

**“Erasmus+ & eTwinning EU Projects & modern school reality.
Case study: 4th High School Alimos.”**

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(The below announcement was in ICT form/presentation & you can find it uploaded [here](#))

Summary

The following paper concerns an attempt of highlighting the dynamic presence of the European Projects in the Greek secondary school reality & their great influence on the school community.

Case study: 4th General Lykeio/High School of Alimos.

Added value:

- Multiculturalism
- Students
- Teachers
- Language skills
- ICT skills
- Further local community
- international educational community

As this presentation was in digital form, its printed form has a descriptive character corresponding to the displayed slides. For the same reason there will be no ad locum references, the relevant bibliography is posted in the annex.

Keywords: eTwinning / Erasmus + / extroversion / experiential / teamwork / skills.

1. Introduction to European Erasmus+ & eTwinning Projects

A. Erasmus+ (Slides, thematic sections: "We are co-opting", "Erasmus+")

Erasmus+ is the European Union's program to support education, training, youth, and sport in Europe. With a budget of € 14.7 billion, it will enable more than 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain experience and volunteer abroad. Erasmus +, which runs until 2020, offers opportunities not only to students, but to a wide range of individuals and organizations because of the integration of seven previous programs. Detailed information on these features, including eligibility criteria, can be found in the Erasmus+ program guide. An indicative funding guide is also available for some centralized activities. Organizations wishing to participate in Erasmus+ can engage in a variety of development and networking activities, such as strategically improving the professional skills of their staff, developing organizational skills and building transnational partnerships with organizations from other countries with the aim of achieving innovative results or exchange of best practices. In addition, these organizations facilitate the learning mobility of students, staff, trainees, apprentices, volunteers, youth workers and young people.

The benefits of the participating organizations are the strengthening of their ability to operate internationally, the improvement of management methods, access to more funding opportunities and plans, the strengthening of the capacity to prepare, manage and monitor projects, as well as a more attractive "package" of opportunities for trainees and staff.

Key Action 1: Learning mobility of individuals

Key Action 1 aims to encourage the mobility of students, staff, volunteers, youth workers and young people. Organizations can send or receive students and staff to and from participating countries, as well as organize teaching, training, learning, and volunteering activities.

Key Action 2: Innovation and good practices

Key Action 2 aims to develop the education, training and youth sectors through five main activities:

- Strategic partnerships to enhance innovation in each sector, as well as joint initiatives to promote cooperation, mutual learning and exchange of experiences.
- Knowledge alliances to enhance innovation in higher education in partnership with business, resulting in the development of new teaching and learning approaches, the strengthening of entrepreneurship in education and the modernization of higher education systems in Europe.
- Sectoral skills alliances to address skills shortages and better harmonize vocational education and training with labor market needs. Opportunities are provided for the modernization of vocational education and training, the exchange of knowledge and best practices, the encouragement of employment abroad and the recognition of professional qualifications.
- Capacity building projects in the field of higher education aimed at enhancing the modernization, accessibility and internationalization of higher education in partner countries.
- Capacity building projects in the youth field to support the development of youth activities, non-formal learning and volunteering, as well as the promotion of non-formal learning opportunities in cooperation with partner countries.

The Erasmus+ Objectives

Erasmus+ aims to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy for growth, employment, social equality and inclusion, as well as to the objectives of EC2020, the EU's strategic framework for education and training.

Erasmus+ also aims to promote the sustainable development of its partners in the field of higher education and contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy.

The program focuses on the following issues:

- Reduction of unemployment, especially of young people.
- Promoting adult education in new skills & skills required by the labor market.
- Encouraging young people to participate in European democracy.
- Supporting innovation, cooperation and reforms.
- Reduction of early school leaving.
- Promoting cooperation and mobility with EU partner countries.

