

Issue 1 - December 1999

1
magazine



youth - training - europe

Coyote

Giving Credit:
Certification and
Assessment of
Non-formal
Education

Theatre in
International
Youth Work

The Power of the
Trainer

Working with
Minorities: Let
your Heart Beat in
their Community

Conflict
Management



PARTNERSHIP
COUNCIL OF EUROPE & EUROPEAN COMMISSION
TRAINING-YOUTH

COYOTE

"Coyote - a resourceful animal whose blunders or successes explain the condition of life in an uncertain universe." (In: Jack Tresidder, The Hutchinson Dictionary of Symbols, 1997)

Coyote is a new magazine on issues around 'youth – training – europe'. It is addressed to trainers, youth workers and all those that want to know more about the world of youth worker training in Europe.

Coyote wants to provide a forum to share and give new insights into some of the issues that trainers face in their work, issues related to the diverse training concepts, methodologies, practices and realities across this continent. It also wants to inform about current developments in this field, especially at European level.

Coyote is published by the Council of Europe and the European Commission within their partnership in the youth field, with the aim to strengthen networking among trainers involved in European youth worker training and to promote the value of European level training for youth workers.

Coyote has come out twice this year: in July and December. From next year on, it will be issued 3 times yearly (in February, June and November). It can be received free of charge.

Coyote is also published on the web at
<http://www.coe.fr/youth>



C o n t e n t s

Editor
Sonja Mitter

Editorial team
Leen Laconte
Carol-Ann Morris
Mark Taylor

Secretariat
Vincenza Quattrone-Butler
Sabine van Mijgen

Translation
Nathalie Guiter

Design & layout
Florin Bedran
Esther Hookway

Spiffy the coyote
The Big Family

Council of Europe

European Youth Centre Strasbourg
30 rue Pierre de Coubertin
67000 Strasbourg, France
Tel: +33 3 88 41 23 00
Fax: +33 3 88 41 27 77

European Youth Centre Budapest
Zivatar uica 1-3
1024 Budapest, Hungary
Tel: +36 1 212 40 78
Fax: +36 1 212 40 76

Commission of the European Communities

Directorate-General XXII
Education, Training and Youth, Unit C.2
Rue de la Loi, 170
1049 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 2 295 11 00
Fax: +32 2 295 41 58

Published in English and French by the
Council of Europe and the European
Commission, December 1999

Printed by Deppen Imprimerie, France

The views and opinions expressed do not
necessarily express the official view of the
European Commission or Council of Europe,
their member states or the organisations co-
operating with the institutions.

Reproduction of texts and pictures is
authorised provided the source and author
are quoted.

The Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe

- 4 Pools and Networks of Trainers - From a Database to a Pool of Expertise: The Trainers
Pool of the Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe, by Patrick Penninckx
8 Impressions of the Training Course on Intercultural Learning and Conflict Management 1999
8 Partnership Programme 2000

Focus

- 10 Giving Credit: Certification and Assessment of Non-formal Education, by Caroline Vink
11 Crafting the Strategy..., by Reet Kost
15 Let Your Heart Beat in Their Community, by Nynoscha Fecunda
18 Preparing Soldiers for a Peace - supporting Mission, by Charly Pauwels
21 Myths in Conflict Management, by Sofiko Shukladze

Ethics in Training

- 23 The Power of the Trainer, by Miguel Angel Garcia Lopez
25 The HSC Coefficient - Is Training Related to Real Life?, by Andrey Ozharovskii

Training Methodologies

- 33 Theatre of the Oppressed and Youth, by Peter Merry & Gavan Titley
37 Human Rights - Where Do You Stand?, by Felisa Tibbitts

Coyote Meets Trainers

- 29 An Interview with Jennifer Nold, by Leen Laconte

Marker

- 38 How Do we Keep up with Expectations?, by Mark Taylor
2 Welcome
3 Comments & Letters
9 Flipchart
40 Notes about the Contributors

Coyote will be happy to receive your comments, ideas and suggestions for future articles.
Please send all correspondence to the Editor at the European Youth Centre Strasbourg,
e-mail: sonja.mitter@coe.int

Many thanks to all Coyote contributors!



Welcome to Coyote !

The beginning of December has come and Coyote is back! The overwhelmingly positive feedback to issue #0 that we received gave us a lot of motivation to continue developing this magazine further. Judging from these reactions, Coyote indeed fills a vacuum on the scene of European youth worker training, by giving a voice to reflections and experiences of trainers and educators in youth work across Europe.

What's new in this issue? With Coyote we want to encourage the exchange of opinions as well as information and have therefore decided, also in reaction to some of the comments received, to ask all the authors of Coyote articles to indicate an address where readers can contact them directly. These contact addresses can be found at the end of each article. Some of the comments by readers to issue #0 can be found under "Comments and Letters". "Flipchart" is starting to take up its function with first announcements by youth organisations and others about new publications, reports, web sites and activities related to European youth worker training.

Coyote aims to address a variety of subjects in each issue - with the exception of special thematic issues, which will come out once a year. The articles are now grouped in different chapters, which will guide the reader through every issue of the magazine. The chapter "Focus" includes articles that do not - and should not - fit under any other thematic heading but stand for themselves.

"I see a very positive and enormous power in training and in trainers: they can contribute with their work to the building of a better society", Miguel Angel Garcia Lopez writes in his article for Coyote. But, he adds, "trainers have this kind of power only if their training has a real influence afterwards in reality". The articles in this issue give examples of how trainers make their training programmes relevant for their participants and for the societies they work in, in working with minorities in the Netherlands (Nynoshca Fecunda), implementing the Youth For Europe Programme in Estonia (Reet Kost) or - in quite a different context - preparing soldiers for a peace-supporting mission in Kosovo (Charly Pauwels). Other articles deal with some of the challenges for the relationship between trainers and participants in a training course (Miguel Angel Garcia Lopez and Andrey Ozharovskii). Theatre of the Oppressed¹ is one method in training, which can help participants to recognise how they can become stronger actors of their own lives also in difficult and conflictual situations (Peter Merry and Gavan Titley).

The methodological reflections, training strategies and results described in these articles point to the question that Caroline Vink poses in her article: Looking at the different ways in which youth work successfully prepares young people for active participation in society and contributes to social development, should young people get official recognition for youth work? And if so, what could this recognition look like? What do you think?

Enjoy your reading.

Sonja Mitter
Sonja Mitter

Comments & Letters

A big **THANK YOU** from the Coyote team to all of those who sent us their feedback to issue # 0. We were happy to receive so many positive reactions and congratulations from people from many countries all over Europe.

A number of readers also followed our call for comments on specific articles and suggestions for the further development of Coyote. Here are some:

"I've read the article on the Albatross Intercultural game that we performed during the European Youth Forum meeting in Antwerp and I disagree with the author. Instead of stating the intercultural strengths of the game, the article criticises the aggressiveness of the game. I don't know the position of the European Youth Forum regarding this game but I'd like to point out that AFS has been using this game when orienting our participants going abroad with a tremendously good success for many years."

Jaime Martinez-Esparza, **Spain**

"Welcome to the land of Albatross..."

I was reading Mark's article in Coyote's first issue and was really concerned about the comments about Albatross. It was said that this game, which has been for me the basis of intercultural learning, was starting not to be so effective any longer. Time passes by and society changes fast, globalisation is coming through the media and multicultural societies. So in a way it is true that an activity like Albatross could not be understood as it is meant to be and might not be accepted so easily.

This summer, I was a trainer in the Peace Cruise, a big training activity that gathered participants from different Mediterranean countries on a sailing boat to train them in conflict management and conflict resolution. The starting point of the training process was communication; then we played Albatross to explore cultural diversity. I had participants from many different cultures, and this meant richness. But it was also a challenge to see how to deal with the debriefing of the activity.

The discussion was really fruitful, and it was interesting to see how some people who believed that they had the "good answers", because they assumed that they knew what was right and what was wrong, found themselves in the situation of explaining why something was good or bad, and this was not always easy. I found it interesting to see how important the different roles that men and women played in each participant's society were in this discussion, and how some details of the role-playing were considered rational or irrational for different participants. But the good point of it was, how surprised and shocked everybody was when they got to know the values of the Albatrossian culture.

I think it is still a good activity to play, but it is true that we need to see the group beforehand and make sure that the participants are not

going to walk out of the room, as that is something that might happen. But then again, I think that even this is not too bad as long as we gather everybody for the debriefing afterwards."

Conchi Gallego Garcia, **Spain**

"What about creating an online literature list (commented and conceived as a "work in progress", which is growing and specially keeps an eye on "European" training publications which are available for free or for little money)..."

Apart from the 2 "Roma" articles (excellent idea), I'm also still missing racism and xenophobia on the agenda (I know, even the best coyote can't do everything at once), or multiculturalism including the fact that more and more participants/trainers should come from the second or third generation immigrants' cultures and not just be selected because of cosmetic reasons ("we are so tolerant": some of my black friends feel like in a zoo in such a surrounding)...

By the way, I find this first coyote issue excellent and I have put it on my literature list I give to participants after trainings with a warm recommendation."

Georges Wagner, **Luxembourg**

"I would most like to read about subjects on useful methods to increase youth participation and reasons that make young people take an active part in projects."

Eugen Ghenga, **Romania**

"The magazine would gain a lot if there is a little more structure added to it so that the reader finds it easier to orientate him- or herself in the magazine and therefore in the world of intercultural learning. ...And another little comment...: I think one of the main goals for Coyote should be to establish a two-way communication between the editors and the readers. Interactivity is what it should all be about... My suggestion is that you add contact addresses (e-mail and snail-mail) at the end of all articles, or at least at the end of those whose authors would like to get feedback (which should be all in my view)."

Guido Keel, **Switzerland**

Create "online discussions on topics at the end of articles (and an) information base on future training courses".

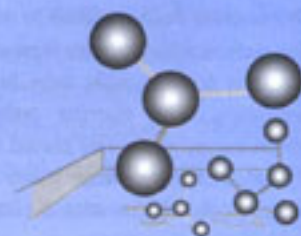
Claus-Bernhard Pakleppa, **Germany**



Pools & Networks of Trainers

The need for competent trainers in youth work is increasing all over Europe. Many organisations and institutions have developed, or started to develop, their own pools of trainers. At European level, the Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe has been operating a pool of trainers for several years. It recruits trainers from its pool to run some of its educational activities and to complement the work of its own educational team. The European Commission has started to collect information about trainers working in and with the National Agencies. Also the European Youth Forum runs its own trainers' pool.

Coyote wants to take a step forward and help to create some visibility about these existing trainers' pools. What are their aims, how do they function, who can join and use them? In issue 0, Carol-Ann Morris introduced the trainers' pool of the European Youth Forum. In this issue, our series continues with the trainers' pool of the Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe.



From a Database to a Pool of Expertise

The **Trainers'** Pool of the Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe

by Patrick Penninckx

A dive into the pool

Since the creation of its training programme in 1979, the Youth Directorate has always made use of external tutors for the running of the programme of the European Youth Centres (EYC Strasbourg since 1979, EYC Budapest since 1995). The expertise of youth organisations has been sought to complement the work of the tutors of the European Youth Centres and bring in grassroots experience from youth workers and trainers. The emergence of more specialised training needs and the continuous recruitment of external tutors has entailed the necessity of a new system through which those needs can be catered for.

The trainers' pool today

The trainers' pool is in fact a database of trainers who have worked with the Youth Directorate (YD) in the past or have shown an interest in working with the YD on the educational programme (training courses or study sessions). The 'pool' is an accessible open list, which can also be consulted by outside bodies in so far as the trainers themselves have given their agreement to this use being made of their inclusion in the database.

The database includes information about the trainers' formal educational backgrounds, their experience of training at European level and their specific areas of expertise. More detailed information is contained in questionnaires which are regularly updated with new indications from the side of the applicants. Often the applicant trainers also include a more elaborate CV, which can be consulted on the spot in the Youth Directorate. No formal criteria have been established for applying to be part of

the pool. The fact of being in the database does not guarantee that the applicant will eventually be contracted by the Council of Europe.

The educational staff of the Youth Directorate select the trainers for upcoming activities (in consultation with its partners, the European Youth Forum and European Commission for partnership activities) and contacts them. The actual composition of training teams is decided by the educational staff. Once the trainers have been contacted, a contract is established with them. At that point, certain criteria closely connected with the particular job expected of them have to be fulfilled. This job may consist in being a member of the preparatory team of a training course run by the Youth Directorate or within the partnership with the European Commission, or of being the 'external tutor' for one of the study sessions run under the Educational programme of the European Youth Centres. These jobs can require fairly distinct profiles.

Running a study session on a specific topic (e.g. unemployment, vocational training, students' representation in universities, etc.) as the only trainer and representative of the educational team in the preparatory group of a single youth organisation requires a different approach than being part of a training team of trainers, devoted to the running of a course which is open to a variety of organisations.

Set criteria

The basic criteria for contracting trainers from the pool are threefold and relate to (i) the training skills of the applicant, (ii) knowledge and experience and (iii) concern and availability of the trainer.





