

Dissemination activities

During the two year's project, beside publishing materials and reports on the school website - <https://www.alberghierowojtyla.edu.it/> - on the e-Twinning page of the project - <https://twinspace.etwinning.net/73671/home> - and the school e-magazine <http://www.thevoicekw.it/>, in order to disseminate the results, reports, and experiences related to the project, the Italian team organized workshops with the middle schools of the neighbouring areas. During the meetings the students helped by the local coordinators of the project presented the various steps of the project, the activities done, and the cultural materials developed to the invited teachers, pupils, and parents. The relevant material was distributed among school managements and other stakeholders during each phase of the project both electronically and during meetings. The same procedure has been followed within the wider (local or regional) community through the existing channels of communications such as the local press or TV-channel. The headmaster supported and promoted all the activities related to the project as internationalization and cultural integration are two main goals of the IPSSEOA Karol Wojtyla in Catania.



My first experience in Turkey

Wednesday 9th October 2018, three students from IPSSEOA 'Karol Wojtyla' together with the vice Principal and the English teacher Mariacristina Nobile, left Italy to fly to Turkey.

At first I was really reluctant to apply for this Erasmus project, but then I realized it was such a great opportunity our school and Europe was giving me. We stayed there for seven days and while the students lived in Antalya in host families, the teachers were hosted in a hotel close to the school.

Although it was difficult at first, my fellow students and I became friends with almost everybody and, by the end of the trip, we knew how to say "hello" in five different languages. Our day started in our host families, everybody was very kind and we surely felt like we were at home.

In the morning we went to school to exchange information about the schools and the typical jobs that the populations used to have. We also organized for the remnant of the day cooperating with the other teams.

We went sightseeing all over the places. Despite it was hot; we really saw a lot of wonderful and interesting places. We even learnt about the history of the city. It was really very fascinating. If during all morning and part of the afternoon we used to do tourists stuff, there is no need to say that during the rest of the evening and at night we went out, either with our host family or with the other students we met there. We used to go for long walks and in the main street of the city; I tried for the first time the typical Kebab and spicy soups. I swear, I have never tried anything that good.

We made lots of friends and I still text with some of them once in a while.

We learnt about other cultures, other music, customs and traditions.

It was really sad to say "goodbye" on our last day but when I came back home I had my mind full of new ideas and all the people I had met during my stay inspired me.

I will never forget such an experience and I thank my school and my Headmistress for this opportunity.

Barbara Zito



Music and dances

Music trends tend to be generational, but there is something so powerful about music genres and how they shape our cultural identity while creating a link across decades, age groups and even countries.

Every country has its own National anthem for a reason. It's a unique declaration of values, history, and culture.

Music also allows us to establish a cultural identity using the sound of typical instruments, genres and rhythms that we all love and know.

We can't imagine a country without its representative instruments or dances.

African dances are performed in lines or circle of dancers using drums, the didgeridoo is the emblem of the aboriginal culture and the "iklig" is used in Turkey.

In Sicily, our typical instrument is the "marranzano" and its sound is often associated with tarantella dance.

Our students were supposed to perform in Czech Republic but, unfortunately,

because of the lockdown our school could not visit the Czech Republic and the students could not show the Sicilian instruments and dances.



Unfortunately we couldn't make the last meeting in Spain because of the lockdown but students worked hardly online, uploading their videos and materials about the language and its changes on eTwinning page.

Breaking stereotypes

The aim of this project was also to dispel old prejudices and beliefs that prevent the real knowledge of people.

People from different countries always have stereotypes about each other. It is absolutely natural as each culture has its own stories and subjective attitudes.

Stereotypes mislead us. They can prevent us from learning some aspects about the country and a real understanding of the different cultures in the appropriate way.

Stereotypes are understood to be detrimental to intercultural communication and the elimination of stereotypes is believed to be a prerequisite for any successful intercultural exchange.

The less we know about the others, the more we hang on stereotypes. If the stereotype is well-grounded and justifiable, it may help to orient oneself in a certain situation. But if it is incorrect and loaded of negative emotions, it will harm the interaction and communication.

