



Academy of Central  
European Schools

# Kick-Off Meeting Senec, 27 September – 1 October 2010

## REPORT

Report by  
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**Interkulturelles Zentrum**

aces is an initiative of



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coordinated by



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# 1. Programme – aces Kick-Off Meeting

Monday, 27.09.2010	Tuesday, 28.09.2010	Wednesday, 29.09.2010	Thursday, 30.09.2010	Friday, 01.10.2010
Arrival of Participants	<p>9:00 <b>Official Opening</b></p> <p>10:30 <b>Coffee Break</b></p> <p>11:00 <b>Problem Solving Activity</b> in 7 parallel groups</p>	<p>9:00 <b>Ocean of Learning</b> Self-directed learning space on Conflict Resolution</p> <p>10:30 <b>Coffee Break</b></p> <p>11:00 <b>Project Teams Continued</b> Instructions for Community Task</p>	<p>9:00 <b>Get Started</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presentation of Community Task results</li> <li>- Introduction of workshop trainers</li> </ul> <p>10:00 – 13.00 <b>Workshops # 1</b> (see description for details)</p>	<p>9:00 <b>Next Steps</b> (PPP)</p> <p>9:30 <b>Closure of the Meeting</b> Setting the Sails!</p> <p>11:00 Excursions to Bratislava</p> <p>Departure of Participants</p>
<p>13:00 Lunch For those who arrive early</p>	<p>13:00 <b>Lunch</b> (part of activity)</p>	<p>13:15 <b>aces Group Picture</b> 13:30 <b>Lunch</b></p>	<p>13:00 <b>Lunch</b> <i>Leisure Team Offers</i></p>	<p>No joint lunch for participants</p>
<p><b>Registration of Participants</b></p> <p><i>Leisure Team welcomes participants</i></p>	<p>14:30 <b>First Meeting of Project Groups</b></p> <p>15:30 <b>Coffee Break</b></p> <p>16:00 <b>Case Studies/Scenarios:</b> Critical incidents in project implementation</p>	<p>Free afternoon and evening</p> <p>Voluntary City Rally in Bratislava</p>	<p>14:30 – 17:15 <b>Workshops # 2</b> (2nd round of same 10 workshops)</p> <p>17:15 <b>Break</b></p>	
<p>18:00 <b>First Contact</b></p> <p>Partner Lost and Found Corner</p>			<p>17:30 <b>Evaluation of Project Progress</b></p>	
<p>19:30 <b>Dinner</b></p>	<p>18:00 <b>Dinner</b></p>	<p>Self-organized dinner in town</p> <p><i>Leisure Team Offers</i></p>	<p>18:45 <b>Dinner</b></p>	
<p>Partner Lost and Found Corner <i>Leisure Team Offers</i></p>	<p>20:00 <b>Country Group Meeting</b> <i>Leisure Team Offers</i></p>		<p>20.30 <b>PARTY</b></p>	

## 2. Aims of the Kick-Off Meeting and Participants

### The aims of the aces Kick-Off-Meeting are:

- bringing together students and teachers from all aces projects 2010/2011 in order to get to know each other and the partner countries
- working on Conflict Resolution and Peace Education
- taking part in methodical workshops on Conflict Resolution, Project Management and various other topics (see the attached workshop descriptions)
- reflecting on project aims
- planning further steps for the common implementation of the project

### Working methods and language

When preparing the Kick-Off Meeting the facilitators and the organisers jointly thought of several keywords, standing for the related aims we had in mind. We hoped that by the end of the event the participants would feel

- well prepared to start the project implementation (**Readiness**),
- connected to their partners and to the aces-network (**Connection**),
- even more confident and motivated (**Empowerment**),
- inspired to try out new ideas, approaches...(**Inspiration**) and to have
- have a clearer picture of their international school project (**Clarity**).

According to these goals the programme was designed and sessions were carried out: We used a variety of working methods - such as plenary sessions, group work, outdoor activities, a living exhibition and workshops.

The composition of groups changed in the different working sessions. We had mixed groups of students and teachers, country teams, groups according to personal interests and, finally, groups involving the project partners only.

