L&T's River

2020

EDUCATIONAL TRANSITION GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

This educational transition guide is part of one of the intellectual outputs of the Erasmus+ project, L&T'S River (project number 2019-1-ES01-KA201-065938)[1]. Based on the objectives of this project, in which it was found the need to establish some points for facilitating the transition of students from primary school to high school. This guide will describe first the different education systems in Europe, focusing on the three countries that participate in this project. After this, it will explain the main changes that the students go through during this transition and give some tools for the professors in order to support the students to overcome those changes that sometimes can have negative effects, such as school dropouts.

In this case, this educational transition guide will make use of the fluvial environments, such as rivers or lakes, in order to create bonds among primary schools and secondary schools, to allow the students to interact with the high school environment and have a more progressive transition.

THE RIVER PROJECT

This innovative project funded by the European Commission is an Erasmus+ KA201 project inside the cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices and it is formed by a strategic partnership for school education involving three different European countries: Italy, Portugal and Spain. Among the partners, there are three school institutions: IES Botànic Cavanilles (Spain), Escola Profissional Cándido Guerreiro, Alte (Portugal) and Istituto Montessori Da Vinci (Italy); and two other private organisations: eco&eco, economia e ecologia (Italy) and Fundación de la Comunitat Valenciana por una economía baja en carbón (Spain).

The objectives of the project are 1) to improve the education transition by increasing the key competences through the participation of students in the fluvial environments; 2) to support the professional development of teachers with innovative opportunities

[1] You can have more information about this project in the Erasmus+ project results (https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/2019-1-ES01-KA201-065938)

offered by rivers; 3) to establish effective partnerships between schools and stakeholders that promote the recovery of natural environments.

Inside the project, the partners have created different intellectual outputs (IO) that are available on the website of the project[2], but also in the Erasmus+ project results website[3]. In particular, this is the third IO produced by the strategic partnership of the River project, an education transition guide. It consists of using the fluvial environments to involve students of different educational levels to encourage reflection and have an initial contact with the next level of education, as well as offering guidance to schools and teachers on how to carry out and educational transit. The idea is to ease the future education transition for students.

[2] http://erasmusriver.eu/
[3] https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/

GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE TRANSITION

EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN EUROPE

Not all countries in Europe have the same educational system. This is important for this guide, as some countries have a higher linkage among schools and high schools than others, due to their local, regional or national regulations.

In this publication, *full-time compulsory education* means the time required of mandatory educational attendance for all students, regulated by the law and it usually depends on the students' age. For this there is a *starting age*, considered as the official age in which students start compulsory education and a *leaving age*, that usually matches the age in which pupils should have completed the compulsory levels of education; once a student is of leaving age, they can legally abandon high school education.

Based on the report *Compulsory Education in Europe* (European Commission, 2018), compulsory education usually consists of primary and secondary school, but in some countries, there is also a compulsory pre-primary level.

The image below (figure 1)[4], illustrates the different compulsory education systems by ages in the different European countries.

[4] Retrieved from: European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018 (4). Compulsory Education in Europe – 2018/19. Eurydice Facts and Figures. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available at https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/sites/eurydice/files/compulsory_education_2018_19.pdf

Duration of compulsory education/training and student's age-groups, 2018/19

	Full-time education/training											
	Starting age					Leaving age						Duration (in years)
	3	4	5	6	7	14	15	16	17	18	19	
BE fr				6						18		12
BE de				6						18		12
BE nl				6						18		12
BG			5		7			16				11
CZ			5	6			15					10
DK				6				16				10
DE (11 *Länder*)				6						18		12
DE (5 *Länder*)				6				16			19	13
EE					7			16				9
IE				6				16				10
EL		4		6			15					11
ES				6				16				10
FR				6				16				10
HR				6	7		15					9
IT				6				16				10
CY		5	6				15					10
LV			5		7			16				11
LT				6	7			16				10
LU		4		6				16				12
HU	3			6				16				13
MT			5					16				11
NL			5	6						18		13
AT			5	6			15					10
PL				6	7		15					9
PT				6						18		12
RO				6					17			11
SI				6			15					9
SK				6				16				10
FI				6	7			16				10
SE				6	7			16				10
UK-ENG			5					16				11
UK-WLS			5					16				11
UK-NIR		4						16				12
UK-SCT			5					16				11
AL				6			15					9
BA				6			15					9
CH		4		6				16				11
IS				6				16				10
LI				6			15					9
ME				6			15					9
NO				6				16				10
RS			5y6m	6y6m		14y6m						9
(*)			6								17-19	11-13
TR			5y6m							17y6m		12

ISCED 2011 level 0 | ISCED 2011 level 1 | na Not applicable

(*): The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Provisional code).

Eurydice (2018)

More specifically, following there is a more detailed description on how the education system works in the three countries that participate in the L&T'S River project.

SPAIN

The education system in Spain has different stages and schooling is compulsory from 6 to 16 years old. In the country, there are public, private and sponsored educations (*educación concertada)*. For the purpose of this document, the focus will be on public education, as it is the most common type of education in the country and the schools and high schools that participate in the project come from public education.

❖ EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE - ECEC (*EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL*)

- This stage is divided in two cycles:
    - *Guardería* (Kindergarten): first cycle, up to 3 years old (not compulsory)
    - *Preescolar* (Preschool): second cycle from 3 years old to 6 years old (compulsory).
- From preschool, children continue to elementary/primary school, that usually is the same where they have undertaken preschool and with the same classmates.

❖ PRIMARY SCHOOL (*ESCUELA PRIMARIA*):

- Primary schools in Spain have six different academic courses that will be done ordinarily during the age from 6 years old to 12. This education is mandatory. In most schools, the pupils have already attended preschool education from 3 to 6 years old.
- The admission to the public schools is regulated by different criteria:
    - Existence of siblings registered in the centre, or parents/tutors that work in the centre.
    - Proximity of the family house or place of work of the parents/tutor.
    - Annual income of the family unit, considering also the specification for large families.
    - Concurrence in the functional diversity of the student or his/her family.
- Once the students have completed successfully the primary level, they will be transferred to high school. Each school has already appointed which high school their students will be transferred to, but this can be modified if they wish and apply to transfer to a different high school.
- It consists of six levels:

- Primero de primaria
- Segundo de primaria
- Tercero de primaria
- Cuarto de primaria
- Quinto de primaria
- Sexto de primaria

❖ SECONDARY EDUCATION (*EDUCACIÓN SECUNDARIA* – High school):

- *ESO* (*Escuela secundaria obligatoria*): mandatory school education that goes approximately from 12 years old (after finishing primary school) to 16 years. Once the student is 16 years old, they can decide on different paths, as they have the legal age to work in Spain. The secondary level consists of four stages:
  - *Primero de la ESO*
  - *Segundo de la ESO* — First cycle
  - *Tercero de la ESO*
  - *Cuarto de la ESO* ⟶ Second cycle

The first three stages will share the subjects, but during the last stage, the students will have to decide which path they want to take, being the scientific or the letters category.