The training skills have to do with the trainer's ability to design, run and evaluate a training course. Is the trainer able to perform an analysis of training needs and apply learning theory to the course design? To what extent is the trainer able to make learning fun, 'perform' adequately in front of a group, create and conduct exercises, lead discussions?

Knowledge and experience refer to the expertise in the subject matter of the training. This not only implies academic qualifications but also practical 'on the job' experience - especially valid in non-formal education and the youth sector. Important in this context are also the trainer's theoretical competence and his/her knowledge of the training function.

The concern and availability of the trainer are linked to the group of participants and to the preparatory team and to the fellow trainers. They have to do with the trainer's attitudes towards 'the other', with empathy, listening skills and the ability to adapt the style and content of the training to the trainees' needs.

Skills and knowledge are important. But as important are the trainer's reasons for doing the training. For the Council of Europe, it is essential that the trainer knows and supports the values of the Council of Europe, and European construction in general: human rights, pluralist democracy, active citizenship, the rule of law, the protection of minorities, non-violence and European and international co-operation. In addition, a strong commitment to the role and function of multilateral and multi-organisational youth work in all its forms is required on the part of the trainers in performing their tasks.

Finally, trainers - especially those working on study-sessions of EYC's programme - need to have some administrative skills and practical knowledge about procedures inside the EYCs.

Measuring competence

It is, of course, very hard to make a sound, objective judgement about the above elements on the basis of an application form completed by the applicant-trainer, and, in fact, very few trainers are actually recruited 'out of the blue'. The trainers involved in our programmes usually have long-standing experience of the EYCs and, in most cases, have themselves participated as trainees in at least one YD training course. But this, in itself, is not sufficient. Trainers are also required to bring along their own formal and non-formal educational background and experience in their hand-luggage.

It is quite natural that some trainers can be found in the existing trainers' pools of other European and national institutions, services and platforms that are active in the field of multilateral training. The knowledge and experience required as well as the trainer-skills, are not always readily available in every country and organisation.

In order to give newcomers in the trainers' pool a chance to broaden their skills before being the only ones in charge of a training course or study session, the YD has established a system of senior and junior trainers. Junior trainers are those trainers who have the potential to grow, and are interested in doing so. They are willing to acquire new trainer skills and improve their experience and are given the chance to do so while being backed up in experienced trainers' teams. Formal criteria have been elaborated in the YD to clarify the difference between junior and senior trainers. They serve as a basis for the establishment of the contractual relationship between the trainer and the Council of Europe.

Perspectives

Some developments in the YD will lead to a higher use of the trainers' pool in the future.

The first development is the changeover of the 'tutors' posts in the YD to posts of 'educational advisors'. This change of name will also alter the job content of the persons recruited for these jobs. It will most certainly imply a lower involvement in the direct implementation of the educational programme and a higher investment in the overall functions of the YD as well as a better exploitation of the results of its work. The educational advisors will be given more tasks in the transversal aspects of the mission of the YD, and in the co-operation with other Directorates of the Council of Europe.

The second development is the shift in the educational resources that are made available for study sessions. In 1999, two-thirds of the study sessions in the EYCs are being run without an EYC tutor. This will be largely the same for the year 2000 and implies that around 20 to 25 activities will be run with an external trainer or tutor. The same goes for the running of the training course programme, which saw a substantial (50%) reduction of the involvement of tutors.

The third development is increased co-operation with the European Commission on European Youth Worker Training and the establishment of a joint training programme within the frame of the concept of 'European Citizenship'.

This increase of the use of the trainers' pool will have consequences on the initial 'database': it will have to be turned into a real pooling of knowledge and expertise. This will also imply giving the pool some kind of a 'life of its own', involving meetings/training for the trainers involved, regular information updates (e.g. via Coyote) and more established contacts with the Youth Directorate.

In the planning of 2000, a first "trainers' forum" has been budgeted. This forum will be an

occasion to further clarify trainers' needs and wishes as well as the expectations from the side of the YD. Coyote could be used as a forum of exchange of thoughts on this event and the expectations from the side of the trainers.

It is also planned that the trainers involved in the training activities of the Youth programmes, co-financed by the European Commission, could become part of a joint trainers' pool on European Youth Worker Training between the European Commission and the Council of Europe. A joint management of this pool of trainers would be most advisable, including joint selection criteria and 'recruitment' policy. The first steps in this direction have already been taken in the frame of the partnership agreement.

Conclusion

The trainers' pool of the Youth Directorate is in constant expansion. It is becoming a tool of the educational policy of the Youth Directorate. There are several possibilities for making the pool more tangible: Coyote, trainers' pool meetings and consultative meetings. For the year 2000, a more structured approach is planned as well as higher interaction with the existing networks of trainers of other European institutions and platforms, in particular those of the European Commission and the European Youth Forum. To be continued!



Partnership Programme 2000

During the first half of 2000, two training courses will be run by the Council of Europe and the European Commission within their partnership on European Youth Worker Training.

Training Course on Project Management and Transnational Voluntary Service

Course aim

The main aim of this course is to provide in-depth information of TNV projects through the analysis of current best practices. It will develop methods for trouble-shooting and improving TNV projects. The training course also aims to develop TNV projects at the conceptual and policy level and to support other organisations with the implementation of their TNV projects.

Target group

Participants and organising team members who are active in organisations, institutions or projects working with trans-national voluntary service activities will be selected for this course. Candidates should be actively involved in the organisation (preparation, implementation, support, etc.) of trans-national voluntary service projects for some time and should want to develop a more in-depth knowledge of these projects.

Course dates and place: **27 February – 5 March 2000, Budapest**
Deadline for applications: **20 December 1999**

Training for Trainers

Course aim

The main aim of this course is to enable participants – within the framework of their youth organisation, service or initiative – to competently prepare, run and evaluate training activities with a European dimension.

Target group

Youth workers aged between 18 – 30, from youth organisations, initiatives or services, in particular those co-operating with the Youth Directorate, the Youth for Europe and European Voluntary Service programmes, and government representatives who are, or will be, responsible for one or several training activities with a European and/or international dimension during the years 2000 or 2001.

Course dates and place: **22 March – 2 April 2000, Strasbourg**
Deadline for applications: **20 December 1999**

Publications

The report of the training course for Roma/Gypsy youth leaders, which was held in March 1999, is available in English and French.

A series of educational publications (working title "educational binders") are under preparation. They will collect training materials and information and should serve as innovative and practical tools for trainers in European youth work.

Themes of the first publications in this series:

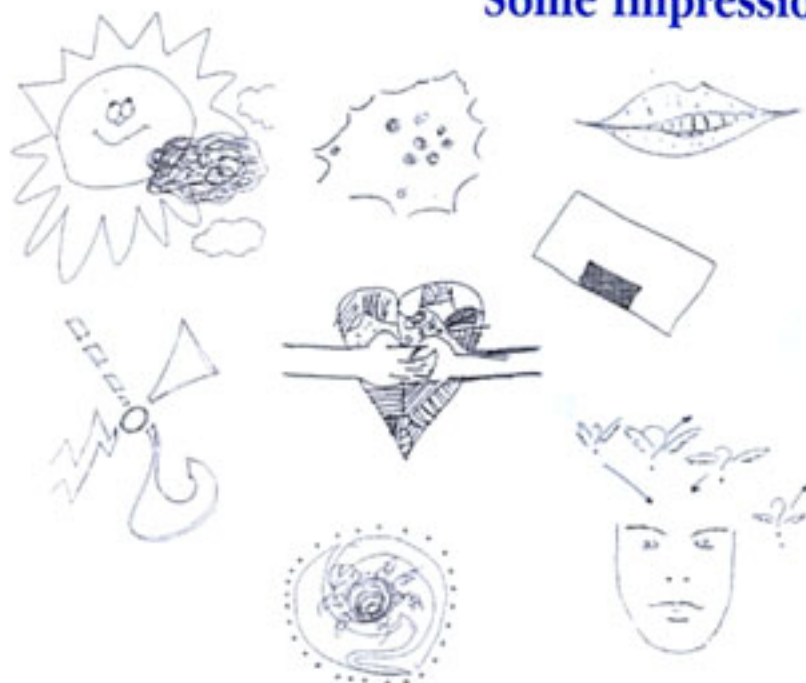
- Intercultural Learning
- Project Management
- Methodologies in Language Learning
- Organisational Management

Date of publication: **April – June 2000.**

These publications will be available free of charge. Coyote will keep you informed about further developments.

Application forms for these training courses, the report of the training course for Roma youth leaders and further information can be obtained at the European Youth Centres or at <http://www.coe.fr/youth>.

Training Course on Intercultural Learning and Conflict Management: Some Impressions



"Like an intercultural meal with a lot of ingredients, very well balanced, spicy, and last but not least very good for the digestion. You can try to share this recipe with others." (participant about the training course)

This June, 28 participants and 5 trainers from many countries in Europe met in Strasbourg for a 10-day training course on intercultural learning and conflict management, which was organised by the Council of Europe and the European Commission within the partnership on European Youth Worker Training. Ten days that opened windows, gave some answers and provoked more questions, about oneself and the others and about what all of this meant for one's own work with young people back home.

At the end of the course, the participants completed an evaluation form. Among other things, they were asked to draw a symbol of the course. Here are some of their impressions.

flipchart



Flipchart is a forum of exchange about what is going on in Europe in the field of European Youth Worker training.

Here, youth workers, trainers, youth organisations and services and others working in this field can announce up-coming events, new publications and reports, innovative methods or any other piece of news which they would like to make known to a larger public.

Europe is more than you think

The **Council of Europe** has published a **teaching pack** for secondary schools, entitled "Europe is more than you think", to mark its 50th anniversary.

The pack contains some ten fact sheets for teachers and pupils, dealing with topics of importance to our society, such as democracy, human rights, social cohesion and cultural diversity. It gives essential information about the work of the Council of Europe plus a series of tried and tested suggestions for project and group work and activities which teachers can adapt for their pupils.

There are ten themes covered by the publication: The Council of Europe yesterday and today, Teaching our continent's history, Protecting and understanding human rights, Speaking and learning languages, Responses to multicultural society, Culture, Kultur, Cultura, Europe and the world, Environmental action, The role of young people and Health, medicine and drugs.

Illustration: Toni Ungere



Europe is more than you think

"Europe is more than you think" was written by Mark Taylor and commissioned and produced by the Public Relations Service of the Council of Europe.

Copies are available free of charge (in English & French) from Point i, Council of Europe, F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, France, **tel:** + 33(0)3 88 41 20 33, **fax:** + 33(0)3 88 41 27 45, **e-mail:** point_i@coe.fr, **web site:** <http://www.coe.fr>

Eurocracy

How to understand something as complex and difficult as the European Union? The board game "Eurocracy" may lend trainers and teachers a helping hand. In the game the member states of the Union have been portrayed as a single country with one government and one parliament. Players represent political parties competing for power. They go on a continuous election campaign through the EU...

On the board, the member states are depicted by 1 - 4 cities, according to their size. The player who lands with his pawn on a free city wins the election and receives 3 members to the European Parliament. Players in possession of all cities of a member state will receive European ministers on passing Brussels. The first player to form a government of 12 ministers wins the game and is appointed Prime Minister of Europe...on condition of sufficient support in the European Parliament.

The rules of Eurocracy have been printed in a booklet in all Community languages. The game can be obtained for the price of 44 Euro (plus postal services) from Jacob Hoeksma, Hoofdweg 39, NL - 1058 AW Amsterdam, Holland **Fax:** +31 20 770 55 63, **e-mail:** J.Hoeksma@cableA2000.nl



The Intercultural Dimension in Service-Oriented Voluntary Work

EFIL, the European Federation for Intercultural Learning, with financial support from the European Commission, organised a training course on "The Intercultural Dimension in Service-Oriented Voluntary Work" in July 1999.

The participants - youth workers, EVS co-ordinators and trainers involved in community service programmes or other voluntary service projects - came away with knowledge and practice in areas such as conflict and crisis management, project management, effective intercultural communication, awareness of ongoing quality issues in a project cycle and support systems, and many more.

The complete **report** of the training course is now available online, in English, on EFIL's web site at <http://www.afs.org/efil> under the section "volunteer training".

Web Sites

YouthNet is the web site of the **Norwegian Youth Council**. It contains information, in English and Spanish, about the Norwegian Youth Council and its member organisations. In particular, the web site gives information about the Council's youth-leader project, an exchange project between NGOs in Norway and countries in the South. It also informs about co-operation between Norwegian NGOs and organisations in Eastern Europe. Address: <http://www.lnu.no>

The web site of the **Spanish Youth Council** gives the most up-to-date information on the Council's on-going programmes, including publications, campaigns, seminars and other activities. Address: <http://www.cje.org>

Chernobyl Project

On the occasion of the fourteenth anniversary of the disaster of Chernobyl, **F.Y.E.G.**, the Federation of the Young European Greens, is preparing a five days **seminar in Kiev** (Ukraine) on the topic of alternatives to nuclear energy around the 26th of April 2000.

