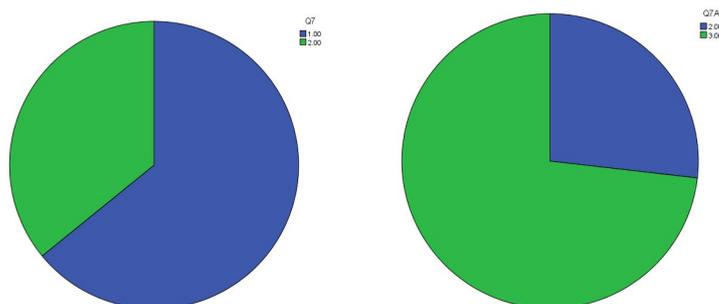
Do you know how to help your

If your child has a special need do you know how to give help at home?  
(No=blue; yes=green)

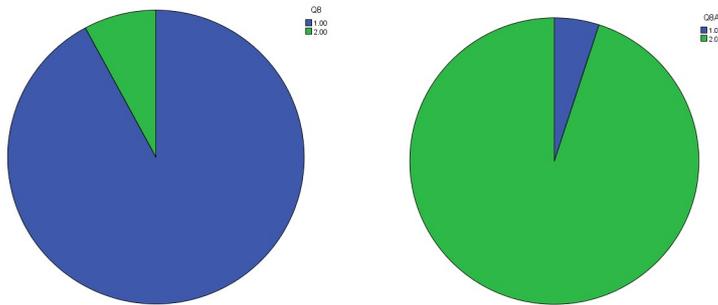


**Section B 1 – Relationship with children’s school**

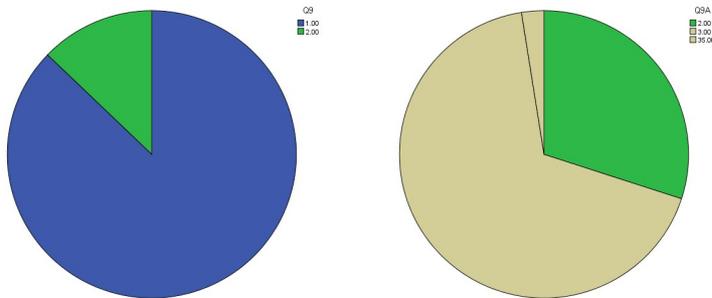
Do you attend parents’ evenings and events?  
(Never=blue; sometimes=green; always=beige)



Do you feel confident about talking to your child's teacher or headteacher?  
(No=blue; yes=green)

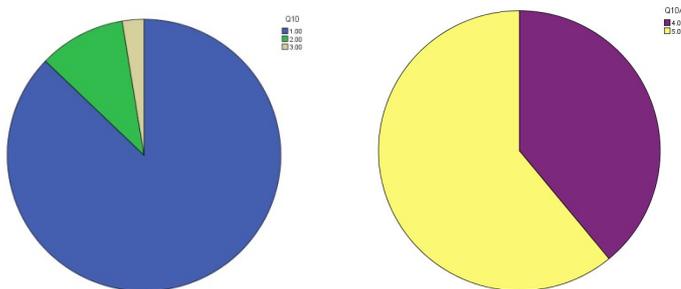


Do you get involved in school activities, helping with special events or outings?  
(Never=blue; sometimes=green; always=beige)

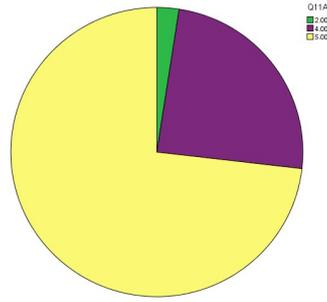
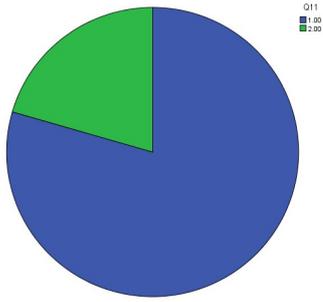


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1 blue	2 green	3 beige	4 purple	5 yellow

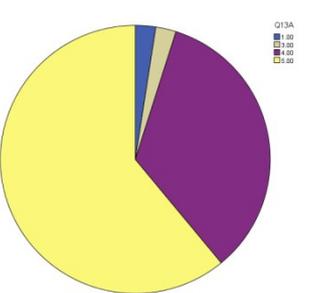
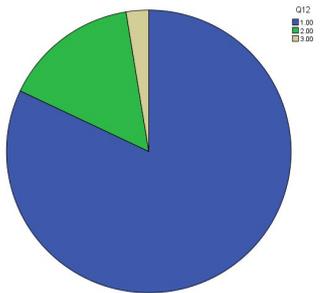
Do you know how to get help at school if your child is bullied, or has behaviour or attendance problems?



Do you know how to get help at school if you are worried about your child's progress in school?

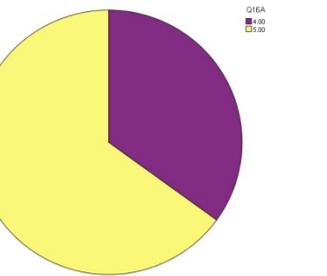
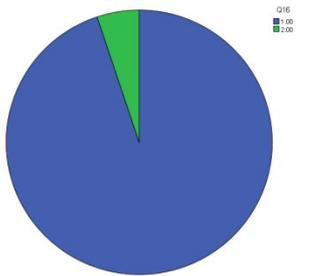


Do you know how to make a complaint about the school?



**Section C – The Stages of Children’s education in England**

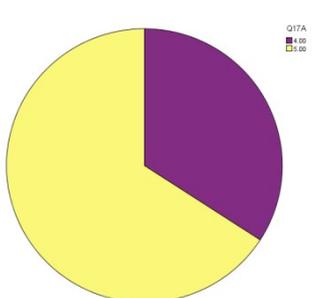
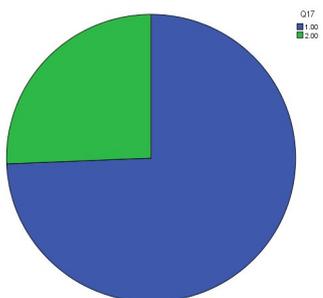
Do you know how English education is organised: when children start school, types of school, how to choose a school, how to apply for a place?



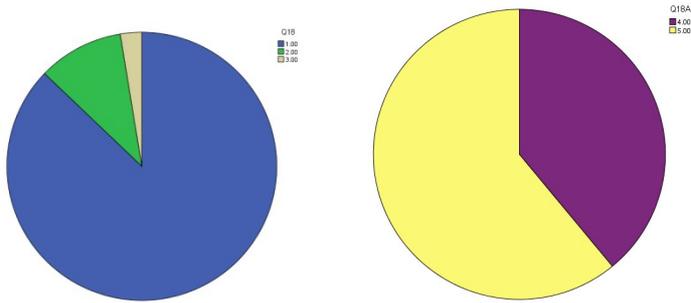
**Section D – Early Years and Primary Education**

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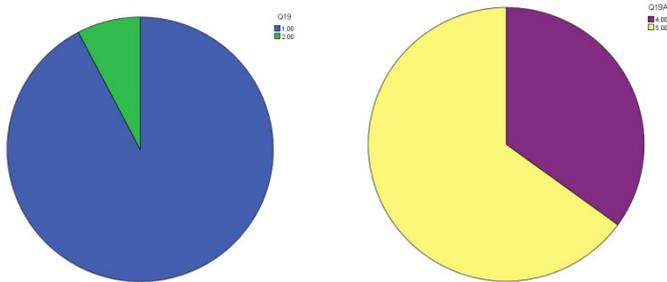
Do you know about Early Years education choices: nurseries, playgroups, reception classes, Sure Start Children’s Centres?



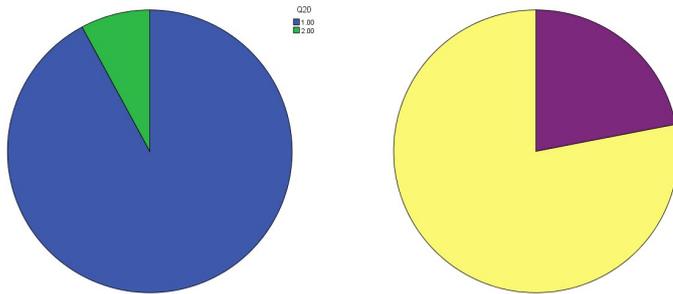
Do you know about the Areas of Learning and Development and how children are taught in the Early Years Foundation Stage?



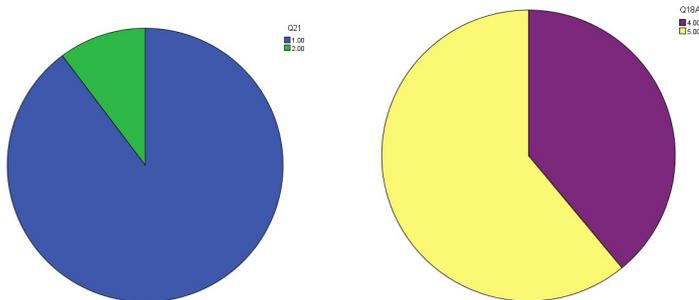
Do you know how children are assessed in the early years?



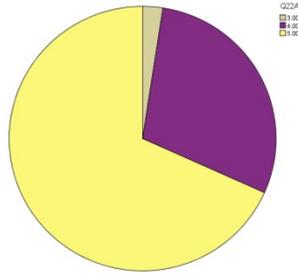
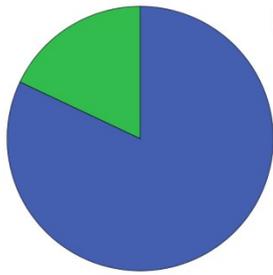
Do you know about the National Curriculum in primary schools?



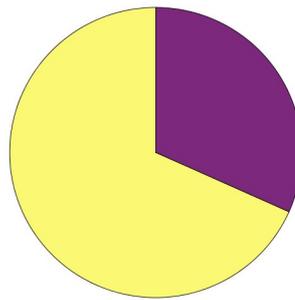
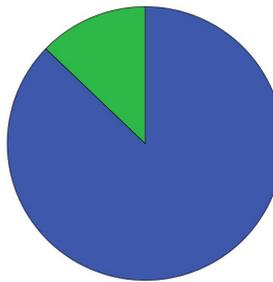
Do you know how children are assessed in KS1 and KS2, by the teacher and through tests?



Do you know what records the school keeps about your child?



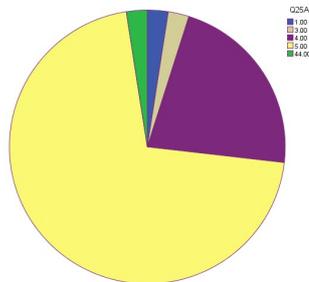
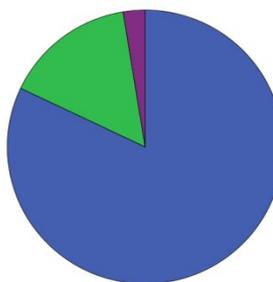
Do you know what how children are assessed for Special Educational Needs and what support is available? Who to contact if you think your child has a special need?



