

Comenius Multilateral School Partnership 2012-1-NO1-COM06-04889 1

My-OURS. Migration and Youth.

Towards An Open-Minded, Unprejudiced and Receptive School/Society.

Work at the partner schools during the second project year focused on exclusion and inclusion practices (E), migration as a topic in literature and the arts (F), and the elaboration of guidelines for integration for the young European citizen (G).

The objectives to be achieved were as follows:

1. Understand current local and school policies and practices on migration and integration.

2. Understand the ways and views of (im)migrant students at the schools involved.

3. Make film clips to portray the "countries present at school".

4. A writing competition on the analysis of literary excerpts on migration.

5. Involve schools in topical activities on Comenius Day.

6. Photo competition on 'migration'.

7. Write guidelines on integration for the young European citizen.

The participating schools were expected to disseminate results from the work done within the school communities via Comenius Corners (informative posters), on the schools' websites, by celebrating Comenius Days and in the local communities by help of the press.

The documents necessary for a common understanding of the various assignments to be carried out during the second year were elaborated during the second preparatory teacher workshop in Trujillo 6 – 10 October 2013. Here the guidelines and rules for the photo contest (6), for the writing competition(4) were formulated, preliminary ideas for the Comenius Days were shaped ((5) topical activities on intercultural experiences including international food cooked by the schools' students), guidelines for the interviews of immigrants (2) and school representatives (1) were designed and guidelines for the film clips 'family snapshots' were written(3). The participating teachers were introduced to examples of 'family snapshots' by the Italian ICT-coordinator Anna Rita Colella, who was also responsible for the project website. The project coordinator Sabine Rolka introduced the workshop participants to the ICC-tool, an instrument for measuring intercultural competences designed by teachers during a workshop

co-organized by the Pestalozzi Programme and the Intercultural Cities project of the Council of Europe and the European Wergeland Centre, Oslo. The ICC-tool was applied during the second project year in connection with the literary analysis of an excerpt from Chris Cleave's novel *The Other Hand*.

During the project year there was regular and good communication within the Comenius google group which the participating teachers used. Here information was exchanged, documents, links and ideas were shared, and the updating of plans and schedules occurred. All 5 partners depended on supportive local school communities. Both the host families, student councils, staff and schools' principals contributed to making the project a success. For example, did the administration of U. Pihl upper secondary school organize the farewell party and parent, professional musician and composer, Mr Leiva, entertained the audience, playing the guitar, accompanied by his daughter Sophia Leiva, host student, who played the trumpet. The headmaster of I. C. A. Zanón in Udine conducted the school's alumni choir at the farewell party of the final student-teacher workshop.

The following two partners had carried out their Comenius Day by the time this report was written: U. Pihl Upper Secondary School, which celebrated its Comenius Day on 8 January 2014, and Istituto Commerciale A. Zanón, Udine, which did so on 11 April 2014.

About 500 pupils in all, took part in the second project year in one way or other. They studied net migration in the local and regional communities, analyzed transcultural literature and films on migration (e.g. *Persepolis* (U. Pihl Upper Secondary School), *Alemanya* (Gymnasium Parsberg), *Quando sei nato non puoi piu nasconderti* (all participants at student-teacher workshop at I. C. A. Zanón, Udine), worked on theatre plays on illegal youth migration (e.g. *Meet Me*, U. Pihl Upper Secondary School) and on literary texts dealing with migration and otherness (e.g. at U. Pihl Upper Secondary School: *Grisen* by L. Saabye Christensen and Tusen *Tegninger* by Karpe Diem).

They interviewed school representatives and immigrants on existing integration policies and practices, participated in an essay competition (topic: A Literary Essay on the excerpt from Chris Cleave's novel *The Other Hand*), celebrated intercultural Comenius Days, made family snapshots and studied the image of migrants in literature, theatre, film, the arts and the media. Information about the project was dissiminated via the schools' Comenius Corners, the schools' websites, the project website and via articles in the local press.The main and final product was a 10-point decalogue for integration for the young European citizen created at I. C. A. Zanón at the final student-teacher workshop by the participating students.