The settings allowed for a creative and dialogue-oriented interaction and a fruitful exchange between the participants. Furthermore, it encouraged a self-directed learning process. The common working language was English - with one exception: the meeting of country groups "(f)aces in the countries" offering space for students and teachers to get to know others from their own country.

**aces Tutors:** The intention to involve young aces members as assistants of the facilitators proved to be a success already at the previous events. Following the overall idea of lived participation, three students from former aces projects had the possibility to take over this responsible task: Olga from Moldova, Miruna Ioana from Romania and Luka from Montenegro.

**Pleasure & Leisure Team:** As the group of participants comprises people with different interests and needs, this team offered various activities during the free time and in the evenings, including different games, a city rally and much more. Tomáš, Tatiana and Martin from the Slovak Republic did their best to make it even easier for the students to get to know their peers, to interact and to feel "at home" (see the annex for more information).



Drum workshop

### Conference participants

Altogether approximately 250 participants attended the Kick-Off Meeting (see attached List of Participants)!

- Delegations from 103 schools involved in the 45 aces projects: 206 teachers and students from 15 countries (out of 104 project schools)

- Special guests from Austria and the Slovak Republic:
  - Mária Slugeňová, Director of the Department of Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation and Programmes, Ministry of Education (SK)
  - Maria Stiffelová, International Cooperation Division, Ministry of Education (SK)
  - Boris Marte and Knut Neumayer, ERSTE Foundation (AT)
  - Mari Steindl, Interkulturelles Zentrum (AT)
- Facilitator team and tutors, the teachers accompanying the tutors, the pleasure and leisure team and the additional workshop trainers
- Team of the aces coordination, including representatives from ERSTE Foundation, Interkulturelles Zentrum and VČELÍ DOM.

**Conference Venue:** Hotel Senec, Slnčné jazerá - sever, 903 01 Senec



The aces coordination team at the Kick-Off



The aces tutors

### 3. Impressions and Outcomes of the Meeting

#### Metaphor of the ship and the ocean throughout the programme

Of course the lake next to Hotel Senec inspired us when we came up with this image. The actual idea, however, was our impression that any international school partnership project can easily be compared to a ship discovering new lands and cultures. There are new smells and tastes and even treasures to be found. The trip is exiting and adventurous but there are always obstacles as well: sharks, rocks, possible strikes... In order to overcome these obstacles teamwork is of utmost importance, but some tools and good preparation are also necessary. Our vision was that by the end of the meeting the participants would feel that “their ships are ready to sail”, that they have everything they need to be able to implement their great project ideas.

Each day of the meeting had a different focus – a specific “motto” pointing out the different goals of the meeting.

#### Monday, 27 September 2010 – “*Ship Ahoy and Welcome Aboard*”

##### ▪ Coming Together and First Contact

After a warm “welcome aboard” and an introduction to the theme in the evening, the participants were invited to get into contact and to form “**Atoms and Molecules**” (groups of two and more pax). The activity “**Unchartered Land**” allowed them to deepen the contact within a group of eight by sharing stories and jointly mapping the course to real or imaginary places they would like to visit (see annex for details).

Quite a few of the participants speak several languages and were ready to be **language assistants**, supporting those who had difficulties to follow the programme in English. After dinner, the participants could have a rest after their long journey, benefit from the **various offers by the pleasure and leisure team** or enjoy a book at the **aces-library**, where – throughout the event - they could also comment on the event in the **Captain's Log**.



First Contact: Atoms and Molecules



Map of "Uncharted Lands"

## Tuesday, 28 September 2010 – “Create Solutions”

### ▪ Official Welcomes and Presentations

The official welcome didn't feel quite as official or formal, as all participants received their personal pillow to sit on. According to the topic of the **aces call 2010 “Create your solutions! Dealing with conflicts in schools and our surroundings”** the aim of the day was to acknowledge conflicts instead of ignoring them. Thus, the theme of the first day was “Create solutions”, stressing the fact that there is always more than one way to solve a conflict or problem and that “we have to be the change we want to see in the world”.