F.Y.E.G. plans to demand the closure of Chernobyl, as a breakthrough to the use of safe alternative sources of energy in 2000. The goal will be to discuss and compare choices for main sources of energy for the future, to evaluate short and long perspectives of their use and possible consequences and threats for the environment.

F.Y.E.G. expects to gather 200 young ecologists from the whole of Europe, for both a conference and an action.

For more information contact : F.Y.E.G., rue Charles VI, 12, B-1210 Brussels, Belgium **Fax:** +3222275290, **e-mail:** fyeg@skynet.be, <http://www.vendinrete.it/fyeg/>

Would you like to put an announcement on Flipchart?

You can send it to the Editor at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg - Keyword: "Coyote, Flipchart" - until 6 January 2000. It will then be published in Coyote's next issue which will come out at the end of February 2000.



Focus

Giving Credit

Certification and assessment of **non-formal** education

by Caroline Vink

Certificates, portfolios... Should young people get official recognition for youth work? What is the goal of non-formal education? Caroline's article is Coyote's first contribution to the debate about quality and qualification of European youth work.

"You learn so much. To deal with other habits and customs, how they are different from yours. You learn to negotiate, to put some water with the wine. I asked at school why we have to write a paper. It is so boring, such nonsense. Just let everyone organise a youth exchange and then you can put into practise everything you have learnt in school. Because everything is in it!" (participant in a youth exchange, 22 years)

"Do not then train youths to learning by force and harshness, but direct them to it by what amuses their minds so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each." (Plato)

Credits for European youth work

European youth work is part of the so-called domain of non-formal education. Non-formal education is often defined as being all those activities that young people are involved in after 'school'. These activities take place in various settings: youth clubs, youth organisations and movements, youth centres, community centres, sport clubs etc. What these places have in common is that volunteers, youth leaders or youth workers offer some type of professional guidance. One of the most important aims of these educators is to stimulate young people to participate in their own environment and to teach them how to take responsibility for their own situation. The key words are active participation and social development. Youth work is often defined in the context of, and in comparison to, the formal education system. The formal education system is mostly fact-oriented and focused on cognitive learning and acquiring knowledge. This knowledge and

these facts can then be reviewed in tests and exams. Non-formal education on the other hand is process-oriented and based on learning life skills which are more difficult to assess. Learning takes place through experience and through reflections on this experience.

Although both formal and non-formal forms of education prepare young people for the challenges and responsibilities that they will face in adult life, there is growing concern over whether the conventional classroom approach is successful in doing so. Our society is changing very rapidly and is becoming more complex. People have to be much more mobile - occupationally, socially and geographically - than in the past. This requires enormous flexibility and social skills. The formal education system often fails in preparing young people for this challenge. For example, a recent study in the UK shows that two-thirds of people aged between 16 and 25 believe that school does not prepare them for real life (Bentley, 1998:3). Traditional knowledge and skills are no longer sufficient tools. The question is, does non-formal education create alternative opportunities?

Out-of-school based programmes enable young people to be involved in social learning. They acquire 'life' skills and competencies through organising activities, raising funds, solving problems or volunteering in their community. These skills and competencies are essential for their future and should be recognised as such. Social competence is a prerequisite for social participation. This view is also promoted by European institutions like the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the

European Youth Forum. The Youth Forum is at this moment undertaking research into the recognition of non-formal education. Their work will be published in December 1999. However, this approach raises the question of how to value and assess the learning elements of non-formal education. School is, until now, the only place where young people receive official recognition for their achievements in the shape of a diploma. If in the world around us qualities are becoming as important as qualifications, shouldn't we give credit to these qualities? There are already a number of initiatives which are looking at forms of accreditation for non-formal education. In this article some of these examples will be discussed and then the discussion will turn to their implications for European youth work. However, we first need to have a closer look at the 'life' skills and competencies that are part of the non-formal education system.

The strength of non-formal education is that there is a high level of participation by young people themselves. It is easier to be involved in activities in which you can have some responsibility and sense of ownership. As shown by the quote from the young person involved in the youth exchange, it is also highly motivating to have some concrete results - tangible learning. This raises the important element of commitment or 'engagement'. There is not the same pressure to learn as there is in school for example. This type of active learning is also less exclusive than the formal education system. Success or failure in school mostly depends on the cognitive and intellectual capacities of a young person. You can fail or pass the exam. These are not the same criteria as in non-formal learning. In principle, everyone is encouraged to participate and the activities are based on the needs and possibilities of those involved.

What then are the skills and competencies which can be learnt through non-formal education? A striking aspect of non-formal education is that the working methods and approaches are often better researched and described than are the learning elements and outcomes. The methods are active, intercultural or experiential and participant-oriented, learning by doing. The learning elements can be summarised as life skills and competencies. Examples are problem solving abilities, communication skills, flexibility, self-awareness & self-esteem, personal discipline, relationship management, self-management skills, commitment,

leadership and negotiation skills. What these have in common is that they can not be learnt through a textbook, they have to be experienced and practised 'in life'.

Systems of assessment and certification

At this moment there are several examples of award and certification schemes for out-of-school based programmes. Most organisations give young people some proof that they have participated in an activity or training programme. Some take this a step further by describing the activities in which the young person has been involved. For instance, the volunteers that have fulfilled two-thirds of their European Voluntary Service receive a certificate describing their activities and role in the project. These are examples of internal accreditation. The type and content of the certificate or award is developed by the organisations themselves.

In some countries models have been developed that are well-established and widely recognised, for example the 'Youth Award Scheme' developed by the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) in the UK. This award is used by more than 1800 educational establishments in the UK as a way of developing personal qualities and skills. The award is not based on factual knowledge but organised around key skills. The participants are highly involved in their own learning through:

- The assessment of their own learning
- The setting of clear and achievable goals
- Identifying, expressing and reflecting on their own view of progress and the development of new opportunities
- Summarising achievements and compiling a portfolio of supporting evidence

Another example - also based in the UK - comes from the programmes of the Prince's Trust. This organisation offers a programme for young people with the aims of developing particular skills and qualities, broadening social experience and awareness and building the confidence and self-esteem of participants. Participants receive certificates for their involvement. These assess the development of core skills, self-awareness, progress towards identified goals and different kinds of achievement.

**... in the world
around us qualities
are becoming as
important as
qualifications ...**



... the young people themselves ... should be encouraged to reflect, describe, analyse and communicate what they experience ...

What these two examples have in common is that they are already rather formalised. They are systems of external accreditation that use standardised criteria to assess the learning of young people. The criteria are the same for every organisation that wants to take part in the scheme. These schemes are widely accepted and recognised in the UK, even by employers. This raises the question whether such a system is a desired format for all youth work, especially European youth work. It does not leave much room for flexibility because it means that you have to keep records of every activity. Although assessment is clearly not a formal exam, it might be beyond the abilities of certain young people and in fact may contradict other objectives of the programme.

A more useful and workable approach for the assessment of European youth work may be a system of portfolio building. A portfolio is normally used by photographers to show a collection of their work. It could also be a useful model for documenting the skills and competencies that a young person acquires in out-of-school based activities. The young person is the owner of their own portfolio and it documents the different types of activities in which they have been involved. The portfolio could consist of direct and indirect evidence of their activities, such as a collection of reports, assessments written by project leaders or other materials. The use of a 'dossier' or portfolio which summarises the different types of projects and activities carried out by the young person would also help to bring together the wide array of awards and certification models that now exist. The idea is that the portfolio is not brought along during job interviews. 'Owners' use it to assess themselves and to become more confident about their qualities and skills. A feeling of achievement can be underlined with the evidence brought from real experience.

The challenges of certification and assessment

The pitfall in the discussion of accreditation for non-formal learning is that too much focus may be put on the 'certificates'. This often entails a system of standardised criteria. This is, for example, a development that we can see in vocational training where such systems are becoming common practice. In vocational training, questions about objectives are easier to address, it is about learning a trade through practise. But what then are the objectives of

out-of-school based programmes? The dilemma for non-formal education is that, on the one hand we would like the learning elements and competencies to be recognised and valued but, on the other hand, we don't want to discourage young people from being involved due to the standards becoming too formalised. The motivation for young people to become active in youth and voluntary work or community-based activities is generally not based on enlarging their career opportunities. They do it because it is a fun way to spend their free time, it is interesting and it allows them to participate and become involved. Too much focus on accreditation could easily have the opposite effect to what we would like to achieve.

The challenge for European youth work, in general, and the institutions involved, in particular, is to look very critically at the strengths of non-formal education and what alternative systems can be developed for the assessment of learning outcomes. It implies that tools of assessment have to be developed which are not specifically related to the content of our programmes but are more focused on the personal development of young people. Also, it will only work if the young people themselves are involved in their assessment. They should be encouraged to reflect, describe, analyse and communicate what they experience in the activities in which they participate. In this respect, it would be interesting to take up the challenge of developing a common 'shell' or portfolio of European youth work activities. This would allow us to better research the value and learning outcomes of non-formal education and to look critically at the ways in which we conduct our programmes. If in the process the voice of young people (on what they would like in terms of certification and recognition for their involvement) is included, European youth work will get the credit it deserves.

Bibliography

Tom Bentley, *Learning beyond the classroom, education for a changing world*, Demos, 1998

Contact address: c.vink@nizw.nl



“Crafting the Strategy...”

Imagine trying to set up a system to start youth work all over again. Given a budget but no youth structures to work with, how to develop the conditions needed to set up youth programmes, quality youth exchanges and initiatives? Reet describes the challenges she has been facing in implementing the Youth For Europe programme in Estonia.

Strategies are both plans for the future and patterns from the past

While strategy is a word that is usually associated with the future, its link to the past is no less central. As Kierkegaard once observed, life is lived forward but understood backward.

After the era of uniformation, Estonia was more or less left with no youth structures. Even though the enthusiasm was still there, the new business-minded state strategy did not consider youth work as being a priority area for development. Today, after eight years, we can see a slight move towards actions undertaken in order to build up a state youth policy which is nevertheless not totally sufficient to be able to implement European youth programmes that need a solid infrastructure... In other words while integrating the Youth For Europe programme into the Estonian youth work it soon became evident that given the reality, there was much that had to be done in order to accomplish the ideal. And obviously that was what we were striving for.

Assessment of the situation required a thorough look at the needs as well as the resources available at local, regional and national level which could be of use to the implementation of the YFE programme. Besides others, we discovered the lacks in human resources (lack of competence in youth work and international project management), which would have become an insuperable obstacle if ignored.

Given these reasons, we decided to organise the training of users as well as the “messengers” of the programme. The main target groups identified were: YFE regional co-ordinators, YFE trainers and resource persons and young people (project groups) with an intention to realise a YFE project.

Effective strategies develop in all kinds of strange ways

Effective strategies can show up in the strangest places and develop through the most unexpected means. There is no “one best way” to make strategy, especially if it has anything to do with human minds. Our strategy with regards to training the particular

target groups evolved more or less while we proceeded. Having said that, the concrete steps taken were nevertheless put in perspective and carefully planned.

Strategies need not be deliberate - they can also emerge...

The following elaborates on the reasons and means of our actions along the way:

First we figured that even though Estonia is a rather small country (45,227 sq. km) with reasonably few people living here (1,490,0), we would still have to expand our grip in order to reach the remotest areas. The answer was the creation of a network of Youth For Europe regional co-ordinators. Given the profile of the people in the network as well as their unfamiliarity with the programme or what it had to offer, we decided to offer a training course.

The aim of training the regional co-ordinators was to give them a deep insight into the background, content, actions etc of the programme and necessary skills and knowledge to ensure that the distribution of information about Youth For Europe as well as the guidance and advice about project management reaches both organised and unorganised youth groups at local level.

Over a period of time a network of 19 people, who were motivated to work voluntarily as programme regional co-ordinators, was put together. During 1998 a five-phased training course was organised in order to give them the necessary competence to perform their tasks as regional co-ordinators.

Regarding the necessity to be able to “talk of your own experience” and keeping in mind the specificity of the YFE programme, it was also important to ensure that the people in the network had an international experience (short study visit, international training, partner finding seminar) as a complementary element to a national training.

To be perfectly honest there were times over the period, while carrying out the training, when we – the agency – were puzzled by the direction the things

by Reet Kost



were taking. Like, for example, the expectations we had towards this network changed (the unexplainable delay of the network to start functioning in practice), and there were changes implemented to the programme and also to the overall aims of the network. Things are not always what they seem or what you want them to be I guess, and therefore flexibility and the ability to change the course of things is important. All in all even though the process was hard, the end result is still a success, for at this point we have a network of people in Estonia, who know the programme inside out and are able and willing to put some effort into the "messengers" tasks.

As to results...well...all members of the network have officiated at some information activities. The most frequent starting point has been an information session for local and regional youth workers that has also enabled the co-ordinators to create necessary contacts in the respective field. Also articles in local newspapers, information actions for local young people and counselling of specific projects have been organised.

Having the network in gear, which now covered the part of informing and counselling of the target groups we were faced with the need for people able to carry out training in various aspects that have to do with international co-operation in the youth field.

