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INTRODUCTION

Why a Handbook on Comenius 1?

This Handbook has two main goals: firstly, to give you and your school the information you need to decide whether or not you would like to take part in a Comenius 1 project; secondly, it aims to give you advice on putting together successful partnerships with schools in other European countries in order to carry out such a project. There are many advantages to participating in a Comenius project. However, it is an undertaking which demands a lot of energy and time and requires careful reflection. This Handbook has been designed to help you avoid any possible frustrations and problems, and make European projects work. The information and advice contained in this Handbook are meant to facilitate your school’s participation in a European project, to enhance schoolwork and to expand the horizons of pupils and staff alike.

Chapter 1 of the Handbook briefly presents the principles and the philosophy upon which the Comenius school partnerships are based, mentions some of the many advantages of getting involved in Comenius 1 projects and provides a description of the three project types under Comenius 1 as well as of the opportunities for transnational mobility they offer. Chapter 2 guides you through the different phases of setting up a project, and Chapter 3 gives you advice on how to carry it out. Chapter 4 deals with topics which are given special priority under Socrates, and the last chapter, Chapter 5, mentions possible problems and how they are best avoided. You will also find an Annex, which gives you information on other cooperation possibilities offered by the European Union and other bodies and organisations in Europe and beyond.
GLOSSARY

Some of the jargon in this Handbook may not be familiar to you. Therefore, what follows is a list of some of the Socrates and Comenius-specific vocabulary that you will need to have at your command while using this Handbook.

European Union :
The European Union (EU) is the result of a process of cooperation and integration which began in 1951. In 1957 six countries (Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) signed a treaty which saw the creation of the European Community. In 1993 the European Union replaced the European Community as a result of the signing of the Maastricht Treaty. After nearly fifty years, with four periods of enlargement, the EU today has fifteen Member States and is preparing for its fifth enlargement. The present Member States are: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

European Commission :
The European Commission is the name given to the administrative structure which advises the EU and implements its decisions. The Commission is the executive body of the Union, whose job it is to help the EU attain its goals. Its second main concern is to defend the interests of Europe’s citizens and make sure that European legislation is applied correctly. Although it has the power to make proposals, the Commission does not take the main decisions on EU policies and priorities. This is the responsibility of the Council of the European Union - whose members are ministers from the Member States’ governments - and the European Parliament (in many, but not all cases).

National Agency :
Each country participating in Socrates/Comenius has appointed an organisation to promote and administer the various education activities funded by the EU. This organisation is called the National Agency. As regards Comenius 1 projects, the National Agency in your country is your contact point.

Transnational :
This means working across national boundaries. Almost every EU programme requires a transnational element of some kind as a way of achieving cooperation between Member States.

Project :
A project is a transnational cooperation activity, jointly developed by a grouping of organisations or institutions. Within Comenius 1, schools can apply for support for three types of projects: School Projects, Language Projects and School Development Projects.

Transnational mobility :
This refers to the cross-border exchanges that take place between partners in a Comenius project. As long as it is relevant to the initiation or development of a particular project, the persons involved in a given project may attend a “preparatory visit”, “project meeting”, “teacher exchange”, “teacher placement”, “head teacher study visit” or “class exchange”. 
School:
This refers to all kinds of institutions providing general (nursery, primary or secondary), vocational or technical education below the level of higher education, including special schools and institutions not normally called schools but which provide education of the type described. Exceptionally, in the case of Comenius Language Projects, non-school institutions providing apprenticeship training may also be included in this list.

Teacher / Educational staff:
This refers to persons who, through their duties, are involved directly in the educational process in the Member States and other countries participating in Socrates/Comenius, in accordance with the organisation of their respective education systems.

Pupil:
This means persons enrolled in that capacity at a “school” as defined in this glossary.

Decision-makers:
This means any category of staff with managerial, assessment, training, guidance and inspection duties in the field of education, and persons responsible for this area at local, regional and national level and within ministries.

Company:
“Company” means all companies in the public or private sector whatever their size, legal status or the economic sector in which they operate, as well as all types of economic activities.
1. WHAT ARE SOCRATES AND COMENIUS?

Comenius is part of the European Community’s Socrates action programme in the field of education. Socrates, which was first launched in 1995 seeks, among other goals, to promote co-operation and mobility, and to strengthen the European dimension in the field of education. It targets the whole spectrum of education from nursery school children to adult learners of any age, and from school partnerships to analysing educational policy in the countries participating in Socrates. It does this through eight different actions, of which Comenius is one.

Comenius addresses school education, and it is guided by four overall objectives. With regard to school education, it firstly seeks to enhance the quality and secondly to reinforce the European dimension therein. Thirdly, it encourages the learning of languages, and fourthly, it promotes intercultural awareness. Comenius is divided into three different parts. **Comenius 1**, the subject of this Handbook, promotes co-operation between all kinds of institutions which provide general, vocational or technical education up to the level of higher education, including special schools and institutions not normally called schools but which provide education of the type described. Comenius 2 addresses the professional development of all types of school education staff, and Comenius 3 aims at networking those, whether they are projects or institutions, which are or have been involved in Comenius 1 or Comenius 2.

The structure of the Socrates programme:

![Diagram of Socrates programme structure](image)

You can find more information on Socrates and Comenius in the Guidelines for Applicants and in various brochures as well as on the Socrates website at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates.html).
1.1. WHY SHOULD WE GET INVOLVED IN COMENIUS 1 PROJECTS?

You might indeed ask why you should add yet another item to your already full agenda. There is no denying that involvement in European cooperation – as in any – means work. However, there are many benefits for all those involved in a Comenius 1 project, as the approximately 15,000 schools, 150,000 teachers and staff, and 2 million pupils throughout Europe who have been involved in Comenius school partnerships up until now can testify. Some of these benefits are described below.

*Teachers* have the opportunity to develop new skills or practise old ones when planning and managing a project. For example, they may organise and chair meetings, negotiate with their partners and manage a project budget. Meeting with colleagues from different European countries provides an insight into different educational systems and teaching methods, which may inspire innovation in teaching. In addition, professional meetings with foreign colleagues often spill into private life and develop into lasting friendships.

Both *teachers and pupils* acquire new skills relevant for both personal and professional life, such as communication and presentation skills, decision-making, problem-solving and conflict management, creativity, team-work and solidarity. They learn new foreign languages or practise languages they already know. A sense of personal development and achievement leads to increased motivation and enjoyment for both.

*Schools* benefit from the increased motivation of teachers and pupils along with the corresponding rise in pupils’ level of interest and achievement. Getting to know different practices across a variety of European schools and finding joint solutions to shared problems gives impetus to applying new management and problem-solving approaches in the whole school.

*Parents* benefit from the rise in their children’s level of interest, motivation and achievement at school. In addition, they - together with pupils and teachers - have the opportunity to broaden their horizons in coming across different countries, cultures and ways of thinking. This will help them all to develop into individuals who can learn from others and live more positively with difference and diversity.

The following comments from participants in Comenius 1 projects illustrate some of the benefits listed above:

“They (the pupils) learned to co-operate with people from a different culture, how to put their well-based theoretical knowledge into practice, and last but not least they could find out the real importance of language learning in their lives.”

“The overall gain for pupils is that Europe has grown a human face. The visiting teachers…and the regular correspondence with other pupils opened a window on the world which would never have been achieved through traditional lessons and textbooks.”

“You get new inspiration, it has been enormously inspiring – you simply become a better teacher by taking part.”

“With my long experience as a teacher I needed new inspiration. Our Comenius project gave so many new impulses. It was a breakthrough and the long-term impact is a changed view of the world…”

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1 You can read more about the projects and their impact in a Deloitte and Touche evaluation report at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/evaluation/socrates_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/evaluation/socrates_en.html)
1.2. COMENIUS 1 PROJECTS : WHAT ARE THEY LIKE?

The following table offers you a quick and precise overview of Comenius projects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School Projects</th>
<th>Language Projects</th>
<th>School Development Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupil-centred</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution-centred</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral partnership</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multilateral partnership</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Max. 3 consecutive years</td>
<td>Normally 1 year</td>
<td>Max. 3 consecutive years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language emphasis</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated into the curriculum</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-curricular</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comenius 1 projects are based on partnerships consisting of schools from the countries which participate in the Socrates programme. These are the 15 Member States of the European Union (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom); the countries which are members of the European Free Trade Association and which have also signed the Agreement on the European Economic Area with the EU (Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein), and the countries which have applied for EU membership (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia as well as Cyprus, Malta and Turkey\(^2\)).

There are three different project types under Comenius 1: **School Projects, Language Projects and School Development Projects**. Whilst being similar in many respects, the projects also have important differences in organisation and orientation.

School Projects and School Development Projects are similar in structure and organisation. They are based on partnerships of at least three schools from three of the countries listed above, and they can be funded for up to three years. Partnerships should be geographically balanced, i.e. partners should preferably come from different parts of Europe, and there should not be an imbalance with many partners coming from the same country. In fact, normally National Agencies only provide funding for one or at the most two schools per project in their country (contact your National Agency for more information). One school in the partnership will act as a coordinating school responsible for different administrative and management tasks.