After being welcomed by the facilitators and braving the rain with a smile, the participants were introduced to the tutors who shared their expectations, what they were about to offer to the other students and teachers and why they happily volunteered to be this year's tutors. One of their tasks on this specific day was to interview the special guests that had joined us for the opening.



As the Kick-Off took place in Senec, we were honoured to welcome our **special guest Mária Slugeňová, Director of the Department of Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation and Programmes in the Slovak Ministry of Education**. Despite the serious topic of the call, she considered the involvement of so many participants to be a very positive sign as it proves that they don't look away but are ready to find solutions in managing potential conflicts in their everyday life.

Ms Slugeňová was followed by **Boris Marte from the Board of the ERSTE Foundation** who pointed out the importance of programmes such as aces as they allow us to get to know the other and to realize that we are all equal - no matter which nation we come from, which minority we belong to, which religious affiliation we have, etc. aces strongly opposes all sorts of prejudices and nationalisms. Instead, we believe that when working together we don't only learn from one another but can also jointly find sustainable solutions for the future.



Finally, **Mari Steindl**, director of **Interkulturelles Zentrum (AT)**, and **Danica Lacová**, executive director of **VČELÍ DOM (SK)** spoke on behalf of the coordinating team and shared the story of the “growth of aces” (see annex for details) which started in 2007 with 8 partner countries as an initiative of ERSTE Foundation coordinated by Interkulturelles Zentrum. In 2008, aces included 12 countries already, and it became clear that in view of further expansion it would be necessary to “take a ship as the boat had become too small.” Thus, in 2009 aces not only involved 15 countries in total but also other captains: the colleagues from VČELÍ DOM.

What makes aces so special, according to Ms Lacová, is teamwork, mutual learning and active participation. In this sense mutual partnership is also crucial for the cooperation of VČELÍ DOM and Interkulturelles Zentrum. The final message of Ms Steindl and Ms Lacová to the participants of the meeting was that every person is important when it comes to change the world, that we need to be creative to find solutions and that we should benefit from the unique opportunity to meet people from different countries and make new friends.



Mari Steindl, Interkulturelles Zentrum

Danica Lacová, VČELÍ DOM

Hermi Steinbach-Buchinger, facilitator

After a **quick sociographic exercise** using the four corners of the room to demonstrate who was present (how many teachers, students, aces-staff, guests/ boys, girls, men, women...) the participants were invited to form **special support groups**, to sit down on the floor, share some stories and make sure to keep an eye on the other group members throughout the conference – at least to exchange smiles once a day.

#### ▪ “Problem Solving Activity”: Overcoming obstacles

Where people work together conflicts arise on a daily basis. Sometimes they even have positive effects, e.g. when they contribute to clarifying issues. The challenge, however, is to deal with conflicts in a constructive and non-violent (both physically as well as verbally) manner. This is why, on Tuesday, the participants were confronted with possible conflicts that might arise within the framework of the implementation of an international school partnership project and various challenges that require teamwork and creativity.

After the break the participants were divided into seven big groups (two of which had the same task). After a first warm-up activity the participants were presented with their specific task that had to be tackled in fairly little time (for more information see the reports on [www.aces.or.at/materials&tools](http://www.aces.or.at/materials&tools) → “Methods”):

- **“The Million Euro Game”**: a simulation game. The participants were divided into 4 subgroups (representing 4 different branches of one enterprise) and had to build the same product in all 4 cities, design a manual for it and elaborate a marketing strategy. The challenge: They could only use the given resources and had to build the prototype in the separate groups without seeing the prototypes of the others. And they could only send representatives of the various subgroups to share ideas/outcomes and describe the design at a given time.
- **“Building Bridges”**: a simulation game. The group of 28 participants got split into six small groups, representing six villages. Two “villages” each had to build a common bridge in order to be able to cross the deep valley separating them. The challenge: They could only use the given resources, the 2 villages had to work separately and representatives of the village only had little time for sharing ideas.
- **“Mission Impossible”**: The group received a list of 12-14 tasks to fulfil in 60 minutes. Every

person had to do at least two; each task had to be done by a team of a minimum of 5 persons. The team in the same composition couldn't do more than one task and the completion of tasks had to be documented with a product (poster presentation, picture,...). The variety of tasks ranged from finding out more about Senec or the languages spoken in the group to taking a picture in front of a sight in Bratislava or making a dessert for everyone in the group.

