

**» Best practice results from Erasmus+ «
A European conference on Dissemination and Impact in the School Sector**

17th – 19th May 2017 in Bonn

Main findings of the working groups

**“Identifying success factors for projects and their dissemination”
“Visions for the future of European collaboration in the school sector”**

In two sessions and six parallel working groups participants discussed success factors for projects and their dissemination as well as visions for the future of European collaboration in the school sector. For the main findings please see the key messages below.

Major topics in the discussion about success factors for projects and their dissemination were first of all the support from principals and colleagues, good planning and communication among partners. The project should be run by a larger team and should involve the whole community. Ideally European projects should be integrated into the school curriculum. Among the manifold proposals for a successful dissemination of project results, building a team, having a clear plan from the very beginning of the project and thinking about a budget for dissemination were crucial points.

Participants unanimously agreed about the significance of European collaboration in the school sector: European projects broaden cultural perspectives, they improve competences and cultural awareness as they foster self-reflexion, they enhance new teaching methods and professional development. However, it can be difficult to find the right team and to cope with the heavy paperwork which should be much lighter in order to attract more schools to the programme. Some teachers also ask for a recompense for the resources they have to invest to hand in an application, run a project and write reports. Consequently participants complained about too much paper work in connection with school to school projects. Suggestions for changes in the current programme range from a two phase application round, which would spare a lot of time of many teachers, to setting up stronger support structures which can help schools with applications. Moreover, budget rules should be interpreted the same way by all NAs which apparently is not always the case.

Further proposals for the future of European collaboration in the school sector include a re-introduction of preparatory visits in order to get acquainted with one's future project partners and to prepare the application thoroughly, and accreditation of schools which have repeatedly participated in successful projects in order to allow a lighter access to the programme.

The workshop results make clear that support is needed on all levels if the school sector is to fulfill the promising expectations of European collaboration. It is not only a question of money, but support is necessary on the EU-level, the national and regional level and last but not least also on the institutional level with support from heads and principals.

Identifying success factors for projects and their dissemination

Wednesday, 17 May, 2:15 – 3:30 p.m.

1) What are, from your point of view, the main characteristics of a successful project?

- Support from the head master and the school management board, good support from the NA (and continuous contact with the NA)
- A strong and good coordinator (but at the same time: involvement of all partners democratic vs. hierarchical leadership)
- A good time management and good communication are crucial (a plan of ways, targets, timing) – a needs analysis, identify potential obstacles / risk assessment
- Strong coordination and a strong project leader (good communication – good relationship between all partners, keep an eye on timing)
- Motivated teachers – they are the pumping heart of a project
- Plan (plan of ways, targets, timing) – a needs analysis, identify potential obstacles / risk assessment
- Involvement of pupils: personal meetings in the course of the project and cooperation in-between meetings via eTwinning
- Involvement of the community, involve the whole school and parents, then pupils and parents want to participate; teachers and pupils are enthusiastic about the project and highly motivated; a project is not an ego-trip but should be shared inside and outside the whole school community.
- Try to find “a common language” about what you want to do, to have a common vision and a shared goal; team spirit and team work both in preparatory phase and during ongoing project => write the application together
- A project with real needs which are innovative and relevant for the school, the European Development Plan and the school policy, applicable goals linked to the needs, contact with real life and sustainability of the project
- The team consists of complementary partners (you find partners who do not have the same problem, but can deliver a solution).
- Financial, administrative, pedagogical, overall management. Teachers are not trained in project management (improve competences and talents).
- No results without fun – no fun without results!

2) Is it possible to identify the main internal and external factors which make dissemination of project results and outcomes a success?

- Have a clear idea of what you want to disseminate, successful evaluation criteria
- Take your dissemination plan seriously. Identify your target groups (pupils, teachers from other schools, local authorities) and use adequate channels to reach them.
- Social media, TV-partners, blogs, slides, write a report, use word-of-mouth recommendations and customize experience
- Transferring your results is almost a second project
- Beneficiaries can be Erasmus+ ambassadors
- Open days, conferences, visible results, materials, presentations to many levels
- Every partner is engaged -> job-Shadowing
- All teachers of a school should be informed about the project, the project results should be used in the school; not only during project meetings.
- Parents should be involved.
- A number of responsible people for dissemination tasks should be agreed on beforehand, do not forget to consider a budget for dissemination.
- Everyone has a contact point that should be informed about the project, there should not be too many gaps between dissemination activities
- but at the same time: involvement of all partners
- Democratic vs. hierarchical leadership, team spirit and team work
- Common vision / shared goal, the process should be visible on a school webpage / regularly updated.
- Personal meetings in the course of the project + cooperation in-between meetings via eTwinning
- Open school days, allow others to watch lessons (also after KA 1 projects), project kits: describing the process of a project, "How to..."
- Dissemination plan (question in the application form is helpful)
- Advertise your project / school in School Education Gateway: under KA 1 possibilities for jobshadowing / study visits etc.

3) Have you ever profited from another's project dissemination event or output? What are your experiences in this context?

