



2. Inclusion Equality

● 2.1 Broadening Participation In International Projects

The EU education agenda is driven by the need to provide a suitable education for people in the new Europe produced by the free market in labour. It's about maximizing the opportunities for all to play a part in the societies and economies that are developing within this framework. There is a strong emphasis in EU education programmes on promoting diversity, dialogue, inclusion and dismantling the barriers that stand in the way of these things. "Intercultural education is a priority field for the entirety of Comenius. In today's increasingly multicultural societies, schools with significant numbers of pupils from different cultures and linguistic, socio-cultural or ethnic backgrounds have become the normality" (<http://ec.europa.eu>).

The Get-in! Network was established to ensure that international learning opportunities were equally available to all members of the diverse population of Europe – so giving everybody a better educational experience in the process. The changing face of Europe, most apparent with the new ethnically diverse generations coming through our schools, needs to be reflected in Comenius 1 projects. This is especially important for minority ethnic pupils, and in particular young women from minority ethnic backgrounds. Evidence also shows that less academic young people are less likely to take part in these projects. Moreover, there are other groups of pupils, such as pupils with learning difficulties, disabilities, behaviour problems, disadvantaged backgrounds and so on, who are likely to be less involved in international projects.

The first questions we must ask as teachers are: "Is our school getting involved in European projects?" and then, if we are: "Who is getting involved / What are the patterns?" and "Why are some kinds of young people not getting involved so much?" Providing opportunities for all pupils is necessary, but not sufficient. We need to look at outcomes and then to identify factors that might affect these outcomes.

Some pupils from certain backgrounds might be finding it difficult to get involved. We might have some ideas about why this is so, but we need to test our assumptions, through listening to pupils and parents. We need to find out what lies behind this and discuss what the school can do.



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The development of inclusion in education needs to be a whole school strategy, in which participation in international projects is one aspect. Inclusive practice is relevant to all pupils, but focuses especially on the range of groups that have historically been marginalized and gained less from our education systems. Bristol Local Education Authority, UK, helpfully defines “educational inclusion” as: “The process by which all those who provide education [...] develop their cultures, policies and practices so as to include all learners. Where:

- It is crucial part of strategic planning for improvement.
- Educationally inclusive institutions are ones in which the learning, achievements, attitudes and well being of all pupils matter.
- They are able to engender a sense of community and belonging, and also offer new opportunities to learners who may have experienced previous difficulties.
- This does not mean that they treat all learners the same way. Rather it involves taking account of learners’ varied life experiences and needs.
- Educational inclusion is about equal opportunities for all learners, whatever their age, gender, ethnic origin, religious belief, care status, impairment, sexuality, attainment, social or economic background.
- It pays particular attention to the provision made for, and the achievements of, different groups of learners.
- However, it also goes much further, and is about tackling the underachievement and exclusion of groups who have been marginalized or disadvantaged in the past, through taking positive action and through the targeting of resources to ensure that they have their rights upheld.”

The Get-in! project looks at how schools can increase participation in international projects with specific reference to the involvement of minority ethnic pupils, especially young women. The principles and the practice outlined, however, have broader implications and are applicable to other aspects of inclusion.

The task for us as educators and school managers is to make ourselves more knowledgeable about the needs of our pupils, parents and communities, so we can anticipate issues and plan for them, rather than just reacting to events. Some of the issues are not easy to deal with, especially when we first encounter them. Through effective networks, however, schools may learn from each other’s experience and develop better practice. The suggestions for good practice offered in this manual are culled from schools which have developed practice over time and from which we can now all benefit.