The idea was to form and train a team of 5 trainers, who would thereafter be able to prepare, run and evaluate different types of training activities in the youth work field at national level, with special attention to international youth work. The way to go about it at that point was to plan an 8 day training course together with Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia, which increased the challenge of the whole activity. Clearly the training needed some serious work put into it, therefore also professional trainers were asked to carry out the training. The participants selected were all youth workers who had experience in international youth work. The content of the training concentrated on different aspects concerning the analysis of the role of the trainer within international youth work, the specificity of the training within an intercultural context, skills training for trainers as well as special aspects of the Youth For Europe programme.

In our everyday work we can feel the relief which has resulted from the success of this training with regards to the team of trainers and resource people, whom we use whenever we have an upcoming training or information seminar. The intentional linguistic preparedness of the trainers also enables the Estonian Youth For Europe Agency to carry out activities in Russian which, given the actual situation in Estonia today, is the main language of approximately 40% of the population.

The cornerstone of the overall training strategy is nevertheless *training of young people (youth groups) who have the intention to realise a YFE project*. The need of it became apparent after some time of existence of the YFE programme in Estonia, where we saw the need for a project development training for unorganised youth groups who had no support from a youth worker nor from an organisation.

Each training (three times a year) involves approximately 30 young people from 10 to 15 projects. The most significant thing about this training is that it's been structured so that it gives the opportunity to go through all the phases of a concrete project which the young people take along in a form of an idea (sometimes it can be more than

an idea). During the course of the training they can develop the idea into a concrete action and finally submit the project for funding. Project development also includes the important aspects that sometimes get lost on the way while the project groups get too much caught up by management details and do not pay enough attention to the content of the project. Such aspects are: cultural preparation, communication, team work, active participation of all the participants, risk management, etc.

The training has proved to be sufficient in two ways: first of all there are always projects being submitted for the next deadline and second, and in my opinion more important, they show quality in partnership and dedication (ownership) to the project by young people themselves.

Has the investment paid off?

As we say in Estonia "Parem on seal, kus meid ei ole!" (the grass is always greener on the other side) and if we acted accordingly, we would never be satisfied and even hinder the positive aspects of our work. For in the short period of the YFE programme existing in Estonia and the even shorter period when it has been possible to submit a project, we have seen a big change in the quality of international youth exchange projects as well as the youth initiative projects. The biggest of these changes is the transformation from international youth camp type of activities to thematic youth exchanges where the educational, partnership and methodological aspects have been carefully thought through and planned.

The change has been the result of the support system in the form of training we have created. We have realised that if not given the possibility to reflect on why and how the things are done with regards to a YFE project, people do not always have the time or do not consider it such an important part of the success of a project's implementation.

What about the strategy?

To unravel some of the confusion - and move away from the artificial complexity we have piled around the strategy-making process - we need to get back to some basic concepts. The most basic of all is the intimate connection between thought and action. That is the key to craft, and so also to the crafting of strategy.

While it is certainly true that many intended strategies are ill-conceived, I believe that the problem often lies one step beyond that, in the distinction we make in the first place between formulation and implementation, the common assumption that thought must be independent of (and precede) action. Sure, people could be smarter - but not only by conceiving smarter strategies. Sometimes they can be smarter to allow their strategies to develop gradually, through the organisation's actions and experiences. Smart strategies appreciate that they cannot always be smart enough to think through everything in advance.

Estonian Youth For Europe Agency
Kohru 6, Tallinn, Estonia
tel: (372) 6 962 420
fax: (372) 6 962 426
e-mail: reet@euedu.ee



Let your Heart Beat in their Community



"Many organisations that practise a policy of diversity ask themselves a basic question: How can we recruit people from another background than ours and include them in our programme? How can we motivate them in a way that ensures continuity over a long-term period? In this article I will describe the way I do this in my work."

Introduction

It is becoming more and more of a social-political rule to include people from different backgrounds in our work. The majority (the largest group of people with the same ethnic-cultural background in a given setting) is continuously looking for ways to make their work accessible to other groups, including different minorities.

Many organisations that practise a policy of diversity ask themselves a basic question: How can we recruit people from another background than ours and include them in our programme? How can we motivate them in a way that ensures continuity over a long-term period?

In this article I will describe the way I do this in my work.

A personal example

In August 1998 a 'motivation' - project was started in the municipality of Capelle aan den IJssel in Holland. The aim of this project was to motivate unemployed people to find a job or at least to follow a course which would make it easier for them to find a job in the near future.

The target group

The project targeted young people of Dutch-Caribbean background from the Dutch Antilles (five islands which are a dependency of the Kingdom of the Netherlands). The project focuses on two specific groups: young people between 18 and 30 and single mothers.

The working context

There is a relatively high concentration of Dutch-Caribbean people in the neighbourhood of Middelwatering which is situated in the municipality of Capelle aan den IJssel. The

majority are unemployed and do not have much prospect of getting a job. They either do not have the necessary requirements or do not know how to proceed to be eligible for a job on the labour market.

At present, our target group receive their income from the local social services (minimum income). Over the years, they have developed a lifestyle that often implies not having the discipline, routine, attitude and commitment towards work which is necessary for everybody who wants to be active in the labour market.

Like many other unemployed people, a lot of the people in our target group tend to go to bed very late and get up late the next morning. Besides, their contact with the rest of the community is at a minimum level. They have little confidence in the local government and among them there exists a feeling of alienation from 'the system', that is from most governmental institutions and organisations.

For its part, the local government has realised that it has not succeeded in its action as an intermediary for jobs for the Dutch-Caribbeans through its regular offer.

The regular offer consists in an individual coaching programme for all unemployed people. This programme is set up in four phases which are related to the distance that exists between the unemployed person and the labour market. 'Distance' in this context means the amount of effort the unemployed person has to make to find a job. From this perspective, people who have been unemployed for less than a year are in phase 1 because they have a better chance of finding a job. The distance is not so great because not long ago they were operating in a setting where discipline and

by Nynoshca Fecunda



... the process and the relationship with each other are more important than the task or the result to be achieved ...

commitment were required. In phase 4 you find people who have been unemployed for over three years. They have a longer distance to the labour market. They will be coached more intensively, because in most cases they need to become motivated again, to believe in themselves and to recognise the importance of working or going to school.

But this approach limited to individual coaching is not successful for everybody; in particular it did not work for most of the people from a Caribbean background. To improve the social situation of the Dutch-Caribbeans living in Capelle aan den IJssel, the local government therefore decided to delegate responsibility to an external bureau, 'Dividiviconsult', which has experience in this kind of work.

The approach

Our target group needs an approach that most fits their lifestyle. Dividiviconsult was already aware that the target group would not react to the traditional initiatives. An example of the latter is sending out letters to invite people to follow an individual coaching programme. Generally, Dutch-Caribbean people will not react to these letters; they just do not appeal to them. Sometimes they do not even open the envelopes.

An alternative approach has therefore been developed. Instead of doing all the work from the office and sending letters to people, interviewing them about their wishes and possibilities, making an individual plan for each of them, etc., a more dynamic and interactive approach has been found. This new approach looks at the relations existing within the community.

Before saying more about the approach, it is important to talk about the communities we are working with: the white Dutch community and the black Dutch community.

The white Dutch community, the majority in this case, is generally speaking, individualistic-oriented. There is a Dutch saying that goes: 'Take care of yourself and God will take care of the rest'. This saying illustrates the idea that everybody is personally responsible for what he or she makes of his or her life. This point of view suggests that the concrete result is more important than the process by which you get the result (including social relationships). This is why white Dutch people are seen as task-

oriented people. They will tend to make efforts to accomplish a task most of the time, regardless of the price they may have to pay for it.

The black Dutch community (of Caribbean background) on the other hand is more collectivist-oriented. People prefer to do things in groups, are more motivated to do things when they are working together. This often means that the process and the relationship with each other are more important than the task or the result to be achieved.

For example, the black community would like to have a space where they can organise leisure time activities for their youngsters after school. A small building is put at the disposal of young people between 12 and 16 years to organise activities. The community received permission to make use of the building for two hours per week. One of their activities is a dance group for children who should have the chance to practice for dance performances. In spite of the age restriction set by the municipality, the black community includes children under 12 years or teenagers over 16 years into their activity. If they did not include them, it would be experienced by the rest of the black community as not fair towards the children who want to take part but cannot do it because of their ages. On the other hand, the management of the foundation which belongs to the white Dutch community applies the age rule that has been agreed upon with the local government. Even though the management of the foundation has complete understanding for the situation, in their opinion they have no possibilities to change it. Currently, some negotiations are taking place between both parties and a mediator. If they fail to come to an agreement, the activity will be stopped.

In this situation it is very important as a professional to acquire a position of understanding and trust from all the parties involved. It is the task of the professional to invest in both parties in order from the beginning, to build up a relationship based on trust. To do so, we started to go personally to the neighbourhoods, to visit people at home, to go to activities organised for and by people themselves and to help them solve the problems they had with the community or with particular persons. Like this a stable foundation of trust was built up.

We soon found out who were the key persons in the community. Especially with these key persons we built up a solid relationship based

on trust. This means that we asked them for feedback on our plans; we discussed problems of the community with them, and we helped them to find solutions. The key persons receive a lot of respect from the community. It was therefore important to involve them in our plans and to make sure that they supported our ideas. Like this, we had a bigger chance that the rest of the community would do so as well.

The results

A very important part of our work is group activity. Most of the people we want to work with belong to phase 4. The distance of our target group from the labour market is big. So the idea is to create activities that motivate people to become active again and eventually to become interested in going back to school or finding a job.

We tried to achieve these results by providing empowerment training. And we wanted to recruit both men and women participants in this training.

We had different ways of recruiting our participants. Partly we contacted people during our visits to their activities in the neighbourhood. We also found participants through personal problem-solving contacts. For instance we helped them to deal with problems of huge debts, or lack of knowledge about which governmental institution could provide certain services, such as the right school for their children. During such contacts, we advised people or brought them in contact with relevant institutions.

Besides these ways of recruiting people for the project, we also used the experience of the key persons to find participants. We thus organised a meeting with the key persons to explain to them what we wanted to do and for what reasons. We encouraged them to give us feedback and made them enthusiastic about our plans. Finally, we agreed that they would go back to their community and look for participants, according to their motivation and best will, whom they think will fit best into the empowerment training that we provided.

Only women have applied for the empowerment training. We were curious about why men did not apply. We found out that in the Dutch-Caribbean community men participate in neighbourhood activities but do not feel attracted by activities like training

courses. For them 'training' is something for women. They support the women's participation but do not consider training as something that they can participate in.

At this stage we are developing an alternative approach for men. It seems that they are very involved in sports activities. They have their own volleyball, football and domino clubs etc. We are going to use these gatherings to approach the men. Our aim is to find out how we can use what they are interested in and how we can develop a programme that better meets their needs.

Conclusions

In order to reach people of a different ethnic-cultural background it is important to know what these people perceive as important in their lives. You have to take the people and their activities seriously, start at the point where the people are right now, listen carefully to what they want and try to include this as much as possible in your programme. Involve the people for whom the project is meant in the project. It is important that participants can identify themselves with the project.

On this basis, you can build a relationship based on trust with the community. The feeling of being taken seriously and of being respected plays an important role. Give the people what they want in a way that is acceptable to all parties. In most cases, if people get what they think is important for them they will gradually become open to new ideas.

To find out what they need, ask the people themselves. Often people know what they need, but sometimes they just do not know how to get it or do not yet have the ability to get it by themselves. Therefore it is always important to be personally motivated to do this kind of work, because this motivation enables us not only to think, analyse and structure the situation but, above all, to empathise with the people we are working with. Make a connection with their heart. Let the people feel that your heart beats in their community as well.

Contact address: Nynoshca@vrouwen.net



... The feeling of
being taken seriously
and of being
respected plays an
important role ...



... Make a
connection with their
heart ...



The Preparation of **Soldiers** for a Peace-supporting Mission

Continuing our debate about how training can prepare for dealing with other cultures, Coyote wanted to know how soldiers are prepared for a peace-supporting mission. How different is their training from a preparation of, for example, volunteers in a European Voluntary Service programme?

by Charly Pauwels



My name is Charly Pauwels and I'm a Belgian Army major. For the moment, I'm the deputy commander of the Belgian reconnaissance battalion that has been designated to prepare for a peace-supporting mission in Kosovo. In some of my previous postings, I've been involved very closely in the preparation and finally in the execution of two missions in former Yugoslavia. So, I took part in the UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force) and the UNTAES (United Nations Transitional Administration for East-Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srem) missions. During those missions I experienced personally that not only the military skills of our soldiers were important.

I do not have the intention to describe the complete instruction and training of our soldiers who will take part at a humanitarian mission abroad. Much more I prefer to emphasise the non-military preparation of our personnel.

At the very beginning of the conflict in former Yugoslavia, seminars on different political and military levels were put together. They had as an objective to estimate the possible influences of this conflict for our society. Very soon it turned out that Europe had to react to stabilise the situation in its backyard because this conflict expanded so quickly, some dared to talk about a third world war. It hasn't come that far, but for the moment the conflict is still going on. The cultural and historical differences among all parties involved living on in the former Yugoslavian territory are so huge that peace seems impossible. It is very important that a soldier taking part in a mission in a foreign, often unknown country, is aware of the existing

differences between the warring factions so that he can act as a peace-bringer instead of unconsciously worsening the situation.

