

Inspiring stories from the Lifelong Learning Programme and Youth in Action











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### Welcome!

2011 was a defining year for Europe and the UK. It is clear that what was a deep and painful period in economic terms was also an opportunity to learn and to change. We hear a lot about changes at a political level, but strategic shifts by organisations tend to occur in the background.

Nevertheless it is important to realise that Europe's political objectives for lifelong learning and social inclusion - embodied in the EU2020 strategy - can only be met if organisations make it happen.

We spent the year uncovering examples of how our UK projects are supporting three strands of European goals: Action for Inclusion, Action for Innovation and Action for Development.

We shared some of these examples at our recent Your Story conference in the West Midlands – a celebration involving over 170 delegates including EU policymakers, projects and other stakeholders with a shared interest in lifelong learning. Other examples are presented here for the first time.

Please take some time to read about their achievements. and consider how your organisation might also benefit from involvement in a European project.

Best wishes

Kürsat Levent Siyon Williams







**Kursat Levent Egriboz Managing Director, Ecorys Lifelong Learning Programme** (Leonardo, Grundtvig and **Transversal programmes**)



**Simon Williams Head EU Programmes**, **British Council (Comenius, Erasmus and Youth in Action)** 



## A picture says a thousand words

Phototherapy is a highly innovative new form of psychological therapy, designed to help individuals talk about problems that are difficult to articulate. Through talking about a photograph related to their worries or concerns, they are able to uncover their deeper feelings – and may begin to take action to resolve them.

This technique has proven highly effective in the treatment of groups who may find it more difficult to communicate, such as linguistic minority communities, refugees, detainees, children and people in the care system.

As a centre for research excellence in therapeutic education, Roehampton University ran the EU's first funded international phototherapy project, 'Phototherapy Europe: Learning and Healing through Phototherapy'.

The Leonardo Partnership was led in the UK by Del Loewenthal, Professor in Psychotherapy and Counselling at Roehampton University. The project supported European practitioners to share phototherapy healing methods in order to promote wellbeing and social inclusion among people with fewer opportunities.

The two year project involved organisations in Finland, Italy and the UK. The partners researched, shared and disseminated best practice and expertise in phototherapy to field professionals around the world including teachers, psychologists, counsellors, arts therapists and nurses through workshops, seminars, online forums, international conferences and events.

Professor Loewenthal explained how the project has impacted on disadvantaged groups, a topic which he has been researching with the National Health Service in an effort to improve access to psychological therapies:

"Phototherapy helps people verbalise what is difficult for them to speak about. This can be done in traditional therapy situations using the individual's photographs from the past or involve the individual and the therapist taking photographs as part of the session. Alternatively... phototherapy can be used as a group project where a community co-creates a series of photographs to express their situation."

The project has now completed a Phototherapy handbook as a lasting resource for education, health, arts and social science academics and practitioners throughout Europe.



Find out more at: http://phototherapyeurope.utu.fi

Action for Inclusion
Social cohesion and active citizenship



# How a cartoon pooch helped a cross-European group reach out to children with learning difficulties.

Across Europe there has been an increased focus on learners with Multiple Disabilities and Visually Impaired (MDVI) children and young people. Many of these young people are pre or non-verbal, or have severe receptive and expressive communicative difficulties, sometimes leading to withdrawal from engagement or the use of challenging behaviour as a means of communication.

Gail Lawler, a teacher in Jordanstown School, Northern Ireland wanted to address this and share best practice on how to make teaching more inclusive for the pupils concerned. Along with nine other similar European schools catering for MDVI pupils she received funding from the Comenius Programme to produce 'Sound and Picture', a best-practice DVD.

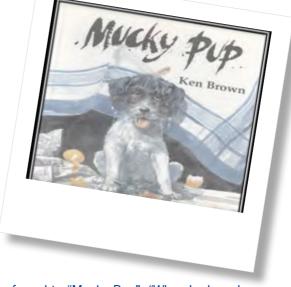
The idea of the DVD was to give educators sound and picture based tools, including digital movies, that they could use to communicate with MDVI

children and which would allow the pupils to take a more active role in their own education.

