

# Uncle HueRva

## Calasancio School - Zaragoza

The Uncle Huerva project was born from the interdisciplinary and inter-level projects that we promoted at the Calasancio Escolapios school in Zaragoza to respond to the ecological concerns that children aged 6 to 9 years had expressed related to the state of one of Zaragoza's rivers, the Huerva River, which passes next to our city center. It should be noted that the Huerva River is one of the most polluted in Spain and that its abandonment situation shows an unpleasant picture of it. Likewise and to frame the name of the project, it is necessary to know that in Aragon, our land, the elderly people of the villages are called "Uncle", thus indicating the respect that is owed and the value that is given to their advises.

Students in grades 1, 2nd, and 3rd found a strange letter from an unknown character at their tables one day, saying he felt alone and abandoned, even despised by the people who passed by him. In the missive he explained to the girls and boys of our school, that he had been someone very important, but that now, they had even hidden him as he passed through Zaragoza. In this way, from the Meraki project of the school we decided to respond by explaining that the Calasancio school and its students wanted to help him, because we do not like anyone to feel that way. We started this way by working the necessary emotional part that every project must have and that, in addition, corresponds to some of the contents that students must work on.

The answer to our letters was not expected and was accompanied by the surprise of knowing who our unknown writer was: the Huerva River. Knowing its problems helped us investigate its course, its history, its layout through our city,... It helped us discover that it is buried as it passes through the center of Zaragoza, which is one of the most polluted rivers, the importance it has in the school district,... From this knowledge that we were acquiring, the students proposed alternatives to the underground to integrate the Huerva River into the urban environment.

To work on the involvement of the students in the neighborhood, Uncle Huerva (this is how the river was presented) explained that he was the heart of the neighborhood and brought us a collection of cards from the neighborhood along with the board game that accompanied them, so that each child brought home the game of Uncle Huerva. Thus, we managed to let the shops of the neighborhood, represented in the different cards, know of our project and our intention to improve the environment of the Huerva River as it passes through the streets near the school and, therefore, our environment and our neighborhood.

It was the students themselves who decided to write letters to the Mayor of Zaragoza to ask for their cooperation and help in our intention to make visible the Huerva River, in the same way they planned and designed a day of cleaning the river banks in which, due to the plight situation of them, the little ones would make "support" to all the adults in the neighborhood who would like to collaborate with us.

The confinement that COVID-19 entailed that we have not been able to implement this day of cleanliness, which we will carry out at the beginning of the new course. However, the Mayor received our letters and, the shops of the neighborhood were interested in our ideas and projects. In addition, the project was rooted with a larger impact on the environment in which we participated the people and businesses of the neighborhood of other projects of the school.

We have managed that, from the game, the excitement, and the service, the little ones discover that they too can contribute their grain of sand, that they can have great ideas and put them into practice with others. They could understand that they live in a neighborhood that needs them, and all of it, like everything that happens in Meraki, playing and working as a team.

Link to one of the videos that Uncle Huerva sent us: <https://youtu.be/fFeAvS-SfPc>

Two-card photos of the game