- During meetings with new teachers who participate in training sessions for new teachers, headmasters, international coordinators, to give an impulse. ???
- It is possible to get inspired by other projects, but you will always have to adapt them.
- It might be a good idea to organize courses with other project coordinators to learn best practice from other schools in your area.
- No, never ...
- Good experiences with a peer-to-peer situation: avoid pitfalls / mistakes.
- The dissemination of KA 2 results profits from the dissemination of KA 1 results.

4) Are you missing support from National Agencies or the EU-Commission? What kind of support would be helpful?

- It would be nice to have a grant / training from the NA to explain what dissemination is about.
- Too much bureaucracy, the EU releases the forms late, the mobility tool takes a lot of time, sometimes there are problems there, the IT platforms should be simplified.

- Impression that the NAs act very differently and would prefer a more homogenous support in each country.
- Application seminars (e.g. Norway) are seen to be very helpful and should be implemented in every country.
- The work of project participants should be recognized (less teaching lessons, more money...).
- The support should not only be central, but regional within the country, also peer-to-peer learning should be strengthened.
- The information about Erasmus+ should be implemented into teacher education (every new teacher should know about Erasmus+).
- More opportunities for conferences / face-to-face meetings (on a European level, but also on a national level and in thematic seminars).
- A more pedagogical approach from NAs (not only "how to...").

5) What would you tell newcomers to the programme in relation to successful project work and a follow-up in widespread dissemination?

- Try to build a good team, be tolerant with your partners.
- Get into good contact with your NA.
- An application under Erasmus+ is a tough thing.
- Make sure you meet the priorities of the European Commission.
- Use partners out of school, newspapers, magazines for teachers and different websites for your dissemination.
- Successful project work means planning ahead and thinking of all the details.
- Attend seminars, start with KA1, get familiar with the guidelines, get help from the NAs, choose your partners wisely (get to know them before the project starts, e.g. through jobshadowing), make a detailed project plan, if you have the opportunity to join an experienced team of partners, do so!
- Have / develop self-confidence, know the strengths of you own organization.
- Look for real support of head of school (not just his/her "blessing") => involve them in meetings.
- BE FLEXIBLE, HAVE A PLAN B.

Visions for the future of European collaboration in the school sector

Friday, 19 May, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

1) What has been your main motivation for getting involved in Erasmus+?

- Broaden European cultural perspectives, spread of democratic values, finding a common ground in Europe, share common values, European connections, approaching/understanding new cultures, improve competences and cultural awareness.
- Getting students involved in intercultural work, attract more students, to see pupils grow.
- Reflect on your own work, self-reflexion and comparison, enhance your own teaching methods, professional development
- Stimulating new initiatives, see other schools, get to know other education systems, meet colleagues from other countries, getting to know new people
- Support of language and cultural studies, use English as a lingua franca.

- Learn to respect others, be tolerant, learn about other cultures, language, teachers' continuation of work started in Comenius. Get out of your comfort zone, improve competence, sense of belonging to a larger group, exchange of ideas and practices. To correct parochialism, to see that others are the same. Funding, otherwise there wouldn't be an exchange. Be proud of your own culture.
- Learning by traveling
- Giving changes for all the school
- Financial support
- Deeper understanding of one's culture
- Students involvement – expanding the horizons of both teachers and students
- Strengthening professional skills, professional development
- Networking
- New ideas
- Solving problems together, learning from other
- Motivation, student
- Professional skills, networking
- To be more attractive school for local community
- The motivation often starts with the wish to travel abroad and to develop language skills and later also include arising of cultural awareness for pupils, internationalization and improvement of education.
- Teachers / students can meet each other, continuation of COMENIUS-partnerships, students with lower economic background have the possibility to get out
- Connection between smaller and bigger societies

2) What do think are the main obstacles in the school sector for applying under Erasmus+?

- Finding a coordinator for KA2 (knowledge, workload, management). Difficulty to find a team and the right persons with skills to write down application & coordinate the project (paper work).
- Heavy paper work and complex administration is time-consuming!!! Complexity of the application process, final report is too complex.
- The school's head teacher / head of school have to cooperate, be positive about internationalization. Some school authorities that are really not willing to cooperate. Schools have a strict curriculum, the international projects are not part of the year curriculum, so it's not part of the official reports, they don't see the need. Time: it takes time to write a proposal and to do the exchanges. If this is not recognized officially, no credits, no extra money for the coordinators. It all depends on the teacher's enthusiasm.
- Missing support from head team, schools authorities or principals.
- Too small chances to get into KA2, low approval rates.
- You find reliable partners more easily in face to face situations like in Comenius, i.e. contact seminars and preparatory visits are needed.
- Division and use of finances (national level).
- Language barriers
- For KA2 especially managing of the budget
- Connection project-every day work
- Small schools and small regions – national level dissemination is difficult
- Erasmus+ is not embedded in the curriculum and causes a lot of extra work (that is not recognized).

