**“Water unites us!”**

**KA 219 Erasmus+ project**

**Intermediate report**

The project “Water unites us!” is a KA219 Erasmus+ strategic school partnership. The project started in September, 2017 and will be completed in August, 2019. Six schools participated in the project: a) 1st General Lyceum of Argostoli, Kefalonia, GREECE (coordinating institution), b) Istituto di Istruzione Secondaria Superiore "E. Fermi", Lecce, ITALIA (partner), c) Escola EB 2,3/S Paredes de Coura, Paredes de Coura, PORTUGAL (partner), d) Srednja škola Metković, Metković, CROATIA (partner), e) Olaines 1.vidusskola, Olaine, LATVIA (partner), and f) Akhisar Anadolu İmam Hatip high school, Manisa, TURKEY (partner).

"Water unites us!" is a multidisciplinary project that focuses on aquatic ecology. The main point of the project is to conduct a research into the similarities and differences among the participants' findings as far as the interaction between humans and the aquatic ecosystems (AQUEs) is concerned. Partners focus on a variety of AQUEs, e.g. seaside, lake, river, lagoon, waterfall and wetland and highlight their special features. We intend to exchange our experiences and ideas and create the space and conditions required for creativity, sharing the joy of spending time together. Furthermore we want to raise intercultural competence by working together in international groups.

“Motion”, “Research”, “Production” and “Dissemination” are the key words that highlight our project activities. The activities were carried out according our application form. One Transnational Project Meeting and two Short Term Exchanges of Group of Pupils were organized during the 1st year of our project. Students and teachers from all the schools participated in them and had the opportunity to discuss, exchange opinions and ideas and get acquainted with the nature, the local culture and cousine.

Starting our project in September, 2017 we created a special facebook page for the project (<https://www.facebook.com/waterunitesus/>) and started an agenda of activities exchanging ideas via e-mail. In September and October we set up environmental working groups of students and teachers and presented them on the school web site. In addition, we started exploring and filming the aquatic ecosystem of study as well as organizing excursions, taking photos and recording. The Croatian partner was focused on river Neretva in Metcovic, the Greek one on Koutavos lagoon and De Bosset bridge in Argostoli, the Italian one on the Southern coast of Italy from Otranto to Leuca and the bauxite quarry, the Turkish one on Lake Marmara, the Latvian one on the Olaine city canal, the Misa river and the Portuguese one on the Coura river.

Each partner school decided on the number of students involved in the project and established a group of students. Then the "breakout" was set up within the group. Questionnaires were developed and distributed to students to fill in. The project activities were briefly outlined in the questionnaires and the students will be asked a) to choose the project activities they are interested in, b) to declare if they have skills relating to the project activities and to what extent (e.g. use of English and ICT, use of instruments of the school natural sciences lab, use of digital camera, cooking, painting, swimming, water polo), and c) to indicate whether they are members of cultural or sports (swimming, water polo, synchronized swimming) clubs. Students, according to their answers, were distributed equally to the following six working subgroups “chemistry of water”, “flora and fauna”, “photography and video tape”, “local sea cuisine", "art and crafts" and "water sports". Student subgroups implement the research activities (measurements of abiotic parameters in the water, recording flora and fauna, recording and promotion of the local culture and local sea cuisine, photographic activities and filming) and diffusion activities of results and project products. Teachers of physical education, literature, history, science, art and crafts, mathematics, English and ICT provide preparation and support to students who participate in the project activities.

The 1st Transnational Project Meeting of the project took place from November, 28 until December, 2, 2017 in Olaine, Latvia. During that meeting: a) We established a most detailed plan of activities, b) We distributed tasks to the teachers involved, c) We discussed the evaluation methods, d) We exchanged and evaluated the material collected in the different AQUEs, e) Croatia, Latvia, Italy and Greece presented proposals for the project logo, and f) We visited Jurmala and Jelgava as well as Olaine City Council and Olaine City Museum.