- **“Explore Senec”**: This group took the mini-train to the Cultural Centre of Senec and had to talk to people on the way who could tell them more about the place. The group's task was to find out as much as possible about Senec and then to compile the results.
- **“Can you count up to 30?”**: A computer virus has infected the entire network of the school and the team is called to destroy the virus in order to save the school's computer system. 30 numbered markers or spots are randomly laid out in a set area, forming the keypad. The group had to work together to “count up to 30” and touch the indicated numbers in the given time.
- **“Blind sheep”**: The sheep (the participants) were told that they are in danger because of a wolf in the area. Because they were blind they had to totally rely on the shepherd to lead them home safely. The shepherd couldn't speak throughout the game; instead he/she had to create sounds and noises to guide them.

The described challenges were very different but all aimed at encouraging the participants to develop strategies for conflict solving. The general message was: There are always various solutions, and if you work together, you will find a bigger variety of possible solutions! Furthermore, the activities were supposed to foster assertiveness, empathy and creativity in problem solving.

After the problem solving activity everyone had time to reflect on his/her role throughout the process as well as the strategies that were chosen to tackle the respective challenge.



Blind Sheep

Building Bridges

Mission Impossible

Million Euro Game

### ▪ First Meeting in Project Groups

The aces projects form the heart piece of the overall programme. All project teams had been chosen by an international jury to be part of this year's aces cycle. Most of the project partners (two to three schools from different countries) had never met before the Kick-Off. In this sense, the first project team meeting in the afternoon was the official start of the actual cooperation. All members of these groups had spent the morning together in a bigger group with other project teams. We wanted to create a field of learning and experience in which all of them were part of the same process – even if they maybe didn't cooperate in the same subgroups.

1<sup>st</sup> Task: Discussion in the project group:

a) *“Who am I?” Introduce yourself to the others: Where do you live? Tell something about your family, your city, your hobbies,...*

b) *“How does the activity of the morning relate to our project?” Share one experience, one idea, one thought which could be helpful for the upcoming project work.*

2<sup>nd</sup> Task: Create a poster: write your project name on a poster

3<sup>rd</sup> Task: Our direction: think about the aims and objectives of your project and write them down - using the compass cards. Students make their card together and teachers make one card as a team of teachers.

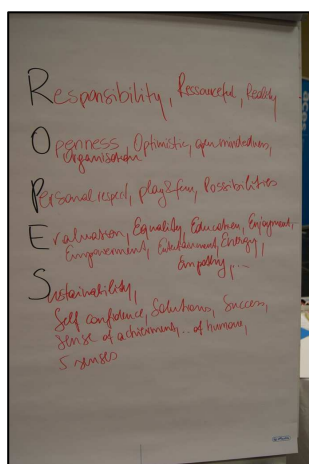
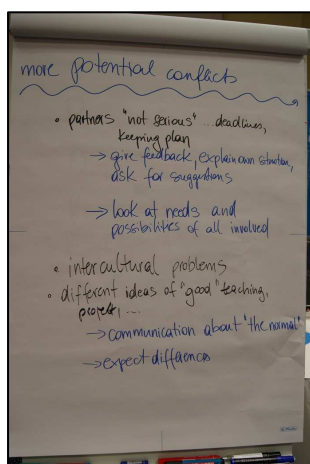
## ▪ Case Studies/Scenarios – Critical incidents in project implementation

Even during work on the projects about conflict management and peace education, conflicts may arise in the process of project development and implementation. This session aimed at raising awareness of different aspects in this process which may lead to conflicts and disagreements. The session was seen as part of the preparation of the project teams for the implementation of the aces projects in the following period of time.

The specific aims were to:

- raise awareness about potential conflicts and challenges in an international school project
- reflect on possible strategies in dealing with conflicts in this context
- stress the importance of good and open communication between the project partners.

