***Presentations by team leaders.***

***Sipyagina Anna, the head of the team "Bears" (Veliky Novgorod)***

The participation of the team of the Novgorod region (Russia) in the international online Olympiad on intercultural interaction "Cultural crossroads" allowed to:

* draw attention to the importance of teenagers ' understanding of the common cultural values that unite them in European countries;
* develop creative activity of students of the Novgorod region;
* expand their cultural range of knowledge in terms of the historical and cultural heritage of the Novgorod land for the whole of Russia, familiarizing other countries with this aspect;
* overcoming barriers of interpersonal and intercultural communication among teenagers in the Novgorod region;
* include students with disabilities (special educational needs) in the team of the Olympiad in the Novgorod region and intercultural interaction in General;

As a team leader, I set a task to unite students from different educational institutions of the Novgorod region and create a single team from different schools and regions of the Novgorod region (it was decided to act as one team from the ANO "Stand-up School"). This experience was successful and useful:

First, the children communicated not only within their school, but also outside of it (this is possible in online format).

Secondly, there was an opportunity to see and evaluate their ability to speak English (compared to the children of other schools).

Third, students from different districts were given the opportunity to participate in the Olympiad as a team for the honor of the Novgorod region.

The most valuable achievement of this Olympiad is when children have the opportunity to create their creative work in English under the guidance of a mentor, and in a situation of comfortable time distribution. (Compared to the classic English language Olympiads, where there is strictly limited time, no creativity, and a lot of stress to make a mistake).

In the future, with colleagues from the Novgorod region, we offer to:

* take into account the large volume and duration of the team leader's work with children: organizer, mentor, translator, supporting specialist (the Olympiad takes a sufficient amount of time throughout the school year);
* connect moderators to the organization and technical implementation/provision of children's dialogues between tours and information exchange;
* add an online discussion to the Olympiad schedule for teachers, team mentors (between rounds), and also in Zoom.

Sincerely yours,

The team of the Novgorod region!)))

***Magnus Fjørtoft, team leader Landoya School, Oslo (Norway)***

Hello Neighbors!

It is great to have been a part of this international project, as I believe this is a great opportunity to do something out of the ordinary school work. I hope this can be an interesting way to learn and expand the horizons for the young.

The students at our school worked very differently with their tasks at each round. First, it was the 8th-graders. We organized this as an internal competition where they all got the task and they came up with their own ideas about what artifact to choose, and how to present it in a creative way. There were some troubles to overcome, with how to get started, creative differences along the way, and the language. The group who won had worked really hard to get a good result.

Second, it was the 9th-graders. We chose to do this in a smaller group of pupils who attend a course called International Cooperation. The small group made it easier to coordinate, and they all worked really well from the very beginning. They had the great experience of communicating with the Arkhangelsk school pupils through Skype (although we had severe technical problems with this. The pupils are not to blame!). The efficiency with which they completed their task was extraordinary!

The third task had its very own problem: Corona. In these times we all experience difficulties in our daily lives, and the students in the final round had to adapt to a totally different school day. They worked from home, and tried their best to cooperate through Google Hangouts. They too had some creative differences, and learned that working individually and communicating only digitally is an obstacle in its own. They still managed, however, to put together a very fine video, explaining one of the other huge problems we all are facing: environmental problems due to our ever increasing greenhouse gas emissions.

I think the participants can learn a lot from participating, both about the specific subject they are working on, and about working in a group.

Among the skills needed for a great result I would definitely rank good group communication the highest. Also the skill of getting started and thinking creatively is very important. The same goes for information gathering and the ability to recognize what should be included and what to throw away.

***Larionova Svetlana, head of the team "Pomors", the city of Arkhangelsk.***

Good afternoon, I am glad to finally see and hear the participants, organizers and experts of our Olympiad, who together with us went through all the stages of the first season of the project.

Now we can talk about what emotions and feelings we experienced while working. There was everything: uncertainty and surprise. Both, joy for the result, and doubt in their own abilities. I admit that sometimes it was not easy, but we all were driven by excitement and responsibility to the whole team.

I would like to note that the project is very interesting in its content, it helped us to master the latest communication technologies. Clear criteria for evaluating experts helped us in our work. It is very important that we could consult Elena, the Olympiad coordinator, on all issues at almost any time.

I believe that the main advantage of the Olympiad is communication between participants in the process of completing tasks, exchanging impressions, and discovering something new. We watched and discussed videos of the three rounds always with the whole team. It is a pity that this year there was no face-to-face meeting at the end of the season. It would have been great!!!

