

Exchange program between schools

Description

The basic principle of exchanges between pupils is that they should become aware of their European identity. Outside of Europe you are considered a European, perhaps you even feel European, but what is this strange kind of identity? Exchanges give youngsters an insight into the differences and similarities between cultures and this insight will contribute towards a better Europe. The European Union has considered this as well, and has therefore set up several interesting funding programs for schools, which organise and participate in exchanges. Exchanges can be set up in so many ways; therefore we present an example exchange program, which can be adapted to the organisers' needs and goals.

Program example:

The first thing is to come up with a theme, around which workshops, lectures, discussions and field trips can be organised. A good idea to make sure that pupils get to know each other better is to organise several workshops in which the youngsters will have to co-operate in order to reach a certain goal. Examples of workshops are:

- Theatre workshop: the pupils will have to write a play around the theme. At the end of the week they perform in this play while the other participants of the exchange are their audience.
- Discussion workshop: the youngsters will discuss a (European) problem/several problems that are related to the theme of the exchange and work out solutions to overcome the problem. At the end of the week these solutions will be presented.
- Media workshop: this workshop has to present either a video, newspaper or website about the exchange and present their material at the end of the week. This means that the participants in this workshop will have to gather information, take pictures, use the video camera and take notes about other workshops, excursions, evening programs and so on.
- Music workshop: this workshop enables pupils to learn from each other's music. Pupils will sing some of their local songs and their anthem and of course play instruments. Next to that the pupils will learn each other's songs and learn new songs, which will be sung at the end of the week.
- Creative workshop: each country has interesting traditions, for example in Fryslân people used to walk on wooden shoes. In a creative workshop one can try to make wooden shoes or make baskets from branches and so on.
- Dance workshop: each culture knows traditional dances, in this workshop pupils can learn from each others cultures and learn new (modern) dances which will be demonstrated at the end of the week.
- Food workshop: cultures can also be distinguished by their traditional food or drinks. A food workshop, during which pupils cook and exchange their own traditional meals, enables the pupils to have a taste of different cultures.
- Nature workshop: in each country there are unique species, plants and sceneries. In a nature workshop the participants go out into the open air, play games and learn about the special plants and species of a certain area.

Since some workshops are more time consuming than others it is advisable to offer some of the workshops to several groups. Next to these workshops it is interesting to offer excursions or do (traditional) sport activities. And you will have to think of an evening program. The last evening can be used to present the results of the workshops.

The organisation of an exchange takes a lot of time, and if you want to apply for European funding one should consider the deadlines of the different programs. These deadlines can sometimes be up to 6 months before the actual date of the exchange. For more information visit our site: funding programs.

Learning objectives

Exchanges have the following learning objectives:

- ❑ To teach/improve the pupils' communication skills and language abilities
- ❑ Pupils become aware of their own cultural background and learn from other cultures
- ❑ To exploit the pupils' creative skills
- ❑ To teach the children to work in a team
- ❑ To teach the pupils presentation skills
- ❑ To develop the pupils' (persuasive) argumentation skills

Target Group

Exchange programs are suitable for children in the age of 10 and above. Most important is that the pupils are able to speak a foreign language in order to communicate with the other participants of the exchange.