

# Erasmus project TRACE

**“Traditional children’s stories for a common future”**

Primary School Josip Pupačić Omiš



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## **1. TRACE project - "Traditional children's stories for a common future"**

The TRACE project was approved from the Erasmus + program of the European Union, worth 178,330.00 euros, and is implemented from September 1, 2018 to August 31, 2020 in cooperation with collaborators from Croatia, Greece, Latvia and Spain. It was presented in the National and University Library in Zagreb, in October, 2018.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impossibility of carrying out project activities within the originally agreed duration until 31 August 2020, the duration of the project Traditional children's stories for a common future - TRACE was extended by 11 months, until 31 July 2021.

The purpose of the Project is to introduce the target groups, teachers, educators and librarians, who work with children between the ages of six and 12, with traditional children's stories from partner countries, and indirectly with the culture of those countries. As part of the TRACE Project, the highest quality children's literature from partner countries will be translated into five European languages of the partner countries and English. Also, the plan is to organize many workshops for teachers, librarians and educators, to introduce them to creative and innovative methods of encouraging children to read, think critically and explore their own European culture and European countries through literature close to them - traditional children's stories, which are a valuable part of Europe's cultural heritage.

The National and University Library in Zagreb is the Project Coordinator, and the Project collaborators are the Association for the Promotion of Non-Formal Education, Critical Thinking and Philosophy in Practice Petit Philosophy (Zadar, Croatia), Primary school "Josip Pupačić" (Omiš, Croatia), University of Peloponnese, (Greece), Biedriba Radošās Idejas (Riga, Latvia) and Fundación Euroárabe de Altos Estudios (Granada, Spain)

## **2. Primary school “Josip Pupačić”, Omiš**

### **Primary School Josip Pupačić and preserving memories of life and opus of Josip Pupačić and traditional customs of the Omiš region**

Primary School Josip Pupačić is the only primary school in the city of Omiš. Its foundations take us far into the past, into the time of 189 years ago. The continuous work of the school can be followed as from 1832/1833, when Bernard Paštrović was appointed, a teacher "preparandus" who would stay there until 1848. It was lower primary school with two classes, and the first preserved register dates back to the 2nd semester of 1835, when 48 pupils attended the school.

Throughout two centuries classes were held in different places. Prior to the year 1932, when the first school premises were built, the activity of the school was held in various church and private houses. Today's school building was erected in 1978, but there is still not enough space needed for education for primary school children.

The part of today's school is also eight-year satellite school in Kučice, situated 12 km away from central school, which has been in operation since 1909, and which was annexed to our school in the seventies of the last century. Kučice is a picturesque Dalmatian village with small karst fields located on a plateau above the canyon of the river Cetina, at the foot of the Omiš Dinara. Together with children from Kučice, this school is attended by those from Penišće, whereas in Svinišće there haven't been primary school children for more than ten years now.

Primary school in Omiš enrolls for decades a number of pupils from the broad and diverse enrollment area: the urban area of Omiš itself, coastal belt to the east, including Nemira, Ruskamen, Stanići, Lokva Rogoznica, Medići, Mimice and Pisak, and the area of Duće to the west. We have to add the picturesque Slime, situated on the hill some 25 km away and on the other side of the mountain, in the canyon of Cetina, Zakućac.

In this school year there are 930 children attending school, with 51 class departments. The education is realized by 96 teachers and school collaborators, helped by 15 teaching assistants, three employees in administration, 10 cleaning ladies and 2 janitors.

Slime is the birthplace of Croatian poet Josip Pupačić and the school has been named after him, Zakučac is the birthplace of Croatian poet and prominent translator Jure Kaštelan, whereas Kučice is the birthplace of world famous marulologist, academician Mirko Tomasović. All three of them were pupils of our school. On the occasion of his visit to school in Kučice, academician Tomasović wrote: 'In this place I learned to write and that is what I've been doing all my life'.

Former pupils of this school were also painter Milovan Stanić, sculptor academic Kažimir Hraste, many scientists, and also a number of world famous athletes such as Ivan Perišić, Petra Martić, Andrija and Toni Žižić.

Natural diversity by the sea and the river and magical hills and mountains have inspired people over the past and today, which is reflected in the tradition of this area. Preserving the tradition of the Omis region is a special feature of the school Josip Pupačić.

### **Curricular peculiarities in preserving memories of the life and opus of Josip Pupačić and traditional customs of the Omiš region**

For the last 28 years, the last week in May the school celebrates **Josip Pupačić Week** - when we go to the poet's native village Slime where his birth house and the Josip Pupačić Memorial Exhibition are located, carefully maintained by the poet's family. We organize a national literary and art competition, Josip Pupačić and I, which also has international proportions, and we announce the winners of the competition in Slime. During the Josip Pupačić Week, we organize the school Pričigin in cooperation with the Pričigin from Split, the Children's Festival for which students prepare for vocal solo performance throughout the year, and also an exhibition of works of art submitted to the competition. Regular guests of Josip Pupačić Week are Croatian writers and scientists. It is also celebrated with a variety of weekly school activities. In 2020, when we were locked up due to horrible Covid 19, Josip Pupačić Week was organized virtually. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of tragic deaths of Josip Pupačić, his daughter Rašeljka and wife Benka, we organized all events live respecting the epidemiological measures to combat the disease and using natural circulation - the space between the school, the City Library and the Cultural Center, Slime, Mirabella Fortress, AZ Gallery, and the school yard.