The participants worked in the same group of approximately 30 people but were divided into two groups of students and two groups of teachers. Each group received a flip chart paper, markers and a case scenario, describing a conflict that – in a similar way – has already occurred in connection with an international school project. The group then worked in one of the four corners of the room. The participants had read the case and wrote down ideas related to the following questions:



After finishing the tasks, the groups rotated and were invited to read the other cases and see the ideas of the other groups and to possibly add their thoughts/comments/ideas. The debriefing took place in a plenary circle and the participants were asked what they considered to be surprising or interesting;

- *What happened in the story? Why did that happen?*

- *What would you do?*

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what other potential conflicts they could think of and how they would possibly deal with these conflicts.

At the end of the session the participants came together in their real life project teams and had a few minutes to discuss how they would integrate this learning into their principles of joint work (R.O.P.E.S) and how they would transfer this to others at home (see annex for handouts).

## ▪ Country Group Meeting – (F)aces in your countries

The evening activity was the chance to **meet the people from one's own country** in order to not only get to know each other but also to share and chat in the respective mother tongue.

The task for students and teachers in the country groups was to:



- benefit from each other's experience and do an energizer or name game
- introduce themselves to each other and briefly present the projects
- have a picture of the group taken – including a poster with the name of the country (on the left the group from Moldova)

## Wednesday, 29 September 2010 – “Find your Way”

After a short energizer Robin Gosejohann from ERSTE Foundation handed over the first aces-camera to the youngest participant, Lyubomir Ruzhinski from Bulgaria. Afterwards each project team received a camera for documenting the project work during the next months. But before that the participants had the opportunity to “sail” through the Ocean of Learning in order to find out more about conflicts and peace, to spend more time with the project partners in order to plan the next steps and then to get ready for the free afternoon.

### ▪ The Ocean of Learning

The Ocean of Learning was an interactive exhibition consisting of 20 different stations or “islands”. The participants formed groups of approx. five people and were invited to discover as many islands as they wanted to. At the port, they were given a map and a sailing guide (see the annex for details) to find their starting point and to decide on which islands they wanted to visit. The stations provided a combination of serious inputs and fun activities related to the topic, but in any case all participants had to get involved.

The activities were highly diverse. A few examples: At the station “**What is conflict?**” the participants shared their definitions of conflict. At “**The wall**” the participants had to think about how conflicts start and write possible reasons on the bricks forming the wall. In the “**Rehearsal for reality**”, a mini Forum theatre, they had the possibility to explore various strategies for dealing with a conflict between a child and its parents in a creative and constructive way. “**Reporting back to Chief Seattle**” allowed the group to reflect on its relationship with our planet and to look at peace from another perspective. “**Skills for conflict resolution**” invited them to think about the most essential skills and attitudes that a successful conflict resolver might need. When viewing the “**Gallery of Ancestors**” the participants were encouraged to think about the history of peace and the most important people related to it. They could borrow “**Living Books**” and interview them on their experience with conflicts and peace education. At the station “**Living Gallery**” they were confronted with old paintings and had to take on the posture of different personages and describe how they feel, what they would say in this position.



What is conflict?

The Wall

Living Gallery

Reporting to Chief Seattle

### ▪ Project Teams Continued

Back in plenary, the participants came together in project groups again and were asked to first collect impressions from the morning session and then think about a **message for aces**. The idea behind this activity was to point out that they are merely representatives of their schools. They were asked to send text messages to colleagues back home and to tell them to bring together as many students and teachers involved in the aces project as possible. They should think about the project and come up with a short message / a slogan for the people in Senec. Then, all together, they should build a “living statue”, showing the message to aces, take a picture and upload it on [www.teamworks.cc/aces](http://www.teamworks.cc/aces). By involving them in this short activity and showing the pictures the next morning, the community back home was made visible as well.



After sending the text message, the project groups in Senec also had to create a living statue and be sure to have a picture taken. The remaining hour was used to **charter the course of the school project** (see annex for details) in order to be sure that at least the representatives of the partner schools had the same understanding about the following: the crew (Who are the people involved?), the route (What is the aim of the project?), and the weather, rocks, sharks and beautiful islands on the way (Is there something to be changed?).