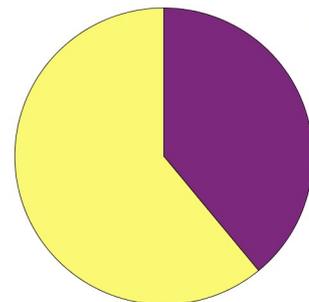
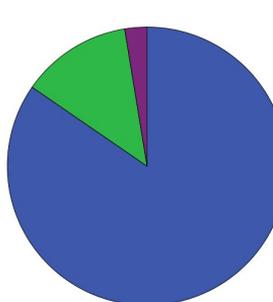
**Section E – Secondary Education and beyond**

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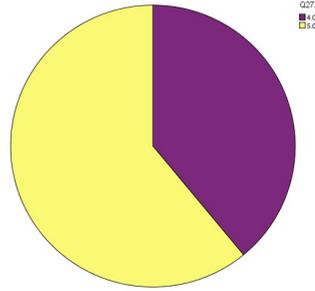
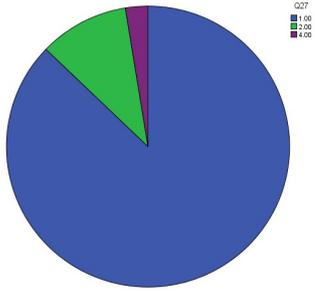
Do you know how the transition to secondary school is organised: how to choose a school and when?



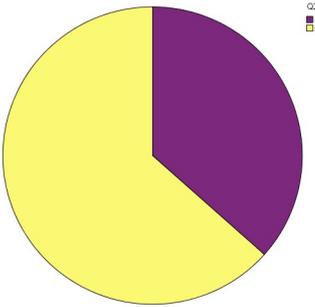
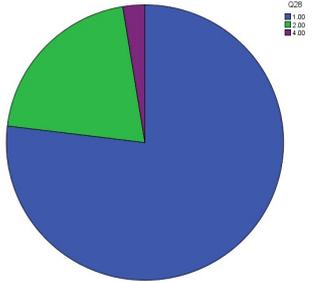
Do you know about the National Curriculum at Secondary school: what subjects are compulsory, which children can choose?



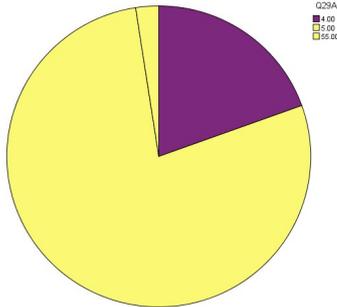
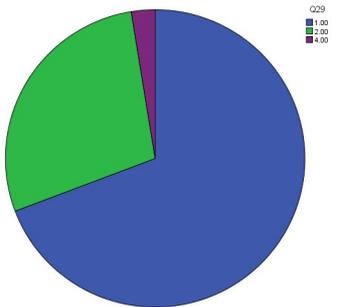
Do you know what choices your child can make in Year 9, what qualifications are available?



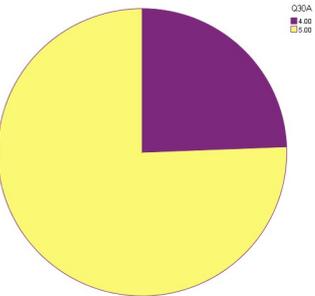
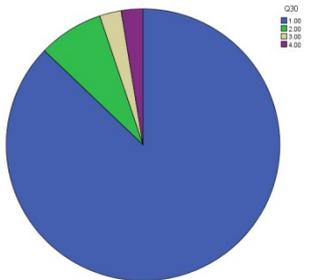
Do you know how to get advice about careers and the qualifications that lead to them?



Do you know about study options after school (sixth form, further education college, apprenticeship, university) and how to apply?



Do you know how to get financial support for education (EMA, grants and loans)?



### 3) Group interviews with women volunteers

## **Interview 1**

3 mothers: Na., H., N.(interpreting as well as participating)

## **Interview 2**

6 current volunteers (also mothers): M, A., E., L., Ai., D.

### **Interview 1.**

#### **How important do you feel it is to be able to help your children with their education?**

N. who came from Kosovo has four young children. She focuses on the importance of literacy and the singing and dancing that Shpresa provide. With advice from Shpresa she helps her children with speaking and writing in Albanian at home. She reads stories to them at home. He finds a few dual language books in the Ilford library but borrows English books to read to her children. A friend brings books from Kosovo. *I need help for my children for everything, so I come to Shpresa Programme.* They help me with lots of things.

H. Replies in Albanian, translated by N. *Before Shpresa I tried to help my children at home and I brought some books from Kosovo. After that we found Shpresa Programme and they helped us a lot.*

#### **Do you find when you try and help your children with English homework that things are very different?**

*I explain one method and my daughter says 'no, mama, don't do like that. Mama I don't like to learn like this I need to learn like in school'. All women have found it a problem that their children learn in a different way from the way they did.*

N. *I'm helping in my son's school and now I can understand everything. I see the teacher explain to the children in that way and now I understand and it's easy for me now to help my children.*

H. explains that because of problems with her health she has not been able to learn English.

#### **How much do you know about the education system in England?**

H. is seriously hampered by her lack of skill in English. She has understood that her child is doing 'very good' but was not able to get more detailed information.

#### **Has Shpresa helped with this?**

H brought the school report to Luljeta and had it explained.

Na. She is now helping in school and has had help from Shpresa and is beginning to understand the structure of schooling.

(There is much discussion in Albanian which is not translated for me)

M. explains that Flutra provides leaflets and provides a lot of explanation and information about education.

H. Explains that she attends Shpresa every week. She suffers from depression and finds that meeting friendly people she can talk to helps her a lot. Shpresa has helped to dispel the negative view of depression in the Albanian community ('she's mad'). Shpresa (Evis) provide support for her on hospital visits and with writing letters.

Na explains how she develops her English through helping elderly English neighbours with things such as shopping. *My neighbour says every morning 'you come and drink coffee' and sometimes I stay at her home, sometimes I give her a cup of tea, and this helps me'.*

#### **What effect do you think coming to Shpresa has on your children?**

N. *They say 'mum, I need to go to meet my friends'. They can learn something new, they can go to karate, they feel very confident. For my children, it is very good.*

(Albanian) *is a little bit hard for them because they speak a lot of English. We try to teach our language first, but they go to school and they learn English and it is a little bit difficult for children, but they learn to speak and read. Writing is more difficult.*

Na. Explains that her daughter is doing well with literacy in Albanian. Her children join in everything and have made a lot of friends and her son especially has greatly improved his Albanian. Time is an issue for women trying to help their children at home.

H. Explains that all her children attend as many activities as possible and she is very happy with the many opportunities offered.

Na explains that it is very important to the families that the activities are free.

**Do your children feel British, Albanian or both? How do they feel about their culture?**

Na explains her eldest son feels more Kosovan and her youngest more British. But the children generally feel both and visiting Kosovo reinforces their dual culture.

**What could Shpresa do better or more?**

Women explain that there is a lot of consultation so they always get a chance to talk about the services and they are very good.

N. *I don't know what to ask because they have everything!*

Na. *If you need something and you go to Shpresa programme, they can help you.*

## **Interview 2**

### **Why do you volunteer?**

This group of current volunteers are all helping at Shpresa as well as in mainstream schools. The women are inspiring to talk to! They all speak very good English.

*A I volunteer because I really like what I do. I like working with children. It is a good opportunity to learn more and to put all your knowledge into practice. It is a plus in your CV and your career. It helps you to know children with different backgrounds and different abilities. I'm so glad in myself that I able to give my contribution to this community.*

E. Explains that she doesn't mind not being paid because she can learn and help people. *We can give something of ourselves and our skills.*

M. *It makes me more confident.* She starts talking about the benefit to her children of coming to Shpresa and how it has greatly improved their oral Albanian and their confidence in sing it with family and friends.

X *It gives you a lot of opportunities. For example for me it gave me the opportunity to organise a show and that made me very confident.* At mainstream school the teacher is the boss. At Shpresa she feels women can make suggestions, try out new activities and gain confidence. *You can use your initiative.*

M. *You get told you 'have done a wonderful job' and that feels so good!*

A. *We are committed to this community and the job, because we love what we are doing.* I am determined. If I set goals for myself I will achieve them, no matter what.

### **What kind of training do you receive for your volunteering?**

E. is being trained as a teaching assistant and gets on well with the course. She was a teacher in Albania but her qualifications are not recognise, so this offers experience of the English education system and a route to eventually gain Qualified Teacher Status.

Several women comment on how effective this training is to understanding the English education system. One woman asks to talk to me privately afterwards in my role as a former teacher trainer. The women explain that Shpresa consult widely about time and venues to make sure no one who wants to follow the course is excluded. They are now starting their NVQ level 3 and are starting placements arranged by Shpresa.

### **What are your personal aims?**

The women would like to eventually be paid to work, preferably in schools.

Ai. *I've had this goal since the first day I came here. Back home I was quite a good student. When I came here I didn't speak a word. I went to Newham College: it was a nightmare, I was crying all the time. ... My husband supported me all the way.... My first target was to learn to speak English... then I wanted to do this course. Now I want to find a job and take my education higher and higher, because you are never completed with teaching... as long as we live we are going to learn.*

All the women agree with this aim. They also agree that volunteering in schools offers excellent opportunities and motivation to improve their English.

Ai describes the embarrassment at first of not knowing the names of the toys young children in school were playing with. She went round asking "can you tell me, darling, what you are playing with?"

### **Did you feel deskilled when you arrived?**

All agreed this was a very serious problem, but that it also provided strong motivation: *we knew what we were capable of back there, so we wanted to prove ourselves. It can make you strong inside.*

M. Describes the difficulty of trying to find a first job with no UK experience. She had learned some English from books before she came, but couldn't understand anyone in the market because of speed and different accents. *Did I come to England or am I in China?*

The women discuss the very multicultural nature of local college classes and the need to tune in to different voices. *You become so open minded for everything because you learn about different backgrounds and cultures and festivals and think, I didn't know nothing! It's not just my little world I live in there is a wider range of things around me that I didn't know.*

E. talks about racist conflicts between black and white in the area in which she lived when she first arrived. She explains that her experiences at college helped her overcome the culture shock.

M. *You learn not to judge the person by their appearance from all these people from different parts of the world.*

D. joins the group five minutes before the end. She is very new to Shpresa, has joined the class. Her English is not so good as the others and they talk in Albanian.

### **New volunteers:**

#### **Why do you volunteer?**

The new volunteers all have children attending at Mayfield and they are volunteering in the project. E. is also volunteering in her child's mainstream school.

1. "To volunteer comes from your heart. You're going to have a result. Volunteering makes you happy. It's a very good experience, you can learn, and you can give something."

2. "Doing voluntary work is a good experience for us." Giving back to her community and to Shpresa Programme for the help she received. She explains all of the volunteers have their own children in the programme and it helps with their language development as they meet with other Albanian children. They learn more about their background. Although she speaks Albanian at home, the children are in an English environment at school all day. Children are forgetting and always asking parents for word meanings. It is difficult for them to communicate with family when they go to Albania. Volunteering also helps with finding a paid job.

F. Has 3 children under 8 attending Shpresa. "I really like them to know their background and where they come from".

3. "I learn more skills and I have more to give". She learns more about how her children are educated and is more confident to help them.

**E.** "I became passionate about volunteering two years ago". She has 2 daughters, the eldest has special needs. The mainstream school asked her to help her daughter "if I go to the school, I can learn from teachers how they work and I can do at home with my daughter. I was invited into a school and that's how I started." Volunteered for 8 months. "I found it really lovely to learn more about the kids and how to help mine at home, how the kids at school get on". "I want to go back and learn more about helping kids and about myself". She is hoping to train as a teaching assistant and eventually as a teacher. "I just want to give back something. This country has given so much to us". "You're so happy when you feel you are helping someone. You make someone's future change in a good way."

### **What kind of volunteering are you doing here?**

**1** was a music teacher in her country. She teaches folk music here to children with special needs. "it helps you to keep in touch with your language and with your feelings."