\(^2\) Turkey is not expected to participate before 2002. However, this situation may change. Therefore, you should consult your National Agency for more information.
The partnerships in Language Projects consist of two schools each from a different country. Language projects will only be funded for one year, even if a project may be prolonged to two years under exceptional and justified circumstances. Regarding content and orientation, Language Projects and School Projects have many similarities, whereas School Development Projects differ from them primarily because they are centred on the school as an educational establishment together with its needs and problems.

It is important to remember that at least one partner in all of these types of project must be from one of the EU Member States.

1.3. CONTENT AND ORIENTATION

1.3.1. School projects

Comenius School Projects promote European cooperation between groups of pupils and teachers from different European countries. The cooperation gives the participants an opportunity to explore each others’ countries, cultures, and ways of thinking and living, and also to learn to understand and appreciate them better. Since the active involvement of pupils in all aspects of the projects – planning, carrying out, and evaluating the activities – is at the heart of these projects, as many pupils as possible should be able to participate in project activities. Projects should provide an added value to traditional learning and teaching by bringing in new and creative ways of dealing with the curricular subject(s) on hand.

Previous experience has shown that the most successful projects are cross-curricular projects that are integrated into the regular curriculum of the participating pupils. Integrating a European project into the curriculum may not seem that easy at the outset. You and your colleagues may have to rearrange your classes, and administrative arrangements may seem difficult at first. However, the key is to make the project fit in naturally with the existing curriculum, not to add to the work-load (you may even find the project theme in the curriculum). Do not give up, but remember that projects which have been successfully integrated into the curriculum and which involve several subjects tend to be the most rewarding ones!

a Project topic and end products

A topic which motivates both pupils and teachers to explore, exchange information, and learn from others is crucial for a successful project. There are no lists of recommended project topics: you and your partners are free to negotiate and choose any topic which motivates you. Since interest in the topic is one of the driving forces of any project, it is worth taking the time to carefully reflect on the topic, and to make sure that each school is equally committed to it.

Cross-curricular topics, where several curricular subjects are brought into the project, have several advantages. They bring together teachers from different subjects and pupils from different classes into a whole school project. Such whole school projects tend to be more sustainable than projects which are limited exclusively to one teacher or one subject. In addition, they allow the creative combination of subjects such as history, maths, art and literature in a project on construction techniques in the partner countries, as one example.
The end products of School Projects vary greatly: projects might have concrete, tangible outcomes, such as a booklet, a brochure, or a CD-ROM. Equally, pupils could have an exhibition of local trades and crafts, put up an artistic performance or produce a video. A description of the carrying out of a project or a module on how to run a European co-operation project can equally well be end products. As the focus of school projects is on the process, the entire experience of being involved in a project is also an “end product” in itself. Whatever form the end product takes, remember that it acts as a powerful incentive for working on the project!

b Examples of projects

The following examples are of Comenius School Projects already carried out in different types of schools. They illustrate the great variety and range of topics and issues dealt with in School Projects.

**TITLE:** Releasing our children from the classroom cage  
**SCHOOL TYPE:** Nursery and primary schools  
**AGE OF PUPILS:** 3 – 9 years old

**PROJECT CONTENT AND ACTIVITIES:** The project aimed at developing an awareness of similarities and differences in nature and the environment in the countries participating in the project. The pupils created a small flower and vegetable garden, produced a book using diagrams and pictures of the flowers and vegetables in the different countries with insertions of text or poetry from those countries. They performed plays related to the environment, put together a cookery book of selected recipes from the countries participating in the project, and constructed a “nature square” to follow the natural cycles of nature in their own country and the partner countries.

**INTEGRATION INTO THE CURRICULUM:** The project themes were aligned with the curriculum of the pupils and project work was carried out during regular classroom activities.

**CROSS-CURRICULAR IMPACT:** Each activity involved different subjects, such as biology, nature studies, music, art and theatre. The pupils and teachers of the various subjects – mother tongue, science, physical education and arts education – worked together on the different activities.

**END PRODUCTS:** Photography exhibition, a video, audio recordings, a book of recipes.
1.3.2. Language projects

The aim of Language Projects is to improve pupils’ motivation and capacity to communicate in foreign languages. They are based on joint work by pupils and teachers on a chosen project topic. All activities should be integrated into the pupils’ regular curriculum. They are carried out together with the pupils who should also be actively involved in planning, monitoring and evaluating them.

The projects include a reciprocal exchange with a minimum number of 10 participating pupils, aged 14 and older, visiting the partner school for a minimum of 14 days (for more information on this, please see Chapter 3.10, “Pupil Exchanges in Language Projects”). An integral part of language projects is working towards the end product. This must be jointly produced, in the partner languages, by the two groups of pupils.
The end product not only motivates pupils to begin with, but also enables all parties to see and enjoy what the pupils have learned and achieved, e.g. how much their competence in a foreign language has increased. Some imagination is necessary to choose an end product, as the possibilities are vast. The pupils could for example produce an anthology of poetry on any chosen theme, a bilingual glossary of technical terms, or a video, write and perform a play, or do a musical performance.

\textit{a The role of languages}

Language Projects do not seek to provide formal language teaching. What they try to do is to improve pupils’ linguistic competence and motivation to learn languages by \textit{creating conditions in which they can communicate in a foreign language in real situations}. The actual use of the language of the other partner depends on the degree to which the pupils master the language in question.

When pupils in both partner institutions have already spent some years learning the language of their project partner, it is expected that they will use the other partner’s language for a reasonable part of their work and more or less to the same extent.

In case pupils in one or both partner institutions have little or no knowledge of each other's languages, they will be expected to learn at least some of the partner's language. If necessary, a third language can also be used as a language of communication.

In case the language of the partner is not on the curriculum of the pupils, a 20 – 40 hour introduction must be organised before the exchange. If one – or both – of the languages is a LWULT language (see Chapter 4.2), you can apply for supplementary funding for linguistic preparation.

\textit{b Examples of language projects}

It may seem difficult to integrate a project into the regular curriculum of the participating pupils for the reasons mentioned earlier in connection with School Projects. Therefore, if your institution has certain days, weeks, blocks, periods or seasons set aside for special activities, it might be useful to use them for the joint project work. The following examples are designed to illustrate different kinds of Languages Projects and in particular how cross-curricular projects can be integrated into regular school work.
**TITLE : Web-based information on environment protection**

**SCHOOL TYPE :** Secondary vocational schools  

**AGE OF PUPILS :** 15 – 19 years old  

**PROJECT CONTENT AND ACTIVITIES :** Pupils studying chemical engineering collected data on water quality of a major river in each partner country. They then travelled to each others countries to participate in the exchange part of the project. There, apart from the linguistic, social and cultural aspects of the exchange, the pupils worked in pairs on the data they had collected from their own countries – as soon as the records were analysed, the pupils put the result of the research on the Internet in three languages.  

**INTEGRATION INTO THE CURRICULUM :** Project content was dealt with during most of their vocational classes, and language tuition was enriched by technical vocabulary relating to the project. At ICT classes pupils learnt about video conferencing so that they could use it to communicate with the partner school.  

**CROSS-CURRICULAR IMPACT :** The project theme encompassed much of their vocational study areas; work in the field of environment protection was based on their biology, physics and chemistry studies.  

**END PRODUCT :** A website containing the result of the research (tables, figures and text with conclusions) in three languages.

---

**TITLE : Ethnic minorities in different parts of Europe**

**SCHOOL TYPE :** General secondary schools  

**AGE OF PUPILS :** 14 – 18 years old  

**PROJECT CONTENT AND ACTIVITIES :** Pupils at the two schools worked together investigating how the minority issue is handled in the two countries, identifying examples of good practice, and making suggestions for improvement. They carried out research in the library and conducted on-the-spot interviews, and wrote and staged a play on the subject.  

**INTEGRATION INTO THE CURRICULUM :** Research in libraries and fieldwork became an integral part of pupils’ normal course of study and placed the learned subjects into a lifelike context. The play was rehearsed during literature and language classes, and the teaching of various subjects were enriched by giving special attention to the project theme.  

**CROSS-CURRICULAR IMPACT :** Work on the project encompassed history, arts and other related fields of study.  

**END PRODUCT :** A brochure containing the conclusions of the research in two languages, a video recording of the play performed in the course of the exchanges.
TITLE: *Experiencing Europe – students with learning difficulties in a multi-skill workshop.*

SCHOOL TYPE: Special secondary schools

AGE OF PUPILS: 16 – 19 years old

PROJECT CONTENT AND ACTIVITIES: The project allowed pupils with minor mental and physical disabilities to travel abroad, get to know a different culture, establish friendships and learn a foreign language. Cooperation of pupils included joint work at a special workshop enabling them to produce something of their own, such as glass painting, carving, patch work, knitting etc.

INTEGRATION INTO CURRICULUM: Teaching to communicate and act independently is an integral feature of the education of pupils with learning difficulties. The project was a key factor in realising this part of the schools’ pedagogical programme.

CROSS-CURRICULAR IMPACT: A complex set of subject areas was touched on by the project, including society and culture, handicrafts, arts, and foreign language.

END PRODUCT: Pieces of handicraft (such as painted glasses and mirrors, a decorated pillow, wooden toys).

### 1.3.3. School development projects

School Development Projects focus on the participating schools and their needs as *educational establishments*. The projects seek to improve school management and pedagogical approaches and they enable teams of teachers and school management – and pupils wherever beneficial and relevant to a project – to exchange information and experience on jointly identified needs and problems.