The military part of the UN mission in Croatia was under Belgian command and ended successfully thanks to the effort of well trained soldiers, coming from all over the world. The most urgent task was to stop the hostilities in order to create a non-violent atmosphere to start the peace-process. To realise this, a demilitarised zone was created in order to separate the conflicting parties. Then soldiers and civilians were disarmed and the military organisation was disbanded. Very soon after that, refugees and displaced persons started returning to their homes and elections were organised. According to the latest information the situation is actually almost completely normalised. All soldiers involved in the operation, regardless of their rank, gained a lot of experience. They have learned in very difficult circumstances to manage a conflict that wasn't theirs. They have learned to be neutral and diplomatic lifesavers without considering the nationality, language and religion of the inhabitants.

This experience will be of great help in the preparation and execution of future peace supporting operations.

Recently the Belgian government reacted positively on NATO's request to send troops to Kosovo. Belgian soldiers will take part in this huge military organisation and will look for the restoration of peace in this region. This mission was baptised KFOR (Kosovo FORce).



The Belgian battalion is, among others, composed of specialised detachments of infantry, cavalry, reconnaissance, pioneer and logistic units. The personnel of these units have to be trained in different specific domains. Each unit has, according to its specialisation, its own instruction and training programme but a lot of lessons are common for each member of the battalion.

In general, although the mandate for each mission can be different, lessons are given in the next following domains: conflict prevention, peace keeping, humanitarian aid, peace enforcement and peace building.

Let me stress the non-military (mental) preparation of our personnel.

At battalion level and higher there are personnel who are responsible for gathering information on the future areas of action.

A general orientation, related to

- ▷ geography (relief, vegetation, hydrography),
- ▷ territorial organisation (communities, districts, provinces),
- ▷ population (numbers, composition),
- ▷ economy (agriculture, energy, soil exploitation),
- ▷ social services, history (of the country, of the conflict, actual situation),
- ▷ spoken languages (Serbian, Albanian, ...),
- ▷ religion (Catholic, Orthodox, Islam),
- ▷ habits, taboos and ethnic contrasts

is used to familiarise our personnel with the country and its population.

Not every soldier needs to have a thorough knowledge in all of these domains. For most of them, general information is sufficient to understand in what game they are going to play. For a few though, it is more important to have a

larger knowledge in all of the above mentioned domains. Negotiators and the key personnel of the units for instance, have to be aware of the political and military framework of the country. Each battalion disposes of several liaison officers (= negotiators on battalion level) whose mission it is to keep and stay in contact with each faction in civilian and military affairs and to negotiate at their units level in case of problems or incidents. For them it is also useful to know the people they work with. "Knowledge makes powerful" is an expression that explains all. The more you know the stronger you are. In order to achieve this, courses and lectures in "techniques of negotiating" are organised.

To make it easier for our soldiers in mission, a code of conduct is imposed. Most of the rules given are of course the same for each mission but some of them depend on the culture they will be dropped in.

Some examples are:

- The attitude of our men towards the local women. In some cultures it can be experienced as a gross insult when a foreign man looks at a local girl. Leaving on a mission with young men and women, who are far away from home for a longer period, is for some not easy. The past gives enough examples to show what I mean. How many soldiers of the different armies that occupied Germany after the Second World War didn't have a relationship with German girls? The same happened with our soldiers during the missions in Croatia. Although this is very human, it can cause severe problems. Can one be neutral if he has a relationship with a girl from the nation he ►►

Picture

A Serbian sign.

This picture was taken in 1993 at the entrance of a Croatian village, completely destroyed by Serbs. Do not immediately judge the act but try first to understand the reason



**... conflict
prevention, peace
keeping,
humanitarian
aid, peace
enforcement and
peace building ...**



... Do not immediately judge an act when you don't know its background ...



Picture

Two religions (in Bosnia). Understanding each other makes it possible to live together in peace

has to control? In order to avoid these kinds of situations it is most of the time forbidden for our soldiers to have any close contacts with the local people.

- The attitude of our military women towards local men. There are some cultures where women occupy an inferior place in their community and where it is not accepted when a woman possesses some power. We have to avoid that women operate alone and to make sure that male colleagues always accompany them. Our women are thought to understand the possible reactions.
- The attitude towards children is not to be neglected. The definition of what a child is seems to be for some nations different from what we think it should be. As for most countries in the world, soldiers have to be at least 18 years old. In some of the central African countries this is not always the case. As soon as a person, regardless of his/her age, can carry a rifle, he can be enlisted. It happened in Somalia that a soldier came face to face with what we call a child. That so-called innocent child, who, just by being a child, easily captured our soldier's heart, managed to infiltrate in our compounds and when it didn't get what it wanted, became a dangerous fighter, ready to use a hidden weapon. Nothing serious happened but valuable lessons have been learned.
- The possession of pornographic material is in some strict Moslem countries forbidden by law and has to be excluded for some missions. Our soldiers have to understand that possessing such material can cause problems. The easiest

way to avoid any incident is to forbid anything that can shock others.

- In some cultures, the drinking of alcoholic beverages is completely forbidden and in others it can be a way to show their hospitality and, refusing a drink, can be an insult.
- Etc...

Based on my own experiences, I have tried to explain that not only knowing your job is enough to do it right. The knowledge of the framework you have to work in is as important. I advise every young man and woman to be open to other cultures and to try to understand them without comparing them with their own culture. This comparison, in order to understand why the other one does something completely different than you do, will not make you wiser. Do not immediately judge an act when you don't know its background. The reason, why nation X does something, is, for a lot of people, not important when they are looking at the way this nation acts. When you are designated to work with that nation, knowing their reasons will make it easier to do your job.

For all those leaving for a mission in a foreign environment: read a lot and talk with those who were there before you.

Good luck!

My military postal address:

Major Charly Pauwels, Eerste Jagers te Paard,
Michellaan 3, B-3970 Leopoldsborg, Belgium
e-mail: charly.pauwels@skynet.be



Myths around Conflict Management

Myths

"This article shares with you some of those stereotypes (or myths as I call them) which exist around conflict management. These stereotypes have been seen by myself throughout my experience of working as a trainer in the conflict management field in Georgia."

One of those very important things that I have learned as a trainer is that, it is the group that counts. Whatever is going to be said or written, the group (or the audience) should be taken into consideration. This is what I had in my mind while writing this article. Who are the potential readers of it? My colleagues or participants of various training programmes? Or maybe even those who have never heard anything about conflict management? Whoever you are, there are very different things to share...

This article shares with you some of those stereotypes (or myths as I call them) which exist around conflict management. These stereotypes have been seen by myself throughout my experience of working as a trainer in the conflict management field in Georgia. Whatever I call myths in this article, have been expressed by participants in their questions, and exactly these questions are most often asked during the training programmes according to my experience.

There are several myths around conflict management in society. I'll try to discuss some of them briefly here, in order to either neutralise or give them some realistic basis.

Myth 1

After my participation in Conflict Management Training, conflict will never happen to me.

Over a long period of time I have come to realise that this is one of the main expectations of the majority of participants. But this does not express at all my thoughts as a trainer about conflict management training programmes. Therefore, recently I started conducting my training on conflict management with neutralisation of this myth as a main aim.

After all, this myth may sound quite fair, if it is transformed into the question: What does it

really mean for me if I participate in a conflict management training programme? Will it be possible to avoid conflicts completely in the future?

Conflict is an indivisible part of our lives. Everywhere, where there is any kind of a movement, there is a conflict. The existence of conflict itself is not a negative phenomenon. Quite often conflicts lead us to positive outcomes: we better understand the problem, better analyse our own behaviour, needs and interests, we better understand our partners and, above all, conflict may serve as a resource for establishing co-operative relations with them.

On the other hand, there are many examples when conflict is followed by polarisation, positional fighting, a waste of various resources and even violence. There is no need for me to cite examples here, I think.

Outcomes of conflict are dependent not so much on the content of a concrete conflict, but rather on the skills and knowledge of the parties involved regarding how to manage the situation. Thus, conflict itself is neither negative nor positive. What is negative, is the process of the escalation of a conflict. So, on the one hand, it is possible (and worthwhile) to increase skills in conflict management – learning how to manage conflicts, and, on the other hand, it is practically impossible to avoid all conflicts throughout one's life. After all, even if it is realistic to avoid them, why should one avoid something that could become a resource for the achievement of various positive outcomes?

Thus, the assumption that after participation in a conflict management training programme conflict will never be experienced in the future by someone, is really a myth. The reality is that it is possible to avoid the escalation of a conflict. ➤



by Sofiko Shubladze



Myth 2

One of the parties involved in a conflict is right and all others are wrong.

This myth is often presented in questions asked by participants in conflict management training programmes in the following way: How can we identify who is wrong and who is right in a conflict situation?

And, really, how can one identify it? What could be the barometer, which measures this correctly? If you have ever listened to two different parties involved in conflict, you may have noticed how different from each other the two views are you have heard. Sometimes, it sounds as if we have been told two different stories. And quite often neither of them is "wrong", i.e., both parties are telling the truth. But, we should be aware of the fact that this is the truth seen by their eyes and heard by their ears.

Yes, reality is subjective. The logic of the emotional world is not as strict as the laws of physics. For instance, we all know that if we throw an object up, it will fall down. (This is obviously not the truth in a context of the whole universe - it will not happen in the place where gravity is not present). The laws of the emotional world are not so solid. What makes one happy, could have a very negative influence on another's mood...What is important for one person, is not essential for another...

Subjective realities - we could also call them alternative realities - are developed on the basis of personal experience. Also, they are influenced very much by those social groups, which the person represents. This group could be a family, neighbourhood, professional unit, ethnicity, nationality, etc.

In order to better understand how subjective realities influence peoples' perception of various events, let me give you an example. Let's for a moment try to discuss who or what is "a drug addict". There are several parties who may consider this issue from different points of view. For instance, for doctors drug addicts are patients, for police they are criminals, for representatives of the orthodox church they are general sinners, for those who are involved in the drug business, they are clients, and so on and so on. Now, imagine a conflict situation when a doctor and a policeman argue whether drug addicts are patients who need special treatment or rather criminals who should be put in prison. And in this situation you try to answer the question: who is right or wrong in this conflict? Probably you would agree that in this case this approach is not so effective, and it is worthwhile to say that both parties involved are right based on their subjective reality. When we ask others to see, interpret, or evaluate events the way we do, this indirectly means that we ask them to deny their own subjective reality, and thus, to ignore their own past experience. How rational is this approach?

On the other hand, of course, there are some situations when one of the parties involved in a conflict just does not tell the truth - this party lies. Thus, the question about whether it is possible or not to identify who's right and who's wrong is partially fair. However, approaching conflict situations with the question "Who's right?" is not so rational and requires reconsideration.

Myth 3

In addition to these two myths or stereotypes about conflict management, there is one more stereotype, which could be expressed as follows:

The party involved in conflict chooses collaboration as a strategy for conflict management, only because he/she is generally "nice" (or "kind", or "altruistic").

This stereotype, for me, can be linked to another question for discussion. What is collaboration? Is it a skill, which may bring benefit in some cases? Or, maybe it is rather a general attitude, and its selection as a strategy for conflict management is related to the basic personal characteristics of a party?

Further discussion of this issue would take us into the depths of social sciences, which I would like to avoid in this article. I would just add that I try to include into conflict management training programmes relevant examples, exercises or cases, which help participants to realise that one should attempt to co-operate. This is not because co-operation is more altruistic, but because in most cases collaboration is more beneficial than any other type of conflict management strategy.

My experience tells me that, when this idea is understood by participants, then the concept of collaboration and joint problem-solving becomes more acceptable and realistic.

So, I have tried to share with you some of the strong stereotypes, which exist among participants when I conduct conflict management training programmes in Georgia. All of these stereotypes under discussion are expressed in many ways, usually in frequently asked questions.

A couple of questions for you now: Are they really myths around conflict management, as I called them here? Or is this my subjective reality, based on my personal experience?

Contact address: Kiacheli St. 14, Tbilisi 380008, Georgia
tel: (995 32) 99 77 88,
fax: (995 32) 92 17 49,
e-mail: pdcgeo@access.sanet.ge





Ethics in Training

The POWER of the Trainer

Based on his experiences as a trainer in international youth activities and in his organisation, Miguel Angel poses some essential questions on how trainers use their power.

Power and trainer are two words with a lot of different meanings and understandings. The combination of the two concepts opens a lot of vistas from which we can approach the always sensitive issue of "the power of the trainer".

The approach that I want to share with you is a self-critical one. It comes from my own experience as a trainer in international youth-activities. Based on my concrete experience, putting my thoughts into words and without generalising, I would like to provoke some reflections in the readers of Coyote, particularly from the large spectrum of trainers (each of them with their particular training experience).

