



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



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Comenius: First steps in lifelong learning in Europe

Europe is undergoing a major transformation. Knowledge and the innovation it sparks are the EU's most valuable assets in today's world economy. Lifelong learning, and the accessibility and quality of Europe's education and training systems play a decisive role in the ambitious goal of transforming the EU into a dynamic, knowledge-based economy.

Lifelong learning requires many fundamental skills: the ability to pursue and continue learning and to organise one's own learning process. Basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are needed in order to assess, gain, process and assimilate new knowledge and skills. Language skills and multicultural competences are becoming more important on the European labour market and in European societies which are made up of a wide variety of traditions and cultures. School education faces the challenge of providing these basic skills and giving young Europeans a good start in a career of lifelong learning.

Since 1995 and also within the new Lifelong Learning Programme, the *Comenius* programme addresses the teaching and learning needs of pupils, teachers and other education staff in pre-school and school education in Europe. It supports schools and teachers in equipping young people with the necessary competences to start a life full of opportunities to develop, learn and grow.

This brochure presents European projects, networks and School Partnerships which have contributed to the aims of lifelong learning and the improvement of school education. They created links between schools, pupils and teachers, teacher training institutes and other stakeholders in school education in Europe. They motivated their participants to learn languages, and they strengthened the European dimension in their institutions.

I hope that they will serve as best practice examples and inspiration to others. I invite all those active in school education to draw upon this rich source of successful activities and to find inspiration for their own Comenius activities in the new Lifelong Learning Programme.



Ján Figel'

*Member of the European
Commission responsible for
Education, Training, Culture and
Youth*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jan Figel'". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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Europe in the classroom – The Comenius Programme

4 | After a pilot project on multilateral school partnerships (1992 – 1994), the Comenius action started already more than 10 years ago in 1995 as an action within the Socrates programme of the European Union. Since those early days, more than 35,000 schools participated in school partnerships,

involving nearly 3 million pupils and teachers.

Comenius also supported many projects improving the training of school education staff; since 2000, the start of Socrates II, the Comenius programme supported 386 projects

which developed new teaching techniques, teaching material, and training courses for teachers and other education staff in practically all fields of school education. In 41 Comenius networks, experts collected and exchanged knowledge and best practices in school education in Europe.

Comenius in figures	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Schools participating in Partnerships	8,794	10,231	10,097	10,178	10,782	12,156	12,430
Pupils participating in Partnerships	615,500	736,600	706,800	712,500	776,300	850,900	870,100
Schools participating in eTwinning projects	-	-	-	-	-	3,283	7,813
Pupils participating in eTwinning projects						91,900	218,700
Multilateral Projects and Networks	70	109	45	50	52	52	56

Comenius School Partnerships change daily life in schools

Comenius contributes to enhancing the quality and reinforcing the European dimension in school education in Europe. In School Partnerships pupils and teachers from schools in different European countries meet to work on a common topic. They develop small publications on their project results, present them in exhibitions, on the internet or perform them on stage. They improve their language skills, use modern ICT in their cooperation

and enrich their knowledge about the variety of European culture. Often several classes are involved in the projects; on average 70 pupils in each of the partner schools participate in project activities. Comenius School Partnerships also offer a good opportunity to meet new friends abroad. The partnerships presented in this brochure show the motivation and the enthusiasm felt by all participants, pupils, teachers and parents alike.

Teachers often use the chance offered by school partnerships to work on problems in their schools and to compare the different approaches in the partner schools. School Partnerships form also one basis to work on issues like reducing the number of dropouts in schools, better integrating all educational needs of pupils in daily school life and improving school management.

The contribution of Comenius Multilateral Projects

During the last decade, Comenius Multilateral Projects worked on issues related to language learning and intercultural education, media, information and communication technologies in school education, environmental and science education as well as quality control and evaluation techniques. The projects presented in this brochure give a small impression of the variety of topics. They involved many different

actors in the field of school education: teacher training institutes, universities and research centres, schools, local communities, associations, and sometimes also companies.

Many projects developed web sites or disseminated their results in another way. They also developed initial or in-service teacher training courses, which enabled student teachers and

experienced teachers from different countries to improve their teaching skills in specific areas. In combination with the individual mobility grants for initial and in-service teacher training, this part of the Comenius programme contributed also to cooperation and exchange in school education in Europe.

The story continues – Comenius in the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013)

With the change to the new Lifelong Learning Programme, the Comenius programme becomes part of the overall effort to contribute through lifelong learning to the development of the EU as an advanced knowledge society with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

Comenius aims to provide support for all those active in school education, starting from pre-school to upper secondary level. Its actions are focussed on creating knowledge and understanding among young people and education staff of the diversity of European cultures and languages and its value. They also help young

people to acquire the basic skills and competences needed for their personal development, for future employment and for active European citizenship.

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General information on Comenius can be found in the annex of this brochure and on the following web site:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/comenius/index_en.html

E-Twinning

The new Comenius programme now also includes eTwinning, the main action of the European Commission's former *eLearning* programme. eTwinning takes advantage of the possibilities offered by the Internet and digital media to promote European school co-operation, collaborative learning and project based pedagogy.

for facilitating school collaboration. A fully multilingual website allow schools to register for eTwinning, find suitable partners and cooperate with them in a secure virtual environment using adapted tools.

few weeks, to long term collaboration on joint curricula, for example. The subjects covered are also up to the participating schools. This flexibility and freedom of action, combined with a minimum of administrative hurdles, are the key elements of eTwinning.

The most original feature of eTwinning is that it does not finance individual projects, but offers rather support through pedagogical assistants, teacher training, tools and recognition

Schools are entirely free to decide on the type of cooperation they want: from short-term projects lasting a

More information can be found on the eTwinning Portal: www.etwinning.net

The Compass Project

6 | The School Partnership "The Compass Project" addressed pupils of different ages and with learning difficulties, and aimed at assisting them in becoming active citizens in an ever-changing society. Four schools from the UK, Finland, Hungary and Portugal compared and analysed all aspects of school life, environment, cultures and climate and learned more about living in another part of Europe.