- After completing successfully, the *ESO*, the student obtains the *graduado escolar* (secondary school diploma); this certificate acknowledges that they have successfully passed all the subjects and gives them access to the intermediate vocational education training or the baccalaureate (*bachillerato*), also studied in high school.
- If by any case, the student is 16 years old and decides not to complete and pass all the levels of secondary, they can choose to start a basic vocational education training. If the student decides to quit their secondary education and later wishes to obtain the secondary school certificate once they are 18 years old, they can reach adult education level.

- VET (*FORMACIÓN PROFESIONAL* – high school):

- In Spain there exist three levels of professional education (Ministerio de educación y formación profesional, 2014):
    - *Formación profesional grado básico* (basic VET) – EQF level 3
        - 15 years old (not more than 17), having completed *segundo de ESO)*, or in some exceptional cases, IN the second cycle.
    - *Formación profesional grado medio* (Intermediate VET) – EQF level 4
        - After completing the second cycle of secondary education.
        - After completing basic VET.
        - After passing the access exam to intermediate VET (if the student is older than 17 years old)
    - *Formación professional grado superior* (Higher VET) – EQF level 5
        - After completing the baccalaureate diploma
        - After completing intermediate VET
        - After passing the access exam to higher VET (at least 19 years old)
        - After passing the access exam to university to older than 25 years old, this would mean that they could pass the access exam required for entering a higher VET course.

Obtaining the certificate of the lower level allows the access to the following level. After finishing the higher VET, the student can access a university degree related with the higher VET diploma.

Spanish Education System

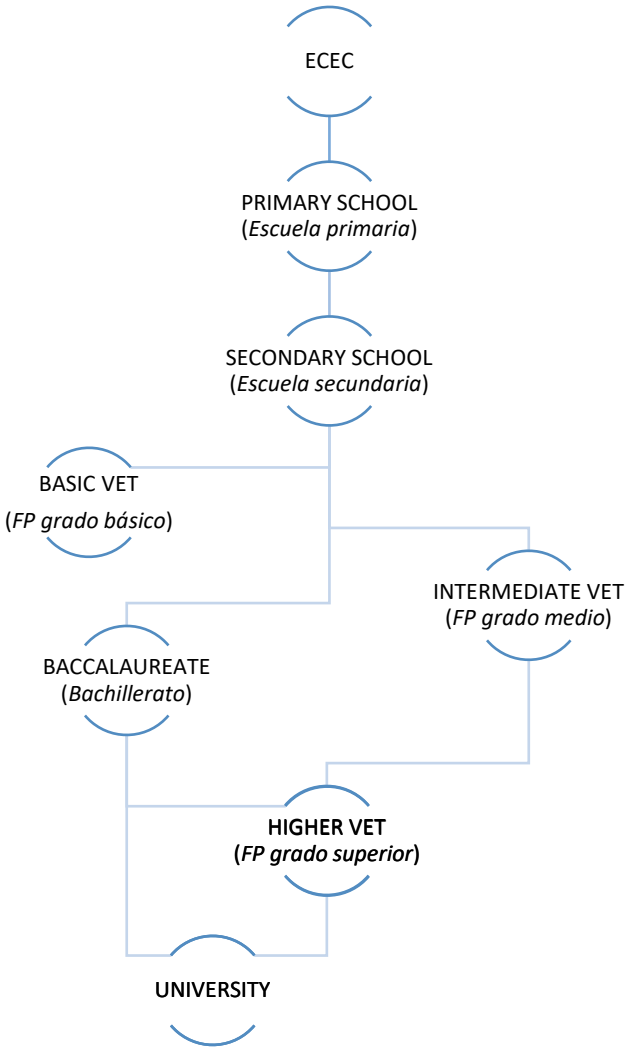

Figure 1: Education system in Spain

PORTUGAL

The education system in Portugal is divided into cycles and schooling is compulsory from 6 to 18 years old. It is important to highlight that the Portuguese education system has different names for the education levels, compared to the Spanish system above, and Primary Education is not completely equivalent to the level called the same name in Spanish, as in Portugal they have another education level called Basic Education. Their structure is as follows:

- ECEC:

This stage is not compulsory.

- *Infantário*: up to 3 years old.
- *Jardim de Infância*: from 3 to 6 years old.

❖ PRIMARY EDUCATION (*ENSINO PRIMÁRIO*):

- Start of the compulsory education in Portugal, it consists of:
    - *1º ciclo* (fist cycle): from 6 to 9 years old; divided in four years

* Primary education is usually undertaken in a different school than the second and third cycles of basic education. Although, some schools may offer those three cycles in the same school.

❖ BASIC EDUCATION (*ENSINO BÁSICO*):

- It is divided in:
    - *2º ciclo* (second cycle): from 10 to 12 years old; it is divided in two years
    - *3º ciclo* (third cycle): from 12 to 14 years old; it is divided in three years
- In Portugal, students who are not able to complete compulsory education can pursue their studies applying for education and training programmes for young people (CEF, *cursos de educação e formação de jovens*). A student can access these courses when they have already repeated two years in the regular basic education. There are two modalities: the second-year courses that cover all basic education (7th, 8th and 9th years) and the first-year courses that only cover the 9th year.
- There is another option for students to complete the compulsory basic education through the programmes of Integrated Education and Training Programs (PIEF) for those students who have social difficulties. This program was created as a measure of social inclusion.

❖ SECONDARY EDUCATION (*ENSINO SECUNDÁRIO*):

- This education goes from 15 years old to 18 years old; divided in three levels (10^{th}, 11^{th} & 12^{th}).
- It includes different types of paths (DGERT, 2019):

- General programmes included in Regular Education (*ENSINO REGULAR*)
  - Languages and Humanities courses
  - Socio-Economic Sciences courses
  - Science and Technologies courses
  - Visual Arts courses
- Professional programmes *(cursos profissionais)*: characterized by a strong connection with the professional world (VET).
- Apprenticeship programmes *(cursos de aprendizagem)*: taught at the Institute of Employment and Professional Training (I.E.F.P.)

