

Project of training teachers in the Virtual Environment

The Virtual Environment (internet, gaming, cell phones et cetera) is growing very fast. It is becoming a major element in daily life. For youngsters it is no longer an instrument but it is becoming an essential part of their life.

Children have the right to a healthy development in all areas, as specified in the Children's Rights. The Virtual Environment was not dealt with in the Treaty because no one was able to foresee (in 1989) the importance the Virtual Environment would have. It speaks for itself that children have the right to a healthy development also in the Virtual Environment. This development can be fostered by parents and teachers. But the knowledge about the Virtual Environment is very limited. This is true all over the world. The pace of growth of the Virtual Environment was so fast that it was impossible to catch up with the development.

Parents and teachers have to be made aware of the possibilities and dangers of the Virtual Environment. They have to work together, because they need each other's support in this fast developing world.

In The Netherlands, Dr. Martine Delfos is appointed as a professor at the Professional University of Teachers, with the topic: The Virtual Development of Youth. She developed a program for schools to make children and youngsters aware of the possibilities and dangers of the Virtual Environment. This program has been developed now since three years, and will be implemented in The Netherlands in primary and secondary schools. The age segment aimed at is children from 10 to 14 years old. The program aims at a cooperation from teachers, parents, children, pedagogues, and the police. Martine Delfos wrote books about the healthy development of youth in the Virtual Environment. Two of them will be compiled to one book. That is: *The Virtual Development of Youth* and *Let's Game. About games and gaming. For gamers and their parents.*

The schools are the most indicated institution to help society develop the right development in youth in the Virtual Environment, because the schools are the place where knowledge is disseminated and where scientific knowledge is applied into practice.

Dr. Martine Delfos is living in The Netherlands, and works with universities, expert centers, special schools and parents associations in Bosnia & Herzegovina, where she was asked to help develop autism help for the country. She established a Universities Expertise Group (UAEG) in B&H together with five universities. To know more about this, the reports on this UAEG can be read and downloaden from her website, where also more about her work is to be found: www.mdelfos.nl She established a research institute in The Netherlands, The PICOWO.

Prof. Dr. Martine F. Delfos
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