Title and acronym: Low-plastic diet to address waste and waistline to deal with climate change and obesity [WASTE-LINES]

Project type: Erasmus+ KA2 Project, Strategic Partnership for School Education

Ref. no.: 2021-1-EL01-KA220-SCH-000031621

Promoter /Coordinator: 1st Primary School of Rafina, Greece

Duration: 28/02/2022 to 27/02/2024

Total project grant: 153.763 Euro

Total expenditure (grant) for the University of Pitești: 16.610 Euro

Local coordinator for the University of Piteşti: Assoc. Professor Dr. Georgeta CHIRLEȘAN

Summary:

The links between the growing problem of childhood obesity in Europe and the escalating climate crisis might not be obvious, but diverse bodies of recent research reveal that the two are

more closely aligned than one might, at first, think.

According to a study by the Obesity Society published in December 2019, when we consider the higher metabolism rate of obese individuals which leads to them emitting more CO2, and the additional increase in CO2 emissions from greater food and drink consumption, *“obesity is associated with approximately 20% more greenhouse gas emissions compared to people of a healthier weight.”*
This study further estimates that global obesity levels
“contribute to an extra 700 megatons of CO2 emissions per year, or about 1.6% of all man-made emissions.”

Europe has been fighting a losing battle to curb the rise of obesity amongst its children and adolescents, reveals a World Health Organisation’s (WHO) report. *“Despite sustained efforts to tackle childhood obesity, one in three adolescents is still estimated to be overweight or obese in Europe,”* said WHO Regional Director for Europe, Dr Zsuzanna Jakab.

According to research published by OECD in 2019, *“children who are overweight or obese are at a greater risk of poor health in adolescence as well as in adulthood.”*
Despite these worrying trends, a 2018 report by WHO Europe estimates that 1 in 8 children aged 7-8 is obese on average in EU countries, with
“Cyprus, Italy, Greece, Malta and Spain showing the highest obesity rates in 7-8 year olds”.
The European average shows that across the continent 14% of boys and 10% of girls aged 7-8 years, are considered ‘obese’.

Research draws a definite link between the purchases or consumption of ultra-processed food and excessive weight. Worryingly, it has also been clearly established that such ultra-processed foods and beverages are the main energy intake source among individuals in high-income countries.

But it is not just our bodies that are degraded by the consumption of processed foods. As the world struggles to get to grips with a climate crisis that has seen the pollution of our waters and air, the melting of the ice caps and burning of the world's forests, research has also established that the very foods associated with improved health have the lowest environmental impacts. It is apparent, therefore, that making healthy dietary choices, involving foods that are as natural and unprocessed as possible, is a key to both the health of Europeans and to the health of the climate itself. However, *"adjusting habits to favour a healthier diet"* was identified as a barrier to healthy eating in a recent study.

Overcoming these barriers to adopting healthier food consumption habits for the improved health of Europe's children and adolescents, and the improved health of the planet, is one of the needs that the WASTELINE project will address.

Research on the link between climate change and obesity has only recently been published. Between 2019 and 2020, this link has been discussed within the scientific and academic communities, but there has been no attempt in Europe to date to engage primary school teachers, as the first formal educators in a child's life, to discuss and debate how habits can be

changed at a young age to impact how children grow and develop – so that the next generation

may be empowered to tackle both the obesity epidemic and the climate crises.

The WASTELINES project will also address this need for suitable continuous professional development training for primary school teachers and other school staff in the primary school

community, by providing essential targeted training to enable them use challenge-based learning methodologies and to develop their own challenge-based learning resources to enhance how health promotion and climate education is approached in the primary school curriculum.

Objectives:

Obesity and climate change are two significant issues facing society throughout Europe.

What we aim to achieve by addressing these two issues in an inter-linked approach targeted at primary schools, can best be described by reviewing the impact that we aim to achieve local, regional, national, European and international levels as a result of the WASTELINES project:

- better equipped local communities and regions, to deal with emerging skill needs or changes in the demands placed on teachers due to the increased professionalism of local schools and the concentration of highly trained teachers;
- more healthy families and school communities, that will be empowered to manage their diet to reduce the threat or incidence of obesity;
- increased awareness about the links between obesity and climate change, and support offered to local school communities to engage in awareness raising campaigns;
- more environmentally aware families and school communities, that will be empowered to understand the concept of a low-plastic diet and make more informed consumer choices

From a national and transnational perspective, the WASTELINES project will:

a) develop, implement and validate a multi-faceted and robust educational intervention that will be piloted and tested in 7 different countries and which will have considerable potential transferability;

b) demonstrate that, given the right CPD training and support that teachers can respond to challenges like obesity and climate change and can harness the full potential of ICT for the provision of engaging education to young pupils on these topics;

c) contribute to the enhanced professionalism of school education and increase the appeal of teaching as a profession;

d) capture the experience of partners and target groups in 7 diverse local situations and make the knowledge that emerges available to schools and countries addressing similar issues.

Outcomes:

- Project Result 1 (PR1): **WebQuest Compendium of Diet & Nutrition Challenges**
- Project Result 2 (PR2): **Digital Breakouts to Present Environmental Awareness Challenges**
- Project Result 3 (PR3): **Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Training Programme for Primary Teachers**
- Project Result 4 (PR4): **Climate Change and Obesity - Digital Challenge Portal**

Partnership:

1. 1st Primary School of Rafina (coordinator), Greece
2. Spectrum Research Centre CLG, Ireland
3. CSI Center for Social Innovation LTD, Cyprus
4. Universitatea din Pitești (UPIT), Romania
5. Proportional Message, Portugal
6. JAITEK Tecnología y Formación SL, Spain
7. CO&SO - Consorzio per la Cooperazione e la Solidarieta'-Consorzio di Cooperative Sociali-Societa' Cooperattiva Sociale, Italy

Project website: https://wastelines.eu/

Project Announcement

Newsletter 1

Press Release 1 by UPIT (EN)

Press Release 1 by UPIT (RO)

Press Release 2 by UPIT (EN)

Press Release 2 by UPIT (RO)

Press Release 3 by UPIT (EN)

Press Release 3 by UPIT (RO)

Press Release 4 by UPIT (EN)

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