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Labyrinth Lab School Brno: Creating a socially responsible learning community

1 Introduction: the school and its vision

Labyrinth is the first laboratory primary (ages 6 to 11) and lower secondary (ages 11 to 15) school in the Czech Republic. The school was accredited by the Czech Ministry of Education and then established as a private school in 2016. The laboratory and the private aspects give the school the opportunity to look for its own educational path within a Czech environment that in the past was strictly centralised. Being a private school also allows the school to keep creating new opportunities for its community while still taking into account developments in not only the Czech educational system, but also in other areas of education and elsewhere in the world. Thus, the school can build on a broad field of ideas and achievements.

In 2016, the Czech environment was not set up to accept the concept of a laboratory school in its system of public education. And as there was enough interest within the community to work on the introduction and establishment of a laboratory school concept in Czech education, the private path had to be taken. Even though Labyrinth is a private school, it continues to work in contact with and with the support of public education, thus addressing one of the key principles of the school philosophy, i.e. social responsibility. The strong connection between Labyrinth and state education is pursued through teaching practice for students of the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Arts at Masaryk University Brno, seminars for teachers, collaboration with state schools through various projects, etc. Thus, the private label here does not stand for profit, but rather for social responsibility and for a path beyond but alongside the system of public education.[1]

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1 The whole education system was centralised and run by the state for decades. It was only after 1990 that private schools started to emerge, and initially their reputation was low. Now the situation is very different, especially at primary and secondary level. Private schools have been established all over the country on the initiative of either teachers or parents who were looking for alternative pedagogies (e.g. Montessori, Dalton Plan, Step by Step, Waldorf, diverse forms of homeschooling or unschooling). However, unlike the programme of the Labyrinth laboratory school, the programmes of these schools have very little common ground with the public system of education.

Labyrinth is a school that aspires to follow the principles of an ecosystem school (Luksha et al., 2018), i.e. a school with permeable boundaries, a school that is part of society and thus interconnected via various societal patterns, notably private enterprises, galleries, and the municipal administration. Labyrinth continually builds awareness of social responsibility towards the community and follows the laboratory-school mission of transformativity and experimentation. It is a school that works systematically towards creating functional networks that have come out of the needs of the glocal community (as described in Section 4) (Featherstone et al., 1995) and while reflecting changes in society and their effect on individual needs, the school is constantly prepared to innovate in terms of infrastructure, tools and methods (Senge, 2012) in the ongoing search for a system that can act upon the ideas and opinions of all parties involved.

Currently, there are 313 students cared for by a team of 44 people, including educators, teacher assistants, school assistants, psychologists and project managers. In September 2021, the school officially applied for an increase in student capacity. The total capacity of the school will be 360 students as well as 160 students per the 4-year grammar school.

Labyrinth builds on meaningfulness, lived values and integrity. Diversity and variety of perspectives, and intrinsic motivation are viewed as prerequisites for the appreciation of open, inclusive and empowering concepts in both education and life. Each day there is space for reflecting on values and their presence in daily decisions, and on how our relationship with ourselves, with other people and with the world is affected and formed by our values. The teacher is viewed as a guide who provides inspiration, a space for discussion, and integration in a safe and non-judgmental environment.

Students are guided to find their own learning strategy, plan and continuously evaluate their learning, and experience individual and team success. Furthermore, as illustrated in Table 1, Labyrinth cultivates core values, which are perceived to be a scaffolding for social and emotional competencies and competencies for the 21st century, as these are relevant to the Czech educational environment. Firm foundations for the values are interwoven with the necessary knowledge and experience that lead a person to become a self-confident, anchored, open-minded, concerned citizen and a self-directed learner.

Tab.: 1 This table illustrates the lived values supported in Labyrinth. In the manner of can-do statements, they are written in the first person singular.

Respect	I act with respect to others and to myself. I believe in my own value and in the internal value of all people around me. I act honestly and fairly with respect not only to the environment but also to feelings, culture, and opinions of those who surround me.
Consideration	I think about others, I'm aware of their needs and I sense their feelings. I am kind and empathetic to others.
Exceptionality	I strive to maximise my personal success and at the same time I am aware of my contribution and responsibilities for the success of the team and community I live in. I always try my best; I permanently want to improve. I am not afraid to attempt unfamiliar things. New opportunities are my stimuli for personal growth.
Morality	I adhere to common ethical principles. I do the right things at the right time, and I am not scared to stand up for things I believe are right.
Responsibility	I have a responsibility to myself. I am honest and sincere and finish tasks I have started. I am responsible for my behaviour towards people and the environment that surrounds me.
Resistance	I believe in myself. I know that when I try to achieve something I can do it. I know which strengths to develop and weaknesses to work hard on, and I do this. I am not afraid to accept new challenges. I can adapt to unexpected changes and perceive them as new opportunities.
Harmony	I promote social cohesion. I appreciate cooperation, tolerant communication, and reciprocal trust. I see diversity as an opportunity for learning and growth.

2 Labyrinth and its position in the Czech school system

On its founding, the school set itself the goal of presenting an open system based on cooperation and participation of students, teachers, parents, and other partners. The idea was born in the minds of several Czech educators who initiated an open forum of teachers, leaders in education, researchers, psychologists, political representatives, parents and other people interested in innovative education. Discussions took place on philosophical concepts and values and effective practices reflecting the needs of society in the 21st century. These discussions became the basis for the shared vision and mission of the Labyrinth laboratory school.

In contrast to other schools established on a private basis in the Czech Republic in recent decades, Labyrinth declared its attitude of social responsibility from the

beginning. In practice, this means providing a diverse, multicultural and understanding environment, cooperating and sharing outcomes of innovation with the public system, and supporting active citizenship within the school.

The school is part of a network of "faculty schools". Labyrinth cooperates closely with Masaryk University, Brno. It shares its outcomes with the Ministry of Education, the Czech School Inspectorate, and other educational institutions. It regularly holds workshops and lectures for other teachers, welcomes future teachers for training, and presents teaching practices on social media. Over the last three decades the system of education in the Czech Republic has undergone radical changes which have quite naturally been reflected in teacher education. The shift from a highly centralised education system to a competence-based education model with equal importance for national and school curricula has brought about a shift in the demands posed on teachers. From the responsibility to deliver only a centrally prescribed national curriculum, teachers' competences were extended to include responsibilities as curriculum designers at micro and at meso level (Janík, 2013). This required a completely new set of competences which previously had been the remit of an assigned group of scholars only.

