

Erasmus in Schools Guide

SocialErasmus+: Internationalisation through Community Engagement in schools



"Why hosting an Erasmus student in your class is a good idea"

"Practical guideline on how to set up an activity from A to Z"

 SocialErasmus+

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This publication was developed in the framework of the SocialErasmus+ project.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

This project has been funded with the support of the European Commission. The publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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About the project

The **SocialErasmus** programme incorporates all volunteer activities where international students engage with locals to contribute to their local host society. The **SocialErasmus+ project** is an Erasmus+ KA3 Forward-Looking Cooperation grant project to support the development and professionalisation of the SocialErasmus initiative across Europe.

The main aims of the project are:

- Better integrate the international exchange student in the local society by organising volunteer opportunities to ensure an exchange of values takes place between the International students and the local community
- Developing and professionalise the implementation process of the activities by involving more stakeholders such as Higher Education Institutions and local schools in the process.
- Increasing the learning experience of students by engaging with Higher Education Institutions and Non-Formal Education experts to build in elements of Community Service Learning in the curricula and increase the recognition students receive for their volunteering activity.

The SocialErasmus+ project has a focus on **Erasmus in Schools activities**, to ensure also local youth experience internationalisation and intercultural communication in classrooms from a younger age.

The implementation of the SocialErasmus+ project is coordinated by ESN and implemented with the support of the European University Foundation, Youth for Exchange and Understanding, Erasmus Student Network Besancon, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, University of Vienna and the University of Vigo.

Introduction

Erasmus in Schools aims at bringing international exchange students into local schools.

The main goal of the project is to familiarize students from primary and secondary schools with Europe and international mobility, fostering a cultural exchange based on values such as respect, co-existence and tolerance.

Organising an Erasmus in Schools will bring an international exchange student into your classroom, where the international exchange students can do a wide range of activities that include country presentations, cultural workshops or language sessions with local students.

Erasmus in Schools is run by the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), a student organisation with more than 530 local organisations in more than 40 countries across Europe. The activities are often carried out in support with the host university where the students are studying.

Why you should host an international student in your class

Erasmus in Schools brings several different benefits to the school.

1. This is a wonderful possibility to bring internationalisation to the school, which does not require actual mobility from your students
2. Creating a connection between generations and people from other countries and cultures allows for people to have an open dialogue
3. While talking to International students, it will allow students to practice foreign languages to complement the lessons, even in history or geography class
4. European openness: reinforcing the cultural and international aspect, fighting stereotypes, promoting tolerance
5. It makes learning about other countries' cultures or history more personal, by having international students to come into the classroom and present the lesson material from a personal perspective. This can increase the student's motivation and Developing motivation to prevent early school leaving

*“Not every school has the possibility to organise mobility to other countries. **Erasmus in Schools is perfect alternative and brings other cultures into the class.** For schools starting international project it is a wonderful first step”.* - Eddy Raepsaet, coordinator international school projects, Scholengroep Vlaamse Ardennen, Belgium

*“Students are undeniably delighted with these “unusual lessons”: they enjoy meeting other people from countries they do not necessarily know, asking them questions. They discover, broaden themselves and especially give up their prejudices. As for learning the language, these interventions make sense. Students understand the value of learning a foreign language and are sometimes more motivated afterwards. These exchanges are obviously a beautiful cultural contribution; international openness is essential for our students to better prepare them for their future life, personally and professionally, but also to offer them another vision of the world and encourage their tolerance. **It is also a good way to approach language teaching in a different way, a more authentic approach; it's not just the teacher who teaches!**”* - Maggy Nuninger, English professor at Condé professional high school, Besançon, France

“In 2014, after I acquired my vocational baccalaureate in Care and Personal Service accompaniment. I decided to go to England thanks to my English teacher, who received international students as part of the language courses and who had talked about international mobility and its possibilities in the classroom. So I took this opportunity and through a program called “Leonardo da Vinci” managed by the CRIJ (Regional Youth Center) of Besançon to do a 3 weeks English course at a school with English teachers and 20 weeks of internship practice in the chosen field.” - Mathieu GARNIER, former student at Condé Professional High School (Besançon)



How to host an Erasmus student in your class?



Ready to start?

1. Contact your local ESN section

Are you not in contact yet with any local ESN section? We can make this match for you! Register your school on erasmusinschools.org.

When you register your account, the National Coordinator will receive an official notification with the information you submitted about your school. They will be tasked to look for the closest ESN section in your area that can arrange for an Erasmus student to visit your school.

They will put you in touch with the local ESN section that will help organise the Erasmus in Schools visit and look for an international student to visit your class.

Note: the ESN team will try their best to connect you to a local ESN section and find an international student to come and visit your class, but as ESN is a volunteer organisation, please be aware it might not always be possible to find a match.