Endangered jobs

The history of a community contributes to its personality.

Preserving the history of an old job through its significant historic and social resources, gives a community its unique character.

The preservation of an endangered job provides a link to the roots of the community and its people and it is the living memory of involved communities.

In fact, a community is richer for having the tangible presence of the past and it is a source of pride for its history and mutual concern for the protection of old jobs and artisans.



Second year meetings

The project has allowed the participants to become aware of the roots, history, traditions and cultural heritage of their country and to overcome prejudice and stereotypes about foreign cultures. All this has an important impact in countries where anti-European forces are getting stronger and in the times when Europe looks back to its roots to discover a sense of unity and belonging to allow us to better understand previous generations and the history of where we come from. Its expression is given in our buildings and cities, our landscapes, archaeological sites and it is preserved not only in literature, but also in craft skills, stories, food, old jobs, myths and legends. Understanding our cultural heritage can give a sense of personal identity even if the rich heritages of many families are forgotten. Unfortunately, people start to change traditions and look forward to a different future modifying what we knew in the olden times.

Even though changes are part of us, it is important to conserve and preserve our heritage in order to pass it on to the future generations. Being aware of our family history is important for many reasons like creating a sense of connection, a greater emotional well-being and even providing means to develop a sense of common belonging. This sense of identity that we gain from the study of our heritage will help to explain to others who we are. This intimate knowledge of self can lead us down the road of our ancestry's treasures or to their discoveries.

It is important to preserve our cultural heritage because it keeps our integrity as a people. The importance of intangible cultural heritage is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next.



The first day of the meetings took place in the school lecture hall, where the different groups presented their countries, their schools and their food habits. Among the various presentations, Prof. Barbagallo, project manager, illustrated the Italian school system, indicating its characteristics and peculiarities. In the following days, excursions were made to Mount Etna, Taormina and Syracuse to show students and teachers the most representative places of our territory and our culture. Etna as a naturalistic landscape has enchanted everyone, as well as Taormina and its ancient theater, the archaeological park of Syracuse and, of course, Ortigia with the Cathedral dedicated to Saint Lucy, the Arethusa spring, the narrow streets of the center, but also pizza and ice cream.

The activities that took place in the following days saw the students and teachers engaged in some cooking workshops, in which, together with our chefs, they learned to prepare some typical recipes such as swordfish rolls, caponata, cream puffs and some famous Sicilian desserts. The tasting of the typical products of the various nations took place in the following days in the restaurant of the school. The kitchen was not the only area of cultural exploration as the research and presentation of our traditions also took place through the revival of the games of our ancestors. Other culturally interesting moments were the visit of the Massimo Bellini Theater and 'Palazzo Biscari'. The activities ended on Friday 5th April with a farewell dinner in a typical Sicilian restaurant. The farewell moment was, as usual, the most difficult due to the bonds that were created between the participants. When asked "what did you like most this week?" all the students replied: "friends".



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First year meetings



The first meeting of the ERASMUS+ project, named "Roots", took place in Naantali in Finland from 12th to 19th December 2018. The schools participating in the project were from the Czech Republic, Finland, Turkey, Cyprus, Spain, and Italy. Preparation for the project began in the summer with the exchange of messages between the schools participating in the project to set the dates of the meetings and the activities to be carried out according to the approved program. First of all, the project was presented on the school website, illustrating its characteristics and purposes. Carola Porto, Gabriele Biamonte, and Anuthera Perera of the 5th O Enogastronomy class were the exchange students for this first meeting. The meeting program was based on the discovery of the cultural heritage of each nation through the knowledge of popular traditions, myths, legends and traditional cuisine. The preparatory activities included the search for material relevant to the project and the carrying out of interviews with elderly people, the making of videos on our school in Catania and on the preparation of typical recipes. Students from other classes were involved in the preparation of the official logo of the project which was chosen during the first meeting in Finland. These activities gave students the opportunity to improve their social, cultural and linguistic skills as well as gain awareness of European cultural roots.

