

PROJECT IMPACT IN GREECE

1. What impact do you think the project had on you and your organization?

The impact of this project on us and our organization was great! The first who were envisaged to fully benefit from the outcomes of the partnership were the pupils and their parents. Since, the project promoted their cooperation in some of the activities, pupils and parents will benefit in many ways:

Pupils:

- promoted the friendship between people and animals and cultivated positive attitudes towards AAI issues
- adopted a basic awareness of reasons for accepting animals in the classroom and begin to actively contribute to the handling and protection of them
- shared ideas, thoughts, learning materials and photos with peers from other countries
- carried out a broad range of activities
- improved critical thinking
- acquired social skills
- used the acquired knowledge to enhance the interaction with animals
- developed a European consciousness
- promoted intercultural awareness and creativity
- raised tolerance and respect towards other cultures
- improved foreign language skills and appreciated their value by using it to communicate with students from other countries
- improved their skills on using ICTs through internet research, ppt presentations and uploading data in our common website.
- acquired a better insight into other European cultures, languages, and school systems, simultaneously reducing prejudices.
- broadened their horizons even for their future adult life and lifelong learning
- promoted self-reliance and independent learning

Parents:

- became better parents since they cooperated with their pupils in such a sensitive issue
- improve their communication skills with their children

School staff:

In addition, since this was an international project and demanded a very active cooperation and communication with partners during the project meetings, writing e-mails, Skype conferences, training and similar, the staff of our school improved their knowledge of foreign languages, especially English, since this was the official language of the project, as well as other languages of the participating countries (basic phrases).

Another benefit of this being an international project was also a better understanding of social, language and cultural diversities and reactions to them. Since there were partner meetings in all participating countries, the participants were able to experience different cultures, educational systems, food, way of living and similar. Since our students were students with special needs and learning difficulties, they were benefited from the project because of the formation of more innovative and affective methods of AAI during the learning process, which will gave them an increased motivation and desire for learning, which resulted in higher learning results.

Also teachers and school staff that involved in the project, came into contact with more effective learning procedures which used as learning tools in and out of the classroom. Additionally, the teachers up-skilled in many new methods of preparing, teaching and evaluating lessons. Staff developed personally from the mixture and collaboration with other partners in education. Teachers strengthened cooperation with outside relevant organizations as well as promote cooperation of school management, staff and parents. Teachers also used the products created in every day school lessons and they will follow up beyond the lifetime of the project.

2. Did you involve any other target groups that are not a part of your organization and what was the impact on these participants (here you can describe the shelters, animal organizations which you worked with during the project,...)?

During the implementation of the project, we came in contact with various organizations, special groups and experts on the field. Those were: A local pet and veterinary shop where the children came in first contact with small animals and learned a lot about them. Then it was a local dog shelter to come in contact with dogs and a local horse training center to come in contact with horses. At his horse center, later on some of our students started AAI lessons. A volunteer dog training organization whose dogs were used for AAI in the classroom.

We also contacted local public and NGO organizations (e.g. Ecological movement of Patras); afterwards we asked the local organizations to use their regional, national and international contacts to inform them about the project results and to disseminate the project results among them. We plan to disseminate the results to this target group because the schools will be collaborating in using the Guide with volunteer organizations that are qualified in AAI. By disseminating the project among these sorts of organizations, they will start the initiative and make contacts with other schools on national and international basis and encourage them to start using the Guide in their schools.

3. Did you in any way manage to transfer the impact of the project on the local, regional or international level (here you can write about other organizations that you involved in the project on local or regional level and if you talked about the project at any other international projects or trainings you were involved in)?

Organizations and conferences that the ZORO project was presented:

University of Patras, faculty of Education at an informative meeting with professors from the faculty as well as guest professors from Hungary and Turkey. They were interested for the Guide and further cooperation.

At the annual conference and assembly of all settings of Special Education of the region. The Head of the Department and the chief Inspector of Special Education were among the guests who were informed about the project and showed interest of how to disseminate and spread it widely.

The project was also presented to the interested people at a regional festival of Animals (Zootechnia).

At Development Forum, a regional conference with local topics which has been visited by thousands of people from all around the region and made a speech about the ZORO project.

We have been made those contacts with local and regional authorities in order to get them familiar with this innovative AAI Guide and to encourage them to propose the use of it to their local and regional schools. They promised to spread the Guide, in the way to sensitivise a large number of the population. Our school has put the Guide in the yearly curriculum plan which presented to the official authority, responsible for education and for educational organizations. At the presentation the members of the school staff got the opportunity to present the Guideline as well as the project's results and benefits. This target group especially addressed in order to present the beneficial effects of this method and to prove them how important it is for the authorities to give some financial means to schools for using the two intellectual outputs more widely.