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AN INTERNATIONAL CLASS For youth voice

How do children perceive nature ? What is their awareness on local biodiversity and environmental issues ? What are their ideas and expectations for the future ?

From september 2019 to june 2021, over 200 students aged from 9 to 17 and of 10 euro-mediterranean classes took part to a “school observatory of nature”. The two main objectives were for children 1) to get a fresh perspective on surrounding nature and 2) to show the society their concerns on nature and their will to be part of actions.

2. « OBSERVE AND (RE) DISCOVER NATURE »

Observing birds, plants and insects was a challenge during a world pandemic. Our project enlightened the difficulties some children may have to access nature and green spaces. Nevertheless, the classes succeeded in producing 1) [lists of species](#), 2) [documented photographs](#) and [videos](#) showing their local environment. They also worked on nature and biodiversity definitions as well as current threats on species and habitats. The main objectives here were for children to 1) **be more attentive to their environment**, 2) to **take an interest biodiversity**, whether “remarkable” or “ordinary”.

1. « DRAW NATURE YOU SEE AROUND YOU »

Take 5 min to think about it ! What would you draw ? **Drawing is a powerful tool** that can accurately translate perceptions. Composition of [students' drawings was analysed](#) (e.g. type and number of natural and artificial elements). We tested if it could depend on some factors (e.g. the country, especially, the environment of the school within a 5km radius). Likewise, comments associated drawings were analysed to highlight word associations when children describe nature.

3. « ACT FOR NATURE »

Students proposed 3 ways to act for nature :

- Calling for urgent new durable policies (e.g. on energy)
- Raising awareness on environmental issues among their mates and relatives (e.g. organising events)
- Supporting biodiversity locally (e.g. planting trees)

Youth is aware of environmental issues. It is volunteer to be part of actions and solutions to protect nature.

Let's listen to youth voice !

DRAWINGS' ANALYSIS

The proportion of nature in drawings varied from 3 to 100 % and seemed to depend on the country (but not the local school context).

On a global point of view, among drawn éléments :



Figure 1: Example of a collected drawing (Italy)

- 1) 65% were plants (trees, grass)
 - 2) 18% were artificial elements (roads, buildings)
 - 3) 9% were animals (birds mostly)
- Remaining 8% were natural physical elements (e.g. sky)

38% of students exposed environmental issues through their drawings and/or their comment (e.g. air pollution, waste, habitat loss, threatened species)

park beautiful sky plant flower
landscape tree trail sea Man

Figure 2: Ten most cited words when describing the drawings