***Week Report 1, Step 1***

The majority of Cypriot residents still use plastic bags to carry their groceries. Given the negative impact on marine wild life, the environment, and human health, students want to know what we can do to reduce the consumption of plastic bags in our society. So, their mission is to find out which is the most appropriate bag to carry our groceries: plastic, biodegradable or fabric bag, and then take actions in order to inform their community. The controversial socio-scientific issue that was chosen concerns the European directive on lightweight plastic carrier bags. According Directive (EU) 2015/720 amending Directive 94/62/EC, all Member States should take measures to reduce the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags, in order to avoid environmental, social and economic impacts. So, all EU Member States, including Cyprus, have to comply with the European plastic bags reduction directive, which refers to 90 disposable plastic bags per person, annually by 2019 and 40 by 2025 with a view to the complete abolition, as well as to end the free disposal of plastic bags by the end of 2018.

The main goal of our SOS4Love project is to familiarize school and local community with alternatives to plastic grocery bags and at the same time raise awareness about the need for prevention, control and reduction of environmental, social and economic impacts caused by the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags. Moreover, a key contributor to the success of our SOS4Loveproject is collaborations among schools across Cyprus and also with stakeholders such as a plastic bags company, the Environment Commissioner, 80 consumers and 3 decision makers such as the Mayor, the Ms and the Minister of Education. Through our project we support the Sustainable Development Goal 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 14 – Life Bellow Water, and SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals.

Τhe IDEA was to reduce the consumption of plastic bags by informing and raising the awareness of the community. Our action plan towards the SOLUTION is described in the following Steps:

**Investigation – Getting familiar with grocery bags**

1. Students watch a relevant animation and the socio-scientific issue is connected with students' daily routines and experiences, follow by the stories around the subject. Students also complete the KWHL form, choose the most appropriate bag on the basis of existing knowledge and construct a questionnaire to explore Consumers views of the subject.
2. Students classify different types of bags in plastic, biodegradable and fabric; learn to distinguish the biodegradable plastic bag and the biodegradable corn bag. They also study various sources (comics, videos, articles, interviews, posters), that reflect stakeholders’ different perspectives and points of view, and export information on the 4 different types of bags by applying the jigsaw method. Stakeholders involved in this issue are manufactures of plastic bags, environmental organizations and consumers. So, the manufacturers study newspaper articles, a manufacturer interview, and brochures. Environmental organizations study extracts from the interview of the Environment Commissioner. They also study relevant reports from TV channels, posters, and animal planet informational spots. Consumers study newspaper articles, posters, comics, and animal planet information spots, as well as data collected from the questionnaire they have developed in order to investigate consumer's view of the issue. Note that students have been studying 4 different types of bags: plastic bag, biodegradable plastic bag, biodegradable corn bag, fabric bag in order to choose among them the appropriate bag to carry our groceries.

**Argumentation – Final Decision**

1. Students discuss their research results, and argue to support the final decision of their group. They develop arguments for all the different types of bags (plastic bag, biodegradable plastic bag, biodegradable corn bag, fabric bag) and present the general evidence based decision of their team in the rest of the class. But there is also an individual vote through Plickers application, in order to express their personal choice.

**Proposing actions and preparing material**

1. Students propose actions to inform and sensitize school, local and wider society about the most appropriate bag to carry our groceries and the reasons why.
2. Students prepare the material that would help them implement the actions they proposed at the preview step: posters, magnets, brochures, promotional key rings, fabric bags, advertising t-shirts, TV spot.

**Participatory action in order to raise awareness**

1. Providing door to door information in order to inform the local community about alternative ways to carry their groceries.
2. Sharing information brochures, posters, promotional key rings and magnets to the wider community.
3. Creating fabric bags and advertising t-shirts, from reusable materials, in order to promote fabric bags.
4. Writing a script and creating a TV spot to raise the awareness of the community. Collaboration with Technological University of Cyprus in order to edit the film.
5. Setting up an information stand in the schoolyard.
6. Making a lecture to the school community.
7. Posting the results of the program on the school website.
8. Participate in a TV show in order to promote the TV spot and at the same time raise awareness.
9. Participate in teleconferences with other schools in order to inform them about their SOS4Love project and invite them to participate.
10. Collaboration with Technological University of Cyprus to present project’s results at the local conference for Responsible Research and Innovation.
11. Collaboration with the Cyprus Center for Environmental Research and Education and present our SOS4Love project’s results at the 1st local Student Conference: "Small Researchers for the Environment".
12. Collaboration with the local Town Hall in order to present the TV spot and also make a public speech at the Local Municipality World’s Environment Day Event, titled “Return to Nature”
13. Proposing mitigation measures to the Mayor, the Environment Commissioner, the Minister of Education and the Parliament, by communicating with them in several ways: email, letter, teleconference, face to face meeting.

**DIFFICULTIES:** To accomplish the objectives of the project, many hours of work have been required by both, students and teachers. We worked weekends and many non working hours. Also, in some cases, we needed the help of parents to study in jigsaw groups, because of the young age of pupils, but fortunately they were willing to offer. Finally, money was required for student transport at various conferences and this was difficult for the families, although local Town Hall sponsored a few of our expenses.