Awareness of our power as trainers

Understanding power as the capacity to decide, change or influence, trainers should first of all be aware of their power. In a training activity trainers do decide, change and influence while organising, planning, leading, facilitating, and evaluating... We do have power as trainers.

Assuming this power means assuming the tasks and responsibilities (with their limits) of being trainers. Without the assumption of our responsibilities as trainers, our power would be something just esthetical, without any content, or in the worst case pure authoritarianism.

The scope of our power as trainers

Our direct power as trainers concerns mainly abstract things (programmes, planning, methods and timetables...). But our, in principle, impersonal decisions have a very important impact on people - mainly on trainees but also on other members of the team. We should be more aware of this, even if we have probably experienced it very often. (In this article, I use the words "participants" and "trainees" to name the same people. The

associated meaning that I have in mind is that "participant" expresses more the notion of "being part of..." - more co-responsible" while "trainee" expresses more "being the target of a training..." - more receiver".)

While being aware of the consequences of our decisions on the trainees, we should not think or pretend to have a direct and automatic power over them. This not just because we cannot predict the results of the training on the trainees, but also because of our respect of them as autonomous individuals. This respect requires among other things, flexibility in the programme, readiness to assume unexpected results, openness to new ideas and willingness to listen to the comments and evaluation of participants. In the same way, outside the strict training programme we should avoid any use of our power. Some trainers, without being asked to do so, try to direct trainees even during a free day.

Some characteristics of our power as trainers

The trainer's power is normally given.

The trainer's power is normally given by the organiser of a particular training; it is not something that we possess by virtue of the fact of being trainers. I would not feel the need of formulating so evident a statement if I had not observed trainers making use of their power outside of training situations. Such behaviour very often shows our deficiencies and insecurities as trainers rather than our qualities or professionalism.

I am not suggesting that trainers should take on some other role outside of the training situation. But I think that we should distinguish more clearly between different moments, places and situations. Outside a training situation, we are still the same person but we should not

by Miguel Angel Garcia López



make use of the power given to us for and during the training.

The power, which is given to the trainer, is therefore limited.

How many times have we tried to alter aspects of a training activity already decided upon or beyond our competence as trainers (e.g. the profile of a training course, the profile of participants, budgets, the length of the course...)? Sometimes, it is difficult for us to accept the limitations of a training course. Sometimes as trainers we deeply disagree with some points but no channel exists to put forward our opinions. But the way of solving these problems should be through dialogue, negotiation and evaluation with all the people involved, and not by taking decisions on our own which are beyond our competence.

Of course, trainers must have some freedom and flexibility in determining many organisational aspects of the training but if we abuse it, this flexibility will be sooner or later questioned and probably cut down.

The trainer's responsibilities: some responsibilities are more attractive than others.

All of us have probably experienced this many times. Some tasks and decisions are easily appreciated by trainees but some others not so much. For example, in general, it is not so attractive to guarantee that participants will make a report as it is to lead an interesting dynamic exercise with them.

These two aspects of being a trainer are not so visible to participants (some of whom may well become "new trainers"). If these two aspects are not accepted and transmitted from the beginning, a partial image of what is involved in being a trainer will be reproduced and multiplied. And it will have to be questioned and confronted, sooner or later by our own trainees, in the stages of the process of becoming trainers themselves.

Trainers have different talents and fields of specialisation. Tasks should therefore be divided accordingly among the trainers working in a team. At the same time, I think that it is always a challenge to assume integral the responsibility for a training process. Being a member of a training team should not be something "à la carte".

The power of a trainer is something shared.

A team of trainers is a privileged space for living co-responsibility and for the sharing of power. This is easy to say but difficult to do.

Sometimes, what in principle should be an exercise of sharing - the distribution of tasks - becomes a competition for power: each trainer tries to take responsibility for the most attractive elements and leave the rest to the others. Too often, in the discussions and decisions of a trainers' team, under the arguments of experience, skills, professionalism and dedication, we can discover a competition for power going on among the trainers. And this competition is obviously projected onto the participants.

A training is always a collective process in which every person involved should have and assume his or her responsibilities and in that sense, make use power in a spirit of collaboration and not of competition.

After all of this...

You might have the feeling that I think that power is something rather dangerous and that the best thing that trainers should do with it is to be careful and approach it with a lot of precautions... This is not exactly what I mean.

I see a very positive and enormous power in training and in trainers: they can contribute with their work to the building of a better society for every human being. But trainers have this kind of POWER only if their training has a real influence afterwards in reality, only if through the training they contribute to the transformation of society.

We should remain ambitious to work in that direction. To achieve this aim, it might be good to reconsider from time to time how we are using our power as trainers within training. This is what I mean.

Contact address: Miguel Angel Garcia López,
Penter Weg 11, D-49565 Bramsche, Germany
tel: +49-(0)5461880364,
fax: +49-(0)403603305266,
e-mail: mbercia@aol.com



The **H S F** coefficient

Is *Training* related to *Real Life*?

Why do people **lie**?

честность - honesty
искренность - sincerity
откровенность - frankness
жизненная позиция - attitude to life

Overview

If you are not very fluent in English, please look up the words honesty, sincerity, frankness and attitude in a dictionary before reading this article.

Message

Training courses rather than "traditional" seminars can have an impact on the behaviour and "outlook on life" of participants. Training courses must therefore avoid creating a "greenhouse" atmosphere in which it is impossible for participants to be honest, sincere and frank. This atmosphere decreases the efficiency of training courses. Do not underestimate the role of the "unofficial" parts of seminars - parties, pubs, and other get-togethers.

Introduction

Let me introduce myself. I am the leader of a Russian NGO for international co-operation, projects and exchanges. I have been involved in international youth activities since 1988 and have seen a lot of different youth events in many different countries. I have also organised a good many international seminars, study trips, conferences and exchanges in Russia. Although I have never organised a training course myself, nor been in a training course preparation team, I have taken part in several European seminars and training courses.

What is the main difference between a training course and an ordinary seminar?

In my opinion, a traditional seminar (study trip, youth exchange) is mainly focused on the transfer or exchange of information (experience, skills) while a training course is mainly concerned with the transfer of attitudes (motivation, behaviour).

When you receive new information (experience, skills), you can either keep it to yourself or use it in your life. But when your attitude changes (towards any specific subject, or more generally towards life itself), so does your general outlook on life.

In other words, a training course can help to change your lifestyle, your behaviour, and even your values.

Is it true? Can a training course actually have an influence on the real life of its participants?

Some examples: At a conference of the Environment for Europe programme, a trainer from OSCE said: "I don't understand why you NGOs don't like your environment ministers. When they attend our training events, they know how to play the role of NGO leaders" ➤

by Andrey Ozharovskii



perfectly well. They understand your position perfectly. They are quite friendly towards NGOs." But the NGO representatives just laughed at this statement. Unfortunately, when the ministers return home, they are still the same "unforgettable bureaucrats". At that training event they received information, but their *attitude* to NGOs did not change... At the seminar they simply *demonstrated* "the right attitude", as the trainer expected.

ЧЕСТНОСТЬ

During another international training programme (LEAD), we had a comprehensive role game. We played the roles of different stake holders in negotiations and bargained for a "loan" for our "country". The aim of the game was consensus building, using a win-win strategy, etc. We were about 150 participants from 9 countries of 5 continents. Did we reach a consensus in this game? Yes. Did we succeed later on when we tried to draft a document about real problems of our real countries. No. Why? It is easy to find a solution in a game - but not in real life.

Another example: At one of the European Youth Centre's training courses we had a perfect discussion - in a seminar room - about national equality (all different - all equal...). But during the informal part of the course - at evening parties - nobody wanted to dance with a black girl. Did the attitude which the participants professed in the classroom differ from their real "everyday" attitude? Or did they just not like black girls?

Please ask yourself, have you been in situations like that? I mean, have you ever noticed that the things you say and the way you behave in a seminar room differ from your position and behaviour in everyday life? Even if you haven't, continue reading this article...

искренность

Greenhouse - the atmosphere of the classroom

A seminar or a training course often seem to have something of the atmosphere of a greenhouse. You are sitting in a comfortable room with a warm atmosphere and friendly, intelligent moderators and trainers. The

discussion is about your life, but at present your real life is somewhere far away. You know that lunch and dinner will be on time, and you are looking forward to the evening programme...

Just as a flower in a greenhouse differs from one in a field, so the behaviour at a seminar or training course differs from that in everyday life... You do not want to raise "impolite" questions for you are on your best behaviour. You decide it is better to say exactly what the trainer wants to hear...

I agree that in general it is easier to keep silent than to ask anything "impolite" or "ill-mannered". But we are talking about training for youth workers, who should be prepared to talk to people and be able to defend their position.

The challenge

For both trainees and trainers the challenge is to create an atmosphere of Honesty, Sincerity and Frankness (HSF). This is not easy. Only a really good trainer can achieve it.

Both trainer and trainees have to recognise the danger of "playing a game". Don't be afraid to show your real opinion, not the opinion which is expected of you. Don't lie.

There are many reasons, why trainers and trainees sometimes prefer to hide their real emotions and attitudes and to behave as ideal persons, and not as they behave in everyday life. In Coyote #0, Carol-Ann Morris described The Perfect Training Event. But isn't there is the danger that the Ideal Trainee may really be an accomplished liar, deceiver, conformist? Changing the attitudes of trainees is certainly not an easy thing to do. But the "Ideal Trainee" could easily *simulate* a change without any real change happening at all.

Something similar happens when an experienced person fills in an application form for an activity at the European Youth Centre. He or she knows the key words and right answers, and fills in the application as an Ideal Applicant, not as a real person.

The HSF coefficient (Honesty, Sincerity, Frankness)

I would like to suggest the introduction of a HSF coefficient as one of the indicators of the success of a training course.

When during the coffee break participants say "What an useless seminar" and in the seminar room the same people say: "Thanks to the organisers for a perfect seminar" - something is definitely wrong... It shows that the HSF coefficient of that seminar is quite low.

It is easy to evaluate an "information-orientated" seminar. You have acquired some new information (a formula, a poem, a computer programme) or you have not acquired anything new. But how are we to evaluate an "attitude-orientated" training course? How are we to know, if the attitude of trainees has changed?

Methods

Let us consider the following methods of increasing HSF.

Icebreaker exercises allow trainers and trainees to get to know each other in an informal way, to establish a degree of personal contact, which is an important precondition for being honest, sincere and frank in the seminar room.

Role games, theatre exercises and suchlike are aimed at overcoming the classroom situation. They create an informal atmosphere which allows participants to behave as in real life, not as in a seminar.

Rigorous discussions are another method, although they are more appropriate in long-term educational programmes. In training courses there is never enough time to go deeper into a subject.

Flashback groups are small discussion groups which meet at the end of each day where the participants can share their feelings and impressions. Flashback groups are specifically intended to increase the HSF of a seminar. In these groups, people can talk about their own

individual problems. But many participants consider even flashback groups as a part of the official "classroom" programme. I heard of a girl who was experiencing a degree of sexual harassment (not violent) from fellow trainees. She talked about it in her flashback group and her persecutors agreed that this was not a good situation. Do you think anything changed in "real life" afterwards? No, every night she had to look for protection from her admirers.

откровенность

A joke

A Russian trainer said that the success of a seminar could be described in terms of the "liperemug" coefficient calculated by multiplying the number of litres of alcoholic beverages that participants consumed by the percentage volume of alcohol in these drinks and dividing it by the number of participants' mugs (i.e. faces).

O.K., this is about the usual stereotype that Russians are heavy drinkers. But the truth in this joke is that when you have a Russian-style alcohol party as a seminar evening programme, it is impossible to behave as in a classroom. And, quite often, seminar issues are discussed during these parties more frankly, sincerely and honestly than during the official part. So, our way of breaking out of the greenhouse atmosphere is to do it with a bottle!

So, as far as we Russians are concerned, the liperemug coefficient increases that of HSF. I wonder if this works for other nations? Seriously, I would like to know whether the issue of HSF is important for other trainers and trainees? What do you do to solve this problem?

ЖИЗНЕННАЯ ПОЗИЦИЯ

My personal metnouns

As I said in the introduction, I do not run any trainings, but I do try to increase the HSF of the seminars I am running in my country. Last October, IDC organised an International Youth Environmental Working Camp in Novorossiysk, on the Black Sea coast. I did two simple things - I took an active part in "the night programme" - I stayed at the parties until 4-5 a.m. every morning, and on the first day of the seminar we organised a study visit to a local brewery. ►►

sincerity

... Don't be afraid to
show your real
opinion, not the
opinion which is
expected of you.
Don't lie ...

honesty



... and about
changing our
behaviour in
real life, not in the
classroom ...

(Brewing is a good issue to discuss environmental protection, water pollution, etc.) The closing ceremony took place in the Champagne museum in Abrau Durso.

So, my "flashback groups" took place during the night parties, when in an informal atmosphere participants could comment on the situation and problems. I hope that beer and champagne also helped to encourage unofficial communication, where anyone could say: "Hey, Andrey, what a stupid lecture you gave to us today!", or "I got so tired of digging with a shovel today, can't you find an easier job for me?"

