

## Case study 18

Henry is a 6-year-old radiant Vietnamese boy, incredibly charming and full of energy. Completely different in appearance from his classmates, he evokes sympathy and delight. The difference in his racial background often leads to him being ignored and excluded from class games and activities from his peers.

### Needs-solutions action plan

Henry is very social and has an acceptable level of knowledge of Bulgarian language. He can communicate well with teachers and classmates.

Given this fact his teacher Miss. Adi decides to use the game “Entangled-Entangled” as a tool to show the class that Henry is a boy just like all the other ones, and they can communicate and play with him despite his different appearance.

This game requires physical contact, as children hold hands and try to “detangle” themselves from the rest of the group. To achieve the task pupils also need to use verbal and analytical skills. After initial difficulties with deciding who will be standing next to Henry, the game begins and kids seem to have a great time, including Henry.

The second round of the game begins without the hesitation of who will be holding his hand and the pupils accept him as part of the group. This tool includes physical and verbal contact between the kids, and requires mutual support and understanding, which is a key factor in integrating someone different and being accepted into the group. Interested in playing other games, the class gradually includes Henry in more activities. As a result he feels more comfortable, plays more often with his classmates and unfolds his sociable and outgoing personality.

To ensure further inclusion of Henry’s character into the class group his tutor adds one more activity. Since at such young age reading and writing skills are not fully developed yet the teacher accepts drawing as a good way for children to express themselves. She chooses the tool “Class photo”.

The kids are required to draw a “self portrait” and stick it on the classroom wall together with the rest of the drawings of the whole group. The teacher then sparks a conversation about the similarities and differences in all the pictures. The activity aims to show the kids that we are all the same despite the fact that some of us have different physical appearances, and there are many things that connect us. The pictures may be different but it is important to understand that sometimes it’s not about how we look but how perceive and express ourselves towards others.

This activity promotes some cultural exchange, as the pupils can go ahead and draw some members of their family, the tutor than can initiate a conversation between the kids and encourage them to share stories from their family background, which leads to further understanding of other people’s heritage and racial background. As a result of this activity Henry draws another picture of him and his teacher in the classroom, surrounded by classmates. We can draw a conclusion that

he begins to feel less of an outsider and more of a part of the group. Some children from the class also approach him and involve him into their free time activities.

Racial discrimination could be a difficult problem to solve in the classroom it takes patience and the use of multiple tools from teachers to explain and reach a mutual understanding with children that people should not be judged by their appearance and despite his differences Henry is a wonderful child just like the rest of the kids in class.