The DVD is already having a positive impact on the young students. James who is visually impaired and has communication difficulties and behavioural problems would refuse to come into the classroom. But then he became involved with the other pupils in producing content for the sound and animation DVD of the children's book 'Mucky Pup'. The children recorded James' voice saying "Mucky pup" which was then added to the animation for each time the

Parents have been amazed at the effectiveness of the resource. One parent said:

I never thought my child could participate and contribute to a learning activity until now ??



story referred to "Mucky Pup". "When he heard his voice being played back he smiled and came into the room," says Gail, "repeating the phrases and laughing." By recognising and following the story through sound, James is learning to click the mouse himself in order to move to the next part of the story.

By interacting in this project the teachers improved their own ICT skills. Their increased confidence and ability in using new technology has enabled them to introduce it into their teaching practices and share their experience with the pupils. They learned about each others' different teaching methodologies and good practice in other countries. Through sharing knowledge with their partners they were also learning about different cultures.

By working collaboratively through the Comenius partnership they can now jointly address the severe and complex needs of such learners on a larger scale.



Comenius School Partnerships fund UK schools and colleges to form partnerships with schools and colleges across Europe.

Find out more at: www.britishcouncil.org/comenius

Action for Inclusion
Social cohesion and active citizenship



### **Eco volunteers**

Conservation management involves protecting, maintaining and improving the condition of the natural environment for the benefit of citizens, learners and researchers. It is a fundamental aspect in ensuring the viability of sustainable development strategies.

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) received Grundtvig Senior Volunteering Funding for their SVEN (Senior Volunteering in Environment and Nature) project which is exploring European approaches to volunteering and conservation management.

So far they have sent three UK volunteers, over 50 years of age, to undertake placements at National Parks in Iceland. Working alongside park rangers for Iceland's Environment Agency, they joined a team of local volunteers in order to repair damaged hiking trails.

This work is essential in order to prevent damage to ecologically fragile areas, which are now under strain due to increasing tourism. Not only that, but the project will help to ensure the safety of the trails for future visitors. The practical tasks



included working with stone to construct drains, and timber to build boardwalks and bridges over wetland areas.

The project provides senior volunteers with a creative opportunity to learn about a new culture whilst contributing their time and energy to the project. On their return to the UK the volunteers will then present their new skills and techniques to co-workers and learners at BTCV.

This was the first time that any of the UK participants had volunteered in another European country. Each volunteer got something different out of the trip, but the friendship and support made a lasting impression.

"What shall I miss about Iceland..? Most of all I will miss the people I have been with. We became a close knit team and, I hope, lifelong friends."

The project provided the senior volunteers with an opportunity to reflect and to think about their volunteering, themselves and the future.



Senior volunteer

Find out more at: http://bit.ly/svenproject

**Action for Inclusion** 

Social cohesion and active citizenship





### To Spain and on to self-belief

Zoe Maclean from the University of Strathclyde didn't let her disability stop her from going to Spain on the Erasmus Programme.

I believe that having a disability or impairment should not stop you from living life to the full. The Erasmus experience is one that will transform you as a person and your life forever. I think that the experience taught me to see my disability differently as I felt more accepted and made more friends in spite of the challenges I faced before going. It was a life-changing experience.

At first my biggest fear was that it would not be possible to go at all. There were so many financial and practical challenges involved in going abroad. It was something which to my knowledge had not been done before at my university. I also had a great fear of not being socially accepted in a foreign city due to my disability.

I know in Britain from experience that people are often put off in a social situation by my wheelchair. How would this turn out in a foreign country?

My university helped me find out as much information as possible regarding accessibility and accommodation. My family was also very supportive in helping me to find practical help in the form of personal assistants and the extra Erasmus funding I received as a disabled student was very helpful.

My fear of not being accepted turned out to be totally unfounded. The young Spanish people that I met at the university in Spain were very welcoming and treated me like one of the crowd. These are friends that I still keep in contact with today. The best thing about the experience was gaining a new sense of self-confidence and self-belief and making new friends. Also I experienced many new things, for example travelling on the metro for the first time in my wheelchair. I felt that the whole experience changed me as a person. It gave me more confidence and self-belief. I do not deny that I had some serious doubts about whether it would



be possible at all. It was challenging and difficult to organise at first for everyone involved. However, in spite of these challenges I successfully completed the year. It is an experience that I do not regret and one that I will never forget. I hope that my experiences give hope and encouragement to others.