A positive example

I find that there are too many negative messages in this article. I do not mean that I do not like the idea of European training courses. I think they are very important and that they have great potential.

At one event in the European Youth Centre there were two boys in the "Russian speaking group" from two Caucasus republics which were (frankly speaking) in a state of war (the republics, not the boys). One of the boys was 18 and had to go to the army two months later (he is probably there now). The two were not very friendly to each other. The future soldier even said once that his dream was to kill 3 or 4 guys of the hostile nation. Nothing strange - the official ideology of his country...

But they both participated in our evening programme (pubs, discos, etc.). Once, after a great party one boy did a great service to his "enemy" - by carrying him from a pub to the Youth Centre. You know, for the rest of the seminar, "the two gentlemen from the Caucasus" were together. I do not know if they really became friends, but I hope that since then neither of them has dreamt of killing boys of the other nation.

I do not know if this example proves the importance of *training courses or parties*. But it is about *changing the attitude* towards other nations. And about changing our behaviour in real life, not in the classroom.

Personal

I am not sure that the issue I wanted to raise in this article is important for other trainers and trainees. I have tried to indicate its importance with some examples. My sensitivity to the issue of Honesty, Sincerity, Frankness can probably be explained by my experience of living under communist rule. I graduated from secondary school at the time of the Soviet Union and I know all about lies and falsehood in the classroom. It was a great surprise for me to feel something similar at European training courses run today.

Let's be Honest, Sincere and Frank!

Contact address:

International Discussion Club - Moscow (IDC)

e-mail: andrey@host.cis.lead.org,

<http://idc.cis.lead.org/>





Coyote Meets Trainers

Coyote is a curious little creature and is fond of wandering around across Europe to meet trainers in the field. Are you interested to get a picture on how your colleagues in the field of training think and feel? Then this is your section.

Jennifer Nold was born in 1961 in Chicago, USA. Right after obtaining her university degree in American Studies she taught English Literature and Humanities for a few years in a high school. At the same time she participated in a course with Outward Bound and quickly decided to join the organisation as a trainer.

Outward Bound is a sailing term. It is the flag, which is hoisted by the captain when he knows that his ship and crew are ready to leave the safety of the harbour and venture upon the open sea. To be 'Outward Bound' is to be involved in a process of movement, exploration and change.

And that is exactly what Jen did. While working for Outward Bound in the States part-time for eight years, she also spent a year working in New Zealand. Increasing interest in cross-cultural issues then led her to Outward Bound South Africa. Her work there was stimulating and enriching, both professionally and personally: in South Africa she also fell in love with a Belgian Outward Bounder. Since 1993 she has worked and lived in the town of Leuven in Belgium, where she facilitates Outward Bound programmes both for the commercial and the non-profit worlds, with national and international groups.

These days, 'Outward Bound' is primarily recognised as the name of the international organisation specialised in outdoor development training where adventurous activities are used to create opportunities for personal and interpersonal development. Today the organisation is represented in 32 countries around the globe, but it was all started more than 50 years ago by Kurt Hahn, a German educator who fled to England before the war and started up a new educational initiative which later became Outward Bound.

Interview

Coyote:

Apparently Outward Bound is a very powerful tool to bring people together....?

Jennifer:

I believe so, and this was why I was interested in working with Outward Bound in South Africa. I think it can be a wonderful way to break down

barriers between people. And yet we need to be careful too. I think that before going to South Africa I viewed typical Outward Bound activities (usually 'outdoor', but not always 'physical' activities) as fairly 'neutral', in the sense of being accessible to all course participants. But I remember very well one of my early eye-openers there.



Jennifer Nold





We were running a programme for young adults (20-25 years old) who had been targeted as having leadership potential. In the group of 25, there were 3 white men and all the rest were black. We presented the group with a raft-building exercise, which they first had to plan indoors before executing their plan outside. 45 painful minutes passed in this indoor discussion, during which time the only three people to say anything were the 3 whites. The 22 blacks sat quietly and respectfully in the room, either watching the whites have their discussion or looking out the window in boredom. Finally after 45 minutes one of the white men got frustrated enough with the situation to say something about it. He addressed one of his black colleagues and said, 'Hey, Widmar, you have a technical background. What don't you make some suggestions about how to build the bloody raft?!' Widmar looked at him and quietly replied, 'What's a raft?'

His reply stopped all of us dead in our tracks. For me, it was a real breakthrough moment. On the surface it was a 'language problem'. But I also came to realise that it was also much more than just a language problem - many South African blacks don't swim and a number of them share various beliefs about evil creatures who live under the water... No wonder they didn't know (or want to know) what a raft was! And instead of offering the group a 'neutral' activity which help bring them together on 'equal footing', we had only managed to reinforce the advantaged and disadvantaged positions with which they had lived their entire lives in South African society!

Since then I've become more sensitive to how our activities are never 'neutral'. It's more than just a South African black and white issue, however. Consider female / male, weak / strong, short / tall, verbal / non-verbal.... Some activities are just more 'accessible' to some people than to others. And I think that's unavoidable. So I guess that part of the art of programme design for me is to incorporate enough 'diversity' in the kinds of activities we do so as to offer all my participants the opportunity to participate as fully as they choose in the programme, to make it possible for them to contribute to the group in their own way...

Coyote:

What Zodiac sign would best describe you as a trainer?

Jennifer:

Well, I'm a Capricorn myself, which I guess is supposed to mean that I can be quite decisive. I can be that sometimes. But frequently I also feel something else, which maybe 'Gemini' would better describe. Gemini in the sense of flexible. I see myself sometimes being supportive, sometimes confronting and sometimes just going with the flow. And I guess this fits with my view of what I try to do in my programmes. While I usually call myself a 'trainer' I think this name - with its connotation of 'training students in specific skills' doesn't really fit. I prefer the word 'facilitator' because in my perception this label better reflects those issues that are the primary ones for me in my programmes - the *participants'* issues, rather than *my* issues. I don't view myself as a 'teacher', trying to cover a certain amount of material with my 'students' within a set time-frame. Instead, I assume that participants on our Outward Bound programmes are there because they want to learn more about the functioning of their group and themselves - become more aware of what their 'normal' functioning is (again, as a group and / or as individuals) and explore both the richness and potentially the limitations of these behavioural patterns. When the group or individuals bump into situations where their normal behavioural response doesn't 'fit' very well, or doesn't help them generate the outcomes they desire, I help them explore alternative options.

So, it's not really about 'training' participants to be able to do certain things - where a 'Capricornian' approach might be helpful. It's really about helping people become more aware of their own typical behaviour (in a specific context, of course - we work a lot with existing groups: a class, a management team...) and expand their behavioural repertoire, where appropriate and where desired. Crucial in this approach is that we're not telling participants what to do, or when to do it. We try to help them generate their own alternatives, when they are ready and feel the need to do so. It has to remain relevant for them! And this approach seems to require a lot of flexibility - it's impossible to know in advance exactly what issues will be relevant when.

Coyote:

But doesn't that make it fairly difficult to design a programme?

Jennifer:

Absolutely. But that's just the point. We try to stay very close to the 'here and now' experiences of our participants, as they continually evolve throughout our programmes – this is part of what 'experiential' means for us at Outward Bound Belgium. And working this way can be very powerful, but people's experiences remain unpredictable. That's why we usually design the programme on the spot, as we go, choosing the next activity based on what the important issues from the previous activity were and where the group and individuals feel a need to focus on at that moment. An exciting way of working, focusing on individual and group processes like that. And also sometimes quite tiring and stressful.

Coyote:

Isn't it normal that experiences are used as a starting point in experiential learning?

Jennifer:

Yes, but I see a lot of 'experiential' trainers / facilitators designing their programmes entirely in advance, and sticking to this programme regardless of the participants' experiences during the programme. I think it can be quite threatening when you drop pre-set structures – I know it was for me when I first started working with Outward Bound Belgium! How do you decide which activity is appropriate at what moment? Sometimes it's possible to answer this question based on a conceptual analysis of group dynamics, for instance, but I think frequently such decisions get made in my stomach rather than my head – a particular exercise just 'feels right' at a certain time... I think this is a way of working that requires a lot of experience – in the beginning you just can't feel / sense / see / intuit that kind of stuff. Sure, some theoretical knowledge is helpful, but experience and being able to 'tune into your group' is even more helpful, I think. You have to be able to feel where the group's at, what they're struggling with, because sometimes they can't make this explicit. And you need to have a feel for the potential effect of a certain activity. And then the art is to combine this feeling you have for the group with this whole range of possible activities which can be presented in an even wider variety of ways, in order to come up with a good activity to help the group at that moment. At one point an exercise might help make a relevant issue more visible for the group or for an individual. At another point, an

exercise might offer them the opportunity to experiment with a different way of working together. And don't get me wrong – sometimes I make the wrong choice too! But I frequently try to involve the group in this choice too – not as far as the specific activity goes, but as far as the theme or issue is concerned – and that frequently helps me be closer to what they need.

Coyote:

In what areas would you like to be trained yourself?

Jennifer:

Well, for the last 8 years or so, I've been fascinated by cross-cultural learning. I was born in the United States, have travelled quite a bit and have lived and worked in New Zealand, South Africa and now Belgium. And on the one hand, I'm intrigued by cross-cultural *differences* and keep wanting to learn more about them and how to work with them. And yet I am also aware that I hate being categorised as an 'American' and put into that little box. I also belong to lots of other categories (woman, oldest child, Flemish-speaker ...) as well. So I start to get nervous when I read a lot of books and articles about 'Americans (or Japanese or ...) are ___ and do ___ and like ___'. That kind of approach starts to repel me more and more. I wonder how much of that kind of stuff is being written just because there's a good market for it. I think plenty of people are plenty nervous about living or working in another culture and are prepared to spend plenty of money on books and training programmes which will take away some of this fear by telling them what they can expect to find in that other culture. Apparently putting people in little boxes is good business! So while I *can* recognise some general differences, say between Americans and Flemish, and am fascinated by such issues, I'm also repelled by the approach to culture I just described. So it's kind of a love / hate thing...

Coyote:

Has Kosovo changed your opinions, feelings, and ideas on what you do?

Jennifer:

Umm ... not really. I mean obviously I see the need for people from different cultures to be able to work and live together better. But I believe that this is true *within* a culture too. I ►



... the basic idea about appreciating and working with diversity is very important ...

see strong differences between Belgians. More verbal people and less verbal people, for instance. This could also be viewed as an interesting 'cross-cultural' dynamic, except that much of the current cross-cultural literature seems to restrict itself to national cultures. Which is a shame, really. Because I think that the basic idea about appreciating and working with diversity is very important – for all of the groups we work with. And for me I guess it's even more important not to talk about 'culture' or 'diversity' or 'verbal' as general concepts with the groups I work with, but to focus on 'you' and 'me' and how 'we' can come to understand each other and work together better in daily situations.

Coyote:

What are you working on at the moment?

Jennifer:

In a few days we'll be starting a programme, funded by the Youth for Europe Programme under Action C. All of the European Outward Bound schools will be attending and the aim is to exchange amongst OBS colleagues from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, France and Belgium our different ways of doing Outward Bound. You see, each school has really developed its own identity, depending on its distinctive history and geography. So while our approach is generally fairly similar, there are some significant differences as well. The Czech school, for instance, has a long history of working with drama and art, something which is not very common in most other Outward Bound schools. The Belgian school has the somewhat distinctive approach I've been describing, in part the result of very limited geographical opportunities and a tradition of working with existing groups. And we're all quite different from the 'traditional' Outward Bound model, which consists of long (3-4 week), expedition based programmes.

So this European Staff Training is really very exciting because it's the first time that so many different schools will get together to explore our common and distinctive approaches to running Outward Bound programmes. What a wonderful way to keep learning from each other!

Coyote:

What are your dadas?

Jennifer:

Oh, hmmm.....Sushi, herbs and spices....

Coyote:

And as a trainer?

Jennifer:

I know this really simple exercise called 'Find the Tree' which I love because groups can solve it in so many different and creative ways. Even though I've done the exercise with many different groups, I still get surprised by their solutions – great! It really is one of my favourites. But I will not tell you about it. Readers who are curious can ask me for its secret by mail!

Coyote:

What are your taboos as a trainer?

Jennifer:

That's a hard question. I think taboo is too strong a word. But I do tend to stay away from the *reasons* for why someone behaves the way they do. I mean, whether they had a tyrannical father or were locked in a closet, or whatever. I tend to focus more on the behaviour itself and whether it's working for that person here and now or not.... I'm not a therapist and don't feel the need to be one on my courses.

Coyote:

Imagine you could decide what is on the agenda of a European Seminar for Trainers?

Jennifer:

I think I'd pick the topic of experiential learning. I think it gets defined in many different ways and it would be interesting to explore that with other experienced trainers. What is it? How does structure play a role? What about the position of the 'trainer'? How can it be integrated with teaching? Etc.

There is a lot more to be said about Outward Bound Belgium and its methodology.

If you are interested, you can contact Jen at:
jen@outwardbound.be

This interview was conducted by Leen Laconte.



