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**ЦЕНТЪР
ЗА РАЗВИТИЕ
НА ЧОВЕШКИТЕ
РЕСУРСИ**



**VICHO GRANCHAROV SECONDARY SCHOOL
GORNA ORYAHOVITSA
BULGARIA**

LIVELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME A COMENIUS PROJECT - MULTILATERAL PARTNERSHIPS



**TEACHING INNOVATIVELY
(WITH FOCUS ON ICT) AND ITS IMPACT ON
THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

01.08.2011 - 31.07.2013

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ROMANIA
COLEGIUL NATIONAL DE INFORMATICA
„TUDOR VIANU"
BUCHAREST

The third meeting in 2012 –

04.06-08.06.2012

Stockholm, Sweden



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It is always interesting...



It is always interesting to observe what preconceived notions we take to most of the things we do, including the places we have the fortune to visit. Whether positive or negative, these preconceptions, usually based on a mishmash of articles read, opinions culled from other people or unverifiable rumours of uncertain source, will colour one's experience. It is therefore a tad embarrassing to admit that my perception of Sweden came from two sources, one more unreliable and fictional than the next. One was a favourite book I had read when I was a child – quite an

accomplishment, since it was one door stopper of a book – namely Selma Lagerlöf's *The wonderful adventures of Nils in Sweden*. Her version of Sweden, though highly idealized and full of talking animals – it is a children's book, after all – still managed to encompass what it means to be Swedish, illustrating characteristic attitudes interspersed with traditional stories and myths. The second source, also fictional, is a series of detective novels written by Henning Mankell centered on Kurt Wallander. This latter filter boasts an even more tenuous connection to Sweden, as I had become acquainted with the written novels because of their BBC adaptation starring Kenneth Branagh. The Wallander works, both novels and tv series (mind you, there is also a Swedish tv series, as it should be) also do a very good job of revealing something about what it means to be Swedish and what Sweden is all about, from wondrous landscape, to social issues, to a determinate drive towards tolerance and multiculturalism.

In my defense, I had also heard and/or read what probably most other people had, namely that Sweden, as one of the Nordic countries, is one of the best places to live in Europe, if not in the entire world. The Nordic countries never failed to appear on any surveys or lists analyzing quality of life, or democracy, or social protection.

So you can imagine that, even though I was not expecting a mythical land filled with milk, honey and unicorns, I was definitely anticipating a superlative experience, when given the chance to be part of the team of teachers involved in the Comenius project.

It should be better, perhaps, if, after a convoluted beginning, I mention I don't intend to follow a chronological structure in my rapid recollections of having visited Stockholm. I'll have to resign myself to writing a couple of disjointed impressions, since attempting an exhaustive approach would definitely merit a novel treatment.

Another thing that characterizes most tourists and visitors to other countries – even those, like ourselves, who went mostly for work related purposes – is a state of quasi-perpetual wonder. Anything that a Swede might consider just part of the daily grind is to me – and other visitors, no doubt – a reason to stop, stare and ponder. Example in point: after arriving on a late Sunday afternoon, and enjoying a rather first startling contact with the city, as it was raining and cold – after having just minutes prior been sunny and pleasant – and thus sending me into a temporary panic regarding my choice of clothes (as my luggage was full of summer, not autumn items) on Monday morning we all assembled in the lobby and prepared



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to head for the school. Naturally, the first highlight of the morning was meeting the other teachers in the project, a reunion even more touching in the case of people we had previously befriended in Italy.



Once assembled, we headed towards the subway station, and waded through throngs of people, and construction equipment – since, as luck would have it, the subway was being renovated - . And this totally mundane part for anyone living in the capital was a completely novel and interesting experience for me. The trains crisscrossing the capital, both under and above ground, are a wonder unto themselves, and definitely make it a lot easier to get around in a city built on 14 islands. I still remember what one of our Swedish hosts

said – and I’m paraphrasing – that is you are always on an island in Stockholm, and you are forever crossing bridges, even if you don’t realize it. Another thing that is likely to stay with me is the nickname given to Stockholm, “the Venice of the North”, which I had never heard before.

The subway was our go-to means of transport for most of the days of our stay, and another special moment was taking the Blue line, the most recent addition to the network of subway tunnels, which had to be dug under all the other ones. Having to descend multiple levels did bring to mind the whole “descent into hell”, minus the unpleasant, hellish part, obviously. In fact, another thing which struck me as great was the fact the subway was host to works of art – mural paintings, photography, statues – which definitely made the daily commute much more enjoyable. Another tidbit that I will probably remember for a while is that, because of the previously mentioned works of art, the Stockholm subway system is considered the largest gallery exhibition in the world. And all accumulation of art started as early as the 1950s, simultaneous to the construction of the subway system!

