

II.A.3. COMENIUS - Results of supported activities

Please provide your assessment of the results of the activities supported in 2007, relating them to the objectives set out in the NA work programme for 2007 as appropriate. The information requested should relate to selected, open and completed activities as defined in page 7 and relates, thus, to activities supported both under LLP and Socrates II.

b. School partnerships

1) Please describe the results of the selection round 2007:

1590 applications were submitted to meet the deadline of 30th March (1423 for multilateral partnerships, 167 for bilateral partnerships). The number of submitted applications has decreased by about 9,4 % in comparison to 2006 year (1740 projects) due to the fact that information was not provided on time and there were frequent changes in the procedures, which discouraged the potential beneficiaries, who may not have had the determination to follow the changes. Moreover, the priority was given to the renewal partnerships, which also discouraged beginners. 681 projects were approved – 31% less than in 2006 - average grant was higher and awarded mainly for 2- years. The geographical distribution was satisfactory, however, the highest number of applications was obtained from the slaskie (25,5% of all applications received), mazowieckie (11,7%) and malopolske (8,1%) regions and the lowest number: 2,7% from the opolskie region, 2,8% from lubuskie region and 3,6% from lubelskie region. As far as the location of the schools is concerned, we can notice that all areas are represented, but the majority of applications were submitted by schools from urban regions (73,2% of approved projects). The reason is that schools from cities and towns usually have better access to information resources. In order to increase the participation of rural schools, NA ran wide-spread promotion campaign through organizing seminars and workshops and also gave priority to schools from rural areas in selection for the contact seminars. The quality of applications, submitted by Polish schools, was good. After interagency consultation period 681 projects were approved including 655 multilateral projects and 26 bilateral projects. Totally 909 applications were rejected, including 767 multilaterals projects and 140 bilateral projects. The National Agency is very frustrated about the final results – rejecting applications was caused by the lack of funds.

1.1) Indicate to what extent they correspond to the objectives set out in the 2007 NA work programme.

Good

We can observe that results of 2007 selection round correspond well to the operational objectives of Comenius work programme: 309 projects included encouraging the learning of modern foreign languages; 162-included supporting the development of ICT based content, services, pedagogies and practice; 30-included enhancing the quality and European dimension of teacher training; 61-included supporting improvements in pedagogical approaches and school management.

1.2) Indicate to what extent the selected projects address the priorities published in the Call 2007.

Good

Projects approved in 2007 correspond to a satisfactory degree to Comenius School Partnerships priorities published in the Call 2007. In 2007 priority was given firstly to good quality renewal applications from existing partnerships. Concerning new school partnerships, priority was given to bodies, which have not yet participated in a partnership. Thematic priorities for partnerships in 2007 were achieved as follows: promotion of intercultural dialogue- in 196 projects; promotion of foreign language learning – 206; helping persons with a disability or other special needs to take part in the project - 23; 48 partnerships focused on social integration/exclusion, 134 were concentrated on ethnic minorities; 14 of approved partnerships were aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for girls/women and boys/men.

2) To what extent are the results of completed projects in line with the planned results in terms of:

2.1) types of activities undertaken?

Good

The majority of the planned activities were carried out. Any changes to the planned activities were caused by diminishing the partnership group due to a matching process. Schools reported changes concerning time, size, place of the activities, but the main ideas and type of activities remained the same. Most popular types of activities undertaken by schools were: pupils teamwork, staff teamwork (multidisciplinary team of teachers) and classroom work – it gave an opportunity to cooperate and interact, exchange ideas, share knowledge. It helped to build better relations between pupils and teachers. Individual pupil work was also a very popular activity- it encouraged pupils to work independently, taught them how to use different sources of information, collect and compare. Field work enabled to integrate projects activities fully into curriculum.

2.2) types and volume of mobility?

Good

Concerning data from final statistics reports, both types and volume of finalized mobilities are satisfactory. As for the number of staff participating in transnational mobility in all types of finalised projects 4522 teachers took part in transnational project meetings, teacher exchanges, head teacher study visits, teacher placements, class exchanges and Comenius 3 network activities abroad. The most popular mobility was transnational project meetings, the least numerously represented mobility was Comenius 3 network activities abroad. The number of disabled persons participating in all types of mobility was very low – only 4 teachers took part in transnational project meetings (2), head teacher study visit (1) and teacher placements (1).

