**In November 2016, our school commemorated the World Day of Philosophy. As part of that celebration a “Philosophical-Cafe” was organized as an activity of the Erasmus+ Project “We Can Do It Together”. The aim of the activity was to make students reflect on the meaning of “Solidarity” so that they could help the others. Here is a student’s reflection on it.**

Solidarity is an essential part of people’s everyday life as it is one of the factors that makes humans such a cooperative species, undergoing the rapid development we have all witnessed. Last year (2016) I participated in two activities based on the topic of solidarity: one was a "philosophical café" in which I was able to discuss its meaning with other students; the other was a project devised to help the students with lower school performance, which allowed me to participate in the Erasmus+ exchange program held in Poland later in that same year.

On November 17, the World Philosophy Day, me and some colleagues of mine from other classes attended the "philosophical café", a sort of street café organized in the library of our school. We began by discussing the concept of solidarity with the following question: "What is the definition of solidarity?” There was a big diversity of answers to that question and from these we tried as far as possible to clarify the concept, although we didn’t reach complete consensus on this because of its abstractedness. Some ideas conceived solidarity as an act of giving without receiving anything in return, others as the need to help so that we will feel more accomplished and some others as a more sentimental act of compassion.

By means of this exchange of ideas and by asking new questions, we deepened our knowledge on this theme and after some time we came to the point where we could divide solidarity into two concepts: the mechanical one and the organic one. The first is based on feelings, essentially on empathy, like when we help someone because our feelings tell us to do so, while the second covers a mutual aid in a more rational and organized way, such as the structuring of the human species as a society.

Meanwhile, we began to discuss what form of solidarity was the worthiest. To answer that question we used one of the most important tools in philosophy, that is exemplification. One of the examples that helped clarify this doubt was the following: "If you had to choose between saving your mom or a group of twenty people from being hit by a train, which one would you choose?". By the given answers we concluded that the choice depended deeply on the answerers’ sentimental or rational personal perspective.

This theme, solidarity, was also what got me to develop, from May to June (2016), some cooperation work with a schoolmate with a lower school performance. We created a detailed assignment to be presented in a lecture about pollution, its causes, its effects and how to reduce it. The primary aim of this collaborative project was to help her to overcome her difficulties and also getting her to achieve higher standards in making oral presentations. This project was the one that later allowed me to participate in the Erasmus+ exchange program.

During the classes I used for this project, Catarina, the one being helped, and I, we divided the work in different tasks, with me making each task first so that I could explain the various important aspects of transmitting ideas clearly and organizing them in a correct way to be presented in the most appropriate way. I transmitted various concepts and strategies such as the integration of documents in the context of the oral presentation, the implementation of strategies to enhance the lecturer’s focus on the subject, how to present with the most natural body language, the ability to memorize ideas instead of just reciting previously memorized phrases and the articulation of ideas using common elements in them.

Catarina was very receptive to all these ideas I provided her with and worked hard to apply the strategies mentioned above. She has always had a very relaxed attitude, was always ready to work and interacted very easily, which made the transmission of these ideas easier.

Unfortunately, I was unable to achieve all the objectives I had in mind to improve her presentation skills due to certain limitations like the short time we had to work together and also I was not capable of explaining her all the ideas associated to these concepts and strategies because of her innate difficulties which had a certain amount of influence on her learning process.

In conclusion, in the "philosophical café" I managed to dissect the concept of solidarity (one of the many purposes of philosophy) which I had previously applied in the collaborative tuition programme with the low performance student. Both these experiences have surely influenced me and will shape my capacity of adaptation and cooperation in the future as well as my open-mindedness which are very important factors to succeed in the globalized world we live in.

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