Omis being the cradle of klapa singing, the children's klapa **Bepo** was founded 23 years ago, and it was named after Josip Pupačić called Bepo. This children's vocal group nurtures the three-part and polyphonic klapa singing of a specially arranged song for children's voices, which is often prepared by their leader Marija Didović. Klapa Bepo celebrated 20 years of existence in 2018 and on that occasion they released their second sound carrier.

Children's klapa Bepo regularly participates in all festivals of children's klapa singing, where it wins first places, and they also performed at the famous International Choral Singing Competition in Verona. This children's klapa has more than forty performances a year at various events. After such a long period of existence, one may notice that there is almost no adult klapa in Croatia some member of which did not come from the Children's Klapa Bepo. This year, in cooperation with the Dalmatian Klapa Festival, the Education and Teacher Training Agency and the Center of Excellence of the Split-Dalmatia County, we are co-organizers of the Children's Klapa Festival in Omis.

As from the year 2002, the student cooperative **Rašeljka**, named after the daughter of Josip Pupačić, has been operating in school. It is known and recognizable at all levels - local, county and state. So far, they have created and exhibited a range of products (souvenirs, guides, brochures) promoting student creativity and entrepreneurship. We are especially proud of the production of our souvenirs of magnetic natural pebbles Bepo and Bepina, which are a certified protected product.

Of particular importance are the activities in **satellite school Kučiće** where traditional workshops are conducted with students and their families of all generations. We started with traditional depictions of old customs, ways of life, crafts, children's games on the day of St. Luke, the patron saint of Kučiće. A special warmth is brought by making doves from the heart of a fig, which is done in the period before Palm Sunday, when the fig tree is in such a stage of vegetation that allows separation of the heart from the branch. Olive twigs are decorated with these doves. The ash flute making workshop has restored the melody of the ash flutes that has long since died out in this place. At school, there is also a workshop for making toys from oak acorn.

In Kučiće, through preservation of the passion heritage, together with the production of doves, an autochthonous drum was also renewed. This drum was used for drumming during the Holy

Week, when the church bells fell silent from Good Friday to Easter morning. The drums signified everything that church bells otherwise signify.

Participating in the TRACE project, we also saved from oblivion oral tradition and wrote down three folk children's stories that originated in our area. These are the stories **Black Aries**, **Neither in Stone nor in Wood** and **Red Rocks**, which had deep educational messages to children in the times before the rule of media and technology, but are no less instructive and valuable to today's generations. We have written and published the booklet Implementation of the Erasmus project TRACE Traditional children's stories for a common future at the elementary school Josip Pupačić, Omiš, which offers new light to the newly opened door of the treasury of folk customs of the Omiš region.

### **3. Traditional story in teaching**

The school curriculum plans various projects and programs, which enable students to get to know Croatian tradition and culture as part of their personal and national identity. Extracurricular activities can also be planned to nurture and encourage the creation of a traditional story.

Traditional stories are represented in the teaching throughout the eight-year primary education. In classroom teaching (students aged 7 to 10) and in subject teaching (students aged 11 to 14), traditional stories are processed as readings and as literary templates in literature classes.

The lesson covers the basic features of traditional stories through various types of texts, from folk tales, legends, stories, tales, poems to simpler literary texts such as anecdotes, jokes, riddles and jokes. The traditional story is also on the reading list.

All stories have one or more ethical values that we want to bring closer to children. Through traditional stories, teaching can be done in correlation with other subjects with which the story is related (Geography, History, etc.) Given the wide range of stories in textbooks, teachers can choose which stories to process with children. We work with children in pairs or groups, thus emphasizing the importance of collaborative learning and connecting with each other. In class, we also organize debates, dramatizations of literary texts, workshops on creative writing. Sometimes, we spend both integrated and project days.



The methods we use in teaching are: the method of reading and working on the text, the method of storytelling, making salaries and other forms of artistic expression, research teaching, the method of critical thinking, the method of discussion, the method of active learning.

## **CLASSROOM TEACHING**

### **1st grade**

Brothers Grimm: Fairy tales

### **2nd grade**

Aesop: Fables

H.C. Andersen: Fairy tales

C. Perrault: Fairy tales

### **3rd grade**

Croatian folk tales

Legends of the homeland

Aesop: Fables

Legends and stories of other peoples: Why frogs croak, a story from Vietnam

### **4th grade**

Ivana Brlić Mažuranić: Stories from the past

Croatian folk tales

Legends about the past of Croats

Legends and stories of other peoples: Vineyard, Israeli folk tale

A judge pronounces justice, an Indian folk tale

I. A Kirilov: The Wolf and the Cat, a fable

## **SUBJECT TEACHING**

### **5th grade**

Alexander Pushkin, A Fairy Tale of a Fisherman and a Fish

Humorous folk tales

### **6th grade**

Ivana Brlić Mažuranić: Stories from the past

August Šenoa, Historical Stories

Alojz Majetić, Pirates from Omiš

Dubravko Horvatić, Hero Mijat Tomić

### **7th grade**

Vladimir Nazon, Stories

Gustav Schwab, The most beautiful stories of classical antiquity

Hrvoje Hitrec, Croatian Legends

## **8th grade**

Đuro Sudeta, Mor

Marija Jurić Zagorka, Daughter of Lotrščak

### **3.1. A traditional children's story in the TRACE project**

Children's stories are a very good medium for thinking, understanding and explaining things in the real world, things in the virtual world and things in every possible world. The idea of using children's stories in education to teach children to think is nothing new.