The first teacher workshop in Parsberg (14-19 Oct 2012) prepared the schedule for the first project year, an info-leaflet, the guidelines and grids necessary for the first year. The first student-teacher workshop in Bergen (21 - 26 Apr 2013) engaged the participants in activities on Human Rights at the Rafto Centre and in

a large variety of lectures by researchers, the police, politicians, immigrant students and teachers with a migratory background on topics such as legislation, stereotypes and otherness, the challenges of migration and integration in school and the local community.

The second preparatory teacher workshop in Trujillo (7 - 12 Oct 2013) prepared the work plan for the second year, the guidelines, interview guides and assignments for the photo contest, family snapshot, literary essay competition and Comenius Day. The second and final student - teacher workshop in Udine (6 - 12 Apr 2014) involved its participants in intercultural encounters such as a lecture on non-native students in Italian schools by Prof. Claudio Freschi, city councilor in Udine and professor of philosophy, a meeting with students at the United World College in Duino near Trieste, a visit to Centro Balducci at Zugliano and talks with refugees there, work on an Italian film about illegal immigration to Italy and the final product, i.e. a decalogue for integration for the young European citizen. The results of the second project year were presented at I.C. A. Zanón on the school's Comenius Day on 11 April 2014.

The project has contributed to sensitizing its participants for otherness and to promoting openness about the topic of migration and youth. It has provided more insight into the challenges and dilemmas of migration, and made the participants reflect on and revise their own attitudes towards migrants. Cooperating in multicultural groups, the participants created guidelines on integration, drawing from the experiences from their work during the first and second project years and the workshops. The participants enhanced their communicative skills and ICT-skills, improved their knowledge of the English language in general and learned a technical vocabulary in particular (on migration, on analyzing literary works).

Some major results from the studies carried out by the students during the second project year (2013 – 2014) in a comparative perspective:

Net Migration Fluxes:

In recent years Finland has received a migration gain from immigration of foreign citizens and migration loss from the emigration of Finnish citizens. The major immigrant groups at present are Estonians and Russians.

In Germany, the largest numbers of immigrants at present come from Turkey, Romania, Russia and Poland. In Germany, 19.5% of the population have a migrant background.

From 2009 on, the numbers of Spanish, Italians, Finnish and Norwegian immigrants have risen considerably, Italians accounting for the largest group.

In Norway, the number of immigrants to Hordaland has risen from 20 000 in 2003 to 50.607 in 2013.

Work migration, and family reunion are the most important reasons for immigration to Norway at present.

Existing School Policies and Recommended Changes:

Interviews with school representatives at all schools show that poor command of the host country's language is a major obstacle to integration. Furthermore, all schools notice that migrants don't easily mix with others due to language and cultural barriers.

Recommended changes are more funding, the organizing of Comenius Days, minority counsellors at schools, Activity Days for the entire school community, more commitment from the Student council, from Students and Teachers, placement and aptitude tests and then guidance. Furthermore, there is a need for introduction classes, extra tuition in the country's language, pedagogical and sychological help as well as help with finding employment.

Immigrant Voices:

Peace and not having to fear for your life are the most important reasons for migration.

Problems with finding friends and with fitting in – always be considered as a foreigner – less prioritized as job seeker - unfamiliar food habits in the kindergarden (e.g.pork) are some of the challenges immigrants being interviewed mentioned.

"Having a professional network and an income does make your life easier, activities with colleagues open a new world of experience, and later on, becoming a mother allowed me to extend my network of people in the school of my son and by participating in the extracurricular activities of my son, I also managed to find more people to relate to, be invited to events and activities that have helped me to absorb my life in a new country."

The Essay Competition:

The essay assignment was challenging, both in terms of topic as in terms of technical vocabulary.

