

II.A.3 COMENIUS - Results of supported activities

Please provide your assessment of the results of the activities supported in 2008, relating them to the objectives set out in the NA work programme for 2008 as appropriate.

b. School Partnerships

Please note that "School partnerships" are meant to denote both the school partnerships under LLP, as well as the school, language and school development projects under Socrates II.

1) Did your NA have any completed projects in 2008? (if you select "no", there is no need to answer the other questions in this page)

Yes

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 activities undertaken by schools corresponded to the previous plan. The most popular types of activities were meetings, competitions, exhibitions, pupils and staff teamwork, performances and e-mail correspondence. They contributed to the exchange of ideas and experience.

As planned, throughout the projects implementation, project participants learned to cooperate, deepened their knowledge about educational systems in Europe and improved understanding of other cultures.

Theatre performances, brochures, films and other products helped young people to understand and express issues linked to the intercultural communication. It improved their language skills and improved cooperation between schools.

2.2) types and volume of mobility?

Good

According to final statistical reports 1752 teachers took part in mobilities of multilateral and bilateral projects such as: transnational project meetings, class exchanges, school management staff study visits or teacher exchanges. The number of disabled persons participating in this kind of mobilities was higher than in the previous year - 56 people. 139 representatives of associated partners took part in mobilities.

Statistics show that 1317 pupils were involved in the mobilities. Still, the number of pupils with special educational needs was rather low, only 109 of them participated in transnational meetings. Comenius projects involved 221 pupils from geographically, socially and economically disadvantaged areas. As the above mentioned statistics show, both the types and volume of finalized mobilities are satisfactory.

2.3) types of outputs produced?

Good

In the multilateral and bilateral partnerships finalized in 2008, products such as books, art objects, leaflets, websites, CD-ROMs, videos, artistic works, theatre, music performances, pedagogic materials were developed. All schools were obliged to fill in on-line EST database which had been implemented for Comenius projects carried out in the school years 2006/2007 and 2007/2008.

As previously planned, examples of good practice were collected and published on the Comenius website and described in presentations and promotional material distributed among potential beneficiaries of the programme. The most interesting products were short films on DVD, mini dictionaries, exhibitions, and games. According to the data from final statistics the planned results were achieved by the beneficiaries.

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

Good

In the majority of schools planned results and products were achieved. Many schools extended the collaboration with local authorities, regional institutions and other schools in their region. They produced websites and published their products in local media. They also developed publications on their own, presented projects' results through exhibitions or stage performances. Some schools developed pedagogical materials to be used in the classroom and ready for dissemination at the regional, national and European level.

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 problems seemed to be high administrative workload and difficult co-operation between local state authorities (school owners) and public schools. There were complaints on delays in transferring Comenius grants from the school running body's bank accounts to schools. These problems were caused by specific feature of Polish law and the fact that headmasters in public schools have no authorization to sign agreements.

Difficulty (2)

In many cases, difficulties in partner school co-operation occurred while organizing the coordinators meetings, deciding on 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 not enough information flow to carry out the project in the most satisfactory way.

Difficulty (3)

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

4.1) To what extent did the school partnerships impact on the beneficiaries (schools, teachers, pupils,...) , as you perceive it:

Major impact

4.2) Please describe up to 3 concrete areas of effect/impact by order of significance

Effect/impact (1)

The rise of confidence in using foreign languages among teachers and pupils was most commonly named by the beneficiaries as an important effect of international cooperation within Comenius School Partnerships. Thanks to co-operation with students from partner schools and active contact with their culture, Polish students' intercultural competences have increased significantly.

Effect/impact (2)

Parents engagement in school life was underlined in many Comenius Partnerships final reports as well as their raising willingness to cooperate with teachers – also stronger cooperation among teachers and school teaching and management staff. Quite often there was an impact on teachers mentioned in terms of development of new pedagogical approaches, entrepreneurship and confidence in using ICT. School management staff has developed new ideas in terms of teachers' work and school organization on the basis of knowledge exchange and final effects of their projects (pedagogical materials, brochures, international seminars).

Effect/impact (3)

In many cases social skills of teachers and pupils were listed as another set of abilities broadened while participating in Comenius projects. The motivation to learn have increased among pupils as well. Their knowledge on different countries and cultures was enhanced.

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

Major relevance

According to final reports submitted in 2008, Comenius Projects had an important role in building effective and long lasting partnerships between all parties locally involved in school and pre-school education. The major part of tangible effects listed in final reports may occur important in building and strengthening cooperation between educational institutions, local authorities and members of local community. Examples of good practice, knowledge and experience exchange taking place at the national and European level have an impact on educational policy of wide range of communities taking part in the programme. Parents' participation in activities implemented within Comenius projects has raised and was often mentioned by direct beneficiaries as a strong indicator of project success.

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

success story or best practice (1)

The multilateral project "Let us smile at Europe" was implemented by the Primary School nr 3 im. gen. Fr. Kleeberga in Włodawa with the schools from Malta, Italy and Hungary.

Partner schools worked on the selections of local legends. Guest speakers representing local communities visited schools to present local, dying-out legends. In classrooms students were engaged in different activities based on these legends and covering the fields of literature, I.T., and arts.

Each partner school created a booklet on local legends, compiled and illustrated by the students. These booklets were exchanged at the project meeting. Then all work was recorded on DVD. The Project has its own website specifically created for it. One can access the website at www.smile-at-europe.ik.org.

success story or best practice (2)

„European Meadow“ project was prepared by schools from three countries: Poland, Germany and Latvia.

Every country has laid out, sowed and cultivated a meadow. A cookbook with meadow recipes was written by pupils and teachers in three languages. Every school produced a book and exhibited it in the school library for pupils, parents and teachers.

All partners made a perpetual calendar with pictures presenting project activities carried out by the pupils. The calendar was then distributed among partners. Along with the pupil activities further contribution was made by the disabled children and teenagers.

success story or best practice (3)

“Generations’ Diary - everyday life at both sides of the Iron Curtain” project was implemented by schools from Germany, Denmark, the Czech Republic, Latvia and Poland.

In the project young people from partner schools followed and compared the life of three generations at both sides of the Iron Curtain. Having analyzed everyday life of grandparents and parents as well as the life of contemporary young people, the students were predicting how the next generation of young people would live, and created the vision of the year 2030.

Studying the life of past generations students interviewed “history witnesses”, collected everyday objects used from post-war times to the present day, organized exhibitions, and made films. Students created multimedia presentations, wrote scripts, made films, and wrote creative texts “Generation 2030”. Students’ intercultural competence has increased significantly. All the final products of the project can be found on the project internet site www.zs-6.com/comenius.

Students learned how to work in a group, discuss and be tolerant to each other. Their media competence and their ability to use modern information technologies developed greatly. Thanks to cooperation with other students from partner schools and active contact with their culture, students’ intercultural competence has increased significantly.

Teachers developed new interesting teaching methods such as creative writing, script writing, workshops, making and editing films.

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

Yes

The implementation of one of the assignments (The Old Games and Pastimes) in the project “Let us smile at Europe” was already used in the two following editions of the Festival of Three Cultures. It is an annual event organized by the Museum of the Leczynsko-Wlodawski Lakeland, which, as one of the thirteen Polish cultural initiatives, was signed into the celebrations of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 in Poland. The participation of the school in this event was a wonderful opportunity to promote it in the region.

One of the final products of the “Generations’ Diary - everyday life at both sides of the Iron Curtain” project – a presentation “A Museum of Everyday Life” inspired grand parents and parents to collect many documents and objects of historical value. As reported by the project participants, some schools show interest in the project and are willing to start similar activities.