

## Open Schools Journal for Open Science

Vol 2, No 2 (2019)

ISSUE 3



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doi: [10.12681/osj.20390](https://doi.org/10.12681/osj.20390)

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### To cite this article:

Marques, C., Silva, F., Cardoso, G., Liberato, H., Lopes, H., Caramelo, J., João, J., Santos, L., Reverendo, M., Jorge, S., & Lourenço, R. (2019). Work with, within and for the City. *Open Schools Journal for Open Science*, 2(2), 39–41. <https://doi.org/10.12681/osj.20390>



# Work with, within and for the City

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## Abstract

Our school and classes do not have boundaries. In this project, students worked in the same projects in Civics, English Language, Information and Communication Technology, Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry and Portuguese Language classes. They worked on real daily life problems in Cacilhas, identified problems, did field work, talked with people, searched for solutions.

**Keywords:** Active Citizenship; Active Learning; Active School; Interdisciplinary; Leadership

## Introduction

Seventy-five 10th grade students worked in groups and searched for problems in Almada, problems that were meaningful for them and that they thought they could make something about. After debating and voting, students presented solutions, searched for stakeholders and promoted change with their ideas and work.

## Methodology

Students initially discussed the places they wanted to visit to identify problems. They put stickers on the map and, with that information, they designed the field trip. Students visited the chosen city area, identified and recorded problems, in loco. They then presented their findings to the class and together chose the main problem they wanted to work on and solve.

## Concept

The students worked in groups in order to find creative solutions for the problems that were identified in the FEEL phase. The students exerted inventive thinking, honing their research-conducting skills and experimenting with different thinking techniques.

## Implementation

Students discussed possible solutions for the chosen problem, searched for stakeholders and divided tasks. They prepared inquiries for the general public (locals and tourists) to help them choose the best solution for each problem.

Students then developed their work by designing and building scale models, recording videos, designing games, etc. They contacted the stakeholders, like the Education Councilor of the City Hall of Almada, and prepared meetings with them. Some groups received support by companies, like LampWave Studio, using Skype.

Students searched for funding by talking to companies and presenting their works in the Portuguese Participatory Public Budget meeting. They shared their works to their peers and teachers. At the end, they presented their solutions to the Portuguese Education Minister, the State Secretary for Education, the Mayor of Almada and to the Education Councilor of the City Hall of Almada.

## Conclusions

At our school, teachers aim to develop active citizens. That is done by developing social and civic competences in our students, which will allow them to take on problems, think critically about them, appoint possible solutions, and take well thought out plans into action. The OSOS ( Open Schools for Open Societies project) challenge allowed us, as teachers, to create routines based on ideas and projects outlined by the students and work transdisciplinary. As for the students, they were able to develop, apart from the subject related competences, the so-called “soft skills” while accommodating learnings in real implementation context. The OSOS experience and the close relation to the local community it enabled us to create was of extreme importance to all of the school community, which was somehow closed within itself. This project enabled us to know our surroundings better, as it also allowed those close to us to get to know us better.

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