Education and training systems: eLearning programme 2004-2006 for integration of information technologies

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This report was written to fulfil the requirements set out in the European Parliament and Council decisions establishing the Community action programmes in the field of education (Socrates 2000-2006), vocational training (Leonardo da Vinci 2000-2006) and integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in education and training systems in Europe (eLearning 2004-2006).

Together, these programmes received more than **EUR 3 billion of Community funds**.

For the period 2007-2013, the various initiatives under these three programmes have been integrated under a single umbrella, the new Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). The decision to conduct a joint evaluation and to present this joint report follows the same line as this integration.

Recall that the **eLearning** programme aimed to support and further develop effective use of ICT in education and training. The objective was to contribute to high-quality education and to put the needs of the knowledge society into a lifelong learning context. The budget available for 2004-2006 was EUR 44 million, 45% of which was for twinning and networking schools via ICT (eTwinning). New organisational models were developed to create virtual campuses to add a virtual dimension to European cooperation between universities. Digital literacy was also promoted by encouraging new skills needed in an information-driven society.

Results of the evaluation: the eLearning programme was particularly effective at producing short-term results for organisations. More than 98% of the eLearning coordinators consulted considered that their project had made a positive impact on cooperation between institutions. Especially prominent institutional benefits included involvement in transnational cooperation, establishment of contacts and exchanges of good practice. Overall, the eLearning programme contributed very positively to the objectives of Education and Training 2010. It performed especially well on developing skills for the knowledge economy and ensuring access to ICTs. Between 67% and 75% agreed or strongly agreed that their project had produced higher standards of digital literacy.

eTwinning was particularly effective at providing an innovative and interesting model offering schools free access to the eTwinning portal, a partner-finding service, support for school-level projects, pedagogical advice and good practice. This approach proved popular with the target audience and highly cost-effective. It exceeded stakeholders' and participants' expectations.

The report also notes that Grundtvig (sub-programme of Socrates) and the eLearning programme had the strongest impact on tackling socio-economic disadvantage.

Lastly, the report notes that the eLearning activities have now been mainstreamed into the Lifelong Learning Programme (notably eTwinning in Comenius and virtual campuses in Erasmus).