



Erasmus+ KA220-SCH “LET’S GO GREEN!”

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KA2 - Cooperation Partnerships in school education

C1 Moving towards a clean and circular economy. Fast fashion, freecycle.

October 3rd – October 7th, 2022

Neringa, LITHUANIA

Project Journal

“Dimitrie Cantemir” Economic College Suceava coordinates, between January 2022 - December 2023, the Erasmus + KA220 project entitled „**Let’s Go Green!**”.

The partner schools come from five other European countries: Neringos gimnazija Lithuania, Neringa, Lithuania; Gymnasio L.T. Chalkis, Chalki, Greece; Ogólnokształcące im. Unii Lubelskiej w Lublinie Lublin, Poland; AEVA – Associação para a Educação e Valorização da Região de Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal; Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore Francesco Ferrara Mazara del Vallo, Italy.

The main purpose of this project is to make young people start thinking critically and with tolerant attitudes about environmental degradation and to encourage them to become active factors of environmental protection, acting and modifying their own lifestyle as well as that of people in community. The objectives are:

- developing sustainable attitudes about protecting the environment for students to ensure better living conditions in the future;

- raising students’ awareness on environmental problems and actions which have to be undertaken from the perspective of people living in different European areas;

- encouraging students to become active factors in environmental protection, acting and changing their own lifestyle as well as that of those around them;

- developing and promoting the values needed to raise committed European conscious citizens.

Between October 3rd – 7th 2022, teachers and students from four of the partner schools participated in the first mobility of the project in Neringa, Lithuania, organized by Neringos gimnazija Lithuania. The topic of the LTT meeting was " Moving towards a clean and circular economy. Fast fashion, freecycle". During the five days of activities, students and teachers focused

on reusing, upcycling, freecycling strategies and successful projects, learning about the impact of fast fashion and consumerism.

On Monday morning, all the guests received a warm welcome at school, greeted by Neringa's mayor, the school's headmaster, and talented students who performed traditional Lithuanian songs. All the teams introduced themselves and went on to getting to know one another through ice-breaking games, while the teachers visited the school and learned about the Lithuanian educational system.



The activities continued with students' presentations of their schools, towns and countries ("10 things you did not know about our country") and the performance of a national/folk song or dance.

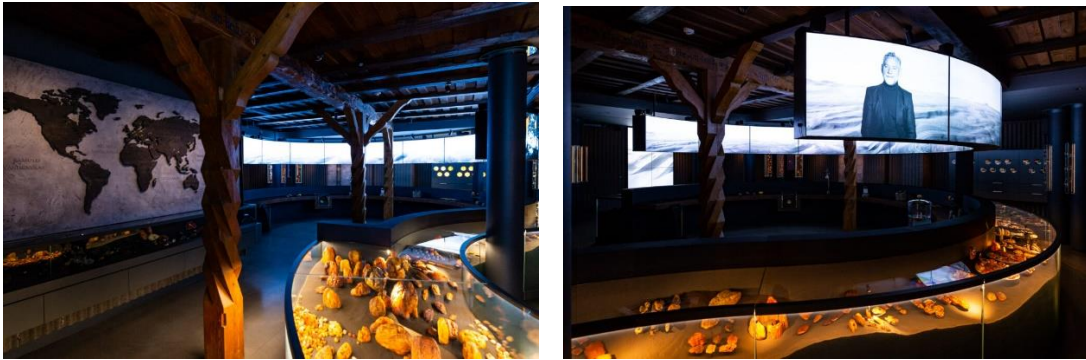
In the afternoon, students were divided into multinational teams to work on vlogs/podcasts related to the topic of the LTT: "Consumerism. Ways to reuse, recycle, upcycle, freecycle". They were also introduced to the assignments to be carried out throughout the week: the *photoshoot contest* "Our feelings for the environment" and the *diary to be completed on Padlet*: https://padlet.com/neringa_sadauskiene1/z90su24fzrimq05x



The day ended with an invitation to explore the Curonian Spit: "Reveal your 5 senses: See, Hear, Smell, Taste, and Feel!". The teachers and students started this exploration with a visit to the town's new Amber Museum, a symbol of the Spit. In the museum, amber was displayed by using different ways of art. Together with the interactive tools, scientific knowledge was being introduced. The purpose of the museum is to present the forest and the river where amber is being collected. The flowing river is the idea of conception that illustrates the amber way to culture.