Portuguese Education System

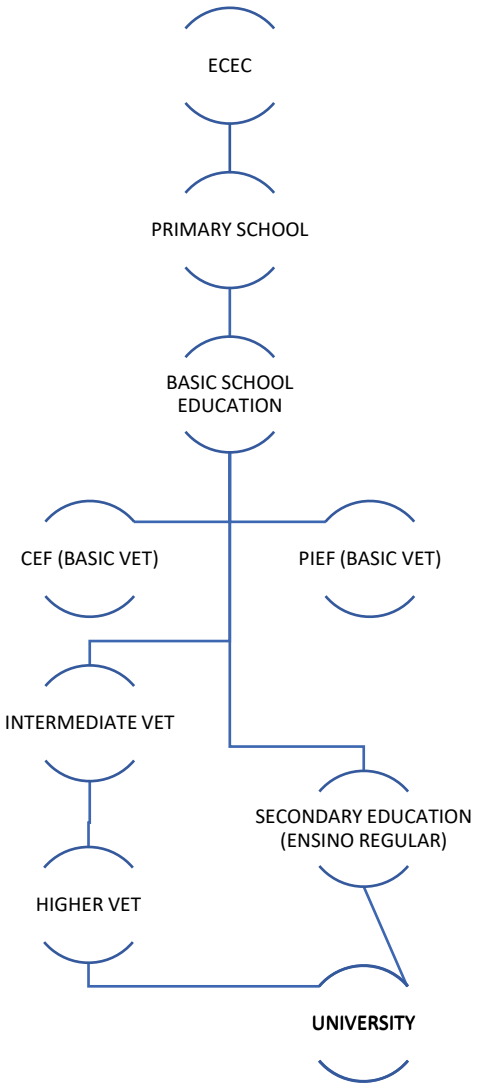

Figure 2: Education System in Portugal

ITALY

Compulsory education starts at age 6 up to age 16, lasting 10 years, but the Italian education system also includes the early childhood education and care (ECEC), from 0 to 3 years old and from 3 to 6 years old (Eurydice, 2019). Even though the compulsory education is only until the age of 16, due to the *diritto/dovere* (right/duty) the students can stay in education until the age of 18 (Angotti, 2019).

- ECEC (not compulsory)
  - *SERVIZI EDUCATIVE* (Kindergarten), less than 3 years old
  - *SCUOLE DELL'INFANZIA* (Preschool), from 3 to 6 years old (this is competence of the Ministry of education)

- PRIMARY EDUCATION (*SCUOLA PRIMARIA)*:

- *Scuola primaria* lasts 5 years from the age of 6 years old. It is included in the first cycle of education.
- Primary school in Italy includes preschool (*scuola dell'infanzia*, from 3 to 6 years old) and primary education (*scuola elementare/primaria*, from 6 to 11 years old). The second education is mandatory and consists in five courses.

- SECONDARY EDUCATION (*SCUOLA SECONDARIA)*:

- Secondary education is divided into two different levels. The first level, *scuola secondaria di primo grado*, has three courses, roughly from 11 to 14 years old. This level is a more general type of education (when the first cycle is finished, the students transfer to high school).
- The second level, *scuola secondaria di secondo grado*, starts at 14 years old. It is the start of the second cycle of education and the students are given the option of choosing their future path. There are three different types of high schools in Italy divided by its specialisation. Those are:
  - *Licei*: (EQF level 4) theoretical education (Arts, Humanities or Science). It has five courses, from 14 to 19 years old. It allows the students to access higher education when finished.

- *Istituti tecnico* (technical schools): (EQF level 4) five-year programmes for a technical education diploma. It allows the students to access higher education or university when finished.
- *Formazione Professionale* (VET): (EQF level 4) five-year programmes, under the responsibility of Ministry of education. Compared to technical institutes, vocational institutes offer more specialized training and more focused on practical applications; today the differences are less evident than in the past (before 2010), when these institutes consisted in a three-to-five-year programme with the possibility of obtaining an intermediate diploma enabling the profession. It allows the students to access university when finished.
- *Istruzione e Formazione Professionale* (intermediate VET): three-to-four-year programmes in specialized training, under the responsibility of Regions. Compared to vocational schools, even more hours are devoted to practice than theory. At the end of the first three years a professional qualification (EQF3) is issued, while those who complete the fourth year receive a professional diploma (EQF4) (both valid at EU level). Both after the third year and after the fourth year it is possible to move to a professional institute or to a technical school, an option that would allow the students to access university when finished.

* All the state institutes allow access to other specialized post-secondary education courses (other than the university): ITS (EQF 5, two-year) and IFTS (EQF 4, annual); the "Istruzione e Formazione Professionale" diploma, instead, allows access to IFTS only.

