



eTwinning

eTwinning National Quality Label

eTwinning

#eTwinning



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills



Co-funded by
the European Union



léargas

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eTwinning is the online community for schools in Europe. eTwinning offers an online platform for teachers to communicate, collaborate, develop projects, share and be part of the most exciting learning community in Europe. Getting involved in eTwinning is easy. Just register online through the European School Education Platform. Registered users can then access eTwinning, the entry point to the community. eTwinning enables users to find project partners and share resources, practice and ideas through its social networking features. Users can interact collaboratively in projects with their pupils and

partners through a special tool called TwinSpace, a private and secure working space for all project members. eTwinning is co-funded by the European Union and administered in participating countries by a National Support Organisation (NSO).

Léargas is the National Support Organisation for eTwinning in Ireland. The NSO is at your disposal to provide technical and pedagogical support, promote eTwinning across the country, organise professional development activities, and much more.

An Introduction to the National Quality Label

02

The eTwinning National Quality Label (NQL) provides concrete recognition for teachers and students who have achieved excellence through an eTwinning project. NQLs boost motivation and are public affirmation of a school's commitment to quality and openness in European collaborative work.

This eBook presents a selection of NQL winners in Ireland in 2022 as well as some useful information on creating projects. The projects vary widely in theme and content but the commitment to digital collaborative work and pedagogical innovation is common to all. We are very grateful to the teachers who have allowed us to feature their work in this booklet, and we hope its readers are inspired to apply some of these innovative approaches to their own projects in the future.

Animals in Danger of Extinction

Peter Kane, Kilglass National School



Background

Our interest in nature, our local environment and climate issues heightened during lockdown and this project added to our interest in our local area and our many vulnerable native species. This was an eTwinning project that was borne during lockdown and was largely carried out virtually while the school was closed at different times. So, it was far from the most-polished project but is symbolic in many ways as it was largely conducted by pupils at home with virtual teacher facilitation. The project was originally started by a small school in The Basque country and 'advertised' on the eTwinning site. As Kilglass National School Erasmus coordinator, I was very interested as I was seeking an interesting project that could be implemented in largely lockdown conditions using virtual learning, which itself created unique challenges. But we quickly developed a like-minded group of partners who all were willing to work together and meet project deadlines.

Project Aim

The aim of the project was to study the causes of animal extinction as a major issue across all partner countries.

We aimed to research animals in danger of extinction (and the reasons behind it) in each and to share this knowledge. Each student group worked on their country and then shared their information. We aimed to use the array of eTwinning tools and to share this information on the eTwinning platform through a mixture of presentations/photos/video and a document where key questions are posed such as 'What are the common solutions?' The project aimed to put pupil voices at the centre of the project, so they had access to and posted directly to the TwinSpace while collaborating and interacting virtually with pupils from partner schools.

Project Work

The project gave the pupils a real voice as they shared research, data and opinions with their partners. The project also had a real cross-border European dimension with the common theme of extinction at the core. The 5th and 6th pupils in Kilglass National School looked at causes and solutions of extinction of the curlew, basking shark and otter. They shared their research and discussed key fundamental extinction issues with their European peers.

They worked at home at various tasks assigned by their teacher, and gained digital skills through navigation of the various elements of the eTwinning platform and TwinSpace.

Outcomes

The pupils learned the mechanics of using the eTwinning platform and become proficient in logging on and navigating the project TwinSpace. They learned how to add content such as text and posters, and how to use the forum option. I had never used the forum with pupils before and this more hands-on approach really added to the project. It was very much pupil-led.

We engaged in an online protocol short course during lockdown as well as internet etiquette lessons when in class. They knew how to safely search for information, photos, etc using search engines that were 'safe' e.g. Creative Commons. It was an engaging and fruitful project for the Irish pupils who were given a perspective on the challenges nature faces both in Ireland and across Europe. It was a stimulating and pupil-driven project which they really engaged with, and which allowed them to develop skills such as collaboration, creativity, communication, initiative, digital literacy and empathy.

Ár dTurás Inbhunaithe / Our Sustainability Journey

Maria Ní Dhonnabháin, Meánscoil San Nioclás

04



Background

Partners from Ireland, Spain, Turkey, and Tunisia collaborated on this project to record and share sustainability-based practices that promote climate action and care for the environment around us. Young people today hold the power to drive and innovate sustainable practices, shaping a world that values conservation, resource efficiency, and ethical responsibility. Education on sustainability equips students with the knowledge and mindset needed to address pressing global challenges like climate change, encouraging a generation that not only adapts to sustainable living but actively contributes to the preservation of our planet for generations to come.

