



ISO
Gazette

by International
School of Oradea

Cultural Fusion: Embracing Diversity

ISO Gazette

Learn | Respect | Succeed

Empathy | Integrity | Teamwork





DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Dear ISO Community,

We are finishing another term, which has passed very quickly. I welcome you to another edition of ISO Gazette, which has a Cultural Fusion & Embracing Diversity theme. When I first heard about the discussion on several theme options, I agreed that this theme is the one that any school should focus on. With our international community members and community members, this focus enables us to envisage a powerful vision in our progression journeys.

We are doing our best to turn this theme into an experience for our community rather than just referring to it as a theoretical concept. The richness derived from the diverse backgrounds within our community forms an essential part of our school's value of empathy.

At its core, embracing diversity demonstrates a profound empathy for the unique backgrounds and styles that contribute to our educational environment. It is an acknowledgment that each individual brings a unique voice to our shared journey.

Showing empathy in everything we do is often easier said than done, and I will avoid saying big things like it is always present in our school. There is a robust collaboration for empathy to happen more each day than yesterday. We must consider listening and hearing before deciding what to do or say next for us to accept that a child's/ parent's teacher's situation and vision can be different than ours. To put this at the core of our actions and sayings wherever possible. When we realize that we missed an opportunity to understand and offer more support, we should at least consider what to do differently next time to avoid having the same regret.

Before I invite you to explore different perspectives on this topic from our students, staff, and parents, I wish you all a happy new year, hoping that 2024 will be a year in which we will be offering and seeing more empathy all around us, at our homes, in our school so that we can hope to contribute it for a better understanding of each other on a bigger scale resulting in more peace among the nations and countries.

Thank you for all your contributions to making a unique journey in our school.

**Kindest Regards,
MR. Ahmet Dundar**



My Culture. My story.

Diversity in our classroom

*by Tudor Belbe - Year 7
and
Cezar Balmos - Year 7*

What does diversity mean? Did you know that it means variety, identity and uniqueness?

In our class we have colleagues from different countries and cultures such as: South Korea, Canada, Ukraine, Hungary and the majority from our country.

Out of curiosity, we asked our colleagues about their culture and traditions. This will help us know more about our school and our community. Our first interviewed colleague was: JADEN who is from Korea and he told us many interesting things like: their traditional food is chicken. We also found out that their traditional clothes are called Hanbok. Apparently, they celebrate Christmas on the same date, the 25th of December. Their New Year is celebrated on 10th February not like we are celebrating it on 1st January. Their national sport is football just like ours which is spontaneous. Our second interviewed colleague was Tymur, who is from Ukraine. He can speak a few languages such as : Bulgarian, English, Russian, Ukrainian and Polish. Their traditional food is Borsh which is a soup which we also eat in Romania. Our colleague Frederick, who is from Hungary,

celebrates Christmas starting from 25 December. On Christmas Eve children receive presents from angels not father Christmas like we do. Their national flag has 3 colours: red, white and green. There is also a special flag for wartime which has the same colours and the national emblem in the middle of it. Gift-giving is done after the Christmas meal, and after singing carols around the tree. On Holy Night, Hungarians listen to holy songs such as "Silent Night" and sing or attend Christmas mass at the church. They also burn candles on the Advent wreath during the four weeks before Christmas.

We discovered some similarities with the Hungarian Christmas which are the fact that both cultures celebrate Christmas on the 25th of December and both cultures have two dishes in common such as: Gulas and stuffed cabbage

Our conclusion is that, everyone is different, but the same in some way and that we all have to respect each other's beliefs and traditions.



Cultivating Cultural Fusion and Diversity Through Core School Values

by Ms Anamaria SSP & Character Education Coordinator

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, schools are increasingly recognizing the important role that character education is playing in shaping not only academically skilled students but also socially responsible global citizens. For the International School of Oradea, a set of core values—**Learn, Respect, Succeed, Empathy, Teamwork, and Integrity**—serves as the base for fostering cultural fusion and embracing diversity.



Learning is a continuous journey of understanding. Beyond textbooks and lectures, our school encourages students to embark on a journey of understanding different cultures, histories, and traditions. By promoting cross-cultural education, students develop a broader perspective that goes beyond the limits of their own experiences. We are happy both for the International and for the Romanian line to be able to offer this wonderful opportunity.

