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Newsletter



Coordinated by



Content

Editorial	1
EuroMed School Forum 2009	1
Values of the young people	1
Values in general	2
Where do the values originate?	3
Values from the gender view	3
Values by countries and schools	3
Austria	3
Denmark	6
Hungary	7
Israel	8
Jordan	8
Lebanon	9
The Netherlands	9
Turkey	10
Quotes – Instead of an Epilogue	11
Useful links and other recommendations	12

Editorial



Dear friends, dear members of the EuroMed School Forum,

Various polls are keen on finding out what is important to young people, but even within only one country this question cannot be easily answered. "The youth" doesn't exist, instead it is represented by a heterogeneous group in highly diverse living contexts and with different backgrounds – even more so if we are talking of students in several countries. The aim of the value task was to reflect on the own values, to find out more about the others and to maybe identify universal values.

I am glad to present you the results of the first step of the value task – compiled and summarized by our intern Lucie Pecinkova, whom I would like to thank for her support.

I hope you all enjoyed working on the activity and I assume that you are eager to find out more about the other schools. As the newsletter can only give an overview of the selected values, we invite you to visit www.euromedschools.net (go to **Information on the project /Material for the activities**). The sentences, as written by the students, enable a more precise idea on why the respective values were chosen and are, thus, supposed to help us question and maybe even change possible assumptions. In the end, we are all individuals, even if we represent a specific cultural or religious group.

Enjoy the newsletter!

Rebecca Zeilinger
Interkulturelles Zentrum

EuroMed School Forum 2009

The project was initiated by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture, Dept. for International Relations in early 2006 and was designed as a particular contribution to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008. In close cooperation with the UNESCO and the ASP-network, Interkulturelles Zentrum (IZ) prepared a concept for a multilateral school network. The EuroMed School Forum: Intercultural Dialogue aims at the establishment of long-term partnerships of secondary schools from Europe and the MEDA countries. The overall aim is to enhance mutual understanding and respect.

In 2009, the focus has been laid on values and the major questions of life: 17 schools are co-operating within the project. There are six schools from Austria, three schools from Turkey, two schools from Hungary and Denmark and one school from Israel, Jordan, the Netherlands and Lebanon.

These students coming from different regions of Western and Eastern Europe and the Middle East kind of represent different cultures which are related to different values. The EuroMed School Forum enables us to see how much the main values of young people really differ and how much they are shared within those countries that take part in this project.

Values of the young people

The students from the EuroMed Forum were supposed to think about their own values and also possible values of other people. First, each student picked three top values in his/her life and tried to symbolize these values by pictures of his/her choice. Afterwards, students formed smaller groups within one class to discuss their preferences. In a debriefing the pupils were supposed to contemplate where their values come from and how they are influenced by the social and cultural background. Further, they debated how these values influence their life style or behavior. Finally, they were asked to indicate which other values would be shared or might be different in the same society/country and in other societies/countries and whether there might be differences based on gender. 314 students participated in the activity.

The main results of the discussions, as compiled by the teachers, can be viewed in this newsletter. After the overview you can see more detailed information related to the particular schools.

In order to see the value pictures and the sentences in which the students describe their most important values, please visit www.euromedschools.net (go to **Information on the project /Material for the activities/ Value Pictures**).