Project Aims

This project aimed to promote more sustainable practices and environmental stewardship in our schools and in our daily lives. Together, we wanted to create a project that encouraged a cross-cultural knowledge exchange, while documenting and sharing the very best climate action initiatives from each school in the project. We wanted to develop our students' awareness and understanding of global environmental challenges and their role as responsible global citizens in addressing these challenges.

We aimed to have activities and project work on sustainability and climate change that was accessible and engaging for all partners and we aimed to include all partners languages meaningfully. During the project we also aimed to embrace art and visuals as much as possible, as it is an expressive medium that transcends language barriers and borders and resonates universally.

Project Work

The teachers planned out a schedule, along with the topics and activities for the project. We began by sharing different climate themed projects we had worked on in our own schools. Through online class meetings we presented our projects and introduced our approaches to sustainability in our schools for the project introduction. We used various digital apps and platforms and programmes throughout the project for collaborative small-scale activities such as brainstorming, quizzes and online games. We used English as our working language but felt it was important to include as many translations of our own languages also within the project as each partner wanted to also promote and protect their own cultures and identity. As a Gaeltacht school this was particularly important to us.

We used online meetings during classes to learn some different ways to reuse and repurpose materials like plastic bottles and drinks cans. We also learned about reducing our 'food miles' by growing our own food and got an insight into fast fashion.

Outcomes

During the project we created a sustainability and climate change dictionary in five languages using Google Drive to share the document between all the users. We also created an online magazine highlighting sustainable practices. Some students used various apps and mobile devices to create art works for the magazine, while others wrote articles, reviewed more sustainable products, and wrote reports. Pupils developed many skills and competencies during this project. Digital skills were improved by activities such as creating the online magazine, photography and apps for creating digital art works. Language acquisition and related skills were evident right throughout the project and particularly during the dictionary activity. Pupils also improved their teamwork, communication skills and collaboration within their own class and their partners while learning about sustainability and climate change.

Background

Gairmscoil Mhic Diarmada was selected among 4 others to take part in the O.C.E.A.N Erasmus+ project after creating links with the Contentin Tourist Office in Cherbourg in 2019. Our school is situated on an island off the coast of Donegal, which was ideal for the project.

Project Aims

O.C.E.A.N. stands for Objectif Citoyen Engagé pour l'Avenir et la Nature. It Involved three French, one Italian, one Spanish and one Irish school. Its purpose was to educate and develop our students' sense of responsibility for our coastal environment by working on common projects such as the air or water quality, coastal erosion, climate change, citizenship, and also biodiversity in each school area. It also brought the opportunity for the students to welcome French students to Arranmore Island and then go to Cherbourg.

Project Work

The project involved the collaboration of different subjects such as art, geography, science, and modern languages. Students worked on the same tasks and were able to compare their findings by uploading them on the eTwinning platform.

The first task was to create a logo for the project. Other tasks involved different types of teaching and strategies. Students worked on an individual level to create the logo, research biodiversity and present themselves in the language learned. Small or whole class collaboration was used for collecting and analysing data.

The final task happened during the Erasmus+ mobility in Cherbourg, where the international students were divided into groups and presented their findings on a particular theme: Coastal Erosion, Heating Systems, Global warming, Plastic pollution, Climate Change, and Wastewater.

Outcomes

This project was really a success on different levels. The students managed to develop new skills and strengthen others. They worked on time management, meeting deadlines, managing a project individually and in a team, use of ICT and new software/apps, reflecting on teacher feedback, working on their listening and expressive communication, decision-making, working with European classmates and their social skills in a different culture.

They managed to learn in a more purposeful way and apply their learning in different environments, both virtual and in another country.

The teachers were able to learn new teaching techniques and strategies, network and bring a project to life to make it successful.



Conference on the Future of Europe

Viki Malcolm, King's Hospital School

Background

The project Conference on the Future of Europe was conceived as a project for students in European Parliament Ambassador Schools (EPAS). Every year, the moderator of the eTwinning EPAS group develops a project where Junior EPAS Ambassadors (students) can work with their peers across Europe to discuss and debate topics that are important to them. This project was created to link closely to the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFE) run by the European Commission, which concluded in May 2022.