As for the number of persons from associated partners, 47 persons took part in transnational project meetings.

As for the number of pupils participating in transnational mobility in all types of finalized projects 3472 pupils took part in this kind of mobility. The number of pupils with a disability participating in the abovementioned types of mobility was rather low – only 38 pupils (less than 1% of all participating pupils) took part in transnational project meetings. The Polish National Agency always underlines the essential role of pupils mobility in all types of Comenius projects. While planning the working visits the director and the teachers rarely took into consideration the possibility of taking pupils. During information meetings the Polish NA continuously informs about such a possibility.

2.3) types of outputs produced?

Good

Concerning data from final statistics, reports of outputs in partnerships well correspond to the planned results. Polish NA has implemented European Shared Treasure on-line system for Comenius projects to carry out in 2006 / 2007 and 2007/2008 school year. All schools were obliged to fill in on-line EST database. We collected descriptions focusing on the most important features of the project: objectives, themes, methodology, activities, results and benefits for the participants.

Multilateral and bilateral partnerships developed the following products: schools prepared art objects, multimedia presentations on CDs, DVDs and set up web pages (it enables the school to become more visible – the school's website will give parents and other interested parties information on what is happening within the school) as well as books/leaflets – work of pupils in national languages of partner schools and in the working language of the project, guides, cookery-books, calendars, artistic items such as: hand painted pictures, theatre performances.

Schools also prepared, among other things: training in ICT programmes, evaluation tools diagnosing chosen aspects of school life, work programmes, tools for internal evaluation system.

2.4) types of dissemination and exploitation activities undertaken by the beneficiaries?

Good

Polish schools attach proper importance to dissemination and exploitation of results in partnerships. Many projects developed web sites or disseminated their results in booklets/leaflets, newspaper articles. Performances, conferences, language competitions, exhibitions of project products organized in schools were open for all the students, their parents and local communities. All activities undertaken involved many different actors in the field of school education: not only schools but also local communities, associations, research centres. Dissemination helped schools in many cases to receive additional funds from non-governmental organizations.

3) What were the main difficulties met by beneficiaries for implementing their school partnership project? Please describe up to 3 difficulties (by order of significance).

Difficulty (1)

The main problem seemed to be high administrative workload and co-operation between local state authorities (school owners) and public schools in the field of delays in transferring funds for projects received from the NA. This is caused by specific feature of Polish law and the fact that headteachers in public schools have no authorisation to sign agreements and to have funds at their sole disposal.

Difficulty (2)

In many cases, difficulties in partner school co-operation were mentioned: organising the co-ordinators' meetings, the dates for pupils exchanges, etc. Schools also indicated lack of support from partners and lack of regular contacts with teachers/pupils from partner schools – there was no flow of information needed to carry out the project.

Difficulty (3)

In some cases staff members indicated insufficient command of foreign languages (except for language teachers).

4) Please describe the impact of the school partnerships on the beneficiaries (schools, teachers, pupils,...), as you perceive it, and indicate to what extent this impact corresponds to the objectives of the action.

Major Impact

Effects of completed school partnership projects are indicated by beneficiaries in the final reports. Beneficiaries indicated impact of projects on pupils, teachers, school as a whole and social environment of a school. All the results mentioned in the reports correspond to the objectives of the action.

The most important results concerning the pupils and beneficiaries: increasing motivation to learn, increasing language and ICT skills, increasing self confidence and social skills and increasing knowledge of partner country and culture.

The most important results concerning the teachers: increasing knowledge of partner country and culture, increasing ICT, language

and project management skills, increasing motivation and pedagogical skills.

The most important results concerning school as an organization: increasing cooperation among teachers/staff, changes in language teaching policy and the curriculum, increasing support of the school management and changes to organizational arrangements.

The most important results concerning the social environment of a school: increasing parent's participation in a school life, increasing cooperation with other schools in a region, increasing other local actors participation and also participation of local companies in school activities.

4.1) Describe up to 3 concrete effects/impact (by order of significance)

Effect/impact (1)

Effects of school partnership projects indicated most often by beneficiaries in final reports are: educational skills, psychological and social skills and social participation in a school life.

Effect/impact (1)

Increased motivation to learn among pupils and cooperation among teachers/staff.