Italian Education System

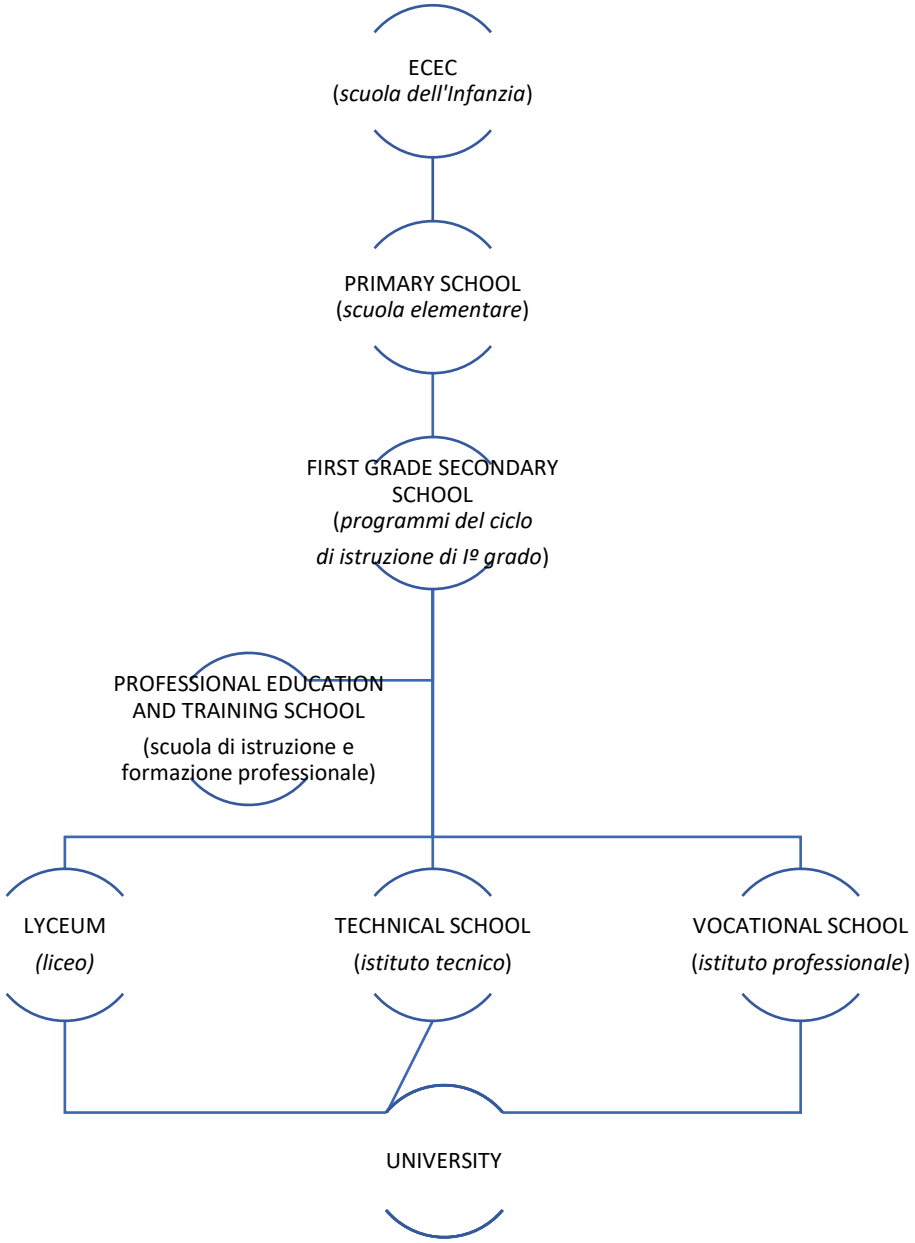

Figure 3: Education System in Italy

SCHOOL TRANSITIONS

First of all, the term "school transition" can refer to different stages in school life: start of school, change between levels within or from schools, shift from primary school to secondary school or even to the labour world. It is a time of adjustment to new surroundings and people, of acquiring new knowledge and learning different routines. In this case, it involves the school environment, but it also includes social changes that happen at the same time.

In all the different countries of the European Union, students go through different stages in their education. As seen above, not all the scholar grades are the same among the European countries, but there are some similarities. Within those similarities, we can find the school transitions of the students who proceed from one school to another, albeit in different ways. It is also important to mention that (Alexiadou, Helgøy, & Homme, 2019, p. 298):

The history, institutional structures, and nature of education provision in various countries influence deeply the ways in which transition policies are constructed. Comprehensive schooling versus a socially selective or market-oriented one and the balance between socio-cultural and economic functions of education frame different outcomes in relation to how transitions are negotiated and implemented.

In this document, we are going to considered that there are four major education transitions, based on the three different countries that participate in this project: the first one is the *transition to kindergarten* (even though some children have already attended preschool or childcare); the second is the *transition from elementary/primary/basic education to lower secondary education*; the third one is *the transition from lower secondary school to upper secondary education* or *baccalaureate*. The fourth one varies depending on the path the student selects. In some countries, as explained above, students can leave school after finishing secondary school and obtaining the diploma or once they become 16 years old; in some other, they will need to finish the baccalaureate or be 18 years old. For that reason, the fourth transition can be when students become part of the labour world or when, after finishing the secondary education, they transition to *vocational education training* (VET) or into

university after completing baccalaureate. For the purpose of this document, we will focus only on the ages from 9 to 12 years old, covering one of the first major transitions in the different countries that participate in the L&T'S River project.

It is important to highlight that during these transitions, there are several changes, not only tangible changes such as the new education centre or change of professors, but also individual changes in the students at different levels: physical, intellectual and emotional (Anderson, Schramm, Jacobs, & Splittgerber, 2000). Most of these systemic transitions happen at the same time as developmental changes (Anderson, Schramm, Jacobs, & Splittgerber, 2000), as many students traverse puberty during the passage from primary school to secondary school. Therefore, "transitions are related to a variety of behavioural and psychological changes [such as] changes in relationships with peers, parents and teachers. […] Many transitions are related to notable changes in students' motivation to learn, academic performance, and attitudes towards school" (Anderson, Schramm, Jacobs, & Splittgerber, 2000).

INSIDE THE PROJECT TRANSITIONS

For the purpose of this document inside the project's context, the transition in which this document will be focused is the second major transition, varying from 9 to 14 years old, depending on the country. This means that the focus is on a change of cycle, that in some countries, depending on the institution in which the students are enrolled, it can happen that this transition involves also a change of education centre and, therefore, of classmates. What it has in common in the three countries participating in the project is that it involves an alteration of subjects, educational requirements, demands and competences, and professors. It is also important to notice that within this transition, we find different education levels, depending on the country. In the case of Italy and Spain, it will be the same type of transition, from primary to secondary school (both in general education). In the case of Portugal, it varies a little, as inside their education system they have CEF courses, for those students who have more difficulties in completing the general levels of education, that will be the focus of this transition in this specific case.

All these individual changes above mentioned, have different implications for educators. It is important to understand that each individual will adjust differently to new learning environments, and the developmental needs of children must be attended not only by educators, but also for parents, school counsellors or administrators.

Why the second transition? During this second major transition, "many students become less motivated and begin to lose interest in school" (Patrick & Drake). This can lead to early school leaving (ESL)[5], among other things, that is considered "as a challenge for society and for individuals" (Alexiadou, Helgøy, & Homme, 2019). Moreover, it "is often problematic for early adolescents because the instructional practices of many […] schools do not meet the developmental needs of early adolescents" (Anderman, et al., 2004). This situation has also some implications for educators as they need to assist students during these periods, that it is not an easy task because each student has a different background and adapts differently to each situation. In this sense, "educators must attend to the developmental needs of children and work collaboratively with parents, school counsellors and administrators to ease transitions for students of all ages" (Anderman, et al., 2004). Furthermore, the education institutions that participate in the project have realised that for them, this is the most crucial time in order to motivate the students and avoid early school leaving, that is one of the major challenges in education as "early school leaving is linked to unemployment, social exclusion, poverty and poor health" (European Commission, n.d.). This has also been highlighted by the European Commission in the document *Tackling early school leaving: A key contribution to the Europe 2020 Agenda* (2011), where it states that "Transitions between schools and between different educational levels are particularly difficult for pupils at risk of dropping out".

[5] The term ESL includes all forms of leaving education and training before completing upper secondary education or equivalents in vocational education and training (European Commission, 2011).

ADOLESCENTS DEVELOPMENTAL CHANGES IN THE SECOND MAJOR TRANSITION

The ages in which the aim of this document is focused range from 9 to 14 years old. During this period, generally children start the period of early adolescence, in which they go through "dramatic physical, cognitive, social, and psychological growth and development" (Anderson, Schramm, Jacobs, & Splittgerber, 2000). Following this, the authors describe briefly some details on the changes the students go through in each phase:

- *Physical development*: the onset of puberty in which adolescents experience a growth spurt, development of secondary sexual characteristics and sexual interest. Females usually begin this phase prior to males.
- *Cognitive development*: improve in a range of cognitive abilities, faster processing information and more efficiently, better memory and ability to engage in complex and abstract thinking, reasoning, decision making and problem solving. They also become self-aware.
- *Social relationships*: friendships become more intense and there is an increased importance of peer relationships and desire for acceptance related with the concern about social image.
- *Psychological development*: greater desire for independence and autonomy. It is also an important period for the development of their identity and perception of who they are, what they value or not and what their aspirations are.