Do you already have an Erasmus in Schools activity planned with an ESN Section? Then they can create an activity online and send you an invitation to complete your Schools account on Erasmus in Schools account. When registering, you will be asked to provide the official address, website and logo of the school as well as a brief description about the school.

Note: You can only create one account per school. We advise you to use an official school email account to submit the registration for the Erasmus in Schools platform.

If more teachers are interested in hosting international students in their class, we suggest to discuss who will coordinate the account or share the credentials among your colleagues. A contact person at the level of the school or regional school authority is necessary so that everything goes smoothly.

2. Define your activity setup

Make clear logistical arrangements with the ESN section on when and how the activity should take place. It is best to tackle the following questions:

- **Dates:** Which are the possible dates the event should take place. Is it feasible for all parties on these dates? Make sure this does not conflict with any public holidays or exam periods.
- **Location:** Where will the activity take place? How easy is it to reach the location with the Erasmus students.
- **Room:** It is important to know what the room will look like in order to prepare for the activity. What type of tables/chairs are there? Can the tables and chairs be moved? What

type of facilities are there; is there a beamer or whiteboard that can be used during the session? Is there a space the students can gather before and after to discuss about the activity?

- **Profile of the class:** In order to adjust the content of the session to the right age group of the students, ensuring the Erasmus students know the age of the pupils, and their level of language knowledge as well as knowledge on the topic you wish to discuss.
- **Duration:** How long can the activity be? Will the session be cut if the time is too short?
- **Regulations:** Are there specific rules to follow in the school?
- **Classroom dynamics:** How is the atmosphere in the class, are there specific points of attention?

The **Erasmus in Schools platform** and the **Activity Outline** will help you go through the majority of these questions in order to know the practical setting for the session.

Topic Selection

It is important to define the topic you would like to address during your classes with the local Coordinator and the Erasmus students that will join your classes. For the ESN coordinator and the Erasmus student it is important to know what class they will be joining (is it a language, citizenship, history, or [...] geography class?).

It is also best to share what subject you would like your students to know more about. It is possible to make connections between the overall learning objectives of your course, and the activity in which you want to involve international students in.

The end goal of the activity is an open dialogue between Erasmus students and school pupils. In order to make sure that is possible, it is important that both the pupils and the international students feel comfortable with the selected topic and is able to speak about that topic in front of a classroom.

Example: you can invite an international student from a Spain inside a Belgian High School classroom to talk about spanish history, spanish language, spanish geography, etc.

Questions:

- **Topic:** Is there are a specific topic the school would like to address?
- Is there anything that is **off limits** for the school or the student?

Legal aspects

In certain countries, there might be some legal aspects you should follow up on. We advise you to check with your administration if specific permits are needed for the international student to enter the school's premises.

Example: it might be needed for the student to prove they do not have a criminal record before working with minors.

Questions:

- **Legal documents:** Does the school require any type of legal document in order for the student to enter the school territory.
- **Pictures:** Is it possible to take pictures during the activity?

Tip: We usually agree with the school that only one person from the ESN section will be taking pictures and the school will be shown the picture selection before the pictures will go live. We suggest to take pictures from the back, focusing on the international students in order to make the pupils of the school unrecognisable if needed.

3. Find Students

Now we can start looking for students! ESN will spread the call through the international students' community and look for local students to take part in the activity.

In general ESN aims at giving all international students the opportunity to volunteer during their mobility. We advise to try and create an activity that would work with a diverse set of possible participants. The more specific you make the expected profile, the more difficult it might be for the local organisation to find a student that fits this profile. Discuss with the ESN section if they think it would be possible to find the profile you expect.

4. Activity preparation

Erasmus in Schools can be implemented across all education stages but is mostly implemented in primary and secondary/high schools with school pupils that are between 6 and 18 years old. When developing an activity it is important that the age and group composition of the participant is well respected. Depending on the context of the school where the activity is carried out and its students, EiS activity can be focused on achieving more specific objectives, creating numerous possibilities to develop meaningful learning, making it possible to connect to different school subjects.

There are many different versions of Erasmus in School activities and it is rather likely that you will find at least some activities that fit your school. Some activities are long, some are short, some are specific for certain courses (languages, geography, sports, citizenship,...). Below you will find a few examples of activities that have taken place.

Note: While there is a wide spectrum of activities out there, it should also be noted that there are some limits on what can be done. It has to be clear that the exchange students are guest speakers and that the final responsible is still the teacher. Good preparation of the activities can avoid a lot of problems.

We believe it is important to involve the student in the preparation of the activity. This can be done by organising a briefing between the school, ESN section and student to ensure everyone is up to date with what is happening.

