



Schools for Resilience

Newsletter

May 2016





School for Resilience project (SfR) started in 2014 with the aim of developing an attractive approach in school environmental education, based on community resilience and PBL. In order to test the teaching plan designed by all project partners, 6 different pilot experiences have been carried out in the Basque Country, Italy, Ireland, Wales, Denmark and Latvia between mid-2015 and the beginning of 2016. These experiences will help to shape a final methodology for teachers that want to tackle environmental and social values in a school education setting.

Check the following experiences in the 6 participant countries!

BASQUE COUNTRY



Aranzadi Science Society piloted SfR in the Municipality of Ordizia, between June and September 2016, where 69 students aged 14 and 15 from Oianguren BHI took part. The first two classes took the course in 4 weeks and the following two in two weeks, which was interesting to see how the teaching plan worked in different time frames. Students first learned about resilience and discussed about the values that are important to them. Then, through brainstorming group exercises and a place check, they designed questionnaires to interview people about the management of transportation,

food, waste and energy in Ordizia. These experiences help them to identify the needs and expectations of their community and they learned to work as a team outside regular classroom lessons.

Students then designed action plans for overcoming the challenges around these main 4 topics. They talked to a renewable energy generation and purchase company, analysed the local food market and created an advertisement campaign to encourage neighbours to use public transportation while going to the local sports center. At the end, they proposed their ideas to face these challenges that they had identified through the course in a public presentation in the Barrena palace of Ordizia.



ITALY



SfR was piloted in the G. Carducci lower secondary school in the municipality of Olginate. Attended by students from three neighbouring towns, it offers a wide range of activities and afternoon workshops, and often organises events with the support of local associations.

After the pre-pilot action of last school year, involving all the 340 students of the 15 classes, and the teacher training of September 2015 the SfR teachers' team

decided to pilot the Schools for Resilience module in two classes of the third year (students aged 13-14). The SfR module of 20 lessons lasted about two months and, through the initial activities focused on values, allowed pupils to get more aware of their own needs, as well as of those of their territory. The outdoor learning experiences, the interviews to citizens around town, the visits with experts and volunteers helped them strengthen the sense of belonging to their community and look for practical solutions to some crucial issues, such as litter and waste.

The PBL methodology actively involved pupils all along the SfR module, and led them to play a key role in the organisation of the door-to-door food collection and in the final event. For a whole week the school opened to the local community hosting meetings, workshops about resilience and sustainability, an exhibition of the pupils' works, their singing performance, stalls of local associations. The climax was the non-stop 48-hour cycling for the "Energiadi" competition, with an unexpected participation of over 2000 people of the area.

IRELAND



The Irish partner Cultivate Living and Learning piloted the SfR module in two schools. Raheen Wood Steiner Secondary School in County Clare in the west of Ireland, which offers a full-time, progressive education for 12--17 year olds was one of these. The SfR module was piloted over 10 weeks with a field trip to Ireland's leading sustainable community project, Cloughjordan Ecovillage.



To host one of the two Irish pilot modules of SfR with 12 students from the Steiner Secondary School was an opportunity to test the material with a receptive group of students outside of the national school system.

The second pilot was hosted in Colaiste Chill Mhantain, a secondary school in County Wicklow with 15 to 16 year old students in Transition Year. This is an optional one-year school programme that can be taken the year after the Junior Certificate in Ireland and before the 2 final years in senior cycle. The Transition Year Programme promotes the personal, social, vocational and educational development of students and prepares them for their role as responsible members of society. The pilot was designed to fit this unique year in Irish schools.

Both pilots were well received and encouraged student engagement with the local area through observation exercises and field trips. The course explored values, whole systems thinking and how we might strengthen the resilience of our communities. The final action of both schools was a celebration of local food, where the students prepared a meal and hosted an event for the local community. The students delivered presentations, played music and hosted talks and discussions with producers from the local area, while building relationships with the community and developing a stronger sense of place.

WALES



The Welsh pilot experience took place in Pencoed Comprehensive School located between Cardiff and Swansea, South Wales.

From meetings with the geography department and the Deputy Head the pilot was organised to run in the school's 'Eco-Club' – a voluntary lunchtime group taking place every Friday. The project ran with a group of 15 pupils from years 7-9 (ages 12-15) over 4 months and approximately 26 hours of workshops. Students kept a record of the sessions through a reflective journal and took part in a range of activities from the SfR activity bank including

values workshops and community exploration. Through this the students decided to improve connections in their local area by organising and conducting the cleaning of a river that was used by both the school and local community. Students advertised around town and promoted the event through posters in local communal spaces and word-of-mouth. The event was attended by several members of the local community including shop owners and residents; even the local Member of Parliament turned-up. The result from the project were connections between the school and a few key members of the community as well as an improvement in the physical environment, i.e. the river Ewenny.



DENMARK



Pilot testing of the SfR project in Denmark was done on Sejs School of Silkeborg. The course was tested in an 8th grade class of two teachers with subjects in the class as Danish, Social Science, Geography, Biology and English.

Students started making inquiries in the local community. For example, they have studied how much food waste they produced in their own family in a week and they interviewed neighbors about

how to support a better community. After the introductory course, students worked in groups where they come up with ideas on how the local area could live more sustainably. During the group work students did interviews and collected questionnaires from local area residents and from the collected empirical data they later on suggested new initiatives in relation to a more sustainable lifestyle in the community. The students' proposals were presented at a kind of fair where they went in dialogue with parents and other stakeholders in the local area.

Evaluation of the project shows that the students particularly have been aware of that, by themselves, they can make a difference to take care of the environment.

LATVIA



In Latvia, SfR materials were tested in two schools – Kandava Secondary Boarding School (6th grade) and Ogresgals Elementary School (5th grade). The pupils of both schools chose to research the impact of climate change on their local communities. Kandava Secondary Boarding School's pupils researched the resilience of the community in case of a storm, while Ogresgals Elementary School's pupils researched the impact of floods. After the implementation of the

project, pupils admitted that they had gained new knowledge about climate change and resilience of the community, as well as developed their cooperation and research skills. Pupils in cooperation with the people of the local community became more positive and gained a more optimistic view of the future, because they confirmed that a community can adapt to various changes by working together.

International training seminar in Cloughjordan Ecovillage

In order to present the teaching plan and the designed SfR materials to a European audience, a one-day training seminar will be held in Cloughjordan Ecovillage on October 11th, 2016. SfR partners will present the results of the project and discuss innovative ways to introduce Place-Based Learning and resilience in a school education context.

Duration:

November 2013 – October 2016

If you want to learn more:

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