



Short report on the evaluation
"Boundless – intercultural learning in dialogue"
World University Service

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German Development Cooperation

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Summary

Besides arousing interest in developing and transition countries, One World and development policy, the objectives of development-policy work in education is also to increase knowledge and foster an unbiased and open-minded attitude in exchanges with members of these countries. The pilot programme *Grenzenlos* (Boundless) was initiated by the World University Service (WUS) in the German federal states of Hesse, Berlin and Brandenburg in June 2003 and it was supported by BMZ until it ended in December 2004.

The idea behind the pilot programme was that the multiplicity of inter-relations between Germany and the rest of the world call for special competencies and qualifications in pupils. It invoked the recommendations of the Permanent Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the German States: "In educating people to bear joint responsibility for One World, schools also need to impart the complexity of the issues involved."

Grenzenlos groups schools/teachers, foreign students and pupils around four aims: setting up educational cooperation between foreign students and teachers of all school forms and grades; accessing schools for the expertise of foreign students; working against prejudice and stereotypical attitudes towards non-Germans; upgrading foreign students from developing countries into learning partners in school education work.

Before completion of the pilot programme an evaluation was conducted to assess whether the objectives, the target groups and the instruments applied were appropriate to the developmental mandate of education work. The evaluation centred on the impact and sustainability of the measure as part of developmental education work.

The evaluation found that the short pilot programme made a contribution to developmental work in education. One comparative advantage of the programme is the authentic way foreign students impart developmental issues to suit the pupils' respective age and grade. Impacts were achieved at the different levels addressed by the programme, particularly at target group and pupil level. We therefore recommend continuing the programme.

Findings

The objectives are very diverse, covering the whole gamut of developmental work in education. There is no overall objective. The project documents cite foreign students in Germany and the teachers as target groups. Pupils can be indirectly inferred from one of the objectives. In working reality, however, there is only one target group: the pupils.

The *Grenzenlos* programme addresses the whole range of different school types. In 2003, the programme was confined to secondary school levels I and II, also including the 5th and 6th grades as of 2004. In every type of school social competency is imparted via developmental contents, taking account of the different educational background and learning capacity of the pupils.

As intermediaries for assignment in German schools, the foreign students are selected very carefully by WUS. They are trained by WUS in didactics and method at successive weekend

seminars. After the first qualification seminar a cooperation seminar is held with the teachers where students and teachers can discuss with each other and arrange the assignments in the schools. As they are agreed with the teachers, the contents and teaching methods may be assumed to be appropriate in general. After the cooperation seminar and at least two assignments in schools an evaluation seminar takes place in preparation for the second qualification seminar. Then the foreign students are examined by a board of examiners made up of the President of the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, representatives of the Hesse Institute for Education and the *Arbeitsstelle für Globales Lernen und Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (Division for Global Learning and International Cooperation) at Berlin Technical University. If they pass, the students are certified as facilitators for global and intercultural education.

Foreign students not studying educational subjects or unaccustomed to public presentations can have difficulty in school assignments between the first and second qualification seminar.

The teachers are the mediators between the foreign students and the pupils. These are dedicated teachers primarily engaged in teaching German, history, geography and English and less in scientific and technical subjects.

Regardless of the terminological confusions in the objectives and target groups, the planning was sound. The planning of the contents and reflection seminars were commensurate with the theme.

In 2003, 15 schools from grade 7 took part in the *Grenzenlos* programme and 31 schools from grade 5 in 2004. Twenty-seven foreign students participated in Hesse in 2003 and 20 in Berlin/Brandenburg. In the two pilot years 2003/2004 all types of school in the German educational system were included, comprehensive and grammar schools heading the list of the participant schools in both years. In 2004, vocational schools, secondary modern schools, special schools and advanced level colleges were also included. Altogether, 74 foreign students have been trained since the beginning of the programme, of these 27 Africans, 23 Latin Americans, 11 Asians, 9 Arabs, 1 Israeli, 1 Georgian and 2 Turks.

