



OTTER Hub Kick-Off Meeting

Monday 30th May 2022

SESSION

On Monday 30th May 2022, OTTER hosted the HUB kick-off online meeting to present how creating a network of teachers, educators, and education experts could be beneficial to work on awakening kids' interest in science via Education Outside the Classroom.

In the meeting, there were participants from across Europe who helped us reply to two questions based on their experience:

- *Which are the main barriers to implement an EOC activity?*
- *What are the benefits?*

The main results are summarized in the next page.

If you want to be part of these sessions either on the **online meetings** or through the **OTTER forum**, make sure you **JOIN THE HUB!**

We have one Hub site for Ireland, one for Finland, one for Spain and one for Hungary. Also, we have an International site to exchange experiences among all countries!

<https://otter-project.eu/the-hub>



EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM (EOC)

Main Opportunities



Students are more motivated to attend and learn in school when having EOC activities than comparable students not being taught outside



Participation in EOC activities allows students opportunities to learn the value of teamwork, individual and group responsibility, competition and a sense of culture and diversity.



Students can build bridges between theory and reality, which increase their critical thinking and makes them feel the acquired knowledge is useful.



The outdoors is a great place for physical and sensory experience.



Outdoor activities in nature increases the environmental awareness and love for Nature.



If EOC involves volunteering, it develops skills like reliability, responsibility and it teaches a sense of philanthropy and giving back to the community.



Outdoor education engages families and the community.





Teaching and learning outdoors is fun!



Learning outdoors is healthy! Learning outdoors is active and increases students' physical, mental and social health.



Highlighting mutual benefits to industries such as agriculture would be a great step forward in bring science in particular outside the classroom alongside topics such as business and geography



EOC can establish collaborations between schools and Universities, NGOs or industries to develop further projects.

EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Main Barriers



Lack of professional time to organize (Teacher's workload): They really struggle to find time to prepare an activity outside the classroom. It normally takes their personal time.



Rigid curriculum, which makes difficult to fit in an activity outside the classroom, as is normally seen as a waste of time for curricular activities (thus, we should incorporate these activities as part of the curriculum)





Time restrictions: the outdoor activity should fit inside school schedule. But, in some countries and for some age ranges, the science or geographic class hours are not many, which makes difficult to organize an EOC activity.



Financial issues: Lack of funds for gear, tools, and transportation. Not every parent can afford it.



The bureaucracy, formal paperwork and the relevant formulations during the preparation phase of the visit the outdoors are very challenging



The number of students should not be too large for learning outside. If it is, the activity should be carefully planned, and several teachers must escort (which is not always possible).



Teacher's skill development is needed to be able to organize these activities (Training in pedagogical models, self-assessment, etc)



Teachers not always know opportunities or businesses that are around or nearby to visit in an EOC activity.



Normally, organization of EOC activities depends on teacher's motivation or self-confidence, instead of structural school organization





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Contact



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