- E+ is very time-consuming and often does not fit in school everyday life: EU priorities are not necessarily school priorities.
- It is difficult to find reliable project partners.
- Sometimes there are concerns from local authorities or headmasters to get involved into the programme (too much work, too few outcome).
- Too much bureaucracy + application form is too long and certain fields are repetitive
- Previous rejections are demotivating for another / third application
- Extra work and substitution at school are not covered
- One budget divided in categories. It should be more flexible and we should be able to use the money as needed (i.e. like it was in Comenius/LLP).
- NA across Europe have no standardization in how funds are distributed

3) In which way could your institution be of help to get more people involved in Erasmus+?

- Ease the paperwork for the schools and the workload of the teachers involved in European projects.
- Exchange of experiences of participants in the local schools, networking in local areas.
- Local international coordinator on municipal level.
- Teachers need a recompense of work in the application process, fewer teaching loads for people interested in Erasmus+.
- Project coordinator could be a separate development officer within the school.
- Stimulate partnerships in which there are two schools from the same country.
- The head teacher seeing the benefits of Erasmus+ would greatly help to get other people involved. Dissemination of results, methods. Free biscuits ☺: for teachers the free biscuits are the trips abroad. More mobilities are needed to cater for this. The school authorities should add international activities into the curriculum (from Scotland).
- Dissemination of Erasmus+ in initial training of teachers.
- Involve more people in seminars etc. even from further away, include experts etc. from elsewhere.
- Mutual problem (analysis phase to identify problem) to be solved at a regional or national level already in planning phase.
- eTwinning and Erasmus+ ambassadors.
- Disseminate / promote the projects amongst educational communities (spread the word, put up signs, publish activities in newspapers, homepage), informal teachers' meetings, support for newcomers.
- Principals should be more supportive, must be actively involved and have a clear idea of what the project is.
- Inform members of staff about Erasmus+

4) In what respect would you like to see changes in the current programme, name the three most important issues which need to be improved?

- Reduce paperwork, easing work for coordinators, application form and report form should be simplified (take out repetitions). Application procedure: why all the details? Flights and all? Motivation on choices of teachers? E+ needs to make sure the money is spent well, we understand that, but the application form is so long. Have a preselection to save a lot of people a lot of time in writing the full application. Just as with an application procedure for a job, gently filter out the projects that can receive funding at different stages, saving a lot of good teachers a lot of time.

- Preliminary feedback on applications before the deadline with NA-suggestions for improvement.
- A NA representative at more locations in a country to support teachers who are writing, to generate interest in Erasmus+ more locally, e.g. the UK has only one. An expert that helps out. In Turkey there are teams in every town to help write proposals, prepare meetings and so on. In Germany there are 100 ambassadors to promote E+ and help out teachers.
- More equal distribution of money on more schools.
- Tutorial system for new applicants, ex-participants can explain and promote Erasmus+.
- More job-shadowing or teaching opportunities in KA1.
- More transparency of the application criteria
- Quality of KA1 trainings is sometimes poor.
- It should not be the same students who are sent on KA2 mobilities within a project, the programme should allow for more mobilities
- Perhaps limit the number of big projects, perhaps allow a certain amount of mobilities per country
- If you concentrate on dissemination this doesn't mean you had a good project. There seems to be a conflict of interests. The one doesn't necessarily imply the other, too much is dependent on dissemination. First write the project and once it is approved, settle the dissemination, don't judge them at the same time.
- KA2 – long teaching assignment – no ministry backs up, the national school systems (ministry, schools) do not support the Commission's goals.
- Preparation meeting before applying for big projects, pre-selection of proposals before doing a full application
- KA4 individual mobility (not linked to bigger projects).
- NAs different approaches (rules etc.)
- KA2 too low management budget
- There should be the same project management and budget rules in all countries/NAs.
- There should be a budget for preparatory visits in all sectors.
- There should be a closer monitoring of projects during their implementation.
- Erasmus+ should be embedded officially in national curriculums.
- The amount of money that each NA has to projects should be regular so that schools don't get frustrated and quit applying
- KA1: individual applications should be possible as it was before.
- Priority of topics, they are too narrow.
- Re-introduction of preparatory meetings for KA2, no limits to the number of mobilities in KA2.

5) In an ideal world, Erasmus+ for schools would work like this: ... *Please try to sketch a framework for a European programme in the school sector according to your needs and wishes.*

- It would be good to have some funding for preparatory meetings, as these really help to shape a project theme together.
- The Commission's and programme's goals support national education systems and the goals of ministries, creating a supportive positive link for schools.
- Closer relationships between coordinators and NAs.
- With reference to time management, give more time for evaluation and dissemination (1 extra year), coordinators work fulltime on teaching (!)
- Online applications and accreditation for 6 years (cf. VET charter)
- Pre-selection of proposals before doing all application work.

- No limits to the number of mobilities in KA2, more money to KA2 than KA1, more money for S2S projects
- No application deadline, open and flexible applications (contents)
- A common framework for NAs
- Headmaster training to trigger off more projects, money for application writers / coordinators, possibility to choose when and how to spend project money (in order to save money)
- Evolution process: KA 1 turns into KA 2