B. eTwinning (Slides, themes: "We are co-opting", "eTwinning")

eTwinning is a dynamic learning community that has involved, in its 12 years of existence, nearly 500,000 teachers working in 182,000 schools. More than 61,000 projects have been organized, involving more than 2,000,000 students from all over the continent over the years. eTwinning - the Community for Schools in Europe - is a school action funded by the European Commission, through the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, under the Erasmus + program.

eTwinning includes an advanced platform with both public and private spaces, available in 28 languages. The public site www.eTwinning.net offers browsers a wealth of information on how to participate in eTwinning, explaining the benefits of the action and inspiring synthetic work together. The restricted area, called eTwinning Live, is each teacher's individual community interface: allows users to find each other, interact, collaborate on projects, and participate in national and European career development opportunities level. When teachers collaborate on a project, they have access to a limited and project-specific area called Twin Space.

eTwinning offers great support to its users. In each participating country (currently 42) a national support or affiliate support service (for eTwinning Plus) promotes action, provides end-user advice and guidance, and organizes a range of professional development activities and opportunities

nationwide. eTwinning is coordinated by the Central Support Office, managed by the European School net (consortium of 31 Ministries of Education), on behalf of the European Commission. The Central Support Service collaborates with the National Support Services and Partner Support Services and is responsible for developing the platform, offering a range of professional development opportunities and other activities, such as an annual European Conference and an Award Ceremony for teachers and students.

The survey of 5,900 eTwinning members makes it clear that eTwinning catalyzes the development of each teacher's skills and teaching practices individually, as well as students' internal motivation and learning practices. Confirms that eTwinning is an important tool for promoting innovation in schools.

Regarding teachers:

- More than 90% of teachers report that skills were affected more than eTwinning is their ability to teach interdisciplinary skills (such as teamwork, creativity, problem solving and decision making) and teaching skills through synthetic tasks.

Regarding students:

- More than 90% of respondents said that eTwinning had a positive effect by enhancing student motivation and promoting collaborative work between them.

Regarding schools:

- Almost 80% of respondents believe that eTwinning has an extremely positive effect on the school level in terms of improving student-teacher relationships and in building a sense of European citizenship.

To make the most of eTwinning and benefit more schools, the following actions will be important for the course of action:

- Cooperation with senior management and school management, to better inform about the potential of eTwinning to positively influence the development, policies and culture of schools.
- Use of the new "eTwinning School" label to formally identify schools that are committed to eTwinning and use it to set up a network of schools that exchange good practice and advise other schools.
- Exploring how to strengthen the participation of less innovative schools, through policies at European and national level. of children

According to the respondents of the eTwinning 2016 monitoring report:

Most of eTwinning members believe that eTwinning enhances students' inner motivation and improves their interpersonal relationships, as it promotes collaborative work. Thanks to eTwinning, students work more in the form of synthetic tasks, small groups focusing on collaborative problem solving, while keep in close touch with their teachers new materials and resources.

According to the respondents of the eTwinning 2016 monitoring report:

eTwinning has had a very positive effect on schools, improving the relationship between students and teachers and forging a sense of European citizenship, especially in innovative schools. The results of eTwinning are expected to be just as positive in terms of attracting parental interest.

eTwinning remains a grassroots initiative, in which a group of teachers is seen as the action team that primarily directs and pushes the development of eTwinning at the school level. It is followed by eTwinning ambassadors, students and National Support Services and school principals.

The role of teachers and principals - members of eTwinning is more important in innovative schools, where the impact of eTwinning is even more visible.

2. Case study: 4th General Lykeio/High School of Alimos

A. REFRO (Slide "REFRO")

The 4th High School of Alimos implemented a three-year (2016-2019) Erasmus KA219 project as a partner in collaboration with the following countries: Italy, Denmark, the Netherlands & Turkey. The International Coordinators of the program were Dendron College School located in Horst in the Netherlands & the Project's topic was "Refugees and Frontiers: Keep Europe United" (acronym REFRO). The broader Project's theme had to do with the refugee issue & its accessories which at that time was in full swing not only in Greece, but throughout Europe, though Greece at this time (2015 et seq.) was at the forefront with the very large influx of refugees to the Aegean islands mainly, on the mainland, the congestion at the borders & in general the great social disruption that followed. The news that our school was going to implement this project caused an intense interest & a great joy in the whole school community. Students, teachers, parents, local authorities, everyone wanted to participate & really everyone participated, each one with his own unique way. The mobilization of the students was immediate. Students of the three grades of high school joined the project, about 100 in a total of 350, & 13 teachers in a total of 35. From the very beginning, the Parents' Association fully supported the project & the Municipality of Alimos too.