If we look back to the Renaissance, we can find an interesting theory of Erasmus Desideri about fables. He claims: "Can anything be better adapted to youthful abilities than reading ancient fables? Because they are attracted to love, they are good for moral lessons, they help vocabulary. There is nothing that a boy listens more readily than Aesop's apologist who, under the guise of a pleasant story, teaches young people the very essence of philosophy. "

Just like fables, fairy tales always give the same lesson, regardless of the age at which it is read. The child will interpret it in a way that suits his needs and interests. When he grows up, he will go deeper into the lesson itself, but that lesson will remain the same in its foundations. The lesson of the fairy tale is that difficulties in life are inevitable and that they must be fought against, and if you do not give up, you will emerge victorious, a hero. Fairy tales confront the child with the essence of the problem, do not show an intricate problem, because that would be unacceptable due to the child's stage of development, and give clear characteristics to their characters.

We can return to them again and again, as life convinces us to reformulate and re-examine those basic philosophical questions about what we know and believe, about good and evil, about human relationships and ourselves, questions that are important to people of all ages and stages of life. "

Almost all traditional children's stories had a moral lesson and it can be used to develop thinking in children. With the right parenting method, any traditional children's story can become a thinking story.

### **3.2. Values in stories**

Values shape human life, yet there is no generally accepted definition of the term. They are defined by criteria according to which the meaning of life is determined, but also the meaning of the whole world. That is why we say that values are an organized set of general beliefs, opinions and attitudes about what is right, good and desirable. Values are not innate to us; we adopt them throughout life, they are subject to change and necessary for life in society, they are part of our world of quality and they are related to people, things and events.

We consider moral values to be the highest natural values. Man's goodness, purity, truthfulness, justice, honesty, humility make him a truly human being who is not determined solely by biological or social assumptions. The precondition for the development of moral values is freedom, and from it arises responsibility. Von Hildebrand considers respect to be the basis of all moral values because man without respect is incapable of submitting to himself or of any renunciation, being a slave to vanity, egoism, or lust.

Perhaps a list of eight values that Kidder considers superior to all others can help: love, truthfulness, honesty, freedom, unity, tolerance, responsibility, and respect for life. These values are certainly moral values, and in their adoption and development the importance of moral education is unquestionable. It is these values that are taught in traditional children's stories.

Values permeate every aspect of social life and are characteristic exclusively of the human species. It is achieved by adopting certain knowledge (moral criteria, rules, principles, norms and categories) on the basis of which a system of moral beliefs, attitudes and values is formed in accordance with which man should act (so that moral education would not become just a moral formalism) habit of moral conduct. The basic goal of value refers to the formation of the

individual as a moral subject who thinks, feels (is emotionally attached to moral cognitions) and acts in accordance with the requirements of social morality, which will clearly distinguish well from evil.

Values must have an educational and shaping component. The latter is aimed at building and shaping human qualities that make a person a good person. The focus is on the emotional and voluntary sphere of human life, and the educational effects are manifested in honesty, honesty, truthfulness, justice, humility, in human beliefs and attitudes interwoven with humanity, in responsible judgment and acting in accordance with the listed values.

“Why should values be adopted? If, for example, we accept selfishness as universal principle, everyone will follow only their own impulses and inclinations. If everyone followed only their own impulses and inclinations, it would be harmful to everyone. Therefore, moral reasons must be superior to ordinary reasons. If one accepts a principle he only thinks is moral, the real moral reason must become interested in ‘himself’. From an ethical perspective, deeds must be good because of what is right, not because of the consequences that produce them.

### **3.2.1. Ethical and moral values in traditional children's stories**

Ethics (according to the Greek ἠθικός: moral, chaste), a set of principles of moral behavior of a society or social group based on fundamental social values such as: goodness, honesty, duty, truth, humanity, etc.

Ethics is the science of morality as a social phenomenon that is expressed in concrete human actions within the rules, maxims and civilizational foundations of a society; it is a philosophical discipline that examines the basis and source of morality, the fundamental criteria for evaluation, and the goals and meaning of moral wills and actions.

The term "morality" came from the Latin words: mos, moris - custom, rule, law; mores - behavior, temper, and way of behaving people and understanding of that behavior; that is, moralis - moral, moral. "Morality is a concrete form of human freedom, standardized by a certain (written or unwritten) code of conduct and action." (Talanga)

Morality can be defined as one of the ways of regulating interpersonal relations, as a system of social norms, rules and principles of human behavior in society. Accordingly, the development of morality is necessary for life in the community, so moral values are sought to be instilled in members of society from an early age. A child is born as a person who by his nature is not a

moral being, but becomes a moral being by upbringing in an environment that provides him with moral development and therefore the relationship between ethics and upbringing is very important. Jean Piaget was a philosopher and a significant psychologist known for his research on the moral development of the child. Piaget, as Talanga (1999) points out, argues that the child initially learns moral rules and their application so that moral consciousness is reduced to the practice of rules, and the child understands them as the rules of the game are understood in play.