Drawing on the richness of their varied experience, the teams develop new effective approaches and methods to meet their needs and deal with the issues in question. Thus they have the opportunity to test and put into practice the most effective organisational and pedagogical approaches and methods in the participating schools.

#### a) The project topic

Since School Development Projects focus on the needs and problems your school and your partner schools have in common, there is no exhaustive list of potential topics. You will have to discuss and agree with your partners on which subject you want to cooperate for the project to be as useful and interesting as possible to all involved.

To give you some ideas about possible themes for School Development Projects, you could focus on school management issues, for example how to develop a sustainable school, how to cooperate with support structures in and outside the school, how to involve parents, how to make the most of school autonomy, how to establish effective links between your school and the world of work, how to work on quality management in a school, or how to ensure equal opportunities between male and female staff.

Your School Development Project could also focus on pedagogical issues, such as how to use information and communication technology effectively in the classroom, how to introduce project work into the curriculum, how to stimulate cooperative learning, how to reconcile the national curriculum with individual learning levels and possibilities, how to motivate pupils for specific subjects, how to introduce a European dimension in various subjects, how to introduce health promotion, or how to develop cross-curricular work.

You could also find a topic for a School Development Project taking it more from a target group angle. For example how to integrate migrant children, how to cope with and
benefit from the diversity that refugee children bring into the classroom and the school, how to integrate disabled pupils in a mainstream school, how to motivate pupils at risk to prevent dropout, or how to create equal opportunities for girls and boys in education.

These and many more topics can be dealt with in a School Development Project. The main thing is that the topic should be inspiring for all participants, as that will make it easier to develop approaches, materials, and tools which will be really useful and to put them to use, not only in your partnership, but also in other schools with similar interests.

b Examples of projects

The following examples of School Development Projects illustrate project contents and activities, the involvement of other interested parties and pupils, as well as the results for the schools involved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE : Educating migrant children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL TYPE : Schools with a high concentration of pupils from migrant families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT CONTENT AND ACTIVITIES : Many schools across Europe are trying to find ways of integrating pupils from different cultural backgrounds. Managing multicultural schools brings about particular problems and particular challenges. Therefore the schools participating in the project developed different management and pedagogical approaches to answer the challenges stemming from cultural and linguistic diversity in school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER PLAYERS : Migrants’ associations, trade unions, local authorities. Teacher placements were organised through these bodies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE OF PUPILS : The issue of migrants was debated in the classroom; some pupils took part in transnational project meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>END PRODUCT/RESULT : The participating schools updated their pedagogical programme.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE : Sustainable schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL TYPE : General secondary schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT CONTENT AND ACTIVITIES : Several schools across Europe decided to co-operate on a strategy to see which institutional approaches they can develop to bring about a sustainable school. Such a school is not only an environmentally-friendly school but also a democratic and participatory school in which all the members of the educational community (pupils, parents, educational staff and local community) are actively involved and committed. The project developed strategies to promote schools as environmentally sustainable communities embedded into the larger concept of active European citizenship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER PLAYERS : Local authorities, a teacher training centre, parents’ and pupils’ associations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE OF PUPILS : Pupils’ associations participated in developing the concept of the sustainable school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>END PRODUCT/RESULT : An institutional structure based on a new pedagogical approach.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TITLE: Cultural heritage
SCHOOL TYPE: General secondary and/or vocational schools

PROJECT CONTENT AND ACTIVITIES: The participating schools across Europe worked on ways to enhance co-operation with partners in the local community who are active in the field of cultural heritage. The activities were linked to raising the interest of young people (especially in vocational and technical education) in a job related to those services.

INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER PLAYERS: Educational departments of museums, theatres, national parks.

ROLE OF PUPILS: The project was linked to active European citizenship approaches where young people take responsibility for their cultural heritage e.g. through peer-led projects.

END PRODUCT/RESULT: The introduction of a regular event into the school’s pedagogical programme relating to cultural heritage.

1.4. MOBILITY WITHIN PROJECTS

Mobility occupies a central place within Comenius 1. Pupils and staff are provided with a range of opportunities designed to strengthen the partnerships and deepen the collaborative nature of the project. When planning your project with your partners, you need to discuss the role that teacher and pupil mobility will play in its development. Different mobility activities are possible depending on the project type, as shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School Project</th>
<th>Language Project</th>
<th>School Development Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff mobility:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>– Project meeting</td>
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<td>– Teacher exchange</td>
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<td>– Teacher placement</td>
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<td>– Head teacher study visit</td>
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<td>– Accompanying a class exchange</td>
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<td><strong>Pupil mobility:</strong></td>
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<td>– Project meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>– Class exchange</td>
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</table>

A Project meeting is a transnational meeting between staff and pupils from the participating schools to discuss issues such as the planning, organisation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project. There is no minimum age limit for pupils attending a project meeting. To decide the age, please refer to national legislation for guidelines to determine the age in cooperation with parents.

Teacher exchanges have an important role in developing the content of the project. In addition, they are an excellent means for professional development. Working in a
different school in another European country provides an opportunity to reflect on one’s teaching approach and to create valuable professional and personal links with colleagues in a partner school.

**Teacher placements** provide an opportunity to participate in a structured range of activities in a company, business, enterprise or public/private sector (e.g. social services, Non-Governmental Organisations, local authorities, not-for-profit organisations). They are particularly useful when developing a project with a school-enterprise theme which seeks to contribute to a heightened understanding of the world of work among young people, or when developing a School Development Project.

**Head teacher study visits** are an important resource for ensuring that head teachers get to know their colleagues in the partner schools. The visits will enable them to develop a greater understanding of the needs of projects and the school management’s role in contributing to the success of projects and removing obstacles to that.

**Class exchanges** are an essential part of Language Projects. In the course of the exchanges, pupils from both schools will have the opportunity to work together on specific tasks within the overall project. This will enable them to use their newly acquired and existing language skills, and acquire a deeper understanding of their partner’s culture. The minimum age of a participating pupil is 14 years. Staff or other appropriate adults will accompany both groups of pupils on the exchange (**Accompanying a class exchange**).

### 2. HOW TO SET UP A PROJECT

#### 2.1. THE INITIAL DECISION

The initial impulse to become involved in a Comenius 1 project normally comes from an individual member of staff or from a small group of like-minded colleagues. However, it is vital for the success of the project that this initial enthusiasm ultimately spreads to the whole school community including senior managers, school administrators and support staff, parents and the community which the school serves.

Therefore, at this very first stage, it would be useful to have internal meetings within your school in order to clarify the purpose of the project you want to undertake and to discuss all its possible perspectives. More specifically, you could pose questions **such as**:

- Which subject areas, themes, topics could be covered?
- What planning and organisation needs to take place?
- Which staff, teachers, pupils and classes etc. are interested in participating?
- What support can be sought from governmental and local authorities, parents associations, education authorities, the local community or the local media?
- What teaching and learning methods and other pedagogical approaches should be developed and how could they be related to the school management?
- What resources/skills are available and what additional resources/skills can be acquired?
- What other countries might be involved?

Remember that your project should:
• deal with a topic of interest to all partners,
• be fully supported by the school management,
• involve parents and raise their enthusiasm and commitment,
• be supported by a “Comenius Plan” (see next section).

The experience of a large number of participating schools in the past has shown that it is crucial to keep an open mind and to be open for discussion when planning a Comenius project. Try to also be aware that a project is not “owned” by you or any other colleague; rather, it is the creative outcome of equitable collaboration between all participating schools. Therefore, all partners should have an equal say in planning the project and developing project activities.

2.2. THE COMENIUS PLAN

2.2.1. What is it?

The Comenius Plan is a brief document which is meant to help your school plan its European and international co-operation activities on a longer time-scale and integrate them into the school’s pedagogical programme. To help you draft your Comenius Plan, your National Agency will provide you with a standard form.

Your Comenius Plan gives a brief description of your school and of any specific issues that may have a bearing on your project application, as well as present and future European/international activities of your school.

2.2.2. Why is a Comenius Plan required?

You may feel that filling in another form apart from the project application is an unnecessary burden. It is true that drafting a Comenius Plan requires some effort from your school at the outset, but in the long run it will prove to be a useful tool in following where your school comes from and where it is heading.

The Comenius Plan will help you to reflect on the following issues: Why does your school want to embark on international cooperation? What do you want to achieve with it? How will it affect the persons directly involved? What effects do you expect in terms of pedagogical approaches, teaching/learning methods, and integration of European activities in the curriculum? How will it affect the school's management and organisational structures?

Given that Socrates and Comenius give special priority to schools and pupils in disadvantaged situations, it is important that you describe the situation of your school with this in mind in the Comenius Plan. For example, your school may be located in a city or suburb where families face high unemployment, violence and drug problems and where many pupils risk dropping out of school, or in a rural area with few or no opportunities for the pupils to get in contact with pupils abroad. Your school may provide education to pupils with special needs, it may be a mainstream school trying to integrate pupils with special needs, or it may have a large number of children of migrants or refugees, who require specific pedagogical approaches, support and monitoring.

