



FAMILY-SCHOOL
NETWORK

NEWSLETTER 4

Winter Newsletter 2022

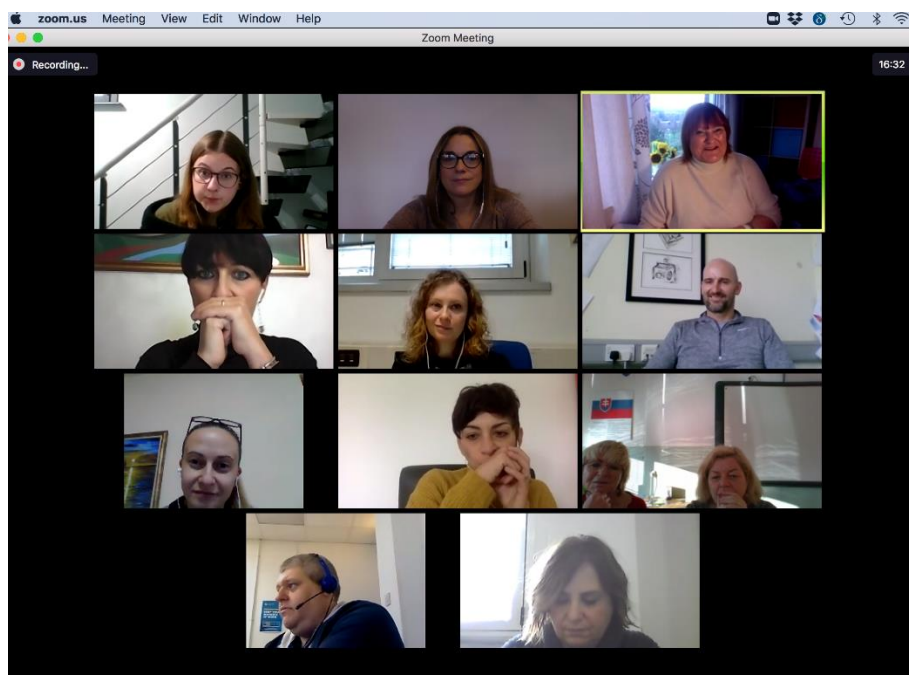




Family School Network – Our Journey together

This will be our final project newsletter and whilst it is sad that our project is coming to an end, we are all very grateful for the opportunities that we have had during the last 35 months (or so). We started this project at the beginning of the COVID 19 worldwide crisis and none of us could have anticipated the impact that this would have. When we meet via Zoom on the 1st of December 2020 (image below) we had hopes and aspirations that the pandemic would be over within months and sensible management by our governments and health specialists would allow us to be free to travel again. Unfortunately, this was not to be! However, with determination, great leadership, engagement, and professionalism for our entire project team we have overcome the many challenges presented and will complete the project fully and on time (well.... with a little extension).

1st Partnership Zoom meeting December 2022



Our partnership, despite the challenges faced, have delivered some excellent outcomes, and achieved some very good results not least the two student mobilities completed in 2022. It is true that things didn't go as originally planned, what does? We have however, developed our skills, experiences and partnership working through our journey and I believe that all of us involved have taken some personal and professional growth from our involvement with each other.



Our final meeting in Rome – December 2022

Our final partnership meeting was held in Rome on the 5th of December 2022. Three full years since we initially set out on our Family School Network journey. We were delighted to have the opportunity to be in Rome at such a wonderful time of year and for the chance to meet again, face to face, with our friends and colleagues from Italy, Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Northern Ireland.

The last six months of our project have been admittedly quite intensive with no fewer than four transnational meetings (Bulgaria and Belfast in June 2022, Slovakia in Nov 2022 and Rome in Dec 2022) as well as the organisation and delivery of the student mobility to Poprad, Slovakia (Sept 2022) and the full student mobility to Orte, Italy (Oct 2022) which seen forty plus students and teachers involved. Phew!!!

We did however understand that because of our early programme issues with the COVID 19 pandemic that this was always likely to be the case. Despite the challenges we did manage to have some fun too!