The pupils in each of the partner schools achieved this through exchanging emails, sampling each others' local foods, planting each others' seeds, and using products from each others' countries to make recipes. Throughout the project their communication and reading skills improved. They became more aware that they are members of a multicultural European society, which broadened their view and changed their thinking. Their experiences during the 3 year project encouraged them to accept differences and to look at their abilities.

The impact of this partnership on the participating schools was impressive: teachers and pupils improved their language skills and the European dimension within the curricula was strengthened. For example in the UK partner school teaching has become more dynamic with an emphasis on experimental learning. The partnership promoted social and educational inclusion and all partners agreed on a policy of equality and diversity in their schools. They also exchanged experiences in the different strategies for an easy transition from school to adult life e. g. by implementing more practical skills into the curriculum.

The project succeeded in raising the profile of children with special needs and bringing Europe into the classroom. But some of the results were also much more tangible: a "Diversity Booklet" with dissemination materials, a website, the creation and implementation of a policy of equality and diversity, and the introduction of a system of Quality Assurance Management, by which each of the partner schools could measure the learning outcomes of both learners and facilitators.



The Compass Project

PROJECT COORDINATOR
DURHAM TRINITY SCHOOL

CONTACT DETAIL
Ann Southren
Deputy Headteacher
Durham Trinity School
Aykley Heads
Durham - DH1 5TS
United Kingdom
a.southren101@durhamlea.org.uk

PARTNERSHIP
4 partners from
the UK, FI, HU, and PT

WEBSITE
www.compassproject.ik.org

PROJECT DURATION
2003 - 2006

Intercultural Communication through Performing Arts

Culture, nationalities and ethnic groups influence each other all the time. The aim of this Comenius School Partnership was to use art performances to increase the knowledge and the understanding of this mutual influence. Teachers and pupils wanted to show the unifying effect of cultural production and art performances which transcend national and political borders.

Schools from Finland, Germany, Spain, Italy and Belgium cooperated in this Partnership. But in each school also different subjects had to work together to achieve this target and to produce musical performances, lyrics, portfolios of materials, computerised information files, and a web site. The project also enabled pupils to establish close contacts with their partners in the different countries and to experience European cooperation in practice.

The main result of this cooperation was the creation, production, performance and recording of a joint musical. "The Station" is the story of people living in different parts of Europe; in one of their meetings they end up in a rural train station. Here they meet a group of tramps and suddenly experience the "magic of Comenius". Songs, dances, the script, the scenography and all costumes were developed by the pupils. ICT tools facilitated the collaboration among the schools when planning, elaborating and realising the project. Final rehearsals and the performance took place during a projects meeting in Finland, in the city hall of Vantaa. In total 88 students and 15 teachers, coming from all participating schools, acted in this colourful musical.

Smaller music and theatre performances were also arranged in each of the partner countries. They attracted a wider audience than just the staff and pupils; local media reported on the project and the performance. The project partners developed also a small booklet describing the whole process of the intercultural communication through art performances.



Intercultural Communication through Performing Arts

PROJECT COORDINATOR
VASKIVUOREN LUKIO

CONTACT DETAIL
Jussi Yli-Vakkuri
Eira Kasper (head teacher)
Virtatie 4, 01600 Vantaa
jussyliv@vantaa-vaskivuori.fi

PARTNERSHIP
5 partners representing
from FI, DE, ES, IT, and BE

WEBSITE
www.vantaa-vaskivuori.fi

PROJECT DURATION
2003 - 2006

The Swing of Friendship

8 | **The Swing of Friendship was not only a very poetic name for this Comenius Language Project: Two vocational schools from Germany and Latvia developed a very concrete and tangible interpretation of this expression and produced together rocking animals for children in a kindergarten in Mālpils, Latvia.**

The project aimed to improve the professional and practical skills of the students, to acquire basic knowledge in the language of the project partner, and to improve skills in English as the first foreign language taught in both schools and used as communication language within the project. The cooperation also improved the social competences and the intercultural understanding of all participants.

The project involved pupils and students of different ages: The drawings which formed the basis for the design of the rocking animals were made by pupils from the Mālpils kindergarten, the Mālpils Music and Art school and the Mālpils boarding school. When actually designing and producing the various rocking animals during the class exchanges, students from Germany and Latvia worked together in pairs and had to use their foreign language skills to cooperate and to organise the work processes.

At the end of the project, 10 wooden rocking animals and happy Latvian children represented the successful cooperation. The students improved their professional, social and language competences, learned to use several working tools and methods and became familiar with intercultural cooperation. In addition the students documented the project process via CD presentations and video; local media in Mālpils and Münster reported on the project.



The Swing of Friendship

PROJECT COORDINATOR

MĀLPILS VOCATIONAL
SCHOOL, LATVIA

CONTACT DETAIL

Līvija Mukāne
Krasta iela 4-45, Mālpils,
LV-2152, Rīgas rajons
limu@inbox.lv

PARTNERSHIP

2 partner schools
from LV and DE

PROJECT DURATION

2004 - 2006

Socio-Professional integration of pupils with speaking and hearing disabilities in France and Romania

This Comenius Language Project between two vocational schools in France and Romania which specialise in teaching pupils with speaking and hearing disabilities aimed at better preparing its graduates for future employment. Focussed on the pastry cook trade, a subject taught in both schools, they studied the compliance between their curricula and the situation on the labour market in France and Romania.

60 pupils and their teachers from both schools compared the educational systems and the ways each system provides support for the theoretical and practical training of pupils with hearing and speaking difficulties. They also studied the similarities and differences in the sign languages of both countries, and developed a common dictionary of specific sign language in the pastry cook trade. This additional vocabulary contributed to the improvement of the specific language of the pupils in their mother tongue. In addition, they also introduced a foreign language in the curriculum, and Romanian pupils with

speaking and hearing disabilities could learn for the first time a foreign language – French and the specific French vocabulary for their future job. This changed not only their perspective on themselves and their employability, but also the attitude of local companies towards pupils with special needs.

The main outcomes of the project are a bilingual illustrated dictionary of signs and methods for teaching a foreign language through the language of signs, targeting the specific vocational vocabulary for the pastry cook trade. The pupils increased their language skills, but also social skills and self-confidence. They enriched their knowledge about Europe and the world of work. The schools experienced a positive impact on their curriculum and their teaching techniques. Due to early contacts with the University of Iasi in Romania, it is also intended to use this first experience to develop a curriculum for specialised teacher training including foreign languages in Special Needs Education.