Project Aims

The project aimed to support students to share their thoughts about the future of the European Union and to come up with proposals based on the issues they felt were important to them. By including high-profile guests in our webinars such as Maria Walsh, MEP for the Midlands-Northwest constituency in Ireland, and Biliiana Sirakova, the EU Youth Coordinator, students were assured that their ideas and proposals were being heard at the highest level. The project was listed as an official event on the EU Commission's CoFE website.

Project Work

The primary aim of the project was to encourage dialogue between students from across the EU, as dialogue is known to improve understanding and promote tolerance and mutual respect. In order that students gained as wide a perspective on European issues as possible, we created international teams for the project work. This meant that students from Ireland were working with their peers in Austria, Spain, Greece, Lithuania, Germany, Slovenia, Portugal, Cyprus, Italy, Romania, Croatia, Poland, Bulgaria, Slovakia, and the Netherlands. As a result, students gained a much broader understanding of the issues faced by young people across the Union. What is topical in Ireland, graduate employment, for example, may be eclipsed by freedom of expression in countries such as Poland. Teams voted on the issues that were most important to them and these included education, mental health, and climate. The final piece of project work saw international teams present their research to our guests and justify their opinions.

Outcomes

The project was well-received by Junior and Senior EPAS Ambassadors and feedback was very positive. Our students felt as though their voices were being heard at the highest level when our guest, Maria Walsh MEP, said she would take the students' proposals to the hemicycle in the European Parliament and present them on their behalf. There is no greater encouragement for students to embrace active citizenship and to take a participative role in the democracies we live in.



Oceans of Culture, Culture of Oceans

Laura Maldonado Borrego, Balbriggan Community College

Background

The aim of this project was understanding the extent to which direct contact with the sea enriches and transforms life in coastal villages: music, literature, painting, gastronomy, jobs, industry, clothing, traditions, myths, personality, religion and death, etc.

Understanding the interdependence that is created when we live close to the sea improves ecological awareness as well as appraisal of cultural diversity, respect for nature and tolerance for different cultural manifestations.

Project Aims

This project had a number of aims including understanding and valuing our relationship with the sea from different points of view (historical, archaeological, anthropological, geographic and artistic), enhancing respect for nature, valuing the role of women as regards everything that concerns the oceans, improving students' digital competence by using different digital tools as

well as the eTwinning platform, improving students' linguistic competence thanks to the interaction with students from other countries and gaining an insight into the similarities and differences of different cultures, and promoting tolerance for different cultural manifestations.

Project Work

During the first term, the project entailed an initial survey to assess knowledge about the topic (using Epicollect), an introduction of teachers and students using avatars, an introduction of our countries, cities and school centres, a photo gallery asking 'what do seas and oceans mean to us?' and a creation of logos.

During the second term, the project continued with a focus on art, music and literature through the creation of an audio-visual sculpture, the creation of videos or performances inspired by local legends and tales related to the sea and school trips and talks from the industry and related professions.

Outcomes

Thanks to this project, our students learned how to work in teams, cooperating and planning the different steps in order to create a product. We created a public TwinSpace, where we shared the final products.

Our students also gained more insight into different aspects of the oceans (ecosystems, threats, jobs, literature, etc.), so that they value and respect the sea at the same time than they support its protection.

Balbriggan Community College won the Uisce Éireann Water School of the Year National Prize 2022 as well as the eTwinning National Quality Label and the European Quality Label.



EuropeOurDNA — Our Democracy Needs Attention

08

Helen English, Maynooth Post Primary School

Background

The teachers involved in this project are senior ambassadors for the EPAS programme (European Parliament Ambassador School). This programme aims to raise awareness among young people about the European Union, parliamentary democracy, the role of EU institutions, EU policies and priorities. It aims to create discussions about the future direction of the EU and invites young people to be active and engaged as young Europeans committed to safeguarding the freedoms and values enshrined in EU laws and treaties. More than one hundred students from fifty EPAS schools across Europe participated in this project. Seven EPAS teachers from six countries acted as mentors, guiding and advising students in project activities and tasks.

Project Aims

We live in particularly turbulent times where democracies are in decline globally. Authoritarian drifts are observable in many countries. Populism is on the rise, surges in hate speech and the viral spread of fake news and disinformation are subverting the foundations of our democratic systems.

The project aimed to develop better awareness about the history and functions of democracy and to explore how the use and abuse of media impacts democratic systems. The project was designed to encourage a sense of student agency in advocating for strong democracy and independent media and to build critical thinking about political and societal forces which harness media to undermine and destabilise democracies.