The project's implementation with a large pedagogical team started from the basics: the students under the supervision of their teachers first were engaged in designing the project's logo, about 10 designs of their own were submitted & finally one was chosen from the pedagogical team, they created the Erasmus corner, which still adorns the school atrium, & composed their own song entitled "Survivor" which they presented at the first dissemination event of the project which took place in November 2016.

This was followed by several experiential workshops by special experts & collaborations with schools & organizations that were actively involved at that time with the refugee issue. Experiential workshops were held in collaboration with the Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), with NGOs such as Metadrasi & Save the children, with accommodation places for minor refugees, with multicultural Greek schools which had refugee & immigrant integration departments, with the Greek Parliament, with the Asylum service, with the Hellenic Council for Refugees.

These actions always took place in the context of either the broader theme project's issue - in the beginning mainly - or its specific theme, which was previously defined in the transnational meetings (educators / national coordinators only) for each transnational meeting, where in the transnational meetings participated & students & aimed beyond the immediate information of the pedagogical team the creation of empathy to understand in depth the issue & to be aware at the same time of a social problem of serious dimensions which at that time was unfolding next to them, on the other hand, was to occupy the European Union & the world as a whole with the dimensions it has assumed & continues to have.

In the second thematic sub-section of the section "REFRO" entitled "Mobility in the 4th Lyceum of Alimos by Rodokleia Kakouri (B2)" are digitally recorded all the actions that took place in Greece, in the 4th Lyceum, when in turn the time came to host two meetings: one transnational & an International one. Transnational meetings were for teachers only, though the International ones concerned teachers and students.

The link shown on the slide refers to another embedded digital file which was the subject of the students' work during the last International meeting held in April 2019 in Cesme, Turkey.

During the transnational meeting in Greece, in addition to the planned activities for meetings of this type (progress report, evaluation, agenda, redesign), extremely interesting presentations were made by experts, representatives of government agencies (ELIAMEP, Hellenic Refugee Council, Director Elliniko School) & MGOS (Transfer, Save the Children).

The theme of this transnational meeting was the investigation of the Historical dimension of the refugee & immigration issue of each country / partner from the 20th century onwards. The

pedagogical teams of all countries made presentations, as well as the Greek school which have been uploaded on the slide (digital prezi file).

During the mobility in Greece all partner groups visited the Historic Center of Athens & created there a "libdub", dance & music for students of all schools, the same movements for everyone. There was also a large public event at the School in the context of the program with guests from national and foreign organizations & almost the entire school community present, during which the Greek team presented dance works, dramatized narrative speech (stories of minor refugees) & a music concert in which minor refugees who were hosted in a relevant neighboring structure took part.

In the context of the same mobility, all groups visited Chios for three days where they were given the opportunity to be informed by the local authorities about the refugee situation on the island, their management, to visit structures for hosting minor refugees, refugee camp & immigrants & talk to them.

In addition to mobility in Athens, the members of the team with reasonable discreet priority to students who are not necessarily privileged (& different persons each time) participated in mobility organized by the partner schools. In addition to the pre-defined tasks, students & teachers had the opportunity to meet & work in foreign schools to see other educational systems, to meet new people, peers but also older, to get to know another culture, to live in families, to taste new gastronomy, to develop communication skills (foreign language, ICT skills, Web2.0).

Therefore, based on the above referendum & on our experience, everyone could easily understand the added value of the Erasmus+ Project. The very well-known Erasmus+' logo "Erasmus+ changes lives, opens minds" can be understood in its full dimension & in its innermost essence only in practice! de facto!!!