It is obvious that the current practice needs teams of experts entrusted with curriculum design. This is what is now expected from the teachers vested with this new responsibility. It is nowadays common practice across the country that all teachers participate in the process of designing a school curriculum, thus contributing to the unique nature and profile of a particular school. Hence a critical role of experienced expert teachers is to guide the student teachers during their formative years. For this reason, teacher training faculties in the Czech Republic strive to build a network of faculty/clinical schools[2] and establish models of cooperation between student teachers, schoolteachers (the term "guiding or faculty teachers" is used) and teacher training institutions. To provide a solid framework for mutually beneficial cooperation, a three-year project focused on improving cooperation with faculty schools was implemented from 2018 to 2020. The aim of the project was to increase the quality of reflected practical preparation of student teachers at Masaryk University's Faculty of Education, and so to intensify cooperation of university lecturers and teachers from primary and secondary schools. As a result, we have managed to establish a well-functioning cooperation with guiding teachers whose preparation includes courses for the acquisition of necessary mentoring skills. Apart from the training, *The Standard of Quality of Professional Competencies of Student Teachers* and *The Standard of Quality of Cooperation of the Faculty of Education and Faculty Schools* were designed and are currently used by students (for

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2 Schools where university students – teacher trainees – do their teaching practice are generally called "faculty schools". Clinical schools are schools which take on teacher trainees for a more intensive, usually one-year internship, as part of their teaching practice.

planning and assessment of their development) and by the guiding teachers (who supervise the teacher trainees during extensive teaching practice).[3]

Labyrinth is one of the faculty schools, but the cooperation goes far beyond the mandatory level of involvement. The teaching practice of our university students (trainees) is generally organised by a coordinator (a teacher from a particular faculty school), whose responsibility it is to choose guiding teachers, create pairs of guiding teachers and trainees, and monitor the whole process. In this respect, Labyrinth is one step ahead of the mainstream schools: the trainees do not only do their teaching practice here, but they can also get involved in research towards their degree (e.g. in support of a Bachelor thesis) stemming from the Labyrinth school's needs.

3 Pedagogical concept and scientific approach

In this section, we first describe the ideas that the educational concept of Labyrinth is built on. We start by listing our educational inspirations with the help of Bertrand's classification of educational theories (2003), thus placing Labyrinth within the historical context of educational approaches. We then take a look at a new paradigm described by Robinson and Aronica (2016) and a broader approach to democracy in education as elucidated by Pol et al. (2006). We devote space to describing in more detail significant aspects of Labyrinth's philosophy, such as the concepts of the embryonic society (Kurz et al., 2022) educational ecosystems (Luksha et al., 2018), school as a learning organisation (Senge, 2012), creative school (Robinson & Aronica, 2016), and the paradigm of internally driven learning (Nováčková, 2001).

The theories we describe in this section are relevant to the Czech educational environment since 1989. Before 1989, the Czech educational environment did not really follow the international educational mainstream and trends. Western pedagogy could even be described as taboo in the Czech environment of 1948 to 1989. After 1989, Czech education changed quickly under the influence of a lot of factors. In the field of didactics, theoretical thinking was long rooted in the Central European context and as such influenced by the *Fachdidaktik* of German-speaking countries (e.g. W. Klafki and his *Neue Studien zur Bildungstheorie und Didaktik*, published in Czech in 1967). It was only after 1989 that other Western perspectives, most notably in the form of curriculum studies, were first incorporated into educational research. For these reasons, the implementation

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3 One of the major aims of *The Standard* is to bridge the gap between theory and practice, not only by formulating clearly what knowledge and skills teacher trainees need to develop, but also to develop common professional discourse understood and shared by practising teachers, teacher trainees and university teachers.

of democracy in Czech schools might differ from its counterparts in German, French, Austrian and British schools. The concept of democracy as such is still establishing itself in the lived values of Czech society and thus of the Czech state school system.

3.1 Classification of theories in education as introduced by Bertrand (2003)

The educational situation in a school is viewed as an engaged interaction of four structural elements. These four elements are the student, content, society, and learning environment including the teacher. The school embraces the dynamic aspect of the educational situation, i.e. the need for constant observation of and action towards changes in individuals and society. Thus, in epistemological terms, by placing itself in the stream of subjectivism and interactionism as classified in Bertrand (2003), the school sees knowledge as subject to individual interpretation but also as an interactive process of reality, as a matter of interactions, as the result of ever-changing reality, and as an interactional process fed by never-ending interactions (Bertrand, 2003). Labyrinth builds on aspects of learning environment theory and social theory as classified in Bertrand (2003). A description of Labyrinth's position in the ever-changing process of education at the time of writing is given in Table 2.

Tab. 2: Relevant educational theories, as classified in Bertrand (2003), and some of their aspects that are applied in Labyrinth.

Learning environment theories	Cognitive theories	- Interest in the mind's action when learning occurs. - Mental modelling of knowledge. - Structuring the body of knowledge by problemsolving. - Individual differences in learning structures. Multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993). Accommodating teaching to learning styles. - Teaching strategies.
	Social cognitive theories	- Cultural and social factors are crucial in the construc-tion of knowledge. - Knowledge acquisition springs from participation, but also from observation and taking others as our model. - Influence of social and cultural interactions on learning mechanisms, proces-ses, and structure. - The development of the human mind is part of a social and historical process. This process goes both ways. - Zone of proximal development; knowledge is socially constructed, knowledge is learned in a social environ-ment through interaction (Vygotsky). - The three sets of elements that influence one another in the development of knowledge: events in the environ-ment, characteristics of the individual, and behaviours (Bandura). - Learning as a form of interpretation and action in a particular cultural setting. - Contextualised learning. - Cooperative social interactions.

Social theories	Critical pedagogy theories (Freire, Grand'Maison, Shor)	- Working on analysis of the present social and cultural structures. - Developing critical abilities and critical language. - The focus: social and cultural structures of modern and industrial culture, and participation. - Openness to cultural, political and social modifications of the current status. - Social development of an individual, established through the interpretation and the creation of mean-ings. - Dialogue, pedagogy grounded in reality. - Social awareness, critical language, social selfempow-erment, school as a cultural system.
	Learning community theories (Freinet, Dewey, Vygotsky)	- Education operating at the crossroads of personal de-velopment and social development. - Equal importance to the individual's personal growth and to social responsibilities in the community. - Equal emphasis on theory and practice, personal development and cooperation, individual work and working together. - Building a learning community. - Cooperative learning (Freinet) – pedagogical principles such as partnership rather than competition, flexibility, helping each other and selfevaluation. - Educational progressivism, linking personal and social development (Dewey, Vygotsky). - Personal growth and social transformation. - Understanding and doing. - Peermediated learning and instruction. - Responsibilities in the community
	Ecosocial theories (A curriculum for the future in particular –Toffler)	- The future will be different from the present. Bringing the future into learning is tied to the underlying currents of change. - Three false distinctions: work and learning, school and community, theory and practice. - Learning through action

3.2 Changing paradigm(s)

Changes in the world, and thus in society, bring with them changes to paradigms (Kuhn, 1970). Robinson and Aronica (2016) state that the current education system, the old paradigm, was designed and structured in the intellectual culture of the Enlightenment and the economic circumstances of the industrial revolution. In the mid-19th century, public education was considered revolutionary. It was designed in the interests of and modelled on industry to include standardisation, lines, separate subjects, ringing bells, the assumption that age is the most important thing children have in common, etc. Informed by the Enlightenment and its intellectual model of the mind, education was connected to deductive reasoning and knowledge of the classics. People who do not share this attitude of mind are easily marginalised by this system of public education (Robinson & Aronica, 2016).