Our Rome meeting was a brilliant opportunity to look back at what we have achieved and overcome during the project, and this was no more apparent that when we reviewed the videos and messages from our families, students, teachers and schools. The impact the project has made is forever immortalised in our video records and these can be viewed on our YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWh_FOHncgy44wKPZ63PctA and on our project website <https://www.family-school-network.info/>

We review our videos and messages from families, students and schools



I think it is safe to say that during the review of these videos there were more than a few tears shed in recognition of the not only the efforts made by everyone but also in the messages we were getting back from students and families about how their involvement in the Family School Network project had improved and impacted their lives forever and left them all with memories of a fantastic experience with students their own age from four different countries. Our partnership has brought together some everlasting relationships and our schools have made links that will live well beyond our project timeline, even with the loss of the UK partners in the future due to Brexit our partners have committed to continuing to work together in the future – who knows Malone College's future ski trips might just include Poprad as its destination!!



A quick review of our outcomes and achievements

Intellectual Output 1 – Developing a handbook for teachers

Our Aim:

- To increase the number of families who, at European level, welcome students who participate in a mobility program.
- To train teachers, providing them with better tools to get in touch with both students and their families
- To strengthen the school-family alliance
- To reduce of the Early School Leaving rate

With the handbook completed and using the experiences gained from their involvement with Family School Network we believe that we have achieved what we set out to do, whilst learning from one another and developing how we interact with students, families and peers we believe we are leaving behind useful tools that will equip future generations of students to undertake Erasmus (and other) funded mobilities and become engaged in projects that perhaps they would not have thought about.

Intellectual Output 2 – Digital Platform and guidelines

Our aim was to set up a Digital Platform to create an online community that all the partners will contribute to the platform with text and translations, videos, and records of their participation in the Family School Network. The platform will be the virtual-meeting place for the families involved in the exchange as well as a place for students to interact with their peers. The platform will host a blog, videos, messages, and will have a communication channel (chat?). We will also develop user guidelines that will be defined for the use of the platform.

During establishment of the platform, it became clear that we faced challenges introducing a new communication tool for younger people who were already overburdened with Facebook, tik tock, YouTube, twitch and other social media technologies. We determined our best method was to use and easy to use and manage platform and chose SLACK as our preferred option. It had the full functionality we needed as well as allowed us to protect the participants and manage content to ensure sensitivities were not broken. Whilst the SLACK platform proved useful and we have some brilliant interactions on it, upon review it was always going to be a challenge to compete with the more familiar methods of interacting and communication already out in the world for our students, schools, and families. That being said, we managed to establish it, promote it and we have some fantastic content to look back on.

Intellectual Output 3 – Emotional Toolkit

The project's final output will be the creation of video-storytelling to be included in the platform, website and social media links. At least 10 student per school will make a video-storytelling both during the school year and during the LTTA mobilities. The videos will feature the families previously "validated" and included in the platform and will be viewed by the subjects involved in the exchanges. The students will make a video-



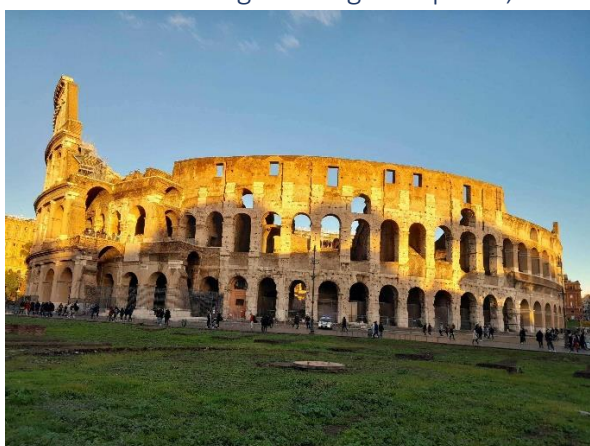
storytelling both at home, introducing their own families, and during the exchange, with the host family, supported by the teachers trained and involved in the project.

Our final IO can be viewed on our website, social media links and our YouTube channel (all detailed above). We think you will agree that we have captured the essence of our project, our student, family, and school experiences and delivered an excellent IO

Collectively we have delivered on all our expected Intellectual Outputs for the project as well as ensuring that over 40 students got a mobility opportunity to visit another country and experience different cultures, food, tourist attractions, schools and most importantly to make new friends.

A few images from Rome

Of course a little sightseeing is required, I mean when in Rome.....





Ending our meeting with a social dinner (which as you would expect in Rome was fabulous)



Our fantastic Family School Network team



I want to thank everyone for their help, support, encouragement, professionalism, and dedication. Without this I don't believe we could have achieved what we have.





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