During his childhood, the child learns about good and evil from his environment by absorbing various "signals" about good and evil, and when he learns what is good and evil, he will be able to use moral knowledge, which is a prerequisite for human moral behavior.

In children, the notion of good and evil is inconsistent because it changes at different periods of their development, so they show signs of conscience. For them, parents are the source of everything good in the world, and for that reason the child accepts the values of the parents, his opinion, attitudes and standards of good and evil, and all this is mainly adopted through prohibitions and restrictions when he does not act in accordance with these criteria.

Through everyday life we can see that the concept of good and evil can be relative and that it can be seen from several perspectives, so one situation or certain behavior for one child can mean good, while for another child it would be evil.

It is children who perceive, imitate and accept all those forms of honesty, generosity, altruism, respect for the rights and welfare of others that appear in his environment, while adults are responsible for recognizing and observing the moral and spontaneous forms of behavior of the child, in which case they should be praised, encouraged, and rewarded for such behavior.

Adults are also obliged to talk to children and explain to them why a certain behavior can be good and what kind of pleasant feelings it arouses in the one for whom it is intended. When a child does well, the most important thing is to encourage him and make him aware that he feels proud, but also that he feels satisfaction and happiness that the rainbows are happy. There are different moral values, and every parent or educator would like to "implant" them in a child in order for the child to become a good and honest person.

The story awakens the different interests of children, as well as connecting old knowledge and experience with newly acquired knowledge. Also, the story stimulates creativity and

imagination in children, improves attention, helps and encourages the development of speech and memory, and awakens in children a love for the story and literature in general.

Furthermore, in addition to the above abilities, stories also develop socio-emotional competencies in children. We can observe that the story affects cognitive (knowledge, memory, attention, creativity, imagination), social (behavior, behavior) and affective abilities (feeling of love, curiosity, etc.). Stories are of great importance on an affective level. Through the stories, children empathize with the characters, put themselves in their shoes and thus experience various imaginary situations that evoke certain feelings and reactions in them.

The most important characteristic of stories is that they have the ability to convey value. With their content and their characters, stories have immense power in evoking and conveying a large number of values that children are able to feel and accept. This can help them develop their personalities, build their character and create their own view of the world around them.

When teachers tell a story that activity does not end when it comes to the end of the story, it should be continued through conversation with the children. Conversation is the most natural way of communication between children and educators. In conversation, educators should discuss with children the meaning and messages of the story. See if the children understand the point of the story, and if not, repeat and explain to them until they understand. Educators can give children other similar examples, moral doubts, or help them distinguish good from evil, or other values that are conveyed in the story.

Also, we must not forget that although the stories possess a handful of qualities, they can also have flaws. Stories can also convey violence, bad values (lying, selfishness) which should not be in the foreground of the story, but by the very presence in it children get to know and remember them. It doesn't have to be necessarily bad because even in real life, not everything is always wonderful and wonderful. It is important that even when such parts of the story are encountered, they are not skipped over, but paid attention to and discussed. To show the child what is good and desirable and what is undesirable, or harmful and dangerous. We can take as an example fairy tales that always contain the contrast of good and evil, in them we can find a lot of evil, injustice and even violence. However, in fairy tales, the good that fights and perseveres against evil always wins.

In this way, the child becomes acquainted with the bad side of people and the world, but he also sees the power and importance of the good that defeats evil. Through stories, as stated earlier, different values are conveyed. However, a lot of stories have been transmitted for many years, since our ancestors, so it is to be expected that not all the values that were valid at that time are still as desirable and current as they used to be. Thus, a lot of stereotypes are transmitted, and the biggest ones still refer to the traditional way of life, ie the position of women and men. Such social stereotypes portray a woman as a housewife and a man as the head of the family. One should not, therefore, stop telling such stories, but simply warn children of such things and explain to them that certain things in society have changed and that something that was common a hundred years ago is no more today. Talking to children about such parts of the story is very important to make them aware of the values that are changing and to explain why this is so. Only through conversation and understanding can social stereotypes be eradicated and an open path left for the development of true values.

### **3.3. Why children love traditional stories**

Children love stories because they understand them and receive their messages correctly. Logical thinking has not yet been developed in preschool and there is still no need for a rational and logical understanding of the world. Children do not think about the story, they accept it with all their psyche and intuitively understand its messages. They do not imagine specific scenes and do not deal with details, but experience the whole story. That is why it is not necessary to soften or change the parts of fairy tales that look scary to adults. The child's psyche understands that there should be no mercy towards evil and if it is not punished, justice is not established. By changing the content, we also change the key symbols of fairy tales and turn them into ordinary stories, and they thus lose their meaning and value.

Stories tell children that one should be noble, brave, humble, good, and greed and selfishness are punished. They teach them that they need to face their fears and weaknesses because that is the only way they can achieve success. They teach them that good returns to good and that it doesn't matter how strong, rich, smart we are, because even the smallest and weakest will win if they have virtues. In short, stories teach them to become good people.



#### **4. Traditional children's stories of the TRACE project**

**The following stories were collected and recorded in the TRACE project:**

##### **Croatia**

Black Ram

Neither in Stone nor in Wood

Red rocks

Manda's Well

The story of The Plitvice lakes

Froggy Girl

##### **Greece**

Theseus and the Minotaur

Icarus & Daedalus Wings

The Man, the Boy and the Donkey

##### **Latvia**

Golden Egg

The little bread bun

The old man's mitten

Wild animals and the dough box maker

The bee punished for lying

The fly is granted the freedom of choice

## **Spain**

The Monk and the Weasel

The Traveller and the Goldsmith.

