

Speech for the concluding ceremony of the COMENIUS-DBU-Project (2011-2013) at Overberg-Kolleg Münster

Angela: Claudine, back in 1999, would you have thought that for our concluding/final Comenius-DBU Project we would have a minister visit our school?

Claudine: No, definitely not. But it is a fabulous opportunity for our 14 year old multicultural partnership to be able to describe/present this 14 year old partnership to the public. Our motto has been: Try the impossible to reach the possible.

Angela: Yes, that has definitely been our motto in this, our last project, especially as the implementation of this one has not been too easy. But finally, many joined enthusiastically, for which we are grateful.

In our Comenius project application, we called the subject "environmental protection for a future orientated world through Education, Politics, Economy and Ethics". In the parallel running DBU-application, we had help of our colleague Ansgar Heskamp, who came up with the shorter term of "From environmental knowledge to environmental action".

Claudine: Exactly that was our **main** goal: Students and teachers were supposed to gain new knowledge about environmental issues through science, economy, politics and ethics and to change their behaviour towards the environment in a positive way.

Angela: We have thought of **methods** to bring the "Protection of the environment" closer to the students and teachers as well as make them more sensitive towards it.

Claudine: Firstly, all countries involved had very different subjects during school lessons about the issue. This was integrated to fit into the national curriculum of each country. Mostly, this happened across the curriculum. Please explain to our guests how you worked here in Münster.

Angela: Here at Overberg-Kolleg, we integrated the subject into our scientific courses like physics/biology and socio-political sciences with focus on geography/social sciences. After our intensive search for subjects, the students worked for a whole year on their own with support of the teachers on the project theme. Their goal here was through **self-discovering, searching and learning** to gain knowledge about the environment. But also to develop their own action

strategies and rethink the area of environment. These results were put into an English spoken presentation and were presented at one of the partner schools and are made available for today's exhibition.

The physics course has implemented this by investigating the photovoltaic and have also generated dye-sensitized solar cells (DSSC). These can be viewed in the physics room. These students are more likely to be using alternative energy sources in future.

Claudine: I can imagine it not being very easy to present a scientific content in English. Instead, I think it will be great preparation for the world of work because many engineers have to do exactly that if they want to sell their products abroad. The other countries involved have worked similarly. The Czechs have even prepared a presentation on a water project in their French lessons.

Angela: They presented it so well in French that my students thought they were French! The Polish and Hungarians also have created multi-lingual presentations, which can be viewed in the exhibition rooms.

Through all of this, we have improved our students' natural science and the IKT skills, meaning the computer skills as well as the language skills. What did you do in France?

Claudine: We have worked on different subjects like "Transport", "Health and Environment" and "Art" but also in the subject "Fashion".

For example, for our encounter in Istanbul, our students have manufactured clothes from materials, which are usually thrown in the bin. A few examples can be viewed in the exhibition room. Our teachers have also prepared and conducted the workshops for the encounters abroad. I could tell you a lot more, but let's talk about the measures which we used to convey knowledge about politics and economy to the participants of the project.

Angela: At home and abroad, we have invited specialists on the subjects who held interesting lectures either at school or at other extra-curricular places. In Münster, we had the politician Ruprecht Polenz as a guest speaker who illuminated us on the sustainable global action subject from the point of view of the peace and foreign policy. In Bremerhaven, we engaged ourselves foremost with the climate change during our visit to the Klimahaus. We also saw during the "Tour de Wind" the construction places of the wind turbines and the positive

economic aspects of introducing alternative energy resources. On a coach tour through the container port, we learnt about logistics and worldwide transport as well as their effects on the environment. Through our visits to extra-curricular places, the participants recognized the sustainable methods of added value and work procurement through the use of environmental friendly technologies.

Claudine: And the positive examples of successful protection of the environment: the Heathlands with the free animals. Not forgetting the World cultural heritage “Eco-system Wadden Sea” (Ökosystem Wattenmeer) in Cuxhaven because next to the Climate house it was the total "Highlight" on our visit to Germany.

Angela: In the Czech Republic, we intensively occupied ourselves with the subject “Water”. During our explorations to extra-curricular places like the river Radbuza, the local water plant Veolia and the DBU financed root wastewater treatment plant in Spálené Porici the students learnt about water extraction, use of water and water purification but also got informed about the natural ecosystem of a river.

Claudine: During international workshops, water samples were examined microscopically, and the ethical, ecological and social problems concerning the subject water were discussed. Possibly, this sounds like the average school lesson!