**2** is helping as a general teaching assistant with all the activities in the school.

**3** is also providing general classroom help in the Albanian classes.

**1** talks of the benefit of the classes for socialising the children and given them a lot of confidence. The women feel a responsibility for all the children when they are here.

### **What kind of training or help does Shpresa offer when you start volunteering?**

**3.** "Because it's Albanian, we know how to work with them, you help them what you need". Teachers offer general advice and practical help.

**1.** When we came here to Shpresa Programme, everybody had background experience in working with children, because we've got our own children." She explains that she training and experience from Albania but needs to learn about policy and how things work in this country. Shpresa explain the differences "you have to be very kindly. Because in our country, when we were children, it was quite different. The teacher has to be very strict and you have to listen. But here they are more polite." She feels she now knows the different expectations of behaviour around children. "We can treat all the kids as our kids, if you don't do that, they just leave".

**X.** Albanian qualifications are not accepted in the UK. "We have to start from scratch. It's quite difficult"

**F.:** "I finished in my country for industrial chemistry." Since she arrived in the UK she has had small children and not tried to pursue a career.

**B.** studied in the army. She explains you train at university to be an army officer unlike this country where you work up from being a soldier. "We're not without any qualifications, we have quite high qualifications."

**1.** "When you find people like Luljeta and Flutra who have been working with our community from a long time ago, they give us ... I met them one year ago and I was completely surprised at how they work with children, what they are giving to our community."

**E.:** "I work in an English school and we have such a very very good, very professional headteacher. I could say, like Luljeta". "I really appreciate it, she is working very hard for us."

The women discuss how good Luljeta is at networking, bringing people together. "She is so organised. She works with passion".

### **Where are you hoping to be in ten years' time?**

**E.:** Is currently not in paid employment. Is studying to be a teaching assistant on the Shpresa TA programme and hopes to train as a teacher.

**F.:** It is easier to study once the children are at school full-time. It is a good time to be preparing for the future.

**I** learning to be a teacher assistant, which will take 2 years. She is in a local school. "I want to improve my work, be more helpful in both sides, with English children and here with Albanian children." She explains how she takes "bits from here and bits from there" from both cultures. Being a teacher is a hard job but rewarding.

**E.:** "When you work with kids, they are from all over the world, so you learn about their background, different cultures, different religions and that. You learn and you get something back, so it's good for us."

The women discuss the many different cultures in English schools and what they can learn from them.

**F.:** "I want to push myself hard because I really enjoy working with kids." Her children are in the same school as Mindela's. "I am going to start there, two days' voluntary work. When I have finished the course I am going to ask for a teaching assistant's position and I am thinking of teaching later". She discusses how much information she gets from reading for her course.

**X.** "When you read it, it looks fun" she wants to carry on and explore education further.

### **Is there anything more Shpresa should be trying to do?**

The women agree "Just continue". One woman has come all the way from Hammersmith to be at Shpresa on Sundays. She would love to have an organisation like Shpresa in west London. She has started and is opening an Albanian class in her school next week. "We are very grateful Shpresa programme gave us this chance and we hope to continue with this very good job for our community."

### **Anything you want to ask me?**

"It was a pleasure to talk to you".

### **Volunteers who have all moved on.**

#### **Why did you volunteer and what benefit did you get from that (or not)?**

**H.** She was helped by Shpresa to get benefits and when she was studying to become a benefits adviser she started volunteering with Shpresa. *I made friends, I didn't have any one here, apart from my mum and dad I had no friends, I volunteered for 4 years.* She left 2 years ago and is now working for Community Links as volunteer co-ordinator for the advice team. *I was volunteering there as well, I was in 2 places.* The experience of working with customers as a volunteer gave her the confidence to apply for a paid job. When she was a volunteer at Shpresa a lot of people were needing help with getting leave to remain and *I was very busy and working under pressure.*

**V.** She teaches the Albanian language classes at Mayfield. She volunteered in 2005. Her sister told her about Shpresa running programmes for children born in the UK. She met Flutra and told her she had been a teacher back home and had taught for 7 years. *It's a challenge working with the children who are born here. I taught every subject in Albania, but here it is just English and Albanian.* She worked for 2 years as a volunteer, then Luljeta referred her to

an agency to do the Overseas Trained Teacher programme (at Empowering Learning). All the time Shpresa were pushing her to do more teaching. *I learned how to prepare and organise lesson plans, because it is so much different. I learn not to make it boring for children, to make a good connection, with games and include other subjects. The hardest part is translating between English and Albanian.* She had a second job translating. She is now working as a teaching assistant and has recently completed the HLTA. She is now teaching mainly in English and developing new teaching and learning skills. *I feel tired because I am working full time in the mainstream school, but I can't give up the Albanian children because I enjoy them.* She talks about the inspiration from Shpresa and the happiness of working for them. *I speak to children from different communities.* She also recommends the Shpresa programme to Albanian children she encounters.

**E.** Shpresa offers an opportunity to children born in the UK to learn Albanian. In the beginning E. was a user, in 2005, and needed help to get a British passport. A lot of her friends were volunteering at Shpresa. *I thought this was a good opportunity for me as well. I was on my own with my family, I didn't know any friends, I thought, if I volunteer at Shpresa I'll get to know more people and I get more confidence as well. I was a bit shy in the beginning. I have got more friends now.* She helped three different classes a week for 3 years. E. did a business administration course which was very helpful. Then she continued to study Advice and Guidance. She is now volunteering with benefits advice for another organisation in Stratford. She is hoping to be offered a job but will always help at Shpresa if she is needed.

**Ha.** She started off getting help from Shpresa, then, supported by Evis, started helping others to fill in forms. *I was very good at writing at that time, but not speaking a lot, I could help people get confidence in writing and get benefits or go to the doctor, lots of small things. I can say I filled in forms for 30 families. Joining with Shpresa was a huge privilege and a chance to learn and work for them. I increased my confidence. When I came here it was not 0, it was under 0. I used to be very confident in my country: top job and university and everything and when I came here, they don't count my diploma, I couldn't speak English, everything was upside down. I felt so isolated. Working with Shpresa, I got the confidence to go back to education, back to employment. I worked one year for a paid job, but then there was a funding problem. I have lots of friends now and I am very happy. My children get so much confidence with different projects.* She appreciates the programmes run for the whole family who look forward to coming to Shpresa. She has also worked on an accountancy project and Shpresa are finding her work with other charities. *I want to say thank you to Shpresa, anytime they need me they can call me, they are so much a part of my life and my kids' life. It is a privilege working with Shpresa. My life is completely different from 5 years ago.* She talks about the many opportunities for training, such as leadership, health and safety, taxation courses etc. Shpresa enables people to move on into British society, they work to put people in employment and education. She has worked in other voluntary organisations in Redbridge and with Helping Hand in Newham, but she is very impressed with Shpresa.

**E.** *Back home I just finished school, I got married, I had my family I came here with nothing, no qualifications, no experience, like a fish without water. I am here now and I can't believe that I have progressed so much.* Shpresa push women to do a range of courses for their own benefit. If she weren't pushed she would just watch TV. *Shpresa give us so much network. I find myself being proud of who I am and where I come from.*

**X.** An MP said *what I know about Albanian people is they do prostitution or they do the car wash, and I was completely wrong.* She explains the MP's views were changed by meeting Shpresa and Luljeta, especially.

**Ha.** talks about the strength of Shpresa compared to similar organisations. *We have been lucky to have a good role model in Luljeta.*

Emma points out that people in Shpresa come from very different backgrounds but SH. Has changed mentalities, especially the men's. People are encouraged to move on and get education and a proper job. It is very helpful to isolated women with low self-esteem. There are issues of domestic violence in the community and Shpresa has been working with the women's therapy centre. The women are very conscious that they have rights and this gives them confidence in domestic violence situations. The women talk across each other about how women used to suffer "in the dark" but they can now get help. *We used to keep our feelings inside in our country, now it has changed a lot. We are open to speak to each other, to give opinions, to share experience. Shpresa has changed us a lot. Now I can say 'I have this problem in my life'.* They mention women being alone at home with nothing to do and suffering from depression.

**Volunteering is a benefit, but it's generosity from you because you need money. Does it help you economically?**

*Yes, because it is leading us to paid work. You don't think about the money when you think about what it might be in the future.* They explain that they will volunteer even if the organisation can't afford to pay lunch or fares. *I come for my own benefit, not for £5 a day, I'm here to learn. When you go for a job they ask 'what experience have you got?'*

X. commented that when she was a college she was criticised by two fellow Albanian mothers for putting her 9 month old baby in the college nursery. She points out many children in Albania were brought up in nurseries. *When my son's grown up, he will say to me 'what have you done? Why you haven't moved on?' He won't remember how long he stayed in the nursery.* She felt women were ignorant and criticising her. She retorted: *You're completely wrong, when my son's grown up he doesn't care where he's been. He cares what I am giving to him.* The woman who criticised her is still at home doing nothing on benefits.

Esmeralda: with unpaid work you learn how to work with colleagues, and many transferable skills. When they worked for Shpresa as volunteers they were treated as staff and had the same opportunities for training and support. They reckon when they have worked for Shpresa they can work in most jobs. *Shpresa gave us huge opportunities. They gave us strong foundations to move on.* They mention a friend now earning £36,000 a year after volunteering for 2 years and others who have moved on successfully.

## **Appendix C – Training and Mentoring**

### **1) The Somali Project**

**Interview with Samia Shire carried out on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

**In your experience, what worked well for taking forward some of the issues in education, especially under-achievement and limited parental involvement?**

Ms Shire feels there are no quick fixes for the Somali community: schools need to take a holistic approach and have a range of strategies such as employing bilingual assistants, mentors, and developing after school study support clubs. They need to use several approaches, systematically, over a period of time.

A lot of Somali children attend complementary schools for study support in the key subjects, especially at KS3. Parents are very committed and will pay. Mainstream schools put Somali pupils in a foundation class, in the lower set and that's already putting their aspirations down.

Barriers: Somali parents do not expect to be involved in school. They feel it would be disrespectful.

**Can you tell me a bit about how and why you got involved with Shpresa, with Luljeta Nuzi?**

*I'm at the stage where she was back then, so she could and share her experience and show us a way forward in terms of paperwork, policies, the constitution, accounting. She helped me with the constitution, how to apply to Companies' House, the Charity Commission, you know, she went through it with me.*

Luljeta Nuzi shared her network and introduced Samia Shire to key contacts. She organised CRB checks for Ms Shire and her volunteers, helped to get the organisation off the ground and worked hard to support funding applications. Ms Shire has been shocked at how difficult this has proved to be. Luljeta Nuzi even offered space in the Shpresa office. The embryo organisation is being sustained by private funding from Ms Shires's father.

Ms Shire feels distance is a major difficulty. She is in North London, Shpresa in the East.

*We live in North London and she lives in East London and we're having a logistical problem in getting there. If we were closer we could get everything off the ground.*

Ms Shire is not keen on working with Gascoigne School as originally arranged. She agreed because she wanted to support Luljeta Nuzi who had been so helpful to her. She would prefer to work at Gladesmore School which is in her area where she knows the community and could build trust quickly.

Samia Shire would like to run workshops for parents. She feels families are very poor at getting the right information. Incorrect and unhelpful information often circulates by word of mouth in the community. Somalis are very scared of governments. They are a Nomadic people and do not feel settled in the UK.