Partners decided that the project logo will be selected through students’ voting. The duty to carry out the logo voting process was given to Turkey. Thereafter the partner countries sent their logo proposals to Turkey and the questionnaire was created on Google forms. The notice board was prepared with the visuals and the brief explanations of the proposals without giving the names of the countries’ names. So, the students did not know which proposal was prepared by which partner country. 400 Turkish students voted online for the logo proposals. After the voting process was completed, the Latvian logo proposal which was voted most was announced as the logo of our Project.

From December, 2017 till March, 2018: a) We got acquainted with the history of the eco-cultural objects by reading books and surfing the Internet, b) We did research into: i) the peculiarities of the AQUEs by filming and taking photos, ii) the biotic parameters of the AQUE by exploring flora and fauna, and iii) the abiotic parameters of the water (e.g.temperature, Ph, salinity, water hardness), c) We explored the local traditional cousin (“sea dishes”), d) We studied the significance of the bodies of water for the development of facilities, the activities and the health of the local people, e) We analyzed the geographical, ecological and cultural situation of the area (“live history”) by interviewing local people (craftsmen, fishermen, ecologists, athletes, officials), filming and taking photos of their activities, visiting museums and reading with a view to collecting material about how the AQUEs have influenced local businesses, activities and traditions, f) The material collected was exchanged among schools regularly.

From December, 2017 until March, 2018 we made Christmas cards depicting the AQUE and send them to partner schools. Furthermore we prepared brochures, PPT presentations, posters and films depicting features of the AQUEs as well as social and cultural activities.

The 1st Short Term Exchange of Group of Pupils was organized by our Portuguese partner in Paredes de Coura from February, 25 until March, 2, 2018 and was dedicated to the water sports as well as to local history and culture. Students and teachers walked along the Minho River, visited the town of Melgaço and the Museum of Cinema as well as the town of Vila Nova de Cerveira and the Aqua Museum. In addition they did sightseeing in the town of Viana de Castelo and climbed on a funicular to Santa Luzia Hill. Students were hosted by hosting families and teachers were stayed at private rooms.

The 2nd Short Term Exchange of Group of Pupils was organized in Lecce, Italy from 15 to 21 of April, 2018 and was dedicated to the chemistry of water. During the meeting: a) We visited the Mediterranean Centre for Climate Change as well as the Town Hall of Lecce, and b) We had a guided tour in Lecce and excursions to Bauxite quarry, Punta Palascia, Avamposto di Tricase, Otranto, Calimera and San Foca. A Chemistry lab and a Biology workshop were organised as well as an exhibition featuring students’ creative and research work. Students were hosted by hosting families and teachers were stayed at the hotel.

In April, 2018 cleaning activities of the AQUEs were organized by the partners. The activities and the preliminary project results of the project were disseminated by the Greek partner with presentations at local “school festivals”. The coordinator prepared the twinspace of the project and started to upload data in collaboration with the partners.

Project evaluation sheets were filled in every three months for the monitoring of the project course as well as the meetings. Students traveled abroad were given Europass certificates.

Finally, during the 1st year of our project: a) Group of students and teachers were fixed to work on the project, b) A project facebook page was prepared to upload project products as well as a twinspace, c) A unique project logo was designed, d) Three very interesting project meetings were organized, d) Students were involved in a variety of activities and prepared posters, PPT presentations, films as well as art and crafts products, e) Project products and results were sufficiently disseminated and uploaded on the school websites, on the twinspace as well as on the facebook page of the project, and f) There was a continuous exchange of opinions and ideas among us as well as a warm and friendly communication. Students and teachers involved in the project were very active and productive during the 1st year. We are keeping in a good course and looking forward to carrying out the activities of the 2nd year!

The 3rd Short Term Exchange of Group of Pupils will be organized in Argostoli from September 24 until September 28, 2018 and dedicated to "Biodiversity and applications of mathematics on the aquatic ecosystems."

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Dr Spyridon Kavvadias

Biologist

Project coordinator