



## The E-LOCAL Project: a Virtual Travel Across Cultures and Languages

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### Abstract

This paper illustrates the E-LOCAL project, abbreviated from Electronically Learning Other Cultures and Languages, a multilateral, two-year project funded by the European Union that belongs to the Lifelong Learning programme, and precisely to the sub-programme Key Activity 2 for Languages ([www.e-localproject.eu](http://www.e-localproject.eu)). The main goal of E-LOCAL is to promote multilingualism and LWULT languages, which is short for 'less widely used and less taught languages', by creating original and uniform learning tools and materials for six languages and cultures: Dutch (Belgium), Finnish (Finland), Hungarian (Hungary), Italian (Italy), Polish (Poland), and Portuguese (Portugal). The partnership includes six universities and three secondary schools. The target group consists of school pupils and university students of the nine partner institutions, that is young people that are likely to experience mobility abroad.

While the Bologna process has positively contributed to student mobility, which is presently part of the mission of Europe's higher education institutions, there is consent that much remains to be done in this respect. Undoubtedly, language learning and culture appreciation are crucial factors in order to foster both mobility and integration. In this perspective, the E-LOCAL project, which focuses on building the student's competence in intercultural communication, promotes successful mobility experiences by also offering a precious support to Comenius participants and a valid alternative to EILC for Erasmus students. In the E-LOCAL platform, cultural patterns are presented alongside with linguistic components, and each target language and culture is intended as an individual, virtual experience of discovery for the student. Also, a great attempt has been made to create the methodology in a way that it would entail a sense of innovativeness. The paper will discuss in detail the key values of the project, and the culture-specific approach to building competence of cultures that are not in the mainstream of general awareness.