In addition, the Education Review Office has created the following table[6], based on the five key aspects identified by the National Middle School Association of New Zealand, including possible implications for school's practices and describing the characteristics for each aspect:

Aspects	Characteristic	Implications
Intellectual	Young adolescent learners are curious, motivated to achieve when challenged, and capable of critical and complex thinking	Students have opportunities to be curious and to have their thinking extended and challenged.

[6] The table has been retrieved from the Education Review Office website (New Zealand). You can access from https://www.ero.govt.nz/publications/evaluation-at-a-glance-transitions-from-primary-to-secondary-school/6-transition-from-primary-to-secondary-school/

Social	Young adolescent learners have an intense need to belong and be accepted by their peers while finding their own place in the world. They are involved in forming and questioning their identities on many different levels.	Students' need to be social and to know about themselves, is met through a culturally responsive programme and a classroom culture that celebrates diversity.
Physical	Young adolescent learners mature at varying rates and go through rapid and irregular physical growth, with bodily changes that can cause awkward and uncoordinated movements.	The programme caters well for students' needs to be physically active.
Emotional and psychological	Young adolescent learners are vulnerable and self-conscious, and often experience unpredictable mood swings	Teachers are sensitive to the emotional and psychological changes that are happening to students.
Moral	With their new sense of the larger world around them, young adolescent learners are idealistic and want to have an impact on making the world a better place.	There are opportunities for students to participate in decision-making that affects their life within the school.

Source: Education Review Office of New Zealand

Even though the sequence of physical change is generally similar from one person to the other, the rate, intensity and timing of those changes vary from individual to individual. Therefore, the impact of this developmental stage changes from one to another and has a different effect on their attitude and learning (N. Z. AIMS, 2011). In addition, gender variables, socio-economic and cultural factors, development levels in the different competences of the learner or the diversity in the capacities of individuals, among others, come into play in the education transition (Trujillo Sáez, 2020).

CHARACTERISTICS OF A POSITIVE TRANSITION

As previously mentioned, transitions are a delicate time for children, even being stressful for them. Some children may need intervention prior to transitioning to another education level, even more in the case that this transition involves the change of another school environment. Some governments or institutions[7] have already

[7] Information in the UK report on education in the following link: http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/pdfs/2004-five-year-strategy.pdf; Information of the Valencia Community in Spain about the importance of the education transition: http://www.dogv.gva.es/datos/2011/06/23/pdf/2011_7216.pdf; communication where it states the significance of the transition between school and/or educational levels by the European Commission: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0018&from=EN

acknowledged the importance of a positive school transition, noticing that it is a difficult time for children.

According to Trujillo Sáez (2020) based on an article in the International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education[8], there are five "bridges" in order to improve the transition in education: administrative, social, pedagogic, curriculum and management of learning. Moreover, Trujillo Sáez also mentions a programme created in the Canary Islands as a perfect example for a positive transition. He says that it is based in seven fundamental objectives:

1. Coordination between the primary (basic) and secondary education levels.
2. Strategies for developing creativity and emotional skills.
3. Strategies for developing communicative skills.
4. Autonomy and cooperation among pupils.
5. Projects in common between the different education levels.
6. Meetings to discuss curriculum matters on the transition.
7. Participation of families in the process.

In the specific case in which the context of this document is placed, the L&T'S River project emphasises the need of creating a strategy for smoothing the transition. The positive actions taken are focused mainly on the students, creating activities in which they get used to interacting with other peers, but also with future professors and the new school environment. The focus of the activities and ideas proposed in the process (explained in the IO1 and IO2) will tackle all the different phases. Using the river or other fluvial environments, while putting in contact primary and secondary school students and professors, will provide an opportunity for socializing, improving the curriculum with new pedagogical ideas and creating activities for the management of learning of pupils. All of these will also create an initial contact with the administrative bridge. Moreover, using the Service-Learning methodology will also help with the creativity and the autonomy and cooperation of the pupils, as well as finding a common place for the

[8] Maurice Galton, Linda Hargreaves & Tony Pell (2003) Progress in the middle years of schooling: Continuities and discontinuities at transfer, Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education, 31:2, 9-18, DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03004270385200161

different schools in which all the students will feel comfortable as it will be a shared space. This methodology will also facilitate the involvement of families in the process, not only in the administrative one, but also in the activities, as those will focus on a service for the community (considered one of the most difficult parts of the project by the staff of the schools participating in the project).

Besides that, it should be also stressed that this will have implications on the professors, as they will need to accompany the students during the process. In order to create activities that can be shared by students of different levels the communication among teachers/professors is key. They must be in contact in order to plan the topic of the activity within the context of the subject and the interaction among students in order to facilitate the future transit. This is a key aspect, as the collaboration among teachers/professors will have a direct effect in easing the students' transition, and especially important with students' inclusion, even more in the case of students with special needs. This collaboration must be built upon effective communication, that will not be just based on the main topic of the class, but also on other aspects of the students, such as behaviours traits, that will also benefit the student-teacher interaction because "research has indicated that effective teacher collaboration has a direct link to student achievement (Levine & Marcus, 2007 as cited in Aldridge, 2015).

According to Dettmer P. and other researchers' collaboration in education can be defined as an interactives process in which educators, families, students and other related services work together sharing "their diversity of knowledge and expertise in order to define the needs of the student and then plan, implement, assess, follow through, and follow up on ways of helping learners develop to their fullest" (cited in Aldridge, 2015). During this process, "accepting and respecting differences in professional perspectives is especially important […] to build positive relationships" (Aldridge, 2015). Related with the collaborative theory for the education field, Dettmer and colleagues created an eight steps problem-solving model that will allow the communication and collaboration among educators (Dettmer et al., p. 122, 2013 as cited in Aldridge, 2015):

1. Gather data, guided by the expressed or observed need

2. Identify and define the problem
3. Generate possible actions toward a solution
4. Critique proposed actions
5. Select the best option
6. Develop a plan
7. Implement the elements of the determined plan
8. Follow through and follow up to evaluate the outcomes

A problem-solving model like the above creates a flow of appropriate documentation, implementation and follow-up of the educators' efforts that may facilitate the posterior evaluation of the evolution of the students. But this "process of co-teaching needs to begin before the start of the term, with principals helping to accommodate teams of teachers in scheduling" (Robinson & Hutchinson, 2014). Moreover, co-teaching is a slow process as a careful planning needs to be created and each educator may need to adapt to other teaching styles (Robinson & Hutchinson, 2014).