The new paradigm builds on the idea of organic farming. For an organic farm to flourish, four principles must be successfully addressed: health, ecology, fairness, and care. While being guided by these principles, a new-paradigm school constantly strives to do its best to ensure that good living conditions for the whole person and the community are in place, therefore helping to raise physically, emotionally and intellectually healthy individuals (Robinson & Aronica, 2016).

Further, as Robinson and Aronica (2016) claim, schools will not be able to meet the unpredictability of the future by doing what schools did in the past, as this approach does not take into consideration what an individual finds important. The new education paradigm moves the mindset of society towards awakening what is in the child; towards supporting divergent thinking; away from dualisms such as academic versus non-academic; and towards collaboration (Robinson & Aronica, 2016). The new paradigm places the child at its centre (Robinson & Aronica, 2016; Senge, 2012), which is relevant to changes that have been happening in the Czech educational environment of the last thirty years.

3.3 A school as a learning organisation

> "Learning is at once deeply personal and inherently social, it connects us not just to knowledge in the abstract, but to each other." (Hall, in Senge, 2012).

Senge (2012), like Robinson and Aronica (2016), challenges the industrial aspect of education, with its machine-age thinking and schools as assembly lines, and believes in the need for change for human society to thrive and survive (Senge, 2012).

Senge (2012) and his concept of the school as a learning organisation serves as a firm basis for the Labyrinth concept. The school fosters a connection between living and learning and perceives no boundaries between learning and life. According to Senge, schools must strive to create a safe place where children can make the transition from their homes to the larger society and where they can grow in each other's company. This can happen at a school that reflects upon and reacts to individual and societal needs and changes, in other words a school that learns (Senge, 2012).

An organisation that learns is created through the ongoing practice of five learning disciplines (Senge, 2012), which allows for the involvement of everyone in the system and expression of their opinions. It also allows for the building of awareness and the development of capabilities to learn and grow together. Thus, Labyrinth acknowledges the need for a clear expression of I see you. Through applying the disciplines of mental models, personal mastery, system thinking, team learning and building a shared vision, the school strives to become a learning place where everyone's identity and values are nourished and their development is supported.

Based on Senge (2012), our aim is to create a school that is understood as a living system, i.e. organised with an appreciation of the value of living systems, similarly to Robinson and Aronica (2016). We understand the school as a web of social relationships where constant questioning is central to its nature, and studying subjects as if they were alive and treating the school as if it were alive involves:

a) learner-centred learning
b) encouraging variety, embracing multiple intelligences
c) understanding the world of interdependency and change
d) constantly reflecting on theories used
e) continually exploring how to integrate diverse academic subjects into meaningful experiences for children.

3.4 An educational ecosystem

Similarly to Senge (2012) and Robinson (2001, 2016), Luksha et al. (2018) observe that education is in a state of transition. They appeal for change in education based on the quickly changing world. Like Bertrand (2003), Luksha et al. (2018) see education as reflective of personal, social, ecological, and cultural changes (Bertrand, 2003, p. 393).

Luksha et al. (2018) trust in the power of educational institutions to lead the way towards a wisdom-based society, i.e. based on collective wisdom for the common good. Change in the world calls for change in the paradigm. It involves digitisation, automation, transformation of social institutions, demographic shifts, and transition toward sustainable societies, thus supporting the idea of self-guided and life-long learning.

As stated by Luksha et al. (2018), societal expectations force schools and universities to remain within the existing designs. "School freedom" alone does not allow the system to evolve significantly unless purposeful and concerted action undertaken by educational innovators and policymakers makes this transition more efficient and directed. First of all, a direction for intentional evolution needs to be set (Luksha et al., 2018). Such a huge ambition cannot be in the hands of one person, even if this person is a gifted leader, nor of a group of people. Such a goal needs the cooperation of many various actors from within and beyond the school environment. To achieve a learning ecosystem becomes the common goal. Luksha et al. (2018) define the ecosystem as a dynamically evolving and interconnected network of educational spaces, with individual and institutional providers offering a variety of learning experiences to individual and collective learners across the learning lifecycle. Ideally and within the educational ecosystem of the laboratory school, the central space of the system acts as an open portfolio, thus working with and also creating prototypes, innovations, and good practices for generation across the system of the school and making these available to other schools and practitioners. Ideally, educators, systems leaders, designers/hosts, and practitioners work

together to cultivate learning and collaboration that supports increasing levels of impact for societal transformation (Luksha et al., 2018).

3.5 Democracy in education

Under the new paradigm (see 3.2 above) and within an educational ecosystem (see 3.4 above) democratic values are prerequisites for the system to flourish, and fostering them is of paramount importance. Thus, for a democratic institution to pursue its values, aspects of democracy such as the complex interplay of all parties, practices of participatory decision-making, rules and organisational arrangements based on democratic principles, respectful and equal interpersonal relations in and outside the school, and interactive teaching and learning methods should be aspired to (Tools for Democratic School Development). Huddleston and Garabagiu (2005) state that schools apply democratic education if they function on democratic principles, teach democracy and work for democracy. In this context, the theme of democracy in education can be understood as relatively new in the Czech Republic, where in 1989 a non-free, communist regime was substituted by a young democratic system. Therefore, most Czech sources and inspirations from which Labyrinth draws are of recent origin, although some attempts to reform pedagogy using democratic principles (inspired by the pedagogy of Dewey) can be traced back to the period between the two world wars, as represented by the work of Příhoda (Cách & Váňová, 2000) and Chlup (1958). This attempt to reform schooling as based on the concept of the laboratory school was interrupted by the communist regime in 1948 and could not be readdressed sooner than 1989[4]. The question of democracy is broad and has been treated as such throughout history. For the purposes of democracy in education, and inspired by Pol et al. (2006), we understand that we can approach democratic inspirations as coming from three fields: politological, reform-pedagogical and managerial. The politological view allows us to look at democracy in education from three points of view: liberal (democracy as an individual opportunity); social (democracy as an opportunity for groups); participatory (democracy as a local voice and influence) (Pol et al., 2006). The reform-pedagogical view allows us to build on educational theories as listed in Bertrand (see section 3.1). The managerial view (confidence in the individual and human abilities, communication) allows us to build on systems such as Senge's (2012) school as a learning organisation, as described in section 3.3. To these inspirations, we can add the learning ecosystems theory (Luksha et