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Socio-Professional integration of pupils with speaking and hearing disabilities in France and Romania

PROJECT COORDINATOR

GRUP SCOLAR VASILE PAVELCU,
IASI, ROMANIA

PARTNERSHIP

2 partner schools
from RO and FR

CONTACT DETAIL

Cristian Mihailov
I.C. Bratianu Str. 26,
700036 Iasi, Romania
vpavelcu1@yahoo.com
adycrimi@yahoo.com

WEBSITE

www.vasilepavelcu.uv.ro

PROJECT DURATION

2004 - 2006

Our Living Environment: Today – Yesterday – Tomorrow

10 | This Comenius School Partnership was conceived as a small contribution to the enlargement of the European Union in 2004: schools from three "old" EU member states – Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden – meet two new member states: Lithuania and Slovenia.

The five schools cooperated in different thematic areas like environment, socio-cultural issues and education. Pupils from different classes and of different ages shared information on the topic 'Our Living Environment: Present, Past and Future', starting with presenting their own rooms, homes, regions, countries and concluding that their common home is Europe and that they should take care of it in the way they do for their own rooms and houses.

The project's web site provides a lot of information on project activities, reports and presentations of different living environments. Since the very beginning of the project it has also served as a learning and teaching tool and as a platform for exchanging ideas. The project activities helped pupils and teachers to create an intercultural dialogue, share common experiences and promote enhanced awareness and respect towards economic, social, cultural and environmental differences between the countries as well as personal features, family traditions and customs.

The project's impact on the schools was very positive: activities motivated pupils and teachers to learn foreign languages, improve their knowledge of English but learn also basic expressions in the languages of the partner countries. The project led to an enhanced use of ICT and innovative teaching and learning approaches; project activities have been integrated into the regular curriculum, and the different subjects contributed to the development of various intercultural educational initiatives.



Our Living Environment: Today – Yesterday – Tomorrow



PROJECT COORDINATOR

KURSENAI PAVENCIAI
SECONDARY SCHOOL

PARTNERSHIP

5 partner schools from
LT, DE, NL, SE, and SI

CONTACT DETAIL

Stasele Riskiene
V. Dambrausko 12-32,
LT-81148 Kursenai, Lithuania
starisk@takas.lt

WEBSITE

<http://ole.mok.lt>

PROJECT DURATION

2004 - 2007

Dropouts? Not In My School

In 2005 about 6 million young people in Europe left education prematurely, having no more than lower secondary education. These figures illustrate that school absenteeism and student dropouts have become a growing concern for European societies. The Comenius School Partnership “Dropouts? Not in my school!” addressed a current European problem.

The main aim of this partnership was to develop means to identify the potential dropout students and to develop and share preventive measures. Based on a statistical survey of all dropout students during the project’s lifetime partners analysed the main variables which caused students to drop out of school. The results were brought to the attention of school authorities and motivated them to do something about it.

In a second step the partnership discussed and developed preventive measures for dropouts. The Icelandic partner school created a new course on study methods and school authorities started to take into consideration the impact of class size and composition on dropout rates. They try to keep the classes small in order to enable a better counselling of each student. For each student clear learning goals and regulations for attendance and discipline are identified. A group of experienced teachers meets once a week and discusses each student’s progress. In case of need students can get additional help in support classes and do their homework under supervision. Also the parents shall be involved more closely in supporting their children. Towards the end of the year the students receive career counselling so that they can decide what their next steps should be.

The four schools participating in this partnership successfully treated a difficult problem in their own environments and showed that there are practical possibilities to at least reduce the number of early school leavers.

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Dropouts? Not In My School

PROJECT COORDINATOR
MENTASKÓLINN Í KÓPAVOGI

CONTACT DETAIL
Neil McMahon
Digraanesvegur, 200 Kópavogur.
Iceland
nm@mk.is

PARTNERSHIP
4 partner schools from
IS, EE, UK, and IT

WEBSITE
<http://www.donimsproject.com>

PROJECT DURATION
2003 - 2006

Written Europe

12 | "Written Europe" is a Comenius School Partnership which highlights the rich European history and its cultural traditions through the study of graphics in public spaces in several European cities. Four European graphic design schools were involved in this project which lasted 3 years. While exchanging experiences, many contacts with different institutions have been established throughout Europe and a frequently visited multilingual website has been created.

Amsterdam, Madrid, Prague and Riga are the four cities involved in the project. Each year, a group of pupils of the respective graphic design schools studied a specific theme. The first theme which has been emphasised was "written cities". What do cities say to us? Informative graphics, identity advertising, poetic utterances were detected and analysed. The following theme was written things and persons. For this action the pupils studied the mobile elements in the cities, small and big objects such as brands, trademarks, cars, public transport, or furniture. Also the animals in cities were observed, their names, marks, etc. And the same was done for people, their names, tattoos, marks on clothes and on bodies. The final phase of the project local, global and common graphics was a synthesis of the work carried out during the two previous years in the four cities. The local identities were compared to the global identity.

The project allowed to identify every participating city and to determine its own local identity. Influences between different cities were tracked and through comparative studies and analysis of the compiled information, the pupils were able to look for a European graphic identity. They examined the trend towards a global non-identity and searched for the common way we are writing Europe.

The European dimension for both school staff and students was present at all stages of the project. This very original and well elaborated project substantially increased the awareness of globalisation and cultural integration amongst European young people. Materials and pupil and teacher experiences are available to a large public via an attractive website. The project has also been presented at conferences, various museums, associations and institutions. Several exhibitions have been organised.



Written Europe



PROJECT COORDINATOR

ESCUELA DE ARTE
NÚMERO 10 DE MADRID

CONTACT DETAIL

Belen Gonzalez Riaza
Avenida Ciudad de Barcelona, 25
ES - 28045 Madrid
arte10@arte10.es

PARTNERSHIP

4 partner schools from
ES, LV, NL, and CZ

WEBSITE

www.written-europe.org

PROJECT DURATION

2003 - 2006

Reading – a key to success in school

Good reading abilities form an important part of the basic skills each European should have. The reality is often different and pupils with low reading skills risk social exclusion in later life. The schools involved in this Comenius School Partnership are all situated in socio-economically disadvantaged regions with high rates of unemployment. Leaving school early is a well known phenomenon in these areas.