CO-TEACHING

Through **co-teaching**, the aim is to give students a more prominent role, as a further step in what is commonly known as co-learning. If co-learning involves learning among students, co-teaching refers to an evolution towards the consideration of students as teachers. (Mosquera Gende, 2017)

From the student's perspective, a study revealed five aspects of a positive transition for children (Evangelou, et al., 2008):

- Developing new friendships
- Improving their self-esteem and confidence
- No concerns to the parents
- Getting used to new routines
- Experiencing curriculum continuity

On the other hand, also according to the same study, negative aspects of the transition are linked to the experience of bullying, problems with teachers or subjects, or not making new friends.

THE FLUVIAL ENVIRONMENT AS THE CORNERSTONE OF THE COOPERATION FOR THE TRANSITION

Inside the scope of the project, the active area of work among the students will be the fluvial environment. Inside this context, students will not only study geography, but also anthropology, history, environment… Students will also learn the importance of water as a key element for life and how to care about the management of natural resources in a sustainable way; the sustainable development point of view will be transversal in the topics of the different activities. Additionally, it will help improve soft skills of the people involved, such as communication skills or teamwork.

In order to do this, it is necessary to train teachers/professors updating knowledge on sustainable development and other pedagogies. In the case of the River project, the partnership did an extensive research to adapt the resources they had to activities linked with the river. By doing so, teachers/professors gained knowledge on different topics and created "The pedagogical material for school teachers" (IO1) and the "Guide for River Ambassadors" (IO2). This way, teachers/professors were trained on the different activities and updated their knowledge, but also, had some action guidelines to follow for their classes, focused also on the students. Moreover, by facilitating the communication and collaboration among teachers/professors, they are able to get in touch with other pedagogies and learn from each other (i.e. communication strategies with the students related with virtual education; how to involve the families in higher education levels); this can be even more productive if, as is the case of the project, teachers/professors are from various centres and countries as it generally broadens the distinctions of teaching methods.

Furthermore, another point to prepare for this to work is to prepare the teaching materials. As said, the material that teachers/professors will use has been prepared previously by all the participating organisations of the project, and the people involved have previously reviewed it and are familiar with it. In this instance, the material has been prepared following a specific education transition, that will be focused on the first educational change of the students after primary education/CEF, but it can be easily applied to different education levels. In some of these cases, students will also transfer

from one school to the other, therefore, other meetings were held in order to explain the material done and start creating the collaboration channel that is needed for this project to work.

THE FLUVIAL ENVIRONMENT

One of the important things of this project is to take what is on hand. In these circumstances, the project includes three different education schools that have a fluvial environment in their entourage. But why fluvial surroundings? Because it can be adapted to the current curriculum, while learning simultaneously about urgent matters such as the management and importance of water and how droughts can affect the ecosystem and biodiversity of an area. Moreover, a common space in which the learners of different education levels is needed in order to achieve a mutual area in which everybody feels comfortable, and an open space is ideal for this[9]. However, these are not the only reasons. Fluvial spaces are a very important part in the water cycle, but also are excellent habitat and food for earth's organisms. Using those spaces as part of the teaching/learning methodology will allow the learners to acknowledge its importance and help with the preservation and care of those spaces.

In addition, not all fluvial environments are the same and, within the project, there even exist a drought river, in which students will be able to compare with the other environments how it can affect and change the surroundings. The fluvial spaces in this project are the following:

- Belcaire river, located in La Vall d'Uixó (Castellón – Spain). It is a small river that comes from the Espadán mountains and flows in the Mediterranean Sea, in the municipality of Moncófar. It is 18,2km long. The river has been of significant importance for the settling of the different towns that are built on the riverbanks. Nonetheless, the river has been neglected and nowadays it is drought

[9] In the case of the current situation in 2020 with the COVID-19, an open space, combined with the corresponding safety measures of wearing a mask, security distances and so on, affects positively the safety measures in order to avoid the spread of the virus, as the risk of infection seems to be higher in closed rooms (Universidad de los Andes Colombia (2020). *El riesgo de contraer Covid-19 en espacios abiertos no es* cero. Retrieved from https://uniandes.edu.co/es/noticias/salud-y-medicina/riesgo-contagio-coronavirus-espacios-abiertos).

except when it occurs the weather phenomenon *gota fría*[10] (cold drop), when it rains intensely and abundantly during some consecutive days.

Belcaire river (highlighted in yellow) passing by La Vall d'Uixó. Botànic Cavanilles high school circled in red. Image retrieved from Google Earth.

- Reno river, located in the Alto Reno Terme (Bologna – Italy). It is the tenth longest river in Italy and the most important of the region apart from the Po. It has a drainage basin of about 5000 square kilometers. The upper course is characterized by several artificial reservoirs whose dams are used for hydroelectric energy production. Nowadays, it joins the Adriatic Sea near Casalborsetti, south-east of the Valli di Comacchio.

[10] The technical name of this phenomenon is *depression aislada en niveles altos (DANA)*

Reno river (highlighted in yellow) by the Porretta terme (Bologna, Italy). Istituto Montessori-Da Vinci circled in red. Image retrieved from Google Earth.

- *Fontes de Alte* and *Queda do Vigário* is located in Alte (Loulé – Portugal). *Fontes de Alte* (the Great and the Small) are an environmental heritage, a source of crystal-clear waters surrounded by a majestic grove. For centuries, the flowing waters of the stream supplied by *Fonte Grande* fed the village, served as lavoir

In yellow the *Fonte Grande* and *Queda do Vigario*. Escola Profissional de Alte circled in red. Image retrieved from Google Earth.

and watered the gardens close to them. *Queda do Vigário* It is a waterfall and it is the last part of a sequence of cascades formed in limestone tuffs on the Alte stream. Nowadays, Fonte Grande is a pool and the traditional celebration of 1º de Maio and folklore festivals take place there.

OBJECTIVES

Inside the education field and the scope of the project, the main aim is to ease the education transition. In addition, other objectives are also considered:

- Understanding the importance of the fluvial environments
- Raising awareness and acquire new habits about how to positively interact with the environment
- Improving the quality of environmental education
- Creating a long-term cooperation among the educative community
- Fomenting new education methodologies/pedagogies
- Promoting the interaction among peers
- Motivating learners about the curriculum
- Inclusive participation of students

Interdisciplinary approach

A really important part of this project and methodology is the interdisciplinary approach. According to the International Bureau of Education[11] (2020) it is defined as:

> An approach to curriculum integration that generates an understanding of themes and ideas that cut across disciplines and of the connections between different disciplines and their relationship to the real world. It normally emphasizes process and meaning rather than product and

[11] "About IBE-UNESCO: IBE-UNESCO is the global centre of excellence in curriculum and related matters. As a leading UNESCO Institute, we are recognized and valued for the specialist knowledge and expertise that we bring to Member States promoting new shared global understanding of curriculum issues." Retrieved at www.ibe.unesco.org

content by combining contents, theories, methodologies and perspectives from two or more disciplines.