Finally the group picture was taken and the participants could benefit from the free afternoon, have a rest, go shopping or even do the city rally in Bratislava that had been organized by Tomáš and his team.

### Thursday, 30 September 2010 – “Loading the Treasure”

On Thursday it was time to “load the treasure”. After the pictures of the community task in the countries had been presented in plenary, the participants were ready to find out what the workshop facilitators had to offer them.

#### ■ Workshops on Peace Education and Conflict Resolution

10 workshops were hosted by trainers from very diverse backgrounds. The same workshops were offered twice (morning and afternoon). Thus, participants had the opportunity to attend two different workshops.

Short descriptions can be found on the following pages. Detailed information on each workshop and method is available on (downloads): [www.aces.or.at/materials&tools](http://www.aces.or.at/materials&tools) → **Methods**

#### **Workshop 1: Leaders and Leadership**

Trainer: Darko Marković, Inn.Side – People and Training, Serbia

How does leadership appear in a project team? Could you have a team without a leader? What kind of leader are you? What is your leadership style? What makes a good leader? Are leaders born or made? How can leaders help their teams to develop and reach outstanding results?

These are only a few questions the participants tried to explore in this learning adventure. The workshop provided a playful way of learning about leadership and hopefully inspired the participants to apply these new insights and tools in their aces projects.

#### **Workshop 2: Participation: Decision making & ownership**

Trainer: Hermine Steinbach-Buchinger, Agentur Steinbach, Austria

Participation.... is a real *challenge*, both for those who (want to?) participate in a decision-making process and for those who offer the opportunity to do so. *Participation....feels really good*, if all partners succeed to develop something together. You will never forget a situation like that! It makes you feel strong. Like being part of something bigger, able to create one little piece of the world. *Participation....can only be successful if all partners involved can act on the same eye level.*

The workshop provided the participants with interesting “hands on”- approaches to participation, offered the possibility to find out what participation feels like, by attending a short role play and provided some examples of tools and techniques, methods and exercises on how to cooperate.

### **Workshop 3: The fundraising cookbook: Recipes for successful fundraisers from Central European Schools**

Trainer: Borislava Daskalova, Bulgarian Network for Human Rights Education, Bulgaria

Fundraising sounds so serious and difficult, but it can actually be fun and easy. The workshop translated marketing terms into cooking metaphors, offering an opportunity to get to know the basics of fundraising using interactive methods and exercises. During this workshop, the participants had the opportunity to explore the most successful recipes for school fundraising. After looking at the cookbook, the group was divided into small teams who “cooked” “appetizers”, “salads”, “soups”, “main courses” and “desserts”. The cooking teams collaborated to create “appetizing” fundraising dishes, following the cookbook instructions. The culinary presentation was followed by a discussion and “easy to fundraise” tips.

### **Workshop 4: Council: The art of listening and speaking from the heart**

Trainers: Galit Hanien, Council Trainer, Center of Council Insight, Israel, and Itaf Awad, Council facilitator for women and peace process leader, Israel

During the workshop, participants had the opportunity to learn about and use the Council method which is applied in Israel and the USA in different fields with the focus on education, peace process and conflict resolution. The participants experienced the intentions of Council and talking from the heart, “the magic and healing of sharing stories”. They also learned about the experience of empowering listening skills and developing other kinds of response. They had the chance to comment and reflect on their experiences.

### **Workshop 5: Bullying**

Trainer: Esther Maria Kürmayer, Black Women Community, Austria

Bullying is a very common form of violence in schools. 1/3 of all pupils are either bullies or victims of various forms of bullying during the time they spend in school. The acts of bullying range from teasing and psycho-terror to different forms of physical violence. Teachers, pupils and parents are helpless in many of these situations, but still there are ways to stop it or to prevent it from happening. The best outcome is when school, parents and pupils work together. How this can be done most effectively was shown in interactive exercises, discussions and theoretical inputs during the workshop.

### **Workshop 6: Way to go! – Five strategies for dealing with conflicts**

Trainer: Katrin Lüth, free lance trainer and facilitator of learning, Austria

"It happened so quickly! Everybody was feeling fine and now there is a big fight going on! What are we going to do?!" As a starting point this workshop wanted to give the participants the chance to find out about some of the things that push their buttons, trigger conflict, and get them upset. Mostly though, the aim of this workshop was to introduce five approaches and strategies of how to deal with everyday conflicts.