How to teach an Elephant to Speak

The Caliph, the Shepherd and Happiness

### **4.1. Traditional children's stories**

The following traditional stories were prepared by Marija Šarac, prof., transmitting stories from her region based on folk customs, phenomena and beings. These are the Black Ram, Don't bump into a tree nor hit the stone and Red rocks. The stories are written in the native language.

#### **Red rocks**

At the very end of the Cetina river, the fast and green Karst river, rises Mosor, grey stone mountain. There are no rich forests as one would expect there. It is situated on the right bank of the Cetina, and so from the height it seems to be guarding and watching the river. That view is as rocky as the mountain itself. All storms, rolling towards

the villages scattered at the bottom of Mosor and on the other bank of the Cetina, start from the mountain top. Gloomy and full of lightnings, thunders and horrible winds, they threaten the fields and the efforts of the peasants.

And there where the mountain foothill and restless Cetina meet each other, the rocks are somewhat different. From the mere touch of those powerful and cold rocks with the clear, noisy

water, the rocks have changed. In that part the river is calm and it flows smoothly towards the next dangerous waterfall. It is strange, in all that dull grey, to see the light reddish rocks hidden in the cruel canyon. The rocks hide lots of caves and springs that rush in heavy rains in large quantities into the canyon itself.

People have always looked to the mountain to get prepared for the forthcoming bad weather, but they somehow knew that Mosor was watching them as well. They were aware that the stone had no eyes and that only fairies could live there far away in the heights. They had always known about them.

The people were not afraid of fairies. One just shouldn't disturb them. Fairies had their laws that ordinary people didn't have to understand. Just respect them.

Mare was a nice little girl. Even at an early age, one could recognize that she was more skilled than the other girls. When some goat or lamb had to be saved from the water or some rock, or when one should have taken a loaded horse across the stream, she was the first to do it.

Her whistles made of ash tree bark had the most beautiful sound, even though her fingers were so small to make something alike. The girl would sing while looking after cattle on the meadows. Her mum didn't have to yell at her very much since Mare was obedient and would with no sign of fear help her wash wool in the Cetina. She was also not afraid to use side roads to go home all alone. By the way she would always pick some flowers and give them to her mum.

While dancing, playing or calming the horse under load, she had always had the feeling to be watched by someone. She would frequently turn herself, but there was no one to be seen. It was the feeling that she was observed not from behind but from above. She did not shudder from that, but she would direct her eyes to the heights, to the mountain, hoping to see who it was.

Mare was growing up and so came the time for her to dance in a circle (kolo) with other girls. She would dance, sing and laugh loudly. Her singing and her laughter could be heard, so it seemed to her that they sometimes mingled with the rumbling of the river, and that all sounds were reflected from the rocks on the other side. And now and then she thought that they turned back to her, but different, with the words she couldn't understand, in a quiet song she was not familiar with, but she somehow liked it. It seemed to her that it was a secret to be kept, but not some terrible burdening secret, rather some special gift she should neither lose nor share.

There were more and more such moments in her life. She was followed by a quiet whisper while she was dancing and singing alone. And that whisper... it was so soft, so warm... She would sometimes recognize some peaceful playful laughter. Words could not be understood. But this never happened while she was with others. She could hear it most clearly when she would, riding a horse, go to the pond. Blowing of wind would then turn into the well-known sound full of unknown words and cheerful laughter.

Some women from the village would now and then throw a warning, allegedly with good intentions...

Don't dance that much, Mare, do not loose your hair... Don't play with a horse... You will be seen by fairies. That is dangerous.

But Mare wouldn't listen. She could see nothing wrong in loving that all. She was not willing to get rid of those unusual songs, words and laughter.

One summer evening, when the villagers were going back home from their fields, and the red sky and hard dry soil were making their way back difficult, Mare decided to stay a bit longer by the Cetina river. She planned to have some rest by the water she loved so much. She knew that those who were singing to her might come, so she would enjoy a little bit in their song and then ride back home.

All of a sudden she could hear the sound of the hoofs, and it wasn't just one horse, she was able to recognize that, there were dozens of them, all approaching her in a gallop. She gave a look to her horse. It only raised its head, but it wasn't frightened at all. It just neighed and shook its nice mane, as if it has met someone well-known. Then she turned back and noticed some ten girls of exceptional beauty. Their dresses were flashing like water and stealing redness of the sunset. With long loose hair, white faces, eyes green as the water from the Cetina river.... they were dancing and wriggling and laughing over the meadows, and singing... And that song reflected the quiet echo of the mountain, the murmur of the stream and the song of nightingales. She watched them, wondering how she could hear the horses but not see them.

She looked at fairies dancing, and then, suddenly, the hem of a dress of one fairy went up. She could see hoofs instead of feet and in that moment she became aware it was really fairies who were dancing. She remembered what those women from the village used to tell her, but she wasn't sorry she failed to follow their advice, since if she had, she would have never experienced something alike. The fairies addressed her telling her that they had come to dance

in the circle with her, confirming they had always watched her from the side of Poljica as she was growing up. They had seen her courage and love and all care shown to her horse. She had all qualities the fairies expected from someone they wanted to dance in the circle with. So they smiled at her and raised their hands and Mare ran to them and she danced the most beautiful dance in her whole life. Finally she could understand what they were singing about.

