



AMuSE – Approaches to Multilingual Schools in Europe AMuSE – Ansätze zur Mehrsprachigkeit an Schulen in Europa

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General information on the project

The project **AMuSE** (Approaches to Multilingual Schools in Europe) was funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission from January 2012 to March 2015. The aim of the project was to gather initiatives and to discuss ways in which schools can change from monolingual settings into spaces of multilingualism. A multilingual orientation of schools is of increasing importance in Europe and worldwide because of the constantly increasing mobility and global flows of migratory movements. At the same time, the majority of the world's population is multilingual.

The project consortium, consisting of six partner institutions from Austria (University of Teacher Education Vienna), Estonia (University of Tartu), Italy (EURAC Bolzano), Sweden (University of Gothenburg), Switzerland (University of Teacher Education Zürich), and Turkey (Akdeniz University Antalya), carried out a series of activities and background research on multilingualism at schools. One focus was the gathering of projects, initiatives, publications, and materials that promote multilingualism in the classroom and at schools. This collection is freely available online as part of the database "Multilingualism". Another focus of the project was on building dialogue between people engaged in teacher education, teachers, and decision makers at schools and in educational policy. To this end, four international conferences and expert meetings were held in different partner countries. The results of the conferences as well as all other publications and information on the project is available on the **AMuSE** website: <http://amuse.eurac.edu/en/home/default.html>

Background to the recommendations

Based on the work of the partner institutions in the **AMuSE** project, the project team would like to propose a set of recommendations to two target groups, both of which have considerable influence on the promotion of multilingualism at schools and in classrooms. One set of recommendations is dedicated to teacher education, which can contribute greatly to an understanding of multilingualism among teachers and to a stronger orientation towards multilingual didactics. The second set of recommendations is targeted at decision and policy makers in the field of educational policy as the legal conditions and their proper implementation are vital in order for schools to turn into places of active multilingualism. The recommendations are the result of joint work among the project partners, which, in turn, draw on different national challenges of implementing multilingualism at schools. The selection given below includes general demands, which are necessary according to the **AMuSE** team in order to take important steps towards multilingual schools. A longer document available on the **AMuSE** website (<http://amuse.eurac.edu/en/home/default.html>) includes the general recommendations and provides specific elaborations for each of them given by the partner institutions. The **AMuSE** team hopes to offer further incentives so that schools can become multilingual institutions in the future.

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Recommendations for teacher education

1. Teacher education should comprise a compulsory training module, which includes a range of subjects such as linguistic knowledge on multilingualism, first and second language acquisition, intercultural communication, second language and multilingual didactics as well as cultural and historical insights into the most widespread regions and languages of the pupils at school.
2. Teacher education should prepare all teachers in such a way that they are able to plan and carry out their teaching to support language diversity in class.
3. As part of teacher training, all teachers should take an introductory language course in one of the pupil's mother tongues, which is not the main language of instruction. This should be offered as a compulsory elective course, which ideally involves a stay in a territory where this language is a main language of everyday use.
4. The language competence of teachers in bilingual and immersion schools should be at a certified, high level (e.g. according to the European Framework of Reference for Languages).
5. The discussion and the conception of new models in the field of language didactics should be promoted and become part of integrated language curricula.
6. All actors in the field of education and all relevant institutions should be involved in the development of materials for the promotion of languages at schools and beyond. It is important that these initiatives will be connected on a regional, national, and international level so that an exchange of ideas, methods, and materials will be facilitated.
7. Libraries (including their electronic catalogues and databases) at schools, universities, and at all institutions for teacher education should be supplied with the latest research publications and didactic materials in the areas of multilingualism and language diversity.
8. Informed discussions and information campaigns on multilingual didactics should be held regularly at all relevant educational institutions.
9. The number of trained multilingual teachers should be increased, and they should be integrated into the regular school system. It is necessary to acknowledge more readily previous teacher training and certifications acquired in other countries.

Recommendations for policy and decision makers in education

1. Already existing national and European laws, recommendations, and initiatives for the promotion of multilingualism should be more thoroughly taken into account. Measures have to be put into place that lead to a serious implementation of these laws and proposals and that reduce the gap between policies and practice at schools.
2. Teams of experts on multilingual didactics should develop conclusive definitions of terminology and of common concepts on a national level and in international exchange. Their work should directly inform educational policy making.
3. Educational policy making has to make sure that the proper resources are provided so that all measures concerning languages and the development of multilingualism at schools will be appropriately financed and supported. This includes, for example, implementing necessary teacher education, fostering the creation of up-to-date teaching materials, and setting up networks for teachers and policy makers on a regional, national, and international level.
4. Decision makers in education have to expand their knowledge on multilingualism and should attend further training courses, which will certify their competence in that area.
5. Mother tongue teaching and support of other languages should be integrated in the regular teaching schedule. Concomitantly, the status of mother tongue teachers has to be made equal to other teachers.
6. Offerings of subject language teaching should be expanded. At the same time, subject language teaching should be combined with social integration; all schools should adopt a language-friendly environment.
7. Every school has to develop their own language strategy with scientific and administrative support.
8. Pupils with an extended repertoire of languages should receive institutional recognition and an appropriate certification of that.
9. The cooperation between professionals in education and linguistic researchers should be improved on an institutional basis so that teacher education can gain direct benefits from that.
10. Promising projects and trial programmes at schools should be professionally evaluated and monitored with scientific support.