Not that the wonders ceased as soon as you set foot above ground. We were lucky enough – mostly due to the very well organized program created by our Swedish hosts – to have the time and the opportunity to visit a lot of striking sights. We went on a bus tour of the city – highly appropriate, since the weather was more inconstant than inconstancy itself – and were given the highlights, such as the numerous museums of the capital city, the house where Alfred Nobel was born, the Royal Palace and a general idea of what the characteristic architecture might be, as well as a deluge of interesting information about Stockholm and the people who live here.

On 6th of June, the National day of Sweden, we were able to visit the unbelievably crowded Royal Palace, and witness not just its wonders, but be only inches away from the soldiers and horses of the Royal Guard. The most surreal part of the experience was how friendly they were, and willing to talk to tourists, and probably answer the same questions over and over again. Friendliness also came into play when, on the very same day, we visited the Skansen museum, an open air museum and zoo, host to traditional Swedish houses and



illage life recreations. Because it was the national day, everyone was there, making for a very crowded park, and yet, people were extremely relaxed, polite and mindful of each other's personal space. There were so many buildings and traditional houses and gardens to visit that probably we would have needed at least 2 whole days to cover the entirety of Skansen. What we did manage to see was more than enough, however, to give us an inkling into the Swedish way of life. My favorite building was probably the one of a traditional rural school, an even more endearing sight since you could see the old-fashioned desks and old books and maps used to teach kids in an undersized classroom.

It was also nice to get a closer look at some of the sights spotted from the tour bus, such as the visit to the Stockholm City Hall, the venue of the Nobel Prize banquet. The guided tour was extremely informative, and it was quite interesting to see how each of the main rooms in the building had been designed around a certain typical Swedish architectural style. The story of how the impressive main hall, called The Blue Hall, actually does not have a single blue decoration, is a good explanation to why all buildings are works in progress amenable to changes.



On Thursday evening we went on a lengthy boat ride in and around Stockholm, which definitely made me realize that the city does indeed live up to its "Venice of the North" moniker. We ended the visiting spree on Friday on a high note, by taking a quick look around the Vasa museum which displays the only almost fully intact 17th century ship that has ever

been salvaged, the 64-gun warship Vasa that sank on her maiden voyage in 1628. To say that standing in that museum, unbelievably close to an

impressive warship, was reminiscent of being in a *Pirates of the Caribbean* film is to definitely sell the experience short.

Coming back to the mundane, yet extraordinary experiences for tourists, there were several other small moments that made this an unforgettable episode in my life. I got to wonder the streets of the city late at night, together with my fellow teachers, and I never stopped being amazed by the fact that the last rays of the sun seemed to die only after 11 o'clock at night. It was on one of these wondering strolls through the city that I noticed what seemed to be an owl perched atop the roof of a building. This sighting led to a debate between myself and Iulia – who needs no introduction – on whether the owl was real or not. A subsequent sighting of another owl, this time on top of a public lighting pole, intensified the debate, and only seeing it the following day, in plain daylight, convinced us both that both owls were, indeed, for decorative purposes, and probably meant to confuse poor tourists like ourselves.

Jumping again back in the chronology of our visit, it was also nice to visit the Swedish partner school, and see many similarities to the Norwegian schools I had the fortune to visit during a previous Comenius project. It was definitely a bitter sweet moment for me to browse the well-stocked shelves and pleasant ambiance of the school's library –which actually had students in it, busy reading, quite a sight for the sore eyes of a teacher who is unhappy kids don't like to read anymore - and to discover non-other than the book that had



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given me the first impression of Sweden, The wonderful adventures of Nils in Sweden, all those years before the advent of the internet and having a world of knowledge just a few clicks away. It felt like coming full circle in a small, yet satisfying way, as if fulfilling a childhood dream of visiting the land of the book.

Coming to the end of this rather meandering compilation of impressions, I realize I have said little about the work we did there. I know my fellow Romanian teachers, Cristina and Corina, did a wonderful job covering the work aspect in their personal impressions, so I feel like I can perhaps be forgiven for the oversight. If I were to sum up my visit to Stockholm in just a handful of words, inspirational and life altering would probably be in the lead. Becoming part, if only for a little while, of the city, and being allowed, however briefly, in the midst of the Swedish people, thanks to our hosts, does truly change one for the better. It is another point in favour of continuing our work on the Comenius project, the current and the future ones, since it is clear through them we can achieve much more than just creating and improving teaching methods and activities. Perhaps in the long run, we can improve people as well, and make Europe a smaller place when it comes to barriers and boundaries of all kinds.