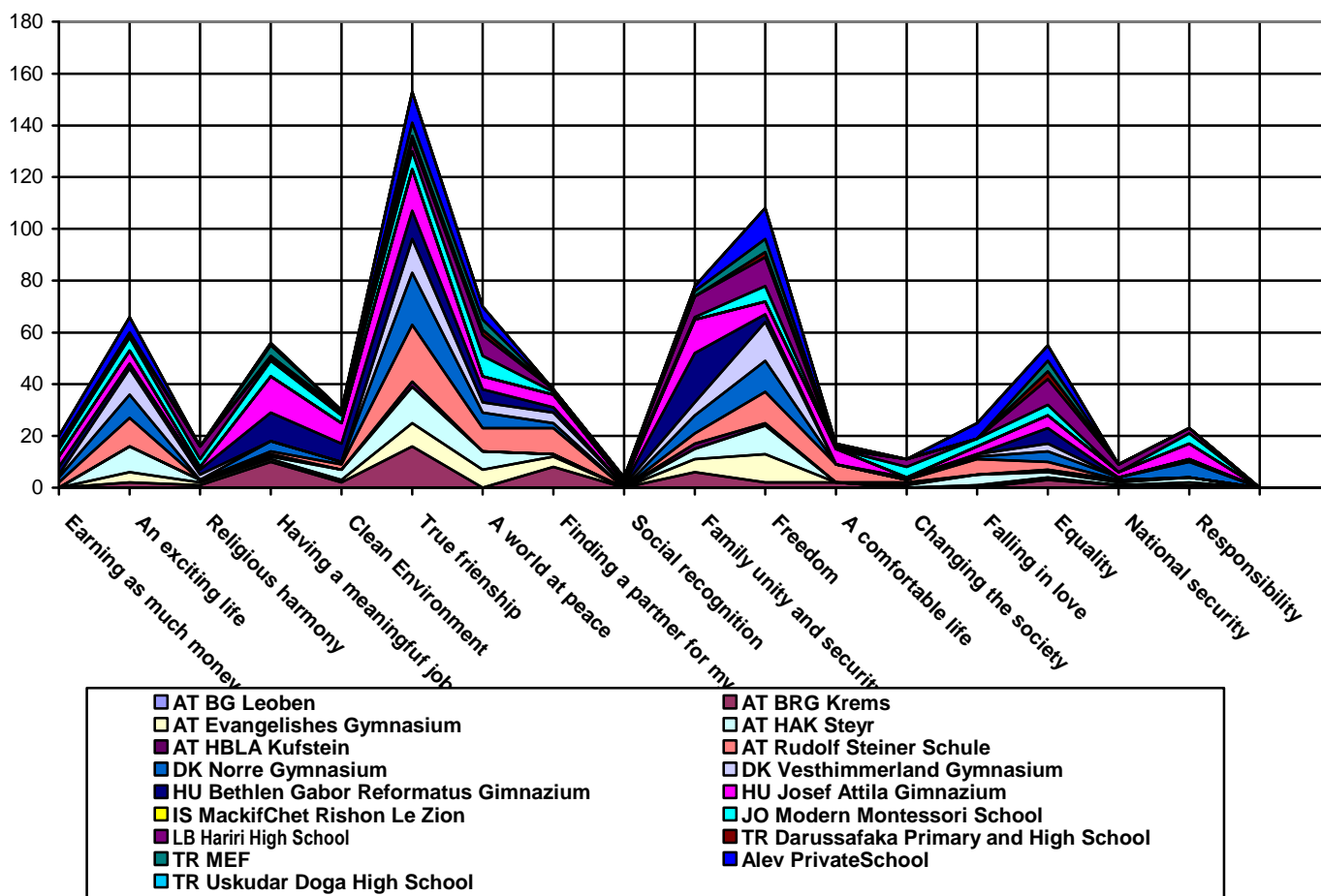
Values in general

Table with number of votes for particular value

Chosen value	Number of mentions
Earning as much money as possible	24
An exiting life	80
Religious harmony	17
Having a meaningful job	68
Clean environment	46
True friendship (close companionship)	165
A world at peace	87
Finding a partner for my life	50
Social recognition	6
Family unity and security	88
Freedom	121
A comfortable life	17
Changing the society	12
Falling in love	25
Equality	63
National security	9
Responsibility	23
Total votes	902

Diagram of votes for particular values

Represented values by schools



Where do the values originate?

When trying to understand how the young people come to their preferences and where their values come from, the students realized that there are various influential factors. Maybe, it is possible to reduce them to three levels: a) factors that are related to the closest community or personal experience; b) factors at the mezzo level, which are connected to the broader surrounding society; and c) macro factors that are at the national or regional level.

Most of the students agree that their values are primarily related to their closest environment. This includes, above all, the family, friends and the school they attend. Often, also their personal experience forms their values. Further, they see the background of their origin as a very important factor, e.g. their educational level or the social and cultural environment they belong to. Last but not least, the environment at the macro level plays its role. For example in states where the religion is an important component of peoples' life the personal values are more likely to be related to the particular religion than in other rather secular states.

An interesting fact is that many students regard their value as something they do not have yet and they would like to gain in their future life. Thus, values can be something desired we want to achieve in the future as we believe hat it improves our lives.

Values from the gender view

There are some differences in opinions of students in terms of what is related to the sameness of values between boys and girls. In some schools students did not arrive at any overall agreement. In other schools pupils think that girls and boys or women and men choose very similar or even the same values. In many schools the young people point out certain differences between the preferences of the opposite sex. In general, students in various schools and countries agreed that girls tend to choose more values such as true friendship, finding a partner, world at peace, falling in love and family, whereas boys tend to opt for money, an exciting life, freedom, a meaningful job or a social recognition. Obviously, the male values are more often related to pragmatic, materialistic and political targets whilst females tend more to the emotional goals. According to the students, it is based both on the nature of females and males and also on the inherited traditions that can be traced back to the family/community habits, or the expectations of the society based on gender. We also have to mention the opinion that the differences are vanishing nowadays, because women start caring about their job and career more and more. In addition, many pupils emphasize the age as an important variable.