This approach allows to adapt the environment to the curriculum subjects of each school, and also allows a creative part, in which teachers/professors/students can transform the activities presented in this project and adapt it to their school/student's requirements. Environment is the basis of this education project with the idea of working through the different subjects included in the curriculum and raising students' awareness in the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Inside the project there are different areas that can be easily adapted to the project such as: Informatics, by searching for information about the fluvial environment; Music, by learning the different sounds of the area or how to use the objects around to make music; Geography, by working on the river's topography and cartography; History, by analyzing the historic-artistic heritage around the river; Natural Sciences, by studying the biome of the river and comparing it to others; Arts, by creating pictures, images, exhibitions… based on the river among others.

Skills[12]

According to the Council of the European Union (2018), there are eight key competences "which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion, sustainable lifestyle, successful life in peaceful societies, health-conscious life management and active citizenship." Those competences are:

- Literacy
- Multilingualism
- Numerical, scientific and engineering skills
- Digital and technology-based competences
- Interpersonal skills, and the ability to adopt new competences
- Active citizenship

[12] For further information, you can access the Intellectual Output 1 from page 5 to page 23.

- Entrepreneurship
- Cultural awareness and expression

Having this into account and the interdisciplinary approach explained above, the different activities presented in the IO1 and IO2 have been created to fulfill all these approaches while easing the communication among peers in order to facilitate the education systems transition points.

SERVICE-LEARNING

The project not only includes the fluvial environment in the learning space as the only innovative aspect, but also the service-learning (SL) methodology integrated in the different phases. Regarding the SL, it "is a teaching and learning approach that provides structured opportunities for knowledge and skill acquisition […] in activities that have been designed to meet a community need." (Billig, 2020) In this case, it can be observed that SL has a service focus but also an academic one. For the practice of this methodology, the educator can decide which focus has more impact in the classroom or if it is balanced between the learning goals and the community needs (Billig, 2020). The author (2020) also explains that often, this type of SL methodology "includes investigation and planning, demonstration, and celebration". One of the most complicated aspects for the SL methodology is the evaluation phase, that is extremely significant in order to assess the learning of the participants, as well as understanding whether the activities are working or not. In order to assess it, indicators are needed that will set the foundation for the future evaluation. For this purpose, surveys, interviews or content analysis of student work through reflection activities or applied learning can be used (Billig, 2020).

Why SL and how can a fluvial element be included in this methodology? Firstly, the reason for choosing this methodology applied to the fluvial environment, that has already been previously reflected in detail in the IO1, is because it is within the center decision which methodology is applied in the institution. Moreover, the activities proposed in the different IO are cross-sectional for the different subjects of the school curricula. Not only that, but it serves for the purpose of applying the vital aspects of the

European Union (EU) while focusing on the different skills, mentioned above, that the EU believes are essential for the education environment and the further development in the labor world; all of that while performing a service for the community. Regarding the question about how to include the fluvial element, it will depend on the context and the specific need of the space in which the students will be working. There are many ways for doing so, for example recovering a river that has been damaged; in this situation, there are several topics that can be explained, such as the importance of water, how water was used in ancient time, the biodiversity of the place, the geography of the place, even the English language related with it, among others.

PROTOCOL BASED ON THE FLUVIAL ENVIRONMENT

In the context in which the project is set the presence of a protocol is highly important, as there will be different schools, professors and students in contact during the whole project. Moreover, as it is an Erasmus+ project, this allows an international approach in which there are more different points of view and education methods involved.

MAIN STEPS

PREPARATION PHASE

- **Need**: this will be the foundation of the service to the community and where all the learning activities will take place.
    - **Collaboration**: if possible, find institutions that can contribute to the activities and define how this contribution will be done. It is possible that the service can be done without any collaboration.
- **Reciprocity**: what is delivered and received, that is to say what the students will offer to the community and what they will learn in exchange.
    - **Motivation**: the students should do an activity which awakens their interest.
- **Design of an action plan**: set the objectives, the learnings, the actions that will be developed and their duration, who will be in charge of each part and the tools needed to perform those actions.

IMPLEMENTATION

- **Performance/demonstration:** follow the action plan, but having into account that if there is some non-planned situation, it would be a good chance to allow the students to take decisions and involve them in solution finding situations.

- **Follow-up:** this part can be done in different situations, while the activities are being implemented and also posterior to the activities in order to analyze what has been done.
    - **Communication:** including collaborators and participants. This can be done in-person, online o in writing (reports)

EVALUATION

- **Assessment of the objectives achieved**: inside this part, interviews or surveys can be done, in order to find out if the objectives have been accomplished
    - **Reflection**: this is an important part of this methodology. During the reflection, that ideally would be done after each activity is performed, the students will be able to voice out their perceptions and how they have felt, even it is possible to assess what they have learned and new ideas can emerge from these reflection sessions.
    - **Modifications:** if there was something that did not work as expected, it can be modified for future application of the activities and achieve a better result.
- **Celebration**: the students have done a service for the community while learning and all the efforts and actions of the students should be recognized.

GENERAL TRANSITION PROTOCOL

LINES OF ACTION	SPECIFIC ACTIONS	PERSONS RESPONSIBLE[13]	SCHEDULING[14]
1. WORKING GROUPS			
1.1. Establish the working groups mixing up teachers/professors from different educational stages	○ Create working teams to organize the activities by subject ○ Make a general overview of the students ○ Choose a representant for each school that will	- Headmasters - Head of studies - Primary/CEF education tutors - Secondary/ Intermediate VET education tutors	First week of September

[13] This will depend on the country and the focus for the transition.
[14] This will depend on the country and the start of the academic year. Also, this may suffer changes due to cases as COVID-19.