The exhibition is unique because of its rich collection of rare amber stones and artworks, accompanied by a virtual story about the formation of amber. Special screens show a 3D film about

the formation of amber, introducing how the amber forest emerged about 40-50 million years ago. Inside a circle, the formation of the Curonian Spit is presented in a multimedia display.



The exhibition has a special space for practical activities integrated, where one can learn about the physical and therapeutic properties of amber by artistic means. An encyclopedia of amber is available in touchscreens. Amber from Lithuania as well as from around the world is displayed in the museum's area. On the second floor, the amber gallery exhibits professional works by Lithuanian and foreign authors.

On Tuesday, October 4th, the teachers and students went on an educational trip to the Grey Dunes. These sandy hills with a bit of green specks at the Lithuanian side of the Curonian Spit reach 60 m in height, which equals to a 20-storey building. Some hundred years ago, they expanded to several local villages, invading them, which granted them such a “dead” fame. Today, it is a quiet spot for a nice walk that will make you feel like in a desert. The dunes are the only place in Lithuania where you can see the sun rising and setting in the sea.

The “history” of the dunes offered the students an opportunity to understand and see how people’s activities can destroy the environment, but also the successful outcome of people’s efforts to undo their past errors. Human activity on the Curonian Spit dates back to at least the 9th century CE, and was subsequently occupied by the Teutonic Knights, whose presence led to increased grazing and logging. The resulting deforestation created a more transient landscape of sand dunes that warped and migrated with the prevailing westerly winds. Reforestation efforts began in the 19th century and were largely successful. The Dead Dunes provide a glimpse of an unreconstructed stretch of Neringa.



Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the area of the “Dead Dunes” also comprises the Nagliai Nature Reserve, an ecologically sensitive region home to multiple rare and fragile

plants. Visitors are obliged to stay on the marked trail, in order to avoid disrupting the peculiar and delicate ecosystem.

The second educational trip of the day was to Juodkrantė, “The Hill of Witches”, Lithuania's outdoor sculpture trail of wooden folk art. This public trail through the woods took the visitors on a trip through the most well-known legends and stories in Lithuanian folk history, flawlessly told by our hosts, the Lithuanian students.



Work began in 1979 on the sculpture park, and it now features 80 different wooden carvings from local artists. Painstakingly hand-crafted, each sculpture depicts a popular character from folk and pagan traditions in the Juodkrante. The public park got its name long before the sculptures were placed along the wooded trails, and is in fact a reference to the pagan celebrations that take place on the hill during the Midsummer’s Eve Festival.

Each year on June 24, people across Lithuania dance, sing, and bring in the midsummer with the older folk traditions of the country. After Christianity came to Lithuania, the celebration was renamed Saint Jonas’ Festival, but many of the practices still have pagan roots, as is echoed by the fantastic world of the Hill of Witches sculptures.

