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The Open School for Open Societies project

Newsletter

The OSOS project encourages an open school approach. An open school opens up to the community and uses the school’s environment to enrich the learning experience of the students. It imports external ideas that challenge internal views and beliefs and uses these insights to innovate education. Furthermore, an open school is a more engaging environment for learning and makes a vital contribution to the community: student projects meet real needs in the community outside school and draw upon local expertise and experience. And finally: learning in and together with the real world creates more meaning and more motivation for students and teachers.

Nineteen European organizations, such as universities, schools, policy making organisations, science centers and organizations representing school heads and physics, are participating in the European education project Open School for Open Societies (OSOS project).

The OSOS project will enable schools to:
- reach out to members of their community and build lasting relations
- offer students the unique possibility to learn from real life projects,
- develop students’ competences such as team work, problem solving, entrepreneurial and presentation skills,
- improve students’ motivation and self-esteem,
- build a network of stakeholders and benefit from their knowledge and resources

The first OSOS schools

The Open Schools for Open Societies project aims to support 1,000 schools in 11 participating countries to become Open Schools. What has the OSOS consortium achieved during the first months of the project?

In Europe, the levels of autonomy for schools differs significantly. In some countries, schools can decide to participate in the project, while in other countries these decisions are made on a local, regional or even state level. Because of these different levels of autonomy, some project partners experienced challenges with engaging schools in their countries, while other partners had many interested schools that preferably participated in the first phase of the project.
In Greece, ninety-nine schools applied to participate the project during the first year. An assessment committee had to be established in order to select 10 schools and 5 runners-up. The national coordinator in the Netherlands, NEMO Science Museum, has selected 15 first schools. Portugal, Ciencia Viva, starts with 18 schools and the national coordinator of Spain, the University of Deusto, starts with 13 schools. ORT from Israel will support 10 Schools, just like the university of Finland in their country. In Bulgaria, 4 schools have already expressed their interest to become part of the national OSOS Open schooling Hubs.

It seems that only after 4 months, 85 schools have committed to become Open Schools. According to Fred Verboon, the director of the European School Heads Association, the Open Schools for Open Societies project offers a clear vision that every school should adapt. Schools need to become connected with their local and regional communities. Verboon truly believes that it takes a city (in this case a local community) to raise and educate a child.

‘In Israel, some of the schools have already started their projects, while the others will begin in the following weeks. The subjects of the projects are very diverse and deal with matters concerning the community in different ways – mapping polluted areas and improving yields in agriculture using technology; finding solutions to help disabled people; offering new aspects to city tours tourists can take; and even confronting the problem of stray asteroids threatening (hypothetically?) to crash on Earth...’

Are you interested in joining the project? Please take a look at our website: https://www.openschools.eu/join-osos/ and contact your national coordinator.

OSOS goes international.

The OSOS project has received positive feedback from the international community only a few months from its existence. Our Portuguese partner Nuclio has given a worldwide tour that included presentations and workshops related to OSOS in Kentucky (US), in São Paulo (Brazil), in Cascais (Portugal) in Dublin (Ireland), in Brussels (Belgium) and even at the premises of the European Space Agency in Noordwijk (The Netherlands).
Supporting 1000 schools

The project aims to support 1000 schools with the implementation of the Open Schools approach and projects. In order to support that many schools, national coordinators have been appointed to engage and support the first 10 OSOS schools in each country. In 2018, based upon the experiences of the first OSOS schools, the Open Schools for Open Societies platform will be made available for all 1000 participating schools in 2019. The first step towards the OSOS platform has been completed by Ciência Viva (Portugal). Ciencia Viva has produced the so called OSOS Support Mechanism, with the main goal of helping the participating schools and their communities in all aspects of the open schooling approach.

‘Opening up schools to their communities is a strategic aim of the country’s national policy as well as to motivate students and teachers to engage in meaningful learning and creative activities. Through this project, we expect to disseminate this open schooling culture all over the school community in Greece’ Institute of Educational Policy in Greece

Need inspiration?

The OSOS website, https://www.openschools.eu/inspiration/, already includes interesting good practices that can be act as accelerators during the implementation of the open school approach in the participating schools. Besides the good practices on the web, the project partners collected more than 50 good practices and these will be shared with all participating schools of the first phase in the next few months. Good practices are a very important part of the project, because they will help innovative schools to progress more and develop their innovative ideas to new localised projects that could provide new solutions for the school and its community, bringing the gap between formal and informal learning settings and creating new opportunities for personalisation at different levels (student, teacher, school).

The Heerbeeck College realized that it is important for students to know what is going on in their environment. They engaged the regional companies and institutions with the aim to show their students what happens with the knowledge they acquire in their school. The teachers of the Heerbeeck College also visited the companies and institutions, They learned what skills are required for their students in order to be successful. Click to watch the video
OSOS Summer School 2018

Are you a School Head or a Teacher seeking to bring innovation to your school and open it to the local community? The OSOS Summer School aims to offer a high-impact and transformative experience in personal and organizational level through a series of workshops, good practices and... challenges. Contributing to your own professional development, we will provide open school strategies and tools to implement the necessary changes in order to introduce openness in your own school. During the OSOS Summer School, personal and individualized support will empower you to engage in innovative practices. Instead of suggesting a one solution fits all approach, you will learn how to choose existing or design new open school activities addressing real needs of the local community.

School Heads and Teachers participation in the OSOS Summer Academy courses can be funded by the ERASMUS+ Programme. Eligible countries for ERASMUS+ funding are the 28 EU member States, plus Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and FYROM.

More info about the training and the Funding opportunities of Erasmus can be found at http://osos.ea.gr/ or please contact osos_summer@ea.gr for further information.