*Parents and children want extra support in English and in maths and they want to catch up with the others, with their peers. So that's where the Somali community is at the moment. And that is the cure and we will run classes in maths and English and then we can start on other issues like Somali language.*

This is very different from the Shpresa model as currently practised. Ms Shire explains that finance is a real problem as qualified teachers expect to be paid at least £20 an hour and experienced volunteers are hard to find. She greatly appreciates all the help she received in setting up her charity but feels that a closer partnership with Shpresa is not practical in the long term because of the distance.

**Interview with Samia Shire on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2011**

In an hour long interview Ms Shire was invited to talk about the progress of her plans since the last interview. With the support of Shpresa and of a fund-raiser she was able to obtain a grant from Awards for All to develop a six-month project entitled RAJO (which, like the Albanian word Shpresa, means 'hope' in Somali). This involved young people in a range of activities on Saturdays and Sundays. The children play football on a Saturday and the work on Sundays for 18 to 20 young people aims to provide them with activities that explore their Somali heritage, offers them role models and enables them to engage more fully with education and with the wider community.

Ms Shire explained how she had been able to build on her considerable knowledge of the local community, both through an earlier research project carried out by the Shire Foundation

(1) and through personal networks. With guidance from Shpresa the Shire Foundation obtained registration as a Charity and developed all its procedures.

*This has been very, very helpful, especially with budgets and spreadsheets, as I have no mathematical background at all. I got so much help.*

Six volunteers were recruited and trained with support from Shpresa.

*None of the volunteers had volunteered before. I had two that were graduates and were seeking employment. They said they had the most amazing time! They were so surprised that they brought such a smile on children's faces. They couldn't praise it enough. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of March, everybody was just hugging each other.*

In a telephone interview carried out on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012, Samia Shire offered an update on developments in her project. She still has the use of her premises and has been able to furnish them with support from the community. As a result of the success of the ROJA project she has been networking successfully in the borough and is in a position to bid for projects commissioned by Haringey Council. At the time of the interviews she was preparing to bid for youth projects promoted by the Council in the aftermaths of the events of last August.

Also as a result of the ROJA project Ms Shire has obtained funding from BBC Children in Need to continue the project for a full year. She has also been exploring with Shpresa possibilities for joint bids for partnership working, training opportunities for volunteers and further networking opportunities.

While her new organisation struggles with the issue of finance for core costs, Samia Shire is enthusiastic about cross-community work

*"I think working across communities is really a positive step forward. It tests the community, and broadens a lot of things for an organisation and ... I'm all for working in partnership with any other organisation as long as it is in the best interest of both organisations, so I am all for it"*

and in particular about the benefits of joint events

*"... I think both organisations can meet each other and see their local area and culture. I think it is really good. I think it is a benefit for the children because they come across different cultures and different communities and ...I think just to concentrate on one particular group, I think children want to know about different types of cultures that are out in their community. I don't see any negativity. Children will benefit from that. It's good to be pragmatic and open to new approaches. Especially as the world is changing and it is becoming more condensed and different cultures are mixing."*

## **2) The Portuguese Project**

### **1<sup>ST</sup> Observation Visit : the dance-off on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

On Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> October a joint event was planned between the children attending Shpresa classes and the new Portuguese group. The "dance-off" was billed as a dance competition and all parents were invited. The hall was set out in two sections with an aisle down the middle. Families started pouring in to the hall as soon as the doors were opened. The Albanians sat on the left and the Portuguese on the right.

By the time the event was scheduled to start the hall was packed and excitement was mounting.



The children who participate in the classes were in the open dance area, Albanians on the left and Portuguese on the right. The event was introduced by Flutra Shega and by Rita Chadha-Bolt.



First the Albanian children were invited to cross the floor and find a friend: someone to introduce themselves to and to talk to. Then the Portuguese crossed the floor and chose another friend. Each group was then invited to dance.



The children were initially a



little shy but they warmed up as their families cheered them on. Albanian children dancing under the watchful eye of the headteacher.

Portuguese children dancing.



At the end of the dance, the Albanian children were invited to find their friend and teach the Portuguese children Albanian dancing.

## Dancing together



When the children sat down women were invited to come up to the dance area. The two Albanian mothers who seemed reluctant were dragged up by their children. As for the children, first the Albanian women, then the Portuguese, were invited to choose a friend.

Some embraced and all chatted for quite some time, before they too were invited to dance. As the session ended prizes were offered to both teams.



After the dance-off the two groups of children set to work in separate areas. The Albanian children worked with their dance teacher to rehearse a dance for a forthcoming show. The Portuguese children worked in groups with volunteers to discuss and plan the kinds of activities they would like to have on offer in the group.



## **2<sup>nd</sup> visit: Interview with Euridice Dos Santos on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2010**

On my second visit I arrive a little late, at quarter past five, due to heavy traffic. It is raining, dark and very cold. Ermir Disha, the Albanian dance teacher is welcoming visitors into the hall. A group of the Portuguese children are sitting in a circle playing games with two volunteers and are totally absorbed. A group of Portuguese men and women are sitting in horse-shoe formation in the staff room, taking part in an English lesson led by a Judith Eherton. The Albanian children are out of sight in two adjacent rooms with Flutra Shega, Evis Bodli and two volunteers. I have arranged to interview two women: Euridice Dos Santos, the organiser of the Portuguese group, comes over to greet me and introduces me to Evelina Treciokaite, the organiser of the proposed Lithuanian group.

More people arrive and, by 5.30 there are 14 people in the English class. This ends at 6.30 when Evis Bodli takes over and provides an advice and support session focused around parenting and children's education. The Albanian children move into the gym with Ermir, rehearsing dancing and then playing very lively ball games. The Albanian women are sitting in a group with Flutra. She explains later that they have been discussing fund-raising for a child from the community who is receiving treatment for cancer at a clinic in Texas.

All available rooms are in use so I interview Euridice Dos Santos and Evelina Treciokaite in a corner of the hall to a back drop of children making Christmas decorations and playing What's the time, Mr Wolf?

### **Euridice Dos Santos, the Portuguese Group organiser**

#### **Why she started the group**

Euridice Dos Santos lives near Gascoigne School, which her children attend. Over the last few years she has noticed an increase in the Portuguese speaking population in the Barking area. As she is known to speak English, members of the community regularly ask her for help, for

example in filling in forms. She explains that most members of the community are economic migrants, few speak good English and

*they are not informed of where to go to get help and then I came up with this idea that maybe we should do something for the community because there isn't anything here representing the Portuguese community.*

Ms Dos Santos worked with two other women, Maris and Crisolta , who encouraged her to start the group. She describes how she approached the school and got a very positive response. She was advised to produce a written proposal, was put in touch with Shpresa and advised by the headteacher to start the project slowly in June and July. The project grew rapidly by word-of-mouth in the community and this resulted in a substantial attendance at the Dance-off event in October 2010 and the increased involvement of volunteers..

### **Working with Shpresa**

Ms Dos Santos met with Flutra Shega and Luljeta Nuzi:

*they have been fantastic for the support they gave us. They helped with relations with the school, with the proposal, supported us on the night, showed us how to organise the kids and gave us examples of how they do things. They are very similar to the ideas that we have as well.*

Shpresa obtained CRB checks for the volunteers, provided examples of documents and policies, obtained funding to pay a teacher and fund the activities and put the group in touch with the Barking and Dagenham BME forum and Rita Chadha at RAMFEL who supplied the English teacher.

*Shpresa are like mentors to me now. They are helping us with volunteer training as well, for the ladies' working in the group. And they helped us with running the consultation event the other day.*

### **The Portuguese community in Barking and Dagenham**

Members of the Portuguese community in the area have the Portuguese language in common, most of them have lived in Portugal and have Portuguese citizenship although they originate from countries that were once Portuguese colonies: Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde and Sao Tome. Ms Dos Santos explains that there are few “*real, real Portuguese, they are located in other areas*”.

Lack of fluency in English is a big problem for the community. Ms Dos Santos explains that she knows families that have been resident for 10 years but have had few opportunities to learn the language. With poor English skills and few qualifications, they only have access to unskilled or semi-skilled jobs, the women in hotel cleaning and the men in construction labouring. Euridice Dos Santos explains that people

*want to work, to have a proper house, to drive, to have a car, and they just need like, an angel, someone to say, come on, you can do it! Come on, let's get together. And this is what he community needs, to get together.*

The children still understand and speak Portuguese, although they do not speak it well and have little connection with their cultures of origin.

### **The group's aims**

In the first instance the group aims to respond to the needs identified by the community since members first started planning in June 2010. Children and parents have been consulted. Priorities include games, dance, Portuguese language learning and cultural events, with English language and classes on parenting and the education system for adults.

## Benefits

Euridice Dos Santos gives an example of the benefit of the English classes

*I am really happy to see that, this is really what they need. The ladies need to be empowered with the language. They need to get some skills, some qualifications, these are people who can be empowered to do well. I have a lady, one of the ladies there, she has been here for 13 years. She speaks a little bit of English but she doesn't like to. I can see that she is changing. She is starting to learn. Now she is a bit more confident to go outside and talk to people or deal with her problems. It changes people's lives...I hope this will give them more confidence, to become more independent, and it will help them to integrate.*

She explains that it is particularly important to empower women, as not all men are supportive of their wives working outside the home. She offers another example

*The other day I phoned one of the ladies and she came here. She said I want to learn, I want to be a volunteer. How do I help? How do I become a volunteer? I said we will discuss it, we will help you. If you have time to give your support here, I will have to see what you want. And I found her in the shop and she said, oh, you know I am with the kids, I can't do anything. I could see that she really, really wanted to learn... we are going to try and work together and see what training she can get.*

Euridice Dos Santos explains that the parenting classes run by Evis Bodli are particularly popular because the education system in Portugal is so different from that in England and parents don't understand how they can support their children.

*They were pleased with her because we don't know about the children, how well they do in school, what problems they have in school... She's just there, giving training and it's really good and it makes us aware of what happens with the children in school. Most of the parents don't really know what's happening in school.*

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Visit: interviews with women in the English class and Euridice Dos Santos

On my third visit, on 17<sup>th</sup> February, I arrive just a few minutes after 5p.m. In the hall the children from the Portuguese group are already organised in their activities.



Jesse, the dance teacher is working with 7 young boys on a complex street dancing routine. The children are totally absorbed, keeping perfect time as they rehearse the moves.



Further back in the hall four teenage girls are working out their own

dance routine under the instruction of Danila, the 16 year-old volunteer. They also are totally absorbed.

The children are preparing for a show that will take place in March. The boys and girls are rehearsing separately, but they will dance together on the day.

In a neighbouring classroom 13 children aged 2 to 9 are working at tables with two volunteer teachers, Crisolite and Maria. They are designing and making costumes for the show, from plastic, paper, card and other recycled materials. They are talking Portuguese among themselves and to the teachers.



In the staff room I get another opportunity to meet the students in the English class. This time they are all women. The teacher sets the class a task and spends a few minutes telling me about her class.

She is a retired professional who has trained in EFL at International House. She is employed by RAMFEL. She regularly has about 10 to 12 students, 18 are on roll,

although to-day there are only 5. This rose to 20 before Christmas when it included two Lithuanians. They no longer attend and she has been informed that they have returned to Lithuania. Judith explains that her students range from very elementary to intermediate. She has found a number of her students shy and reluctant to speak, so she arranges activities, such as role play, to encourage the use of spoken language. She finds the students very keen to improve.

### **The students in the English class**

After observing a question and answer activity, I get an opportunity to talk to the women. The exchange is limited as I do not speak Portuguese, but the women are keen to talk to me. M. explains that she comes

*because I want to learn English in the right way. So that I can find a good job.*

E. agrees

*I come to school to learn good English, because my English is very poor and because I have nothing for to do at home. And I come with my grandson because I am nanny.*

N. adds

*I enjoy the English class because I need to learn speak more my English because I don't speak very well English. I need more qualifications, I do find one job.*

All the women have children, or grandchildren who attend the group, except S., who is newly arrived from Portugal and is a beginner at English. E. is proud that she is able to translate for S. and explain that she wants to learn English so she can find a job.

