



Associative Financial Literacy

Accompanying the journey of life

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School Goes Business

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School goes Business is a program at Helmut von Kugelgen School in Fellbach, Germany near Stuttgart. This program is aimed at 10th/11th grade pupils and combines practical work at a company, with classes at school that give them insights into business economics and accounting. During three months, in the afternoons, the students engage in practical training at a company. The aim is to give them the opportunity to experience real working-life situations. During weekly lessons we discuss the bigger picture of their work environment, discuss legal forms and structures of the different companies. During this last trimester, one of my research topics was based on money so I shared with them the different aspects of money to complement their own perception of money. In this context, the 'true' price was also explored. During a project combining a partnership with a Spanish Waldorf school in Vitoria, Spain with a business activity by commercialising organic olive oil, we worked on aspects of pricing and what is the 'true' price. Also, there it was interesting to see the connections between one activity and its impact on others, comparing prices, etc.

We also explore current business topics like inflation, a hot topic at the moment due to raw material increases and energy cost explosions in Europe. The pupils get to know alternative business models and purpose-driven entrepreneurial activities, which are ideal to combine with the aspects of threefolding. In addition we look at and talk about the historical context, how since the division of labour people are mostly not working for themselves anymore but for a company and its customers, who buy, consume or use the created products and services. The students show interesting reactions during these discussions. At this age of adolescence, the dream of being rich is very popular and the students look up to people like Zuckerberg and Elon Musk, and idolise rappers and influencers. But looking closer, they realise that the real drive behind their business initiatives is not to become rich, but to serve and create new ideas. Therefore, the pupils start questioning the paradigm that being rich is the most important thing and the only sign of being successful. They realise that it is possible to look at earning money as an outcome of a working relationship, not a goal in itself.

At the beginning of the year, we set up a student food kiosk called 'Bread & Break', offering snacks, fruits and crepes, run by students of this grade. We started with the business idea and brainstorming about what could be sold. Working out a budget made the pupils aware of everything that had to be considered in this process. They realized that in theory you can offer anything and determine any price, but in reality, it all has an impact on your business. They learned basic accounting skills by calculating a budget projection and evaluating the real figures afterwards. By participating in this project the students also got to develop hands-on capabilities in three areas: Vision, Concept and Implementation.

I realised that the typical front of class teaching method does not work well for this subject. My approach is to give some topics like price index, inflation and raw material, etc. The students do research themselves during class, while my main task is to bring their different findings together. By doing this kind of research, the students experience first-hand that you can get a lot of knowledge from the internet, but to bring it all together and make sense of it, you actually need to develop and find your own insights.