

Euro-Mediterranean Project "Living with the Sun on both sides of the Mediterranean"

North African and European education systems share a common history and influences and have many similarities. Schools on both sides of the Mediterranean are heirs to a vertical model - a model that evolves greatly according to place and time, but whose historical tendencies have generally consisted in confining the pupil to a passive situation, consecrating the authority of the teacher, and valuing memorisation as a means of learning.

Beyond the question of the educational model, both European and North African teachers are faced with similar challenges, first and foremost that of ensuring a **complete and effective health education for their pupils** - at a time when it is more than essential, throughout the world, to **raise children's health awareness**.

It is from these two observations that our desire to carry out a **Euro-Mediterranean project focused on solar education** was born: "**Living with the Sun on both sides of the Mediterranean**". Active for 13 years, PASSERELLES.INFO aims at **education for sustainable development, health and citizenship**. It designs and distributes **easy-to-use, turnkey guides** for primary school teachers, and provides training and conferences. The Guides are available online and are sent free of charge to teachers after registration on the web platform.

The pedagogical method used is effective and innovative, putting the pupil at **the heart of the learning process by encouraging him or her to build knowledge with the teacher in an interactive way**. It has been validated by numerous studies, surveys and evaluations published in scientific journals (1), (2), (3). These have shown **very encouraging results in terms of improved student knowledge and, above all, changes in behaviour**.

As a member of the UNESCO Clubs and Associations, PASSERELLES.INFO has nearly **75,000 registered teachers in many countries: France, Spain, Italy, Bulgaria, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Egypt**. It is currently running three programmes: "*Eat, move for my health*" devoted to nutrition education and the prevention of obesity and overweight; "*Reduce my waste, feed the Earth*" dedicated to education on sorting, reducing waste at source, and vermicomposting; and finally "*Living with the Sun*", which informs about the effects of the Sun on health and ensures solar prevention (skin cancers, cataracts, etc.). The latter is distributed in partnership with **Sécurité Solaire, a WHO collaborating centre**.

European populations are known to be highly exposed to the risk of developing skin cancer and cataracts. But North African countries are no exception. They account for **90,000 new cases of cancer per year**, an increase that is sustained and worrying (4). Although skin cancers are far from being the most numerous cases, they are nevertheless among the least known, and North Africans are very little aware of them. Other disorders linked to excessive exposure to the sun, such as cataracts, are on the increase and represent more than **a third of blindness cases in North Africa**, where treatment is difficult and unequal. Prevention is the best answer to this growing public health problem, and PASSERELLES.INFO intends to contribute, through its experience and know-how recognised throughout the world, to making this prevention possible from the earliest age.

(1) *A Cluster Randomized Trial to Evaluate a Health Education Programme "Living with Sun at School"*. Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2012, 9, 2345-2361; doi:10.3390/ijerph9072345.

Hélène Sancho-Garnier, Bruno Pereira and Pierre Césarini

(2) *Lutter contre l'échec scolaire en réseau d'éducation prioritaire*, in Zay D. (ed.) Education inclusive. Une réponse à l'échec scolaire ?, Paris, L'Harmattan, p. 212-217. Reuter Yves, (2012)

(3) *Éducation nutritionnelle à l'école: évaluation d'une méthode pédagogique «La Main à la Pâte»* Santé Publique 2010/2 (Vol. 22) Editeur S.F.S.P. Stéphane Tessier et col

(4) *Cancer au Maghreb et au Moyen Orient : Au cœur de la transition épidémiologique*. Paris, France : Éditions universitaires européennes. Cherif, H. M. (2017).

Today, the association's ambition is to go further in the cooperation between the two shores, through the project "Living with the Sun on both sides of the Mediterranean", which will allow to extend to the schools of European and North African countries the trainings already successfully conducted in France.