Respect is one of the keystones of ISO's character. In our school one of the ways we show respect is by seeing diversity as a strength not as weakness. It goes beyond just the simple acknowledgment of cultural differences, it instills a deep appreciation for diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and practices. Our aim is to create an environment where every individual feels not only acknowledged but genuinely valued for the unique perspectives they bring to the table. Being an international school gives us the opportunity to have students and teachers from different cultures and backgrounds and this helps us achieve our goal.

Our students are expected to **Succeed** beyond academic excellence. Success, according to the school's values, is not measured only in academic achievements. The accent is placed on success within diverse environments, highlighting the importance of collaborative work and acknowledging the strength that comes from combining different talents, skills, and cultural viewpoints.



When it comes to cultural differences and diversity **Empathy** means understanding beyond borders. Empathy is an integral part of Character education, deeply rooted in its essence. Students are encouraged to understand and share the feelings of their peers from different cultural backgrounds. Through activities that promote walking in others' shoes, the school cultivates a deeper appreciation for the rich tapestry of diverse perspectives.

Recognizing the strength that lies in diversity, the school places a strong emphasis on teamwork. Collaborative projects involving students from various cultural backgrounds are not just encouraged but integral to the educational experience. This approach prepares students for the collaborative demands of the globalized world they will enter upon graduation. In conclusion the value of **Teamwork** facilitates uniting differences for collective strength.

The final pillar, **Integrity**, is not just about honesty; it extends to cultural sensitivity in interactions. The school addresses stereotypes and biases head-on, fostering an environment where honest and respectful communication is of greatest importance.

In addition to embodying these values in day-to-day interactions, the school employs strategic initiatives to further promote cultural fusion and diversity. These include cultural exchange programs, trips, integration of diverse perspectives into the curriculum, community involvement, guest speakers, and conflict resolution training that considers cultural differences.

As the educational landscape continues to evolve, International School of Oradea stands as a beacon, illustrating how character education, rooted in values of learn, respect, succeed, empathy, teamwork, and integrity, can actively contribute to the creation of inclusive learning environments that celebrate diversity and prepare students for a globally interconnected future.



Cultural Fusion: Embracing Diversity

by Vadym Bielov - Year 4

Children of 16 nationalities study in our school. Cultural fusion is a process of combining and mixing different traditions and values of different cultures. That's why cultural fusion plays a very important role in our school. Some people fear cultural fusion because they think they will lose their traditional identity. It is very important to recognise the positive sides of cultural fusion.

By embracing diversity in our school, we create a safe space where every child feels important. It improves children's performance in the school, helps children to talk more often to each other, children become more creative and their behavior becomes better too! Recognizing different cultures and traditions helps to improve relations between children and the exchange of ideas. By embracing cultural fusion, we create an environment that values and respects each child's unique personality.

Bullying is cancelled! Hooray!



There are children of 5 different nationalities in our class. Since I'm from Ukraine, I want to tell you some interesting facts about my native country. Ukraine is a beautiful country in the central part of Eastern Europe. The symbols of Ukraine are yellow fields with grain and blue sky.

Therefore, the colours of the Ukrainian flag are blue and yellow. The Ukrainian language is one of the oldest East Slavic languages. It has 256.000 words.



The most traditional Ukrainian food is borsch, varenyky and salo.



The traditional Ukrainian dance is hopak.



The traditional Ukrainian clothing is vyshyvanka.



Ukrainian is one of the most melodious languages in the world. Ukrainian musical group "Kalush Orchestra" won at Eurovision 2022 with the song "Stefania".

An Ukrainian anecdote:

'My teacher wanted to put me in the corner, but she couldn't, because all were occupied.'



I want to share with you my experience with ISO.

I have been an ISO student for almost 2 years. And I have been living in Romania for almost 2 years because of the war in Ukraine. Understanding and respect for people of other nationalities and traditions, as well as knowledge of the English language, helped me make friends with a boy from China named Lixi. Despite the fact that we have different traditions, cultures, and food, we were able to become best friends and we are still best friends. An interesting fact - China is 5.943 kilometers from Ukraine.

You have to respect your culture and also respect others, because if we don't, there will be chaos because no one will help each other and we won't be able to live in harmony.

Year four class representative,
Vadym Bielov, Ukrainian by nationality



Our story. Diversity in our school

by Iannis Costea - Year 8

In the land of the children, amongst the Romanians, there's a great diversity, such as: *Ukrainians, Hungarians, Chinese, Koreans, Turkish, Germans, Indians, Slovaks, British, Americans and Brazilians*. All of these varying nationalities celebrate their own international day. They all celebrate it in different ways and days but they all have one thing in common, the meaning of the day for each of them and for each of us.

What makes us different?