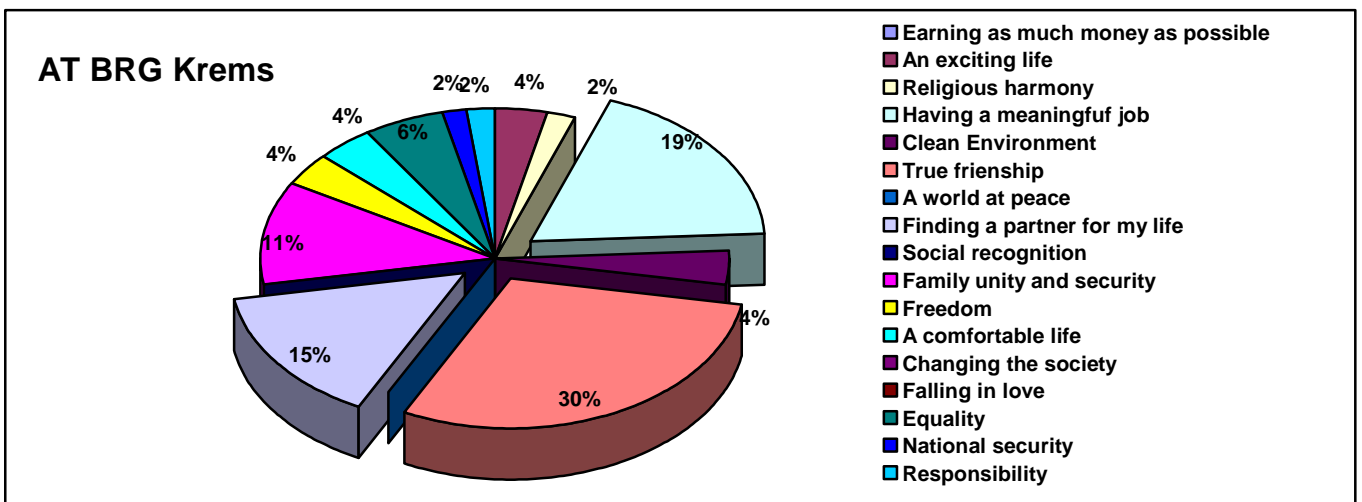
Values by countries and schools

Austria

BRG Krems

From the BRG Krems school there were 18 students coordinated by Elisabeth Streibel. The main values for these students were having real friends, finding a meaningful job and partner for their life. They believe that family unity would be another important value in their society.

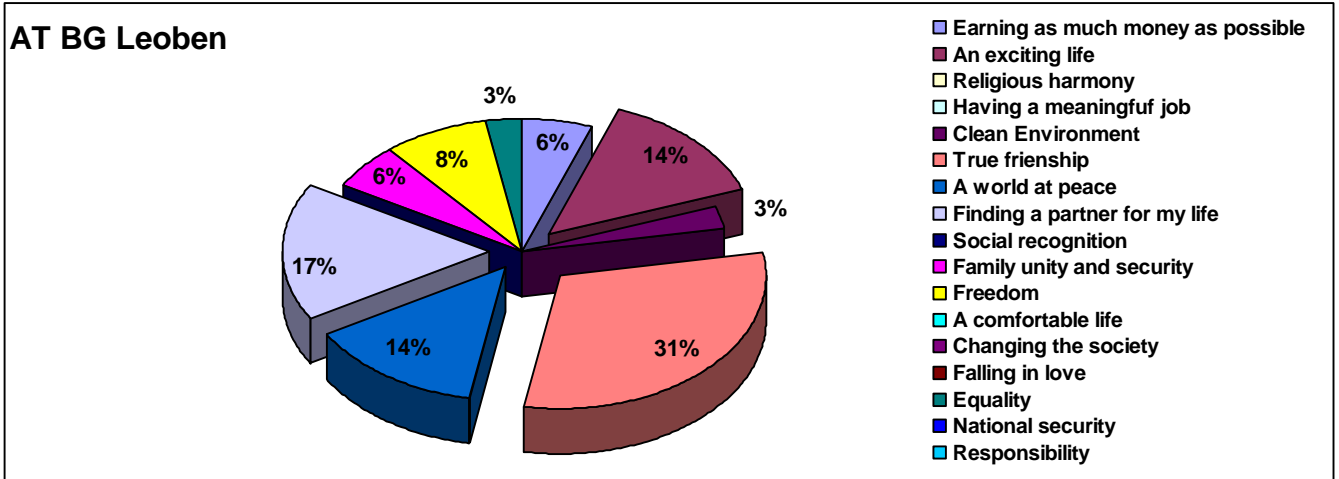
Diagram of the top values in this school



BG Leoben

12 students represented the BG Leoben school (teacher Albert Ecker). Friendship is the most important thing for the majority of these students. Then, they appreciate having a partner for their life, living in a peaceful world and having an exciting life. They state that for older people in their society partnership, family, peace and religion surely also are important.

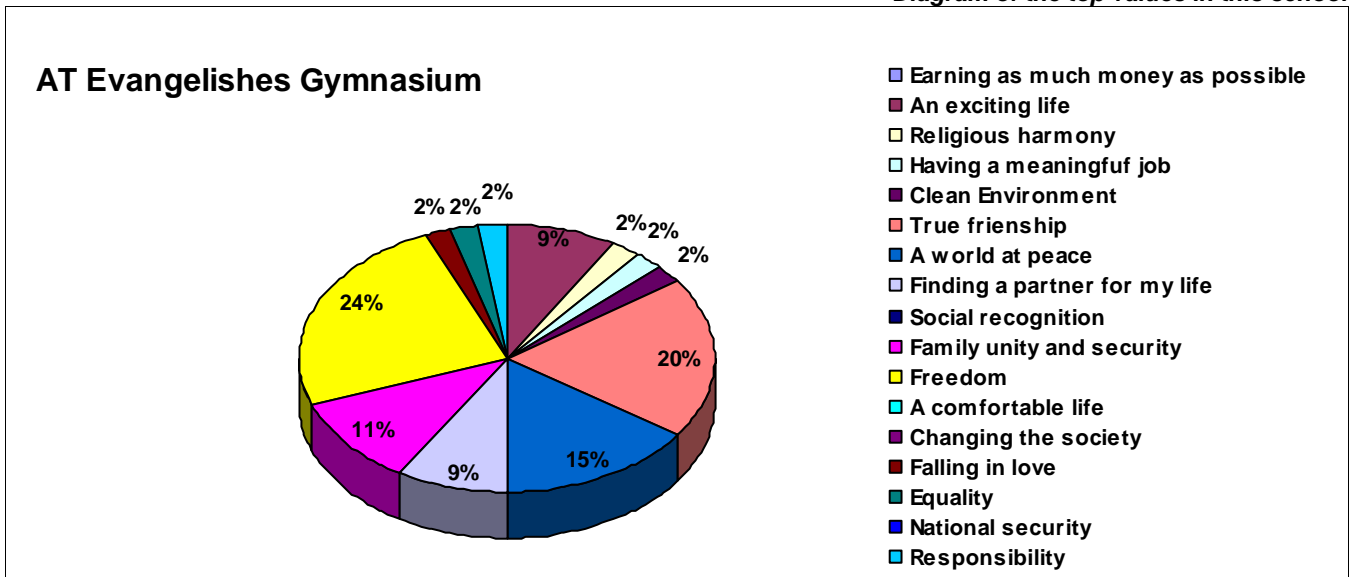
Diagram of the top values in this school