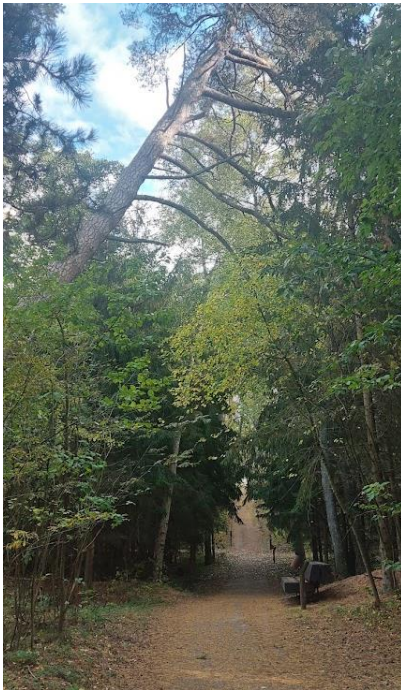
Close to The Hill of Witches, another stop on our trip was at the Cormorantland. Cormorants appeared in Juodkrante in 1803. Gradually the herons were pushed to the margins. After 10 years, two separate colonies of herons and cormorants formed on the southern and northern outskirts of Juodkrante. Cormorants started spinning their first nests in 1989, their abundance curve is still growing, and the future will show when they will stabilize and what the consequences of their competition will be. Cormorants and herons are protected by law, so there is still no talk of artificially reducing them. Local fishermen and foresters are dissatisfied with the damage caused by these birds.



In the afternoon, the students participated in a lecture at school: “Metamorphosis of Eco Design in the Curonian Spit”. Afterwards, they were actively involved in a workshop: “Breathe New Life into Old”, where their task was to collaborate in international teams and create new objects using recycled materials. The teams presented their work and organized an exhibition.



In the evening, the students were invited to “Follow the Green path” and to explore Neringa with their hosts.



The third day of the LTT meeting was dedicated to a full day educational trip to **Klaipeda**, the mecca of fashion, a city where various fashion events are organized, united by the common concept of sustainable consumption and awareness in the broadest sense.

Klaipėda is a port city on the coast of the Baltic Sea, the center of Western Lithuania, and the third largest city in the country. The port of Klaipėda is the most important ice-free port on the east coast of the Baltic Sea. It is the most important transport hub in Lithuania, connecting sea, land and railway routes from east to west. Klaipėda is unique for its Old Town which is an outstanding example of German architecture. Not only the variety of entertainments leaves the impression, but also the number of interesting places to visit like the Theatre square, the

Lietuvinkų square, the Aukštoji street, the Didžioji vandens street, or the Meridianas vessel, which is known as one of the most beautiful sightseeing places. Klaipėda is a very charismatic city including a spectacular architecture, majesty of its harbor and original leisure time activities.



Orlando kepurė - (*Dutchman's Cap*) is the highest spot on the Lithuanian seaside: a 24.4-meter cliff located in the Seacoast Regional Park. According to scientists, the cliff was formed 12 to 15 thousand years ago by retreating glaciers. The Dutchman's Cap has long been a landmark for sailors and fishermen: overgrown with pine and oak trees, it created a distinct contrast to the sandy plain surrounding it. It is believed that the cliff was named the 'Dutchman's Cap' because of its resemblance to a Dutch cap when viewed from the sea. The top of the Dutchman's Cap commands a sea view with steep shores and stony beaches. There is also a park here for nice walks among oaks, beeches, sycamore maples and other ornamental trees. The Dutchman's Cap cliff is included on the List of Natural Heritage.



Melnragė is a former fisherman's village situated next to the Klaipėda city. It is one of the most popular seaside attractions in Klaipėda city. The beach offered the students and teachers to stop and search for little pieces of amber also known as the gold of Lithuania.

On Thursday morning, the students participated in the second session of the workshop "Breathe New Life into Old", and expressed their creativity through drawing and painting of old T-shirts, transforming them into clothes that represent their personality or interests. The activities

at school continued with the webquest “Change your lifestyle to protect the environment”. The webquest was designed to educate students about issues that have a huge negative impact on environment. The key focus was on consumerism and fast fashion, to get a closer look on one's habits and increase knowledge about circular economy. In international teams, students’ task for the webquest was to discuss about the given topics, collect information using internet resources and make presentations (<https://www.createwebquest.com/node/65995>).



The afternoon was reserved for a hiking tour: Nida Old town, the Coal Forest installation, the Sundial, the Parnidis dune, offering both students and teachers opportunities to appreciate nature’s beauty and to reflect on its fragility and need for protection.