Project Work

Students first identified the questions they wished to address in the project. Project tasks related to these questions were designed by the mentors. A timeline for completed tasks was shared with students. They worked collaboratively and independently in small international teams. They researched topics such as types of government, democracy and human rights, democracy in decline and democracy and media. The teams presented their work in online meetings. An invited guest — an expert in the field — offered feedback and expanded on some of the issues raised.

Outcomes

Students developed a keener sense of the fragility of democracy and of the forces which threaten the freedoms and values which underpin our democratic systems. Students gained insights into contemporary political upheavals that lead to polarisation and increased societal tensions. Students became more sensitised to the deleterious impacts of media, particularly social media. Students improved their media and digital literacy skills; they learned to work autonomously and collaboratively, communicate confidently and clearly; they acquired enhanced competences for intercultural and active citizenship.



eTwinning Ambassadors are there to support you with their experience, enthusiasm and exceptional eTwinning skills and knowledge. This engaged group of teachers are fundamental to the success of eTwinning in each and every country. eTwinning Ambassadors are an active community that works closely together to make eTwinning stronger.

In collaboration with the National Support Organisation, they share good practice, learn from each other and develop their skills so that they are always ready to provide support and guidance to all eTwinners both online and in person. To contact an ambassador in your area, visit www.etwinning.ie.



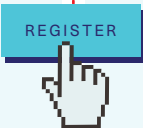
In 2022, a number of Irish teachers were awarded National and European Quality Labels. A total of 17 projects received National Quality Labels, with nine receiving European Quality Labels. The winners were celebrated at an award ceremony at **The Léargas Gathering 2022**. Well done to all the teachers, students and schools for their hard work and creativity in their projects!



8 Easy Steps to Register a Project!

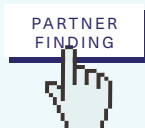
1 Register

Register on the **European School Education Platform**. Check your inbox for an email to complete the sign-up process. Once verified, you will be prompted to register for eTwinning. You can join your organisation or create it, if it doesn't already exist on the platform.



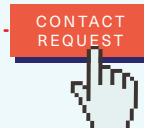
2 Find a Partner

Go to **PARTNER FINDING** where you can check out proposed project ideas from other teachers and answer their posts. You can also post your own ideas and connect with teachers.



3 Check Availability

Contact teachers first to check their availability and interest in working with you. Make sure you have ticked that you are available for an eTwinning project on your profile.



4 Add Contacts

Once you've found potential partners, add them as a contact. This allows you to register a project together.

5 Create a Project

When they accept your request, you are ready to set up a project! Decide which one of you will register the project — only one can do this. Go to **MY PROJECTS** and click on **CREATE PROJECT**.



6 Approval

After you submit your project, your colleague will receive a notification to accept it. Once this is done, the project will be approved by the NSO of both countries.

7 Your TwinSpace

Once the project is approved, you can find it in **MY PROJECTS** where you can navigate to your **TWinspace**, the private workspace for your project.



8 Collaborate

You can now go to the **PROJECT > MEMBERS > INVITE A MEMBER** to add other colleagues you want to work with.



Contact the National Support Organisation for eTwinning in Ireland

Léargas manage national and international programmes in education, youth and community work, and vocational education and training. Established in 1986, we are a not-for-profit organisation under the remit of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. Our programmes focus on cooperation between communities

and between countries and bring an international dimension to the work of education, training, and youth and community organisations. As well as eTwinning, we manage intercultural programmes such as the European Solidarity Corps, EPALÉ and are the National Agency for the European Union programme Erasmus+.

Déan teagmháil leis an tSeirbhís Tacaíochta Náisiúnta eTwinning in Éirinn

Eagraíocht neamhbhrabúis is ea Léargas a dhéanann bainistíocht ar chlár náisiúnta agus idirnáisiúnta san oideachas, obair óige agus pobail agus in oideachas agus oiliúint ghairme. Bunaíodh sa bhliain 1986 é agus is leis an Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna é ina iomláine. Tá ár gcuid clár dírithe ar chomhar idir pobail agus idir tíortha, agus déanann siad iarracht

ar ghné idirnáisiúnta a thabhairt d'obair eagraíochtaí oideachais, oiliúna agus agus eagraíochtaí óige agus pobail. Lasmuigh d'eTwinning déanaimid bainistíocht ar chlár idirchultúrtha ar European Solidarity Corps agus EPALÉ agus is sinne an ghníomhaireacht Náisiúnta don gClár Erasmus+ de chuid an Aontais Eorpaigh.



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