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4 Příhoda's concept was designed to concentrate on the child and to create a so-called unified but internally differentiated school (under the influence of Dewey, but also of world educators such as Thordike, Decroly and Dalton) and work on systemic changes in education (especially in the 1930s). Before that, immediately after 1918, attempts to reform education tended to be individual and unsystematic. Unfortunately, all attempts to reform and systemically transform education were interrupted by World War II and the subsequent rise of communism in Czechoslovakia. Communism denied the focus on the student's individuality by promoting a collective view. (Svatoš, n.d.)

al., 2018), as described in section 3.4. We are open to anything new and inspiring that comes our way, as we view Labyrinth as a changing organisation within a changing world.

Democracy is often associated with values such as participation, justice, equality, joint decision-making, teamwork, cooperation, division of powers, mutual respect, diversity, and participation. It is understood that democracy cannot stand in isolation; it must rely on the presence of democratic methods in all social relations, i.e. the right to equal treatment, the right to gain information, participation in decision-making, and the right to respect. Thus, relations with all groups of educational actors are fundamental to this democratic process (Pol et al., 2006). In order for a student to accept democracy as a way of life, certain conditions must be met. It is vital for the student to be given the opportunity to learn what such a way of life means and how it should be led; additionally, the curriculum should emphasise the transfer of democratic experience to young people, and democratic structures and processes of school life must be established. It is a matter of respecting the student and acknowledging that students "own" and have a significant influence on their learning (Pol et al., 2006). If schools are to be democratic places, it is expected that the idea of democracy will be reflected in the roles that adults take on at the school, the creation of specific structures, and all relationships viewed together (Pol et al., 2006).

Managerial inspirations (Pol et al., 2006) lead us to pay significant attention to internal relational characteristics, i.e. an individual's relationship to work, co-workers, leadership, climate, and culture. Internal relational characteristics thus displace external ones, meaning that inner motivation replaces reward, punishment and control (see also Nováčková, 2001; Robinson & Aronica, 2016), and the non-democratic relation of superiority and subordination between teacher and student is erased. The theory and practice of successful leadership thus begin to be perceived as is typical of a democratic order, with attention paid primarily to school climate, school culture, cooperation, respect and equality, and justice (Pol et al., 2006). Thus, as described by Beane and Appel (1995, in Pol et al., 2006), Labyrinth works with the following:

- open flow of ideas regardless of their popularity (ensuring awareness)
- confidence in people's individual and collective ability to solve problems
- care for the common good
- care for the respect and rights of individuals and minorities
- understanding of democracy not as ideals to be realised but as an idealised set of values to be lived by (Pol et al., 2006).

As described by Ekholm (2004, in Pol et al., 2006) democratic learning is a matter of experience – it is a hidden agenda, i.e. the teaching itself could be taking up the time a student needs for hidden learning. In order for a student to learn de-

mocracy in practice, they must be able to ask important questions, participate in decision-making, take responsibility for decision-making, and participate in the evaluation of the entire process. Thus, if students are to learn democracy at school, it seems inevitable that more time will be devoted to experiential learning and less to traditional[5] teaching.

Based on Dewey's concept for his laboratory school (Dewey, 1972/1896; 1942), Labyrinth brings together not only the community but also theory and practice within that community. Labyrinth is a university-affiliated school, i.e. a space that is open to various actors who understand their role of social participation in the sense of enriching the educational milieu, and a space that serves as a training environment for democracy and where democracy is reflected in everyday life. The school is understood as a social institution, whose role is to present society to every child in such a way that they feel part of it and actively participates in it. Education is understood not as preparation for life but as part of life itself (Dewey, 1897).

In addition, there is a place for every child at Labyrinth, and each child is perceived as an individual. Thus, as in Robinson (2001, 2016) and Senge (2012), the child is at the centre of the educational process. The school community is formed by dynamic, diverse groups of children, and the school works with both strengths and weaknesses of individual children. Thus, Labyrinth embraces different paths of learning, while students discover their own learning strategies and work with mistakes. Thus support is given to students for learning about the community, within the community, for the community and among its generations. In doing so, Labyrinth uses varied, verified and innovative teaching methods and approaches, such as inquiry-based and place-based learning, and development of thinking in a global context and "schola ludus". The result is a creative school.

3.6 Creative schools and the paradigm of internally driven learning

According to Robinson and Aronica (2016), the main key to transforming education is the keeping alive of our need to learn through the school years, as children have an extraordinary capacity for innovation. The talent in each child and creativity in education are as important as literacy, and so they should be given the same status. Supporting divergent thinking is essential for creativity, as it is for seeing multiple answers and multiple paths. Also, creativity goes hand in hand with not being scared of making mistakes. As Robinson (2001) states, there can be no originality without an odd mistake along the way.

The old educational paradigm stigmatises mistakes. In fact, they are the worst thing you can do. Thus, such a system educates children in a way that drives them away from creativity and towards making them afraid of getting things wrong.

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5 In the Czech context, the term "traditional teaching" can be viewed as non-experiential and teacher-centred, as it includes a lot of memorisation and emphasis on factual, declarative knowledge.

The new educational paradigm embraces mistakes and works with them in a creative way (Robinson, 2001).

The new educational paradigm also embraces the intelligence of human beings in all its diversity, dynamism, and distinction. In doing so, the old hierarchy of subjects in which mathematics and languages are paramount while dance and drama are at the bottom is being replaced by a non-hierarchical collection of equal subjects, thus adopting a new conception of human ecology in which the richness of human capacity is cherished, the principles on which children are educated are rethought, and human beings are not stripped of their commodities – all in the hope that human beings educated in such ways will not deprive the earth of its commodities (Robinson, 2001).

According to Robinson (2001), support should be given to eight core competencies in a child and four functions of a school. The four main functions of a school are:

1) helping students personally by building on their individual talents
2) boosting the economy by generating innovative workers
3) understanding one's own culture and appreciating other cultures
4) generating politically engaged and compassionate citizens

The eight competencies nurtured by a school are curiosity, creativity, criticism, communicativeness, collaboration, compassion, composure, and citizenship (Robinson, 2001).

