



Pilot action of sustainable fruition of transitional waters through environmental education: *Hydropsiche Project*

On action 4.6 we have launched a very small project, which is called *Hydropsiche*, with the schools.

The project is aimed at a reinforcement of the concept of natural heritage value, with



respect to river mouth ecosystems, lagoons and coastal wetlands (defined as *transitional waters TW*), and at a dissemination of scientific knowledge. To this aim, the project staff developed a collaboration with a group of science teachers of an intermediate school of the Lecce Province (the Leonardo da Vinci school of Cavallino) to define a activity

programme in the field of environmental education targeted to 11-14 year old students. The innovative idea was to link environmental education with local handicraft to maximise the interest of students; in some way we can say that pottery handicraft typical of the Lecce Province was the approach utilised to reach the aims of the project.

An artisan was involved to collaborate with the project group and with the school teachers to realise terra-cotta whistles, typical of the area, as perfect representations of benthic invertebrates and phytoplankton taxa characteristics of the protected areas studied by the project.

The project supplied information on their ecological relevance in the ecosystems, on their behaviour and functional role; the teachers integrated the activity in the program of zoology and ecology, through field and laboratory exercitations and by describing in detail the morphology of the taxa linked with their behaviour and ecological functions; the artisan and the students applied the



acquired knowledge on morphology, phylogeny and ecology to realise perfect copies of animals and plankton cells with terra cotta. The school participated with the project products to the Mediterre Conference and won two Awards. The products are then labelled with the name of the protected areas and available locally as protected areas gadget. The project represented a

model which is going to be replicated in the Balkan countries in the future.