ATAU midterm/Interim report

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Please provide an overall state of play of your project: what are the achievements of the project at this stage? Are the initial activities and objectives being carried out and reached so far?

At this stage we have had three Transnational Project Meetings (Zagreb, Valencia, Joensuu) and also attended one LTT meeting in Dabrowa nad Carna. All meetings have been carefully planned in advance and been full of activities for pupils and teachers both in and outside schools and included cultural activities. This project and its participants have followed the original plan of activities to share their art, literature, culture, traditions and national holidays, but also created a lot more in international co-operation with teachers, pupils and other staff. All participants are highly motivated and eager to share, learn and participate. All project countries have presented themselves with Here we are-activities, such as created and shared videos, local holidays and we have voted for the project logo with all the pupils in all our schools. Before Transnational Meeting in Zagreb we had also involved pupils in discussing and sharing their ideas in what art is. From these collected ideas of art, our project teachers from Italy and Czech Republic composed a song with pupils in Poland and we made a rap video with Finnish kids with Polish and Finnish teachers from the lyrics. Our pupils, school staff and parents have been a part of this process.

Creative winter and Art in our towns. During creative winter we shared pictures, art and videos from our countries in Drive, pedanet, Whatsapp, eTwinning and Facebook. There was an art exhibition for school staff and parents in our school inside and outside. Pupils built snow statues outside and inside they created a wintery town. We have learned how pupils all over Europe (in our project countries) celebrate different national holidays and our pupils have had the opportunity to create presentations with place based pedagogy, ICT and creativity to other pupils to share their cultural heritage. The amount of art in all its forms have increased in pupils’ everyday lives.

After Transnational Meeting in Benetuser we started “I lend you this book” where pupils could recommend one traditional book to others. We created book trailers using Shadow Puppet-application and sharing them as videos in our Google Drive. Pupils presented and recommended English versions of Moomins, Kalevala and Tatu and Patu this is Finland-books and learned about other countries’ traditional books and tales.

Music is a very important part of this project. In all of our meetings we have sang traditional songs from project countries, created new pieces of music (like Art is..), learned from each other, shared musical culture, organized big concerts for pupils, parents and staff and enjoyed the beauty of music in all project countries. For instance in Finland we invited educational board, parents and people from our surrounding community to take part in our Folk Evening.

So far the activities carried out have been motivating, sharing and activating for all participants.

The Transnational Project Meetings have also included pupils’ participantship, they have never been only meetings for teachers, but also workshops and teaching for receiving country’s pupils. The greatest achievements so far concerning Finnish pupils are that pupils’ English language skills have improved, their knowledge of their own culture (art, literature, music, paintings, architecture..) have increased as well as knowledge of other European cultures, their sense of coherence has increased, they recognize their role as Europeans sharing same values but also embrace the unique of their own culture. Art is a language that combines us, through art pupils are able to express, share and value their culture in all project countries.

Please describe further in details the project activities supported by the grant for Project Management and Implementation that have been carried out until now.

Finland has not received any grant for LTT meetings. Only Transnational Project Meetings. This has created a bit of a financial problem because in order to carry out all the activities it is crucial for Finnish teachers to also participate in LTT meetings. Our pupils are highly involved in this project and all grades in our school have been a part of creating and sharing the activities. Our parents can follow our project through Facebook and our Pedanet-pages and can see the results of pupils’ work. It was extremely important for our school to participate in LTT meeting in Dabrowa nad Carna because this was a meeting also to prepare for the Transnational Meeting in Finland. For this meeting we utilized Project Management money. And if there were exceptional costs, Project Management money was used in TPM meetings.

How is the monitoring of the project being carried out so far and by whom?

We collect, share and present all activities in Whatsapp, Facebook, Google Drive and pedanet. We also establish local art exhibitions in schools for pupils, parents and staff. We have organized and well-arranged meetings where we decide next activities and their deadlines. We discuss the details and progress in Whatsapp and e-mails, even phone calls (Facetime) at times and our coordinator Miriam Taberner Vidal has had marvelous job in organizing our tasks and monitoring our progress. In each TPM we present our work, as well as in online dissemination channels and our motivated and task-oriented partners are eager to fulfil the tasks in due time. We have regular meetings in our school where we discuss what activities we are currently working on and our teachers can participate in evaluation and feedback. Local coordinators are in charge of activities being carried out in time and how to divide the tasks inside the schools. We also inform our principal on the current tasks and how well the project is advancing and collect all data in online tools where teachers and parents can follow up on our work.

