**Education Learning and Skills**

Two successful European partnerships have been initiated during the current EU funding period between Kent and Flanders in the field of education. The Comenius EU project GAMES aims at supporting the quality of extended schools in Kent by excxhanging good practices across border and working with the local communities in the fiel of health, …. The Comenius EU project EASIER aims at building an adaptive script for creating a new research curriculum online on the commemoration of the Great War for staff and students in Kent and in Flanders.

**Next Steps**

The new funding period offers a unique opportunity to build upon what has been already done in order to:

- Support the schools in Kent

- Link up the Kent Association of Headteachers with European partners

- ENGAGE communities with education starting with the early years

- Strengthen the professionalism of youngsters beyond 16

- Promote skills development and a more integrated approach between education and skills

-  Linkup education and tourism.

**Projects in the pipeline**

**Project title: Engagement of new communities with education;**

**Target population:  0 – 7 year olds and girls from 13 years upwards**

*The current situation*

Families coming into the UK have to negotiate an education system which may vary significantly from their home country particularly in respect to the age of entering formal education and expectations around attendance and parental involvement in school life. Thanet, Dover and Shepway and Gravesham have been selected as areas with significant levels of new community populations.

Attendance rate in primaries is an issue and lack of take up of nursery placements. There is also some evidence that in specific groups from new communities, girls’ successful engagement in education from aged 13 upwards is not highly valued.

*What the project will address*

The project will provide new communities with information  on pre-school activities, the education system in Kent and the support that is available to children and their families to make a successful ‘school ready’ transition into formal education. This information will be given through literature provided in the languages spoken by new communities. A strand of work will be focused on engaging with new communities through face to face contact led by a range of community development workers who have experience and knowledge of working with emerging communities. In addition, specific work will take place with girls from new communities in Key Stage 3 and 4 to raise their aspirations and encourage them to consider post 16 learning opportunities.  This approach will be shared with partner countries.

**Using community assets to promote plurilingualism and raise aspirations**

*The current situation*

Changing patterns of migration and settlement mean that schools in Gravesham, Thanet, Shepway and Dover in particular have an increasing range of linguistic diversity in the school population. These developments can be viewed positively, in particular given that plurilingualism (competence in more than one language) has been recognized by the Council of Europe, among other international bodies, as a desirable educational goal for all, benefiting both the individual who can speak several languages and wider society. However, to reap these benefits, there is a need to build the educational aspirations of young people from new communities and promote the acquisition of additional languages for the established community.

*What will be addressed by the project*

The project will link the learning of languages to opportunities within the local  labour market e.g. Paramount, ports and the global nature of the labour market. Kent County Council’s Skills and Employability Team provide data on future labour market trends and the local employment opportunities requiring plurilingual skills are increasing. The project will map the community languages and engage young people as co-producers of a peer mentoring scheme to support those newly arrived in Kent from other countries and create Young Language Ambassadors who are able link schools to new communities e.g. by providing translation services for parents/carers, producing multilingual materials, advising on community cohesion. Due care will be taken to safeguard children young people and the families who are beneficiaries of the programme. This will not be used as a substitute for KCC translation standards as defined by public sector equality duties.

**Engagement with education post 16 options**

*The current situation*

Rationale – to ensure that young people and families from new communities are aware of the options and pathways for education post 16 and continue to be engaged in learning under the Raising of the Participation Age agenda.

The project will identify if any of the new communities are under-represented in post 16 learning (with a particular focus on girls’ engagement in learning) through interrogating destination data and in discussions with schools and colleges about drop out rates.

*What will be addressed by the project*

As a result of the analysis the project will ensure schools are providing quality CEIAG to target groups of young people and supporting transition into next steps. We will be supporting schools to achieve standards in regard to the Raising of the Participation Age and support young people to plan and achieve their learning and progress towards their career goals.

From the analysis we will target the work of peer mentors, provide advice to parents and encourage the participation in learning for under-represented groups. Specific work will be undertaken with girls aged 13 years old and above, from any of the new communities should the data evidence an under-representation.

**Multi-regional programme on the Great War Centenary involving Nord Pas de Calais, West Flanders, Zeeland.**

The project will built upon a current EU Comenius project and will bring together Kent key partners : Nord Pas de Calais, West Flanders, Zeeland. In the future project, attention will be paid to the following parameters:

• a historical-chronological time line, e.g., the drawing up of lists of relevant historical events and dates;

• a geographic allocation, whereby relevant historical events are linked to specific locations;

• a thematic allocation, whereby relevant historical events arecoupled to specific themes, and,

• the target groups, e.g., senior citizens, students, out-of-school youth groups, local and foreign visitors.

Through research activities, exchanges of staff and students across the border, the project will facilitate access to war sites and link up with the Step Short project by unlocking r sites in Kent to visitors from home and abroad.