The women are keen and feel that one lesson a week is not sufficient. E. notes

*We need to speak English. Because we have only one day. We need to maybe one more day. Two days is OK for us.*

T. is hoping to find employment in baking. She explains

*I started a course on cake decoration. I need to learn more English because in the future I need to do one to make the cakes.*

Those with children are pleased that they are attending the group to learn Portuguese. N.

*I've got children as well here, they enjoy it very much. They learn Portuguese well, because we just talk at home, but here they learn how to write and they like to stay here. They enjoy it very much.*

### **Second interview with Euridice Dos Santos – 17<sup>th</sup> February**

I sit down to talk to Ms Dos Santos, this time in a quiet classroom, to find out how the group has developed since my visit in November.

The main event was the formal launch of the Portuguese Group which was coupled with a Christmas Party on 16<sup>th</sup> December. This was well attended. Five volunteers prepared Portuguese food for sharing. All members of the community were given a questionnaire to complete. This provided more information about the wishes of the community and established a list of members willing to help as volunteers (a report from event is included in the Appendix).

The group have spent some time discussing a distinctive name for the group. They have settled on *Bem me quer*, which Ms Dos Santos says is difficult to translate, but she explains

*you know the flower daisy? We have this saying, Bem me quer, ma me quer. It's like "love me, love me not". But in our language it's, it can be love me as well, but it's not really love me, it's like wishing me well. So like, the group wishes everybody well.*

Euridice Dos Santos has drafted a design for a logo which represents a daisy with seven petals, one for each of the Portuguese speaking countries that members of the group come from.

Since my last visit the group has put a lot of work into developing formal structures. She shows me a ring bound file in which all her policies and administrative procedures are recorded. She shows me the registration forms for children, health and safety, child protection policies, and there are many more. Ms Dos Santos explains how the mentoring from Shpresa has proceeded and how they have helped with sample documents

*They let me have a look at the samples. And I look at it and adapt it and I prepare. The constitution is done, the board of directors, chair, secretary and treasurer. Shpresa have got a grant for the group which they are managing temporarily. When all the papers are ready we will be opening a bank account.*

Ms Dos Santos explains her feelings about the support she has received

*It's been excellent, I think. They have helped so much. The mentoring, the stages where I am now and what you can do next and the advice for the group, on this health and safety thing, and the equal opportunities, child protection, it all came from them and it's been a great help for us. They have been through it all and I am able to go through their stuff... It's very good to have a look and to have an idea of how things are done and they already have stuff. They have been more than helpful. Very good. And they are very friendly, we feel good with them. I feel like one of them actually. I feel familiar, I feel comfortable with them, I can just talk with them.*

The five volunteers that have been recruited are receiving training in child care, health and safety, first aid, food hygiene and more is planned, such as leadership skills. As well as the

English teacher, a paid dance teacher has been recruited. Ms Dos Santos feels there has already been an impact on the children

*Even the kids. They are learning dancing now. Otherwise at this time they would just be at home watching TV. But now they know that every Thursday there is a Portuguese Club, as they call it, so they can have fun, they can dance, they can learn Portuguese. It's a way for them to socialise as well... which is very good.*

Older children have started to attend, some coming from as far as Dagenham.

### **Extracts from an interview with Euridice Dos Santos on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012 to provide an update on the project:**

The networking across communities has been very beneficial to her organisation as well as to her personal development:

*The benefits are excellent. People now know that there is a Portuguese community in this area, a year ago they didn't know about that. The Council know, the other organisations know, which is very good. And Margaret Hodge, the MP, she knows now. I never had the opportunity to meet her, but she knows because this Christmas I received a Christmas card from her, for the Portuguese community group. And they were all so happy and said wow! So it's like, in the one year, I've managed to network, to build some relationships with people from the Council, with people from other Portuguese organisations as well, in Tottenham and Central London. The other day I had some conversation with Shpresa and she was trying to show me what I had achieved personally in the last one year. It was a lot. It was very good. And it made me think that, you need to have this, keep it running because, for what I have achieved, I even became a School Governor at Gascoigne. I am a community representative now, so in July I became a community representative. Which is very good. Now I have a special role in the governing body which is training and liaising....If organisations are working together and if they can bring things that are not there, if these organisations can make things happen, of course it will affect the policies and on the political side. It makes a difference.*

Euridice Dos Santos greatly values the lessons she has learned from Shpresa:

*this is what I learned from Shpresa. Whatever opportunity you have, always grab it. This is what they told me at the beginning and this is what I keep doing. Any meeting you are invited to, whatever, anything. Just go for that opportunity, never give up, there are problems or difficulties but we can come through it. There is always a solution, if you show all the people that you are having the problem. There is always one or two that will support you. If not them, they will always refer you to somebody else who is more ... can advise you. So I have learned a lot, I have built my skills, my networking which is very good, so I can go to meetings now and they know "oh, I heard of you. Are you the Portuguese?" It makes a big difference. And I can see how happy they are, how they can talk with enthusiasm "oh, you are from the Portuguese community!" Which I believe makes them happy as well. So always get the opportunity, use it, and never give up. And you'll get there.*

Ms Dos Santos has also provided evidence of her organisation having developed a London-wide presence.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> visit: children's voices – 17<sup>th</sup> March 2011

On my fourth visit the children are just arriving. A group of younger children are perched on benches at the side of the hall, waiting to be allocated to their activities. I am interested to find that they are talking excitedly among themselves in Portuguese.



A few minutes later Jesse, the dance teacher starts a rehearsal for a forthcoming show with four teenage girls and Danila, the volunteer.

They are intent on getting the complex steps right and Jesse is a perfectionist. Near the end of the routine he films them with his telephone and they cluster eagerly around him to get the verdict.



I move on to the classroom and find the group of younger children has grown substantially since my last visit. There are now 22 children sitting at tables, opening their exercise books and learning their numbers in Portuguese.



Ms Dos Santos tells me that new children join every week. She is supported in the classroom by Maria and another volunteer. At the end of the session the children join in a lively song.

#### **The children's voices**

In the course of the evening I get the opportunity to carry out group interviews with a group of younger children, junior-aged children and teenage girls.

**The younger children** are aged 5 and 6. They are excited to come in

to a side room and talk to me. They chat about their friends, who brings them to the club. In

response to a question about why they come to the group A. explains : *I like dancing, I like playing football and I like playing with the girls too, the girls games, like catch the boys.* B. tells me she comes *to learn. I learn Portuguese words.* C. comes for the same reason and adds *I like writing and dancing.* Both she and D. also come *because I like to play with my friends.* The children all agree they enjoy the dancing.

All but one of the children explain that they understand when their parents talk Portuguese



and that they speak the language “a little”. C. on the other hand speaks English with her mother and explains that when her parents speak Portuguese to each other *I don't understand what they say.*

**The junior age children** are aged 8 and 9, though one in the group is 6. They are very focused on my

questions and give substantial answers. They clearly enjoy coming, meeting friends, dancing and playing games, but it is with respect to learning the language that they are most vocal.

J. comes

*Because the learning is exciting. And we learn more Portuguese and words that we never knew. And we're learning how to read in Portuguese and all sorts of stuff. ... I like playing the games and enjoying the lessons that we do.*



She goes on to explain how she learns:

*I learn all of the words and I really like talking Portuguese. All of us here, we like coming here because there is interesting stuff and we learn more stuff than we did when we listen to our parents speak to us because ... there's some words we don't know, but they tell us what the word is and we write it in our books so then every time we are stuck on a word, we can just open our books and we can say the word.*

N. explains

*I like learning Portuguese because, after, when I grow up, I'm going to learn all the words. I like to read. I like to talk Portuguese with my parents. And I like to learn Portuguese because it's fun. I like to see my friends at Portuguese club. We*

*dance, we sing songs, we write Portuguese, that's what we're doing. And we learn numbers in Portuguese.*

C. mentions that she particularly looks forward to parties.

**The teenage girls** were interviewed with Danila, the volunteer who supports them.

Danila explains how she got involved in the organisation:

*my uncle brings my little sister and my little cousin and I came to pick them up one day and they started to tell me about what it was and what they did here, so I decided to volunteer. So briefly, what I do is ... sometimes I help with the kids and sometimes I help with the older ones, teaching them dance. And I also participate in it as well. I taught myself, so I'm learning too... and what she likes about it:*



*what interested me is that they were teaching a lot of kids Portuguese. That to me was the most important. And now that I come here all the time and I see the same faces and it's kind of growing into a family if you see what I mean? ... It's more about the experience I am gaining from this. It's free, so why not take the opportunity to do it.*

Danila goes on to talk about the importance of learning Portuguese

*Really important, because it's always important to know the language that your parents speak and having a second language is important. It's spoken all over the world.*

After complaining about the lack of choice for language learning at her school, she was supported in sitting a Portuguese GCSE. As a result she is fluent and literate in the language.

J. is a recently arrived Italian girl. She has joined her friends in the group but is still not sure whether she will stay in Britain. The other girls talk about the importance of learning Portuguese. Two of the girls explain that they understand it but lack fluency in speaking and they appreciate the opportunity to become literate in the language. A third was at school in Portugal when she was younger and is literate in the language.

The girls enjoy the social aspect of the group, particularly *when we create different dances with Danila and when new people come to the group.*

The girls go on to talk about their ambitions for the future. Danila wants to be a psychologist, H. a PE teacher, J. a maths teacher, M. wants to work in social care and S. is not yet sure about her plans.

### 3) The MYPOLACY Polish Project

**Visit to Mypolacy on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

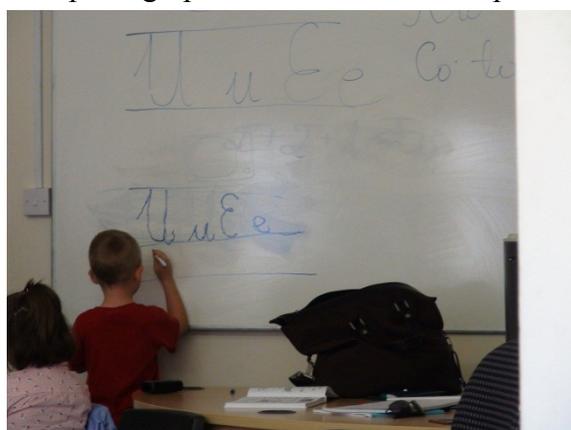
At the time of writing Mypolacy is in the process of negotiating to use the premises of a



mainstream school for its classes. In the meantime these are held in premises above a shop in the lively High Street of East Ham. On the afternoon of my visit it is a warm and sunny day and the pedestrianized High Street is very lively indeed and full of the sound of street music.

The day of my visit coincides with Teachers' Day in Poland and, as I walk into the room, two teachers are being presented with bouquets of flowers and

photographed with children. Six parents are present, three of whom are able to stay and speak



to me. There are nine children aged 4 to 8 (4 girls and 5 boys) working around a long table in the centre of the room. The room is spacious and well equipped as a teaching space with two large whiteboards. The equipment in use includes children's textbooks, handwriting books, drawing books and writing and drawing materials.

The teacher comes across as an enthusiastic volunteer. He has a very pleasant manner with the children, using praise and encouragement. In the hour and a half that I spend observing, the pace of the session and the activities vary.

Initially the children are practising handwriting (the Polish style is different from the English), coming out to try their skills on the whiteboard and practising in their books. They are concentrating and watching carefully the teacher's instructions. The teacher speaks in Polish throughout and the children all appear to understand him well.

