

School project on the “Situation of Minorities Through Individual Lives”

Hungary/Germany

https://tk.hu/docs/palyazatok/aktiv_allampolg_egesz_kicsi.pdf

DESCRIPTION

Launched in 2011, the joint project between the Kossuth Lajos Secondary School of Economics and Human Studies of Tatabánya (now Tatabányai Szakképzési Centrum Kossuth Lajos Gazdasági és Humán Technikum) and the Karl-Kessler Realschule of Aalen, aimed to **present the European citizen through exploring the lives of people who have managed to come closer to the ideal of a common Europe.**

In this project, Hungarian-German “tandems” of 2 students established personal contact with Germans who had been living in Hungary for a long time and Hungarians who have spent decades living in Germany, to learn about their life stories and situations.

The students also met the representatives of “Hungarian Germans” who lived in Hungary until the end of World War II and were then expelled or deported from the country due to their German origin, and they also studied the situation of the German minority living in Hungary.

The work was facilitated by the fact that members of both target groups live in both towns, Aalen and Tatabánya. In their research the students also focused on understanding how these people mastered the language of the other nation. The project placed particular **emphasis on the topic of active citizenship**, as the research also sought to find out to what extent the **minorities living in Germany and Hungary had integrated.**

Before starting the project, the students prepared the interviews and the follow-up work in pairs. After this preparation, students had to stay with a foreign family for 10 days.

The **overall objectives** of the project were to **learn about:**

- the **life stories and situations of people living in another country;**
- the **situations of minorities living in these countries**, with special **emphasis on how certain historical events influenced people’s lives.**

IMPACT

The **foreign language skills of students improved immensely** as they could learn in a native environment, from native interviewees and partners. Additionally, they also developed **greater tolerance, acceptance of each other, as well as the importance of respecting different cultures.** As a result, they are capable of **cooperating with people from other cultural backgrounds**, equipping them to **contribute to the development of a democratic society.**