B. SCME (Slide "SCME")

The SCME acronym is an elliptical corruption of the terms from the English language SC-hool ME-diation while in Greek language we are talking about School Mediation. But what is this? What is school mediation? & Why?

School Mediation is a practice of managing & attempting to normalize-resolve school conflicts and is applied through dialogue, empathy, and active listening. It is a form of a peaceful intervention-settling of aggressive behaviors, which is organized and implemented within the school context, as an alternative practice that replaces the disciplinary system of punishment. A group of schoolgirls & students are trained & act as mediators. It is applied by teaching negotiation techniques, collaborative problem solving and self-empowerment of those involved. This is practically the process one follows. But how does he follow it? Divinely inspired; It cannot be done...

The 4th High School of Alimos reached School Mediation through the Department of Secondary Education of Athens & the Headteacher of Health Education in the School Activities Programs Mr. Mara Drakopoulou. Ms. Drakopoulou organized relevant seminars of long duration & provided a serious training opportunity to the teachers of the Department by accredited mediators. A relatively large group of teachers from our school were trained who then acted as multipliers to their fellow teachers & as mentors to the students & students who showed interest. Thus, in the beginning, a positive atmosphere was created in the school & a Health Education program, which initially had the purpose of introducing the school mediation in the daily life of the school as a process of managing & resolving the conflict situations between the students by the students themselves.

The 2nd slide embeds two videos on mediation simulation in practice which aimed to be shown & to be evaluated by the team within the project's experiential workshops.

Then, through the European platforms, the eTwinning platform mainly, the partner schools were found, and all together we decided to create an eTwinning project entitled "Cre@t1ve Conflict Resolution and Peer-to-Peer School Mediation". The project is still active & the partner countries are Poland, Portugal, Malta & two schools from Italy.

The online collaboration between teachers & students through the Twin space, the official eTwinning platform, has been excellent & mostly secure. Assignments were posted, the students were in very frequent communication with each other, they exchanged views on the project but also on other topics. At the forefront of all these actions it was finally decided to have an exchange program among the schools involved. So, a 15-member pedagogical team of the 4th High School Alimos last March visited Poland & was hosted by the school VI Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Króla Zygmunta Augusta in Białymstoku from where the photos on the slide are, while a corresponding Polish pedagogical team is expected to arrive in Athens next October. During the stay of the Greek school in Poland, the Greek team made a presentation about the process, the framework & the techniques of school mediation to its Polish peers/partners, while at the same time several experiential workshops were held with the participation of all students and teachers involved.

In the end, the Hellenic School decided to submit the specific proposal as an Erasmus project & to be the Project's Coordinator. The proposal was crowned with success & the school for the years 2019-2021 will implement an Erasmus+ KA229 project in collaboration with Poland, Portugal, Italy & one additional country: Malta with the same theme: "Cre@t1ve Conflict Resolution and Peer-to-Peer School Mediation".

The project's objective is through teamwork & experientiality which will be supported online by the respective software but also by the live contacts & the direct communication that will result from the mobilities, to investigate inside the European schools' environments the issue of conflicts & to emerge as the most appropriate way of managing & dealing with it, that of school mediation. A serious factor of the conflict situations that occur in schools is school bullying. Particular attention is to be paid here as this is a chronic issue that plagues the school family with sometimes unpredictable & very unpleasant consequences.

All approaches & procedural part regarding the project's implementation & its objectives will be based on purely scientific criteria which will be determined by specialized experts.

In conclusion, based upon the above referendum, one could very easily understand the added value emerging from the European projects for our schools: we are all different, but we are all the same in the big issues that concern our schools. "Ο άνθρωπος" (the man) was Oedipus's answer to the Sphinx. Man is the one who determines things around through his «ορθό λόγο» (logic). Is this logic in the very beginning ("Εν Αρχή ήν ο Λόγος", fragment from the Holy Gospel of Jesus' Resurrection)? Should it be? We are looking exactly for this person in our schools. In this Man, "τον Άνθρωπο, τον άνω θρώσκοντα" (the man who is staring up), education on a global scale should invest ... from his very childhood ...

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