Evangelisches Gymnasium

The Evangelisches Gymnasium was represented by 18 students, who were coordinated by Mag. Heike Wolf and Mag. Ulrike Repolusk-Schüle. The most important values for these students are freedom, true friendship and a world in peace. They also think that health and friendship are important values in their society. On the other hand not many students feel the importance of the national security as Austrians have been living in peace for more than sixty years.

Diagram of the top values in this school



HAK Steyr

The teachers Mag. Jutta Christl and Bernhard Kaiser and their 21 students from the HAK Steyr school took part in the activity. True friendship, world at peace and family unity and security were the most important values for these students.

AT HAK Steyr

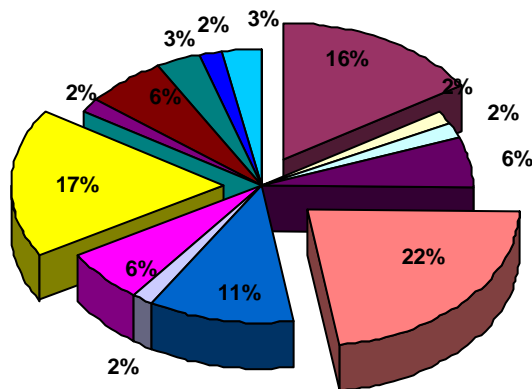


Diagram of the top values in this school

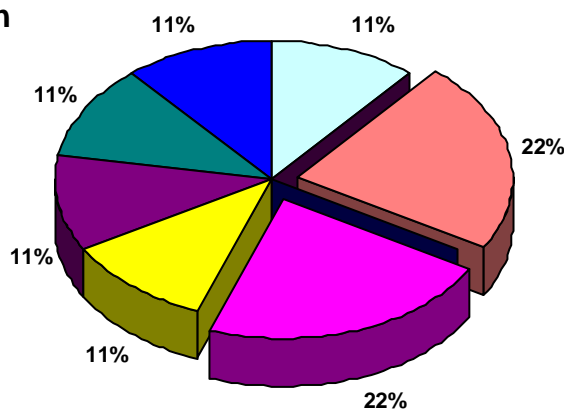
- Earning as much money as possible
- An exciting life
- Religious harmony
- Having a meaningful job
- Clean Environment
- True friendship
- A world at peace
- Finding a partner for my life
- Social recognition
- Family unity and security
- Freedom
- A comfortable life
- Changing the society
- Falling in love
- Equality
- National security
- Responsibility

HBLA Kufstein

From the school HBLA Kufstein, 15 students and the teacher Mag. Ursula Neumayer participated in the activity. They stated true friendship, family unity and security as their main values. They also consider freedom to be important in the society they belong to. Students from this school believe that people who have a good education most likely develop the same values.

Diagram of the top values in this school

AT HBLA Kufstein



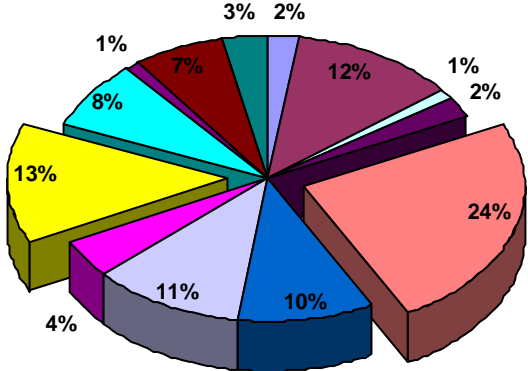
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- Responsibility

Rudolf Steiner Schule

30 students who were coordinated by Marlene Sadychov represented the Rudolf Steiner Schule. The most important value for these students was true friendship, further they find it important to have an exciting life and freedom. They expect other teenagers in Austria to also choose friendship and partner for life as their top values. As the students said: "Our financial background is stable and we are brought up in a liberal environment, our main problems and concerns are therefore harmony in family life and being accepted by the peers – things you cannot buy with money." They believe people from a different social background might be more concerned about social recognition and earning as much money as possible.