The children have a break for lunch at their desks. They bring out sandwiches and drinks from their satchels, then tidy up and settle down to reading under the guidance of the teacher. They are clearly in the early stages of reading, but the teacher is delighted with their progress. The oldest child, an 8-year old girl, reads a little independently. The teacher explains to me that, at this early stage of learning Polish phonics, some of the children confuse the English and Polish pronunciation of letters. After some concentrated group reading, the children rise, push their chairs in and follow their teacher in some lively physical exercises on either side of the table, to music played from the teacher's phone. They are clearly enjoying this.





The teacher explains to me that he tells traditional myths and stories, which the children illustrate, as a way of making them familiar with Polish history and culture. The children have settled down to drawing just before I leave and are chatting to each other about their work.

While the premises do not offer much space for recreation, they are safe and satisfactory and it is clear that even the youngest child is happy and that all are enjoying their activities.

As the children are so intent on their activities I am reluctant to interrupt to talk to individuals and they are a little shy of me. I have a few words with the oldest girl, who is not yet fluent in English and asks the teacher to translate. She explains that she enjoys learning the alphabet and that her mother brings her because she

enjoys meeting her friends.

While the class is taking place, the coordinator is holding meetings with parents in a side room.

### **In January 2012 Anna Palka provided an update to her project.**

Since the successful pilot of the Polish classes using Shpresa's premises, Anna Palka has been finding maintaining the success a struggle. She explains:

*In July 2011 we had 40 students. And then we had to move back to the Mypolacy Centre Office to East Ham and on the spot we lost about half of the students. Because they weren't happy with moving. Many of them were living just next to the Shpresa office. They were expecting we would carry on, but we couldn't afford the rent and we had to move here. Because here we have the school and the office and we can divide the expense, that's why. We had no choice. I'm planning to open another department in Plaistow, so I hope they will come back. So at the moment we have got about 20 students.*

With assistance from Shpresa Ms Palka has been trying to find a school within her catchment area willing to offer free premises, and has not yet been successful.

In addition to the issue of premises, Anna Palka has not yet been successful in obtaining any finance for her core operations and is currently entirely dependent on the small fee that families can afford to pay. While she was initially able to pay one of the two teachers (the one observed when I first visited the class) she is no longer able to do this and has recruited a volunteer to replace him.

An unexpected additional problem has been a wait-and-see attitude from some parents:

*there were so many parents coning here and they were expressing openly that they want to wait for some time to see how the school will go. How sustainable we will be. So that's one of the reasons they didn't want to put their children because they weren't sure how we would survive. I saw a few parents and they*

*are waiting, probably, for the next year. Hopefully they will come back, seeing we are still existing and teaching children.*

While Anna Palka's determination and passion for her project are evident, she has also planned to ensure that her project continues should she become unavailable. The teacher of the older children

*she is my right hand. She is helping me a lot. She is the one who will cover if I am not able to come. If she isn't able then there is my partner from another organisation. He can help me to keep it going as well. So I don't worry about this at the moment.*

Anna reports that she has found the networking at a local level in the borough very helpful, in providing feedback and confidence and helping to establish her presence in the community and within the voluntary sector. In spite of the difficulties she is experiencing her vision remains strong and she is determined to succeed

*We are struggling at the moment but moving forward slowly.*

*My dreams and my hopes, I will start talking about them when I make this number happen, 40-50. And there are, I can say I believe more Polish children will speak their mother-tongue language, which they will write and they will know more about culture. They will be able to show to other children some bits about Polish culture, Polish dance, so that's my hope, to make it happen. We need to have more students.*

### **Interviews with three teachers(in January and March 2012)**

The passion for teaching and for transmitting language and culture comes across strongly in the interviews with three volunteer teachers. All have experience in Poland although none of them are sufficiently fluent in English as yet to be teachers in the UK. All talk about the pleasure of working with children and supporting parents who are anxious about their children losing the use of Polish. They are keenly aware of their responsibility to transmit language, but also because they are the only teachers that some of the children have access to, either because they are waiting for a school place or because they travel frequently and do not attend school.

The secondary teacher, who has a Masters degree in Pedagogy, focuses on the very high level of differentiation needed in lessons to support both the relatively new arrivals who have been to school in Poland and the London-born child of mixed heritage who hears little Polish in the home.

Another volunteer who works with the older group of students is an expert on conflict resolution and community development. This has led her to an appreciation of the focus in Newham schools on community cohesion and developing children's social awareness, which contrasts with Polish schools which are entirely focused on the transmission of the curriculum. Her particular concern is with children recently arrived from Poland who are showing signs of losing the active use of Polish. She is also concerned about the group of Roma teenagers who attend the class, who speak a dialect of Polish as well as Roma but who have never been to school and are new to literacy. Another challenge for her is that a few of the children have an irregular attendance pattern.

The volunteer teacher who works with the younger group is only in her second week at Mypolacy when I speak to her. She was also a teacher in Poland and enjoys the opportunity of using her skills to transmit language and culture. For her the main challenges of the post is the lack of space for practical activities. She is particularly positive about social diversity in London.

### Parents' voices (interviewed in January, February and March)

Due to the restricted space on the premises interviews with parents were also fairly brief and several were carried out with the assistance of an interpreter. All parents referred to the importance of maintaining their first language and ensuring their children know about Polish culture. They are pleased with the school and report that their children enjoy attending. All parents report having heard about the school from friends.

The parents of a six year old boy born in Poland, but living in England since the age of two, explained that they speak Polish to their son at home: *"It's very important. We are Polish, we want our son to speak both languages and to know the history and culture of Poland"* and the father added *"We have a lot of family so every year we go for a long holiday and it's a very important thing for us to give our son knowledge about our country and its history and geography"*.

The family heard about the new school from a friend and have been bringing their son for 5 weeks *"to give our son some chance to learn.. "At home he tries to be Polish and when he is going to school he is trying to be English."* They order children's books in Polish from a local shop, over the internet, and *"when we are on holiday in Poland we are buying a lot of books and we have a huge shelf full of books"*.

The father says his son enjoys the classes: *"He likes coming here. He makes new friends, different ones from English school."* The mother hopes they will soon move to proper school premises where there will be more opportunities for games and a wider range of activities. The parents are also keen to support their child in the mainstream school *"We help with homework and projects. It's work for us as well!"*

The mother of a six year old girl has lived 11 years in London and her daughter was born there. She explains her reasons for bringing her daughter to Polish classes: *"It is important to learn Polish because her dad is English and I am Polish, so she lives in this country, but she does go back to Poland and she needs to speak Polish to some of the people. It's important for her to communicate with Polish people in Poland. And it's a second language as well. It's important that we learn French, Spanish, German. I speak Polish with her at home but we do mix. That's one reason why I have brought her to Polish school because since she was born, we mix the languages and the way she speaks, she speaks half English, half Polish. She needs to know when you speak Polish and when you speak English. ... so she knows the difference between English and Polish."*

Like the other parents interviewed, she buys children books from the internet and also from a Polish club in Hammersmith. She also heard of the school from a friend and is pleased with her daughter's progress: *"she's very happy here. She likes school but she is very shy, so I bring her here to open up a little bit more"*.

The mother of 10 year old Weronika (her chosen pseudonym) arrived in England six months ago and speaks to me with the assistance of an interpreter. She is delighted with her daughter's progress in her English school and the quality of the teaching. She says to me in English *"I love the school, trust me, it's very good"* and through the interpreter

*"She's really pleased about the English school, she says she has lovely teachers and lovely assistants and she really appreciates that after a half year staying here, her daughter is reading books in English"*.

The mother then proceed to talk enthusiastically and very expressively directly to me about the importance of language learning

*Polish is very important. I don't know how is future. She can go back, one day, to Poland. There is plenty schools, plenty universities what use only English. She can exactly learn in Poland. Very important, she must be proper Polish, proper English. She is like a sponge with language. Children is like sponge with language. She speak as well Hindi. She watches many songs and she proper speak Hindi. I'm thinking this is very difficult, yes? And for her it's like sponge. People hear how she sings and they are shocked because she is very clear. She watching Bollywood movies and she sings. Trust me. I'm thinking, English is not easy like this. What happened? I see with my eyes children are like a sponge.*

She very much appreciates the Polish school and the way in which her daughter can continue her development in Polish which she also supports at home.

Two mothers were interviewed with interpreter assistance in March. One was very keen for her daughter to attend as she had been waiting for several months for a place in a local primary school. She was grateful to Anna Palka for advising her and supporting her in this process. Another mother, who had older children at college and in work explained how she helped her children to learn Polish at home but was grateful for the teacher's expertise in teaching writing. She explained how her children enjoyed making Polish friends at the school, but also that they made friends from all communities in east London.

### **Children's voices**

In the course of visits in February and March 7 children were interviewed, all from the older group who meet on a Saturday morning.

Weronika has been in the UK for 6months and it's her mother who told me how much she loves languages, speaks to me with support from an interpreter. The first thing she tells me is that she can count in Russian and Urdu and proceeds to demonstrate. She explains that she has good friends in the Polish school and that attending enables her to continue where she left off. The interpreter tells me "She says that she comes here because she likes learning, learning, learning and reading". Weronika learned English in her Polish school and feels this helped her when she came to London. She loves her mainstream school and feels she is getting on well there and enjoys the friendly atmosphere. She explains:

*She says that they don't quarrel, the atmosphere is quite good, there is no aggression. This is different from the Polish one because there was, the children were more naughty. The Polish in Poland are more naughty than here. Sometimes they are violent, the children, in Poland*

She feels very well supported by her mainstream teacher

*She says in the beginning it was quite difficult but she was really surprised when after two days at school, her teacher gave her a diploma. She did not expect it and it was really nice and she is doing better and better.*

Nicola (her chosen pseudonym) is 11 and is looking forward to going to secondary school. She too loves languages: she is totally fluent in English, speaks Polish well and enjoys learning Spanish at school. She enjoys the class and the opportunity to meet Polish friends:

*I learn Polish because it helps me and I can read Polish and write better Polish. I enjoy it because I learn more and there's loads of friends here and the teachers support you. And if you don't know they help you.*

E. is 8 years old and explains to me that her mother is Polish and her father Caribbean and that she speaks St Lucian French and learns standard French at school. She also mentions learning Latin at school and knowing "a bit of German". She explains her motivation for attending the classes:

*I come here because I don't really know a lot of Polish and. I only know a couple of words, and I need to learn Polish because I go to Poland and visit my cousins. I want to communicate with them. I'm trying to teach them some English and I'm teaching my auntie some English, and one of my aunties is not very good at speaking English and she made a deal with me. If I teach her English she teaches me in Polish.*

E. is lively and very enthusiastic about the classes and the special activities "it's perfect just the way it is".

Maria is almost 15 years old and has lived in London for 8 years. She is confident and beautifully dressed. She speaks Roma and Polish and although she occasionally makes use of the interpreter to communicate with me, she can make herself understood in English. She attends the school to improve her Polish and to learn to write it. She speaks Roma with her family and Polish with friends. She has never been to school. However she tells me she has an English book and that she is trying to learn from it by herself. The interpreter tells me:

*She likes to come here because it is a nice atmosphere. She feels very well here. She has cousins here. . She would like to have her own family, and to have some education which is also important, some education and to be happy.*

On my next visit she tells me that she would like to be a dress designer and that she started to make some of her own clothes.