Furthermore, in Labyrinth we recognise the importance of the learning environment and of students learning from each other, while creativity is viewed as essential for the ability to adapt to the uncertainty of the future. Like Robinson (2001) and Senge (2012), Nováčková (2001), a Czech psychologist who has devoted her long career to awakening the paradigm of internally driven learning within the system of Czech public education, emphasises the necessity of:

- contrasting external/controlled and internal/autonomous motivations, thus contrasting the prevailing outward driven learning paradigm with the paradigm of internally driven learning
- supporting teaching that builds on taking seriously the basic needs of children, psychological safety in schools, respectful behaviour, clean language, and formative assessment

4 Theory in practice: creating a functional and supporting network of relationships

From the beginning, when Labyrinth opened its doors in 2016, there was a clear vision and a community of teachers, education professionals and parents whose 32 children were placed in two classes of equal size. The vision has persisted, and the community within and around the school has grown in size and thus in complexity. In an organisation where people are connected by mutual ties inside and outside the school (Luksha et al., 2018), and where the school, as a living system, takes its vitality and energy from the commitment invested in it by people involved (Senge, 2012), personal mastery, shared vision and team-learning can flourish (Senge, 2012).

Labyrinth is a school that perceives itself as a part of life, a place of learning, cognition and communication. It also sees itself as a culture and community centre in support of children, their parents, and the wider community. Cooperation among children, school, family, and community as well as the well-being of all parties involved are of key importance to the concept of the school (see Figure 3).

Labyrinth is a socially responsible organisation that welcomes anyone who believes in meaningful and innovative education. The school is open to supporting other schools and teachers. It connects businesses, public institutions, and education, while continually working to enable children to go happily through the educational system and to develop their potential while being part of a community, of an educational ecosystem.

4.1 The self-directed learner

On the inside, a school is expected to create a safe environment in which each child can flourish. On the outside, it is expected to follow changes in society and adjust its inner educational processes so as to be in sync with the ever-changing world. When these two main educational tasks merge, a school fulfils its potential by being well-equipped to educate children of today's world, for today and tomorrow, while supporting self-directed learning.

Labyrinth is guided by clear educational principles. The individual needs of each child are respected; each child's potential is developed; diversity and intrinsic motivation are supported. Further, children are encouraged to find their own strategies for learning and reflect upon the learning process, therefore experiencing individual and team success. On the outside, there is an ever-changing world where the sets of skills needed to succeed are subject to rapid change. For this reason, it is crucial for a school to go with the flow while providing solid ground on which new skills can be practised.

Each school year begins with a get-together during which all students and teachers discuss class and school rules in order to establish a framework for fair commu-

nication and behaviour. This approach is understood as a way to equip children with important competencies such as respect, responsibility, communication, participation, and coordination with others. Further, it gives first-graders a chance to work on their class identity (e.g. class name, class logo, class rules).

Since its founding, the school has worked with the concept of direct democracy by constantly monitoring students' well-being and giving them opportunities to express their opinions daily, on all issues that they find relevant. In the past, whole-school issues were addressed at school assembly, an approach that gave every child a chance to participate directly in the decision-making process. In the school year 2021/2022, however, Labyrinth decided to introduce a school parliament, for which each class nominated two deputies. The parliament meets regularly to discuss an agenda gathered from particular classes and students.

The school has preserved the practice of a whole-class morning session, known as the morning circle. This serves as a forum for giving new information, expressing and sharing feelings, solving conflicts, and working on class agreements or decisions. The forum supports the children in fair communication, promotes empathy and active participation, and is crucial for social-emotional learning. Friday sessions are used for a summary of the week's developments, and also for giving and receiving feedback. In this way, the school ensures that each child's voice is heard.

4.2 The children's parents at Labyrinth

A child and her or his parents need to be familiar with the school vision and feel part of the school environment. This process is supported by meetings with the headteacher and monthly meetings of children, parents, and teachers, which are called education groups.

The meetings with the headteacher start prior to the child's admission to the school. Expectations on both sides are compared, as are personal and educational attitudes. These meetings are regarded as a crucial part of educational diagnostics. In addition to meeting up with the parents of the school's students throughout the year, the head regards it as his duty to meet any parents seeking advice in terms of education, and he is in regular communication with parents fulfilling the school's mission of social responsibility.

Communication in the democratic environment of the school is based on transparency and accountability. Labyrinth aims to ensure that every voice is heard and that the school provides tools for involving all its actors in the decision-making process. Actors include students, teachers, parents and the wider community. Communication and cooperation with parents are of crucial importance for the school community's well-being, and for the community to feel safe and grow. Parents take part in class meetings (teacher-child-parents) to discuss the child's achievements, to agree on steps to be taken, and to discuss where support is need-

ed. Besides this, through online tools such as Edookit, Google meets and Umíme to, parents are regularly informed about their child's achievements.

Parents participate in the running of the School Council and the Parents' Assembly. The School Council is an official school body whose representatives are teachers and parents; it includes the school's head. The Parents' Assembly is represented by the students' parents of each class; it raises and discusses topics with the school management. The school also maintains the contact with parents by hosting many other activities, e.g. informal parent and grandparent meetings, informal teacher-parent meetings, parent TEDx presentations, and a regular newsletter.

The community around the school has been working on a so-called Partnership Agreement, i.e. mutual assistance among parents with the emphasis on social responsibility and heterogeneity. It will provide financial support for some students and parents.

4.3 School partners

Partners including Masaryk University, museums, galleries, libraries, NGOs and businesses play an important role in the life of the school. In cooperation with parents and other partners, the school provides a safe, supportive environment that is a natural stepping-stone to later life. Everyone can participate in a curriculum that emphasises key values and competencies for the 21st century and aims to support each child as she or he becomes a self-confident, anchored, and open-minded person, an active citizen, and a self-directed learner.

Labyrinth's cooperation with the Faculty of Education of Brno's Masaryk University began in 2016. The school offers short- and long-term teaching practice to faculty students and students on Erasmus programmes. Labyrinth is also involved in the professional development of teachers. It offers various workshops and lectures and motivates all age groups for learning. Labyrinth teachers work as mentors or senior teachers; they present different topics at conferences and offer a wide range of courses, including one on formative assessment and an academy for headteachers. As a Centre of the Lego Foundation and a Digi Centre, Labyrinth hosts workshops for students and teachers. The school cooperates with the Italian organisation INDIRE (National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research), the Teacher Training School in Rovaniemi, Lapland, the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic on a project called *Implementation of geographical information systems into learning at primary and secondary schools*, and Prague's Charles University on the research project *Key skills at primary school students – diagnostic tests – preparation and standardization of the diagnostics tests of reading skills with special emphasis on reading comprehension.*

In the boxes below we describe three projects in which Labyrinth is involved. The first was developed in cooperation with the Faculty of Education of Masaryk

University. In the second frame we describe two projects, one based on IT, the other on LEGO.

