



Horses & Education

Sport and education with horse

- lifelong doable
- a family sport
- women and men compete together
- has an influence on the personal development
- improves the physical fitness during the whole life
- gives the possibility to include people with handicap into the regular competition and education systems
- is an important part of our European traditional heritage
- Promoting values of integration, volunteering, mentoring

Key figures

- 76% of the riders say that they have a strong leadership (compared to 46% of non riders)
- 83% of the riders say that they have a strong capacity to deliver (compared to 58% of non riders)
- 98% of the riders say that they are nature connected (compared to 74% of non riders) ref: SCHNEIDER, 2012
- More than 80 % of questionnaire respondents reported that horse riding made them feel 'quite a lot' or 'extremely' cheerful, relaxed, happy or active. Qualitative data suggests that horse riding can play a role in managing negative feelings relating to anxiety and depression.
- Asked to rate different motivations for going horse riding 82 % of questionnaire respondents rated the motivation of 'interaction with horses' as either 'very important' or 'extremely important'. ref: BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY 2011)

Experiences within "Leonardo Da Vinci Partnerships"



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

Maria Charlotte Wist (Germany)

"The meetings within the Leonardo Da Vinci project were a great possibility for me to check my abilities concerning working in the international horse business. Furthermore I can say that I grew with my challenges and became more and more confident in what I had to do. I really recognize a development in myself after these three meetings, I feel ready for being a responsible part of the horse and rider education, to teach the right contents in the right way. The feedback we received in all these days helped me a lot to develop myself from a student to a future instructor."



Robin Redolat (France)

"The training course in Norway was a very good experience for me. I have learned about the other schools in Europe and about the other way to teach. I improved my English too because I had to exchange with other pupils. That was very nice!! Thanks for the reception and thanks to my school to give me the chance to go there".

Bruno Varunca (Portugal)

"In recent days, 25-27 February I had the pleasure of being in the riding meeting held in Norway Norsk Hestesenter. It was a very pleasant experience, and I managed to learn enough level of riding, have a new vocabulary riding the "European" way. Each country has a method of working and hopefully we can bring some of these methods to Portugal. Not to forget also is the English, where I had some difficulties, and I think that's another thing to be improved in Portugal".



With many thanks to Prof. Dr. Harald Lange (University of Würzburg) who has provided the pedagogical background out of a research project about the impact of horses within school projects.

The contact with horses and its impact onto the self-concept

The nature of the horse and its individual characteristics and behavior provide a certain learning arrangement. Within a communication a horse gives feedback and shows a mirror image of the way it is treated. This mirror function of the horses provides an important influence on the self-concept of human beings.

In general self-concept is understood as a mental model of a person themselves. This self-concept takes an important key role in the development of someone's personality. In terms of the work with horses the support of the self-concept of children has been very successful already – although the physical self-image gained a special strengthening. For that reason horses are helpful for the development of a personality structure of young people in an advantageous sort of way.



Picture: Holger Schupp

Assistance of the empathy skill through the contact with the horse

Picture: Copyright IFCEI/ A Laurieux

To be able to handle horses it is necessary to understand the horse and its nature. To have empathy for the mood, the reaction, the "feeling" of the horse within different situations is a key tool for a successful communication between human and horse.

"Empathy" itself is of special relevance for humans, and not only for a successful cohabitation, especially in regard to the development of one's own personality. The ability of empathy plays an important role in the training of the "I-identity" and for the setup of relationships. Empathy is also important for the self-development and for the development of moral principles. Contact with horses provides the need to gain somehow the ability to empathy and therefore this is helpful for the acquisition of social competences.



The influence of the horse contact for the bonding behaviour

The relationships between a child and its attachment figure can differ greatly concerning its quality. It will show in the end result children with assured and un-assured bonding experiences. The quality of bonds defines the self-picture of the child and has great impact on all other relationships that the child affiliated in its life. Therefore positive bonding experiences are of central significance for any young person. There is a need of an insuring bonding with regard to a healthy development. Interpersonal relationships have a significant influence on the physical being, the personality and the identity formation of a child. The contact with horses enables children to collect different positive bonding experiences.



Experience of the French Equestrian Federation – Pony Ecole – Spring 2013

Horse riding is the 3rd sport in France and the 1st sport for women. The French Federation organized in 2013 an operation to develop horse riding at school from April to July.

817 horse riding schools labelled "Pony Club de France" proposed free lessons for children

1 100 different grade schools

55 000 children from 4 to 10 years old discovered equestrian activities

1 100 teachers, **150 000** parents, brothers and sisters were involved

More than **1 500** mayors learned how horse riding can be good for education, health and social activities

www.poneyecole.ffe.com



Experience in Sweden - Which identity do girls create in the stable? Study made in 2005 by Lena Forsberg and Ulla Tebelius in Sweden

Sweden is one of the most horse populated countries in Europe. 220 000 individuals visit riding schools every year. 85 percent of these are women, half of them younger than twenty-five. Riding is an important leisure activity of many girls. The aim of this study was to discuss young girls' creation of identity in a stable milieu. The results are based on ethnographic study of 6 girls aged 14-16 joining a riding club. The stable can be seen as a cultural arena, which is characterized by rational work and obligations. Within this the girls develop

competence, responsibility and autonomy. The young girls seem to orient towards certain values, which give them the strength to widen gender limits and to expose another way of femininity than the one open for them outside the stable.

Girls commented on the image others held of them; an image about empathy, care giving riding not being tuff. In their own view they rather experienced power and competence in the stable as there were challenges and risks in the sport.

They developed a physical and mental strength through working in the stable, which is opposite to stereotype female traits. The girls oriented themselves toward ideals like being self-reliant, goal-directed and autonomous. As they spent a lot of time in the stable, working hard and commanding a big animal, their ways of identifying themselves as girls might have widened and given them other ways of presenting their gender (Butler 1993). In this process they seemed to achieve a social and cultural capital, which could be of future use.

EU Institutions' activities



Sporting organisations and educational institutions can benefit greatly by working together to promote greater participation in sport. Through sporting activities, young people can learn to be part of a team and accept the principle of fair play, as well as establish healthy behaviours and lifestyles.

This kind of collaboration also helps to increase the numbers of qualified coaches and professionals in the sector.

The European Commission has acknowledged that the quality of physical education programmes and the qualifications of the teachers and trainers involved are a concern in a number of Member States.

More extensive interaction between sport and education across Europe is needed to promote the mutual sharing of best practices.

The EU Expert Group on Education and Training in Sport explored ways of promoting qualifications gained by coaches, volunteers, and elite athletes through non-formal (sport-specific courses by federations) and informal (learning in practice) methods, leading to the European Qualification Framework (EQF).

The second EU Work Plan for sport (2014 – 2020) planned to be adopted in May 2014, includes a proposal for future European actions in the field of education and training in sport:

3 Sport Strategy Groups will be active during the period, one on Sport & Society with a specific sub-topic to develop on education.

Erasmus+: the new EU programme for Education, Training, Youth, and Sport for 2014-2020.

The Erasmus+ programme aims to boost skills and employability, as well as modernising Education, Training, and Youth work.



The seven year programme will have a budget of €4.7 billion; a 40% increase compared to current spending levels, reflecting the EU's commitment to investing in these areas.

Erasmus+ will provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad.

Erasmus+ will support transnational partnerships among Education, Training, and Youth institutions and organisations to foster cooperation and bridge the worlds of Education and work in order to tackle the skills gaps we are facing in Europe.

Erasmus+ will for the first time provide support for Sport.

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