N. and her twin sister D. are aged 11 and come to talk to me together. They also make some use of an interpreter to communicate with me. Both have just recently joined the class. They explain that they travel regularly between Poland and England, sometimes spending a whole year in Poland. They had started attending primary school in England but ceased attending when they returned to Poland on the death of their grandmother, to deal with family matters. The girls speak Roma at home and both Roma and Polish with friends. Nisa explains that she had English friends when she was at primary school. Nisa and Diana want to improve their Polish and learn to write the language. Both girls talk about their ambitions. Nisa wants to become a make-up artist. Diana comes across as very confident and tells me, through the interpreter

*She wants to achieve something in life. So she wants to go through college and university and then she would like to be a doctor, but it is difficult to be a doctor. Hard work.*

#### **4) The Lithuanian Project**

##### **Observation in the Lithuanian class**

The class runs from 11am to 1pm with a 15 minute break during which children can eat a snack which they bring from home. I arrive just as the class is starting and children are settling down. There are 12 children, 5 boys and 7 girls. Another girl arrives later.



Milda Lileikiene reports that there have been new children joining recently, including 3 girls that morning.

There are two 3 year olds, P. and L. They sit at a separate table with E., the classroom assistant. She has a selection of jig-saw puzzles with large pieces, children's books and small brightly coloured plastic letters, colouring pens and paper. Throughout the first part of the session she engages the children, talking to them. Later she holds their hand as they learn to write their names and a few letter shapes. They seem at ease and comfortable talking to her and each other. After the two younger ones join the rest of the class for a drama rehearsal.



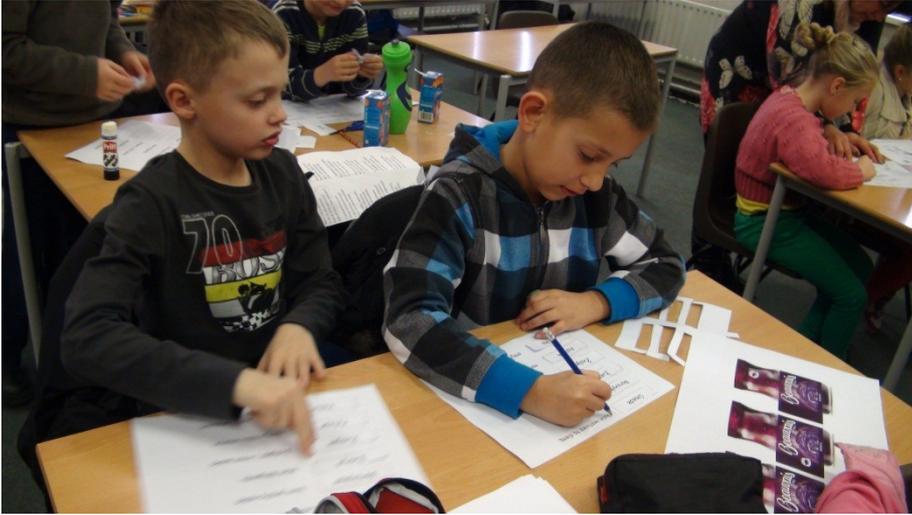
The other children (aged 6 to 11) have large sheets of paper. The children have been asked to brainstorm the names of famous characters from Lithuanian fairy tales from a list of initial letters. One of the boys has brought in an elaborate model of a jet fighter made from Lego which he keeps on his desk and intermittently plays with.

At the beginning of the lesson the girls seem much more intent on the task than the boys, who are fidgeting.

The teacher has a very pleasant and expressive voice and good body language. She



speaks entirely in Lithuanian. As the lesson progresses, they start discussing the story that they will be presenting for a show on 8<sup>th</sup> March. It is a play based on a folk tale about mushrooms by a famous modern Lithuanian writer.



Later when the children have a sentence matching task, the boys get more involved and two in particular seem more fluent in their reading. When break time comes the children are very engaged and are not keen to interrupt their work.

During break several children have a snack and enjoy talking to each other. At the end of break they need a little persuasion to start working

again.

After break the teacher sits the children in a large semi-circle. There are mushroom hats as props, the children have the script and start rehearsing. The teacher is very expressive and good at building children's confidence and drawing them in. Because of the absence of several children, she has to stand in for several parts.



A star part is held by three year-old P. who is showing off proudly and has a loud voice. One girl in particular is very expressive in her role, and the boys are confident at reading from their script. One boy is tearful because he wants to change roles.

Twenty minutes before the end of the lesson the teachers sits the children

back at their desks. From the front of the class she runs an interactive vocabulary lesson based on stories and using a large clown puppet. Although the boys appear inattentive, they are quick with the correct answers.

In the last ten minutes of the lesson the teacher reads the whole class a story with great expression. The children are totalled absorbed and attentive. As the story draws to a close, parents start coming ion to class to collect their children. They have a few words with the teacher as the children tidy up and she starts packing up her equipment.

### Parents' voices

**R. was interviewed on 8<sup>th</sup> March at Gascoigne School.**

R. is the mother of a five year-old. The family have been in the UK for two years and her son joined the Lithuanian school when it started at Gascoigne in September. Before her son started at his local primary school she was anxious

*I was worried because my son didn't speak English at all. I was very concerned that he is not able to express himself. But later, when he started he made very, very good progress in the English school. In a few months, about 4 months, he did very, very well and I realised that he forgot his language. He started to mix English words with Lithuanian words. And that is the main reason why we came here, to know his native language. Not to forget it.*

R. is pleased with the impact on her son:

*Very good. Because they are reading, they are writing, they are learning the letters. I am sometimes teaching him at home as well. We are doing practice. They are learning the letters, Lithuanian letters, because the Lithuanian alphabet is different. And the kids are learning everything here .... because they have drama here.*

She judges the school by how keen her son is to attend

*L. is very interested. He is always asking, when are we going. I think, if he is asking me it shows that he likes it. And it is the most important thing: that the kids want to go there.*

R speaks good English and works in London, but she is continuing with her studies in Lithuania by distance learning. She still finds settling in east London difficult

*Everything! New language, everything around, to find a job. Because you are coming to nowhere, you don't have family here, you don't have friends here, you are even scared to go to the GP.*

She finds life very expensive and still struggles to navigate services. She would welcome an information service for Lithuanians. *Information for young families, for kids and things. Just that information.*

**The following parents were interviewed on 12<sup>th</sup> February at Mayfield School.**

M. has brought her 3 daughters: twins aged 7 and an older girl aged 9. This is their first visit to the school and she is staying to find out what it is like and to see how her daughters respond. She found out about the school from a friend. The family have been in Britain for only two years, so all the girls were born in Lithuania. She is very keen for them to maintain the language: she speaks it exclusively with them at home. She reads them stories everyday *"I grew up with stories. I know them all!"* She also tells stories. She explains that she has older children back in Lithuania and has a large collection of children's books from when they were young. She also brings back books when she visits home.

M. in Hackney and her daughters attend the local Primary School. She was attending Hackney Community College to learn English. However she was able to get work as a child minder for 3 days a week and this no longer fitted with her college hours. She explains that she is working by herself to improve her English. She learnt the language at school in Lithuania and can read much better than she can understand and speak. So she visits Hackney Library where she can use audio-cassettes to teach herself. She feels she is improving, but needs a lot of practice.

E., like M., has been sitting watching the class. He has brought his 3 year-old only daughter P. She is very settled while he is in the room, but when he tried to leave she

started to cry. Nearer the end of the session, after break, he was able to leave for a short while. He also found out about the class from friends. He lives in Dagenham. P. does not speak any English. He explains that she attended a toddlers' group for a few months, but hardly any of the other children spoke English, so she did not learn any. He is anxious that she will forget Lithuanian when she starts school, so he is keen for her to learn the language and especially to make Lithuanian speaking friends. P. gets on well with the older girls. I witnessed this at break when she went over to talk to them and brought one over to see the work she had been doing on her table with the volunteer assistant. He explains that he tells or reads P. stories every night. He tells me about a Lithuanian shop in Beckton that sells children's books. He likes the fact that the teacher does drama with the children and uses stories as a basis for her teaching.

He talks about how expensive it would be to have a "proper school", a bilingual one that ran five days a week, using both languages. This would be his ideal for his daughter.

A. arrived late with her daughter who appears to be the oldest child in the group and has been attending since November. She sits and waits at the side of the class. This is the first time she has had a chance to observe what is happening. She also heard about the school from a friend. She is concerned that her daughter is forgetting Lithuanian, answering in English when she is spoken to in Lithuanian at home. She wants her daughter to make Lithuanian friends and learn more about the culture. She also thinks languages are important and she would like her daughter to learn several. She thinks drama and singing are also important and would like to see more activities of that kind available.

The family visit Lithuania in the summer holidays. There is an extended family there, but it is noticeable that her daughter's Lithuanian is not very good when she communicates with them. A. talks about the Lithuanian community. She values this school and is very happy with it. Her daughter loves coming to the school and gets up enthusiastically on a Sunday morning. There is very little that is organised for the Lithuanian community (that A. is aware of), except for Christmas and Easter events organised by the Lithuanian Embassy.

### **Children's voices**

R. and K. both started in November. They come to a quiet corner of the classroom during break to explain to me why they come here. R. tells me "*I want to learn better Lithuanian*". She explains that she likes the school very much. She enjoys "*sticking names to things*" and learning new words and learning stories.

K. likes the way the class is structured "*if you learn here, you also get time to have a break and remember what you have learned*" and she talks about the benefits of learning more Lithuanian and learning new words. She adds "*There's a lot of different stories in our language*."

R. explains that some of the stories are similar to ones she encounters in her English School. She mentions the Three Little Pigs which is slightly different in Lithuanian.

R. "*you learn new words in stories. Words that you don't use at home*".

K. "*Complicated words*"

R “*We can speak Lithuanian here and have Lithuanian friends*”

K “*We play lots of different stuff, different games, sports games*”.

The girls love drama and appreciate how they learn new words through acting out stories and playing traditional games.

There is limited time available to discuss the girls’ relationship with their English school. K. enjoys it but R. is not so keen “*I don’t really have friends in English school.*”  
(The interviews stops here as break is over and the class are reassembling).

## **Appendix D - Interviews with school and community leaders**

**Rita Chadha –Bolt** , the Chief Executive Officer of the Refugee and Migrant Forum of East London (RAMFEL) was interviewed by telephone on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011.

Ms Chadha-Bolt explains her role in the setting up the organisation. Shpresa introduced the Portuguese Group to her. She is supporting them to set up formally as an organisation, through helping with a constitution and has offered training for their management committee on the differences between a charity and a company. Training will be offered in fund-raising when the group become a registered charity. Rita Chadha-Bolthas offered advice on making connections locally and positioning themselves so that local authorities take the needs of the Portuguese community on board.

Ms Chadha-Bolt will retain a role with group as she is the main contact with the BME forum in Barking and Dagenham where they are regular attendees. RAMFEL provide the teacher for the English classes with £1,000 provided by Shpresa. This arrangement will continue as the Portuguese Group do not yet have a bank account. Ms Chadha-Bolt is aware that the women would like to meet twice a week and have a longer lesson on the day. She is trying to find more suitable local authority accommodation for the lessons.

On the impact of the group so far, Rita Chadha-Bolt comments

*They are getting recognition from the local authority because they are being networked and getting out and about.*

The Local Authority Community Cohesion team now recognise there is a sizeable Portuguese community. The next stage is for the LA to recognise the needs of that community.