Casual exposure time room

A theoretical language concept for practical language skills was developed in collaboration with the Department of English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Education of Masaryk University. Over several months, regular meetings of teachers and researchers were held in which theoretical and practical aspects of language teaching and learning were brought together. The four dimensions of this concept are illustrated in the diagram below.
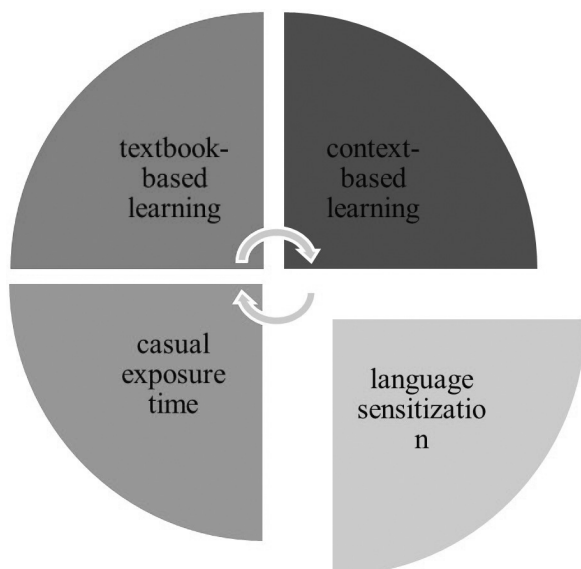

Fig. 1: The language concept

The language concept is based on a balanced combination of explicit and implicit learning. The idea of the necessity of a casual exposure time room was born within the team of teachers and researchers and later researched within a diploma thesis project by a student from the Faculty of Education. Following set-up, the room has continued to develop. Activity centres are adapted or removed, while books are added to the collection of the reading centre to meet the wishes of students. This project supports children's language skills through activities in a stimulating English-language environment. Once it has been established and tried out in practice, it will be worked on further so as to be transferable to the public education system, thus once again fulfilling the social responsibility principle of a laboratory school and highlighting the laboratory school's research principles of transdisciplinarity, collaboration, experimentation, and transformativity (Šikulová, 2021).

The DIGI centre and the LEGO education centre

From its founding in 2016 onwards, it was obvious that technology would feature heavily in the school's programmes. IT lessons are part of students' curricula from the earliest years. Research has focused on students' ability to participate actively in programming and working with technologies, e.g. robots and ozobots, and on creating a continual digital competence model.

For wider support, and in respect of its social responsibility principle, Labyrinth became a member of the DIGI centres network, which is part of a project called Elixir to Schools. So far, there are 7 such centres in the Czech Republic.

The centre's aim is to support teachers in developing their digital competencies and to give them a space in which they can share their experience. Labyrinth also hosts a LEGO education centre. The LEGO Innovation Studio (LEIS) opened on 1 November 2018. LEGO Education has equipped LEGO spaces with robots and other aids that can be used to activate teaching methods in school education from preschool to secondary-school level. Not only is LEIS at Labyrinth the first such innovation studio in the Czech Republic, but it is also one of the first in central and eastern Europe.

IT teachers at Labyrinth provide expertise for other teachers. They share their experience through workshops and lectures and participate in state-wide discussions on IT curriculum reform, thus once again following the laboratory principle of social responsibility.

The most recent Elixir to Schools report shows the impact of the centres on teachers and students. In 2020, nearly 4,000 teachers participated in activities of the DIGI centres network, consequently having an impact on 196,000 students in the Czech Republic (https://elixir-do-skol-digicentrum-brno.webnode. cz/).

Fig. 2: Description of an IT and a LEGO project

4.4 Teachers and other educators

Concepts of personal mastery and mental models are practised at Labyrinth, where there is togetherness in building a shared vision (Senge, 2012). Each individual is supported in developing their strengths, both professional and personal, and it is understood that these interconnect. The school works with mental models and comfort zones. It acknowledges that crossing a comfort zone may be a repetitive and challenging procedure that can be achieved only in a space where one feels safe. Further, building a shared vision entails creating something new, something original. It is understood that realising this process is impossible without making an occasional mistake (Robinson & Aronica, 2016). Thus, spaces where people share ideas, support each other's ideas and work with mistakes in an organic way (Robinson & Aronica, 2016) are created and the concept of team learning (Senge, 2012) in a safe environment is practised.

At Labyrinth, the system of relationship-oriented leadership (Spurkeland in Pol et al., 2006) is put into practice, i.e. there are leaders at all levels, coaching and mentoring, teams of professionals, year-group teams, support for beginning teachers, and tailor-made jobs. Labyrinth offers varied teaching loads and various types of jobs, i.e. working as a full-time and part-time teacher, full-time and part-time educator for afternoon clubs and afternoon activities, full-time and part-time psychologist, part-time special education teacher, and part-time assistant teacher. This variety of contracts and teaching loads ensures that the school can work towards its vision of being an educational ecosystem (Luksha et al., 2018), where not only full-time teachers participate in further development of the school concept. In this way, Labyrinth naturally serves as a platform for regular meetings of teachers, researchers, experts, or the wider community connected to the laboratory school. Teachers meet once a week in the staff room. These meetings serve the purpose of presenting of information, addressing of organisational matters, sharing professional experience, providing inspiration, and working on future plans. Other weekly meetings are held for the school management and special interest groups. Apart from these meetings, teachers from expert groups and grade groups meet as time permits and their needs demand. These teachers have a reduced number of teaching hours to allow for two hours of planning, sharing and evaluating. There are also intensive sessions for planning (before the school year) and evaluating (at the end of the school year). Various informal gatherings of teachers include joint holidays and a teachers' choir; they place an emphasis on teacher well-being and the creation of a supportive environment for teachers.

Occasional meetings with partners and researchers take place by individual agreement, either at school or at the office of a participating organisation. The school organises themed workshops on particular issues. Teachers are motivated to be proactive and to participate in sharing personal experience and innovation with the system of public education.

4.5 Leadership

"A creative leader nurtures an environment where creative ideas can flourish" (Robinson, 2001).