Andreea Dumitru , English teacher at Colegiul National de Informatica "Tudor Vianu", Bucharest, Romania



Our journey began on a June morning with the sun rushing towards its unavoidable ascent on the sky, and its early rays caress our cheeks tenderly. I say this because I had to get up at 4 am. Our plane was due to take off around 6. It was the first time I was visiting Sweden - Stockholm. I left with a suitcase bigger than me because I was scared of the changing weather that the weather sites announced. After a 6 hour flight, including a stopover in Zurich, I arrived in Stockholm. I had carefully read the indications provided by the partners in Sweden

and I knew I had to exchange money at the foreign exchange in the airport and then we would find the train that took us near the hotel. After a journey of 30 minutes by train, we reached the hotel. At that moment I realized that the weather in Sweden defies all consistency: though being sunny just minutes before, it had started to rain.

Stockholm is a fantastic city with immense buildings in warm colors that seem unfriendly and cold initially, but later you discover the impressive architectural details. The town seemed absolutely gorgeous, with narrow streets, souvenir shops and candy sprinkled here and there which gave it a distinct stylish air. I felt I had never breathed a cleaner air compared to all the cities I had visited before.

Our hosts? Perfect hosts, people with whom we have found that friendship knows no age or nationality. We noted that they appreciate punctuality and tend to be people on the quiet side – especially compared to people like ourselves, apparently noisier and more extroverted. I really appreciated the fact that the food is very healthy and the cheese tastes fantastic. I noticed that Hässelbygårdsskolan is where cultures around the world reunite and coexist in perfect harmony. I immediately imagined a multicultural class! Workshops were held both in Hässelbygårdsskolan and the Education Ministry building in Sweden. These workshops were attended by all partners except partners in Czech Republic. I was impressed with the



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workshops, divided into humanities and sciences, but also by the live demonstrations with students present.

By attending these courses I discovered new ways of planning lessons, and new assessment methods.

In our free time we took a bus tour of the city (an excellent idea because it was raining very hard), and we visited the City of Stockholm and the Vasa Museum.

I was impressed by the tall buildings, the air of restlessness and the feeling of perpetual motion pervading the atmosphere of the city, especially when contrasted with the calmness and good nature of the people. The vegetation in Sweden leads to some striking combinations of colors: the green forests and the preternaturally blue sky with occasional touches of gray are reflected in crystal clear waters.

Fortunately, whenever I want to revisit this lovely experience, all I have to do is browse through my photo album, full to the brim with all these wonders which encompass unforgettable stories!

Cristina Issa, French teacher at Colegiul National de Informatica "Tudor Vianu", Bucharest, Romania

The adventure of a computer science teacher in Sweden



The word defining that day was definitely anxiety. Why was I so nervous? It was certainly not the first time I was leaving the country. It was true, however, that it was the first time I was headed towards the Nordic countries. And here I was, at the airport, with the rest of the project's team members, waiting for takeoff.

Our journey was uneventful and, after a stopover in Zurich, we landed on Arlanda Airport, located in the north of the city. This is one of the main bases for Scandinavian Airlines, a company

whose flights connect many European and international locations to Stockholm. We took a very fast travelling train, the Arlanda Express, which connects the airport to Stockholm's Central Station (Stockholm-Centralen).

It was raining a little when we left the station, but you could still feel the cold pushing through, although it was practically summer. My anxiety was completely gone. I found myself on foreign land, and my mind was currently preoccupied with the significant differences in temperatures between the two countries.

The hotel was unbelievably close to the hotel, strategically chosen as it was also near the subway station, where most subway lines converged.

The very same evening I met the other partners involved in the project, teachers from Bulgaria, Spain, Italy, Poland and Turkey. We had a chance to talk and exchange impressions about travelling to Sweden. We left then on a short expedition, meant to reveal the city, one of the most beautiful cities in Northern Europe, to us. Stockholm has a continental air to it, as well as cosmopolitan, much more than other Nordic cities, such as Helsinki or Oslo. There are



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definitely many historical sights to visit, and everything is seemingly permeated by cleanliness, order and civilization.

The next day marked the start of discovering a new way of organizing education. We took the subway headed towards the partner school together with our Swedish hosts. We crossed the city both under and above the ground, thus having the chance to admire the views from atop the bridges that crisscross the capital of Sweden.

The teachers at the partner school were waiting for us, and led us towards the festivities' room, so that we could begin the activities for the project. What followed was a week full of presentations and teaching centered activities, involving all the teachers present, as well as selected students from the Swedish school.

Teachers from all the participating schools gave demonstrations of how to create and teach a modern class, using ICT and online evaluation tools. I was impressed by each of the presentations, and by the distinct way of presenting the educational softwares created by the project partners, most of which covered a wide variety of school subjects.