Erasmus enables higher education students, teachers and institutions in 31 European countries to study for part of their degree in another country.



La Erasmus - an exciting and unforgettable taste of fun, friendship and freedom! 77

Zoe Maclean, Erasmus student

Find out more at: www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus

Action for Inclusion
Social cohesion and active citizenship



## **Limiting global temperatures**

Some environmental campaigns catch the public imagination. 'Save the Whales' pulled on our heart strings; 'Keep Britain Tidy' spoke to our sense of civic responsibility. Industrial refrigeration may never have the same popular appeal but it is a major contributor to global warming and firms will need to take radical action in this area as part of European targets to limit the impact of climate change.

Let's take supermarkets as an example. Forget about the controversy surrounding disposable plastic bags. Chemicals released by fridges account for 30% of supermarkets' emissions, yet only 0.5% of stores have been fitted with greener equipment, according to the Environmental Investigation Agency.

As well as the environmental impact, firms stand to make considerable financial savings through repairing leaks and by installing more efficient refrigeration systems.

The UK's Institute of Refrigeration leads 'Real Skills Europe', a Leonardo Transfer of Innovation project

working to provide industry with much needed training resources to take action in this area.

In particular the project has developed downloadable toolkits on finding and fixing leaks, and on the financial savings that may be accrued through waste reducing measures.

The materials are available in several European languages to anyone with a professional interest as either a user or a specialist in refrigeration.

One of the most exciting developments will be a multi-lingual e-learning and assessment scheme, with opportunities for mutually recognised accreditation of skills in this area.



With a partnership spanning seven countries (Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Poland and the UK) this has the potential to be an incredibly powerful agent for change and a European success story.

The project has given me that extra knowledge to help customers get a better overview of the need to reduce leakage. It also shows a commitment to working with clients to go beyond their minimum legal obligations so that we can make a real and lasting impact on reducing the environmental footprint of refrigeration operations 77 Efficiency Trainer feedback

Find out more at: www.realskillseurope.eu

**Action for Innovation**Creativity and entrepreneurship





### From anti-social to Aunty Social

It may be known as the Las Vegas of the North, but for the teenagers of the surrounding area, Blackpool used to seem like a cultural wasteland. Catherine Mugonyi saw her friends hanging around with nothing to do and nowhere to go. She knew if she didn't do something, then some might fall prey to the heavy drinking culture among young people and the educational underachievement and anti-social behaviour problems that frequently follow.

With six of her friends she decided to offer young people something different. Instead of being antisocial they could now join Aunty Social, a cultural club which allowed them to channel their energies into creative projects, develop skills to boost their CVs and build new friendships. Through funding from the Youth in Action programme, she was able to turn her ideas into a reality.

Aunty Social adopted a 'pop-up' approach, setting up a variety of activities in different locations, from coffee shops to libraries, giving the club an element of surprise. Events were promoted through their WordPress website, Facebook and Twitter

reaching over 600 young people. Appetite for Aunty Social was evident from the interactions across these online communities. There was a real thirst for Aunty Social's film clubs, 'crafternoons', DJ workshops and knitting groups.

'Crafternoon' sessions have enabled young people to come along and learn how to design their own jewellery. The monthly film club has given a group of movie-mad sixth-form students the opportunity not only to attend screenings and discussions, but to help run the events, increasing their confidence and organisational capability.



Youth Initiatives are projects that are initiated, set up and carried out by young people.

Aunty Social is that we are offering young people a different kind of experience of the city. We are inspiring them to unlock their creative side and develop skills, whilst having fun, bringing different sections of the community together 77

Catherine Mugonyi, Aunty Social

Find out more at: www.britishcouncil.org/youthinaction

**Action for Innovation**Creativity and entrepreneurship





## Together Wii can do it

# Crescendo took teachers and pupils together on a journey through cybersports and virtual music.

The magic of eTwinning brought pupils from Doncaster and Dublin together in the virtual environment of the Nintendo Wii game to explore new worlds of music and sports.