Angela: No, definitely not, because the students showed in a water chart and mind maps as well as artfully created posters their findings and the rules to useful water consumption, under the instructions of the French and Czech teachers. They were cooperative, helped each other and had to use their language skills. I remember that we found out how much water is used to manufacture a pair of jeans or a cappuccino. Everyone became aware that a cruel war about water could flare up. This awareness could also be a motor for sustainable action to preserve the creation and social peace. I was so happy that the Turkish students, together with their philosophy teacher, created a presentation on ethics in which they have put 3 ground rules. I will quickly name them:

1. To stand up for educating everyone about environmental consciousness.
2. To see the responsibility for the environment as more important than their personal interests.

3. To ask people to adapt their own consumption behaviour to the environment because the only thing that does not change is the change of nature.

Claudine: All these results, also the art products which my colleague Virginie Lejeune made the students prepare at each encounter to different subjects, are on display in the gallery. Partly, they are simple warning signs with which the students want to raise awareness about careful use of natural resources.

Angela: In Istanbul, we have visited the waste separation plant of this huge city, which has around 22 million inhabitants. We were completely shocked about the massive mountains of plastic bags as we had never seen them like that before. Many of us realized how much each of us could have contributed to this. An expert explained to us which logistics were necessary to separate and to process this waste. It was a good idea to take the students directly to these companies and to bring them into contact with economy.

Do you remember all those garbage collectors which we saw in the city of Istanbul? They are very poor people which collect the plastic waste and take it to the waste plants. The students of our Turkish partner school of Lycée St. Michel must have been very impressed because they reported that in a multi-lingual exhibition of pictures. This exhibition goes under your skin. Part of this exhibition, dear attending, is on display for you here. Even the Turkish media has reported about this.

Claudine: On the subject of garbage, here is another good example for sustainability at our school: After our students learnt about waste separation in your school, they followed your example and have set up a similar system under the Agenda 21.

Angela: Great if there is such interaction such as this!

On our last visit to Hungary, our secondary subject was: human consumption and agriculture- supporting (bearing) power of earth. We visited a few extra-curricular places of education: The Puszta national park in Hortobagy or the eco-village Gömörzölös, where the institute for sustainable development from Miskolc have created and already use a future orientated developmental model project in the countryside. The small village, which only has around 100 inhabitants, exclusively uses environmental friendly plants e.g. Compost toilets, wind pumps, natural waste water cleaning, water collectors, solar collectors and tube dryers used for the drying of fruit. Everything self-built. Very impressive. But when we visited the highly interesting Bio-Farm in Gelej with milk- and

cheese products we saw their best agricultural business. It went “click” in their heads as it showed them how the theoretical lessons had been put into practice.

Claudine: Yes, most of the project participants have gained better knowledge through the project. This is also shown by the evaluation, which our Polish colleagues meticulously conducted after each encounter. Many project participants specified that their own environmental behaviour had improved due to the project. Even their social skills e.g. their “soft skills” and their linguistic competence.

Angela: Not to underestimate the expansion of social- and citizen competences. Students and teachers have improved their intercultural abilities. They have learnt a lot about the cultures in the countries they have visited and have become more suitable for Europe as well as becoming more open to the world.

Also, these abilities, including the matured European identity, will be useful for students and teachers alike for the professional world.

Claudine: To make other people and institutions know our work, we jointly prepared an English speaking reader at our last encounter in Miskolc.

Angela: A lot of effort was put into the layout and print by our Hungarian colleagues Krisztina and Elisabetha. In our reader, next to a lot of photos and information about the schools and the encounter, you can also read a breakdown of the project, which was written by our Polish colleague Kasia. On the enclosed DVD, there are many presentations made by the students.

Claudine: Moreover, all our partner schools will be publishing the most important results of the project, also internationally, on the EU-homepage, named “EST”.

Angela: But the best and the most beautiful outcome of this project is our friendship, which connects us. I cannot imagine that there will ever be another war between European countries.

Claudine: Multilateral relationships between schools help strengthen the peace in Europe. This is the biggest gain sustainability. I also am certain that us coordinators will stay in contact for many years to come.

Angela: In order for you, our dear guests, to know which coordinators besides us have worked on the project for more than 2 years, we would like to introduce them to you:

Claudine: Alena from Pilsen, Ayla from Istanbul, Kasia from Krakow and Krisztina from Miskolc.

Angela: Therefore, I want to sincerely thank you, as well as the headmasters and headmistresses, the teachers and the students of all involved schools for their exceptional work. The project and today's exhibition are a result of our joint effort.

Claudine: Without the generous financial support from our sponsors, this kind of international work would not have been possible. So, we want to sincerely thank our sponsors, the European commission as well as the DBU.

Danke! Köszönöm! Teşekkür ederim! Dékujeme! Merci! Dziękujemy!

Angela: A special thank you goes to the headmaster of the Overberg-Kolleg, Mister Noe, who meticulously and competently managed and paid out the funds. This was a lot of additional work for him.

Many thanks for your attention!

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