

LitBridge- Connecting Cultures through Literature

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A bridge connects places and people when something holds them apart, it is a pathway to progress and a structure that spares an existing gap. This is the main idea based on which I designed and am now implementing a sociocultural educational initiative. Living in a country where cross-cultural encounters increase due to the refugee crisis, we are witnessing greater conflicts based on such loaded concepts as “Cultural Diversity” and “Multiculturalism”. *LitBridge* envisions to open a dialogue and create a framework of connectedness between primary school students and refugee/migrant children who haven't been into school yet. The necessity of this project lays on the fact that parts of the society oppose to the integration of refugees mentioning “cultural chasm” and different religion as main reasons for this reaction. The medium I am using to start bridging this chasm is literature while through it we can better understand other cultures. Through the use of refugee literature and interactive activities based on literary texts children will empathise and be able to personalise human rights and values that otherwise seem abstract to them. With the use of multicultural literature they will be able to explore other cultural identities. All children will write their own texts, illustrate them and bind them to create their own books. Children will be able to communicate their message of empathy and realise their own responsibility to welcome those children. Refugee children will be given voice. The project was already implemented in a small scale in 2 schools in Germany (https://issuu.com/sofiavyzantiadou/docs/buch_korrigiert__1_?workerAddress=ec2-54-162-72-44.compute-1.amazonaws.com). In this context, I would like to cease the opportunity and share my view on how the structure of “bridge” can be used in a symbolic context and generate a methodology to bring cultures together.