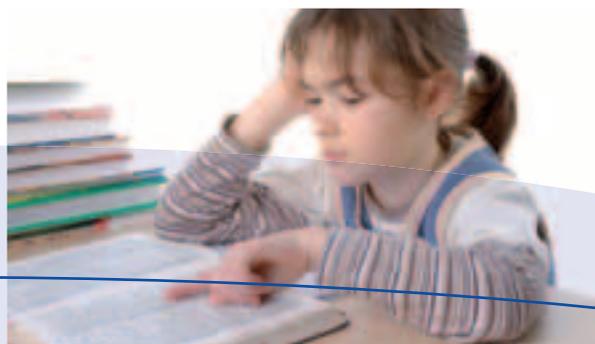
The language and social and communication skills of pupils from the four partner schools in Italy, France and Sweden urgently needed improvement, and the Partnership aimed at discovering new methods in reaching this target. The cooperation started with the search for innovative strategies and methodologies to improve pupils' motivation to read and to understand written texts. The teachers exchanged existing practices and approaches and were involved also in teaching activities in their partner schools. During the three years of Partnership activities the partners assessed the difficulties experienced by pupils, developed suitable activities, assessed the results and adapted the teaching activities

in a circular theory-practice process. In order to motivate pupils to read and to write and also to overcome their frustration, the teachers used non-conventional means, such as the production of cartoons, comics, videos, photo stories, etc. The teaching covered the different language registers like oral/written, informal/formal, confidential/official, iconic, sms, etc.

The project also led to an increased use of ICT in schools, intercultural awareness, and the development of synergies with local bodies and institutions. The contact with pupils from the partner schools increased the intercultural awareness of pupils and their families in an area normally cut-off from cultural contacts with other countries. The teachers, too, received a stimulus to improve daily routine and their approach in the classroom.

Though the emphasis was more on the process than on the product, several activities resulted in small products (cartoons, comics, and videos). The concept of this project has a clear potential for transferability to other schools in similar situations.

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Leggere: una sfida per il successo scolastico

PROJECT COORDINATOR
SCUOLA MEDIA DON BOSCO,
MARCIANESE, CASERTA

CONTACT DETAIL
Brillante Massaro
Via de' Felice 2,
IT 80125 Marcianise
brillmass@tin.it

PARTNERSHIP
4 partner schools from
IT, FR, and SE

WEBSITE
<http://www.comeniusitc.com/>

PROJECT DURATION
2002 - 2005

DEMOCRISIS

14 |

This Comenius School Partnership aimed at awakening the interest of young people in participation in political life at school, local, European and global level by analysing dangers and threats against democracy in different types of societies. But it also contributed to more democratic practices in the participating schools and to closer cooperation with the local communities and associated partners.

Pupils and teachers in five schools in Sweden, the Czech Republic, Spain, Bulgaria and Poland studied and discussed topics including the obstacles in the reintroducing and reconstructing democratic institutions, causes and background of terrorism, structural obstacles to the political participation of disadvantaged groups, the implementation of democratic values in the educational system and, last but not least, the role of women in political life.

The partners collaborated in organising meetings, conferences, comparative studies and exhibitions concerning these issues. And the project work was truly cross-curricular, involving history, religion, social science, native and foreign languages, geography, and thereby a large number of teaching staff. The schools involved associated partners such as the United Nations' local associations and local politicians in their work. The partnership also worked across different school levels by involving pupils of different ages.

By studying the lack of, and the threats to, democracy in different parts of the world, pupils reached a deeper knowledge of other societies and learned to accept and listen to others. Teacher reported that students became more critical and politically aware throughout the project. They gained a better understanding for other cultures and improved their skills to debate, to listen and to analyse the opinions of other young people.

The success of this Partnership inspired several new school projects and due to the clear impact on the schools' working methods, the results have proved sustainable at local level.



DEMOCRISIS

PROJECT COORDINATOR

NYSTRÖMSKA SKOLAN

CONTACT DETAIL

José Molina
Östra Rydsvägen 8,
614 32 Söderköping, SWEDEN
jose.molina@nystromska.
soderkoping.se

PARTNERSHIP

5 partner schools from
SE, CZ, ES, BG, and PL

WEBSITE

<http://www.nystromska.soderkoping.se/demo1/>

PROJECT DURATION

2003 - 2006

Taking nature as a model?

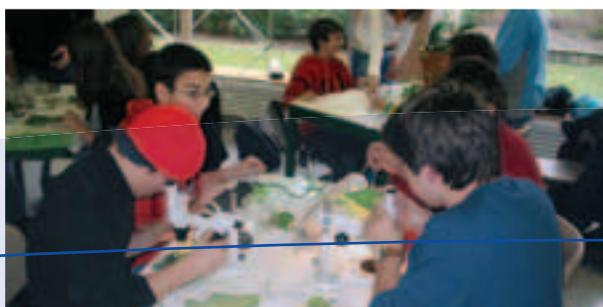
Bionics is the application of methods and systems found in nature to the study and design of engineering systems and modern technology. It does not yet belong to the core curriculum in schools in Europe. All the more interesting that four secondary schools in France, Germany and Luxembourg chose this topic to serve different goals: to interest pupils in scientific research and ethical questions and to motivate them to improve their language skills and enrich their vocabulary in French and German.

Over the three years of this Comenius School Partnership, pupils and teachers worked on ethical questions, discussed the future of the European social model, explored the possibilities to use bionic approaches in industry and production, and reflected on future opportunities and limitations of new technologies. Each of the

partner schools covered different aspects of this broad topic and by exchanging their results the schools were able to get a more complete picture and to learn about the discussions and approaches taken by their partners. The most concrete results of the project were the set up of an interactive exhibition and the creation of a web site. Project meetings, joint workshops and a "Bionic Day" were focal points of project work.