Diagram of the top values in this school

AT Rudolf Steiner Schule



- Earning as much money as possible
- An exciting life
- Religious harmony
- Having a meaningful job
- Clean Environment
- True friendship
- A world at peace
- Finding a partner for my life
- Social recognition
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- Responsibility

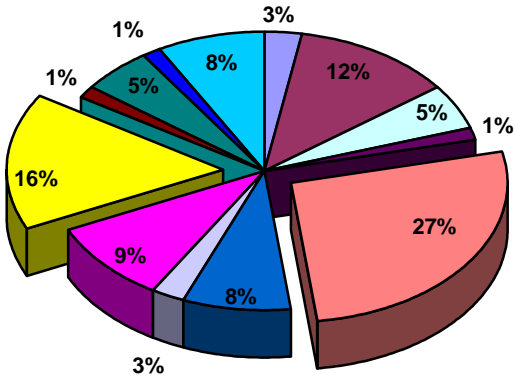
Denmark

Nørre Gymnasium

Marianne Zandersen and her 25 students represented the Danish school Nørre Gymnasium. They chose true friendship, freedom and an exciting life as the most important values for their life. The students believe other shared values in their society would be a freedom, equality and responsibility.

Diagram of the top values in this school

DK Nørre Gymnasium



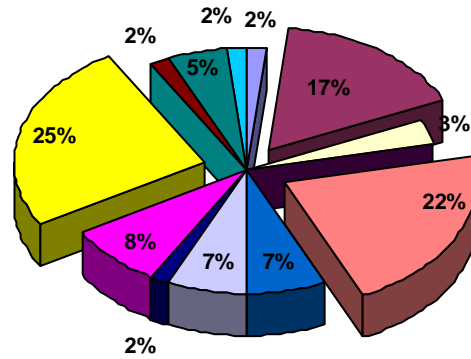
- Earning as much money as possible
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- True friendship
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- Falling in love
- Equality
- National security
- Responsibility

Vesthimmerland Gymnasium

20 students supported by the teacher Margit Hansen from the Vesthimmerland Gymnasium took part in the activity. They stated their top values to be freedom, true friendship and having an exciting life. Very likely freedom and peace would be values shared in their society. The students believe, to a great extent, that their values are influenced by their social and cultural background.

Diagram of the top values in this school

DK Vesthimmerland Gymnasium



- Earning as much money as possible
- An exciting life
- Religious harmony
- Having a meaningful job
- Clean Environment
- True friendship
- A world at peace
- Finding a partner for my life
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- Family unity and security
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- Changing the society
- Falling in love
- Equality
- National security
- Responsibility

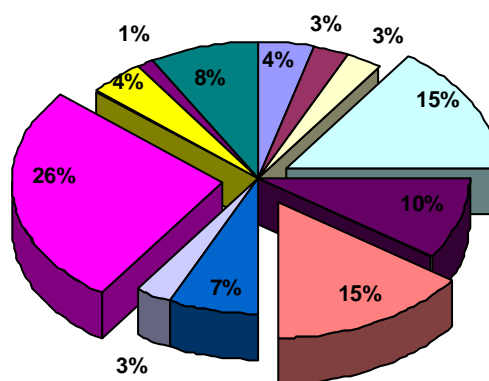
Hungary

Bethlen Gabor Reformatus Gimnazium

There were 24 students and the teacher Eva Molnar from the Bethlen Gabor school. These students agreed that their most preferred value is family unity and security, followed by having a meaningful job and true friends. However, the pupils state that values that appear to be basic and fundamental are very much related to the values of the respective environment (family, school, good friends) they belong to. When changing our company also our values can change according to the perception of our new environment. In the opinion of the students, the Hungarian society in general considers family unity and security as important, as well as a comfortable life which is related to earning enough money.

Diagram of the top values in this school

HU Bethlen Gabor Reformatus Gimnazium



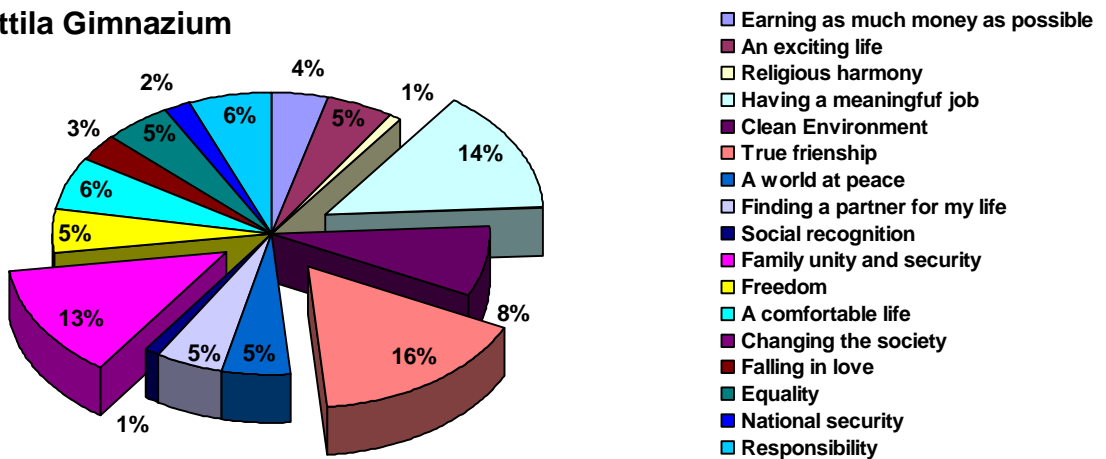
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- Responsibility

Josef Attila Gimnazium

Ferenc Olah coordinated the group of 33 students from the school of Josef Attila Gimnazium. The top values in their class are the true friendship, having a meaningful job and unity and security of families. In their society, friendship and responsibility would most probably also be regarded as the most important.