Effect/impact (1)

Increased parents' participation in school life.

5) To what extent are the results of this action relevant for/transferable to other beneficiaries and stakeholders?

Major relevance

School partnership projects are mostly concerned with pedagogical and organizational issues at school, so results can be transferable to other schools or organizations which are active in a field of education.

Results of projects can be used by other schools, community centers, non government organizations working in the field of education.

In the case of vocational schools realizing Comenius projects results can be transferred to labour offices, enterprises, career advisors. In the case of projects devoted to building knowledge on a given theme (not only pedagogical knowledge) results can be useful for everybody interested in the subject of the project.

6.1) Please provide, if possible, up to 3 examples of success stories or best practices.

success story or best practice (1)

Project Title: A European Identity Trip

Coordinating School: Poland, VIII Liceum Ogólnokształcące in Białystok

Partner's School: Germany and Sweden

The main and the most important product created jointly was the common book entitled: 'A European Identity Trip'. Students from each school wrote stories describing local myths, legends and unknown stories and three best papers from each country were translated into English and collected in one book. There were 200 copies printed and each school received a number of books to be distributed between students, parents and teachers. What is more, all schools tried to send books to local museums, archives, libraries and other local schools. Students also organized a promoting event in their own country. They also created the Internet webpage. This webpage was their communication platform and it was also a place where students could read all papers which were not included in the book. Students sent each other materials presenting the schools, cities and countries, they explored the history of their own regions, learnt how to collect and question recourses necessary to write papers and they had a chance to practice their English. All papers were also available on the CD.

success story or best practice (2)

Project Title: Prehistorical origins of European cultures

Coordinating School: Italy, Istituto Comprensivo Statale Pietro da Cemmo

Partner's schools: Austria, Spain, Poland

The joint final product of the cooperation between the partner schools was the DVD film entitled: "A typical day in a prehistoric settlement" which was prepared by all schools on the basis of the shared material. Each school presented its final products and the process of the realization of the project as a multimedia presentation. Several scenes of each film became part of the joint film of all partners. This way the participants were able to compare their work with that of the partners. The realization of the project enabled all the schools to reach a better knowledge of the prehistory of their territories. The film and other final products were going to be very useful and effective didactic instruments. This experience gained by each school during the realization of the project has improved the work with students.

success story or best practice (3)

Project Title: Buildings – our European Ties

Coordinating School: Poland, Zespół Szkół

Partner's schools: Spain, Germany, Romania

Schools worked on buildings in historical context. Their major interest concentrated on castles, fortresses, palaces and other historical buildings in their regions. Each school organised trips and open-air activities in the places with historical buildings in order to get to know them, their history and compare life in the past and nowadays. After the trips each school worked individually on final products and then on joint products during the visits. In the course of the past school year schools produced the following products: models of historical buildings, power point presentation, pictures of castles and palaces painted on bottles, posters, postcards,

guidebook on castles, palaces and other historical buildings in our regions. The joint products were: power point presentation, the guidebook and the film documenting our activities. Systematically, the project websites were updated where the teachers inform students, staff, parents and others interested in activities. Dissemination of the products took place during the visits in partner schools, they were also sent via the Internet or by post. Some of the products were distributed outside the partnership e.g. the guidebook on historical buildings and the film with our activities were given to the local authorities. All schools organised the display of their products in special “ Comenius Corners” in their schools as well as in local community halls.

6.2) Have these cases inspired similar initiatives at national or regional level?

Yes

The book entitled: ‘A European Identity Trip’ (first success story of best practice) had a different impact in each partner country. In Poland, for example, one of the winning stories entitled ‘About the Prophet from the Woods’ inspired other students from school to write a much bigger paper and send it to ‘The KARTA Center’ (an organization, documenting and popularizing the recent history of Poland and Eastern Europe). Students used the story from the book as an inspiration to take part in the educational project in cooperation with the Batory Foundation entitled: ‘History at Hand’. In March 2007, a deepened and a more academic paper is taking part in the annual competition for historic research works for pupils above the elementary level.

In 2007 examples of good practice were presented on the conferences, meetings and during Comenius Festivals organized in Poland by regional coordinators with National Agency. As a results many schools decided to use such experiences to manage their school in local environment,prepare new Partnerships and cooperate with many institutions, for exapmle local media, museums, non-governmental organizations and local authorities.