How did the project partners contribute to the project so far? Has the distribution of tasks been adjusted since the application stage?

All participants are highly motivated and eager to share, learn and participate. This project and its project partners have followed the original plan of activities to share their art, literature, culture, traditions and national holidays, but also created a lot more in international co-operation with teachers, pupils and other staff. In the beginning of this project no-one could not have predicted where this could lead us. The partners in this project have created something completely different, something greater than anyone could have anticipated. We have shared art as a common language to depict our cultural heritage, involved our teachers and pupils in common shared, European learning entity that has led to learning new pedagogical thinking, strategies and teaching methods. It has led to eTwinning - and job shadowing projects. This professional network created through Arts Talk About Us - project profits our pupils not only in terms of learning to use English as a means of communicating with others from around Europe, but to use art as a common language, to appreciate one’s own cultural heritage, to be open to teachers form around Europe, to teach and learn from each other.

**If your project involves other organisations, not formally participating in the project, please briefly describe their involvement.**

**In our project we have had co-operation with for example local museums, library and Mutala Siihtala Resident Association. Children have studied their cultural art and surroundings by visiting museums, movie theater, concerts and by interviewing their close relatives. We invited parents, Mutala Siihtala Resident Association, some local musicians and members of educational board in Joensuu to take part in our Folk Evening during our Transnational Project Meeting in Finland.**

If relevant, please describe any difficulties you have encountered until now in managing the implementation of the project and how you and your partners handle them.

One of the partners had to quit the project so we lost Greece after the first meeting. We decided to replace this mobility with a mobility to Valencia. Everyone who is involved in this project is easy to motivate but it is not always easy to involve all teachers in schools. For this we have created regular meetings where we present our work and talk about the project and what we have done so far and open online dissemination tools for everyone. But every difficulty we have encountered have been easily managed since we have good coherence and agreement between partners and everyone is willing to work towards our common goal.

**What has been the project's impact so far on the participants, participating organisations, target groups and other relevant stakeholders?**

All participants, teachers, staff and children, have enhanced their communication skills. Art, in all its forms, have increased in all project countries’ schools. Parents are more interested in international co-operation in schools. Pupils are more interested in the project countries and start understanding their role as a part of Europeans. They want to know and learn more from our project teachers and pupils. They want to share their everyday life and participate in the activities planned in this project. They look forward to new tasks and sharing art with their new European friends.

The greatest achievements so far concerning Finnish pupils are that pupils’ English language skills have improved, their knowledge of their own culture (art, literature, music, paintings, architecture..) have increased as well as knowledge of other European cultures, their sense of coherence has increased, they recognize their role as Europeans sharing same values but also embrace the unique of their own culture. Art is a language that combines us, through art pupils are able to express, share and value their culture in all project countries.

Our pupils, parents and teachers will understand and cherish the value of this Erasmus KA+6 project by the end of this “Arts Talk About Us”.

In case already applicable, to whom did you disseminate the project results inside and outside your partnership so far? Please define in particular your targeted audience(s) at local/regional/national/EU level/international and explain your choices.

Local and regional level: We cooperate closely with museums, library, Mutala Siihtala Resident Association, pupils’ parents and local residents. Our projects have been presented in regional International Team to teachers around Joensuu area.

National level: Three of our teachers were lecturers in a national seminar by Regional State Administrative Agencies organized in Joensuu and Koli in October 2018 where Hanna-Kaisa Malinen educated teachers about internationality and Erasmus projects in Mutala School.

EU level and International level: We have online dissemination tools like Facebook, Whatsapp, individual websites, Pedanet and Google Drive where we share and present our work. We have organized concerts for parents and surrounding citizens during all Transnational Project Meetings. We have visited local authorities and presented our project and discussed about its value and importance in global education in European schools. We have published pupils’ art and culture- related videos with Erasmus+ logos for parents and relatives to see.

Art is..-project in cooperation with Polish and Finnish teachers during a workshop in Finland:

<https://hannakaisamalinen.wixsite.com/lalalanguageland/music-video-and-rap>

<https://peda.net/joensuu/alakoulut/mutalan-koulu/erasmus>

<https://www.facebook.com/Arts-talk-about-us-2029517347279152/>