

Successful Completion of the Erasmus+ Project K229 SALES at “Bogdan Voda” Theoretical Highschool in Hălăucești

The Erasmus+ KA229 - School Exchange Partnerships – “Students Actively Learning Entrepreneurial Skills” (SALES) project, with the number 2020-1-BE02-KA229-074685_2 run during the period between 1st July 2020 and 31st August 2023, has come to an end. The partnership of five European countries - Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania and Turkey - was created out of the desire of the schools involved to contribute to the personal and professional development of students and to their entrepreneurial skills.

The overall aim of the project was to facilitate cooperation through the exchange of ideas, opinions and perspectives of young people from different European countries and the generation of business ideas relevant to local economies.

The festivities dedicated to the opening of the school year 2023-2024 at “Bogdan Voda” Theoretical Highschool were marked by a series of special moments, attended by representatives of the school inspectorate and the local community: inspector Cristinel Iordăchioaia, mayor Petru Burbulea, parish priest Daniel Lucaci, head of the Hălăucești Police Station, Maftei Iulian and sister Beti, from the “St. Francis” Day Centre.

In a festive atmosphere, the school management rewarded the students and teachers who achieved outstanding results in the national exams. The students and teachers involved in the Erasmus+ SALES project were then highlighted. They all received Diplomas of Excellence, small surprise-gifts and a substantial, highly graphic colour brochure dedicated to the Project, which tried to immortalise the five mobilities in suggestive images.

Then followed the official launch of the 10th issue of the high school magazine, *Cultural – Educational Milestones (Repere cultural-educationale)*, which faithfully reflected in its pages, issue by issue, the activities of the project. All these materials can also be accessed in electronic format, on the official website of our institution, liceulhalaucesti.ro.

The event continued with a broad dissemination of the Erasmus+ K 229 Project, SALES, through a retrospective presentation of the activities carried out during the five mobilities. The video material surprised those present with the recollection of some touching moments during the activities of getting to know the partners and the local horizon, the elaboration of business plans by the students through cooperation, the cultural exchanges, the visits to tourist attractions, but also the moments of relaxation. The material can be found on the official SALES project website http://liceulhalaucesti.ro/erasmus/erasmus_K229/index.htm.

The 28 students from our school who participated in the SALES Project relived with emotion and nostalgia those unique moments that gave them the chance to meet students and education systems from other countries, to cooperate and build friendships, to see other countries...

The first mobility, held from 25th to 29th October 2021, was hosted by Professionalna Gimnaziya po Transport Razlog, Bulgaria. Our high school was represented by a group of seven students and four teachers. The theme of the activities was “*The economy of Bulgaria and beginners in agriculture*”.

Iulian Denis Paraschiv, a graduate of our high school, currently a student of the Faculty of Psychology remarks: “*For me, the experience of the Erasmus+ project in Bulgaria was a point of formation of a vision of life and a reencounter with myself. To meet students from other countries, to have the chance to talk to them, to see how a different educational system works, is more than just an experience, it is an emotional and mental training. I had the chance to participate in different school activities, to present my ideas, to work in a team and even win a prize!*”

I visited places that gave me new motivation and encouraged me to keep going and never give up. I shared ideas with students from the Czech Republic, Belgium, Bulgaria, as well as teachers. Every day I spent came with a new challenge and a new lesson.”

“Bogdan Voda” Theoretical Highschool in Hălăucești was given the task of organising the second mobility of the project. The activities took place from 15th to 21st May 2022 and were attended by 24 students and 8 teachers from the four partner countries that, together with our students, had the opportunity to get to know “*Romanian economy and IT initiatives*” and to develop interesting business ideas under the guidance of our teachers.

Ms Ann Verecke and Ms Lobke Van Impe, teachers at Go! Handelsschool Aalst, Belgium, coordinators of the SALES Project, remarked at the end of a fruitful week:

“What an excellent experience this second mobility in the SALES project has been! The Romanian team from the Bogdan Voda Theoretical School of Hălăucești had gone all the way to give their guests a warm welcome. The whole week was planned and organized to the minute and involved both the school and members from the larger community of Hălăucești among which several entrepreneurs that our group visited or interacted with. [...]