The Comenius Plan also offers the whole school community a good opportunity to discuss how the project will be integrated into the school life - the curriculum, the
school’s organisational structure, etc. Therefore right from the start, you are encouraged to involve the head of your school, teaching and other school staff, pupils, parents, an inspector, a counsellor, the local educational authority or any other interested person or body. In the end, who you involve will naturally also depend on how the school system works in your country.

Discussing the future cooperation strategy of your school in advance will make things clearer to everybody concerned. It will also make it easier for you to obtain the necessary support once the project gets going. It is good to remember that a project is not something extra that one person can manage on his or her own. Therefore, you will need the support and commitment of the head of your school, your colleagues, pupils and their parents, and other interested parties.

In many countries in Europe schools are expected to develop a strategic plan covering one or more years. The Comenius Plan is not meant to come on top of this plan. In fact, both can and should be connected and will thus also strengthen each other. Your Comenius Plan will also be an opportunity to think further ahead than just Comenius 1 projects. You may be interested in other Comenius or Socrates activities or in other opportunities for international cooperation. Thus, your school will be setting goals for itself, which will help orient its future activities.

Your National Agency will read your school’s Comenius Plan together with your project application, but unlike the project application your Comenius Plan will not be the subject of a selection. It will be a tool for the National Agency to see in what context your project will be operating: that is, what are the specific characteristics and needs of your school and how the project may contribute to dealing with those issues.

2.2.3. When to submit a Comenius Plan

You need to submit a Comenius Plan together with a new Comenius 1 project application. A Comenius Plan will normally remain valid for more than one year. Therefore you do not need to submit a Comenius Plan when submitting a renewal application for a second or third project year, unless significant changes have taken place in your school’s circumstances or its plans.

2.3. HOW TO FIND PARTNERS

Finding partners might seem somewhat daunting at first. However, there are several ways to go about it ranging from personal contacts to tools which have been expressly developed for the single purpose of helping you to find partners.

Personal contacts, both private and professional, are a good starting point. You yourself, your family, your friends, your colleagues, or the head of your school may know teachers abroad who would be interested in setting up a project with you. The local or regional authorities may also be able to help you. They may have “twinning” arrangements or other close contacts with their counterparts in other European countries, and could put you in touch with interested schools in their area. Comenius 2 in-service training courses and Arion study visits may also lead you to potential partners. You may also find partners through contact seminars arranged by Comenius 3 networks for which preparatory visit grants are available (see next section).

PartBase (http://partbase.eupro.se) is a database on the Internet that has been developed with support from the European Commission. It enables schools to search for potential
partner schools and to register their own school to find a suitable partner for Comenius projects. The *European Schoolnet*, which is a framework for collaboration between several Ministries of Education in Europe, also has a website with partner-search facilities ([http://www.eun.org](http://www.eun.org)).

*National Agencies* in the different countries participating in Socrates/Comenius arrange *contact seminars* focusing on a particular theme where you can meet colleagues from schools interested in starting a project. Grants for preparatory visits are also available for participation in these contact seminars (see next section for details). You can contact your National Agency for further information on such a contact seminar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For School Projects and School Development Projects it is strongly advised that schools initially look for more than the minimum three partners. In that case, even if one school drops out, the project will still have enough participants to be eligible under Comenius 1.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### 2.4. PREPARATORY VISITS

#### 2.4.1. What are they?

Schools can apply to their National Agency for a grant to undertake a preparatory visit. Such a visit lasts up to one week and enables you to meet your potential partners and discuss and develop the project together. It’s also an opportunity to start building the personal relationships on which a successful project is built, and to start filling in the application for funding. It will enable you to get to know the partner schools (school buildings, the level of ICT equipment etc.), their school systems and cultures. You can discuss issues such as the workplan, the roles and tasks of the coordinating school and the partner schools, means of communication, languages to be used and mobility activities to be undertaken in the course of the project. In order to derive maximum benefit from the visit, try to exchange as much information as possible with your potential partners on your school and your educational system. The most effective visit is one where all the partners meet each other.

The participation in *contact seminars* can be funded like preparatory visits. In the case that you receive funding for participating at a contact seminar, you normally cannot receive funding for another preparatory visit (check with your National Agency).

You can apply for and may get a preparatory visit grant that covers:

- actual travel costs,
- travel insurance costs,
- a portion of the subsistence costs.

It is important to keep in mind that costs relating to the replacement of teachers will not be covered.

To apply for a preparatory visit, you will need to fill in a standard application form, which is available from your National Agency. National Agencies in each country will fix their own closing dates for submitting the applications, and therefore you need to contact your National Agency to find out how and when to apply. Remember that retrospective applications will not be considered – i.e. don’t be late!
No funding is available to meet the costs incurred by the school hosting a preparatory visit. Therefore, each participating school will have to cover these costs through their own grants and the partnership will have to agree in advance how they will share the costs. The “travelling” partners have to submit the preparatory visit application to their National Agency. For visiting schools, a maximum two persons may be present at these events.

Should a preparatory visit be undertaken in good faith and prove unsuccessful, the school will not be required to return the grant. The person undertaking the visit will, however, have to provide a full account of expenditure and an explanatory report of the visit to the National Agency concerned.

Since preparatory visits are designed to pave the way for a project they must take place before the project application is submitted. However, schools wishing to join existing projects as additional partners are free to apply later. It would be very useful for them to time their preparatory visit to coincide with a project meeting of the existing project.

### 2.4.2. What to take into account when first meeting with your partners

This is a crucial meeting, as the decisions taken will affect the development of the whole project. Be prepared to negotiate as you have never negotiated before, and to use your communication and diplomatic skills to the full! Other useful skills are tolerance, patience, flexibility and a sense of humour.

Apart from deciding the location of the meeting, it cannot be over-emphasised how much you are advised to have agreed upon a clearly-defined agenda prior to the meeting, and who will chair it. At this stage, it may also be a good idea to have a pupil, parent or other interested party present. However much ground you have managed to cover in advance, you will need to work through the items listed below. Do not forget to keep one eye on the application form when doing it!

- What your reasons are for wanting to take part in a transnational project and what you expect of the meeting.
- Which staff, how many pupils and which age groups are to be involved in each school.
- A suitable time-scale for delivering the project and when to submit an application.
- How will you communicate – in which language(s), by what means and how often.
- Project budget.
- The areas you would like to explore as possible themes for the project, and which curriculum areas are likely to be involved either directly or indirectly.
- How the theme will be developed in each school.
- Which school will coordinate the project, and what tasks will the participating schools take on.
- What equipment, resources, expertise and contacts each school brings to the project.
- Arrangements for collecting data, monitoring progress and disseminating information about the project.
• When and in which country should project meetings be held – it is useful to build them into your planning from the start.

• What will happen if key personnel change.

• What will happen to the project if one of the schools in the partnerships wishes to withdraw.

• What will happen next if the project is rejected (will there be any further cooperation).

Remember that a preparatory visit where all partners meet is an excellent opportunity to start filling in the project application!

2.4.3. What to take with you?

You should also give some thought to what you will take with you. The following checklist may contain some useful prompts:

• this Handbook, the Socrates Guidelines for Applicants, the Call for Proposals and any other sources of reference you may obtain, application forms - there will be many occasions during the meeting when you will want to check out technical points, and you may not be able to rely on your partners to find an immediate answer,

• a letter of greeting and support for the project from the head of your school and possibly the chair of the governors or managers, along with messages from the pupils who may be taking part in the project,

• information on your school, for example a school brochure, relevant planning and curriculum documents, vacation schedules and information about the educational system in your country/region,

• a stock of lists of contact names, telephone and fax numbers to hand out,

• photographs, a video and/or audio recording to give an impression of your school and the area it serves (but check that your equipment is compatible), a camera and a camcorder,

• tourist information about the area in which your school is located, including posters,

• gifts, particularly ones which have some relevance to your school and its local community – take more than you expect to need because you may well find yourself meeting more people and being given more hospitality and presents that you had anticipated.

When going on a preparatory visit, it is important to be aware of:

1. any cultural differences between the countries participating in the project,

2. different priorities and focus in the project

3. varying levels of language competence.
2.5. PREPARING THE APPLICATION FOR FUNDING

2.5.1. How to go about it?

The general closing date for Comenius 1 applications is 1st March. However, some countries have earlier closing dates. It is therefore advisable that you and your partners check with your respective National Agencies to see if there is an earlier closing date for any one of you.

The application form is both a joint application form for the whole project and an individual one for each applicant school. What this means is that questions which relate to basic project information, the partnership, project content and project organisation concern the whole project, and you and your partners need to fill them in together. The budget section of the application form, however, concerns each applicant school, and needs to be filled in individually by each school. Each school needs to prepare its own Comenius Plan as well.

The coordinating school will submit the jointly completed application form together with its budget section and Comenius Plan to its National Agency. Each partner school will submit a copy of the jointly completed part of the form together with its budget section and Comenius Plan to its National Agency. In case the joint part of the application form has been completed in a language different to yours, your National Agency may ask you for a translation.