RAMFEL has a second tier capacity building role. They offer frontline legal advice and representation and have been doing that (providing immigration advice, housing etc. ) with the Portuguese group and hope to expand this work in the coming year. RAMFEL's capacity building work is informed by case-work service:

*We see the needs directly and the need for community activists / organisers. They can be channelled into a forum for the greater good of the community.*

Ms Chadha-Bolt concludes

*"It's a fantastic project and it's worked extremely well. It's evolved naturally. It's not been heavy with partnership planning". "Lule, Euridice and I have only actually met together once". "It all works because we all know our roles and what we are doing there".*

*"This project does demonstrate the ability of migrant organisations to self-advocate and engineer their own destiny. Without being forced into any kind of national target. They have probably evolved faster because they have not had a target to reach. No framework or output focus. They are able to develop from a very needs-orientated base. That is what Shpresa's success relies on at the moment.*

### **Bob Garton, headteacher, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2011**

The headteacher of Gascoigne school was asked about how, from his point of view, Shpresa operated to mentor the Portuguese Group, the impact of their work and how it fitted in with his vision for the school.

Mr Garton talks about the importance of finding the right community leaders and how difficult this can be. He explains that the organiser of the group, Euridice Dos Santos,

*was quite tentative to begin with. I think they have given her confidence, to see that she can manage it... They have shown her the way, what is possible and getting other people to help her as well. They (the group) needed someone like that to take on the responsibility. Once they (Shpresa) find them, they can develop them really well and that is what they have done.*

He goes on to explain how Shpresa proceeds:

*They are mentoring, they haven't taken over. They coaxed them along, suggested things to do and gave advice on a whole range of things. Luljeta, is a good role model. You've got to have that commitment... It's a selfless position because they give so much of their own time.*

Mr Garton explains that, from the practical point of view, having the community groups in the school works smoothly: because communication is good, small issues (like over-keen children arriving too early) can be addressed immediately and no serious issues have ever occurred.

The impact of working in this way with community groups is immediately noticeable in the ethos of the school. *“It was one of the highlights of the Ofsted inspection”*. He maintains that not charging groups is an important part of his policy as the school is well paid in kind.

*That is worth more than even thousands of pounds. It’s in the school’s self-interest. Because our community cohesion is so strong, it so valuable... and also I’m happy for people to use the school if they fulfil certain criteria. And if they fit in with the way Shpresa work, then I know they are going to be OK. And you can trust them. So, no hassle for me.... Everything is left as it should be, all those things. We’ve got a facility that is being used in the evening and everybody’s winning from it.*

Bob Garton notes, however, that he does not feel the need for a written agreement with the groups as they have a good understanding and work on trust.

In terms of the impact of the Portuguese Group specifically on the school, it is early days yet *it’s gradual, you can’t expect to notice too much: people just talk to each other, they’ve met at a meeting here and they want to chat in the playground.*

In terms of impact on the children’s achievement, this is much harder to measure in the short term. While the assessment co-ordinator of the school will be looking at patterns of achievement, it is difficult to measure the group’s effect. However he notes

*anecdotally, it’s going to have an effect. If the parents are happier, if they feel more confident, if they can talk to the school, if they can talk to other parents, they are going to be more at ease with their children coming to school, the children are going to be more relaxed, so they are going to learn more successfully.” He explains how parents benefit from a greater understanding of how the education system works and how to access service and approach the school with confidence. “All these things have an impact.*

Community cohesion in its widest sense is an essential part of Mr Garton’s vision for the future of his school and its role in the community. This is an area of strength in his school and has been praised by Ofsted inspectors. He explains that he would eventually like to have mixed multicultural groups that involve the whole of the school community. But he feels that the first and essential step is to ensure different communities feel secure.

*They feel secure within that. The Albanians, they are much more secure in their own cultural group, they can then reach out to other cultural groups, as well. But I think until they have that security, language and that, you are not going to get people wanting to work together for the school. But we are beginning to see that now. You get groups that are established, the self-help has worked really well and now they are reaching out to other cultural groups with the school. I think that’s the long term aim. We’ve got these individual groups (the Albanians and the Portuguese), they are meeting on the same night and do slightly different things but you can see how the Albanians and the Portuguese, they are also doing things together, and they are mixing in a way they might not before have done it, in the playground and so forth.... as things develop, as the new group takes off, we can gradually spread out. .. it’s had enormous benefits for us.*

**Sonia Walker, the Ethnic Minority Achievement co-ordinator at Gascoigne School, interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> March.**

Ms Walker was asked similar questions.

She explained that, after the success of the school’s partnership with Shpresa, she was trying to recruit parents to start up another community group. She initially approached both a

Somali and a Portuguese parent, but neither was able to start any initiatives at the time. Euridice Dos Santos approached her independently

*and said she was thinking of starting a parents' group as lots of parents were approaching her and asking her was there anything here for Portuguese parents.... I liked being approached by parents because that shows there is a need for it ... and that's how that began really. And we started to talk about it and I told her that we had Shpresa here who were willing to mentor the group. And we had a meeting with them and that was the beginning of that group. So that worked quite well.*

Ms Walker goes on to describe the assistance provided by Shpresa:

*Yes they did support them, they had several meetings and, speaking to Euridice, she said she found them really helpful in terms of how to work with the school and what things they could do in terms of ... I think they helped with funding as well because they have a lot of experience in that field. Basically how to set up a group, how to work with a school, how to work with parents, organising things that one might take for granted and not realise, that was really helpful.*

In terms of making the project run smoothly, Ms Walker feels the benefit, like Mr Garton did, of good communication, enabling her to solve any issues that arise.

There has been a noticeable impact in Ms Walker's relationship with parents:

*In terms of relationships with the parents I've seen that. All our staff are out in the playground at the end of the day. And for me the Portuguese parents are, not friendlier, but they seem to approach me more, because they know I am working with Euridice to build up the group, so they will come up and talk about their children or mention things." She is pleased about the level of communication, how parents feel they can come and ask for the use of the school hall for a celebration or an extra evening a week for the Portuguese group.*

There are also benefits for the children involved:

*I think it benefits the children... They can build up a picture of their own culture as well as fitting in to the British way of life and that culture, combining both of them. They are very keen on, like Shpresa, combining both cultures. They still retain their Portuguese origins and that culture but they still integrate into the mainstream society.*

She also reports how the children benefit from seeing adults working together.

### **Martin Pinder - volunteer Black and Ethnic Minority Community Development Officer with Newham New Deal Partnership, interviewed on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2012.**

Mr Pinder explains that while his remit is within the boundaries of the Borough of Newham, his activities move beyond this when it becomes necessary to work with partners outside Newham that nevertheless can have an impact on Newham.

The interview covered a wide range of issues of relevance to Shpresa's work in mentoring and building the capacity of new organisations and raising their profile east London. Mr Pinder has a long term strategic vision for the development of the supplementary school sector. He has been working to create a forum in Newham that brings complementary schools together and offers opportunities for networking, training and building a strong presence in the borough. He explains the current focus of his work:

*(The Partnership) wanted me to initially work with the East European residents in Newham because they felt they knew least about those. They felt that, in the context of minority ethnic groups in Newham, of which, of course, there are legion, the Eastern Europeans were the last to arrive in significant numbers and*

*they deserved some sort of engagement. So last year was largely spent organising 4 public meetings and related studies, and several other studies that didn't have a public meeting, that are work in progress. The aim was to open up the East European profile in Newham from different perspectives, because they didn't have many community organisations yet.*

The public meetings were focused around supplementary education, religion and drug and alcohol issues within the communities and the Roma community.

Since that start, Mr Pinder is now working almost full-time on supplementary education as he believes that there are opportunities here in Newham to build on the assets and social capital of its residents, particularly its languages, culture and other capacities.

*My own vision is that, by the end of this calendar year we have 50 members to the particular Newham group. When I say 50 members, not paid up and attending every meeting, but members that you can say honestly are members. Normally my experience says it can take around 3 years to get things to bed down properly. You need to wait and see who's reliable and who's not reliable and what you should change and so on. So I think within 3 years we should be established as a group that would be sufficiently strong that, not only could it service its members from an education point of view, but that it could even take some sort of a lead educationally and culturally in the Borough. And then, I suppose, in ten or twenty years, I would like to think that we would be the leading foreign language/ community language borough in the country, in terms of teaching practice and organisation because I think we under-realise the community language teaching enormously.*

A key part of Mr Pinder's strategy has been a programme of seminars involving high profile speakers, e.g. the local MP and the shadow employment minister Stephen Timms, shadow education minister Stephen Twigg (the latter asked but not yet accepted) and the former education secretary Baroness Morris of Yardley (Estelle Morris) to bring together key players, headteachers and teachers in both mainstream and supplementary schools. The aim is to encourage partnership and offer models and examples of good practice.

As well as supporting supplementary schools that teach mother tongue, the strategy includes schools that offer home-work clubs and teaching support in National curriculum subjects.

Mr Pinder was impressed with Shpresa when he first met the organisation and visited its offices and realised that "*they are probably as good as any in London for their size*". He appreciates the way in which Shpresa have helped the groups they are mentoring to find free school accommodation, and how they encourage engagement with families, parents, as well as the children and other young people. Shpresa also involved them in the European Day of Languages activities with mainstream schools and encouraged them to take part in the public meetings. Shpresa has ensured that the groups have all the foundations in place for setting up and organisation, but he notes there is still strategic work to be continued and speculates on how much Shpresa can be expected to offer

*There's all that setting down foundations and so on, which has to be what the mentor starts with. The question is, when does the mentor finish, or stop giving*

*direct input and one aspect of the mentor might be to say, you must get trustees, these are the sorts of things you need to do to get trustees, if you want help on funding bids, this is what you should do on funding bids, so it's a question of the mentor drawing the line. And not getting too involved, because a mentor also can't do everything for the mentee. So part of the strategy should be to be hands off. So you take them by the hand for the first step, but then purposely keep outside of it so that person can go and look for his trustees and fundraising and so on. So where you draw that line, it's not an easy one.*

Mr Pinder acknowledges the difficulty of fund-raising in the present economic climate and explains that some boroughs, such as Barnet, are able to offer more targeted support in this area to new community organisations than say Newham which is relatively hands off.

Mr Pinder has been working to support the campaign by young people to obtain a GCSE in their community language (initiated by Shpresa) and was instrumental in obtaining a first meeting with the Chief Executive of the Exam Board OCR.

### **Ben Pollard – CitizensUK. Interviewed on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2012.**

In his role as Coordinator of CitizensUK's Strangers Into Citizens Campaign Mr Pollard encountered Shpresa around 18 months ago. He was interested in the model Shpresa's had developed and the way in which it was beginning to work with the Portuguese community.

*... the model which she had developed, which seemed to move far beyond just language learning and development into a more cohesive, holistic community development. This then had huge potential for community organising, in terms of not just wanting to improve cohesion and strengthen families and communities, but also to use the latent power in that newly organised community to join with others, to build relationships with people who could deliver the interests that they had in common.*

Mr Pollard went on to explain how Luljeta Nuzi worked with the young leaders of the Ethiopian and Somali communities to develop with them the campaign to get Somali, Amharic and Albanian recognised at GCSE level. When he got involved in supporting the GCSE campaign, it was already underway

*They had the campaign underway for a while, I think, to put it very simply, they had not yet fulfilled the full potential of working with other people. And I think, through that delicate approach of working with partners to build power, she has really reached the place where big commitments have been made. From a community organising perspective, there are two parallel goals. And the primary goal is always developing the leaders and the capacity of the alliance to work together. So what really excites me is, it goes beyond mother tongue, and it's really the relationships that are being formed. Because no victory is permanent, even on an issue like this. And the power that will be built through fighting this campaign, will mean that the next thing that they want to take on together could be bigger.*

Mr Pollard worked with the young people and the leaders of the three groups from different diaspora communities to help them develop and implement a strategy to engage with educational decision makers such as the Chief Executive of the OCR Exam Board that has potentially national implications.