To begin with an interesting fact about us Romanians, we are the proud inventors of: The jet engine (Henri Coanda) and the fountain pen (Petrache Poenaru). Although he didn't invent it, Nicolae Paulescu contributed to the invention of insulin. We are known all around the world because of our mesmerising landscapes, our traditions, our epic history, delightful cuisine, athletes and important people scattered all across every ramification of history.

To honour the Great Unification, here, in our school, we celebrated Romania's National Day on the 1st of December. On this special day, we dressed in traditional costumes called "ie" and "camasa". All the students could get dressed with the colours of the Romanian flag, the colours of ISO, or each of us could wear our traditional clothes. Regardless of everyone's ethnicity, every child, despite their nationality, joined for a traditional dance called "Hora".



There is a saying which says that, even in a different soil, the tree grows the same roots, similarly, children here celebrate their own nation's identity by wearing their national costumes. Despite this, they all celebrated Romania's National Day alongside the Romanians.

We tried to find out our colleagues' opinions about some things regarding what they like about Romania.

"What food do you like?" was one of the questions we asked, and the answers were: pork chop and polenta, plăcinta and ciorbă de burtă.

Our second question was *"Do you have Romanian friends?"* To this question, everyone said "yes".



Our third question was *"Do you have a favourite place in Romania?"* The answers were mostly Oradea, Bucharest, Iasi, Salina Turda and Vaslui.

Our last question was *"Do you have similar traditions in your country?"* The answers were mostly split into "some", "yes, but different dates" and "no".



To sum up everything that I have stated in the lines above, every ethnicity respected and celebrated its own traditions, while joining the Romanians to celebrate the 1st of December, Romania's National Day.

Diversity in games. Our story

by Ana Sanislav - Year 6 and Maximilian Ilonța - Year 6

What do you think of when you hear the word *game*?

You will probably think about the joy of being with dear friends while you all play together. This emotion is priceless and unforgettable. Same for us!

But do other children from different cultures feel the same way? Today you will find out the answer to these and other questions. The word play is pronounced differently in other cultures and languages, but what does it mean?

Today you will find out!

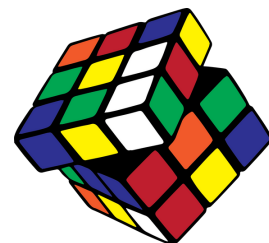
We surveyed our classmates from different cultures and these are their answers:

Our colleague Anjali, 9 years old, grew up in Ireland and her favorite game is Hide and Seek. Is a great game and we all enjoy it.



Linda and Antonia, who are from Germany, are nine years old and their favorite game is Rock Paper Scissors!

Some colleagues are from Hungary, like Geri and Sara. Their favorite game is Baranta, a traditional Hungarian game. Another favorite game is rubik's cube because it's fun when everything is boring and this game makes you think a lot.



In addition to these interviews, we also conducted research in our classroom where we played games with our colleagues from different cultures and countries.

We played some interactive games such as: cordless phone, rock, paper, scissors and hide and seek. After that we played some games with Romanian words such as pheasant and wholemeal.

Which do you think was better?

We noticed that, when we were playing with children from different cultures, they enjoyed interactive games more than word games, because it was more difficult for them to integrate without knowing Romanian words. Games are always fun regardless of the country or the cultural background, we equally enjoyed them.

I hope you enjoyed this article, (we worked hard 🤖)

Diversity in the workplace, and why it's essential for teams

Written by Ms Florina, Proud secretary of ISO amazing staff & students

Why is diversity important?

Imagine if we all liked the same things, looked the same and acted the same; if every team member made the same decisions, had the same experiences, skills and opinions, life would be pretty dull, right? Well, we are happy to let you know that here at ISO we have an amazing team from a variety of cultures, backgrounds, with many abilities and different lifestyles.

What is diversity in the workplace?

In my opinion the definition of diversity in the workplace goes further than having representation from different races or having a workforce inclusive of different backgrounds and national origins. It goes beyond gender, socioeconomic, and cultural diversity.

It means that the organization fosters a sense of belonging that makes everyone feel like they are part of the team and we are lucky to call our team a family, the ISO family.



Why is diversity so important?

Everyone has something that makes them different. Whether it's a unique upbringing, educational background, way of thinking, or perspective on the world, we all bring our own strengths to the table. A diverse and inclusive organization is one that is at the forefront of innovation and social change and I am very proud to say that this is what International School of Oradea embraces on a daily basis through it`s team.

