



29TH MAY 2020

p r e s e n t s

*Meeting Beyond
Borders*

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ABOUT
OUTDOOR EDUCATION
TO SHARE BEST PRACTICES
BETWEEN TEACHERS AND
EDUCATIONAL STAFF ACROSS
EUROPE

Report of the conference led by
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ABOUT OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Outdoor education is on the rise in Europe and beyond, with a noticeable emerging trend of integrating outdoor learning activities in formal education and bringing the outdoors inside. Not only does outdoor education help students become in tune with their surroundings and gain an appreciation for the natural world, it also plays an important part in bringing what they learn in the classroom into real life through application and observation and highly contributes to their personal and social development.

CONFERENCE GOALS

During this conference, teachers and other education staff had the opportunity to exchange best practices and experiences concerning skills and tools to lead students in outdoor learning, confront and discuss about exercises and challenges, problem solving games, experiential activities in the nature, on school sites, in local parks as well as in urban settings.

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CONTRIBUTOR 1: FOTIOS PONTIKAKIS

HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER OF VAMOS

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE OF VAMOS

The Center is located in the village Kefalas near Vamos Apokoronou in the Chania Prefecture (in the western part of Crete island in the south of Greece) and it offers educational programs for environmental school teams. These programs are designed by the Pedagogical Team of the Center at the start of every school year (September-October) and submitted to the Directory of Environmental Education of the Ministry of Education. Some example of Educational programs addressed to school teams:

- Recycling SOS
- Olive tree and olive oil in Crete
- I walk into the forest
- A 5500 years' old walk in Old City of Chania
- Ecotourism
- Water and wetlands
- The magical world of caves
- Our school is going green: Scents, colors and tastes in the school garden

(More information and examples of activities led outdoor can be found [here](#))



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CONTRIBUTOR 2: GIULIA ZAMBON

TRAINER OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION FOR ERASMUS LEARNING ACADEMY

ACTION BOUND - BEING ACTIVE EXPLORERS

ACTION BOUND is an online platform to create Scavenger Hunts. Created first on the computer, it is usually used on smartphones and laptops. It allows users to tour around a city or building enriched with quizzes, tasks to perform and information to discover in order to proceed further in the tour, similarly to a real videogame. Between the major benefits of using this app, we think we can list the following:

- it helps students staying focused on school trips or visits, while having fun
- it creates the environment for more dynamic and involving tours
- it develops attention to details, focus, problem-solving skills and the ability to connect theoretical knowledge to reality.

Read more [here](#) or visit the official website <https://actionbound.com/>



05

KATJA FROM SLOVENIA:

Keywords: outdoor teaching // school garden renovation

Katja from Slovenia, a past participant of ELA's course of Outdoor Education, shared with the other fellow teachers how she made use of few activities she learned in the course which took place in October 2019. Overall, she frequently takes her class outside the building and simply enjoy the fact of being outside while learning. She stated that with this simple action she has already noticed some improvements. She looks forward for next year, when a more structured Outdoor Education program will be arranged, including a renovation of the school garden.

FOTIOS FROM GREECE:

Keywords: math teaching // recycling // geometry applied outdoor

Fotios presented this idea of tool for teaching Math outdoor: groups of children walk around and collect garbage present in the garden. They sort the waste into different categories (metal, plastic, paper...) and calculate the percentage of each type of waste. The activity is very versatile and can be applied in any type of environment. In his centre, they apply outdoor education also to geometry: in the forest students are asked to calculate theoremas, distances and other measures, so that they can apply abstract rules to real environment.

06

ANNA FROM GREECE:

Keywords: young pupils // activities ideas with flowers and plants // storytelling

Anna is a teacher of young pupils and she shared how the environment is promoted in her school. Maths and biology are taught by using elements of the nature: it helps students to understand the healthy meaning of nature in our life.

She spoke about the successful eTwinning project with with Poland, Lithuania and Estonia schools called "Listen to the sound of the forest": forest and countryside are the main themes.

Anna develops outdoor activities also in her big school yard, so that they don't need to go out of school property to be able to enjoy outdoor education. She is very fond of the activity about collecting wildflowers: children pick and preserve the flowers in the garden by categorizing them. They do it also with herbs found in the forest; in the long run, they have created a school pharmacy.

Even the songs used to teach English are about nature, and in this way even little ones are able to learn English and at the same time learn about natural elements. They also dramatize songs or books, and become animals or plants of the lyrics and texts.

In Anna's school, teachers connect outdoor education and activities about wildlife and animals to storytelling: after working on the animals of the forest and dramatizing songs, they go deeper in the research about specific animals. Kids look up for information about animals' habits, food and life and present it to the class.

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CRINA FROM ROMANIA:

Keywords: treasure hunt // interdisciplinary // teamwork // non formal education

Crina is a teacher from Romania and a colleague of two past participants of ELA's course about Outdoor education.

She gave an example of activity to do outdoor in the school yard: the “hunt for questions”, which involves subjects like Math and English.

Students are divided into 4 groups. They must follow an individualized route along which they will encounter 7 treasures, which are protected by 7 challenges/problems to solve.

They can take possession of the treasures only if they know how to solve the problems. Each treasure contains one letter. When they think they have the answers, they send the solution through a representative to the Mathematics teacher to check for correctness. If yes, they obtain the treasure and the letter. If not, the students can continue on their way. In the end they will return to the difficult question because only in this way they will obtain all the letters. By anagramming the letters, they will form a word established by the teacher, which can be later the subject of discussion or study.

In her case, prizes were given to the team that did the best (sweets, yummy!).

(Crina's school project about outdoor education)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

POTENTIAL HAZARDS AND DISADVANTAGES OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION

“What would you suggest to teachers who are about to try outdoor education for the first time? What should they pay attention to?”

Participants in the conference suggested above all to be careful of the **safety of the children**: nature can be tricky, therefore we should go before on the place and make a **scouting expedition** to seek for **dangerous spots**. It is best to also trace a trail to understand how to walk from one point to the other in order to **avoid improvising**.

GREETINGS AND CLOSURE

This report is the outcome of the first conference of the initiative "Meeting Beyond Borders: 5 Conferences to share best practices between teachers and educational staff across Europe", a series of five conferences organised by ELA - Erasmus Learning Academy, with speakers and participants from all over Europe.

To learn more about the other conferences of the series, [visit our website](#)

