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The role of leadership in education as a decisive factor for the Communication of Sciences: The case of the European project Connect (Horizon2020)

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The term "Science Communication" describes the scientific field of theoretical knowledge and practical skills that focuses on issues of two-way communication between the "scientific laboratory" and society, but also on communication between scientists coming from different fields of expertise. Its integration into school environments and educational institutions is an absolutely innovative action in the educational landscape. In addition, it can be safely considered as an expression of leadership of the persons and agencies involved since the role of the people who are called upon to apply the principle of leadership consists mainly in the management and coordination of systems and groups both on a synchronous and a longitudinal level: Leaders should contribute catalytically in the areas of motivating, supporting and developing colleagues, cultivating solidarity, encouraging innovative actions, establishing and defending the appropriate work culture and, ultimately, shaping strategy and vision. In short, leaders are actually charged with the task of achieving the goals set at the collective level by exerting a positive influence on the behavior of his associates, an effect that can greatly activate the feelings of passion, excitement and assimilation that characterize the scientific phenomenon. A typical case of all the above mentioned is the project Connect (<https://www.connect-science.net/>), a three-year project (2020-2023) in which the Regional Directorate of Education of Crete participated, included in the European Program "Horizon 2020" in framework of the "Science with and for Society" (SwafS) module. It was aimed at schools and offered a model that strengthens children's confidence in their engagement with science as a method of solving everyday problems and at the same time brings them into contact with scientists by involving parents and the local community. In other words, Connect tried to foster the belief that "science is for me". Its evaluation has shown that the successful exercise of leadership, both at the level of the project coordinators and at the level of the principals of the participating schools, has been the critical factor for the success of the project and the achievement of the goal, i.e. Communication of Science with society.