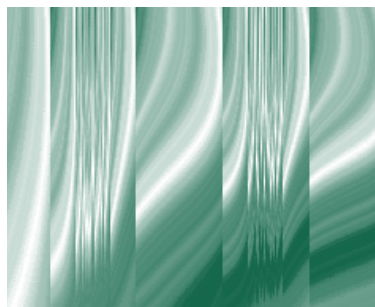


Promoting intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding

TRAINING REPORT



Promoting intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding Training Report

YOUTH COUNCIL PRILEP, 2011

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INTRODUCTION

This publication is a result of the project “Promoting intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding” funded by the European Youth Foundation and Council of Europe and implemented by Youth Council Prilep.

This publication is a synthesis on discussions, work on the segments of intercultural dialogue, intercultural dialogue as a big picture and the importance it brings. Work done on the event from all partner organizations, preparation phase, information from the training sessions and workshops, short-listed photographs from the project, conclusions and participants can be found in here. Leading point for implementation of the project was the idea to discuss and develop between the European organizations working with youth, how to approach through their work and projects the field of promotion of Intercultural Dialogue (ICD) and intercultural learning (ICL). We have identified the need to discuss on the event the issues of discrimination, xenophobia, stereotypes and prejudices, conflict management and non-violent communication, discrimination in order to match together the big picture of intercultural dialogue and the importance that it has in the process of building healthy intercultural societies.

We consider that much is done on the field of strengthening and promotion of intercultural dialogue on European level, but there is still necessity to proceed working on its promotion and in future, identifying ICD as a main tool to establish understanding and acceptance of the diversities between the European citizens and especially between the young people.

In this manner during the event we have worked on the fragments of ICD in particular and on ICD and ICL in general.

INTRODUCTION

Through 4 working days on intensive work in highly intercultural environment, using participatory non-formal education methodologies we succeed to open the theme of intercultural dialogue and to establish international youth partnership platform that upon this project will build many other projects and initiatives through which we will in debt work out intercultural dialogue and set new standards on its promotion on local, national and European level.

The project partners include YouNet (Italy), Edukativni Centar Krusevac(Serbia), Maison de l'Europe de Caen Basse-Normandie (France), Asociacion OPENDOORS (Spain), Sasdi Kisteregi Ifjusagi Prgogramszervezo Kerekasztal Egyesulet (Hungary), European Youth Center Breclav (Czech Republic), Alternativi International (Bulgaria) and Omerli Initiative and Development Association (Turkey). We would like to take this opportunity to thank our project partners and all the young people that participated in the activities of this project for their dedication and their enthusiasm in achieving our objectives. We look forward to future cooperation through joint projects and activities that will address promotion of intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding.



THE PROJECT

Main aim of the project is to raise the capacities of the youth NGO's from Europe to promote inter-cultural dialogue and mutual understanding between young people.

Objectives of the project are:

- To promote inter-cultural youth work as a tool that fosters inter-cultural dialog;
- To educate participants to create future projects that will promote inter-cultural dialogue and mutual understanding in their communities and on European level;
- To promote the concept of inter-cultural learning and values in Europe;
- To promote CoE white paper on Inter-cultural dialog and create follow-up of the event.

During the entire event participants have been working on the following themes:

1. Concept of inter-cultural dialog – following the concept of ICD we wanted to share visions of the world, to understand and learn from the participants and from their different points of view and understanding. It was important to set the ICD as a basic pillar upon which we can identify similarities and differences between different cultural traditions and perceptions. By identifying differences to learn how to respect them and accept them.

By explaining this we aimed to bridge the divide between those who perceive diversity as a threat and those who view it as an enrichment, to share best practices particularly in the areas of intercultural dialogue, the democratic management of social diversity and the promotion of social cohesion and to discuss to develop jointly new projects in future.

2. *Multiculturalism and interculturalism* – the idea was to present these two ideologies and the tendencies they bring within. By separating and planning these to concepts, participants will learn the basis of coherent societies and tolerance towards people from different backgrounds. What's most important the idea was to promote living together; in one big circle instead in ghettos and circles that represent production of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination. The idea was to present these two ideologies and the tendencies they bring within. By separating and planning these to concepts, participants will learn the base of coherent society and tolerance towards people from different backgrounds. What's most important the idea was to promote living together, in one big circle instead in ghettos and circles that influence on production of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination.