The Coal Forest is the creation of Jolita Vaitkute (born 1995), an artist from Lithuania. She uses food and other everyday objects to embody her ideas creating installations, performances and illustrations. The installation greet us in a pine forest that is located near the Valley of Silence. The perspective installation „Coal forest“ invites the audience to think about the fragility of Neringa’s forests and why it is important to protect them. Wildfires are devastating to the forests on the island and fire is a clear and universal symbol of destruction to the living nature. The installation urges to stop and think about any activity that is damaging to a forest. The creation draws the audience in visually and even though the viewer knows that this is a decoration, it still leaves a very clear understanding of how brittle the nature is.



The Parnidis Dune, rising to a height of 53 meters, is adorned with a **sundial** - calendar. It consists of a circular court, with small steps rising in a semicircle, marking the hours. In the center of the site stands an obelisk 13.8 m in height of polished stone, from which a shadow falls

and becomes a clockwise arrow. The obelisk is carved with calendar runes and holiday icons taken from the 17th century. wooden calendar. On the sides of the square are four sculptural figures for the spring and autumn equinoxes and the summer and winter solstice.

The day ended with a boat trip on the Curonian lagoon. Going on a boat trip while staying in Nida gave us an opportunity to admire the dunes of Nida not only from land but also from the lagoon. The group sailed near the Parnidis and Great dunes, reached the water border with Kaliningrad and travelled along the shores of Nida.



The last day of activities, Friday, October 7th, was the day in which students presented their work and the winners of the photo and Erasmus spirit competitions were awarded. Students' presentations were on topics like: "The rise of fast fashion", "The world of fast fashion", "Idioms about clothes", "The future of fashion", "The health impact of fast fashion", "Turning trash into treasure – Upcycling", "The slow clothing manifesto", "Scary facts about fast fashion".

The conclusions? Fashion undoubtedly has a significant negative impact on the environment, one that needs to be addressed if we are willing to avoid more serious consequences. Could the solution be slow fashion? Fashion is a cultural phenomenon, a way of life, and an attitude. The future might change for the better if we adopt a more sustainable style of living and thinking. An individual as a responsible consumer has the ability to contribute to saving the planet, therefore, actions have to be taken now.



In the afternoon, in a festive atmosphere, all the participants received their certificates, students and teachers exchanged impressions and tasted traditional dishes and desserts of Lithuanian cuisine.



The meeting was a real opportunity for professional, cultural training, exchange of experience and practice of language for the participating students and teachers. Due to the activities of the project, the students had the opportunity to learn more about their own country and the culture of other countries, about the different lifestyles in both formal and non-formal learning environments, being active protagonists of the teaching and learning process.

The activities carried out in the school workshops, the open discussions, the educational visits offered the students the opportunity to manifest their artistic and creative potential, to participate in experiences that helped them to learn not only scientific information, but also values, traditions. Participating in webquests, using ICT tools and collaborating in an international teams stimulated students' academic success, improved their English language skills and specific vocabulary related to circular economy.

On a personal level, the meeting deeply impacted the participants: „*The best aspect of the meeting was probably the probably people as I feel like I met my friends for life there and just can't imagine my life without them now*”; „*Another fulfilling experience, great immersion in the country's culture and nature*”; „*Great balance between outdoor and indoor activities, very good timing and organization, hospitality and involvement of the hosts*”; „*The whole experience was amazing! I really wish I had gone for Erasmus when I was younger ♡ Erasmus really changes people so it has huge impact on life, I could see everything from different perspective and appreciate the life which I have, but also set goals what I want my life to look like in the future. All this experience really made me more confident not only in my English skills but also social skills so I will miss this time!*”; „*I had a chance to meet incredible people with whom I made thousands of jokes, I was able to compare two relatively similar cultures Polish and Lithuanian. Getting along only in English for a whole week was a fun experience, especially among my national team and I never got lost which was my biggest achievement*”.

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