

EELLSS at a glance



EELLSS stands for European Experiential Learning Lab on Soil Science and is a 2-year project (01-09-2015 to 31-10-2017) funded by the ERASMUS+ Programme. The EELLSS consortium aims to develop a comprehensive, versatile and extendable approach to integrate soils as a substantial learning field in European school education.

Soils and the connected soil sciences offer rich and contextualised learning environments for basic and science education, for practical and

problem based learning and for interdisciplinary learning projects. They also differ from region to region, influence and shape the local and regional environment and climate and offer an interesting field for practical comparative research for students. Despite their interdisciplinary and practical potentials, soils have hardly ever been thoroughly introduced in school education, except maybe in vocational agricultural schools. EELLSS aims to include soils and soil science in curricular and extracurricular activities and will do this by applying a competence oriented learning approach.

EELLSS addresses teachers and educational professionals, pupils and students, schools, education institutes and informal learning providers, European stakeholders dealing with school and environmental policies and course providers.

EELLSS Final event in Kassel

The EELLSS partners organised their final event on October 5th and 6th, 2017, in Kassel. The two-day event brought together more than 85 people from all the seven partner countries – among them all partners and all those teachers and students that have been involved in the learning projects. The event was hosted on day 1 by the German associated partner school, Wilhelmshgymnasium, and on day 2 by the project coordinator, Landkreis Kassel. .

The programme involved students, guests and partners in a series of soils related practical activities and promoted a European exchange and mutual learning on the matter.

The Highlights



Highlights of day 1 were the European buffet with treats of each partner country and the common art project. For the buffet each partner brought along characteristic snacks from their country – the Italian team even booked an extra luggage to carry their additional 25 kilos of olives, cheese and pastries. All snacks vanished in about 15 minutes ...



The common art project was organised by Kirstin Porsche, art teacher of the Wilhelmsgymnasium. All the participants worked together on gigantic mind maps on soil related words and were invited to creatively write or draw their associations to the given words. Every five minutes the whole group swapped places to work on a different key word. At the end many metres of papers were filled with soil related words, technical terms, arrows and little drawings – some of them real master pieces.

The highlight of day 2 was the European fair where students and teachers presented their learning projects – with a focus on activities, problems, results – by means of posters, films, power points and mind maps.

The projects were carried out in the partner schools and involved groups of students between 13 and 18 years old. The topics varied greatly and tackled e.g. soil contamination, soil erosion, soil compaction, the history of soils, use of pesticides on the quality of soils, peat soils, soils for food production etc.

During the fair all projects were evaluated by a team of experts from the partner organisations and by all teams of students in a peer-to-peer assessment.

Both evaluators' groups used a set of criteria against which projects were evaluated. The criteria related to the project idea and its relevance, the approach and the achievements and their transferability.

And the winners are ...

The evaluation talks led to very interesting discussions and involved literally everyone in the fair. There was a great movement around the stands as everyone was eager to see all projects in order to be able to assess the projects and to get the evaluators' prize – a special prize for the best evaluators' team among the students.

The expert team had a difficult job – all projects were of very good quality. This was also specifically underlined by the Swedish laudator who chaired the award ceremony. At the end of a long process of analysing and discussing the evaluation results two teams were awarded the EELLSS prize. These teams are:

METU DF High School, Turkey: "Target specific fertilizer"

The main purpose of the project was to find the most common soil problem that Turkey is facing. This turned out to be the improper usage of fertilizers in agriculture. They took various soil samples around Ankara and analysed the impact of the usage of fertilizers on different crops. They found that soil deficiency in their city is mostly due to improper application and the over or under usage of fertilizers. They thought of ways on how to raise awareness for the issue among farmers and, apart from talking to farmers, came up with a website that provides specific fertilizer recommendations for different types of soils and agricultural products.



De Nieuwste School, the Netherlands “Het Nieuwste Bos”

The main activity was about students creating a plan to adopt a part of a forest for food production. This involved testing soil fertility, developing ideas on which kind of crops could grow on certain soils, and creating a business plan.

The team had to cope with a lot of problems, as the piece of land they were promised to receive had not been given to them in due time. Instead of being able to start with their activities they were initially involved in long negotiation processes with the local authority. So they learnt very well how to communicate with official representatives and politicians. This is one factor that convinced the jury – instead of giving up the team showed a great deal of stamina.



In addition, the Fox price for the best evaluator students' team was awarded. The Fox price was awarded to the team of the Aizputes Secondary School from Latvia. The team showed a lot of expertise and engagement in assessing their peers, and their results were the closest to the ones of the expert team.



The next steps

After the two years of excellent cooperation among the partners it is now time to join forces for the final reporting and to look for future projects and ways to prolong the partnership.



European Experiential Learning Lab on Soil Science

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