The teachers also had the chance to exchange details of the different pedagogical methods used in each partner school and to learn more about the school system in the partner countries. The partnership raised their interest in further cooperation with schools from other European countries and at the same time succeeded in interesting their pupils in science.

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La nature en tant que modèle? Possibilités et limites

PROJECT COORDINATOR

LYCÉE MICHEL RODANGE
LUXEMBOURG

CONTACT DETAIL

Jean-Marie Mangen
30, Blvd Pierre Dupong,
L – 1430 Luxembourg
jean-marie-mangen@education.lu

PARTNERSHIP

4 partner schools from
LU, FR, and DE

WEBSITE

http://www.lmrl.lu/04.events/2005.02.bio/ev.2005.02_bionique.html

PROJECT DURATION

2003 - 2006

Toys of Yesterday – Toys of Today

16 | Children certainly love toys. And especially younger children love to search for them, construct their own toys, learn about toys from former times or other countries. This was the starting point for a School Partnership working with children in pre-primary and primary education.

Five schools from Portugal, Slovakia, Poland, Spain and Italy aimed to develop a European spirit and promote European culture through lots of activities concerning toys: research and exchanging of traditional toys, making toys, creating a photo album, a CD Rom and a thematic dossier on teaching with toys. The project opened up a new intercultural dimension for pupils, teachers and parents. Through the different activities accomplished it was possible to come up with a human approach to Europe and awaken the pupils' interest in other cultures and languages. The topic "toys" was a good way to pass on important values, respect and tolerance. When constructing their own toys the pupils used recyclable material, developing a feeling for environmental questions but also aesthetics. They discovered many possibilities to use so-called rubbish in a fun way and to turn it into new objects.



The ongoing collaboration between the partner schools, the teachers, pupils and all other members of the education communities and the face-to-face project meetings improved language skills and intercultural competences. The pupils communicated by sending information on their daily lives and hobbies, but also via video conferences. Teachers used the project also to exchange pedagogical practices and details of school organisation. They improved their ICT competences and tried out new teaching techniques. Not only the cooperation between education staff and school management improved, but the project also influenced the relationship between parents and school and the contacts between the schools and the local community.

Toys of Yesterday, Toys of Today



PROJECT COORDINATOR

EXTERNATO FREI LUÍS
DE SOUSA

PARTNERSHIP

5 partner schools from
PT, SK, PL, ES, and IT

CONTACT DETAIL

António Vasco Jardim Amaral
Praça do MFA,
2800-171 Almada / Portugal
externato@freiluisdesousa.pt
avja@sapo.pt

WEBSITE

www.freiluisdesousa.pt

PROJECT DURATION

2004 - 2006

Eurokid – developing intercultural and anti-racist learning on the Internet

Combining young people's fascination with the Internet with teaching about racism and anti-racism was the inspiration behind the Eurokid project. The project developed websites which address common issues of difference, conflict and diversity across Europe, such as the situation of Roma, the position of refugees, anti-Semitism, linguistic differences, and the growth of non-Christian religious minorities.

The project used the advantages of the Internet to provide on-line teaching resources which are transnational, interactive and engaging for young people. The main target audience are younger teenagers. The project partners from Spain, Italy, the UK and Sweden, all specialists in multicultural education, designed websites and produced additional teaching materials for teachers. This work resulted in four websites for each of the partner countries.

Fictional characters representing different ethnic groups in the country inform about their life, their hobbies and beliefs. On a European website some of them meet in a chat room. In this way the websites tackle the question of stereotypes and inaccurate generalisations about ethnic groups. The website is freely accessible to schools and to individual young people.

Using this example the project partners invested also in research on the process and the outcomes of specific forms of web-development and pedagogical application. They developed a theoretical and research framework for the use of website technology in addressing antiracism issues in schools, youth groups and teacher education.

The main outcomes of the project were not only excellent websites for classroom use, but also a training programme for teachers linked to each website, and a network of interested users. The project also resulted in the publication of a book on "Kids in Cyberspace".

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Eurokid – developing intercultural and anti-racist learning on the Internet

PROJECT COORDINATOR

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CHICHESTER
Bishop Otter Campus –
College Lane

CONTACT DETAIL

Chris Gaine,
Bishop Otter Campus
College Lane
UK Chichester PO19 4NF
c.gaine@ucc.ac.uk

PARTNERSHIP

4 partners from
the UK, ES, SE, and IT

WEBSITE

<http://www.britkid.org/>

PROJECT DURATION

2000 - 2003

Early technical education

18 | The aim of this project was to promote early technical education through the development of an all-embracing pedagogical/didactical concept by means of interdisciplinary and international cooperation in the field of research, education and economy. Five partners from pedagogical institutes, universities and industry developed teaching materials that can be used in practice when explaining technical phenomena to children aged 3-12.

The target groups were educators and primary school teachers who benefited from further training at universities and vocational training institutes. The different realities in the countries participating in the project (Germany, Spain, the Netherlands and Portugal), different ages of school enrolment and different pedagogical concepts of early technical education were taken into account. The project partners compared and analysed the different research results in their countries and developed teaching materials, experiments and games which can be used by many countries and within different educational systems. They also developed an educational-didactical concept for the training of teachers and educators.

The main results of the project are an electronic manual with teaching materials on experiments and games and the above mentioned educational-didactical concept for teacher training as well as a handbook which informs on the current situation concerning research on early technical education. The project's website which offers all these products also includes a chat room for pupils, students, instructors, lecturers and other interested people.



Technische (Früh-)Erziehung/ Early Technical Education



PROJECT COORDINATOR
RICHARD-VON-WEIZSÄCKER-
BERUFSSKOLLEG

CONTACT DETAIL
Christine Köhler
Auf der Geest 2,
D-59348 Lüdinghausen
koehler-rvw@web.de

PARTNERSHIP
5 partner institutions
from ES, DE, NL, and PT

WEBSITE
<http://www.earlytechnical-education.org>

PROJECT DURATION
2002 - 2004

ODE - Outdoor Education: Authentic learning in the context of landscape

Outdoor education is defined as a combination of outdoor activities, environmental education and personal and social development. It allows pupils to undertake "hands-on learning" at the location – in a forest, a park, woodlands, etc. Outdoor education can also be a pedagogical tool for improving learning results. Especially children with special needs can take advantage of it as textbooks are replaced by other forms of learning.

