



Climate Friendly Management in European Schools

Climate change represents one of the greatest environmental, social and economic threats facing the planet. Especially the younger generation needs to learn to live sustainably in order to counteract climate change and subsequent environmental problems. By now approaches for introducing climate change issues in the educational field are still scattered in different European countries.

The project CLIMES is funded by the European Commission to introduce the topic of climate change and climate adaptation in European schools by developing and implementing a functioning climate-friendly management system. The vision and hope related to the implementation of the CLIMES management system is that the whole school community will be induced to behave in a climate-friendly way, i.e. to mitigate damages for the climate, and to adapt to the expected changes in climate.

The objectives of the CLIMES management system are:

-  Students learn how to act climate friendly.
-  Students acquire competences in the application of professional management systems and instruments.
-  The institution school is organised in a way that it acts climate friendly and adapts to climate change not only ad hoc but permanently in the long run.

CLIMES seeks to involve teachers and pupils in European schools as well as relevant regional, national and European stakeholders. In the long run CLIMES will have ripple effects with-in the whole school community and the civic society.

CLIMES builds on the experience gathered in the EU-funded project JEM! – Joint Environmental Management (www.jem-eu.org) that clearly showed that an integrated approach involving students in curricular and extra-curricular activities in the practical development processes achieves very good results in terms of competence development and acceptance.



Pupils in the JEM! project

CLIMES intends to promote a European exchange of experience and good practice among participating schools and external stakeholders and will organise European conferences with pupils and teachers of CLIMES partner schools. Moreover, the CLIMES team will organise a European school competition where innovative ideas and projects in the field of climate mitigation and adaptation will be awarded. Pupils of the age between 14 and 19 years as groups or classes living in the EU will be invited to take part by presenting their innovative projects in an inventive way. The best project ideas will be chosen by an international jury and the winners will be invited to an award ceremony in one of the European partner cities.

Project Activities in the First Project Phase

The project started in January 2011 and was officially inaugurated with a virtual online meeting that took place mid-January with representatives of all eight partner institutions. During this meeting the first project steps were discussed and scheduled in accordance with the project design.



Preparing an exhibition of environmental projects

Stocktaking

In the first project phase the CLIMES team wanted to get an overview of existing national approaches for facing climate change in schools. The partners collected information on available curricular and extracurricular activities and methodologies dealing with climate change. This was done with an action research approach combining research activities (literature analysis), quantitative elements (preformatted questionnaires distributed in ten schools) and qualitative analysis (interviews with teachers, education authorities, teachers' training institutes and external experts etc.).



Through a context analysis possible settings (school types), target groups (age level of students) and available resources for the implementation of climate friendly measures in different European countries were outlined.

The results of this stocktaking provide a basis for the development of a European approach integrating European good practices and for the subsequent conceptual, development and piloting activities.

Partner Meeting in Göttingen

Even though the virtual meeting was a good starting point, a “real” partner meeting took place in February in Göttingen where the project partners met for the first time. The meeting was an excellent opportunity to get to know to each other and to intensively work and further plan the project and its activities.



The CLIMES project team

After an introduction to the JEM! project partners discussed on how to transfer the JEM! experience to the CLIMES project. JEM! dealt with the introduction of an environmental management system according to EMAS. Partner schools implemented successfully management approaches, but it became evident that not all formal elements of a management system can be introduced in schools – or better – would require much more

resources than a school normally can make available.

Thus the CLIMES partners decided to “downsize” the management system to those elements that seem feasible in schools without leading to frustration. The cornerstone of the CLIMES approach is the regular check of schools’ carbon footprint and the introduction of measures to reduce it.

In the framework of the meeting the partners visited one of the German partner schools, the vocational training school Herwig-Blankertz-Schule in Wolfhagen, where partners were informed about the latest developments in terms of environmental standards and innovation such as the newly installed roof of solar panels protecting the schoolyard from rain. The Herwig-Blankertz-Schule has two branches, of which the one in Hofgeismar was also involved in the JEM! project.



Visiting the schoolyard with its solar panels

Partner Meeting in Cagliari

In the month of May the second partner meeting was hosted by the Italian partner school I.I.S. Duca degli



The agricultural technical and vocational school Duca degli Abruzzi

Abruzzi in Elmas, Cagliari in Sardinia. The school is an agricultural technical and vocational secondary school and was partner in the JEM! project. The school implemented then elements of the EMAS management system and contributed considerably to the elaboration of the CLIMES management approach.

During this meeting the concrete steps for implementing the CLIMES approach were defined and planned and each partner school established an individual schedule. For now we expect the first steps (preliminary steps and check – see hereafter) to be implemented by autumn.



Core Elements of the CLIMES Management Approach

The core elements of the CLIMES management approach are components of the Deming circle (plan-do-check-act) added by a definition of basic responsibilities and a basic level of internal and external communication.

In the “check” phase, schools identify those operations that influence climate change significantly. These are:

- 🐟 energy use
- 🐟 traffic induced by school
- 🐟 school meals
- 🐟 water use
- 🐟 waste disposal

Schools have to calculate regularly their carbon footprint (= total carbon dioxide emissions within a period) on the basis of the collected data by using a well defined carbon footprint calculator.

Based on the results of the “check” phase, activities have to be planned to reduce the carbon footprint (mitigation measures) or to adapt to the climate change (adaption measures). This means to define the climate relevant objectives and targets for the school to be reached within a specified period and to specify a climate change programme with activities, responsibilities as well as necessary resources.

In the “do” phase these activities are implemented accordingly. The climate change group has to check regularly on their effectiveness and efficiency and, if need be, redefine them.

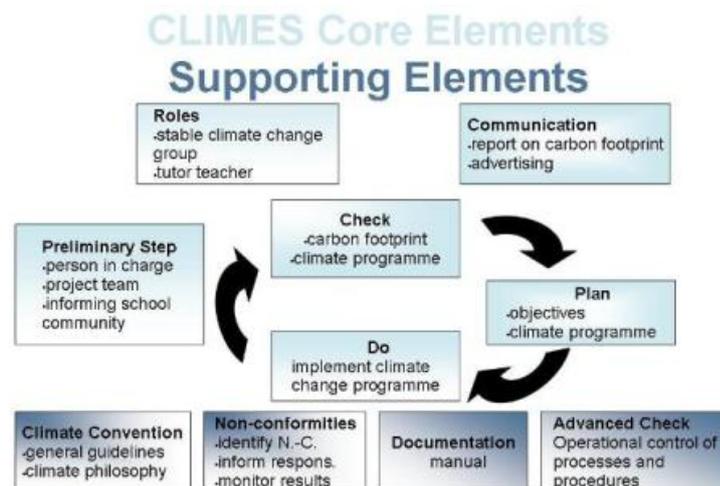
In addition, each school has to assure that sufficient manpower with defined roles and responsibilities is available for implementing and maintaining the CLIMES management system. An elementary communication related to climate change issues serves to inform the school manager, the complete school community as well as the

interested public about the actual climate influence of the school and to promote climate friendly behaviour.

CLIMES Website

The project website was implemented in April and offers information on the project. It will be updated regularly to allow an interested public to get a closer insight in the project work. As CLIMES puts a special focus on a European exchange, which will be promoted among the involved pupils and teachers from the partner schools, adequate communication tools will be implemented on the project website at a later project stage. Interested local stakeholders have the opportunity to present their project related work in a specific section on the website. For further information, please contact either the coordinator or one of the partner organisations.

www.climes.eu





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