

The Experience of PA-MAP Project: an information path in primary schools to raise community awareness about air pollution

Original

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Abstract

BACKGROUND AND AIM Raising community awareness is a complex process that requires participatory application and concrete actions on a local scale. As part of the European PA-MAP Project (Participatory approach to monitoring air quality in urban environments), we addresser the problem of air posllution with primary schools pupils in various European cities through the ORPAC (Observation, Reflection, Planning, Action and Change) approach. [α]

METHOD Theoretical lessons and practical teaching activities were developed, involving 200 students and 12 teachers. Children aged 10 and 9 who attended various primary public schools were involved (Istituto Comprensivo Statale Italiano Montessori in Barcelona (Spain), Istituto Comprensivo Statale Italiano di Contursi Terme (Italy), Convitto Umberto in Torino (Italy)). The groups of schoolchildren, with the help of the teachers, were involved in a participatory and co-creative scientific program developing concrete actions to encourage sustainable behavior on a local scale. [α]

RESULTS The schoolchildren engaged in writing a story about air pollution and were involved in taking action for change together with teachers and families. Each student planned and developed a practical action to reduce exposure to air pollution, involving their families and friends. Investigations were carried out on a neighborhood scale, observing and collecting information on the means of transport used to reach the school, on the motivation linked to this choice, on possible alternative routes and on the possibility of creating green spaces around the school. [α]

CONCLUSIONS Through the ORPAC method promoted by PA-MAP, children increased their awareness, contributing to the promotion of sustainable solutions with their families and becoming participants in a co-creative process to improve the quality of urban space and the quality of air. Public participation and raising awareness of air quality imply active research at a local scale and a response to input from city residents, so as to integrate ad hoc strategies and policies to achieve sustainable objectives. [α]

