

Call for School-Community Projects

GUIDELINES 2017

aces - act local is an initiative of
ERSTE Foundation



ERSTE Stiftung

coordinated by
Interkulturelles Zentrum



in cooperation with
Nadácia Slovenskej športelne

NADÁCIA 
Slovenskej športelne

and associated with the
EU Strategy for the Danube region



1. About aces – act local

For ten successful years “aces – Academy of Central European Schools” has been offering a support scheme for international school partnership projects in order to foster cross-border cooperation and exchange among students, teachers and educational policy makers.

Recent social and political developments in Europe induced the **aces** management to rethink the programme and strive for an altered focus and framework for **aces**. Schools are now encouraged to partner up with other stakeholders in their community to overcome social challenges on the spot. The European element of **aces** will be kept through an international training event that provides for capacity building and exchange of knowledge and practice beyond borders.

The **aces** management and its partners are convinced that education must respond to burning issues of social development and contribute to enabling civil society to take action. Through **supporting school-community projects aiming at the enhancement of young people’s active involvement in their local surroundings and fostering their civic engagement and transversal skills** greater social cohesion can be achieved on a local and European level. In this context schools are seen as key institutions in order to promote a culture of activism, volunteerism and social engagement among the youth in the region.

The programme aims at supporting the establishment of local cross-sectoral collaboration between schools and non-school partners in order to tackle social challenges. These partners should be other civil society stakeholders, such as associations, NGOs (non-governmental organisations), NPOs (non-profit organisations), foundations, cooperatives, grassroots initiatives, (social) enterprises etc. or other public institutions/local authorities.

aces – act local encourages these school-community projects in the **15 Central and South Eastern European partner countries** through a project contest. The awarded local initiatives are supported in the realisation of their projects by means of seed funding (micro grants), various helpdesk services and an international training event, the **aces Academy**.

To highlight this new focus of aces, it has been named **aces – act local**. Like the former aces programme, **aces – act local** is funded by ERSTE Foundation and coordinated by Interkulturelles Zentrum in cooperation with Nadácia Slovenskej sporiteľne. Moreover, the programme is supported by the Ministries in charge of education in all participating countries.

aces – act local is based on five Guiding Principles

- » **Democratic Citizenship**
- » **Human Dignity**
- » **Student Empowerment**
- » **Action-oriented Learning**
- » **Community-based Cooperation**

2. Theme of the aces – act local call 2017

The official launch of the aces – act local call including the release of the theme will happen on 10 January 2017. Visit www.act-local.aces.or.at and stay up-to-date!

3. Rules of participation

3.1. Who can participate?

The call addresses **public schools of all types** in the eligible countries with a target group of students aged between 13-17 years (primary, secondary, vocational and technical schools etc.). Special needs schools are encouraged to get involved.

The **eligible countries** are: Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Restrictions on participation are:

- » **Private schools** (also private schools under public law) **are EXCLUDED** from the project contest!
- » **Every coordinating school can be part of ONE project application only.** In case the aces management receives more applications from the same school, only the one which has been submitted first will be accepted.
- » There are **NO restrictions** on participation regarding schools which have already taken part in previous calls in the context of “aces – Academy of Central European Schools” (international school projects).

3.2. Project partnership

The school-community project is **characterised by the cooperation and partnership of the coordinating school with local non-school partner/s**, e.g. a public institution or authority (municipality, library, university, public service provider) or an NGO, NPO, association, cooperative, grassroots initiative, (social) enterprise or foundation. **Be aware that in some countries collaborations between schools and non-school partners have to be officially reported or even approved by the respective school authority, so please clarify specific requirements.**

Regulations for eligible partnership:

- » **“Local”** means within a **maximum linear distance of 50 km** from the location of the coordinating school, but still **in the same country**.
- » **Other local schools** can be **additional project partners** as well, **but not as the only partner** in the project.
- » The **maximum number of partners is 5, which includes non-school partners as well as additional schools!** But the lead applicant should be aware of the coordination workload that goes along with a project involving many partners.
- » **Project partners** (non-school partners and additional schools) can be **involved in more than one project** application.
- » **All partners need to clearly identify with the aces – act local [Guiding Principles!](#)**

Fruitful partnership and cooperation require a mutual agreement on the division of tasks and continuous communication throughout the project period with all partners involved. Therefore, cooperation already starts with developing the project idea together. The key to successful teamwork is the focus on a longer-term partnership based on shared interests and aims, regular exchange of ideas and thoughts, and a high degree of reliability.

