Report on the final meeting online – instead of meeting in Dortmund

Day 1 – Monday 1st February 2021

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic the last international meeting that had been planned for May 2020 had to be postponed twice. In the end, however, it had to be carried out online in February 2020 because Germany was still in a lockdown. The other schools in Spain, Norway and Finland could work directly or with a reduced number of students in the classroom.

It was really sad, because we had planned to stay in the center of Dortmund for 3 days and then move into a remote hostel in the forest of Schwerte where we would have had all the opportunity to work in international teams like we did in Finland in 2020.

At the beginning of the online meeting Susanne Auer welcomed all schools and the schools showed the process and progress of their work during the 30 months of the project. The Spanish and the German team presented a film to the conference members. There were 8 students from Finland, 8 from Norway and 12 students from Germany taking part. These films can be watched on etwinning under “Final results of the last international meeting”. They will be published on youtube, vimeo and facebook as soon as all persons in the videos have given their permission.

In the next part of the conference Susanne Auer presented the schemes to support special groups of students like to motive girls to decide for STEM professions, to support weaker students or to prevent students from leaving school with any qualification and finally to support refugee students or youngsters in general who come to our countries from other parts of the world. Schemes that already existed gave the basis, like a support scheme from Finland for weaker students, a scheme from the city council of Dortmund for including refugee youngsters and a scheme from Norway to prevent truancy. The scheme to support girls in STEM professions was developed in Spain among women in these jobs and their ideas and experiences (see etwinning”schemes…”)

The four schemes were presented to the students and the students had a word about these ideas, which were developed by pedagogues. They agreed to the ideas and added that the family had a very big influence on job decisions youngsters make and emphasised the necessity of cooperation with the families.

After the lunch break the Norwegian group presented a technology how to melt plastics and make new parts out of this recycled material. They showed an impressive process and how they made an ice scaper for car windows. The participants of the conference were very impressed how easy this process looked but the Norwegian presentators also said that there are difficulties when it comes to the recyclability of some plastics. Anyway, the students from Germany and Finland learnt about a new way of using plastics and of one solution of reducing plastic waste which we find on beaches.

A film from the German team put the idea of a robot picking up trash on a beach into a broader context and explained that they tried to use recycled material for the body of the robot as well but as the lockdown has prevented them from going to school, they haven’t yet managed to do so. Nevertheless, their robot uses recyclable batteries as one feature to consider the sustainability. They also explained sustainability in a wider sense, like the means of transport we use, the fuel it consumes or products that are more sustainable because they are from local producers, what a CO2 footprint means and these subject matters are integrated in their other school subjects as well.

The Norwegian team suggested the concept of RRR, which means reuse, recycle and repair, the last aspect having been neglected for a long time when in machines and in cars only new parts are installed instead of repairing the broken ones.

The participants in the conference agreed upon the fact that a project like “Robots ‘R Us” helps to build more environmentally-consciousness in students, just by the way of deciding on the materials used in the robot.

At the end of the 4-hour day the list of criteria for the final presentation day was presented to the group again. It had been made and given to the groups in October but now the number of votes and the percentage of their weight had to be discussed.

In the end the teachers’ vote got an influence of 10% of the votes and the students 90% while nobody was allowed to vote for his/her own country and the teachers were not allowed to vote for the performance of the teachers. Fair enough. For the list of criteria, also see etwinning.

The jury was voted for: each country has chosen two representatives for the poll.

A long but successful conference day.