

# SCENARIOS

## FOR I ACT ACTIVITIES @ SCHOOL

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To help teachers implement I ACT, our team has designed a set of examples that come as an illustration and a complement to the I ACT@school guidelines. Each example is set in a different country, in a different kind of school and deals with a different issue. We have used all our experience of international education to provide you with what we feel are relevant, concrete and inspiring applications of the I ACT action at school.

This is an initial set of activities; we will monitor during the coming months what happens in schools which have decided to participate in I ACT and enrich this set with field-tested I ACT projects. Do not hesitate to tell us your project story!

## SCENARIO 1: ROBERT AND HIS PUPILS ON A MELTING PLANET

Issue: A planet at risk

Topic: The rising of sea level

Robert teaches natural sciences to a group of 15 year olds in a secondary school situated in the Netherlands. They are attracted to the I ACT project because of its open range of networking and thematic opportunities within a common pedagogical framework. The other reason is the fact that the region and its people are getting increasingly concerned about global warming, water management, unusual heat and the alarming prospect of seeing the sea level rise. The Investigation phase of the I ACT methodology will be facilitated by the national focus on the issue and the availability of resources. The class is divided into 3 groups, one for online information, one for TV documentaries and one on magazines and newspapers. The three groups also involve their families in the information collecting process. Very interesting interviews give new lights to the issue when parents and grand parents share their experience and memories.

After about three weeks, Robert and his pupils switch to the analysis phase and define the areas that are most affected by climate change and choose to focus their Change and Transfer phases on one of them, because of its close link to their local community: the melting of the pole and consequently the rise of the sea level. The group also decides to organise an action day in March 2008, exactly half way between through the international Polar Year.

At this point the pupils express the wish to link up with another school situated on an island to share information and make common proposals for a better future. A partner is found in Gotland using the I ACT group network. Teachers and pupils agree to meet online once a week via videoconference. Communication language is English. Both classes compare, analyse and together agree on a series of measures which might help to slow down the pole melting process through a set of strict measures at local level.

On 15 March 2008 they start a full collaborative action week, demonstrating that their measures are applicable at school, at home and in their region. Once the action week is completed, Robert, his partner and a teacher of mathematics design a probability estimate and visualise the potential difference via Google Earth to prove that the measures proposed by the pupils are realistic and can be applied in any other region to make a greater impact.

## SCENARIO 2: ANNA AND THE BEES

Issue: Biodiversity

Topic: To be or not to be without bees!

Anna teaches English to a group of 17 year olds in Paris. Her pupils mainly live in the suburbs and they have almost no link with nature. She has great difficulties getting her pupils interested in learning English in a genuine communication context, and even more difficulties involving them in an issue to explain the concept of biodiversity and some related associated with it.

First of all, Anna joins the "I ACT for our Common Future" group on Facebook and very quickly finds a partner school in Spain. She naturally liaises with the science teacher who speaks quite good English and together they agree to work on biodiversity issues, which are part of his curriculum. They organise how their classes would work on the topic.

During the first four weeks, the pupils try to get a clear understanding of biological diversity through exploring their local community in the vicinity of their schools. This is achieved by personal observation and investigation. The classes take digital photos, record information on maps and create hot spots on Google Earth. They try, with the help of the science teacher and local nature groups, to identify the different places, birds, animals and insects that they observed. The pupils in both schools create a Web-report of their local environment in English on a blog set up by one of the teachers. The pupils then research on the Internet the meaning and importance of biodiversity and try to relate their findings to this concept through the blog.

The science teacher in Spain develops some questions, which aim to help the pupils to understand the differences between the environments around the two schools and to help them to the relationships between different species. Important factors like climate, altitude, land use, pollution are discussed by pupils through the blog.

The topic "threatened species" is introduced in both schools and both teachers choose to look at bees because all pupils can associate with them in their daily life. The trigger for this activity came from an article by Professor Gordon Frankie, famous entomologist at Berkeley University, in California, where he claimed that "a world without bees is a world without chocolate..."

The next step is to understand why and how bees are vanishing, to recognise the link between bees and chocolate, and what food chains are about. Beyond chocolate, the pupils soon grasp the fact that a threat to a species is a threat to their life.