- » **Attention:** Inviting a person from an NGO as a speaker or workshop trainer only for a single event is **NOT** considered as a project partnership!

3.3. Project coordination

The **applicant school** is the **project coordinating partner!** In order to foster **active student participation**, the coordination team for the project consists of a **mentor teacher** and a **co-leading student** from the same school. This **leadership team** takes the responsibility for the overall project implementation, acts as the main contact point for the **aces** management and participates in the aces Academy. Furthermore, this leadership team is responsible for submitting the **online application and final project reporting**. The co-leading student fulfils and supports these shared tasks according to his/her abilities.

LEADERSHIP TEAM CRITERIA

- ✓ Both coordinators (student and teacher) have to master the English language on a working proficiency level – at least B2 according to the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#)
- ✓ Co-leading student and mentor teacher must not be relatives
- ✓ Willingness to cooperate and share responsibilities, knowledge and competences
- ✓ Interest in ICT (information and communication technology) and interactive online tools
- ✓ Communication and social skills
Particularly relevant for the co-leading student:
 - ✓ Integrative and communicative personality
 - ✓ Ability to identify with the role of the co-coordinator and multiplier for the peer-group

3.4. Communication

The language for **overall communication is English** (**aces – act local** management, **aces Academy** and exchange with other project participants, website content, e-learning offers and reporting). The use of other languages for communication between partners, as well as for the publication of final products related to the project, is possible.

3.5. Project seed funding

aces awards the grant to the school-community project, but in terms of administration the coordinating school receives the **seed funding** in the amount of **800 Euro** directly. **Therefore, each coordinating school or its appointed official school body (preferably the school board, school foundation or parents' council, etc.) needs to have a bank account that accepts bank transfers in Euro (!).*** Otherwise, we will be obliged to deduct the emerging costs for currency exchange from your micro grant.

The seed funding has to be used for expenses arising from the realisation of the project (costs incurred during the implementation period) and must be justified at the end of the project in the **financial report**. The **project activities take place only locally**, which means **within a linear distance of 50 km** from the location of the coordinating school, but still **in the same country**.

The following types of costs are considered eligible:

- ✓ Local travel costs (public transportation)
- ✓ Reasonable catering for project activities and events
- ✓ Entrance fees (e.g. museums, national parks ...)
- ✓ Working materials (e.g. consumables such as paper, photo copies, creative materials...)
- ✓ Project documentation and product costs (e.g. books, calendars, videos, games...)
- ✓ Minor ICT-equipment (e.g. for cameras, software, etc.). Please note that the equipment has to be purchased for the COORDINATING SCHOOL and not for private or single school individual's demand. After the implementation of the project the equipment remains in the possession of the coordinating school.
- ✓ Remunerations for non-school partners up to a max. amount of 400 Euro (invoices/contracts must meet all formal requirements and include the tasks/activities performed!). This overall sum can be distributed among all non-school partners that are considered as legal entities.
- ✓ Honoraria for external workshop facilitators and other guides or experts (NGOs, universities, freelance trainers, etc.). Note that only external experts who are NOT involved in the project as a partner are allowed to receive honoraria.

* If you would like to apply with such an alternative bank account, please get in contact with your maintaining institution in order to clarify specific requirements (e.g. if this is possible, who needs to be the contracting party, who must sign the contract, grant transfer procedures).

- ✓ Attention: Expenditures that are strictly considered NON-ELIGIBLE COSTS are honoraria/ remunerations for project teachers (for coordinating the project, for participating as a school partner, for per diems or alike).

The costs for the participation of the project leadership team in the **aces Academy** (travel, visa, board and lodging) are covered additionally by **aces** and need NOT be paid from the project seed funding!

In order to foster the entrepreneurial spirit and to ensure the project's aims, the **aces management strongly encourages all project actors to raise additional funds**, e.g. through a **crowdfunding** campaign or other **sponsorships**. Further information is available [here](#).

3.6. Project duration and timeline for awarded projects

In **aces – act local only new projects are eligible**, therefore an ongoing initiative cannot be submitted. The seed funding will not be awarded if the project already starts before May 2017. The maximum duration of projects is 8 months. Project activities have to be carried out between May and December 2017. Some of those activities can also be realised during the summer holidays, but this is not obligatory.