The Crescendo project, the brainchild of ICT Coordinator Patrick Carroll and his European partner school in Dublin, provided the means to fuel Patrick's 'insatiable passion for pushing the boundaries of creative and innovative learning'.

The students created music using songs from the 'Wii Music' game and exchanged videos and photographs with their partner school to show their progress and exchanged feedback via podcasts. It incorporated other curricular themes too. In English the students created promotional materials and in maths they planned and costed a trip to Dublin. In Design Technology they designed costeffective vehicles as an alternative means of travel. They were also learning about sustainability so

they made recyclable instruments to replicate the instruments they would play in the virtual music game.

The second part of the project used Wii Sports with the pupils designing their own games, using video to explain the rules, and then running competitions. They used design classes to develop clothing and footwear for the activities, maths to evaluate the sports day results and science to further investigate the elements of a healthy lifestyle.

By integrating the Wii the pupils were immediately engaged in the activities and the curriculum topics. They were motivated to use new technologies and learn new ICT skills. The interaction allowed them to improve their communication skills and to identify differences between the schools, from the sports played to musical tastes and languages taught. They worked as a team and had a sense



of ownership by involving the wider school in their learning and activities and in showcasing the projects to their families.

Teachers at the two schools began to grasp the impact that games technology can have not only on motivation but also in developing leadership skills when young students are given the responsibility for shaping activities. They found that they were learning from the students, and in turn becoming more assured and experimental with the technology.

Marks have improved across the curriculum and senior management have recognised the value of investing in progressive technology in the classroom. The projects have also been used as a good example of innovation at Teacher Conferences, enabling the dissemination of the process and outcomes of the project.



eTwinning is the free online community for schools across Europe to connect and collaborate using ICT.

Find out more at: www.britishcouncil.org/etwinning

**Action for Innovation**Creativity and entrepreneurship



### Life skills to pay the bills

Atiti Sosimi arrived back in the UK in 1994 with £25 in her pocket and a ten month old baby and, despite having a degree in Sociology, has gone from being unemployed and unemployable to becoming the founder of her own business, Distinctly Different, and employer to others.

Atiti built Distinctly Different from a corner in her bedroom and nurtured it until she could move it into an office, where it has since grown into a successful company.

European Highway to Entrepreneurship is a Grundtvig Partnership between seven organisations that draws on the experiences of people like Atiti to help others change their lives through selfemployment and enterprise.

Each partner organisation has a wealth of experience in offering training and support to a variety of socially excluded groups, using different approaches and methods. The learners involved at the partner organisations include people with disabilities, jobseekers, migrants and minority groups.

Through a survey of learners, the partners have identified some of the key barriers they face, and the information and support they require in order to improve their situation.

By visiting each other, the partner organisations have been able to exchange ideas and teaching techniques, in order to enable tutors to deliver innovative support and guidance in the areas of entrepreneurship, confidence building and motivation.

Critically, learners and entrepreneurs are also involved in the visits, which means they can participate in workshops on preparing for the labour market and are able to contribute to discussions surrounding best practice in entrepreneurship education, from a learner perspective.

I actually didn't make a conscious decision to start a business. Circumstance dictated it to me 77

Atiti Sosimi, Distinctly Different

When receiving visitors, each partner also arranges a variety of cultural activities to ensure that participants return home with a much richer understanding of the history and culture of the countries involved in the project.

A handbook containing tried and tested approaches to entrepreneurship training and facts and tips for people who want to start up a business is now available to download free of charge at <a href="https://www.eu-highway.com/manual">www.eu-highway.com/manual</a>.





Action for Development New skills for new jobs



# Forging ahead

Art and metalwork student Lizzie Arthur found Erasmus a well-rounded preparation for the world of work.

Choosing to embark upon the Erasmus programme has certainly been one of the best decisions I have ever made. My experience was an inspirational one, alive with opportunity. As well as learning a multitude of new skills within my course interest, I was able to broaden my knowledge further in a new, challenging environment.

During my time abroad, I was included in some brilliantly unusual situations. I learned to live in a foreign place and become accustomed to a different way of life. I learned to be independent, resourceful and inquisitive. I met some exceptional teachers and students, who were remarkably generous with their time and patience. I would never have predicted some of the exciting prospects my Erasmus experience presented to me.

