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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A NON-FORMAL DIDACTIC INTERVENTION TARGETING STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

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GES4SEAS is Horizon Europe research funded project (2022-2026), entitled “Achieving Good Environmental Status for maintaining ecosystem services, by assessing integrated impacts of cumulative pressures” (www.ges4seas.eu). To achieve some of its objectives, the project includes Ocean Literacy activities to communicate the importance of the ocean, how different activities and pressures are impacting our seas, and to mainstream the key paradigm of ‘healthy oceans for healthy societies’. One of such tasks engages with schools in order to bring added value to the ongoing school curricular activities related to the environment and the ocean. The goal of this task is to raise awareness of the students on issues related to ocean health, through the production of a free digital publication containing scientific articles adapted to young generations. Researchers from different countries, participating in the project, write short and illustrated articles on marine-related key topics and share this with a student class linked to science or other disciplines. Students read the articles and comment on what is not clear, what could be improved, what details are missing, and how the illustrations could be improved, to better address these issues for young people. After receiving the feedback, the project researchers improve the articles and prepare a digital publication which will be translated into different languages, available online and shared with the participating schools and their societies.

Towards this aim, a non-formal didactic intervention was designed, developed and implemented by HCMR scientists in collaboration with the Biology Teacher of the Music School of Heraklion focusing on the students’ knowledge, attitudes and behaviour towards investigating Good Environmental Status of a semi-enclosed marine ecosystem located on the north-eastern part of Crete Island. This intervention included laboratory and fieldwork/outdoor activities. Initially, the marine ecosystem of Elounda bay was presented to the students (e.g., nursery ground, non-indigenous species). Students visited the labs of HCMR in order to familiarize them with scientific equipment (e.g., microscopes, stereoscopes) as well as to observe and identify marine species (e.g.,

macrobenthic animals). Fieldwork/outdoor activities included a visit to the study area where the students measured abiotic parameters in situ (e.g., water temperature, salinity, pH, dissolved oxygen) using scientific instruments and had the opportunity to discuss with local fishermen and authorities. Finally, students were asked to review a short scientific article on the environmental status of the marine ecosystem of Elounda bay. A review form was prepared and given to the students in order to fill in with specific comments. Questionnaires were also given to the students before and after this didactic intervention in order to measure the impact of all these Ocean Literacy activities concerning their knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. The Blue Project developed was also a part of an educational program targeting 'adopting a marine ecosystem' and the involvement of the Music School of Heraklion in the EU Blue Schools initiative in order to certify them as a blue school and to become a member of this European network.