### **Workshop 7: Let’s dance and understanding follows**

Trainer: Raduca Vojáčková, certified 5 Rhythms teacher, Czech Republic

The participants automatically took the most important tool for this workshop with them – their body. Inside the body, there is always movement, but outside it often seems to be static - stiff/frozen shoulders, hips, back. Putting the body in motion and keep moving; this was the first basic step. When enjoying the dance and surfing the waves of the music sometimes even the mood changes. The participants explored the many ways they can move or how much they could be inspired by the movement of somebody else. The group kept dancing - alone, in pairs, in groups. They aimed at finding the connection to each other and maybe even freedom, joy and love – the essence of each human being.

### **Workshop 8: Are you a cyber-bully?**

Trainer: Georgi Apostolov, Applied Research and Communications Fund (Safer Internet Centre), Bulgaria

How many computers do we need for training 25 people to prevent e-violence and cyber-bullying? The right answer is none. How much knowledge of computers should the participants have? Doesn’t matter! To a large extent, online behaviour mirrors offline actions. But not 100%! We tend to think that in front of a computer screen we are anonymous, that what is funny to us is funny for everybody on the Internet, that online postings cannot hurt anybody. This misconception can easily lead us to the behaviour of an online

bully. How can we teach ourselves and others “Netiquette”? It’s very simple – by playing! The participants of the workshop played together and discussed how to prevent online violence.

### **Workshop 9: How does the colour of the eyes matter?**

Trainer: Mitja Blažič, Informational centre LEGEBITRA, Slovenia

The scenario: In February 2010, two prominent American scientists published the results of a study titled “How does the colour of the eyes matter?” The outcome of the research is that “blue-eyed people compared with brown-eyed clearly demonstrate significant forms of underdevelopment in several fields.” This controversial statement was the kick-off for a social experiment in the workshop, during which the participants learned the details of the exciting study. They simulated real life situations where the line between good and evil was divided just by the colour of the eyes. They experienced and reflected the consequences of this division and gained knowledge, skills, competences, methods and tools to share these findings in our societies.

### **Workshop 10: A window to our feelings**

Trainer: Maja Uzelac, Centre for Culture of Peace and Non-violence, Croatia

The participants were briefly introduced to the process of communication. How? Through the process of communication itself, based on very relevant situations in our lives. The aim was to learn non-violent communication (NVC) which is like learning a foreign language. In most cases the first language we use is, as master for NVC M. Rosenberg says, the language of Jackal, or, as Maja Uzelac says, the language of Snake. Snake is a language of classification and judgment; it’s a very good language for telling people what is wrong with them. But what for? They might feel hurt. In the workshop the participants learned to distinguish between the different languages and experienced them in different role plays.



Workshop 3



Workshop 7



Workshop 4

### **▪ Evaluation of Project Progress**

After the second round of workshops the participants came together in their project groups again. First they shared impressions of the workshops, focusing on one moment of personal learning and an important aspect they should keep in mind when working together in the upcoming months. The next 40 minutes were used to look ahead to the project work and think about the next steps and meetings. Referring to their applications and workplan they were asked to even take possible changes into consideration that might have become interesting due to some experience at the Kick-Off (see annex for details).

### **▪ The Ocean-Theme Party**

In the evening everyone dressed up and made sure to have at least one accessory related to the motto of the party. Within a very short time, the pleasure and leisure team had managed to change one of the workshop rooms into a cosy pirate cave. Tomáš, Tatiana and Martin and DJ @ndree led through the evening. The participants were invited to attend several smaller activities such as pulling apples from a bucket filled with water, limbo dancing or the tombola. Of course everyone was free to either hit the dance floor or have a drink and a chat in the banquet area or to enjoy the surprise-goulash.



## Friday, 1 October 2010 – “Setting Sails”

Still being a bit tired from the party most participants seemed to be happy about the little massage that was supposed to be the energizer of the day. Then it was time to review the last days and to look ahead and “set the sails”.