I chose Riga as my destination of study because I wanted to further my knowledge of metal work. I had researched beforehand that the Art Academy of Latvia had a very good department.

I fully embraced the chance to be working within a new establishment at a midpoint of my University studies in the UK. I found it refreshing to have the opportunity to work around different people within a new environment. I found it exciting to feel foreign. The experience has made me appreciate who I am and what I have got. It has broadened my horizons and expectations of what I can achieve.

Whilst on Erasmus, I made some fantastic friends. I met other Erasmus students from different countries, as well as local students in Latvia. In my free time, I did some travelling with these friends; I took the opportunity to explore some of Latvia's towns and cities, as well as travelling to the capitals of Estonia and Lithuania, Tallinn and Vilnius.

Lizzie Arthur, Erasmus student

Lizzie Arthur, Erasmus student



Living within another culture, I have learned so much not only about the place itself but also about myself. I feel more equipped to enter the third year of my studies because I have developed so much and grown in confidence.

Erasmus enables higher education students, teachers and institutions in 31 European countries to study for part of their degree in another country.



Find out more at: www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus

Action for Development

New skills for new jobs

#### **Transversal Study Visits**



# School-life balance

Wales has been very innovative in developing community focused schools.

Research shows that a range of factors outside school impact on pupils' ability to learn and achieve whilst in school. Schools that are truly community focused work in partnership with local authorities and others to address these factors and to help meet the needs of children and young people.

ContinYou Cymru, a charity responsible for supporting the development of Community Focused Schools throughout Wales, has hosted a Transversal Study Visit to introduce senior education professionals from several countries to this exciting area of practice.

During the intensive week-long placement the participants were able to speak to headteachers, staff and pupils, as well as local statutory and voluntary organisations, as part of organised visits to primary and secondary schools.

The visit attracted the attention of the Times Educational Supplement (TES Cymru, 10 December 2010) which interviewed some of the participants before they returned home.



**11** was very surprised to see so much co-ordination and so many integrated services for children. Teachers in France just teach - they are not so concerned with wellbeing. The relationship between teachers and students is very different here...The community schools approach is transferable, but it should take into account local context and the needs of different communities 77 Christiane Polowykow,

Head Teacher, France

For ContinYou Cymru this was an opportunity to obtain an outside perspective from highly experienced educationalists throughout Europe on their provision and to champion the Welsh education system at a European level.

Pam Boyd, Executive Director, ContinYou Cymru said:

"We were delighted to be able to host the visit and hear about the experiences of educationalists from across Europe. It gave us the opportunity to build on our existing relationships with the schools and local authorities involved in the visit and to be able to raise awareness and showcase effective practice in Wales."

Find out more at: www.continyou.org.uk/wales\_cymru

Action for Development

New skills for new jobs









### **Hijacking the Radiowaves**

A group of young people from a small mining town in Leeds hijacked a school's online community, Radiowaves, and took on the role of news correspondents connecting Europe digitally.

At a time of economic troubles, social mobility is a huge problem across Europe. For a group of young people in Leeds, who are from single parent or low-income families, the chance of coming into contact with young people from other European countries is a rare occurrence. For many, due to the resentment of migrant workers, particularly from Eastern Europe, the desire to mix has never appealed.

With funding from the Youth in Action programme, DigitalMe, a not-for-profit digital technology organisation, partnered with schools in the UK, Slovenia, Latvia, Poland and Germany and offered 60 young people a chance to meet online and learn new media skills, whilst exploring another part of Europe.

Working with an online mentor, these young people were tasked with the role of news correspondents reporting on themes of national and EU identity, democracy, culture and conflict. Young people





developed research skills and interview techniques when they collected opinions from the wider public and politicians in their local areas.

The project culminated in Network News Week which allowed young people a chance to put their country on the map and share their work with European peers. Hosted on the social network for schools, Radiowaves (which reaches an audience of 40,000 young people), reporters in each country shared their stories with the world.