The fairies were playful, so they combed the horse's mane, ran over the fields with it, even though it had been dark and the night had fallen long ago. But the sky was full of stars and it was a full moon – one could see as in the middle of a day. They ran to the spring, over the fields and meadows, over rocks and streams. They sang and danced all night. Before dawn, they accompanied the horse home, and they took Mare with them into the caves in the Red Rocks.

When mother realized that neither Mare nor the horse had come back home that night, she started crying bitterly. She asked the other girls if anyone had seen them. But no one did. She looked for Mare all night shouting her name, then she sat in front of the stone threshold on a small wooden bench, looking into the starry sky, and praying to God, hoping to hear her steps from every sound she heard. At dawn she saw the horse in gallop, completely wet entering the stable. It was still dark, so she hoped Mare could have come either. Following the horse, she rushed into the stall but Mare wasn't there. Then she had a closer look and she noticed a braid which was twice the length of a mane, something that a human hand couldn't have made. Mother knew it were fairies. Her heart stunned. Every search is in vain, she was aware. If the fairies liked Mare, they would return her. She could do nothing more but pray and hope it would really happen that way.

For seven days Mare rollicked with fairies. At night, by moonlight, she danced and sang with them. She washed her face in the spring with them. During the day she would sleep in deep caves, high in the rocks. Now she could understand their language. She was told that the human beings never stayed to live with them. She would be returned back home when the moonlight disappears. She didn't have to pay anything for all good she had experienced, she was given that due to her special qualities, her courage and kindness. She was promised to be always helped by fairies if attacked by someone in the village, in that case they would take revenge and make that person's life bitter. There was only one condition of a happy return to the village – she should never ever say how to reach the caves in the Red Rocks of the Mosor mountain, nor what fairies really were. She had to keep the secret about their lives and to which wells they used to come to people. This wasn't hard for Mare since – although she was always ready to

help people- she didn't believe them very much, so she could keep the secret. She also didn't want to make fairies angry, as they were now her friends.

On the seventh day she came back home. Dead tired of dancing, with the hair unkempt and full of braids, her sleeves and skirts broken... She hugged her mother. Didn't cry. She was calm. She had protection. And the people from the village didn't ask her much, they would just say:

She was taken by the fairies into the rocks of Poljica!

And Mare lived a peaceful life full of memories she wasn't willing to share with anyone.

### **Neither in Stone nor in Wood**

Once upon a time there was a little girl who lived in a village near the river Cetina. She was kind to everyone. The playful little girl was beloved among her little friends. She was different from the others because she enjoyed the company of the elders and absorbed their stories, even though sometimes she did not understand their meaning. She was very polite, so her Grandma's friends didn't mind when she joined their company. The relation between Grandma and her youngest grandchild was getting stronger as the time went by.

She grew up to be a pretty young girl. Grandma carefully watched over her and the boys who liked her. She told her: "You must choose the one who will love you just the way you are or you will never be happy!"

The girl thought the words were just the result of Grandma's great love for her and did not quite understand what did she mean by "to love you just the way you are." Her Grandma always advised her and the little girl obeyed because her Grandma would explain every advice she gave her, every except the one about "the way you are". When she asked her about its meaning, Grandma replied: "You will understand the meaning of these words when the time comes, I can't explain it to you now."

The little girl fancied a boy from her village. Grandma was not happy about it and told her that he was a good boy but just not good enough for her being afraid what would happen when “her granddaughter time comes”. The girl didn’t understand her Grandma again, but did not ask too much. She was so in love that she begged her Grandma to accept him. Once more Grandma complied to her granddaughter’s wishes. After some time the dowry was prepared and it was time for the girl to get married. The wedding was like any other: with plenty of songs and joy. Life went on as usual.

As the time passed, Grandma got weaker. She said to her granddaughter: “Everything I know and everything I have will be passed on to you because you are the youngest of all my grandchildren and my favorite one.”

Soon the time arrived for Grandma to leave her granddaughter. The girl bid her last farewell with dignity and every sound of the funeral tolling of a bell touched her soul deeply.

It was not long after that the girl couldn’t sleep well anymore and every morning she looked more and more tired. Her husband was very worried about her but after the hard day’s work in the field he would fall sound asleep. However, he became suspicious of his wife’s weary appearance. He had bad dreams one night, then suddenly woke up. He was shocked. His wife was not in bed. He wanted to wait for her but tired as he was he fell asleep again. When he woke up in the morning, his wife was sleeping peacefully next to him.

Next day he decided to work less, eat less and drink less wine that day. When they went to bed that night he pretended to be sleeping. After some time his wife got out of the bed. She took off her heavy cloth nightgown and went to the fire place where she took soot from all the pots and spread it all over her body until she was totally painted in black colour. Then she said:

Don’t bump into a tree nor hit the stone

but go to Puglia under walnut trees.

After saying these words the wife disappeared.