Benefits of diversity in the workplace:

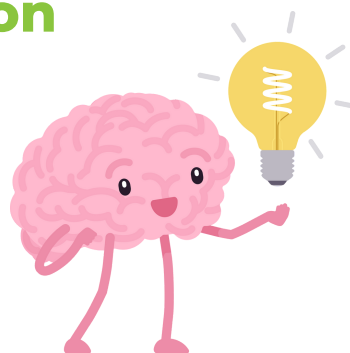
1 Decreased groupthink at work

A diverse team provides access to a wider range of skill sets and experiences and different ways of thinking, behaving, and communicating. This facilitates the growth of new ideas and reduces groupthink and this is what ISO is trying to accomplish through our teachers weekly Monday meetings and admin team departments meetings.



2 Increased creativity and innovation

A diverse workforce brings together individuals with different backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, and problem-solving approaches. This diversity of thought fosters creativity and leads to innovative solutions. At ISO through our diverse team we try, as much as we can, to generate fresh ideas and develop unique approaches to our daily challenges.



3 Broader range of skills and knowledge

Team members from diverse backgrounds often possess a wide array of skills, knowledge, and expertise. This diversity of talents allows our school to tap into a broader range of capabilities, enhancing the ability to adapt, learn, and excel in different areas and this is what ISO is aiming to achieve.



4 Improved decision-making and enhanced problem solving

When a team consists of diverse individuals, decision-making processes are enriched. Diverse perspectives enable a more comprehensive analysis of problems and a consideration of different viewpoints.

A diverse team can effectively tackle complex problems. Different backgrounds and experiences offer alternative approaches to problem-solving, resulting in more effective solutions. This is why we have our SLT group members growing from year to year and students council weekly meetings to support the improvement of decision making and enhancing problem solving through diverse perspectives and by encouraging critical thinking. Also this kind of leadership leads to a better informed decision making and minimizes the potential for groupthink.

5 Better performance

Inclusive workplaces that value diversity foster a sense of belonging and create an environment where team members feel respected and valued for their unique contributions. This inclusivity boosts each team members morale, satisfaction, and engagement; this is why at ISO we have a range of different events throughout the year where everyone can bring their contributions to the table and share good practices.

6 Global perspective and cultural competence

A diverse workplace provides exposure to different cultures, languages, customs, and perspectives. This exposure nurtures cultural competence, expanding the teams` understanding in general and facilitating collaboration in an increasingly interconnected world. At ISO we are aiming to achieve throughout our continuous growth and ongoing journey all these aspects for being able to keep on creating an inclusive experience for all our actual and future team members.

After all, the bond that links our ISO family is not one of blood but one of learning, respect, success, empathy, integrity and teamwork!



Our Human Capital Mosaic.

The Strength of Diversity in our School Staff

by Ms Anda Manea, HR

Diversity it's the heartbeat of progress and innovation within any organization. Our human capital is a vibrant mosaic, composed of individuals from various backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives, and it's this wonderful mix that makes the foundation of our school's success.

Our school is a reflection of the world itself. This wonderful mix of different people.

One of the most significant advantages of such diversity is the breadth of perspectives it offers. Each staff member brings a unique viewpoint shaped by their background and experiences.

This diversity of perspectives fosters creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking in our school's daily operations. When faced with challenges, our team doesn't rely on a singular viewpoint but rather harnesses the collective wisdom and varied approaches stemming from our diverse staff.

Additionally, embracing diversity in our school staff not only enhances the quality of education but also prepares our students for the globalized world they will inherit. Exposure to diverse perspectives from a young age equips students with invaluable skills in cultural competency, empathy, and open-mindedness—skills that are imperative in today's interconnected world.

It's important to acknowledge that fostering diversity isn't merely about recruitment; it's about creating an inclusive environment where every individual feels valued and respected. Embracing diversity means actively listening to diverse voices, providing equal opportunities for growth and development, and celebrating the richness that each person brings to the table.



Our human capital mosaic isn't just a testament to our commitment to inclusivity; it's our greatest asset in shaping a brighter future for our students and our community.

In conclusion, the strength of our school staff lies in its diversity—a tapestry of talents, backgrounds, and perspectives that enriches our educational landscape. It's through embracing and celebrating this diversity that we pave the way for a more inclusive, innovative, and harmonious environment within our school.

Together, let us continue to weave the threads of diversity into the very fabric of our institution, for it's in our differences that we find our greatest strength.

Inclusivity in Admissions.