Diagram of the top values in this school

HU Josef Attila Gimnazium



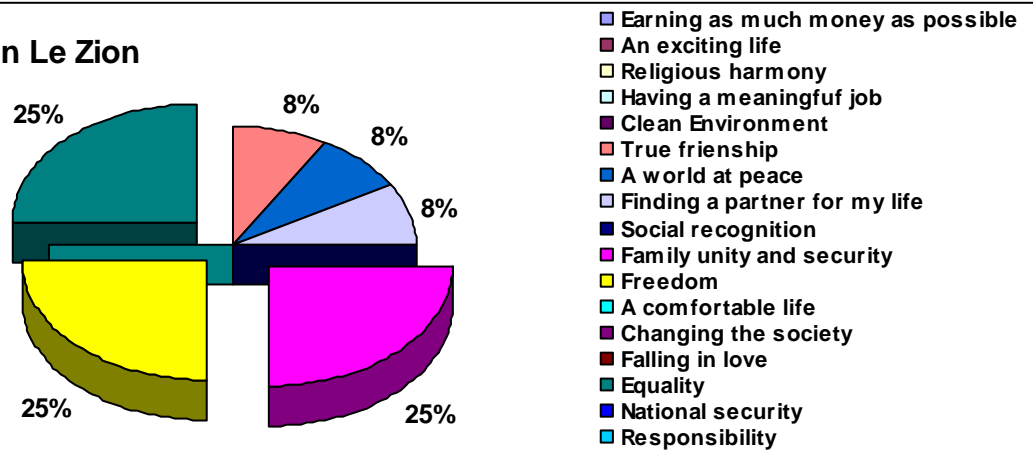
Israel

MackifChet Rishon Le Zion

12 students and their two teachers Michal Ben Haim and Tammy Cohen from the Mackifchet Rishon Le Zion school took part in this project. They indicate family, freedom and equality as their prime values. These students assume that similarly to them freedom and equality would be the main value within their society.

Diagram of the top values in this school

MackifChet Rishon Le Zion



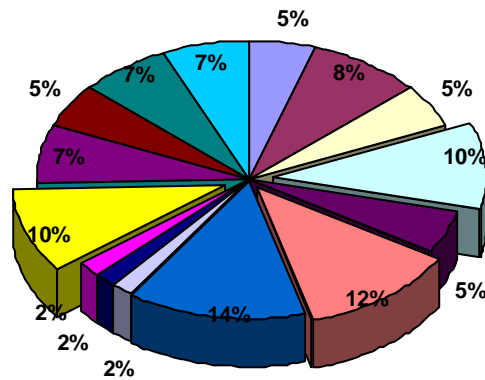
Jordan

Modern Montessori School

There were 20 students participating in the task, who were assisted by Hoor Hawamdeh and Dalal Hammoudeh. A world at peace, true friendship, freedom and having a meaningful job were the prime values. The students mentioned that religion plays an important role in their life too. Despite the fact that there are different religious groups in their country, they did not feel the need to point out the value of religious harmony as crucial to them. They agreed that the reason for this is that they have already a harmony within their community. According to them, some other important values in the society would be freedom, equality, peace and friendship.

Diagram of the top values in this school

JO Modern Montessori School



- Earning as much money as possible
- An exciting life
- Religious harmony
- Having a meaningful job
- Clean Environment
- True friendship
- A world at peace
- Finding a partner for my life
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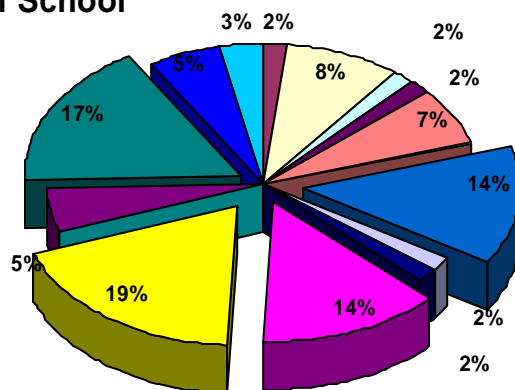
Lebanon

Hariri High School

Norma Ghamrawi led the discussion with her 12 students from the Hariri school. Freedom, equality, a world at peace and family unity were the top values here. Values shared in their society would be freedom, equality, peace and a clean environment. The students were aware of the fact that their values are driven by their cultural and social backgrounds. They explained that probably in some other place in the world the value of freedom or peace would be less immense as they have it already.