Questions:

- **Involvement of the different stakeholders:** are you going to take part in the activity as a teacher, or do you expect to be a spectator/observer? Would you like to debrief and reflect with the pupils yourself after the session?
- **Activity Outline:** Would they like to give feedback on the outline of the session?
- **Introduction:** Ask if it is Ok for the ESN Coordinator to introduce the visitors to the class and the aim of the session.

Inspiration for Activities

During an Erasmus in Schools you can discuss a large range of subjects and subjects with the students that can be adapted to the needs of the class. Important is that you adapt your activity according to the pupils' age and language skills.

Think out of the box, it is possible to focus on gastronomy, cultural traditions such as traditional feasts such as the Chinese New Year, Venetian Carnival or Japanese tea.

Take a look at the different models presented to inspire yourself, or take a look at the Activity Outlines prepared by ESN Coordinators across Europe.

Tool: Use our practical guideline to set up your activity, get inspired by the example activities you can find in the toolkit!

I'm a migrant, so what?!

Time allocation:
90 min

Age of participants:
15 - 19 years old

Size of the group:
25

Aim

- Present migration as a natural process happening since the beginning of time
- explore the values & challenges brought by migration
- Encourage acceptance and understanding toward topic of migrations

Activity

This activity starts by introducing a mindmap with post-its around the topic of Migration, Immigration and Emigration. A simulation game is implemented to showcase the challenges newcomers can experience in society. The international student shares their personal story and the classroom discusses how inclusive their society is to newcomers.

What do you know about me?

Time allocation:
90 min

Age of participants:
15 - 19 years old

Size of the group:
25

Aim

- Raising awareness about stereotypes and their impact on our society
- Raising awareness of stereotypes of their own country
- Breaking down stereotypes

Activity

This activity explores the concept of stereotypes the class has about their own country as well as the country of the Erasmus student. The class will discuss if these stereotypes are correct for themselves and the international student and reflects on the effect stereotypes can have on people and group dynamics.

Country Quartet

Time allocation
60 min

Age of participants
10 - 12 years old

Size of the group
25

Aim

- Teach children more about the local culture of different countries.
- Have the children interact with students from different countries.
- Break through some of the stereotypes that the children might have about certain countries.

Activity

This activity targetted at younger children focuses on a country quarter. The pupils receive a poster that they are supposed to fill with pictures of traditional cultural elements of the international students; from the capital, to the colour of the flag, to pictures of an important statue and traditional food, in order to challenge them to learn more about the different countries.



5. Go for it!

The Erasmus students visit the classroom! Stay present in the classroom but take a step back and allow the students to interact.

What is expected from the school during the event?

Make sure that the tasks are well defined and each person is aware of what is expected of everyone. Discuss with the school how involved they wish to be in the development of the activity. Agree upon the role of the ESN Coordinator, International student, and school teacher before, during and after the activity.

Teacher's role:

It is the best that you as the teacher take a more passive role in the activity. The strength of an Erasmus in Schools activity is that students are able to talk peer-to-peer and discuss topics in an interactive way. Some small support in the facilitation can be asked of the teacher and the ESN Coordinator.

ESN Coordinator's role:

Depending on the experience the international student has on facilitation experiences themselves and the language level of the local pupils, the ESN Coordinator can sometimes take the role of facilitator of the session. If they feel confident enough, they could do parts of this.

Things to keep in mind the facilitator should do:

- Introduce the visitors and the aim of the session
- Be a go-between between the school pupils and the international students.
- Helps in case of difficulties (understanding, discussions)

- Rephrases questions to students to make concepts clearer
- Integrate the pupils into the activity, induces them to ask questions, overcome their shyness

NOTE: We ask the teacher to stay present in the room during the session. Given that the ultimate responsibility for the pupils' care stays with the schools, it is better not to leave the international students with the pupils in order to prevent possible miscommunication.

6. Evaluation of the activity

It is important to determine how you plan to evaluate the activity. Discuss with the ESN coordinator and international student what is the role of the participant and the role of the teacher in the debriefing process of the activity.

The participant will include a short debriefing activity to wrap up the activity itself and define the learning outcomes with the pupils of your class.

We would, however, advise that you as the teacher, takes a bit of time to discuss what the pupils learned from the discussion with the international students. Given that the final responsibility to connect it to the learning objectives of your course, is with the teacher, we would advise that you take a bit of time at the end of the class or the beginning of the next class to discuss with the students what they learned from the discussion with the International student(s).

This can happen at the end of the class and involve the International students, or take place in the next class with the students alone. The ESN coordinator can host a short debriefing to wrap up and evaluate the activity.



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*Education is the
most powerful
weapon you can
use to change the
world’*

– Nelson Mandela

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