Through participating in this project, young people learned new communication and social media skills. For many, it was the first time they had planned, produced and edited their films, sharing them with an online community. They also learned to upload and promote their articles as well as writing captivating and engaging blogs allowing young people as far as New Zealand to comment on their work.

Alison Booth, from DigitalMe, explains the importance of this project:

"Not only has this project tackled the problems around social mobility but it has equipped these young people with transferable skills, allowing them to become more culturally aware. They have gained a wealth of skills in new media which they can use not only in their education but also their future careers."

Youth Democracy Projects support young people's participation in democratic life.



Find out more at: www.britishcouncil.org/youthinaction

Action for Development

New skills for new jobs





### **Viva Comenius**

Making contact with a school in Malaga through eTwinning was just the start of an exciting journey for one Leeds primary school.

Language skills are a critical part of operating in a global economy, and the leading countries in language tuition all give their young students an early start on their linguistic journeys. But for primary schools getting access to quality language teaching and to the opportunity to practice with native speakers can be a challenge.

That's why Sarah Stead, International Co-ordinator at Adel Primary School in Leeds, turned to eTwinning to find a partner Spanish school to enable the pupils to communicate and learn from each other.

Having seen the effect that it had communicating electronically and by post with their Spanish counterparts, the school secured further funding from Comenius Partnerships, to take a trip to Malaga and work together with their partners. That was six years ago. Now eTwinning is built into the learning of the whole school and the Malaga trip has been an annual event ever since.

"We spend a day in the school, working with our partners in bi-lingual workshops which are cross curricular," says Sarah, "the children work together in maths challenges, art workshops, PE, flamenco dance and music."

"There is a large focus on Picasso and the children produce wonderful art work." Dilemmas such as bull fighting are also discussed, giving rise to reasoned arguments and thinking about different cultural expectations.

Before they make the trip the Year 6 teacher spends the whole half-term studying Malaga as a cross-curricular topic.

Having made such a success of studying one of Europe's most accessible languages, they have branched out further by hosting a Comenius Assistant from Bulgaria.

Comenius Assistants are trainee teachers who come from another European country at no cost to the



school. "Dobriyana taught the young students about the cyrillic alphabet, costume, cooking and many songs and dances. She was a great asset to the school," says Sarah.

The teachers are also more motivated. They have acquired new ICT skills and enhanced their professional development through visits, comparing and extending knowledge of techniques for behaviour management and approaches to using teaching resources.

Comenius School Partnerships fund UK schools and colleges to form partnerships with schools and colleges across Europe.



My role as a teacher has completely changed... I feel motivated to educate our children about their future as European and global citizens 77 Sarah Stead, Adel Primary School

Find out more at: www.britishcouncil.org/comenius

Action for Development

New skills for new jobs

### **Opportunity Overview**

European programmes for education, training and youth





Lifelong Learning Programme

#### **Higher education**

Higher education organisations, students and staff can take part in Erasmus.

Find out more:

www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus 029 2092 4311

erasmus@britishcouncil.org



#### **Adult education**

Adult education teachers and learners can participate in Grundtvig.

Find out more:

www.grundtvig.org.uk 0845 199 1919

grundtvig@uk.ecorys.com



#### **Schools**

Schools can apply to participate in the Comenius and eTwinning programmes.

Find out more:

0161 957 7755

www.britishcouncil.org/comenius www.britishcouncil.org/etwinning comenius@britishcouncil.org etwinning@britishcouncil.org



#### **Vocational education and training**

Employers and educational institutions can improve vocational education and training with Leonardo.

Find out more: www.leonardo.org.uk 0845 199 2929 leonardo@uk.ecorvs.com



#### **Youth in Action**

#### **Youth in Action**

Youth in Action offers European opportunities for young people.

Find out more:

www.britishcouncil.org/youthinaction
For all contact details please visit:
www.britishcouncil.org/youthinaction-contact







#### Tip!

For an overview of all opportunities available under the Lifelong Learning Programme and Youth in Action, please visit: www.lifelonglearningprogramme.org.uk

#### **Education and training professionals**

If you're involved in planning the provision of education or training you could go on a Study Visit.

Find out more:

www.transversal.org.uk 0845 199 3939 studyvisits@uk.ecorys.com









### www. life long learning programme.org. uk









