

A study on chocolate

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With the market for chocolate and sweets as a basis, pupils from Stasys Salkauskis Gymnasium in Siauliai, Lithuania and Flen Stenhammar Basic School/Prins Wilhelm Gymnasium in Sweden have explored market research and entrepreneurship through a Nordplus Junior-project.

The goal of the project has been to give the pupils some basic knowledge of how to start a business and to teach them in what ways real and potential market research can be performed. The project participants have developed entrepreneurial skills through lessons in the fields of Economics, Informatics and English, as well as through after-school activities. As a part of the project, the Swedish pupils got to visit Lithuania and the Lithuanian pupils got to visit Sweden.

Preparations

Before the visits to Sweden and Lithuania, the project participants did research on real and potential markets for chocolate and sweets in Lithuania and Sweden. They also prepared questionnaires in order to find out what sorts of Swedish chocolate or sweets Lithuanians are in want of, and what sorts of Lithuanian chocolate or sweets Swedish supermarkets and sweet shops lack. Moreover, they found locations of possible chocolate selling shops and described advantages and disadvantages of these locations and shops.

Visits in Sweden and Lithuania

During both visits, the project participants got familiarised with the economic situation and the possibilities for doing business in Lithuania and Sweden. This was accomplished by visiting various successfully running companies and communicating with local businessmen, lecturers and students that have chosen higher studies in Economics, Business Management and Public Administration.

When visiting the various places and towns in Lithuania and Sweden, the pupils had the opportunity to perform real market research in both countries and to compare existing supply and differences in prices of the respective products in particular places of the country. Other exercises included identifying customers, how to advertise one's products, and how to write a business plan. While in Sweden, the pupils were able to try out their newly acquired entrepreneurial skills in practice by selling various Lithuanian and Swedish products for Flen residents in the Christmas fair arranged at Prins Wilhelm Gymnasium.

The pupils also had the opportunity to produce hand-made pieces of candies of their own when taking part in the educational programme at the joint-stock company 'AJ Sokoladas' in Trakai, Lithuania. In addition to using their own entrepreneurial skills and ideas, the pupils developed an awareness of the fact that there is no point in trying to sell a product that anyone is able to produce, it is far more important to be able to produce a product which can be sold.

Learning languages

While communicating on the Internet, living in each others' families, spending their free-time together and being involved in different types of leisure activities the project participants could get better insight into the culture, mentality and young people's ways of life in both countries.

Besides, they had a possibility to develop their linguistic and cultural communication abilities and acquire socio-cultural knowledge and skills that are needed when communicating in the English and Swedish languages and to put them into practice. In the course of the project the Lithuanian pupils had a possibility to apply their Swedish language skills in practice as well as envisage spheres of life where Swedish is necessary to know which helped to raise their motivation to learn the Swedish language.

TEXT AND PHOTO: J?rat? Rim?ait?, project coordinator in Lithuania



The pupils sold various Lithuanian and Swedish products in the Christmas fair arranged at Prins Wilhelm Gymnasium.

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