Now fully aware of the dangers linked to the vanishing of bees, the pupils in both schools decide to take action, through the I-ACT programme they create short guidelines in French, English and Spanish for their local communities on how to create a small bee garden on a balcony and therefore contribute to preserve chocolate! These documents are agreed and finalised by the classes.

The end of the school year is at hand, time has come to share what they have found out and achieved with the rest of the school and the local community. Both partners agree to organise an information day about bees at school, which consists of:

- An exhibition in the school entrance
- A talk from an expert entomologist from a nearby university
- Two canteen menus: one in a world with bees and one in a world without bees

The classes give out the leaflets they produced to other pupils for them to take home to their parents. The classes create a joint press release, which they send to local newspapers and radio station. Journalists become interested in the local story and follow it up, leading to local stories in the media. A local horticulture company decides to sponsor the bees project and help the pupils promote their 'balcony gardens'.

Throughout the activity pupils reflect by writing a personal diary. The teachers encourage them to consider that there are many complex issues involved in biodiversity, but that individuals and groups can make a difference.

### SCENARIO 3: DAVID AND HIS PUPILS LIGHTEN UP THE STREETS

Issue: Living together

Topic: Safe environments

David teaches history and geography in a lower secondary school in the United Kingdom. His pupils come from many different countries and his school is situated in a crime-ridden suburb. He joins I ACT because it offers him a chance to empower his pupils and eventually make a positive change in the neighbourhood.

First of all, the pupils investigate the connections their families have, where did they come from - themes like immigration, emigration and things that affect where people live - like war and peace. They also investigate the importance of location - why some places are attractive to live in and why others are not. At the same time, the pupils research the history and geography of their city to understand what makes it 'tick'.

A debate about the future of their community leads to discussion of the issues that concern them most: anti-social behaviour and safety. The pupils decide to do something about it.

They explore around their school where the areas that they feel safe and unsafe are located and what influences their feelings about safety. They discover that the quality of street lighting is a major issue in their community so they decide to further research it.

They carry out a survey of the street lighting in their area and present their results in the school to other pupils. The class contacts the local police and town hall to get hold of crime statistics. The pupils discover that there are some relationships between safety, crime and street lighting and present their findings to the Mayor and local community. They invite the local TV station people who come along to the school.

The town hall decides that they will look at how they can improve the street lighting in the local area.

The pupils advertise their project results on the Web. Other schools that want to do a similar project contact them. This is why the pupils with their teacher produce guidelines which others can use to I ACT.

The pupils discuss their project and realise that that they can make a difference but that working and living together in the community is about taking part and making their voices heard. I-ACT is also about sharing findings and outcomes

## SCENARIO 4: BUKET AND HIS PUPILS PLANT TREES

Issue: Climate Change

Topics: Deforestation – Greenhouse effect

Buket lives and teaches geography in Turkey. He knows that 27 percent of Turkey's territory is covered with forests. But about 50 percent of the forest areas is degraded and this is why, the Turkish Ministry of Environment and Forestry has launched a national mobilization campaign in order to rehabilitate degraded forests and increase the forest cover to 30 percent of the total land of the country.

Buket has heard of the ENO network pledge for tree planting and the United Nations call for action. He feels that the "I ACT" project framework will help him to participate in the campaign, make a difference in his country and join a network of other schools.

For a couple of weeks, Buket's pupils harvest information via the Internet, books and documents issued by the Turkish government to finally grasp the importance of the greenhouse effect on global warming, not only in Turkey but also in the world.

Together, they analyse the situation and envisage different ways to contribute. Then they decide to focus on the national campaign and increase the number of trees in their area and region. This is when they enter the phase when they realise that changes will be much more effective if they could get as many schools as possible to plant one tree per pupil involved. They work out a solid action plan and Buket contacts all the schools in his region and all the schools in his already running European project. He contacts the Ministry of Education, explains about I ACT and applies to be among the schools to get and distribute seedlings for the 2008 campaign.

Together with his pupils, he prepares a presentation for all the schools involved and all together they plan to plant the trees during a ceremony organised with local authorities and parents on the world day of environment.

Finally Buket and his pupils write their own "declaration" in which they encourage others to follow. The text is published on the school's web site, the I ACT blog, and on the ENO web site in different languages with the help of Buket's colleagues.