and centers (if applicable)	work as the main channel of communication and coordination among schools		
2. COORDINATION PLAN: CENTRES AND PROFESSORS			
2.1. Curriculum coordination by Basic Skills	Establish the basic skills that will need to be developed in the activities	- Headmasters and/or head of studies - Primary/ CEF education tutors - Secondary/ Intermediate VET education tutors	First week of September
2.2.Curriculum coordination by areas and subjects	○ Design the activities by subject, appointing the teachers/professors that will assist in each one of them and always having into account the basic skills chosen in the previous meeting. ○ In the working teams, developing the activities	- Primary/ CEF education tutors - Secondary/ Intermediate VET education tutors	First week of September
2.3.Meeting to transfer information about the students	Communicate important information about the students, such as behavioral aspects and students with special needs.	- Primary/ CEF tutors - Secondary/Intermediate VET education tutors	Second week of September
2.4.Establish the common elements about treatment of the diversity	Review the activities designed to make sure it fits the student's needs.	- Headmasters and/or head of studies - Primary/ CEF education tutors - Secondary/ Intermediate VET education tutors	Second week of September
2.5.Study of the most common issues and solution tactics	Put in common techniques used in different schools and/or schools in order to understand what are the problems and try to find solutions	- Headmasters and/or head of studies - Primary/ CEF education tutors - Secondary/ Intermediate VET education tutors	Third week of September
2.6.Resources and facilities	Create a list of places available to perform the activities and what it is needed to then try to obtain it, including a schedule for their usage	- Headmasters and/or head of studies - Secondary/ Intermediate VET education tutors Primary/ CEF education tutors	Third week of September

2.7.Revision	Review the activities and make sure you have the place and the resources needed to perform it, if not modify what is necessary	- Headmasters and/or head of studies - Primary/ CEF education tutors - Secondary/ Intermediate VET education tutors	Fourth week of September
3. STUDENTS			
3.1.Informative meetings	Inform the students about what they will have to face when changing education levels, preparing them for the future	- Tutors - Headmasters - Last year students of CEF/primary education	During Mid-November until the end of December
3.2.Visits to their destination center and classrooms/professors	Show them the new school, new classes, introducing them to the new professors, explaining the future schedule…	- Primary/CEF education tutors - One representative of the school - Last year students of CEF/primary education - Different professors from different subjects (to be defined by each centre)	In January
3.3.Shared activities	Perform the activities planned with the students of the last year of primary/ CEF education and the first year of secondary/VET Intermediate education	- Primary/basic education tutors - Secondary professors (they will vary depending on the activity)/ Intermediate VET teachers - Last year students of CEF/primary education - First year students of secondary/ Intermediate VET education	From February till the end of the academic year
4. FAMILIES			
4.1. Informative meetings	○ Administrative information ○ Characteristics of the new educational stage ○ Usual behavior/physical changes	- Orientation departments - Tutors - Educational psychologists - Parents of the students	From April until June

INSIDE THE PROJECT

In order to create the protocol for this project all the steps in the preparation phase were carried out. It was found out that the main need of this project is to facilitate the transitional education among education levels in a shared common space. There are also other specific needs for the project such as the involvement of a "damaged" fluvial environment in order to help to its recovery and the learning of sustainable and environmental issues. For accomplishing all of this, it was decided to use the service-learning methodology. Moreover, there are several collaborators in this project to allow its correct implementation. Primary and secondary schools are an important part, but also public institutions - in order to perform the activities in a shared common space. Moreover, as the Erasmus+ request the participation of a minimum of three European countries, it was necessary to find schools with common goals and contexts to carry out the project. In this case, the collaborators in this project are:

- **IES Botànic Cavanilles** (high school) – related with the following primary schools: CEIP Ausiàs March, CEIP la Moleta, CEIP Colònia Segarra, CEIP la Cova (all of the students attending these four primary schools usually transfer to the IES Botànic Cavanilles for secondary school)
- **IIS Maria Montessori-Leonardo da Vinci** – this institution includes primary and secondary education levels.
- **Escola Profissional Cândido Guerreiro de ALTE** – this school includes CEF courses, specific for the Portuguese Education System. Their transition will focus on CEF students transferring to VET Intermediate levels within the same school.
- **eco&eco** – inside the scope of the project the idea is to teach about the environment and the current situation the world is in, as the EU is putting a lot of emphasis on the sustainable development goals and its importance for the future. Because of this reason, the project needed a close partner that could guide the schools on the environmental topic with different points of view and that has experience in the educational and training field but also in research studies about preservation.
- **Fundación de la Comunitat Valenciana por una economía baja en carbón** – this is the entity that coordinates the project, that has experience in education but

also in environmental conservation and regeneration. Moreover, it is a consulting organization about environment and sustainability areas, and has a network of contacts in the local administration.

- **Other institutions/organizations** – inside the project, the several partners have different contacts that will facilitate the implementation of the project. For example, the City Hall of the different cities in which the project will take place will allow the usage of the common space for the service activities that will be performed.

In the case of this project, the process from 1.1 to 2.7 has already been performed during IO1 and IO2. Moreover, those two intellectual outputs also included the discussion within different schools not from the same area and with different fluvial environments in order to achieve a more extensive and inclusive program for the activities.

Regarding the action from 3.1 to 4.1, the protocol will have some modification due to the current situation with the COVID-19. It is worth mentioning that this activity was planned transnationally with a special focus for multilingual competences.

Below, there is the protocol in case it cannot be performed normally and it has to be adapted:

LINES OF ACTION	SPECIFIC ACTIONS	PERSONS RESPONSIBLE	SCHEDULING
3. STUDENTS			
3.1.Informative meetings	Inform the students about what they will have to face when changing education levels, preparing them for the future. The information will not be done in a general meeting, but will be carried out per individual classroom, to avoid unnecessary contact with other students from different classrooms and following the rules of the school with the distance and mask requirements.	- Tutors - Headmasters - Last year students of CEF/primary education	During Mid-November until the end of December
3.2.Visits to their destination center and classrooms/professors	Show them the new school, new classes, introducing them to the new professors,	- Primary/CEF education tutors - One representative of the school	In January

	explaining the future schedule… In the case the visits can be done face-to-face, students will wear a mask and keep the distance. Students will not be able to enter the classrooms. Visits will only take place when students are all inside the classroom, avoiding possible contact with other students. Just one professor from the high school, being also the representative, will be in the visit. The visit will be different for each classroom/primary school. Done virtually, several online tools can be used, as Google Maps to show the location of the center. Moreover, students will be able to record themselves the high school and putting it together with online platforms such as EdPuzzle.	- Last year students of CEF/primary education	
3.3.Shared activities	Perform the activities planned with the students of the last year of primary/ CEF education and the first year of secondary/VET Intermediate education The group will be reduced (4 people per group), and all the students will have to wear masks and keep the distance. All the activities will be done outdoors. In the case the situation does not allow the in-person activities, photographs of the places in which the students should have done the activity will be taken, in order to have an online class, involving maximum 10 students and creating different sessions, to work those activities online.	- Primary/basic education tutors - Secondary professors (they will vary depending on the activity)/ Intermediate VET teachers - Last year students of CEF/primary education - First year students of secondary/ Intermediate VET education	From February till the end of the academic year

4. FAMILIES			
4.1. Informative meetings	○ Administrative information ○ Characteristics of the new educational stage ○ Usual behavior/physical changes All this information will be shared virtually and, if needed, an online session will be scheduled	- Orientation departments - Tutors - Educational psychologists - Parents of the students	From April until June

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