3. *Inter-religious and inter-cultural dialog in youth work* - focused on the problems that young people across Europe face in relation to cultural and religious diversity. The participants exchanged good practice and agreed the importance ICD and ICL have in every society, and especially in those where at least two religions are present. Lack of interreligious dialogue often is the entrance door for conflicts, tension and misunderstanding in the societies and between people. It leads to creation of even bigger stereotypes and may lead to raise of nationalism which is solid ground for creation of non-secure living surroundings. By discussing on these issues , participants created critical thinking on the topics. Went in debt by analyzing the roots of these phenomena and proposed possible solutions on these sensible topics.

4. Conflict management - By explaining the concept of ICD we have also tend to achieve a consensus that disputes should not be resolved by violence. Participants discussed on how to identify and handle conflict practice in a sensible, fair, and efficient manner and what kind of skills should they have in order to work on the issue with bigger quality and devotion. Non-violent communication was put on the table as one of the most effective and best tools to fight against conflict management. We defined that we still don't know much on this method, and the need to work on it in debt was underlined. Also participants addressed the need of mediation as another tool which can be applied in the process of conflict management.

5. Human rights – Universality of the concept of human rights and the reality and the way they are applied and treated. HR helped the participants to discuss and explain the context of mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance. Definition of human rights, their interpretation, Implementation was defined as a key point upon which stabile society can be build, where respect, intercultural dialogue and symbiosis of diversity are overwhelming. Respect of human right reflects the level of progress of every society. Healthy societies are those that provide conditions for respect of at least basic human rights. Even though it was defined that even in the advanced developed societies, the need of respect in real life of the human rights flows in the air. It was especially underlined the need to respect the rights of the immigrants, asylum seekers and minorities on European level in general, cause still misunderstandings happen throughout Europe.

6. Discrimination and anti-discrimination – two diagonally different concepts of promotion of respect and tolerance toward the diversities. To treat one particular group of people less favorably than others because of their race, color, nationality, or ethnic or national origin Wide spread, present in various forms and situations, always important and potentially dangerous., discrimination is identifies as a vivid issue, especially between the young people. It was defined that discrimination is almost always result of lack of knowledge and information for the people we discriminate. Very often stereotypes, prejudices are developing processes of discrimination.

7. Cultural diversity - the quality of diverse or different cultures, as opposed to monoculture, as in the global monoculture, or a homogenization of cultures, akin to cultural decay was discussed. Respect to the other cultures and the possibility to learn and share our own, is the main contribution towards the development of ICD in general. The idea of Europe itself is an unified platform where every culture, nationality, tradition has equal and significant place with all others, and is respected by all the others.

Working on the above mentioned themes, helped the young people on the event, to work piece by piece and catch the big picture of intercultural dialogue.



PREPARATION PHASE

Before the main event, the project team (representatives from partner organization from Macedonia, Hungary, Serbia and Italy) conducted preparation phase. This process is very significant and important cause it gives the main directions how the main event should be planned and implemented and how the evaluation and final phase should be carried out.

At the beginning we did online gathering where we discussed the general responsibility of the project and the aim we want to achieve. Second step was to organize preparatory meeting the project team. The meeting was held in Ohrid, Macedonia in hotel "Klimetica" in the period of 27-29 July 2011. During the meeting we have put on the table and agreed all the details and technicalities. We have defined the final working agenda, the methodology of work, materials and publications as resources. In order to spread the co-management and ownership of the event, each of project team organizations took responsibility to prepare, organize and facilitate sessions on the main event, which proved to be motivating for the participants on the main event.

Taking in mind that the prep meeting was held at the same place selected for venue of the event, the team had the chance to inspect the accommodation and working facilities and conditions and make sure that the participants will feel comfortable, living and working in pleasant intercultural and safe environment.



PROGRAMME CONTENT

DAY I

Opening session of the event and the theme of intercultural dialogue was the concept of intercultural dialogue and defining intercultural dialogue. It was underlined that there isn't definition carved in stone about what is ICD. That it represents vivid issue, mosaic of smaller fragments that build it. ICD was recognized as one of the main pillars of healthy societies, where different people, different cultures, different traditions, angles of view live together, accepting the differences that are present.

It was underlined that Europe presents this kind of platform, mixture of so many differences and that it represents excellent classroom of how to promote ICD. Even though by analyzing the past, present and possible future situations there are still much to be done on promotion of intercultural dialogue.

The analysis of the situation on youth intercultural dialogue in Europe exposed that intercultural dialogue shows to be stabile in certain parts of Europe, but not as in one piece.

There is still level of discrimination, prejudices and stereotypes, exclusion and conflicts that remind us to keep working on building young people concuss and mentality to accept the diversities. Especially were underlined as an example the situations of the immigrants, asylum seekers and minorities in Europe, and the difficulties they face on daily basis.