The following shows you which parts of the application form to fill in individually and which to fill in jointly:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jointly:</th>
<th>Individually:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Project basics</td>
<td>• Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Project partnership</td>
<td>• Budget declaration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Project content</td>
<td>plus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Project organisation</td>
<td>Comenius Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Summary</td>
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</table>

Note that the application form relates to all activities, including transnational mobility (cf. Chapter 1.4)

2.5.2. What makes a good application?

Projects should meet the objectives and priorities of Comenius as presented in the Guidelines for Applicants. In concrete terms this means that the persons assessing your application will be looking at how well your project enhances the quality of school education and reinforces the European dimension therein. The following priorities will also be looked at:

• How well does your project promote intercultural awareness?
• How well does your project promote the learning of languages?
• How well does your project meet the needs of children with special needs?
• How well does your project promote equal opportunities?

It is clear that every project may not necessarily fulfill all of these priorities. This is understandable and acceptable: it is better for a project to focus clearly on a limited number of priorities than making a weak attempt at all of them.

In some countries there might also be national priorities that you need to consider. You will need to find out what they might be in the annual “Call for Proposals”, which you can get from your National Agency, or download from the European Commission’s website.

In addition to the formal selection criteria described above, you should also demonstrate the following elements in your application:

• clear objectives and realistic expected outcomes,
• a clear and coherent work-plan,
• coherence between your Comenius Plan and the application,
• plans for the ongoing evaluation of the project,
• plans for the dissemination of product outcomes at local and regional, and where possible, national level.

Comenius projects are co-operation projects where all partners have equal rights and obligations. The application should therefore make it clear that the activities have been agreed on by all partners and that all partners are equally committed to the project.

Remember that the application is your ticket to get funding for your project. Therefore, make sure that your application is explicit and clear, and completed in full. Remember that no one is able to read your thoughts - ideas need to be spelled out! In this respect a critical friend could be useful; i.e. let someone who is not involved in the project read your application and give feedback on it.

2.6. SELECTION AND ENTERING INTO THE CONTRACT

2.6.1. The selection process

Since Comenius 1 projects are transnational projects, they need to be approved of at both national and European level. Therefore, the application process consists of a national selection carried out by each National Agency, followed by a European consultation procedure.

What this means in practice is that if your National Agency has accepted your project application, it will then need to consult with your partners’ National Agencies to find out if they have also been accepted. As explained earlier, School Projects and School Development Projects need to have at least three partners; therefore, at least two of your partners’ applications must be accepted in order for your project to be approved. Regarding Language Projects, both you and your partner must be selected by the respective National Agencies. The European Commission is not involved in the selection of project applications.
In this respect it is useful to know that each country participating in Comenius is allocated a budget which is based on a number of elements such as the size of its school population, for example. Project approval depends on the annual budget, and in case there is more demand than funds in any given country, the National Agency will select applications which best meet all the criteria used to assess the projects. Therefore, it might happen that even if your application has been accepted by your National Agency, your project may be refused because one of your partners has been turned down.

Therefore, it is good to have at least four schools involved in your partnership to reduce the risk that the whole project application is rejected, just because one school’s application is turned down. On the other hand, a partnership that is too large is not encouraged at the beginning - in any case, it is possible to extend the partnership by adding new schools at renewal stage.

Your National Agency will inform you of the results of the selection procedure before the planned start of activities.

2.6.2. What happens if your application is successful?

Your National Agency will inform you that your project has been selected, and will send you a contract in which you commit to carrying out the activities described in your application and to respect the contractual and reporting requirements.

The contract is a legal document, and therefore it needs to be signed by the person legally authorised to sign it on behalf of your school. You need to keep one signed copy of the contract, and return another one to your National Agency. The contract will enter into force when the National Agency receives the signed copy.

Once it receives the signed copy, your National Agency will issue you a grant for the first project year. This grant will be divided in two instalments:

- You will first get an advance of 80% of the project grant: it is normally paid within a month after the National Agency has received the signed contract.
- You will receive the remaining 20% at the end of the contract period on receipt of a satisfactory final report and account of expenditure.

The grants are calculated in euros. Contracts follow the school year, which for the purposes of Comenius is seen to run from 1 August to 31 July the year after.

If your project is a School Project or a School Development Project, you will first be issued a contract covering the first project year. In order to continue with the project for the remaining two years, you will need to present a progress report and submit an application for project renewal (see Chapter 2.6.5 below).

Language Projects may exceptionally receive a two-year contract in case the two pupil exchanges cannot be organised in the course of one school year. However, the amount of the grant for a two-year contract will not be higher than for a one-year contract.

2.6.3. Grant support and grant rules

The grant consists of two parts: a standard amount to cover eligible project costs, and a variable amount to offset eligible transnational mobility costs. The variable amount of each school varies according to the number of people travelling, whether they are pupils or staff, where they go, and how long they stay. Comenius funds will cover the travel and
insurance costs in full, but the subsistence costs are only covered in part. The application forms contain the up-to-date information on the applicable rates.

You can only use the standard amount of the grant for the following categories of eligible project expenses which it can cover in full:

1) linguistic preparation of staff and pupils: e.g. extra lessons in the target language, purchase of material for autonomous learning, such as CD-ROMs, books, etc.
2) items used in project activities: e.g. paper, material for handicrafts and art-work, items and materials for class or field-work, entrance fees to museums, local travel related to field-work, etc.
3) translation, e.g. by an external agency
4) documentation: e.g. layout, printing
5) software: internet/e-mail connection or software directly related to project activities
6) general administration: communication, office supplies, photocopies
7) other: items/costs that are necessary for the carrying out of the project but which do not fit into any previous category.

The variable amount covers the travel and travel insurance costs of those travelling within the project and contributes to the subsistence costs of staff, and, in exceptional cases, those of pupils. The types of mobility activity that can be applied for are described in Chapter 1.4 above.

It is important to remember that:

- The grant can never be used to cover costs that are not directly related to the project. Staff costs are ineligible in all cases. For example, none of the above services provided by staff from participating schools are eligible for funding from the project grant.
- If you have not been able to use the whole grant, you will have to return the remaining amount to the National Agency. Therefore, be realistic in your grant application, and only apply for as big a grant as you can use!
- Funds cannot be transferred from the standard amount to the variable amount or vice versa, nor from one contract year to another!
- If your school is disadvantaged for socio-economic reasons or if it is an establishment for pupils with special educational needs, you can apply for a higher standard amount (you have to justify the need for this in your Comenius Plan). Likewise, you can apply for a higher variable amount in case any of those travelling within a project has a justified need for a higher amount, either for socio-economic reasons or because they are disabled and need special assistance when travelling and staying abroad (you need to specify this in the “budget” section of the application form).

2.6.4. Reporting

One of your responsibilities as part of project activities is reporting to your National Agency on project progress and the use of the grant. What this means is that the National Agency will provide you with the necessary report forms together with your contract, where you can find more detailed information on when and how to do the reporting. The deadlines to submit the reports, and the language in which you should draft the reports are specified in the contract which your National Agency will send to you.
2.6.5. How to go about renewing your project?

Imagine that your project is a School Project or a School Development Project, and you and your partners have been awarded grants for the first project year. However, you have planned to carry out a three-year project, and need the financing to be able to do that. What you need to do is to submit an application for project renewal to your National Agency. You will receive the renewal form automatically from your National Agency. Remember that the closing date for Comenius 1 applications is 1 March (don’t forget that deadlines are different in some countries; so consult your National Agency!) and take into account the time you and your partners need to jointly fill in the application form.

The application procedure is the same as for the first project year apart from the fact that you don’t need to submit a Comenius Plan with the renewal application.

3. THE PROJECT GETS UNDER WAY

3.1. ORGANISING THE PROJECT

Once you have received the contract, be clear with your partners that the foundations for co-operation have been set. Experience has shown that frequent communication - both between and within the partner schools - is one of the key factors for the success of a project. Clarity, commitment and the will to compromise are other essential ingredients in the recipe for success.

When starting a project, you may find it useful to reflect on the following advice given by teachers with experience in transnational projects:

- Make sure you let everyone in the school and in the local community know about the success of your application. Visibility and active support of the whole school, parents and local community is very important for the success of the project.

- Establish regular and effective communication between the coordinators in the partner schools, and among the staff of each participating school. It is important that the project should take on a life of its own as early as possible, and there is nothing like a regular flow of information, questions, suggestions and greetings to achieve this.

- Exchange greetings with your partners and take practical steps to get the project under way, such as the simultaneous issue of press releases, or an exchange of letters of congratulation and renewed commitment. You might also decide to establish immediate contact between the participating pupils.

- Agree on the means of communication to be used (e-mail, fax, post, telephone, video conferencing, computer conferencing…)

- Organise an early briefing meeting for colleagues in your school to renew and secure their enthusiasm and commitment.

- Make sure that theory and practice meet and that you can quickly share practical outcomes of the project with colleagues in your own school and in your partner schools - in particular with those who are not directly involved in the day to day running of the project. This will enable them to see that the project offers tangible and practical benefits and that they are dealing with real people who share their interests as fellow professionals.
• Make sure that everybody involved has a clear idea of the different phases of the project, and take notice of each other’s holidays dates, time zones, school day and exam times, not forgetting potential bureaucratic restraints such as on the use of phone, fax or e-mail.

• Record events, outcomes, expenditure, data, successes and concerns as they happen. You will need to evaluate the project and to report on its progress and it is far easier to record matters when they take place rather than to try and remember them later at evaluation and reporting stage.

• Be aware of the impact that staff changes can have on the project. Change in staff has been the major cause of failure to date, and therefore it is important to ensure that your project can withstand and survive changes in personnel.