Her husband was scared but anyway he decided to follow her and wanted to find out where was she going and what was she doing. It was easy for him to take off his nightgown and spread soot all over his body but in fear he forgot the exact words his wife said before so he said:

*Bump into a tree and hit the stone*

*and go to Puglia under wallnut trees.*

All of a sudden he was thrown outside bumping into trees and hitting the stones. All those kicks were pretty hard. As the wind was carrying him he was all bruised and battered from every side. Suddenly he found himself behind some rock. He knew the place. The place with the most walnut trees. But what nobody knew was the fact that witches gather there during the night. They knew how to come there without getting hurt the way he was. He was looking at them wondering and with great fear. He couldn't even imagine that his good wife was also there.

All witches were seated in a circle, murmuring some quiet songs and laughing out loud. In the middle of the circle the fire with crackling sound was lit the way it should be at their home but much stronger and brighter. The big smokey pot was there, too. Now and again every one of them threw something in the pot that made smoke bigger so it was spreading wider from the circle where they were seated. The smell and the smoke made his fear smaller and he felt dizzy so that he would also laugh but had to restrain not to be caught. The rhythmycal noise made him sleepy so he fell asleep for a while.

Suddenly down from the village he heard roosters crowing. Everything stopped. None of the sounds were heard anymore. All these soot-covered women turned into fire balls and flew towards direction from where they came. They flew to their villages before the dawn under the sight of the bright morning star. It looked as if the stars had decided to go on Earth. The husband stood still unable to move. First he was astonished by everything he had seen but the fireballs made him even more frightened.

It was almost dawn. The sun was coming out. By this time he came to his senses and became aware that he was in the middle of the mountain, naked and soot-covered. He could remember the magic words but it was too late. It was too bright for the wind to come and get him back. The day came and he, hiding all in fear that he might be seen, somehow tried to reach his house. It wasn't easy. At that time water carriers go to the spring. Children take cattle to pasture and hard working farmers are getting ready to work in the field.



He passed almost the whole village and was close to his hamlet when he was seen by his Godfather who couldn't recognise him because he was naked, all painted in black, full of bruises and scratches. Frightened by his look the Godfather crossed himself and started to pray loudly. The husband said: "You are my Godfather, please take me to the house, give me something to wear and I'll tell you everything that happened to me." When Godfather recovered from fear and was able to recognise husband's voice he took him to his house, gave him some clothes and listened to his story.

The Godfather believed in his friend's story and recalled that he had experienced something strange that night, too. That night the cow from his stable should have been calved so he had to be up before the dawn. When he passed neighbour's house the candle went burning stronger and he saw woman washing her face and sweeping the floor long before the dawn and the bright morning star.

Soon the husband went home and his wife ran to meet him. She saw him all battered. He said:

He said:

*Bump into a tree and stone  
and go to Puglia under walnut trees.*

The look on her face told him everything.

After that strange adventure the husband was hiding all the pots in the house before going to sleep. His wife wasn't sleepy as she used to be nor she was happy as before. She remembered her Grandma and understood the meaning of the phrase "to love you the way you are".

### **The black ram**

When the summer heat burns the ground, the rock and nothing else grows in the dry land, everybody goes to the Cetina river. Even during the hottest periods, the Cetina land is green, and what you've planted can be watered endlessly. The cattle drinks and cools off at the stream, and in the afternoon when the cattle are fed and resting, and the heat weakens, at that very exact moment children learn how to swim. Grandfathers tie them up with a rope around the nearest

tree, so the water wouldn't take them, and bit by bit, every child learns the joyful process of swimming.

You should come to the river at dawn, before the heat. As the sun rises in the sky it becomes much harder to work near the water. Everybody awaits for the sound of the church bells which can't be heard from the village church (because the field is too deep in the canyon), but from the church on the other side, where the canyon is milder and the church positioned on a high rock above Studenci so it can be heard and seen from here there, and everywhere. That sound marks the most important part of the day. Men stop digging, and women picking apples and cherries, and everyone puts their hands together and briefly say their prayers.

A fierce bell toll, as if right above your head, suddenly marks noon. All other sounds stop and only that fierce toll fills the canyon and the field.

At that exact moment should you sit around a wood log, say your prayers and start dining. Everybody knows this and none should do else what. Even the children know it's dangerous to do differently. However, no one knows why that must be done, it's something never discussed about, but still, everyone senses there is a story behind all this.

Amongst children there were and will always be those who are disobedient. As was this time. Young Josip does only what he wishes to do. And this time not only did he fail to sit and say his prayers, but he went straight down to the river while the bell was still filling the air with its fierce sound. When he came to the river, he remembered his mother's words who's always told him not to go into the river hot, because he could get cramps and drown. However, this seemed to him as a bedtime story, and right now he was trying to cool off, so he refused to listen to his mother's advice.

He slightly stepped into the refreshing, ice-cold water and started undressing with an already definitive decision to take a swim. He decided to swim downstream. Lifting his hands and hiding his eyes from the sun, he checked how far he must go. And what a sight it was, a huge black ram in the middle of Cetina covering the whole river with its body and looking straight into the boy angrily. Eyes black as the night glimmering from water in this bright, hot summer day. Its horns big, black and curled as two fat knobs. Its fleece glimmering from water drops that fly around from the Cetina rapids. The ram lying and looking at the boy, the boy, on the other hand, terrified as he was, wasn't even able to call his father, mother or his older brother, as if he was mute. He was unable to think or move. The ram continued lying and looking at him calmly with his horrifying, fiery eyes. In a tiny part of sense, the boy had left, he remembered

the fireplace story. He wasn't supposed to hear it, he should've been sleeping, however, Josip known for his mischief pretended to be sleeping. That was when he heard the horrific legend saying: "He who sees the black ram at noon, should outrun it, go home and not leave the house for three days and nights. Otherwise he will not live!"

