

The conference entitled
“Comenius Partnerships - Helping schools team up across Europe”,
organised by the Directorate - General for Education and Culture in Brussels,
Belgium, 3-4 may 2012

The European coordinator of the Comenius multilateral project - “School for Life” - was selected to participate at the conference entitled “Comenius Partnerships - Helping schools team up across Europe”. The conference focused on how cross-border partnerships can create a lasting and beneficial impact on schools and, consequently, the teachers, pupils, parents and local communities, and the links between school projects and school policy developments.

The conference was opened by António Mendes Silva, European Commission, followed by a spokesman of The European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth. Then they held plenary sessions with two keynote Speeches on schools policy: Professor Klaus Hurrelmann - "Current challengers in school education" and Paul Collard - "Can external partnerships bring about real change in schools? The Case of Creative Partnerships”.

Next, were held in four parallel workshops:

- 1. Turning schools into 21st century leaning environments**
- 2. Improving teacher competences**
- 3. Schools that work for everyone**
- 4. Supporting the internationalisation of schools.**

The project coordinator participated at workshop 2 led by Stijn Dhert the policy expert, from Belgium. The workshop objective was to identify the type of support needed by teachers to enhance their skills and talents, to improve the quality of teaching and determining the ways in which schools can achieve partnerships to help meet the challenges of today's world. After discussion and reflection, the idea emphasized by all participants was that the quality of Teachers is most important lever for achievements, for students performance, is essential to create different context in which to develop their talents and selection criteria for partnership should address the impact on Reaching Objectives and Comenius quality (CAN partnerships role play).



Two project speakers presented examples of good practice projects "Equal by law, But Not in reality" (Lithuania) and "The Learning Teacher Network" (Sweden). Then the participants of this workshop were grouped into 4 teams each to write a

project proposal that responds to the questions: Why? (What is the problem that needs to be solved?), What? (The Objectives of Proposal), How? (Steps of Proposal) and to take into consideration putting teachers in new contexts active way.

The project proposals had four approaches:

1. Support teachers to be fully aware of their competences and strengths
2. Support teachers to be agents of positive change in constantly changing environments ("Blossom")
3. Teachers and pupils working together to catch the "right fish" in the vast and stormy ICT sea
4. The same teachers in different contexts in search of UNESCO's four pillars of education.

The participants in this workshop visited the stands of projects related to the workshop theme of **the exhibition of the 12 Comenius school partnerships**, listened to presentations, products and outcomes were observed and questions were asked.



In the **Plenary sessions** all the conference participants were reunited and provided feedback from workshops, carrying the discussions with an expert panel.

In closing the conference, Margarita Lago, the European Commission speaker, presented information on the European Commission's proposals for the new program "Erasmus for All (2014-2020): what's in it for schools?" and provided answers to questions, then questionnaires to assess the activity were completed.



The participation in this conference was a great opportunity to meet people and new ideas, to exchange experiences and to discover best practices in Comenius partnerships to find information on the upcoming program and it was an inspiration source for new projects.

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More details - <http://comeniuspartnerships.teamwork.fr/en/documents>