This integrative system provides space for and encourages teacher autonomy. This task can be well completed through a system of relationship-oriented leadership within which the traditional system of top-to-bottom hierarchy is dismantled, and multi-level leadership takes place. For people within the educational ecosystem to be proactive, the leadership creates boundaries within which it is possible to move while also creating conditions under which people can express themselves freely. The boundaries are not perceived as a set of general rules but are created within each individual's relationship with the leadership, so that there are a variety of paths that stem from individual agreements. This high degree of freedom is a crucial part of relationship-oriented leadership. There is freedom for one's own actions within the system, and feedback mechanisms are in place so that no one is left behind. Relationship-oriented leadership is a system in which the individual's mastery (Senge, 2012) is emphasised. It is up to the leadership to ensure that each individual's mastery is not isolated but permeated by the team around them. Under such circumstances, a shared vision (Senge, 2012) can flourish. There is a system of regular and various meetings within the team, e.g. weekly teacher meetings, grade teacher meetings, an online information system, and team building activities. The headteacher is seen as an integrated part of the institution, rather than the top of its hierarchy.

5 Labyrinth as a safe and supportive learning environment

As illustrated by the diagram below, there is a complex safety net around each child at Labyrinth. This safety net is created by active communication and co-operation between the school, the parents and the wider community, while the individual needs of each child are considered and acted upon with the aim of supporting each child's education.

Differentiation: In a system with the child at its centre, differentiation is a prerequisite. Differentiation is practised at Labyrinth through stable ties within the school, and with the help of an individualised and differentiated approach to each child. Each person is unique, and the school strives to develop everyone's strengths, and support everyone in areas where they might not feel confident. For differentiation to be fully practised, various mechanisms have been put into practice. There is tandem learning. There are rainbow lessons, i.e. lessons in which children within a class are approached differently and in various groupings depending on their level and interest in the given subject. There is a complex passable schedule system within which children can move to another group, or to

another grade. There are school counsellors who address the needs of students and help the team to meet each child's academic and developmental needs. Thanks to the clarity of the system in place, counsellors' suggestions can be acted upon swiftly by other team members. Thus, children's needs can be targeted quickly, as time is viewed as of the essence for differentiation to take place.

*Learning environments***:** At Labyrinth, we understand the learning environment to be an important condition of the learning process. It can be seen as a motivating factor. Real-world environments can be brought to any school subject, from natural sciences (e.g. environmental learning) to mathematics (e.g. Hejný's mathematics). Suitable learning environments, e.g. classroom setting, but also learning outside classrooms, learning in nature, learning in natural children's environments (playgrounds, families), learning online or through technology, are chosen depending on the pedagogical activity.

At Labyrinth, we also work with the school's city-centre location. The school space is customised to support and develop learning, but learning takes place outside the classroom as well – at the university, in nature, at museums, and at other places of culture. As the STEAM concept is reflected in Labyrinth education, art plays an important role in the school. Some lessons regularly take place at the Moravian Gallery, which is one of Labyrinth's official partners. Students are in direct contact with artists, and curriculum topics are connected to pieces of art or the gallery's activities. The school holds regular summer camps for students in the gallery. The school follows the programme of "School like a gallery", a project supported by Brno City Hall the aim of which is to bring art into schools. Thus, the school is seen as a public space that can engage people's senses, and corridors and classes are used for various exhibitions. Below are some other learning environment case studies:

Design reflecting community life: Spaces are interconnected and shared. Teachers are accessible to students and parents. The school has access to a garden and playground, which are used for learning, playing and informal meetings. Labyrinth also serves as a community centre. The learning environment is created by the community around the school. People are welcome to come to Labyrinth for informal learning, tutoring and online learning. It is a place for after-school clubs, interest groups and day camps. Experts and the wider community can find a place here.

Breakout spaces: Flexible classrooms are equipped with desks and chairs that can easily be set up for teamwork, pair work or individual work. There are areas for digital work, creative work and researching. There is a casual exposure time room that supports students' English-language acquisition. Functionality is regularly discussed with designers and producers of school furniture, and the needs of everyday school life is reflected in new designs and prototypes.

A learning environment which promotes independence, interdependence and self-motivation: The classrooms have class bookcases. Some classrooms have a place for doing research or for keeping a pet. There is a corner with board games, based on the preferences of the students.

Space for research: Every classroom has an interactive board. The school provides sets of laptops and a mobile digital classroom that allows students to use the equipment any time they need it. There is a school library. There is a bookcase for teachers and also for parents in various places across the school. Students are exposed to a variety of printed and digital materials, tools and equipment.

Special-purpose spaces: The school also provides spaces for relaxation. The school terrace is used either for teaching or relaxation; school events are held there too. There are relaxation and play areas for younger children, including a special wooden castle-type construction. Teachers use a shared staff room that works as a meeting point, silent staff room, copy centre, teachers' library, info-point and café with sofas. All corridors are understood to be public space. They often serve as a gallery presenting students' art or the work of professional artists.

Virtual spaces: The number of virtual spaces has grown in the last two years in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the school's information system (Edookit for teachers and parents), teachers use Confluence for communication, sharing materials and organisational matters. Some lessons and meetings are held in Google Classroom. For informal virtual meetings the school uses tools such as WhatsApp groups, ZOOM and Gather Town.

6 Assessment for learning (assessment as learning)

At Labyrinth, we understand assessment for learning not as a set of techniques to apply during our teaching, but as a complex process which is directly linked to teaching, learning and the aims and content which our learners need to engage with. We understand that assessment starts at the moment of setting aims for our learners, continues with introducing criteria for their performance (considered vital for self-assessment) and is followed by monitoring and continuous, clear feedback.

Unlike in the majority of mainstream schools in the Czech Republic, where summative grading instead of formative assessment is still used, teachers at Labyrinth favour diverse forms of analytical assessments ranging from assessment criteria and rubrics to visualised feedback in the form of monthly plans shared with both the children and their parents. The system is based on the idea of a responsive classroom (Fletcher-Wood, 2018) where the teachers perform the role of a filter and a thermostat for the class as a whole and for individual children.

In case individual intervention is needed, consultations are offered with the aim of naming the problem and suggesting a plan of action. The aims are set at three different levels: developmental, support and personal. First, the child tries to formulate what they can or cannot manage, what they find problematic, and what is the next smallest step they can take. Following this stage, feedback is provided by the teacher using non-judgemental descriptive language to offer their point of view (Košťálová, 2012).

At mid-term and at the end of the academic year, students receive a school report which not only evaluates their progress and performance in individual school subjects/fields of education but also goes beyond this to evaluate the development of the key competences.

The system as such is not a rigid scheme; assessment processes are constantly subject to evaluation and reflection on the part of teachers, school management and, of course, the children. Unsurprisingly, the COVID-19 pandemic brought about some changes and adjustments to the way feedback was given and elicited.