Diagram of the top values in this school

LB Hariri High School



- Earning as much money as possible
- An exciting life
- Religious harmony
- Having a meaningful job
- Clean Environment
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- A world at peace
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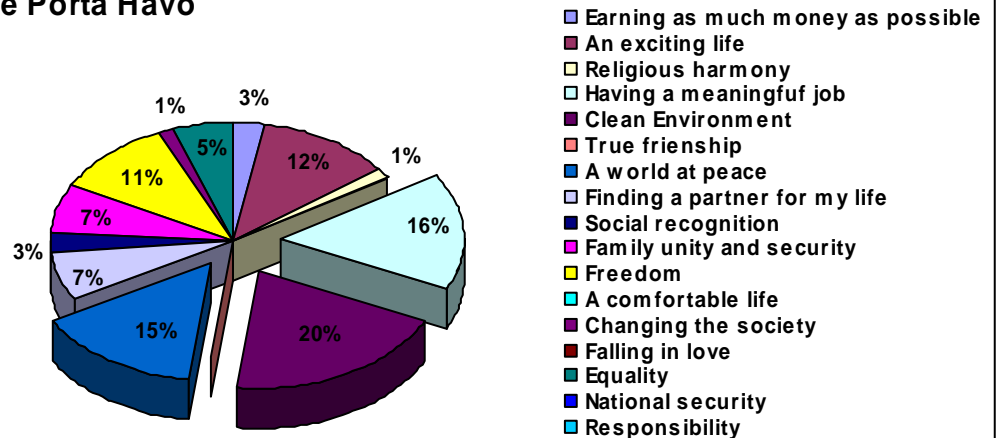
The Netherlands

Porta Mosana Collage

25 students from the Dutch Porta Mosana College were assisted by Guido Amkreutz when debating on their values. The most important points for these students were having a clean environment, a meaningful job and a world at peace. Freedom would be another vital value in their society.

Diagram of the top values in this school

Porta Mosana Collage Porta Havo



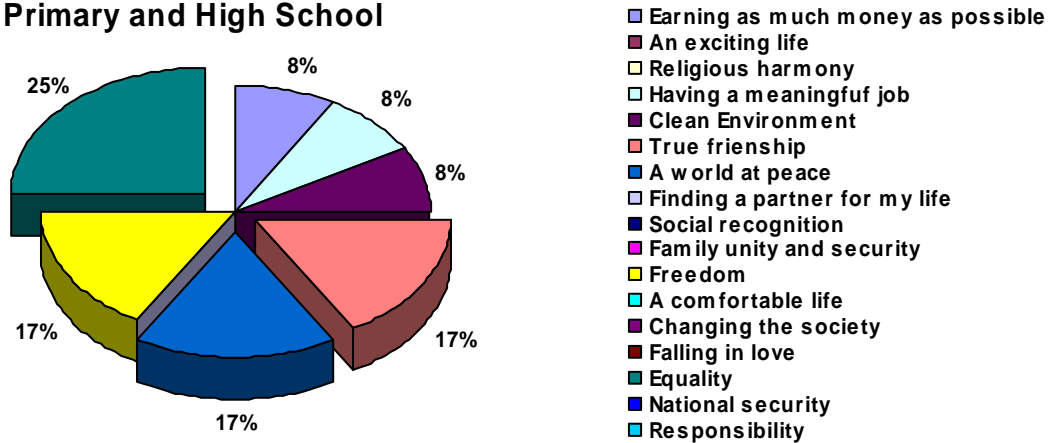
Turkey

Darussafaka Primary and High School

Dom Brasington and Meltem Ceylan Alibeyoglu were discussing the topic of values with 4 students in the Darussafaka school. The youngsters went for equality, however also friendship, a world at peace and freedom play a significant role for them. They believe that their values are very much related to their own experience and also to the boarding school, where they are growing up. Some other values from the surrounding society would probably be peace and equality.

Diagram of the top values in this school

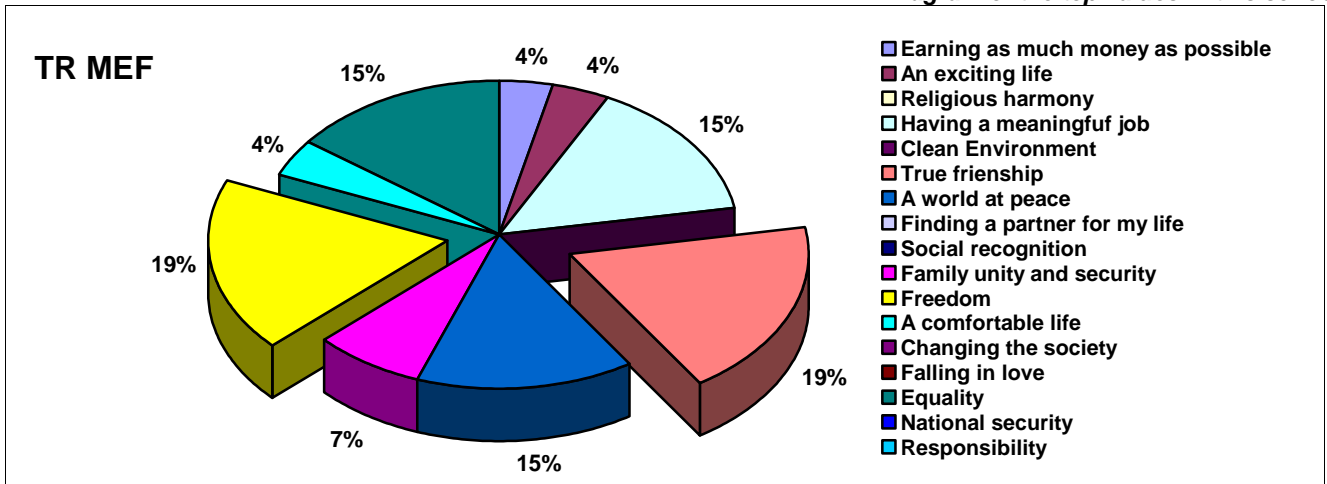
TR Darussafaka Primary and High School



MEF

All together 10 students from the MEF school assisted by their teachers Simge Sübaşı and Duygu Barut were discussing their values. The most important things for these youngsters are true friendship and freedom. These two values and family unity would be very likely the most important points also in their community, as they are believed to be the values ensuring a better future.