Many thanks to the moderators for the opportunity to participate in such an exciting business, and good luck to everyone in the new academic year.

***Shamarukhina Maya, the head of the team "Kola pomors" the city of Murmansk.***

The students of the gymnasium and I received a lot of positive emotions from participation. When I was asked to take part in the Olympiad, I was very worried if the children would cope with the tasks, as there were more questions than answers. But in the process of preparing for the 1st round, all doubts disappeared. The children were so interested when discussing which exhibit of our school Museum to present, everyone offered their favorite one and explained why. It was difficult to make a choice, Honestly, I was worried about the 2nd and the 3rd round. Will the participants be able to present it in English? But the children showed independence, and almost everything was taken into their own hands. By participating in the Olympiad and watching videos of other teams, the children learned a lot about the culture of their neighbors and improved their English skills when communicating with other children and among themselves. Thanks to participation in the project, students revealed their creative abilities. We would like to Express our gratitude to the organizers and hope for further collaboration.

***Expert presentations***

***Alexander Yakimov, expert of the 2nd round, Senior Lecturer,  
Department of Germanic Philology and Scandinavistics,  
Petrozavodsk State University***

"The Cultural crossroads Olympiad was an event of a completely new format for me. I have never participated in anything like this before, despite more than fifteen years of experience as a teacher, examiner, and expert. "Cultural crossroads" turned out to be not just a crossroads of cultures in the usual sense, but a multi-level, so to speak, three-dimensional intersection, where traditions, values and thinking of very different people from very different places had met.

I really liked all the participants. It is good to see that a new generation is growing up, that it is not like us at all and that ıt can teach us a lot.

There were winners in the competition, but there were no losers, because all participants had the opportunity to talk about themselves and their region and learn a lot about others. We have all seen that the North can be very different, but the people who live here do have a lot in common."

***Alexander Selyanin, expert of the 3rd round, Director General School League ROSNANO, St. Petersburg***

"I got a great pleasure evaluating the final work of the teams. This was especially interesting, because the new unexpected conditions for implementing such a project in the context of restrictions on real communication became a real challenge for the project participants. I am sure that all the teams, although in different ways, managed to cope with this. To be honest, I don't like to give ratings and make a rating. From my point of view, speakıng about projects like ours, there are neıther the best nor the worst ones. Because the main goals are to enjoy working together as a team, improve communication efficiency, and get a practical result that is meaningful to you."

***Ekaterina Yarkova, expert of the 3rd round, head of the Department of environmental education and tourism of the national Park "Vodlozersky"***

Hello dear project participants and colleagues!

I was very happy to take part in viewing and commenting on the videos! I never stop being surprised by the younger generation. I am very happy with the work done by my colleagues, because it is difficult to attract young people and even more so to engage them in active actions to save our planet.

I love to quote with a deep meaning of the phrase: "We have learned to fly through the air like birds. We learned to swim underwater like fish. We still have to learn to live on Earth as people."D. Darrell.

Nothing affects the state of nature as much as human activity, and no natural disasters have a more serious and lasting effect on the environment. Emissions of toxic waste poison water, air and soil and lead to the death of entire ecosystems, deforestation and poaching lead to the extinction of many species of animals. The situation is getting worse as technology develops.

Nature protection is one of our main responsibilities. Nature gives us all its wealth (material and spiritual). And we, in turn, must spend it wisely and carefully, because it is not infinite. In each video, I saw for myself a certain "core" - a goal/task that the children can already implement on their own. In some cases, there are more serious environmental problems that need to be worked on for a long time and where a systematic approach is necessary. But someone has come up with a solution now, and this fact can’t make you unhappy, – everything starts small (with first yourself)!

Almost every country in the world has a law on nature protection. It obliges people to protect natural resources, use them correctly, and take care that nature does not become exhausted and will serve us for a long time.

Therefore, we must understand the importance of nature protection from our earliest childhood. In your videos, you offer to work with the younger generation, conduct actions and promote environmental protection. I hope that you will not stop and will continue to visit your friends and acquaintances, and I, in my turn, can guarantee that the national Park "Vodlozersky" will always provide the necessary support with human resources and educate together with you!

Good luck in new projects, do not stop there, fight for the right to live in a clean world, do the good things and love everything that surrounds you! Nature conservation is the best thing we can do right now!