The general objective of the project was to find and to compare the different perspectives on outdoor learning and to develop and use an In-Service training course in outdoor education for European teachers.

The project aimed to explore the opportunities of the outdoor and landscape environment as a learning environment and to train teachers to work thematically in an inter-disciplinary way in this environment. Teachers

should be enabled to create learning situations which can enhance self-confidence by using the outdoors as classroom, replacing the textbooks and addressing other senses. The outdoor classroom in this approach is seen as a complement to the indoor environment. Outdoor education helps children, in particular children with special educational needs, to relate to the environment and to reflect on their own environment.

The project also highlighted and shared the historical and pedagogical roots of outdoor education. The participating institutions from Sweden, Germany, the UK, Austria, and the Czech Republic reflected also on the research on and empirical evidence of the health perspectives for motor skills, concentration and personal growth. The project developed a website, in-service training tools, training papers and materials, seminars, exhibitions and magazines on a website. The In-Service Training course developed for teachers was very successful and is still on offer.

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ODE – Outdoor Education: Authentic learning in the context of landscape

PROJECT COORDINATOR

KINDA KOMMUN

CONTACT DETAIL

Ann-Charlotte Nilsson
Tingshustorget 1,
S-590 40 KISA
kinda@kinda.se

PARTNERSHIP

11 partners participating
from SE, UK, DE, CZ, and AT

WEBSITE

<http://www.ode.kinda.se/>

PROJECT DURATION

1999 - 2002

Argonauts of Europe

20 | The Argonauts in Ancient Greece were heroes on a quest to find the Golden Fleece. In the same way, today's European student teachers will have to learn important education and international competencies by going abroad. The quest for the Golden Fleece is a metaphor for something which is not tangible, but is rather a flexible combination of knowledge, attitude and skills necessary in a truly multicultural Europe.

The eight project partners in "Argonauts of Europe" developed and implemented a mobility framework and a course including teaching practice for foreign student teachers. Intercultural communication and the management of transnational educational projects were the main focus of this learning experience, which was supported by a web-based learning environment.

In this way the project partners aimed to offer a tool for a better preparation of future teachers in managing European school projects like Comenius School Partnerships. They also developed a profile of education staff able to work in the field of European and international education. Within the lifetime of the project, the newly developed course was implemented in each partner institution combined with a period of intensive teaching practice at a foreign primary or secondary school. In total 120 student teachers participated in the courses.

The project results were widely disseminated and closely matched the aims of the Comenius programme. They help to prepare young teachers for European cooperation in schools and strengthen the European Dimension in school education.



ARGONAUTS OF EUROPE: Mobility framework, Course and School Practice for Student Teachers in Europe

PROJECT COORDINATOR

HOGESCHOOL VAN UTRECHT
(FAC. VOOR EDUCATIEVE
OPLEIDINGEN)

CONTACT DETAIL

Lejo Swachten
Archimedeslaan 16
Postbus 14007,
3508 SB UTRECHT
Lejo.Swachten@feo.hvu.nl

PARTNERSHIP

8 partners from
NL, FI, SE, PL, ES, AT, and CZ

WEBSITE

www.respect-network.org/argo

PROJECT DURATION

2002 - 2005

The new NETwork of THEmatic Museums and Institutes (NEOTHEMI)

Traditionally, museums display the cultural heritage of one or more countries thus illustrating some nationally relevant 'realities'. The NEOTHEMI network conceptualised the museum instead as both a physically flexible place and a virtual space where visitors could find and compare physically-distant objects, texts and artefacts from different countries but belonging to comparable cultural horizons.

The NEOTHEMI network aimed at the creation of a European platform for cultural heritage, a virtual educational museum. The contributions of the ten participating countries were grouped in broad areas, called the thematic 'pavilions'. They covered themes such as folklore and traditions, communication and interaction, art and cultures, or symbols of identity. National differences were respected while promoting a larger European perspective in order to overcome any cultural divide. Based on a common approach each partner institution organised one theme autonomously.



The network activities were centred on the creation of the virtual museum and the organisation of thematic pavilions. In addition, the network organised meetings, training seminars and conferences. Several newsletters and three booklets were published covering topics related to cultural heritage and ICT. The main outcome was the development of a new concept of museum seen as both a physically flexible place and a virtual space. On the NEOTHEMI website the visitor can find information about the network's philosophy and download the publications, and has the opportunity to exchange ideas with the network, and "e-walk" through the virtual museum.

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The new NETwork of THEmatic Museums and Institutes

PROJECT COORDINATOR
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI
DEL MOLISE

CONTACT DETAIL
Claudia Saccone
Via F. de Sanctis, s/n,
IT-86100 CAMPOBASSO
api@mclink.it

PARTNERSHIP
13 partners from FI, IT, IE, DK,
DE, NO, UK, HU, FR, and PT

WEBSITE
<http://www.neothemi.net/>

PROJECT DURATION
2001 - 2004

The Twinning Game

22 |



Using the eTwinning portal, the project aimed at deepening contacts between young people in Poland and Greece and developed a good co-operation between pupils from two schools in both countries. Teachers and pupils presented their schools and cities and informed on pupils' life and interests. This exchange of information was accomplished by designing and playing games.

The exchange of photos and small descriptions of school life in the two countries as well as discussing different ideas and thoughts made pupils aware of the richness and diversity of European culture as well as of similarities in their daily life. In a second step they started to create and exchange different games and quizzes. In playing the games provided by the partner school, the pupils and teachers extended their knowledge on the partner. At the end of the project the two schools created also one

common game based on the quiz "The Millionaire Game", which is accessible to everyone and focuses on questions concerning Greece and Poland.

The project had a multidisciplinary character involving mainly the subjects like informatics, English and economics. Within the economics lessons, questions on the European Union and its institutions were also tackled. The project offered pupils the possibility to communicate with their European counterparts by using a foreign language, know about each other's country and work together creatively. The project offered them greater independence and rewarded their sense of initiative. Students put into practice what they have learned in textbooks and they were highly motivated to expand their knowledge.

The teachers used the e-twinning project for exchanging experiences in teaching and expanded their knowledge on the educational system of the other country. They also became familiar with using ICT in the classroom and experimented with new approaches and methods of teaching.

