



### Editorial



**T**he 2030 Agenda behind the Sustainable Development Goals is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan. The interlinkages and integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals are of crucial importance in ensuring that the purpose of the new Agenda is realized.

Six partners from the Ulixes network have decided to contribute to the SDG agenda by joining forces in a KA2 project called Sustainability in shared classrooms – focusing on problem-based learning in a cross-cultural frame based on the Sustainable Development Goals.

The aim of the KA2 project SCLASS is to create a how to teach a Sustainable Development Goal subject together with other educational institutions in Europe. By creating a teacher's guide and a virtual platform with teaching modules, we develop tools to find European partners, provide input to teaching methods and materials as well as instructions on how to use digital technology for blended learning.

If you are curious about this project and its progress, I invite you to read further. You will find a recent state of affairs combined with testimonials from some of the participants. So, I hope you will enjoy the next pages.

*Malene Olsgaard*  
International Project Manager at Zealand Business College, Denmark  
Lead partner of the SCLASS project



### **Educating young people about sustainability is a daunting task for everyone**

*The SCLASS Project is managed by a Danish Team: Malene Olsgaard, Tina Christoffersen and Klaus Lindegaard. On a beautiful day we asked them about their motivation for this project.*

#### **What is so important about the SDG's and why should European children and youngsters learn about them?**

The SDGs provide worldwide guidance for addressing the global challenges facing the international community. It is about better protecting the natural foundations of life and our planet everywhere and for everyone and preserving people's opportunities to live in dignity and prosperity across generations. In the SCLASS project we focus on involving youngsters from Europe and give them a better insight into the common challenges and through a shared project with youngsters from another country give them an opportunity to take action on selected SDGs. We believe that the young generation of today might be overwhelmed by the many challenges that we face worldwide so by working intensely with individual focus areas in a shared classroom, they gain a sense of being able to participate and make a difference.

#### **Why did you concern writing a European project proposal and what do you consider, after one year, the added value of cooperating with partners from different European countries?**

As the challenges of today are global and since the youngsters are important actors when it comes to finding sustainable solutions to the challenges it was obvious to do a European project where we invite youngsters into an international shared classroom and give them a platform for taking action and becoming more informed about the impact of our actions.

Educating young people about sustainability is a daunting task for everyone and the added value of working with partners from European countries is the possibility of creating a classroom where the students will have to relate to their own practice and beliefs before they can collaborate with students from other countries who most likely have a different approach to the same issues. It is thus a project that raises awareness and involves the young people at the same time.

#### **When do you consider this project to have been successful?**

One of the objectives and goals of this project is to create a platform with a guide to teachers who want to work with sustainable topics in an international and virtual classroom. We thereby aim to create a platform with guidance and materials that can be used by the teachers. By sharing the experience with colleagues and peers we expect it to be a tool that makes it easier to teach about sustainability and to involve the students in the project design as well. We would consider it a success when we can tell that working with SDGs in a shared classroom has become part of the curricula - not only at the partner schools but also among the network of each SCLASS partner.

#### **What do you hope for after the project is finished?**

We hope and believe that the outcome of the work in SCLASS will enable more cooperation between youngsters in Europe to create awareness about the sustainable development goals. In the ideal world maybe not only in a virtual classroom. Setting up the frame of a shared classroom could also inspire the teachers and the students to meet in real life and to further cooperate on finding solutions to and reflect on the common challenges in Europe.



### Meeting in Valencia



SCLASS got started during the COVID19 Crisis. We have cooperated online for months. But in the autumn of 2021 all teachers and project members could finally meet 'live' in beautiful and sunny Valencia. A lot of work had to be done.

### Finishing the Teaching Modules

In groups, all teaching modules were assessed and adjusted. We uncovered which SDGs are already covered primarily or secondarily in the existing teaching modules.

We also discussed the relevance of adding more teaching modules to the website to make sure the Website is a 'container of materials and inspiration' as we have stated in the application. A solution could be to develop new micro modules focusing on the SDGs that are covered secondarily - or to make light versions of the existing teaching modules. It is still to be decided on in the beginning of 2022.



### Towards a teachers' guide

The second day of the meeting we focused on the steps in the Teachers' Guide. It has been a process that started in May 2021 where all the teachers involved in the project collected 7 key factors that are important to consider before you start working in a shared classroom with teachers and students from another country. Eventually, the 7 key factors have been divided into the first draft of what will become the steps in the Teachers' Guide. At the meeting the teachers decided to narrow down the key factors or steps in the guide – when presented at the website – to only three:

- **WHY** work in a shared classroom focusing on the SDGs
- **HOW** to work in a shared classroom with teachers and students from another country
- **WHAT** is important to take into account in order to succeed

We then divided the teachers into three groups – each representing either the WHY / HOW / WHAT – and in December the groups will be working on the first draft of the steps in their respective STEP.



### One step closer to a more sustainable world

*Within the SCLASS project the focus is on a shared classroom concept of European cooperation in secondary education. Teachers from each participating institution have prepared a number of these classrooms so far. Maya Verlinden, one of the teachers from AP (Belgium) testifies why she considers this project valuable.*

I believe that teaching youth about sustainability is key to initiate change towards a sustainable future. Teaching students about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) will empower them with knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to address the global challenges we are facing. It will give them the opportunity to take responsibility for their actions and commit to working together to build a better and more sustainable future for everyone. Although the SDGs are inherently global in nature, it is valuable to approach them starting from local problem-based questions close to the students' reality, which is the approach applied in the SCLASS teaching modules.



Personally, I have found it very interesting and valuable to work on the topic of climate change through the concept of shared classrooms with a diverse group of students (with different nationalities, ages, cultures, religions and beliefs). On top it was also fun to do. It allowed both the students and me to gain important insights and experiences that could facilitate the shift towards a more climate-friendly society, locally and globally. In general, I am convinced that workshops on the sustainable development goals, particularly in an international setting, can similarly provide such insights and experiences to a lot of young people. This would bring us (at least) one step closer to a more sustainable world.

