



EDUCAÇÃO



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In the framework of the Erasmus+ project, KA2, *Strategic Partnerships / Exchanges of Good Practices, Inside out*, a meeting was held from 16th to 20th May 2022 in Banagher, more precisely the fourth short-term exchange of students. Several teachers and students from our school as well as from the hosting school, *Banagher College Colaiste na Sionna* (Banagher, Ireland), from *Dukdalf* (Leiden, the Netherlands), from *Szkola Podstawowa Marii Konopnickiej* (Czeladź, Poland), from *Mehmet Akif Ersoy İlkokulu* (Izmir, Turkey) and from *Základná škola Andreja Sládkoviča* (Sliač, Slovakia) took part in this meeting.

On the first day, we were kindly welcomed by the headmistress and we took part in a welcoming ceremony which covered several traditional Irish dancing and Irish music performances by some of the Irish students. Then we got to know the school premises and some of its teachers. Afterwards the presentations related to all the countries of this project as well as to their schools and towns took place.

Due to the climate conditions, it was not possible to carry out the guided tour in Banagher, as initially planned. However, as an alternative, we were given the chance of having a “lesson” about the Irish ancient language – gaelic – and about some of the town historical facts and also about its main spots. Thus, we got to know that Banagher lies in the heart of the Irish Midlands at a major crossing point on the river Shannon, Ireland’s longest river. Besides this interesting information, we learnt about

the bond of renown writers such as Charlotte Brontë and Anthony Trollope to Banagher. The students also took part in a quiz and in lessons of digital technology.

On the following day, in the morning, after a hurling (Irish traditional sport) match, in which both teachers and students from all the schools got involved, we had the opportunity to visit the town charming marina, right next to the river Shannon. We also visited the 7-arch bridge, that was completed between 1841 and 1843, and that forms a county boundary line between Offaly and Galway and a provincial boundary between Leinster and Connacht. In the afternoon, we visited *The Portumana Workhouse*, which impressed us a lot due to the appalling living conditions that those who had huge economic difficulties had to go through in order to survive, mainly during the 'Famine'/'Great Hunger' years (1845-1849). We got to know that a workhouse (or poorhouse) has been described as the most hated institution ever established in Ireland. In simple terms, people who could not support themselves could be admitted to a workhouse. Here, in return for doing some work, they received a little food. One of the cruelest aspects of workhouse life was the splitting up of families. There were separate living quarters and yards for men, women, boys and girls. Only children, aged 2 or less, could remain with their mothers. During this tragic period of Ireland's history, one million people died and about two million emigrated, namely to the USA and Canada.

The last day, Friday, was spent in Galway. In the morning, we visited the *Galway National Aquarium of Ireland*, where we could enjoy exhibitions and several marine species. After a short but very pleasant walk on *the Beach and Galway Promenade*, in the *Pure Skills Activity Center* the students had the possibility of getting involved in several types of sports such as baseball, cricket, basketball, rugby, golf, tennis and hurling, which pleased all of them quite a lot.

After some free time to get to know a bit of the town and also to do some shopping, we went back to Banagher College, Coláiste na Sionna so that we could attend a closing goodbye ceremony in which the attendance certificates were kindly delivered to all the participants by the school principal.

And this meeting, that granted all of us, both teachers and students, unforgettable memories, had come to an end. It was an unquestionable cultural and personal enriching opportunity. We can't help expressing our gratitude to all those that contributed to the undeniable success that it really was. Thanks a lot!