The twinning Game



PROJECT COORDINATOR

VI LICEUM OGOLNOKSZTAL-
CACE IM. JANA DLUGOSZA

CONTACT DETAIL

Leszek Jablonski
ul. Francuska 61a/4,
40-028 Katowice
leszek.jablonski@poczta.fm

PARTNERSHIP

2 partners from GR and PL

WEBSITE

<http://www.twinninggame.net/>

PROJECT DURATION

2005 - 2006

The Dinocrocs Grow Up (Adventures of Hocus and Lotus)

The project applied the developmental principles of psycholinguistics in teaching languages to young children. These principles include affection, narration, frequent repetition and a set of new and enticing experiences as an introduction to the language.

The project produced a complete set of language teaching materials for children aged between three and eight. The materials are the result of about 20 years of research and extensive field tests made in schools in the five partner countries. These tests have proved that children can learn foreign languages faster and more effectively with these materials than with the traditional methods thanks to their narrative format and theatrical approach. The materials include booklets, songs, animated cartoons, magic kits and teacher guides. The cartoon characters, Hocus and Lotus, are part-dinosaur, part-crocodile and have a common European background.

The project provides an innovative model and new tools that can potentially be used in any European country to teach foreign languages to small children, helping to overcome the costs and difficulties that are often associated with teaching this age group. By presenting language learning as a pleasant and interesting activity,

the materials have relevance beyond their immediate target group and appeal also to adults (teachers and families). By avoiding characters with specific national features, the project also aims to make children aware of their shared European cultural heritage. In addition, the project represents something of a breakthrough in terms of financial sustainability for language teaching in kindergartens and primary schools, since foreign languages can be effectively taught by generalist teachers, even if they do not know the language in question. Teachers require only a short course and are provided with a complete guide (book and DVD) that directs them through the teaching and learning (they learn together with the children) of the five languages.

Statistics from the project show that more than 3000 teachers are using the product in Italy, particularly in the Lombardy and Alto Adige regions. The city of Brescia also uses the products in all of its primary schools. The cartoons have been broadcast on state television (RAI) in Italy and on private TV stations in a number of other countries in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. The cartoons broadcast by RAI reached an average of 1.5 million children. In addition the website has an average of more than 150 visits a day and more than 10 000 contacts.

109956-CP-1-2003-1-IT-LINGUA-L2

The Dinocrocs Grow Up

PROJECT COORDINATOR

UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA
LA SAPIENZA

PARTNERSHIP

6 partners from
DE, ES, FR, IT, and the UK

CONTACT DETAIL

Traute Taeschner
Università di Roma La Sapienza,
I-00185 Roma
traute.taeschner@uniroma1.it

WEBSITE

<http://www.hocus-lotus.edu>

PROJECT DURATION

2003 - 2005



Soccerlingua

24 | The project promoted languages to reluctant teenage learners through the theme of football and by portraying international football stars as language-learning role models. It introduced a modern, innovative approach by using interactive DVD technology that had not previously been employed in an educational context. By linking languages with their passion for football, a teenage fan will see languages as a real life skill and not just a school subject.

Football is the people's game and football superstars are famous all over the world. So many top stars now play in foreign leagues that football has become a multilingual environment, and since young football fans want to copy their heroes the project used this factor to encourage them to learn the languages spoken by their favourite players.

The project produced promotional films and an interactive DVD quiz in four languages (English, German, Italian and Spanish), with which children can test their language skills and football knowledge. The project also produced an Easy Reader book in the style of a football magazine, along with a promotional website. These products give young people the opportunity to take the first few steps in a new language by watching, reading and listening to fans and players from different countries. In order to create an interesting and entertaining product, the project promoters filmed interviews with famous players, youth players and fans. By including interviews with female players the project aimed to appeal equally to girls and boys.

These products were distributed to an initial 5000 schools and language colleges across Europe and will be available in four new languages (French, Portuguese, Swedish and Turkish) in the near future. Teachers have given very positive feedback, saying that the products helped them to generate interest in languages among teenagers who were previously difficult to motivate. Top football clubs and national associations have supported the project in the creation of the products, and these clubs and associations now form the basis of a dissemination network in six countries to take the project concept into schools, football youth academies and beyond. The project also has a "myspace" link and more than 100 000 users are linked to the "Soccerlingua friends network".

Soccerlingua



PROJECT COORDINATOR

EUROPEAN SPORTS LINGUISTIC
ACADEMY LTD.

PARTNERSHIP

7 partners from the
NL, DE, ES, IT, and the UK

CONTACT DETAIL

Richard Weaver
Mallards, The Avenue,
Bourne End,
UK-Buckinghamshire SL8 5QY
richard.weaver@soccerlingua.net

WEBSITE

<http://www.soccerlingua.net>

PROJECT DURATION

2003 - 2005

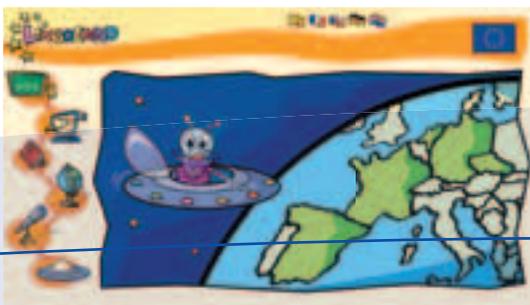
The project developed an attractive Internet platform to promote linguistic and cultural exchanges between schoolchildren in different European countries. By enabling communication with native speakers in the same age group, the project succeeded in bringing the way of life of other countries to children in an immediate and meaningful way, thereby increasing their appreciation of other European cultures.

LINGOLAND aimed to inspire children in primary and early secondary schools to learn about other European countries, languages and cultures and to promote exchanges between them. The project developed an Internet platform that allows teachers and pupils to contact each other and develop joint learning projects, with languages and cultures being introduced on the basis of playful, interactive tasks. This platform is divided into open and closed areas. The open area offers games and general information about languages and countries, and allows the testing of basic knowledge in five different languages through an interactive language quiz and a

multimedia dictionary. The closed area is designed for schools wishing to carry out joint projects. In these cases, pupils from neighbouring countries participate jointly in a learning "adventure" during which they must solve a series of linguistic problems, alone, together or in tandem.

