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Project description

"My Featured Space" is a project conducted in the course of the promotional programme 'Sparkling Science', supported by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research.

Students in the Alps Adriatic region analyse and form their future living spaces in rural regions using scientific methods. My Featured Space is focusing on life quality in rural regions in the future. Together with researchers, teachers and stakeholders pupils from the Alps Adriatic region develop scenarios for rural living spaces in 2025. The main question is, what students will need in the future to live and work in attractive rural regions. "My Featured Space" is an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research project.

Students at the age of 16 to 19 years are working as researches on the rural region. Students from different schools in Austria (3), Slovenia (2) and Italy (1) participate in this project. They are from the same or from different classes of their school. The students are working in the project "My Featured Space" for the whole project period, which lasts from November 2009 to May 2011.

Project phases

The project is structured in an introduction phase and four main project phases. Each project phase starts and ends with a workshop. During these workshops researchers convey knowledge of scientific methods to the students. Stakeholders introduce their practical experience and know-how. Students present the interim results of their research work in the different groups to the plenum and discuss these results with the researchers and stakeholders. Finally in each workshop the next working steps are reviewed and fixed together.

First the pupils documented their present living space with short videos referring to the methods of qualitative social research. The pupils have defined parameters for the quality of life in the rural spaces analysing these videos. In the next step mutual effects between these parameters were described following the method of sensitivity model by Frederic Vester. In the workshop an overall matrix is designed and the relevance and completeness of the parameters will be checked.

The goal of the next step is to identify some highly active parameters in the system. Using this model pupils develop and design their visions of an attractive living space. They also learn to understand interactions in the complex system "rural region". By selecting active parameters the interconnected data base of the sensitivity model allows to run through various scenarios. Thereby the students get to know, what measures must be taken to realise their favoured rural living space. By this means the students get a deep understanding how rural regions work.

The model will finally be implemented a computer simulation game "My Featured Space 2025". The computer-game will visualize scenarios of attractive living spaces. Working with the data based model to develop their scenarios of the rural living space together with the Institute of Information Systems of the University of Klagenfurt the pupils will develop the game where the visualisation of different scenarios in the rural space will be simulated.

After the research work the student groups will develop innovative projects in their own rural regions to stimulate local growth and activities. Those projects are done on municipality level and will be supported by local actors.

PR and Media

The project results will be presented as final reports, dissertations, as well as project presentations for various events. The students are asked to present their working results to the public:

- on the project homepage
- at their school
- at partner schools
- at regional events for example held by the regional management of Carinthia or the Carinthian Gemeindebund or the municipality of Jesenice in Slovenia
- on a conference of Alliance in the Alps
- as the ORF is a project partner there will be reports in different TV and radio shows for example "Servus, Srečno, Ciao".

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