The awarded projects will be invited to implement their ideas. They will receive further information regarding next steps and the Academy according to the following schedule (subject to change):

- » **End of April 2017**: Announcement of contest results – Interkulturelles Zentrum will inform applicants about the outcome of the project selection process;
- » **May 2017**: Start of all projects with a Kick-Off Activity launched by the aces management (pre-condition for the payout of the micro grant);
- » **May – June 2017**: Payout of the seed funding by Nadácia Slovenskej sporiteľne to each awarded school;
- » **May – December 2017**: Implementation of each project;
- » **June and November 2017**: Brief e-learning offers (more details to be announced at a later stage)
- » **25 – 29 September 2017**: International **aces Academy** taking place in Senec, Slovakia;
- » **31 January 2018**: Deadline for submission of the final narrative and financial project report in English

Note: **It is compulsory that the leadership team of each awarded school attends the aces Academy (participation cannot be delegated to others!).** Participating delegation members are expected to stay for the entire duration of this international training event.

4. Project quality criteria

Submitted applications are first assessed for eligibility, according to the conditions outlined in this document. Once a project is eligible, the quality of the project proposal is assessed through taking into consideration the following quality criteria:

PROJECT QUALITY CRITERIA

- ✓ Relevance and suitability to the theme of the aces – act local call 2017
- ✓ Reflect the [aces – act local Guiding Principles](#)
- ✓ Innovative character of the project idea
- ✓ Feasible, coherent and complete project concept and application
- ✓ Clear and realistic objectives for the project and the partnership
- ✓ Activities and methods are appropriate for the aims of the project
- ✓ Suitable project idea and activities for the age group and considering the abilities of the students
- ✓ Realistic cost and project implementation plan
- ✓ Focus on local community and sustainability:
The project idea must be focused on a relevant social challenge in the local context. The aim is to bring about change and create long-lasting added value for the participants and the local community.

5. Application procedure

5.1. Application form

The proposal for a school-community project must be submitted by using the [online application form](#), which is available from **10 January to 28 February 2017, 23:59 CET**. Please note that it must be completed by the **coordinating school (lead applicant) ONLY**. The project proposal should, nonetheless, be a **joint project application**. This means that all partners involved should discuss the content of the proposal before making the application.

The **application form** consists of **4 parts**:

- ✓ Information about the partner/s
- ✓ Project description (including project implementation plan and cost plan)
- ✓ Project pitch video:
 - » max. 2 minutes!
 - » brief presentation of the leadership team (student and teacher) about the project idea and aims (keep it short and simple!)
 - » to be uploaded on an external website (youtube or vimeo) and added to the application form through inserting the web link
- ✓ Supporting documents:
 - » "Declaration of the Coordinating School": to be completed, signed and stamped by the coordinating school
 - » "Partnership Statement": to be completed, signed and stamped by the partner/s

The supporting documents are available [here](#) and should be downloaded, completed by all partner/s and sent to the coordinator in due time so that the school can finalise the online application procedure within the set deadline. The coordinating school is responsible for filling in and submitting the complete online application form, including the upload of supporting documents.

5.2. Deadline for submission of applications

The deadline for submission of project applications for this call is **28 February 2017**. After submitting the online application form, you will receive an automatic confirmation of receipt.

5.3. Assessment of applications

An international jury will assess the submitted project proposals according to the eligibility and quality criteria (pages 3 to 6) and award approximately 40 school-community projects.

5.4. Further questions and contact details

Interkulturelles Zentrum can advise applicants on questions and technical problems related to the application procedure. However, **keep in mind that we need sufficient time to react before the deadline**. Furthermore, the **aces management strongly recommends you to follow these [guidelines](#)** and read carefully through the [FAQs](#).

In case you have any further questions regarding this call, please contact Interkulturelles Zentrum:

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Further information on aces – act local, the project contest and our partners are available on the recently launched website: www.act-local.aces.or.at

Information on:

- » **ERSTE Foundation:** www.erstestiftung.org
- » **Interkulturelles Zentrum:** www.iz.or.at
- » **Nadácia Slovenskej sporiteľne:** www.nadaciaslp.sk