We were impressed by the way in which the hosts organized the SALES project’s central business plan assignment, course material and coaching of the international student teams. As a consequence, the teams delivered a rich variety of business plans in ICT, linked to the reality of the Romanian economy. The hosts organized meetings & visits with several local entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship being one of the ways of making a living in this rural community. We were impressed by the energy and passion of the entrepreneurs we were allowed to meet and talk to.[...]

Without any doubt, the Bogdan Voda Theoretical School of Hălăucești is focused on internationalization as a way to create relations between their rural community and the larger world and create opportunities to improve the circumstances of their students, their school team and the larger Hălăucești community. Twice a public online communication with their Indian partner was set up during this mobility to underscore this aspect.”

Mobility in the Czech Republic, held from 7th to 11th November 2022 at PrimMat - Soukroma Stredni Skola Podnikatelska, s.r.o. - Frydek-Mistek, had as its working theme “*Czech economy and initiatives to small businesses*”. A large group of 12 students from our school participated, accompanied by 3 teachers.

Daria Mihălcuț, a graduate of our high school, recalls: “*The visit of the local company Marlenka took place on the very first day of the project, after the participating students from the five countries had worked together to develop business ideas. Arriving at the famous cake factory, we were welcomed with open arms by its employees. We were invited to sit at the set up tables, where we were served samples of their great range of cakes! At the same time, we were served with coffee specially made by Marlenka.”*

From 5th to 11th March 2023, the five students and two teachers representing our highschool travelled to Belgium to GO! De Handelsschool Aalst. The activities proposed by the Belgian partners had as theme “*Introduction to the Belgium economy and outdoor activities and sports activities*”.

Iosif Giurgică, a 12th A grader, declares: “*The Erasmus+ experience has been by far the most interesting one so far. I had the chance to meet new people who filled my soul with joy. Erasmus+ is about people, friendship and new experiences. There would be many things to say, but I hope I have captured the essence in these few words.”*

His colleague, Eoden Pîrlea, remarks: “*The SALES project helped me to gain new knowledge, deepened my English language skills and made friends with people of other nationalities. The moments spent in this project were special and unique, which I will never forget!”*

The last mobility took place in Turkey from 25th to 30th April 2023, hosted by Kadinhani Zeki Altindag Anadolu Lisesi, Konya, its theme being *“Turkey’s economy beginners and beauty industry”*. Our team consisted of four students and three teachers.

Raluca Cecilia Frenț, a 12th B grader, told us: *“This week gave me the opportunity to discover people with different perspectives from mine. Thanks to the places we went and the business plan we built together, we had fun and got to know each other much better. In doing so, we have created some unique memories in this limited time.”*

As we take stock, it is safe to say that the SALES Project has had a major impact on all the participants, as well as the other students and teachers in our school. The theme proposed by the five participating schools and the modern approach turned the cooperation activities between pupils into a real socio-economic laboratory, bringing together viable models that aimed at developing entrepreneurial, communication, cultural and interpersonal skills.

Entrepreneurship education is also a priority in the other participating schools in the partner countries, in order to lead students towards the development of a healthy business environment responsive to the needs of the community and a market economy with extraordinary dynamics.

The students participating in the project were receptive, spontaneous, active, attentive, and uninhibited, showing great interest in identifying viable solutions for developing profitable businesses, demonstrating skill and ability in carrying out individual and team work tasks, producing interesting portfolios, finding correct and complete solutions for protecting the environment and reducing pollution.

Francisca-Iuliana Vîrgă, a 12th B grader, *“The experience offered within the Erasmus+ project has been by far the most interesting so far. I had the chance to meet new people and things, which filled my heart with joy and opened my eyes to see how the world really is. And I have to say it’s beautiful! Our partners in the Czech Republic, Belgium, Turkey and Bulgaria helped me to look at what is around me from a different perspective.”*

We believe that the objectives proposed and assumed in the project have been fully achieved and have offered students unique learning and development opportunities, by opening up modern perspectives on entrepreneurship, through mutual knowledge of national values and traditions, through direct cultural exchanges.

We are pleased to see through the access statistics and discussions that the official SALES Project website, http://liceulhalaucesti.ro/erasmus/erasmus_K229/index.htm is an example of good practice.

The project has highlighted the special relationship between teachers and students in our school, between the institution and the local community, the activities carried out contributing to a better mutual knowledge, to the formation and development of positive attitudes and behaviours, to the promotion of European values, to the increase of the degree of internationalization of “Bogdan Voda” Theoretical Highschool.