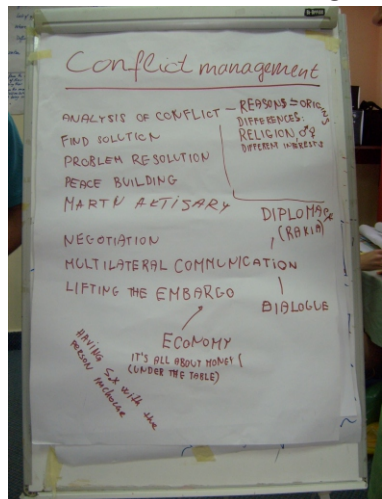
Lack of information is about something different is the reason to create stereotypes, prejudices, discrimination and exclusion. This can lead to increased level of nationalism and intolerance towards certain groups of people and will result with unstable, closed, xenophobic societies. In this direction, challenges of promotion of intercultural diversity in the societies and promotion of intercultural dialogue remain. Initiatives, projects, discussions and lot of work is needed to continue build tolerance and mutual life, respect and acceptance.

PROGRAMME CONTENT

DAY II

Interreligious dialogue and intercultural dialogue in youth work in multicultural environments shown to be one of the most important topics for the participants. It is important to work intensively on promotion of Interreligious and intercultural dialogue in the multicultural environments. There are many examples of people of different backgrounds living in same community but not mixing and contacting between each other, just because they are different one from another. In these environments the level of exclusion is big. Stereotypes and prejudices are almost inevitable and contribute to even bigger isolation and lack of dialogue and communication. It's crucial to break these closed circles and provide conditions for coexistence.

Discrimination is still present on various basis. Situation of Roma people was underlined as one of the examples, but as well the situation of immigrants, minorities etc. All these groups enjoy fewer rights than the other people and are often treated inadequate to what laws and international laws and rights predict.



PROGRAMME CONTENT

DAY II

This leads to creation of conflicts, conflicts on different grounds. Lacks of policies for treatment of this issue are obstacle as well.

Only with time and right approach and work, results are unavoidable. Same time young people, citizens, NGO sector and national and European institutions are working on solution on these problems, through their daily and devoted work, that needs to be taken as an example for all other key actors, institutions and citizens.

The Council of Europe and European Youth Foundation are working devoted on the field of strengthening tolerance, mutual life and promotion of intercultural dialogue in Europe. Their support in various forms is more than valuable and important. Their politics, recommendations, directions and guidance are supporting the process of intercultural learning Europe wide and are developing the process of intercultural dialogue.

These directions, recommendations, policies can be found in their numerous publications, guidebooks, manuals and documents. Seeing the importance of these documents and the benefits they bring, presentation was made on the T-kit for intercultural dialogue and on the White paper on intercultural dialogue as excellent resources that can be applied in the work of strengthening the ICD.

In order to present the work and support that EYF and CoE provide to these processes, as part of the working programme presentation of these institutions was made, by the representative of EYF on the event, Michele Bergdoll.



PROGRAMME CONTENT

DAY III

Conflicts happen because of lack of trust, discrimination and intolerance. But also conflicts often happen because of the lack of knowledge, methodology and work on how to prevent them.

Non-violent communication is stated as one of the key factors for prevention of conflicts. This session was stated as a possible theme of future project and initiative, because it brings great importance.

During the third day it was inevitable to open the human right theme. This opened wide discussion between the participants. Main point was the non-equal approach toward human rights and the quarantines and freedoms and obligations that they bring. The level of democracy and intercultural dialogue in every society make the difference in what extent the HR are respected.

In the second part of the working day, participants had the opportunity to visit Ohrid, where working in groups, they made photography's on the themes on HR, ICS and social inclusion. On the presentation afterwards through photos they transferred the importance of ICD and diversity in every society. This creative workshop, from another angle underlined the presence of the ICD and diversity and the necessity they bring for mutual, tolerant life and coexistence and acceptance.



PROGRAMME CONTENT

DAY IV

Upon the previous working days, identification of current situation of ICD in the participant countries was made. We have recognized the fact that we all have the same issues of ICD, but just they are structured and initiated in many different ways. This brings the need to continuously work and exchange knowledge and experience on international level. Still the tendency to promote ICD as one of the pillars remains priority in every neighborhood, community, society – in Europe.

All this participants managed to transfer and present through musical workshop. They have transferred the message for non-discrimination, respect and diversity working in small groups and creating songs, which showed that many, many approaches can be used working on the above mentioned issues.