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The three students accompanied by two teachers of English, Anna Maria Barbagallo e Anna Chiarenza, left Catania on 11th December and arrived in Naantali the following day in the afternoon. The journey was long but exciting because everybody was looking forward to meeting all the project partners. The headmistress of the Naantali Upper Secondary School and the host students were waiting for us at the bus stop. We were very happy to meet them; after all we had known each other for some months through our exchanges of messages and information. On 13th December, Saint Lucy, the Headmistress welcomed all the teams at school, together with the other teachers and students who, for the special occasion of Saint Lucy, had organized a small parade while the choir sang special hymns in honor of Saint Lucia. After the welcome, the students of Naantali presented the Finnish School System, while the students of the other countries presented their schools and their cities.

In the following days, the results of research carried out on myths and legends were presented, and some excursions were carried out, including one to Turku, the ancient capital of Finland. We took a guided tour of the city and visited the Cathedral, the Castle and the Christmas markets. In the afternoon, we attended the Christmas carols in the Cathedral of Naantali. In the following days, we went on a trip to a natural park and had a special Christmas dinner. In addition to the perfect organization of the country and the efficiency of the school system and structures, we were surprised by the Christmas atmosphere and the lack of light typical of the winter period in Finland (as for six months people live in a twilight). During the presentations of the traditional cuisine of the various countries, we tasted some typical products in a relaxed atmosphere and of great understanding between all the teachers and students. In the various workshops drawings, artistic works and theatrical representations were made. The last day was the worst because it was not easy to say goodbye even though we knew that we would meet in future meetings to explore and compare other aspects of the common cultural heritage that make up the roots of Europe.

The second meeting of the ERASMUS + "Roots" project took place in Cyprus from 22nd to 29th January and had as its main theme the immigration / emigration of peoples and the perspectives of young people related to traveling. The students of the 3rd O Tourism class, Giorgia Carmeci, Elena Bruno and Gabriele Nasisi, accompanied by the English language teachers, Anna Maria Barbagallo and Rita Santagati. The students discussed the results of a previously prepared questionnaire on attitudes towards immigrants and the reasons that push people to emigrate, both in the past and today, leaving their country of origin to move elsewhere. We also attended a conference on stereotypes towards immigrants and on European legislation in this area. During the meetings, the Cypriot school system, schools and cities of the participating countries were presented. On the first day of the meeting, held at the Polemydion high school in Limassol, we were warmly welcomed by the performances of some students of the Cypriot school who performed traditional dances and songs. In the evening, we tasted the local food, prepared by some parents of the students. In the following days we went on excursions to Paphos, the ancient capital of Cyprus and its archaeological site, a natural park nature and Omados, an ancient rural village. Also noteworthy was the tour in the old city of Cyprus, in the various districts where some Turkish minaret peeps out among the Orthodox churches and which tells us about the division of Cyprus into two parts, the Greek Cypriot one and the Turkish Cypriot one. A division that is strongly felt between the local people as it generates sadness and concern for a possible peaceful future. Cyprus is expanding due to the increase in tourism and the presence of Russian capital but also due to the extraction of natural gas present on the island. The meeting ended on January 29th and the farewell was not easy due to the atmosphere of harmony and friendship that had been created during the week of the meeting.

The third international meeting of the Erasmus + "Roots" project was held in Catania at our school the IPSSEOA 'Karol Wojtyla'. The project teams from the Czech Republic, Finland, Turkey, Cyprus and Spain arrived in Catania on March 30th. After the first meeting at the airport between the host students with their families and the foreign students, all the exchange students spent Sunday together with the family. On Sunday afternoon, the guests visited the food and wine event for charitable purposes "Cibo Nostrum", which took place at 'Villa Bellini', organized by the Federation of Italian Chefs. On that occasion our guests were able to taste some of the specialities of our traditional cuisine. The theme of the meeting in Catania was the exploration of traditional Sicilian cuisine and the comparison with that of the participating countries.