Our Commitment to a Diverse Student Body

Written by Anca Popa, Head of Marketing and Admissions

In the heart of the International School of Oradea, DIVERSITY is not just a buzzword. It's a fundamental commitment that shapes the very fabric of our community. We're not just about enrolling students. We're about building a family that's as diverse and unique as the world itself. This current school year our school counts 16 different nationalities.

What Inclusivity Means to Us?

So, what's inclusivity, really? It's not about ticking boxes or hitting quotas to transform them into conversion and retention rates. It's about creating a space where every student feels like they belong, no matter where they're from or what their story is, because at the core of our mission lies the belief that education is a transformative journey, and the diversity of experiences, cultures, and perspectives enriches this odyssey for every student. Our doors are wide open to students with different backgrounds, languages, and experiences. We see the beauty in our differences and believe that together, we're stronger.

Picture this: Our admissions philosophy is like a warm welcome hug. We're not looking for everyone to fit the same mold. We actively seek out those little quirks and unique stories that make each student stand out.

Our admissions team is all about making the application process easy and transparent. We want families to feel at home from the get-go, regardless of where they come from.

One of the things that make our school so cool? The international flair! Our classrooms are like a mini United Nations, buzzing with different languages,

traditions, and laughter from every corner of the globe. We don't just tolerate diversity, we thrive on it.

We want everyone to graduate with not just a diploma but with a global mindset that'll serve them well in our interconnected world.



More Than a School. A Supportive Community.

Getting in is just the start. We're all about creating a community that's got your back. Our teachers aren't just educators. They're mentors who understand and appreciate the diverse needs of our school family. We've got resources and support systems in place to help every student thrive, no matter where they're coming from.

And hey, it's not all about textbooks and tests. Our school calendar is a colorful mix of festivities that reflect the backgrounds of our students, making everyone feel like they're part of something special.



Looking to the Future. Our Shared Vision

As we talk about inclusivity, we know this journey is ongoing. We're not just aiming to be a diverse school. We're working towards being a school that evolves, embraces change, and leads the way in creating an inclusive educational experience.



So, to our current school family and those thinking about joining us, let's keep this journey going.

Together, we're not just a school; we're a community where diversity is not just embraced—it's celebrated, and where education knows no borders.

Global Horizons: A Mother's Perspective on Choosing the International School of Oradea

by Ms Daniela Guzga, ISO parent

In the mosaic of my life, colored by the sprawling landscapes of Canada, but deeply rooted in the soil of my Romanian origins, a unique chapter unfolded as my husband and I decided to return to our native country.

Although we were thrilled to reunite with loved ones and embark on this beautiful journey together, we had a stressful process of finding a school for our 10 year-old daughter. Do we send her to Romanian school, where she would eventually pick up the language and fit in? That was one side of the coin. The other side was to send her to a school where English was spoken, and she could transition easier into her new life. This was my side of the coin. Upon coming to the school for our initial meeting, I cannot describe the feeling with words other than immediate relief, and a familiarity that resembled...being back in Canada. We were greeted with friendly, smiling faces at the school. The grounds were secured by a gate and a guard, there was a large yard, very modern school and amenities. Our situation was discussed and we felt genuine acceptance, understanding and empathy for our daughter and her new journey.



We felt reassured we were making the right decision, and any concerns we had were addressed immediately. We were also excited to hear that she would also learn Romanian as a subject, and even have personalized material.

As much as we hoped ISO would be the perfect fit for her, ultimately her feedback would let us know. From the very first day, she returned home with stories of new friends made, recess adventures, new students joining frequently from different countries, the school culture of helping all adapt, open discussions with teachers, questions that were not only



allowed, but encouraged and answered to her understanding. She continued with stories of fun during “Golden Time”, invitations to birthday parties and sleepovers, finding her “bestie” and creating a special bond with that one friend that makes school an even more enjoyable experience, we feel that we made the best decision. So much so that this year, her little brother is also joining the ISO family.

We found the school to be a little piece of home away from home. Diversity, a concept I cherished from my Canadian experience, takes on a new dimension at ISO. It’s a celebration of not just varied nationalities but a fusion of traditions, languages and histories. It’s an immersion into a global community that promises to sculpt my children into citizens of the world, appreciating both of their Canadian upbringing and the rich Romanian tapestry that awaits their exploration.



A community of local parents wanting a unique learning experience for their children, and also international students in Romania temporarily, that find common ground with other students via the English language. ISO has been our main focus and the reason we chose Oradea to be our home. The investment into our children’s education and future is repaid with gratitude, happy smiles and warm hugs, the highest currency in the world.

THE ISO GAZETTE #8

If you're passionate about fostering education and community growth, let's collaborate.

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