• Keep your targets and time-scale under constant review.

3.2. HOW TO SET UP A WORKPLAN

The first thing to keep in mind in setting up a workplan is that the goal of the project should be attainable. Do not be over-ambitious! The main concern will be to agree on ways to organise the activities and on how to put ideas and plans into practice. Remember that a School Project or Language Project should be integrated into regular class work and that pupils should be actively participating in the activities.

Clarity and coherence are key-words in a good workplan. Provided that you have a common understanding of the objectives and the content of the project, you can set up a work plan that will ensure a steady and consistent development of the project.

Therefore, make sure that:

• effective channels of communication are established,
• the timetable is realistic in relation with desired outcomes,
• there is an agreement regarding which partner does what and when,
• you have considered how you will monitor and evaluate the project.

You will need to set dates for:

• meetings: local meetings (colleagues, parents, representatives for local community) and transnational meetings with the partner schools,
• mobility activities,
• reporting and evaluation,
• delivery and exchange of products, files, etc.

Make sure that you and your partners fully understand and agree on the workplan! The best way to achieve this is to have a jointly agreed workplan in writing.

3.3. TEAM BUILDING AT YOUR SCHOOL – WHOLE SCHOOL PROJECTS

Comenius 1 projects provide teachers from a number of subject areas with an opportunity to participate in the development of a cross-curricular and transnational approach to the topic chosen for a project. In each school, a project should therefore involve a
multidisciplinary team of teachers rather than being reserved to one teacher, or teachers from one subject. It is essential that the project be seen as the property of the whole school, and not of one or two enthusiastic teachers. School management, teaching staff and non-teaching staff should work together as a team in order to ensure the successful carrying out of the project.

In School Projects and Language Projects, all pupils should have the opportunity to participate in one way or another in project activities. Ideally, pupils should participate actively in all phases of the project, including the planning, organisation and evaluation of the activities. School Development Projects do not necessarily involve pupils to the same extent as School Projects and Language Projects. Nevertheless, efforts should be made to enable pupils to get involved whenever the topic allows it (see examples on School Development projects in Chapter 1.3.3.).

If there is a team behind a project and a common understanding regarding the aims, benefits and added value of the project for the whole school, it will be easier to give it a sharp educational profile and thus increase its visibility. A whole school project will make it easier to:

- put ideas into practice,
- motivate pupils and teachers,
- attract the attention and active support of parents,
- motivate non-teaching staff to give administrative and technical support,
- make the project known,
- attract the attention of educational decision-makers,
- attract the attention and support of the school board/inspectors.

A genuine whole school project facilitates integrating the project into the curriculum and makes it more resistant to potential problems, such as changes in staff.

3.4. HOSTING A COMENIUS LANGUAGE ASSISTANT

Future language teachers may apply for a grant to spend 3 to 8 months as a Comenius Language Assistant at a host school abroad. This activity is supported by Comenius 2. Such assistants may be assigned to any school eligible under Comenius 1 (see Guidelines for Applicants for more details). Therefore, your school may decide to apply for a Comenius Language Assistant, if it doesn’t already have one.

Regarding a School, Language or School Development Project, a language assistant may help prepare and implement the project between your school and schools from her/his country. This is a wonderful opportunity to avail of. Previous projects have shown that an assistant can offer great help and input in formulating and organising a project. Furthermore, an assistant can provide significant support in carrying out and realising the plans of the project.

3.4.1. How to apply for a language assistant

If your school wishes to host a Comenius Language Assistant, you will need to submit an application with a copy of your school’s Comenius Plan to your National Agency by 1st.
March before the school year in which the assistantship is to take place. The application form is available from your National Agency. The National Agency will try to match your school's requirements with the wishes of the future language teachers applying for such a grant.

3.4.2. Support for Assistants

A host school must designate a teacher to supervise the assistant, look after his or her welfare, monitor the progress of the assistantship and act as contact person throughout. The school should also try and help the assistant to find accommodation.

Assistants receive a grant to help cover mobility costs resulting from the assistantship. This includes travel and a monthly contribution towards subsistence costs. The host school does not receive any financial support to organise the assistantship, as it will receive full benefit from the presence and the work of the assistant.

3.5. INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL COMMUNITY AND OTHER POTENTIAL PLAYERS

The school is an important player in the community, because good quality education is vital for the future of a community. Transnational co-operation projects give schools an opportunity to establish new links with partners in the local community also in view of developing cooperation in new fields of community life.

To achieve this, the school can play an active role, take the initiative and convince possible partners about the benefits of cooperation. It would be useful to contact representatives of the local community – such as its education authority or board, and professional and other associations – that might be interested in becoming involved in the project or supporting it. Local media and other schools in your area may have an interest in the results of the project. The results will also enable parents, other schools, the local community in general and decision-makers in particular to see that the project offers tangible benefits.

Many schools have also collaborated with teacher training institutions and universities in testing innovative teaching methods. In addition, the teachers involved have been offered in-service training.

It would be very beneficial for schools to make good use of all the existing contacts they have in the community. For example, before approaching a local enterprise for support, the school could find out if any pupils’ parents work for that company. This could make the first contact much easier. The same applies for the presence of the head of the school at public events or occasions that might lead to furthering school contacts in the local community.

It is useful to find out about possibilities for cooperation with the following:

- local and regional bodies and organisations,
- associations working in the field of education, including students’ associations, pupils’ and teachers’ associations, and parents’ associations,
- social partners,
- teacher training institutions, higher education institutions and universities,
• research centres with expertise in the field of education,
• companies and consortia, professional bodies, trade organisations and chambers of commerce and industry.

Non-school partners that have a specific role in the project must also be put down as an “Associated partner” in the application form. In the case of a non-profit organisation, part of the grant may even be used by the school to fund their involvement, for example in contributing to their travel costs to participate at a project meeting.

3.6. COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR PARTNERS

3.6.1. Which language/s to use?

Promoting language learning in school education is one of the objectives of Comenius. In general, teachers and pupils participating in projects are happy to practice their foreign language skills. However, if the level in a foreign language is more modest, effective communication within the partnership may seem difficult. Therefore it is not uncommon that at the start participants in a project may be relieved when the most common language is chosen as the working language. However, later on their relief may turn into frustration at not being able to try out and improve their skills in other languages.

Therefore, it is good to keep in mind that Comenius projects provide you and your pupils with an opportunity to use and improve your existing language skills, and, what is more, learn new languages you might never have considered learning otherwise. The following pointers may help you over the first difficult phase and communicate in languages with which you might not feel entirely comfortable to start with:

• Make sure that your partners are aware of the level of competence in their language which you can manage on a day to day basis. That way, you can find an effective basis for communication between you. Remember that it is easier to read or listen to a foreign language than to write or speak it.

• There is no reason why a conversation should not be conducted in a different language in each direction. Remember too that the right vocabulary is more important for effective communication than impeccable grammar: you will be more appreciated for trying to make yourself understood in your partners’ languages than for limiting yourself to just a few well-practised remarks!

• Try to develop a functional knowledge of the languages of your partners. There are many good tapes or computer-based products available that will quickly help you to acquire some basic skills, and your participation in a Comenius project will give you plenty of opportunity to practice, as well as encouragement as you improve!

You can check out the European Commission’s Language website at http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/languages/index.html for ways of learning languages which you might find useful.
3.6.2. Which means of communication to use?

The telephone is a very direct and personal way of communicating, but it does have a number of disadvantages. The cost of international calls is significant, but since this will often be the most natural way of keeping in touch, it would be advisable to build this item in your budget. However, access to a telephone may often be a problem, and differences in time zones, individual timetables and patterns of the school day can make calling difficult. Another point to note is that later on there is no tangible trace of what was agreed upon during telephone conversations. You should also remember that telephone conversations take place in real time – there is no time to look up words in a dictionary or to spend time making sense of a difficult passage. On the positive side, frequent connections and conversations will very quickly improve language skills!

Communicating in writing might therefore be easier, at least initially. Letters, faxes and e-mail provide a good means being immediate and as personal as you like to make them. They have the added advantage of providing the participants with a tangible, lasting copy which in turn gives them the leisure to work out what is being said and how to reply. It is useful to remember that not all schools will have a fax machine or a computer. However, most will be able to find some way of gaining access to one that can be used to send and receive messages. Video-conferencing and video-phones provide alternative but more expensive ways of communicating with partners. Computer-conferencing may provide a happy medium in being interactive but less costly.

When you are addressing the issue of communication in connection with new technologies, you need to be aware of the varying degrees of familiarity with these media within participating schools and sometimes between participating countries. It is important that the related issue of teacher training needs is addressed in this context.

3.7. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN A PROJECT

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays an increasingly important role in transnational projects. The role of ICT in a project is mainly to facilitate learning and teaching. But it is also extremely useful in efficient and rapid communication. ICT has proved particularly suitable for project work because:

- it gives an opportunity to cooperate with partners in distant countries and it makes it simpler, faster, cheaper and more fun,
- it motivates pupils and encourages them to interact with pupils in partner schools and exchange ideas and share knowledge with them,
- it encourages pupils to work independently,
- it increases linguistic and cultural awareness and provides the possibility to use foreign languages in an authentic setting,
- it makes the acquisition of knowledge more authentic,
- it gives access to various and up-to-date sources of information which can be efficiently collected and compared,
- it provides new learning opportunities, particularly in the field of distance learning,
- it facilitates the involvement of disabled persons,
it enables the school to become more visible – the school’s website will give parents and other interested parties information on what is happening within the school.