It is evident that the students need a certain understanding of the historical background of the literary text (excerpt from Chris Cleave's *The Other Hand*) and

The Photo Contest:

The topic of the photo contest was abstract and not at all an easy one ("We – young people - different cultures – one Europe"). It was therefore interesting to find that the participants focused on their dreams (seeing the world, coexistence) and on the obstacles to realizing these dreams (ending in barbed wire – the truncated way) and language.

The Family Snapshots:

Making a family snapshot turned out to be the hardest challenge. One has to be very self-confident to convey to others a piece of one's own culture. Neither at U. Pihl Upper Secondary School nor at I. C. A. Zanón nor at Kastellin Lukio did there participate students with a *migratory* background in the task. A very impressive piece of work was however done by the Spanish students who interviewed a Columbian immigrant woman who freely talked about differences about her own and the Spanish culture and even danced for the students. This task maybe also indicates a poor command of English on the part of the students with a *migratory* background. But it also accounts for there not being any students with a migratory background in the classes that participated in the snapshot assignment.

Intercultural Encounters :

During the workshops, the students worked in intercultural work groups. They learned about the concept of the United World College (250 hours of voluntary social commitment), they met two young refugees at the Centro Balducci (a Catholic centre run by help of donations and voluntary contributions from the parish), and they also met students from Australia, guests at I. C. A. Zanón, Udine. The students reported on being in host families as a very valuable experience which made them use all their language competences (English, German, Spanish and a little Italian).

The ICC-tool:

To measure their intercultural competences (attitudes, skills, knowledge) the students had been invited to apply the ICC-tool (description see above). It is evident that the students feel that they need to develop more their tolerance of ambiguity and their confidence to challenge and be challenged. They also admit, given their age, that they need more knowledge about world views and belief systems and about the role of social and political actors and that they need to develop their critical thinking and multiperspectivity.

The winners of the various competitions, chosen by a jury of participating students, were:

Anya Nguyen, U. Pihl videregående skole, Bergen, Norway - logo competition (2012 - 2013).

Sonia Zucchetti, I.E. A. Zanón, Udine, Italy - essay competition (2012 - 2013).

Pauliina Haapakoski, Kastellin Lukio, Finland - photo contest (2013 - 2014).

Elisabeth Honig, Gymnasium Parsberg, Germany - essay competition (2013 - 2014).

The students from I.E.S. Turgalium, Trujillo, Spain, did the best interviews with migrants (2013 - 2014).

10 Guidelines for Integration for the young European Citizen (the Decalogue) were written by multinational student groups at the student-teacher workshop at I.C. A. Zanón, in Udine, Italy, on 9 April 2014 :

1. No tolerance of racism.
2. Be open-minded and try to understand what migrants have experienced.
3. Don't make fun of people who do not know the language of your country.
4. Organize extra courses for migrants to learn the language of your country and to practice more in the subject they need help in.
5. Make an effort for everyone to feel accepted.
6. Include migrants in your activities.
7. Elect tutor students and teachers to help with integration.
8. Learn different languages and promote cultural learning at school.
9. Promote intercultural projects such as Comenius projects and secure finance.
10. Give migrants assistance in finding a job.

Evaluation:

A general wish among students was to spend even more time together with their partners in working groups and to skip some of the lectures. That would allow for more time to compare and discuss results. Students and colleagues also mentioned that they would like to have the programme for the student-teacher

workshops at an earlier date so that they could prepare better for the various assignments, e.g. visits to cultural monuments. In Norway, for example, students do not have any arts classes at Upper Secondary School level. Arts are integrated into the Norwegian classes. The Norwegian teacher would then take on the task of preparing for these cultural monuments.

In conclusion, all the people involved in the Comenius project shared their knowledge, their commitment to being teachers, parents, and students in an outstanding way.

We expect the guidelines to become part of our schools' thinking and acting.

A student may have the final say: "In my opinion, this kind of project affects in a positive way my relationship with people from countries different than mine."