Although the core target group was children aged between six and twelve, the platform also engaged the teachers and, often, the parents of the pupils involved. The joint learning tasks succeeded in promoting a general linguistic awareness, self-study and creativity and in motivating the children to learn further foreign languages, while the teachers who worked with these tools had to adopt a new way of teaching, allowing their pupils greater independence, a more flexible timetable and more access to new technologies.

The project website currently receives an average of around 120 000 hits a month. LINGOLAND also attracted positive recognition from experts and received several prizes: the Comenius-Siegel 2005 (for an exemplary multimedia project); Giga-Maus 2005 (for the best on-line tool for primary school children); the Erfurter Netcode (for a high-quality on-line tool for children); and the European eLearning Award "Eurelia" (for an outstanding project in the area of eLearning). The project promoters continue to receive specialist enquiries and invitations to present the project.



PROJECT COORDINATOR
UNIVERSUM VERLAG

CONTACT DETAIL
Katharina Alexander
Tanusstraße 54,
D-65183 Wiesbaden
kalexander@universum.de

PARTNERSHIP
7 partners from
CZ, DE, ES, FR, and NL

WEBSITE
<http://www.lingoland.net>

PROJECT DURATION
2002 - 2005



Further information on the Comenius Programme 2007 – 2013: Objectives and Actions

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The Comenius Programme aims to

- develop knowledge and understanding among young people and educational staff of the diversity of European cultures and languages and its value and
- help young people acquire the basic life-skills and competences necessary for their personal development, for future employment and for active European citizenship

More specifically the activities shall

- improve the quality and increase the volume of mobility involving pupils and educational staff in different Member States
- improve the quality and increase the volume of partnerships between schools in different Member States, so as to involve at least 3 million pupils in joint educational activities during the period of the programme
- encourage the learning of modern foreign languages
- support the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice in lifelong learning
- enhance the quality and European dimension of teacher training
- support improvements in pedagogical approaches and school management

Who can participate?

Basically everyone involved in school education can participate in the programme, e.g.

- pupils in school education up to the end of upper secondary education
- schools, teachers and other staff within schools
- associations, not-for-profit organisations, NGOs and representatives of those involved in school education
- persons and bodies responsible for the organisation and delivery of education at local, regional and national levels
- research centres and bodies concerned with lifelong learning issues, higher education institutions as well as bodies providing guidance, counselling and information services

Comenius supports the following activities

Mobility of individuals which may include:

Exchanges of pupils and staff, participation in training courses for teachers and other educational staff, preparatory visits for School Partnerships and Comenius Assistantships for future teachers in another European country.

The Comenius Assistantship has two main objectives: It gives the assistants, who will be future teachers, the

opportunity to enhance their knowledge of other European languages, countries and education systems, as well as to improve their teaching skills. It also helps to improve the language skills of the pupils at the host school and increase both their motivation to learn languages and their interest in the assistant's country and culture.

In-Service Training grants are available to enable teachers or other categories of staff working in the

school education sector to participate in in-service training activities lasting between one and six weeks in a country other than the country in which they normally work.

The training may take the form of a training course, a conference, a seminar, or of a placement in commerce or industry, or a public or non-governmental organisation, where this is considered to be conducive to achieving the objectives mentioned above.

School Partnerships

- School Partnerships between schools from different European countries, with a view to developing joint learning projects for pupils and their teachers. They help pupils and teachers to acquire and improve skills not only in the topic or subject area on which the project is focussed, but also in terms of teamwork, social relations, planning and undertaking project activities and using information and communication technologies (ICT). Participating in a School Partnership with schools from different countries also gives pupils and teachers the opportunity to practise foreign languages and increases their motivation towards language learning.

Multilateral projects

- Multilateral projects aimed at developing, promoting and disseminating educational best practices, developing or exchanging experience on systems of providing information or guidance particularly adapted to the learners, teachers and other staff concerned by the Comenius programme, and developing, promoting and disseminating new teacher training courses or course content.

Multilateral Networks

- Multilateral Networks aimed at developing education in the discipline or subject area in which they operate, for their own benefit and for that of education more widely, acquiring and disseminating relevant good practice and innovation, providing content support to projects and partnerships set up by others, and promoting the development of needs analysis and its practical applications within school education.

Lifelong Learning

28 |

Europe is undergoing a major transformation to become a world-leading knowledge-based society. This means that knowledge, and the innovation it sparks, are the EU's most valuable assets, particularly as global competition becomes more intense in all sectors.

It implies that high-quality primary, secondary and tertiary education are as important as ever. In addition, ongoing vocational training and learning have to renew constantly the skills base of EU citizens in order to equip them to handle the challenges and ever-evolving technologies

of today. The European Union has already created a vibrant single market and introduced a common currency, the euro. The third challenge now is to complement these achievements with a genuine European labour market in which well educated and trained citizens can take their qualifications across borders.

A single umbrella for education and training programmes

The European Commission has integrated its various educational and training initiatives under a single umbrella, the Lifelong Learning Programme. With a significant budget of nearly €7 billion for 2007 to 2013, the new programme replaces the existing education, vocational training and eLearning programmes, which ended in 2006.

The new Lifelong Learning programme enables individuals at all stages of their lives to pursue stimulating learning opportunities across Europe. It consists of four sub-programmes: Comenius (for schools), Erasmus (for higher education), Leonardo da Vinci (for vocational education and training) and Grundtvig (for adult education).

A transversal programme complements these four sub-programmes in order to ensure that they achieve the best

results. Four key activities focus on policy co-operation, languages, information and communication technologies, effective dissemination and exploitation of project results.

Finally, the Jean Monnet programme stimulates teaching, reflection and debate on the European integration process at higher education institutions worldwide.

How to apply ?

The application process, the level of support and the minimum number of partners required varies according to the type of action. Your first point of contact for general questions about the programmes, information material, funding, application procedures and application forms are the National Agencies, which have been set up in every participating country.

A list of all National Agencies in the participating countries can be found on
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/national_en.html

For detailed information on applying, please consult also the following web pages:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/index_en.html

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