Asked to compare online and onsite teaching, many teachers reported that the online format was more challenging in terms of time. This apparently includes the amount of time that teachers can allot for feedback. Moreover, the non-verbal feedback in constant use onsite is very limited (if not impossible) online. Therefore, for responsive teaching (Fletcher-Wood, 2018) to take place Labyrinth teachers were faced with the need to stay effectively connected with children and their work. They started using tools for feedback offered by online teaching platforms, such as customised assessment rubrics in Google Classroom, so that learners would receive targeted feedback on their in-class and out-of-class performance. Another tool which proved useful and effective was the quiz, which was applied in different forms for easier and more complex tasks, including literacy development. Some teachers opted for individual interviews to provide weekly feedback on children's work and progress based on their monthly plan. Others went to a yet higher level to prepare tasks or activities tiered in three levels to reach children at different stages of development.

7 Professional learning

Professional learning is an active process of systematic inquiry into the effectiveness of one's teaching practices (Košťálová, 2012). This inquiry has many parallels with formative assessment practices used with students. The same processes are applicable in promoting teacher learning. Continuing development is the only way for a teacher can become an adaptive professional (Fisher et al., 2016). Systematic inquiry, challenges and meaning-making brings us back to Dewey and the way he conceptualised reflective practice.

At Labyrinth, the system of teacher learning is primarily linked to the school's vision. Teacher development takes place not along the lines of a career system, but in a way that benefits both the teacher and the school. Labyrinth's Plan of Professional Development, a binding internal document, serves to integrate and plan for the progress of the teacher and the school, i.e. to find some synergy between the field of development a teacher is interested in and the school's vision. This plan is set for a year, during which the teacher and the school management meet to discuss progress as well as needs related to the teacher's goals. At the same time, the extended management team seeks feedback and input from the teaching staff regarding more general needs. Based on that, teacher development covering particular issues is managed at the whole-school level. In this way, teachers are integrated into a specific social network where both subjective and objective determinants of teacher development come into play, hence providing space for the teacher's professional identity to develop.

8 School as a part of life

Labyrinth bases its curriculum on the concept of integrated thematic instruction (Kovalik, 1994). At Labyrinth, we work with big ideas within which varied subjects are integrated. The tendency is to introduce each grade to a theme, which it then pursues throughout the school year. Students are encouraged to look at real-world examples, engage in authentic experience, and produce projects for real audiences. Emphasis is placed on the development of key competencies, as these are presented in the national curriculum (RVP ZV, 2021), with the aim of directing students towards participation and understanding themselves as part of a bigger picture. To achieve this aim, many smaller steps have to be taken. In early years of their studies, students focus on specific areas. This system builds upwards from the student's knowledge of the self, their surroundings, and their anchoring in time. After this, students are ready to move on to more glocal and global topics. Thus, upon reaching the lower secondary years, students know how to participate and how to become proactive, an attitude which would be hard to achieve without prior knowledge about themselves and the community. Only now can this knowledge be turned into an activity from which the community can profit. The steps students take on this journey are bound by their grade. They are illustrated in Table 3 below.

Tab. 3: Integrated themes in grades one to nine

GRADE	WHOLE-YEAR TOPIC	ROLES TAKEN ON BY STUDENTS
1	Me	Discoverers
2	Time	Explorers
3	Cities and countryside	Businessmen and farmers
4	My country	Travellers
5	The world around us	Ecologists
6	Birth and life	Scientists
7	Community	Companions
8	Me – a human (rethinking)	Human beings
9	Looking for social justice	Active citizens

At Labyrinth, non-formal education is perceived to be an important part of children's development and is emphasised as such in pedagogical diagnostics. It can develop children's strengths and support them in areas in which they lack confidence. Labyrinth provides all-day education. To further develop children's interests, teachers and partner organisations draw on their deeper interests to provide a wide range of afternoon activities, i.e. arts and crafts, languages, sports, music, and research-based clubs.

The school also serves as a community centre, where exhibitions, concerts and lectures take place. Children act as guides at the openings of these events; they also participate in art workshops at exhibitions. The school regularly holds suburban camps that use the potential offered by the school's surroundings.

In the school year 2019/20, Labyrinth launched the unique Space Academy project. This project aims to acquaint children with all aspects of space research, not only in the Czech Republic, but also elsewhere in Europe. The Academy was established in cooperation with the Observatory and the Planetarium of the Capital City of Prague. Prague (Planetum), Brno Observatory, and Planetarium, S.A.B. Aerospace, which participates in unique space projects with the European Space Agency and the CzechInvest agency. After the pilot year, the project will be opened to other schools in the Czech Republic and abroad.

Additionally, since its founding Labyrinth has been dedicated to the systematic integration of art into school life. It cooperates with the Moravian Gallery in Brno, where students take part in regular activities and informal meetings. The school collaborates with the SE.S.TA association, whose main purpose is to help contemporary dance to engage in an international context and to open interdisciplinary cooperation and discussion.

Labyrinth is one of six places in the Czech Republic with a so-called Digi Centre – a place where workshops focused on the use of technology in teaching and conducted in the form of collegial education of teachers are regularly held. In 2018, the LEGO innovation studio in the Czech Republic opened at Labyrinth, and LEGO is regularly used as an educational aid.

9 Outlook, vision and challenges

Schools, school management, teachers and students in the Czech Republic still face many challenges. The Czech educational system has recently focused on local resources, dialogue among schools and peer support. The Strategy of Education (Strategie vzdělávání 2030) presented by the Czech Ministry of Education emphasises active citizenship, well-being and professional development, while supporting equity in access to education and cooperation. Within and alongside the public education system, Labyrinth faces challenges that are crucial for its development as well as being inevitable for a socially responsible school that aspires to support changes in the educational paradigm. At Labyrinth, we strongly believe that changes made from within schools can bring them closer to real life and support students' ability to deal with the uncertainties of the future.

In 2021, Labyrinth celebrated its fifth anniversary. Its original vision, as described in this chapter, has not changed since 2016, although there has been a visible, remarkable change concerning its breadth, which has been expanded and enriched by experience and knowledge, as well as through input from the children, parents, educators, partner organisations and many other parties. Thus, the school has created a healthy, free and socially responsible ecosystem in pursuit of innovation while constantly questioning the decisions it takes on its journey. Personalised learning and education that go beyond academic results, integrated learning, interdisciplinarity, diversification of educational resources, a dynamic learning environment, new ways of learning, freedom vs responsibility, distributed management (e.g. increased number of part-time jobs, flexible workloads, diverse roles, varied competencies), a non-hierarchical community – all these are issues on which Labyrinth has recently focused while continuing to strike a balance between the conservative and the innovative.

The school will continue to expand in the coming years. Its physical environment will be enriched by two new buildings with a unique architecture, energy solutions and special educational spaces. In 2023, a new Labyrinth grammar school will open its doors to first-year students, thus expanding not only Labyrinth's metaphorical breadth but also its length, by extending the vision to another educational level.

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