



STIFTUNG FAIRCHANCE



Press release

Targeted language support for elementary school children in Berlin

The "MITsprache" language promotion is honored as an "outstanding educational idea"

Berlin, 14 February. On Thursday, "MITsprache", a Berlin-based language promotion project which provides targeted support for socially-disadvantaged children – especially those from different ethnic backgrounds – was acclaimed as an outstanding educational initiative as part of the "Ideen für die Bildungsrepublik" ("Ideas for an Education Republic") competition. This project was conceived by the Fairchance Foundation and is being implemented in cooperation with the Sprachförderzentrum Berlin-Mitte. This award was presented to the project's executing body at the Vineta Elementary School.

"MITsprache", a remedial language acquisition program, is introduced early in a child's formal education and thus may already take hold at daycare centers. By means of imaginative language learning games, this program enables children with insufficient German language skills to improve their linguistic abilities and acquire the tools needed to actively participate during classroom learning. "MITsprache" empowers children by improving their academic prospects. Long-term language promotion efforts – paired with intensive parental involvement and teacher training – are currently taking place at five elementary schools in Berlin's troubled Gesundbrunnen district. Over the next months, several daycare centers within the same catchment area will also launch this program. These language promotion efforts are devised for children at daycare facilities and for first and second graders. They are based on the learning program "Deutsch für den Schulstart" (or "German in preparation for school enrollment") which was developed by Heidelberg's Ruprecht-Karls University. A scientific evaluation of the MITsprache program, which is presently fostering 100 children, is in progress.

"It is very difficult to make up for language deficits once they've taken hold. Our goal is to give children an equal opportunity to succeed in life by helping them to acquire good German language skills. Mastering the language of instruction – and of your environment – lays the cornerstone for success in both the academic and private realms", according to Dr. Verena Schöwel, Fairchance Foundation's executive chairperson. Daniela Ebert, representative of the "Deutschland – Land der Ideen" ("Germany – Land of Ideas") initiative, praised the program's effectiveness and sustainability: "Equipped with good language skills, children will be well on their way to earning qualifications to enter an occupation and lead a self-determined life within our society. We are pleased to highlight this program's exemplary commitment to promoting equal opportunity in education."

Over 1100 educational projects from throughout Germany entered the "Ideas for an Education Republic" competition at the beginning of 2012. An independent jury of experts designated 52 award-winning projects. Together with the Federal Ministry for Education and Research and Vodafone's Stiftung Deutschland foundation, the "Deutschland – Land der Ideen" initiative has just recently launched its 3rd annual competition.

Projects and initiatives that advance educational equal opportunity for children and youths in an exemplary and sustainable manner may submit their applications to www.bildungsideen.de until 24 March 2013.

Points of contact:

Stiftung Fairchance
Anna-Maria Bodmer
Grüntaler Straße 7
13357 Berlin
Tel.: 0049 30 / 499 881 10
E-mail: anna.bodmer@stiftung-fairchance.org
www.stiftung-fairchance.org

Deutschland – Land der Ideen
André Gröger
Kurfürstendamm 21
10719 Berlin
Tel.: 0049 30 / 206 459 166
E-mail: groeger@land-der-ideen.de
www.land-der-ideen.de