Key Action: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices
Action Type: Strategic Partnerships for Schools Only

Project Title

Small Scientists Across Europe

Good practice example

Project Coordinator

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Project Information

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Project Web Site	http://www.ssae-eu.com
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EC Contribution	158,080 EUR
Partners	Agrupamento de Escolas Rainha Santa Isabel (PT) , HUMA HATUN OZEL EGITIM ANAOKULU (TR) , GRADINITA CU PROGRAM PRELUNGIT SCORNICESTI (RO) , Gradinita cu Program Prelungit Nr. 3 (RO) , Preschool Põngerjas (EE) , Kauno lopselis-darzelis "Giliukas" (LT)
Topics	Pedagogy and didactics ; International cooperation, international relations, development cooperation ; Natural sciences

Project Summary

Small Scientists Across Europe is a project combining kindergarten education programmes, reflections on the implementation of these programmes and innovative methods for acquiring scientific knowledge in order to develop thinking in a structured way.
This project brought together seven European schools of preschool level from six different countries, including a school specialising in the education of pupils with disabilities, linking more than 75 teachers, 1000 pupils and their families.
It allowed students to broaden their scientific knowledge on four main themes: Earth, Air, Water and Fire and to be confronted with problem situations in order to acquire the skills necessary to understand phenomena through an investigative approach.
By allowing children to appropriate a motivating starting question (simple but making sense so that children appropriate the problem and want to solve it), this approach allows them to experiment themselves with simple and available equipment, to confront others in action, to observe what they are looking for, to discuss with their peers, to bring out solutions and to share discoveries. This approach allows for in-depth and not superficial learning through the understanding of the real-world phenomena to which they have been exposed and the active construction of knowledge.
This project also made it possible to develop language in all its dimensions and communication.
Each theme to be studied was divided into several experiments taking into account the material, effects and possible transformations. The young child in each structure was confronted not only with experiments conducted in his or her environment, but also those carried out by the partners (twenty-one different experiments on each theme, three in each school and of three difficulty levels). The experience of the partner countries allows the confrontation of events, structures and thinking that are different from those of the country of origin. Experiences are documented in manuals for children to create personalized materials, including real and functional experiences.
In addition to the production of four scientific books (one on each theme) for students, teachers and academic inspection (to ensure wider dissemination), students produced literary works (twenty eight stories on the four different themes) and played online activities based on their own drawings or productions.
Thanks to the scientific context integrated into the children's daily environment and the selected activities that are an integral part of the national education programmes, our children's skills in research, critical thinking and creativity have been developed. They experimented with different materials, learned through play, cooperation and collaboration with other children, respecting rules and responsibilities, had the opportunity to explore, observe, analyse and solve problems, feel the joy of creativity.
Our project has strengthened the digital and technical key competences of staff and children, as well as the key competences in cultural and intercultural awareness. Teachers in partner pre-schools are now more confident and more willing to adopt and use new technologies in their classrooms.
A dedicated project website is a living and regularly updated source of information that will continue after the two years of the project (part of the budget has been set aside to maintain the site). Throughout the project's life cycle, the documents have been registered in Twinspace on the eTwinning platform, all teachers have registered and been able to discover the platform and get involved in projects.
All planned project meetings were successfully implemented and took place in a fruitful and productive atmosphere. At these meetings, objectives, targets and activities were clearly defined. An agreed timetable clarified all objectives and set specific deadlines, and these meetings were an excellent opportunity to exchange good practices in science education. Communication between participating educational staff strengthened networks and provided feedback on ideas that could be used in the project.
The evaluations put in place show a real interest on the part of children and teachers in this type of discovery, the practice of experiments in class and the desire to ensure that this teaching continues in future years. The parents

of the students appreciated this different approach, the team's investment in this project, its success and the communication around it.

Link to project card: Show project card

* Results are available for this project. You can click on the link above, and go to "Results" section to view them