3.8. MONITORING PROGRESS – SELF-EVALUATION

Evaluation is crucial for the success of a project. For the purposes of Comenius 1 projects, evaluation is seen to mean a continuous reflection on processes and outcomes. It is important to continuously monitor the carrying out of the project in order to keep it on track and improve your performance. This allows you to adapt the project objectives and activities to new or changing needs and ensure that the project gives maximum added value to the schools directly involved and other potential beneficiaries.

You and your partners should reflect on the following questions during and after the project:

- Have the plans been followed, and if not, why not?
- Are the goals appropriate?
- Should the project be modified?
- What are the benefits of a given activity for the pupils?
- How did the pupils complete the tasks set to them?
- What skills are being/have been developed?
- Is the project helping to raise achievement levels?
- Are the means of communication used appropriate and efficient?
- Are the teachers working together?
- Does the project have an impact on the curriculum?
- Are parents/representatives of local community/other educational establishments/other relevant interested parties involved?
- Have the pupils’ and teachers’ skills in foreign languages and motivation to learn them increased?
- Is there a greater awareness of the European dimension in education and of different cultures?
- Was the planned end product / end result made / achieved?


3.9. RESULTS AND THEIR DISSEMINATION

Dissemination means the sharing of your experiences and the results of your project. You are advised to share and spread out your experiences and the results of the project as widely as possible, in order to:

- make pupils and staff aware of what a good job they have done,
• make all interested parties and a wider public aware of the work the school has accomplished,
• influence decision-makers,
• generate interest in transnational cooperation,
• generate interest in language learning,
• raise awareness of European cultural diversity – and similarity,
• raise awareness of the European dimension in education.

Different target groups may have an interest in the end product of your project. They include local and regional authorities and businesses – especially if they have supported your project – neighbouring schools, parents, teacher training institutions, and colleges and universities. From the outset, you and your partners should outline plans regarding how, when and where to reach the target groups of your project. Be imaginative, there are many possibilities open to you. The following suggestions might be useful: classroom and school halls, exhibitions, pupil newspaper, school and council reports, school yearbook, school website, parents’ evenings and open days, local, regional and national conferences, academic and professional journals, local, regional and national media, meetings and seminars and networks.

3.10. PUPIL EXCHANGES IN LANGUAGE PROJECTS

Pupil exchanges play an essential role in Language Projects. The purpose of an exchange is multifaceted. The most obvious aim is to increase the motivation, capacity and confidence of pupils to communicate in other European languages. The exchange experience will certainly give the participants the opportunity to use the foreign language in an authentic setting; but also significant for the “visiting” exchange pupils is the intercultural experience through living in another country, preferably within the domestic culture of a family. Finally, the two groups of pupils will have the opportunity to work intensively together on the project during actual exchanges.

The exchange normally consists of two periods of time lasting a minimum of 14 days each (including travel) spent by a minimum of ten pupils aged 14 or older in the locality of their partner institution. Whenever possible, the pupils should stay in each others’ families. There are many advantages to this; primarily, it is the best chance to practise their language skills; the pupils will have a stimulating first-hand experience of another culture, and it encourages the development of their social skills. However, it is sometimes impossible for a family to host a foreign pupil, and you may need to resort to other solutions such as a Youth Hostel or student accommodation. This, however, has the big disadvantage of limiting the linguistic and cultural experience of the pupils concerned.

Accompanying staff should preferably be also accommodated at the homes of their counterparts. Besides being more interesting for them, it is a sign for the pupils that “Our teachers are in the same situation, so we are all in it together”.

It is very important that both participating schools have a clear understanding and clear agreements about all aspects of the exchange. The following are some ideas that relate to the different phases of a Language Project.
3.10.1. Before the Exchange

The pre-exchange period is an important time to lay the foundations for a well-planned, smooth exchange experience. It is important relatively soon to: organise a project meeting with your partner to prepare the exchange, take care of travel arrangements, organise and follow language preparation and establish contact between pupils participating in the exchange.

Other matters to organise are to develop a programme for the exchange, choose the accompanying staff and finally to match the participating pupils. Matching the pupils is particularly important if project work will be carried out in pairs – you can do this on the basis of the wishes of the pupils and/or by using matching forms.

The pre-exchange period is also a good time to raise additional funds for the project. It is especially relevant if the project topic relates to a local/regional/national company that may be interested in the outcome of the project. For instance, a project that aims to create a marketing strategy for a local product has good chances to be supported by the company producing the product in question.

3.10.2. During the exchange

During the exchange the pupils of both schools, divided into small groups or pairs, will collaborate on tasks already planned within their project according to the individual work plans of the pupils. In the first part of the exchange pupils continue the work started in the pre-exchange period and plan the work to be done in the second part (return visit). In the second part of the exchange they complete the end product – or at least finalise the plans for its production.

The programme of the exchange should include:

- ample time for joint work on the project,
- a daily period when pupils are alone with their accompanying teachers to discuss social and project matters,
- extra language classes,
- classes on local and national history and geography,
- cultural visits in keeping with the project objectives,
- leisure and free time.

It is essential that accompanying teachers monitor the work and the use of the foreign language by their pupils and, where necessary, support and encourage those pupils lacking in confidence. The accompanying staff should hold daily evaluation sessions with their counterparts to make sure that everything is running smoothly and to solve problems, if there are any. Together with the pupils’ logbooks and diaries of the exchange, the results of these evaluation meetings are an important source when writing the final report of the project.

During the exchange it is important to involve:

- staff and pupils who are not directly concerned with the exchange,
- parents whether they host exchange pupils or not,
• members of the local community such as local businesses, cultural associations, etc.

Remember to keep these groups regularly informed about the project. Make clear that the project and the exchange is a valuable cultural experience for all. Invite them to help with some of the leisure activities.

3.10.3. After the exchange

In the period after the exchanges it is important to:

• complete the end product,
• evaluate the project (and write the final report required by the National Agency),
• disseminate the results of the project.

The end product is the visible result of the work done by pupils in partner institutions using the partner languages. The end product:

• fully represents both partner languages - if spoken or written is bilingual
• provides an objective for the project,
• provides an opportunity to show the pupils’ competence in the foreign language,
• enables pupils to see and enjoy what they have achieved,
• enables teachers, parents and other interested parties to see what the pupils have achieved,
• illustrates co-operation between pupils of two different countries.

3.11. SAFE AND SMOOTH MOBILITY

Comenius School Projects and Comenius School Development projects allow pupils to participate in project meetings abroad, and pupil exchanges are an essential part of Comenius Language Projects. When you are planning a mobility activity involving pupils, it is good to remember that any visit abroad can involve an element of risk, such as illness, accident, theft or abuse. However, the many benefits to be gained far outweigh the potential risks. Careful planning together with the teachers and the pupils concerned, their parents, the school management and administration and other interested parties will help to clearly define responsibilities of the different parties involved and reduce the risks. Careful planning will also enable pupils who have special educational needs and who might be more vulnerable to risk to fully benefit from the experience of travelling and staying abroad. Being involved in the planning will also create a sense of ownership which will make it easier to accept and understand rules and codes of conduct jointly agreed on and to respect them during the stay abroad.

When planning the exchange / project meeting abroad, it is very useful to:

• make checklists for all parties involved, i.e. for the pupils travelling abroad, their parents, the head teacher and the responsible (group) leader and other accompanying adults,
• draw up a code of conduct between the child/children or young person(s) and the school/responsible teacher/ accompanying adult(s),

• draft a parental/guardian consent form.

You could also reflect on the following issues:

• a realistic assessment of potential difficulties,

• sensitive supervision,

• promotion of safety skills of and strategies for children and young people, possibly together with the police, youth workers or other relevant bodies,

• laws relating to children and young people, child protection included, in the country to be visited,

• the necessary documentation for travel abroad including travel insurance and some basic background information about the area to be visited,

• comprehensive information to the parents/guardians, to the school administration and colleagues concerning itinerary, programme, addresses and emergency contact numbers,

• procedures for possible emergencies in the country to be visited.

4. SOCRATES SPECIAL PRIORITIES

4.1. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Socrates programme seeks to promote equality between women and men and equal opportunities for disabled persons. It also seeks to contribute actively to the fight against social exclusion, racism and xenophobia. Translating these objectives and principles into reality may not always seem all that simple, and the following examples are designed to show ways of doing this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE : Different but equal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUPILS : Primary and secondary schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVE AND ACTIVITIES : Pupils and teachers from schools in four different countries work together on the subject “Equality” in a broader sense. The aim is to make the pupils aware of how they consider gender, ethnical background and economical status in their interaction with people, and to develop common methods and tools enabling the teachers to measure the pupils’ opinions. The goal is to make the pupils more open-minded and raise their understanding of the fact that people are different but that everyone should be treated as equal. The schools arrange thematic days on equality. They also develop a questionnaire on how girls and boys see gender when it comes to job opportunities, for example.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTCOMES : A survey of the situation in the countries participating in the project, strategies for ensuring the equal treatment of all pupils at school, both in and out of the classroom.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TITLE: European Citizens - Living and working together in Europe
PUPILS: Upper secondary schools/general and vocational education. A quarter of the pupils have special needs (Down’s syndrome, MBD or autism) or are physically disabled. They are integrated into ordinary classes.
OBJECTIVE: Comparative studies and co-operation will be used to find out how disabled persons are trained and taken care of in three European countries in view of future employment.
OUTCOMES: Develop curricula where the interests of disabled persons are catered for in view of integrating them in working life. Make pupils aware of their identity and create tolerance and understanding for different educational needs and methods.