While a careful selection was made of foreign students, the choice of schools was in part rather random. WUS writes to education authorities but there is no assurance that the information is passed on to the headmasters. If the headmaster is not interested, the information material is not made available to prospective teachers. The eastern federal states are generally less acquainted with WUS.

In the pilot phase only three assignments were organized per foreign student. The students therefore complained that despite receiving highly qualified training by WUS, they were not given enough assignments. In Berlin/Brandenburg, the foreign students and the teachers have to have a direct contact person. The executing organization WUS has its head office in Wiesbaden/Hesse.

The personnel capacity of the executing institution WUS, however, is already nearing its limits at the present stage of the programme.

Almost all schools that have taken part in the pilot programme have requested more foreign students. Some schools are considering integrating the *Grenzenlos* programme in ongoing school programmes (e.g. anti-racism) or replacing these with it. Technical and vocational schools are discussing the possibility of extending the programme to include more occupational profiles. The authentic way foreign students impart the contents makes for a comparative advantage over other programmes. Schools taking part in the European Schools Programme may be able to provide funds to finance the programme.

The high voluntary commitment of the teachers is another indicator of the beneficial impact. Some teachers also regard *Grenzenlos* as an upgrading programme.

The foreign students attached particular value to the didactic and educational training and some applied it in their own courses of study.

Interviews with 60 pupils showed that the topic imparted at events held by the foreign students had a direct impact on the pupils but also encouraged them to reflect on the situation of the students and aroused their interest in other issues or other countries. Some pupils were so interested that the discussion with the foreign students was continued separately.

The discussion with vocational school pupils revealed the limits of developmental work in education, that is, where the deficits of the educational system are most apparent. Where technical equipment is lacking, no qualified teachers are available and lessons are cancelled, it is difficult to draw attention to problems in other regions of the world and the related context.

Recommendations

- The programme should be continued, taking into account the limited personnel capacity. A successive expansion should be given precedence over a nationwide programme for the whole of Germany.
- The objective and the definition of the target groups need to be revised. The overall objective should be inferred from the expansion of intercultural and international competency and the specific intercultural setting.
- The request must be aligned with project reality. The target groups are the pupils. The intermediaries are the foreign students. The mediators are the teachers.
- A contact person has to be appointed for Berlin/Brandenburg. In a successive expansion of the programme, consideration should be given to assigning regional contact persons for several federal states.
- Without forfeiting the special status of the programme, consideration should be given to how inactive schools could be reached via school channels.
- Finance arrangements must be made with schools that can make their own contributions (European Schools Programme). The education budgets of the federal states also have to be taken into account. *Grenzenlos* should not, however, be confined to schools that can make their own contributions or those that can draw on large financial resources.

General conclusions

Over its short term the pilot programme has made a contribution to developmental education work despite some organizational deficits and some needed qualitative improvements. A comparative advantage of the programme is the authentic way foreign students impart developmental issues to suit the pupils' age and grade. During the pilot period, the project primarily reached open-minded schools and their pupils. The question remains of how to reach inactive schools. Where can interventions be made in these schools to enable pupils to acquire social competency through developmental educational events?

Baseline data

Project title:	"Boundless - intercultural learning in dialogue"
Project start:	1 June 2005
End of project:	31 December 2004
Project expenditure	EUR 49,906 (2003)

EUR 101,703 (2004)
BMZ division in charge of project 114
Project executing organization World University Service (WUS)
Term of evaluation: 25 October - 22 November 2004

Evaluator

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**BMZ comment on the findings of the evaluation of the WUS project
"Boundless - intercultural learning in dialogue"**

Since the outcome of the above expert report is largely affirmative as concerns mainstreaming developmental issues in schools, BMZ is of the opinion that these measures should be financed by the respective education ministries of the individual federal states, provided all the states are in agreement. BMZ is prepared to provide interim finance again for 2005. WUS should arrange for financial participation by the federal states by the end of the year.