### ■ The Next Steps

Reinhard Eckert, the project manager of aces, informed the participants of the most important details regarding the implementation of the international school partnership projects: the transfer of school grants, the final project reports, the documentation of the project work with the interactive website tools, project visits of the aces team, the upcoming events, the available support of Interkulturelles Zentrum and, last but not least, the new online resource [www.aces-tools.or.at](http://www.aces-tools.or.at)

For details on the next steps please see [http://doku.cac.at/next\\_steps\\_2010\\_presentation.pdf](http://doku.cac.at/next_steps_2010_presentation.pdf)

### ■ Reviewing the Kick-Off

After seeing the photos that captured some of the meeting’s “best moments” the participants were invited to take some time and reflect on the last week. Five large paper boats had been set up in the plenary room, each one representing one of the evaluation questions that related to the intended goals the facilitators and organizers had in mind when planning the event. On one side of the room there was a trash bin and on another side there was a fish net.

The participants were given five post-its and two sheets of A4 paper. On the post-its they were invited to refer to **evaluation questions** to be put on the boats:



**Boat 1 “Clarity”:** Do you have a clearer picture now about your project than you had before? If yes, what helped you to have a clearer look at your project?

**Boat 2 “Readiness”:** Are you ready to start your project work? If yes, which parts of the programme helped you to feel more prepared than you were before?

**Boat 3 “Connection”:** Do you feel connected to your project partners and the aces world? If yes, which moments of the Kick-off helped you to develop friendships and relationships to your project partners or other people?



**Boat 4 “Empowerment”:** Did this event contribute to increase your confidence and motivation? If yes, please tell us what in particular supported you in becoming more confident or motivated?

**Boat 5: “Inspiration”:** Was this conference an inspiring event for you? If yes, which particular situation or part did you find most inspiring?

The **fish net** was meant to “catch” the sheets of A4 paper on which the participants had written what they had learned or gained during the Kick-off. They were asked to scrunch up their paper into a ball and to throw it to the net.

The **large trash bin** encouraged the participants to indicate what they hadn't liked about the event on a sheet of A4 paper, to again scrunch up the paper into a ball and to then throw it into the bin.

**Short Summary of the outcome:** Nearly all participants indicated that they had a clearer picture of their project, were ready to get the project started, felt connected, empowered and inspired. In most cases this was due to the project team meetings, the workshops, special people, activities or "swimming in the Ocean of Learning".

Some personal statements: "Yes, we are ready to dive in." "You people are the inspiration. If we copy you, we will be successful. Nice work!" "I've met some new friends and I love them. I'm going to miss them and because of that I am more confident." "120% connected. Not with everybody, but all the same I am enriched with a lot of new and nice people in my life. My official connection with my partner is already a friendship now." "As much connected as I have never been before with any colleague at work for years." "We are the power rangers!" "Now I am the captain of my project."

When replying to the possible gains and learning achievements the participants mostly mentioned something related to the following: "communication" (23), "interculturalism and equality" (20), "friendship" (20), "teamwork" (17), "self acceptance and self-confidence" (12), "workshops" (10), "dealing with conflicts" (7), "language skills" (6) and "bullying facts" (6).

The trash bin, finally, contained notes such as "nothing, everything was fine" (30), "not enough spare time" (8), a particular workshop (8), weather (4), the distance between hotels (3), "I don't know." (3), "not enough outdoor and physical activities" (3) and the "closed aqua park" (3). One participant mentioned "too close contact with others during some games (atoms and molecules)" and another participant indicated: "I wish I had more time to sail the Ocean of Learning. It was a smart event, but I couldn't see all of the islands because of the free afternoon I've chosen (Bratislava)."

#### ▪ Closure and Excursions



After the evaluation it was time to benefit from the energy in the big group and to celebrate the last moments together by getting together in a circle and jointly dancing the "Specknerin" before, finally, saying good-bye in all our different mother tongues.

The buses arrived at 10:30 to take the participants to Bratislava. Some of them already had to head off to catch their train, plane or bus back home. The majority, however, decided to either take the boat tour or go on one of the city tours.