Final part of the last day was the evaluation phase. Participants through questionnaires and spoken evaluation access the event, the project, evaluated themselves and their learning moment and provide realistic feedback on the event and the importance of the entire project.

They recognized the importance to continue working on these themes and in future and put ideas of possible future projects that can be applied.

Before the official closing they received certificates of thanks by the host organization and the project team as recognition of their participation, devotion and learning process throughout the entire project.

METHODOLOGY OF WORK

Methodology was based on theoretical lectures and presentations, practical exercises and experimental learning and possibilities to reflect on the applicability of identified ideas. Education module was focused on highly participatory methods, brainstorming, group discussions, small group work, feedback in debriefing sessions, energizers, Q&A where participants were permanently motivated and involved.

Visual facilities were used to increase the learning results. In this manner we have implemented photo workshop, where participants through photography explained the concept of ICD, diversity and mutual understanding.

Combination of plenary sessions with small group work was made. Plenary sessions were used to introduce the topics as well as for structured discussions and presentation of the results from the small group work. Working in small groups enabled "learn by doing" approach understanding of theoretical concepts. Exactly in these groups, participants were active the most. After the work groups, feedback were always made, reflecting the work done.

The entire concept of the working methodology was developed by the project team and aimed to respond towards the participant's expectations, level of knowledge and experience.

The activities supported group unity and trust among the participants; team work and inter-cultural cooperation; development of participants' communication and inter-personal skills.



INTERCULTURAL DIMENSION

The project and the venue helped participants to share culture and cultural values, to develop critical thinking, to present their national cuisine, traditions and culture and to promote intercultural learning and dialogue in every aspect of the event. What's most important is that the participants gained competencies on how to promote intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding between their peers, in their community, in their professional and personal work.

The training course developed high sense of understanding, respect and cooperation between the young participants. It enabled the creation of international new partnerships between the partner organizations and building of youth platform. The event promoted social inclusion of young people and volunteerism, European awareness and citizenship and promotion of CoE values as pillars of European unity. The training course increased young people's positive awareness and acceptance of other cultures and celebrate diversity, set directions on how to prevent and combat prejudice, stereotypes and all attitudes leading to exclusion. Project fostered youth participation and quality of life in Europe and contribute to united positive critical thinking towards promotion of ICD between young people in general.



Quantitative impact

Number of participants: 27 young people with or without previous experience in NGO sector, coming from different cultural and social backgrounds from all over Europe

Number of organizations: 9 organizations directly involved from geographically different parts of Europe + 70 organizations reached indirectly

Number of additional people reached by the project (through publication, web, mail...): 2.000

Number of countries involved: 9

Qualitative impact

Main qualitative impacts:

- Improved knowledge on development and promotion on intercultural dialogue and intercultural learning
- Enhanced awareness of young people's on the importance of intercultural dialogue on international level
- Qualitative, relevant, shared and coherent set of recommendations addressed to youth organizations from Europe that work on promotion of ICD and ICD relevant and related topics
- Improved skills and competencies of the participants and NGO's involved
- Better integration of young people in the life of the communities in Europe
- Impact on the local communities: communities involved in the project will gain relevant "resources" to promote and develop intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding.

IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE COOPERATION NETWORKS

The project enabled the creation of sustainable partnerships and a network of organizations that are willing for further cooperation in the field of youth, promotion of intercultural dialogue and acceptance of diversity. The network showed to be functional right after the event. The involved organizations created and applied two new international project proposals to the European youth programmes. Also in the period of 2012 in May, part of the organizations will be working together again on international project aimed at promotion of youth participation and social inclusion of the young unemployed people in Europe.

This is excellent starting point for promotion of sustainable productive international partnership and is one of the best achieved results of the event itself. Using the support of CoE we have managed to set a platform of organizations that will work together to improve the position of young Europeans.



The evaluation strategy has been created by the project team. Main aim of the evaluation is to measure the overall success of the project and the impact it makes, to see in what extent did the participants expand their knowledge in the working themes, become aware of the possibilities to work and promote intercultural dialogue, what is the level of motivation and enthusiasm to proceed working and educating peers on ICD and ICL.

In order to have reliable and measurable results we conducted several types of participatory evaluation in different stages of the event.

During the implementation of the main event, at the end of each working day, reflection groups were made. Using this methodology we were following the energy and dynamic of the group, receiving their feedbacks upon the working programme we succeed to make modifications according to their learning need and we evaluated their learning moments. With the daily evaluations we also followed the overall situation with the logistic and working and living environment. What is most important, these daily evaluations helped to provide qualitative, dynamic non-formal working atmosphere.