TITLE: Local Roots and Global Wings
PUPILS: Lower secondary schools. Most of the pupils are from immigrant and refugee families. Many families have low socio-economic status, suffer from unemployment and live on social welfare. A fifth of the pupils have learning difficulties, reading and writing difficulties, and emotional problems caused by war and multihandicaps. Most of the pupils are bilingual.
OBJECTIVE: Make the pupils conscious of their cultural heritage locally and internationally. Make them see the importance of taking care of their environment. Develop tolerance and respect through intercultural work.
OUTCOMES: Pupils and teachers gain understanding of the importance of broad cross-curricular work with focus on the international dimension. Increased language skills for pupils and teachers. A better and deeper understanding of each other’s cultures. Strengthen the pupils’ identity development and make every one of them feel important. Creating a homepage on the Internet.

4.2. THE LESS WIDELY USED AND LESS TAUGHT (LWULT) LANGUAGES
The European Union is committed to maintaining and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity. It encourages the use of all the official languages of the Union (plus Irish and Luxembourgish), but especially of the LWULT languages. Therefore, all actions within the Socrates programme are concerned with the promotion of the LWULT languages.

The LWULT language status tends to vary from country to country. Nevertheless it is probably true that English, French, German and Spanish are taught in schools throughout the European Union, and it is therefore important to promote contact with other languages as well. An unfamiliar language should not be seen as an obstacle, but a bonus in providing the opportunity to widen one’s cultural and linguistic horizons.

Comenius Language Projects put particular emphasis on the LWULT languages, and one of the two partners should normally represent one of them. This will give pupils and teachers the unusual opportunity to have a taste of a language they might never even have heard before!

Since projects involving LWULT languages have high priority in Comenius, they can be more generously funded (see the Guidelines for Applicants for more information).

5. POSSIBLE PROBLEMS AND HOW TO AVOID THEM
In a project involving several partners from different schools and different countries unexpected problems may crop up. Being aware of the kind of problems that may arise helps you to plan and carry out your project in a more realistic and practical manner.
Withdrawal of a partner or a person

Even if the minimum requirement in School Projects and School Development Projects is 3 partners, it is wiser to start with 4 or even 5 partner schools. If one of the partners has to withdraw from the project, it will still be able to continue.

In this respect it is essential to actively involve several persons from each participating school in the project. If one of the persons has to withdraw from the project, there will be others who are very familiar with it and can continue the work.

Unclear division of tasks

The tasks of the participating schools should be clearly defined in advance. Each participating school should be aware of its role and the concrete tasks that it is expected to carry out. It is advisable to set out the tasks in writing.

Comenius projects demand quite a lot of extra work from all the participants – make sure that you and your partners are aware of this before committing yourselves to the project! If one of the partners does not carry out their tasks, you and the other partners may need to consider dropping the partner and looking for a new one in order to save the project.

Lack of time, lack of resources

Projects may be tempted to set goals that are so ambitious that attaining them in the scope of the project is impossible. When planning the project, it is therefore better to formulate concrete, attainable goals to which all the participating schools can commit themselves. However, it is also wise to make some space for flexibility in the workplan so that it can be modified if necessary.

It is good to keep in mind that schools can have very different resources and that they cannot always invest equal amounts of time and money in the project. The level of technical equipment in a school can also have an impact on cooperation. For instance, all schools do not have the same possibilities to use ICT in communicating with their partners which can have a big impact on schedules.

Cultural differences

When working together with people from different countries and different cultures it is useful to keep in mind the different backgrounds of your partners. Working cultures differ, and so does the school environment and the rules and practices. In addition, teachers and pupils may have different rights and obligations from those in your country. Therefore, keep an open mind and talk openly with your partners about the differences and possible problems caused by them. And remember that learning about different cultures and ways of doing things is an essential part of your project!

Language and communication problems

It is very important to ensure from the beginning that you and your partners have at least one working language in common. Interpretation is not recommended because it slows down work, is not always available and does not allow such personal contact as direct communication.

Regular communication between the partners – and within each participating school - is one of the key elements for the success of a project. Face to face meetings cannot be
organised very often and that makes using efficient means of communication particularly important.

It may be useful to agree on fixed days for communication. A simple but efficient rule is always to confirm reception of e-mails and faxes so that the sender knows the message has been received.

Differences in the level of technical equipment in each of the partner institutions may sometimes be a problem. Even if e-mail is the fastest and easiest means of communication, you need to find other solutions if one of the partners has no access to it.

*Differences in the school year*

The school year starts and ends at different times in different European countries, and holiday periods vary considerably. The differences need to be taken into account when fixing the workplan for the project. Remember also that the curriculum is more flexible in some partner schools than in others, and plan work accordingly.

*Lack of support from your own school*

A Comenius project should involve the whole school, not just a contact person and her/his pupils. When taking the initiative to participate in a project, make sure that you have the support of the head of your school and of the other teachers, even those not directly involved in the project. It is also important to keep everybody informed of the progress of the project and of the results achieved.

*Unexpected problems*

If you encounter unexpected difficulties or problems, you may contact your National Agency for advice.
CONCLUSION

This Handbook hopefully presents to you all the necessary information to help you decide if you want to embark upon a Comenius 1 project. This has been done by trying to give a realistic evaluation of the amount of time and work entailed, of the potential difficulties and of the benefits and rewards enjoyed by all those involved in a Comenius 1 project.

The Handbook provides you with advice on the different stages of launching and carrying out a Comenius project: on how to initiate, organise and structure a partnership, technical advice on application and grants, details on arranging safe and successful transnational mobility activities, pointers as to how to involve and recruit the help of the whole school and local community, language assistants and parents; how to communicate maximising the benefits of modern information and communication technologies, and examples of projects that inspire and spark the imagination as well as various checklists, reminders, and tips.

The school is the "greenhouse" for shaping the character, values, skills, talents and actions of continuous generations of world citizens. In this respect, the school is a world in itself. Comenius, the Czech philosopher from the 17th century who lends his name to this EU activity, held the view that "schools must open themselves to the outside world". In the light of this aim, we hope that Comenius projects will continue to inspire, stimulate, bring to action and teach many generations of European pupils, deepening their experience of “education” in the broadest sense, and we hope that this Handbook helps you along the way. Good luck!
ANNEX

Other cooperation activities in Europe and elsewhere

Your Comenius 1 project is over. You probably want to just sit back and reflect on and digest what you have experienced in the course of the project. Elation, frustration, feelings of success or maybe also of failure come to mind. However, the rewards outweigh the frustrations, and you would like to continue working together with colleagues at European – or international - level. But how to go about it? There are many possibilities for such cooperation, some of which are listed below.

- **Comenius 2 projects and individual mobility grants.** Your school may become involved in a Comenius 2 project which seeks to improve the training of teachers and other school education personnel and to develop strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning. You as an individual can apply for a Comenius 2 mobility grant which enables you to participate in an in-service training course in another European country. You can find more information on Comenius 2 projects and grants in the Guidelines for Applicants, from your National Agency, or you can visit the Comenius website at http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/comenius/index.htm.

- **Comenius 3 networks.** Comenius 3 wants to network Comenius projects with similar thematic orientations. One of the aims of such networks is to enable projects to continue and maintain their cooperation after Community funding for their project finishes. You can have more information on Comenius 3 in the Guidelines for Applicants, from your National Agency, or by visiting the Comenius website.

- **Other activities in the Socrates programme.** You may take part in activities under Grundtvig, which seeks to enhance the quality, availability and accessibility of lifelong learning through adult education in the broadest sense; Lingua, which promotes the teaching and learning of languages, or Minerva, which focuses on open and distance learning and the use of information and communication technologies in education. You can also take part in a project under Complementary Measures. You can find more information on these activities in the Guidelines for Applicants, from your National Agency, or the central website for Socrates at http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates.html.

- The European Community’s Leonardo da Vinci programme in the field of vocational education and its Youth Programme offer opportunities for cooperation. You can find more information on these opportunities by visiting the website of the European Commission at http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/index_en.html.

- You can become involved in activities arranged by the European Parliament and/or the European Political parties, such as the Robert Schuman Competition. For more information, you can contact the European Parliament’s information office in your country, or visit the Parliament’s website at: http://www.europarl.eu.int/sg/tree/en/default.htm.

- Your country might be involved in different bilateral and multilateral activities with other European or non-European countries. You can find more information on such activities from the education authorities in your country.
Various European and international organisations (such as the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the World Bank), non-governmental organisations, foundations and associations arrange activities in the field of education. The education authorities in your country will be able to give you information on such possibilities.

The list presented above is by no means exhaustive, since more and more European and international cooperation possibilities are open for schools. Therefore, keep your ears and eyes open! Newspapers, professional publications, websites, bulletinboards and colleagues can all prove out to be useful sources of information.