



The international mountain school of the Maritime Alps



AlpCity Partner	Piedmont Region (Italy)
Work Package	Services and quality of life (WP6)
WP Coordinator	Provincial Government of Lower Austria (Austria)
Subjects involved and their role	Natural Park of the Maritime Alps Piazza Regina Elena n.30, 12010 Valdieri (Cuneo) Patrizia Rossi (Director) Tel.: 017197397 Fax: 017197542 E-mail: parcalma.rossi@tin.it Primary schools of Valdieri and Entracque Secondary school of Borgo San Dalmazzo University of Turin, Education Sciences Municipality of Valdieri Municipality of Entracque Centro Servizi Amministrativi (CSA) of Cuneo National Park of Mercantour (France)
Spatial area involved	The small towns mostly concerned are Entracque and Valdieri, where the schools are located at the moment. However, the project area regards the Park and its surroundings.
Project budget	€ 40.000,00
Project purpose	The aim of the project was at developing a model of public school in mountain areas which would allow to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- keep on site local students and, at the same time, to attract students from neighbouring zones;- qualify local teachers, increasing their sense of belonging and job/life prospects; to attract external teachers;- define an education strategy based on European languages, especially the alpine ones and on scientific subjects, with advanced methods and equipments;- promote the integration of the school into networks of exchange with other alpine schools, aimed at the circulation of students, teachers and ideas. Creation of halls and colleges (both for students and external guests in summer).
Project methodology	The methodology included a concept modelling, cooperation among different stakeholders, know-how transfer, creation of a network of alpine schools and some



best practices exchanges.

In particular:

- analysis of the state of the art regarding schools in mountain areas (Piedmont and outside): peculiarities, priorities, potentialities, existing good practices (in Italy and in other alpine countries);
- formulation of a first theoretical model of an ‘international school’ in mountain areas: feasibility studies including financial, administrative and technical aspects (e.g. check with the current legislation and recent changes, financial requirements and other funding opportunities);
- analysis of the Maritime Alps area in terms of critical aspects and potentialities;
- definition of an international school model applied to the peculiarities of the Maritime Alps area.

Involvement of local key actors engaged in the promotion of schools in mountain areas in Piedmont and at a trans-national level (e.g. Principals of local schools, Park of the Maritime Alps, Provincial Educational Office of Cuneo, Mountain Communities, the Italian Alpine Club, etc.).

Project activities

Starting from the consideration that mountain schools become smaller and smaller because of the diminishing number of pupils, the case study aimed at offering attractive contents and activities to traditional school, by creating a new and innovative model linked to the mountain environment. Professional competences, sports, environment, local culture, computer science and foreign languages represent the main activities. The school will be a residential college open all year around, serving also as location for sports and cultural events. For this purpose the following steps have been implemented:

- identification of the area/schools for the carrying out of the case study
- involvement of the Park of the Maritime Alps
- drafting of a strategy and a work plan for the collaboration among Piedmont Region, the Park of the Maritime Alps, University of Turin and local actors and stakeholders
- collection of documents and data concerning the situation, priorities and challenges of schools in mountain areas (e.g. referring to the book ‘Le scuole di montagna in Piemonte’, Edmond Le Monnier ed., 2004)
- preliminary research for Best Practices related to schooling innovative initiatives in Piedmontese mountain areas.

Achieved results

Setting-up of a working team with the involvement of different actors at different levels.

Outlining of an initiative called ‘Centomontagne’ promoted by Piedmont Region, and co-funded by the “Compagnia di San Paolo” Foundation as call for best practices to be received directly from schools in Piedmontese mountain areas.

A survey among the local population has confirmed objectives and results: families from Entracque and Valdieri were asked to express their schooling needs and the reasons of their abandonment of the valley.

Discrepancies between planned results and results achieved

All the established objectives have been so far confirmed by the implemented actions.

Instruments proposed, revised and finalised

An action plan between the Park of the Maritime Alps and the French Park of Mercantour.

A formal agreement with the Centro Servizi Amministrativi of Cuneo.



	<p>A business plan including a financial plan and a feasibility study.</p>
Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders	<p>The pilot case was carried out with the method of an integrated participatory approach involving representatives of the Park of the Maritime Alps, schooling experts and local teachers. This working group established also external relationships with teachers, families, resident students and other institutions (Park of the Mercatour, with whom some meetings were organised in Tenda in order to collaborate in the drafting of the educational axis of the Action Plan).</p> <p>Through the pilot case design and drafting new forms of relationships between public institutions and citizens have been created. For the mountain population, often sceptical, it represents just the start of an involvement into a project for the future of the valley.</p>
Critical aspects	<p>The budget available is not sufficient for a real business plan, only a very preliminary one has been issued.</p>
Lessons learned	<p>The most encouraging result is the interest and support from the local population and institutions.</p>
Transferability	<p>The case study is replicable in any other mountain school, where a subject can play the role of catalyst. The subject can be constituted by a park, a local cultural organisation or a non-governmental organisation.</p>
Case study follow-up	<p>The Park of the Maritime Alps has the intention to go on with the project by steps, seeking for further financing support thanks to the interest expressed by the local and regional institutions.</p> <p>Potential sponsorship could be offered by the Regional Councillorship for Mountains and some private foundations like “Fondazione San Paolo per la Scuola”.</p>
Common issues with other projects	<p>A list (available on request) of 20 other examples of similar schooling experimentation was provided by the pilot case staff as result of potential synergies to be created and as a collection of outstanding best practices on the subject.</p>
SSC Experts’ comments and recommendations	<p>The aim of the project is at developing a model of public school in mountain areas. The idea behind the pilot case revealed to be good also because theory has been supported by an intensive trans-national and interregional exchange of ideas and practices. The involvement of a national Park facilitated the process (some specific themes concerning the alpine environment could be taught by the Park personnel as well as practical exercises). The setting up of a virtual platform in schools can be another option. The aim is at reducing the disadvantage of distance, saving teachers’ time and introducing students to innovative tools. In this case an interesting link with the Austrian pilot cases can be remarked. The inputs from this case study can be considered for building up an innovative and reference model of mountain school.</p>