Environmental Educational Program “Close the line”

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INTRODUCTION

Fig. 1: Program logo

The environmental educational program “Close the Line!” (logo Fig. 1) was designed and is being implemented by the Municipality of Agia Paraskevi at the schools of its territory. The program’s aim is to raise awareness in the fields of (Fig. 2):

A. Prevention of waste production
B. Linear economy versus circular economy and sustainability
C. Sustainable waste management

The program involves the instructors’ physical presence in the classroom and interaction with the students.

Fig. 2: Program poster

Prevention of waste production

Students watch two plays. Each play is conducted by a team of one instructor and one student. The instructor plays the “child/student” and the student plays the “parent” with help of accessories. The plays show the packing of (plastic and wooden) food and beverages for school. The first team uses disposable containers (eg. plastic water bottle, plastic cup and straw, plastic cutlery, disposable food container, aluminium foil, paper towel, thin plastic bag) and the second team uses reusable containers for food/beverage transport (thermos, flask, metallic/bamboo cup and straw, metallic/silicone food container, fabric snack bag, metallic cutlery in a case, cloth towel). The narrator describes the plot as it evolves and freezes the plot with a bell in the moments, where there is a differentiation in container type choice (disposable versus reusable), while drawing the attention of the students in the choices they have. The “students” of the play act as if they consume food and beverages and they then put the accumulated waste into a transparent plastic bag each. In the end of both plays, the accumulated waste is compared: The plastic bag of the disposable containers’ team contains disposable waste for recycling or landfill, while the bag of the reusable containers’ team is empty. In the last case the reusable items return to the school bag to be washed at home. The narrator draws conclusions about the most sustainable choice of containers and shows thus the way to become a zero waste student.

Fig. 3: Bookmark

In the end of this session, each student will receive a bookmark with suggestions about “How to become a zero waste citizen” (Fig. 3).

Fig. 4: Linear & circular economy boards

Linear economy versus circular economy and sustainability

The schemes of linear economy and circular economy with the corresponding stages are presented each on two magnetic boards, standing on two tripods. Each stage of the two schemes is an empty square which corresponds to a certain magnetic picture of the same size, which is to be attached onto the empty square. Both economy schemes are based on the life-cycle of an aluminium can. The narrator describes the life-cycle while attaching the magnetic pictures on the empty stage squares (Fig. 4).

After the presentation, all stage pictures are distributed to students, who face the challenge of placing themselves in the right order in the front of the classroom, while holding the picture in front of them facing their co-students, in order to form the stages of linear economy and circular economy.

The narrator explains with pictures which economy is more sustainable and why, regarding the following criteria: Consumption of mineral resources, energy consumption for primary aluminium production, fossil fuel consumption for energy generation for primary aluminium production, fossil fuel consumption for transport, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions & climate change, water consumption for primary aluminium production, heavy & unhealthy human labor, vital space consumption and environmental degradation by landfills.

Sustainable waste management

Students are trained in sustainable household waste management. Original schematic pictures of all waste types (Fig. 5) and all waste bins/management ways are presented in class and the correct waste management is explained via questions (instructors) and answers (students). In addition, all waste management options are evaluated regarding their sustainability.

Fig. 5: Waste types

After that, notebooks with pictures of all bin types/waste management ways (Fig. 6) are distributed to the students. The instructors show schematic pictures of all waste types and students are asked to choose the correct bin(s) or management for each one of them from their notebook and show it to the instructors.

Fig. 6: Notebooks with bin types

At the end of the session, each student will receive a brochure about the correct waste management to take home.

At the end of the program, a banner with the program logo (Fig. 7) will open, to remind participants of the central program message and photographs of all students, teacher and instructors will be taken in front of it.

Fig. 7: Program banner

Furthermore, lots will be drown and one student will win an everyday reusable object, some with the program logo, such as thermos, flask, metallic cup, metallic food container, snack bag, metallic cutlery in a case, metallic straw (Fig. 8). The idea is to strengthen the philosophy of zero waste citizens with the aim to prevent waste production.

Fig. 8: Reusable objects as lottery wins