Our host took on a guided tour of the school (Hasselbygardsskolan), which consists of several buildings with modern, well lit and welcoming classrooms, each containing the absolutely necessary modern equipment for carrying out teaching activities at a satisfactory level (desks and chairs for each student, playgrounds and green areas in the school yard, as well as boards displaying the works of the students of the school, ages between 6 and 15). All these characteristics signified, at least for me, the active involvement in school life of the local community and authorities.

The "Swedish Experience" was given its final touches by the very welcoming people, perfect hosts who sacrificed an entire week of their own time so that their guests would feel at ease and be able to discover for themselves a city built on 14 islands, surrounded by waters so clean you could swim in them, or fish, or go on a boat ride. One of the main attraction we visited was the main landmark of Stockholm, namely the City Hall (Stadshuset-a red brick building) built in 1923 on the Kungsholmen shore (Kings' Island), which achieved worldwide renown as the place where the Nobel gala takes place.

The days of our stay there went by perhaps too fast, but we still have from this wonderful experience the friendships with our fellow teachers, and the promise to continue working for the successful completion of our project ("Teaching innovatively – with focus on ICT – and its impact on the quality of education").

*Corina Ciobanu, Computer Science teacher at Colegiul National de Informatica "Tudor Vianu",
Bucharest, Romania*





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TURKEY

HASAN HUSEYIN AKDEDE ANADOLU OGRETMEN

Gudul, ANKARA

The third meeting in 2012 –

04.06-08.06.2012

Stockholm, Sweden

Impressive Days With The Friendly Blowings of North Winds



Country of beautiful people and places.. It was a very nice experience to meet in Stockholm a magnificent city which fascinates people with its beauty and history. Our friends Helena, Heydar, Elham, Ylva and Elisabeth and the others were very hospitable. The meeting was fruitful in terms of connecting each other and sharing useful experiences. We as Turkish group again feel that we are very lucky to meet this group and share fascinating times each other.

Thank you very much for hosting us - such a beautiful and hospitable country and school...





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Jakub

BULGARIA

Vicho Grancharov Secondary School

Gorna Oryahovitsa

The third meeting in 2012 –

04.06-08.06.2012

Stockholm, Sweden

**WONDERFUL AND UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS DURING THE 3RD TRANSNATIONAL
MOBILITY IN SWEDEN**



An extraordinary hospitality from the Swedish colleagues, a well planned program for work and leisure participants in mobility. During our stay in Stockholm we witnessed the celebration of the National Day of Sweden on 6th June. My colleagues and I joined the celebrations at Skansen open - an air museum, where we saw many flags, folk dances, music and speeches. We witnessed and participated in the celebrations around the Royal Palace with the royal family

It was very exciting...

We would like to thank our hosts for their hospitality!

*Vanya Hristova –
IT teacher from Vicho Grancharov Secondary School, Bulgaria*





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SWEDEN
Hässelbygårdsskolan
Stockholm

The third meeting in 2012 –

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Stockholm, Sweden





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SPAIN
IES NEWTON-SALAS
VILLANUEVA DE LA TORRE

The third meeting in 2012 –

04.06-08.06.2012

Stockholm, Sweden

IMPRESSIONS FROM STOCKHOLM



The weather was a little bit cold and rainy when we arrived, but we had a warm welcoming at Hässelbygdsskolan school. We enjoyed a show played by the students, who sang and danced for us. It was a pleasant surprise for Elena and me!

Work Sessions were very interesting because we could talk with colleagues from Rumania, Poland, Bulgaria, Turkey and Italy about common problems and issues we deal with in our everyday work. We could also see live teaching activities from all those countries.

We could also enjoy the National Day at Skansen, the world's oldest open-air museum (it has a park, an aquarium and a zoo showing Scandinavian wildlife). And the entire Royal Family passed by in their carriage right in front of our eyes!!! We were astonished!



This cosmopolitan city is full of energy and everyone seemed to enjoy whatever he or she was doing. We liked the visit to the City Hall very much (our guide was wonderful), Vasa Museum (dedicated to the world's only standing 17th-century naval warship) and the marvelous old city: Gamla Stan.

One of the best ways to see this city is by boat. Our kind Sweden hosts arranged one of these trips and we could travel between the islands belonging to the



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Stockholm archipelago. It was an unforgettable experience!!

It was possible for us to taste the typical Sweden food during all the week: delicious fishes, meats, salads, cheeses, etc.

The best was smoked salmon (lax).

We would like to thank our hosts (Ylva, Elisabeth, Helena, Elham...) for their hospitality.





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POLAND
II LICEUM OGOLNOKSZTALCACE IM. MIKOLAJA
KOPERNIKA

CIESZYN

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**Istituto di Istruzione Superiore I.P.S.S."M. LENTINI"-
L.S. "A. EINSTEIN "
MOTTOLA, ITALY**

The third meeting in 2012 –

04.06-08.06.2012

Stockholm, Sweden

