

Insights from the 6th Conference of the SIEST Mediterranean Network

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Science and technology are becoming more and more important for people's everyday lives. The current scientific and technological progress is impressive and sometimes even beyond bold imagination. All these new advances may hold the key to a better future for humanity, but they also require critical examination by both scientists and lay people. In order to be able to put modern science and technology under scrutiny, lay people need to have the opportunity to build a meaningful understanding of the natural world and develop critical thinking and decision-making skills when at school; in other words, they need to be educated for becoming scientifically and technologically literate. The good news is that research on science and technology education can significantly contribute in addressing such needs. The research community is very active and, as it expands, it also forms international networks that aim to promote fruitful interactions and joined research projects with useful educational implications.

SIEST is actually one such network. It was launched back in 2008 with the aim of bringing together science and technology education researchers from all around the Mediterranean Sea. Since then, scholars from several Mediterranean countries like France, Greece, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Italy or Spain have the opportunity to exchange research ideas, methods, findings and expertise by creatively interacting in the SIEST Conferences held every two years and the research groups formed within the SIEST network. It should be noted that the enculturation of younger researchers is strongly emphasized; SIEST aims at giving them the opportunity to interact with -or even work at the elbows of- more experienced members of the network and benefit not only from their expertise but also from their different research traditions.

This year we had the honor and pleasure to organize the SIEST Conference in the University of Patras in Greece. We are very happy to report that the number of participants was highly satisfactory and the dynamics of the network really promising. The worldwide dissemination of the studies that were presented in the Conference would not be possible without the *Educational Journal of the University of Patras UNESCO Chair*. Having an open-access international journal hosting the papers of the SIEST 2019 Conference is actually very important for the SIEST network since it contributes to its further development.

So, many thanks should go to the journal's editor in chief, Professor Konstantinos Ravanis, as well as to the members of the Conference's Scientific Committee for the high-quality reviews they provided for the submitted papers that finally made it to this issue.