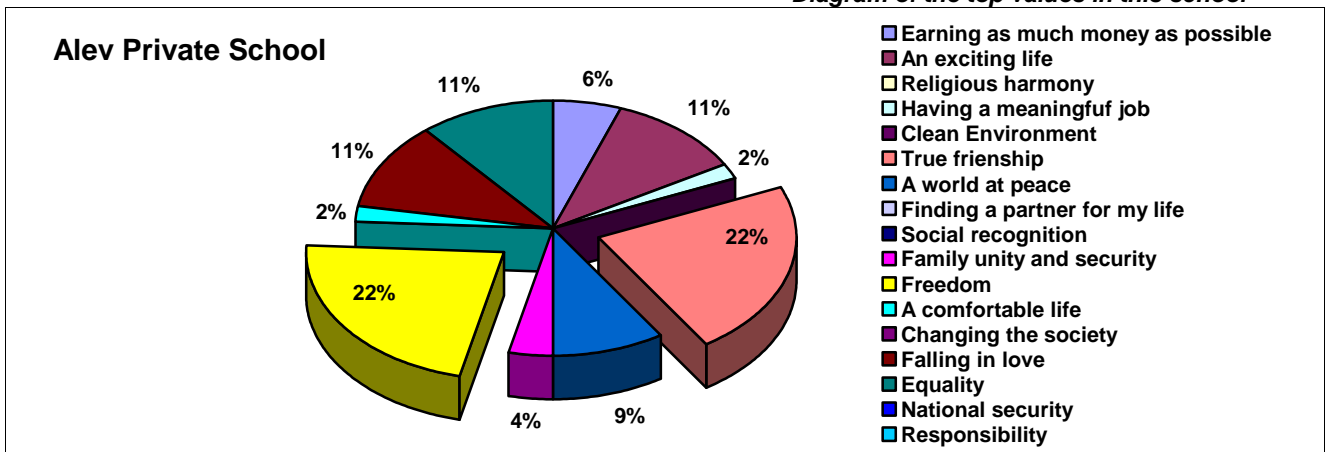
Diagram of the top values in this school



Alev PrivateSchool

Nesrin Kacan was assisting the group of 15 students . The most important values for the pupils are true friendship and freedom. People in their society would probably also value equality, love and an exciting life.

Diagram of the top values in this school



Quotes – instead on an epilogue

The following selection of quotes on tolerance, understanding and intercultural dialogue can obviously be complemented. Feel free to send me quotes that impress you because of their promotion of mutual respect. I will be happy to make them available to all on www.euromedschools.net

"We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names, and all are different colors. But, they all fit nicely into the same box.
Unknown

"People of different religions and cultures live side by side in almost every part of the world, and most of us have overlapping identities which unite us with very different groups. We can love what we are, without hating what – and who – we are not. We can thrive in our own tradition, even as we learn from others, and come to respect their teachings."
Kofi Annan

"We should stop thinking in categories 'us and them' and instead opt for 'me and you!.'
David Vseviov

"Men hate each other because they fear each other, and they fear each other because they don't know each other, and they don't know each other because they are often separated from each other."
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"The discovery of others is the discovery of relationship, not of barriers."
Claude Lévi Strauss

"A Senegalese poet said 'In the end we will conserve only what we love. We love only what we understand and we will understand only what we are taught.' We must learn about other cultures in order to understand, in order to love, and in order to preserve our common world heritage."
Yo Yo Ma

"I do not wish my house to be walled on all sides and my windows stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible."
Mahatma Gandhi

Useful links and other recommendations

Welcome to the Atlas of European Values

More than 800 million people can call themselves Europeans: from Finland to Malta and from Iceland to Azerbaijan. Their cultures and societies have all been influenced by the Roman Empire, Christianity, Enlightenment and two World Wars. This communal history has not led to one European culture. The importance of God, the value of leisure time, the significance of having children, ... all differ enormously between countries. The difference and similarities of values were made visible on this website of the Atlas of European Values.

<http://www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu/homepage.php?lang=en>

Learning to Live Together An Intercultural and Interfaith Programme for Ethics Education is the first outcome of the worldwide ethics education initiative launched by the Arigatou Foundation and its Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC). Since its establishment, the Interfaith Council on Ethics Education for Children has focused its work on the development of this resource material to nurture values needed to learn to live together in a plural society. The material has been developed in close cooperation with and endorsed by UNESCO and UNICEF. The launch took place at the occasion of the GNRC Third Forum 24-26 May 2008, where 1300 people from different secular and religious organizations gathered to discuss the moral imperatives to create a better world for children.

<http://www.ethicseducationforchildren.org/en/learningtolivetogether.html>

Declaration towards a Global Ethic. The Council of the World's Religions at
http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/_includes/FCKcontent/File/TowardsAGlobalEthic.pdf

The Anna Lindh Foundation

<http://www.euromedalex.org/>

On www.euromedschools.at we have also uploaded the following documents which you might want to use or work with:

Declaration on Global Ethic

Declaration on Human Rights

Convention on the Rights of the Child

"Intercultural and Interfaith programme" - A compilation of activities

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