At the last day of the event, the project team carried out final evaluation. In order to receive as more as possible realistic feedback we conducted two types of evaluation, using questionnaires and spoken evaluation. In this process participants access all the segments of the event: the working methodology and content, overall organization of the event, the trainers and support staff and what's most important their learning moment. Participants made a comparison of their expectations before the event and their benefits from the event.

General grade, from the evaluation phase is that the event hit it goals. It enabled to put the participants in highly participatory non-formal learning process, with possibilities to learn and share.

It enabled participants to gain competences and develop personal and professional skills and to build future partnerships and cooperation.

The educational content and the methodology of work are evaluated as good balanced, giving opportunities to discuss, give feedback and actively learn. It was pointed out by the participants that more time was needed to completely work out intercultural dialogue and its concept. Even though we had 4 intensive days of work, more time is needed. We have all agreed that it is necessary to continue working on the ICD in general and of the fragments of ICD in particular. This pointed out the need of creation of more projects and initiatives where we will precede working on the themes.

Host organization and the overall organization of the project are graded as excellent, providing excellent living and working conditions.

Work of trainers is evaluated as excellent and motivating for the participants to be actively involved in the working sessions.

At the end the final evaluation of the project was carried out by the project team and host organization. Analyzing the feedback by the participants and involved organizations and the overall impression is that the project achieved its goals. It succeeds to put people from different parts and backgrounds from Europe in an intensive working environment and to develop learning process on intercultural dialogue. Final conclusions and lesson learned from the event can and will be applied in the future work of the host and partner organizations.

FUTURE STEPS AND FOLLOW-UP

"Promoting intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding" has shown to be starting point of international partnership and basis of European youth NGO network. We have succeed to create platform through which we will apply our ideas into projects and initiatives, where mutual support will be constantly promoted which will in long term increase the quality of work of the organizations involved.

In this context together with the partner organizations we have created and applied for project under EYF programme and under YIA programme, which is excellent impulse to keep cooperation on high level with mission to contribute to the wellbeing of young people Europe wide.



EUROPEAN YOUTH FOUNDATION

The European Youth Foundation (EYF) is a fund established in 1972 by the Council of Europe to provide financial support for European youth activities. It has an annual budget of approximately 3 million Euros. Since 1972, more than 300 000 young people, aged between 15 and 30 and mostly from member states, have benefited directly from EYF-supported activities. In 2007 the EYF supported some 300 projects involving more than 15 000 young people.

Its purpose is to encourage co-operation among young people in Europe by providing financial support to such European youth activities which serve the promotion of peace, understanding and co-operation in a spirit of respect for the Council of Europe's fundamental values such as human rights, democracy, tolerance and solidarity.

The EYF thus provides financial support to the following types of activity undertaken by non-governmental youth organisations or networks or by other non-governmental structures involved in areas of youth work relevant to the Council of Europe's youth policies and work:

- educational, social, cultural and humanitarian activities of a European character;
- activities aiming at strengthening peace and co-operation in Europe;
- activities designed to promote closer co-operation and better understanding among young people in Europe, particularly by developing the exchange of information;
- activities intended to stimulate mutual aid in Europe and in the developing countries for cultural, educational and social purposes;
- studies, research and documentation on youth matters.

YOUTH COUNCIL PRILEP

Vision

Youth Council Prilep is a sustainable leading organization on the local and regional level, a reliable partner in the creation and the implementation of youth policy along with all key stakeholders. Our work as a visible and recognized organization is based on democratic values enabling youth to be creative and active citizens.

Mission

Youth Council Prilep supports young people to participate in democratic processes, empowering them to grow into active citizens.

Field of work

Youth Council Prilep will support young people in the region by implementing more projects to help young people. We will provide youngsters with opportunities to improve their capacities and creativity through workshops, trainings, seminars and social events. The impact of our work will improve the effectiveness of youth participation in the educational institutions and will develop new participatory mechanisms. Youth Council Prilep will increase the mobility of young people and will bring Europe closer to the youth through increased opportunities for youth mobility including international events such as youth exchanges, international trainings and seminars. Youth Council Prilep will seek to accomplish these aims in a sustainable manner.

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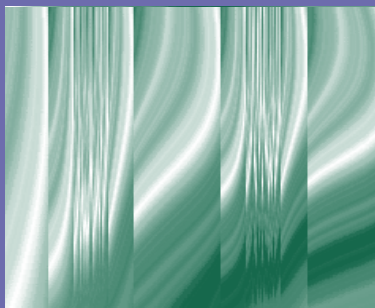
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Agency for youth and sport

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