Moreover, he remembered them saying that he who sees it will go crazy or die. And of the ones who saw it so far, only one was able to come home. All others would get to the "Big Board" where they would be found.

As soon as his feet started working again, Josip rushed to fetch his horse on the meadow and forced it uphill. He forced it while screaming of fear never even daring to look behind himself to even see if he is being followed by the ram. He knew that if he looks it in the eyes once more it would be the last thing he did. The horse running as the wind on that hot summer day, wet and on the brink of its power, and Josip ice-cold of the spiteous fear. The skin on his back shuddering, while thinking about the ram who is inevitably by his side. The biggest hill was passed, and home was close. Rushing like the wind he was quite a sight for the old man who was returning home from the stream.

On the horse he saw a naked little boy, blue of fear, screaming and rushing the horse. The old man got scared thinking that an evil force is running to the village. He decided to stop the evil stepping in the middle of the dusty road rising his hands in the air. In one hand holding a stick, and the other using to make a sign of the cross, thus asking God for help. The old man yelled loudly in order to scare whatever there is in the dust rising behind the horse's gallop. Suddenly, he yelled, the horse already distraught, flew even faster sensing that his barn is close, and that his suffering is nearly over. The gallop was heard much sooner than the horse reached its barn, so Josip's uncle decided to check where the noise is coming from. And was he surprised by the scene. At first sight he also thought an evil force is approaching but looking closely he saw a horse galloping with his nephew on its back. Wanting to stop the horse he called him by his name, but the horse frightened, refused to stop and decided to continue to his barn. That's when the uncle was really scared, because he remembered that the barn entrance is too low for Josip to ride in, so he grabbed him from the horse's back in full gallop saving his nephew from sure death. Had he hesitated for a moment Josip wouldn't have been saved.

That's how Josip's uncle saved him. Josip refused to leave the house for three days and nights. And from that day on he listened to adults, and never questioned them anymore. Now he knew

why you need to sit around the wood log in the shade, saying your prayers and not going to the water when the church bell marks noon.

#### **4.2. Workshops at the Primary School “Josip Pupačić “**

By teaching children stories and their values and lessons, we have expanded this topic a little at school.

We performed with the children:

- reading workshops in the classroom and school library
- dramatization workshops
- creative writing workshops (change the ending of a story, create your own story ...)
- creative storytelling workshops (you became a character in the story)
- art workshops
- music and dance workshops (we get to know traditional songs and dances)
- sports workshop (we get to know sports from the past, traditional games).

##### **4.2.1.Example of workshop (Black Ram)**

#### **MOTIVATION**

- On the board paste cards with the words: black ram, Cetina, Joseph.
- Students explain the words, I show them photos of a ram, the river Cetina.
- I encourage students to guess the content of a fairy tale.

#### **READING A FAIRY TALE**

## **FAIRY TALE ANALYSIS - UNDERSTANDING AND THINKING**

- What is a fairy tale?
- Which characters are real and which are unreal?
- What season is mentioned in the story?
- What was the boy's name?
- How is Joseph different from other children?
- Are you always obedient?
- Why did the boy go to the river at noon?
- What time is it at noon in the middle of summer?
- What did the boy see?
- Is the black ram evil? Is every black animal evil? What makes you think?
- How did he feel watching the black ram?
- Have you ever felt such fear?
- What did Joseph do when he became frightened?
- What would you do?
- Why didn't he go to his parents and brothers?
- Do we act reasonably when we are too afraid?
- Why did Joseph think the black ram was following him? Why didn't he turn around?
- How would you act?
- Is fear ever good? When?
- Is disobedience ever good? When?
- Should disobedience be punished?
- Have you ever been punished for disobedience?
- What did Joseph understand at the end of the fairy tale, what lesson did he learn?

## **CONCLUSION**

- Explain the wise saying, "Big eyes are in fear."
- Do adults sometimes frighten children to prevent them from doing something they are not allowed to do?

## **CREATIVE WORK**

- Fairy tale illustration: drawing, comic.

### **5. Results of the TRACE project**

Participating in the TRACE project, librarians, teachers and students of the Primary School Josip Pupačić, got acquainted with the rich European mythology, traditional beliefs and customs of other nations. Listening to stories from Greece, Latvia and Spain, we recognized and noticed links with Croatian stories: belief in deities and mythological beings, respect for fundamental moral and ethical values by which both the individual and society are directed towards generally accepted values. The stories encourage goodwill, modesty, diligence, critical thinking that helps us to reason clearly and impartially and draw conclusions.

In the workshops conducted in the classroom, students were happy to listen to stories, ask questions, re-examine the actions of the characters from the stories on which they built and became aware of their behavior, actions towards themselves and others. After getting acquainted with the stories, the students came to the conclusion that all traditional stories contain values that we should strive for and apply to life. Encouraged by the stories and their lessons, they also researched with interest the traditional customs associated with their region, and so they themselves wrote down the traditional stories of their place.