Training Methodologies



'To Know and Transform' Theatre of the Oppressed and Youth

"By visualising and transforming situations of oppression, the group can develop strategies for change".

Peter and Gavan raise the curtain on a way of using theatre in international youth work.

As former drama students, we once agreed that the name Theatre of the Oppressed carries with it some odd connotations; vaguely suggestive of leather, upheaval and dimly lit pre-war Berlin cabaret clubs. Perhaps that's just us. Yet in this context, using the word theatre is a bit misleading for a practice which is based on and derived from the experiences of what is normally called the audience.

These interactive methods were originally developed in South America by director and activist Augusto Boal, for use in communities oppressed by military dictatorships and the delights of the free market. Heavily influenced by Paulo Freire's 'pedagogy of the oppressed', Boal's practice facilitated people in identifying the forces which affected them, and in exploring solutions which they could then try out. Boal himself introduced the forms to Europe, and since then they have been changed and adapted by activists, community workers, therapists and a range of other practitioners in diverse social and cultural fields. That said, a strong common philosophy underpins these variations - that of empowering the individual and group to name, unmask and engage with the problems, issues and obstacles which they encounter. By visualising and transforming these situations, the group can develop strategies for change.

Some of the forms of the Theatre of the Oppressed are well known: Image Theatre, which involves a 'sculptor' representing her story with a

human statue, which can then be worked on by the diversity of experiences brought by the group. Forum Theatre can often be developed from an image process, it involves the presentation of a scene which exposes a problem which is unresolved by the end. The scene is then replayed, but this time spect-actors (who, as opposed to traditional spectators, are able to participate as actors in the drama) can replace the oppressed character and find ways of changing the unwanted results. In this article we want to look at some of the experiences we have had using these methods, the uses they can be put to (with an emphasis on intercultural learning) and issues to bear in mind about their use.

The essence of Theatre of the Oppressed is about making visible the invisible, helping us out of our minds into other senses, in order to perceive our reality more clearly. Then we can more effectively take appropriate action. As such, it can be applied to a wide variety of situations and contexts, and each user should adapt it to their specific needs. The methods can be used in a number of ways - as an evaluation tool for example. A quick Image can help a group assess their perceptions of the current dynamic, and experiment in ways to move forward in their chosen direction. This could be completely open for the members to share their own general perceptions, or to examine a specific issue more deeply. Building on the experience of others, it becomes what Boal has termed "a rehearsal for reality".

by Peter Merry & Gavan Titley



Picture
YEU, Lithuania, August '97
Intercultural
communication problems



One example of this was at the Ecotopia camp in Scotland in 1997, run by European Youth (Forest) Action. We were asked to run workshops on gender and power, following concerns based on the group's past experience. The image theatre gave the participants a chance to express how they saw gender relations in certain situations, and to role play different solutions. The week culminated in an intense Forum Theatre session, with about 200 people packed into a poorly-lit marquee, during which someone shared their experience of the after-effects of child abuse in a family. During the three hour session, spect-actors tried all the different roles; abused, abuser, parents, sister/brother, friend. The engagement was total, and the learning tangible. People dared to ask the deepest questions, which may never have been aired otherwise. For most, it will hopefully remain theoretical, but for those for whom it was a 'rehearsal for reality', it can only leave them better prepared.

There are many issues which we have explored with groups in this way, including bullying,

violence in the family, drug/alcohol abuse, the experience of culture shock, leadership and group dynamics. Any situation where there is conflict lends itself to these methods, and as conflict is a part of our everyday lives, the potential is great. It is a process of naming (acknowledging the existence of something), unmasking (revealing what lies behind the surface situation) and engaging. Engaging can't happen effectively without the first two stages.

In terms of conflict, we have used Theatre of the Oppressed techniques to examine common experiences and explore how we can learn from them. One example was with youth leaders from the former Yugoslavia in 1997, at the Sunrise City Camp in Croatia. Using images allowed the participants to share visually their perceptions of what they had lived through, and to explore together how they might defuse such situations if they arise again. While to an extent this is therapeutic, it must move on from looking back to looking at possible solutions for future scenarios.

In all of the examples so far, the Images or Forum pieces have been created from the experiences of the spect-actors in the group. However, we have also used Forum Theatre with pre-prepared plays. This is particularly useful for engaging with a new issue in a participative way. We co-ordinated a group in south-west England touring schools in the region with a piece on the debt crisis in developing countries. We created an allegorical story of the debt crisis (the International Monetary Fund was a fairy godmother!) and we helped the participants to draw the parallels afterwards. The moment you told the pupils that they would be able to replace a character the second time through and that they should watch for things to improve, they were hooked.

Given the nature of many of these groups already mentioned, the intercultural learning dimension to the drama process is always present. More explicitly, Theatre of the Oppressed lends itself to the canon of intercultural learning methodologies in a very dynamic way. Image work is non-verbal, and as such often stimulates participation in groups

... conflict is a
part of our
everyday lives ...

with language issues. While there is a freedom to 'imaging' a situation without verbal language as an intermediary, it also creates new challenges. Images are obviously subjective, and deeply cultural, so the negotiation of solutions within the group is often accompanied by a negotiation of what the image is trying to say. This dual focus can be highlighted in warming up the group by asking pairs to make statues of the same concept, and then giving the statues titles in their heads.

Drama that is based on experience, and on other's interaction with that experience, raises the question of empathy. If a forum is really motoring, spect-actors have the opportunity not just to try out their ideas, but to feel something of the tensions that have led to the need to explore that problem. If people have suggestions, they are not discussed, they are tried. This means stepping into a pair of shoes, knowing how they usually walk, but trying to take them in a different direction, or onto a new route. In a Pax Christi seminar in Antwerp in 1998, we watched people with experience of some of the world's most vicious conflicts diving into the complexities of sectarianism in Northern Ireland. They lived not only the dramatic situation, but also their own, to see what this archive of pain could suggest for the future. This is also where the limits of empathy need recognition - groups try things that stem from common understanding, and then need to see what would work in the specific context.

In dealing with intercultural learning, the experience of the group prior to the workshop often becomes a resource, but this needs to be consensual and handled with care. The line between what groups are happy to call 'cultural' and that which they prefer to see as personal

responsibility is frequently an issue. It can be a passing and humorous incident; such as the presentation of a rose by a boy to a girl, and the utterly opposed connotations involved. Issues which are proving to be an impediment to the group process can be worked on to tease out ways of living together in the immediate future. For example, at a global youth event some participants were disturbed by the habit of some men in continuing to hold the hand after shaking it, sometimes for the length of the entire conversation (it was meant to signify attentiveness and respect). In using images to deal with this, it was not enough to conclude that masculine discourses vary culturally, but rather to explore how a dialogue could be opened within the group on translating the theory of intercultural learning to lived practice. A simple example, yet as a rehearsal for intercultural reality working with drama in this way addresses what Bourricaud has called the 'open ensemble of interlocutors and partners' which we face in a multitude of training situations.

As with all group work, the role of the facilitator is crucial. In Theatre of the Oppressed, the facilitator is called the Joker. Her role is to manage the interaction between the spect-actors and the scene. It must remain a facilitative role: any hint at manipulation and the trust of the group will vanish. It is their stories, their experiences and their initiative that are involved here, and they are sacred as such. Having said that, the Joker has the responsibility for ensuring that the space remains safe. If people start to feel insecure, they will not participate. Creating that safe space is very important, through the use of games and trust activities. Holding that space is the hardest job. The challenge is to know how far to let the »

... Theatre of the Oppressed lends itself to the canon of intercultural learning methodologies in a very dynamic way ...

Picture
EGTYF, Music & Drama,
EYC Strasbourg, April '99
Image Theatre on Kosovo



natural enthusiasm and creativity flow, before it begins to push people's limits too far.

The Joker also has responsibility for ensuring that the spect-actors' interventions remain within the reality of the actual situation. They are not allowed to come up with 'magical' solutions that quite simply could not happen in real life. The Joker is not the only one who can call magic - it is the responsibility of the spect-actors also. It is then up to the Joker to make a decision.

It is clear that working with these kinds of issues can bring up strong emotions. The openness that the methods encourage can lead to people disclosing more than they would normally do, and it is crucial that these situations are dealt with sensitively. Proper space for a structured debrief is essential. If we throw things into the air, we have the duty to provide the opportunity for a safe landing. The methods themselves are relatively simple, yet their application is complex. This is of course what makes them so effective, but it also means that people should certainly look for experience of their use before trying to use them with a group. There is nothing better for discrediting a method than its use in careless hands...

"To know and to transform - that is our goal" (Augusto Boal). In our experience his methods do just that, raising awareness of ourselves and our surrounding reality. But not for its own sake - for the sake of action and both personal and social transformation.

Bibliography

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Penguin, London, 1972. A seminal book providing the background philosophy for Boal's work. It looks at education for transformation, taking adult education as the example. But also a much wider thesis on life.

Augusto Boal (trans. Adrian Jackson), *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Pluto Press, London, 1995. The first text outlining the theoretical background to the methods and some examples of its use.

Augusto Boal (trans. Adrian Jackson), *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, Routledge, London, 1992. The Boal "bible". It contains descriptions of all the main methods, with lots of useful exercises and examples of TO in practice.

Augusto Boal (trans. Adrian Jackson), *The Rainbow of Desire*, Routledge, London, 1995. Taking the methods more into drama therapy, as a result of Boal's experience in western Europe. Exercises of working with our own internal oppression (the "Cop in the Head").

Augusto Boal (trans. Adrian Jackson), *Legislative Theatre*, Routledge, London, 1998. Taking Forum a stage further to turn people's analysis of the problems and desired solutions into real policy. It draws on Boal's experience as an elected local government Councillor in Rio de Janeiro, where he combined policy-making with Forum Theatre.

Beyond the Mask is hoping to set up a training course on the use of Theatre of the Oppressed and similar interactive methods in youth work. If you would be interested in this, or further details, you can contact us at:

Peter Merry, Beyond the Mask -
training and drama for intercultural learning,
Van Blankenburgstraat 25 III, NL -
2517 XM Den Haag, Netherlands
tel/fax: 00 31 (0)70 360 2060
e-mail: office@beyondtheface.com

*"To know and to transform -
that is our goal"*
Augusto Boal

Where do You stand ?

Coyote has taken on board the increased interest of youth workers in human rights questions. It will take this subject up further in its next issues.

You might know this exercise. The participants stand in the middle of the room. On two walls, opposite each other, there are two posters. One says "yes", one says "no". The trainer shows them a statement dealing with an aspect of a specific subject, and then asks them to decide, spontaneously – do you agree or disagree with this statement? People then move towards the poster that best expresses their opinion. Once two groups have formed, they need to convince each other of their opinions. Until the trainer stops the discussion and presents the next statement.

Finding arguments to defend their opinion, the participants might start reflecting about the subject, the arguments presented and the way people behave in such a situation. "Where do you stand" is an exercise that, like many, can be played in different ways, with different objectives and on a variety of issues.

Human Rights: Where do you stand?

- Human rights are ideals. They are not practical.
- Human rights are evolving. This means that they can never be permanent.
- Young people don't need to hear about human rights. They need respect from adults.
- We don't need the Universal Declaration of Human Rights because the same ideas are in my country's Constitution.
- Human rights are really just cultural imperialism.
- You can't enjoy your human rights unless you have enough to eat.
- I don't need to protect your human rights. That's the job of the government.
- We shouldn't protect the human rights of addicts because they are breaking the law.

Statements by Felisa Tibbitts. **Contact address:**
e-mail: ftibbitts@hrea.org



marker



"Marker" is a regular column in Coyote, written by Mark Taylor, looking at issues in training. Feedback from you will be really welcome.

How do we keep ^{up} with expectations?

Organising training courses when you do not know the participants beforehand poses a fair number of challenges. Not the least of these is: how do you know what their expectations are and whether they are being met? This is important if we want to create courses which relate directly to our participants.

If the course is open to all, you can ask applicants to put their motivation for attending the course as a question in the application form. Answers will tend to be rephrasing of the publicity you have sent out about the course and will rarely give you any hard information.

At the beginning of a course, there is a mass of more or less unoriginal methods to find out peoples' expectations. One of them irritates the hell out of me and I'm not sure why: it is the one where you give participants a set of coloured post-its (sticky pieces of paper) and ask them to answer questions like "what do I want to take home with me?" "what do I not want to happen?" "what can I share with others?" etc. These papers are then stuck on the wall and everyone has the chance to read them. If the team is serious about asking these questions, then participants should receive a considered reply. Here it is important to divide those

elements which will probably be met by the course, those which are open to negotiation and those over which the team has no control.

Going to a restaurant...

Peoples' expectations during a training course change. This process can be compared to the following scenario. One day, a friend asks you to go out to a new Indian restaurant with a group of people. You have a picture in your head about what an Indian restaurant and its food could be like but, as you have never been there and you do not know the other people, you are not completely at ease when you arrive. After a brief round of introductions, a menu is put into your hands and you choose your first course (it is going to be a long meal) and something to drink. This may involve some advice from and negotiation with the others - will this dish be nice and hot? should we all take this wine? Then you have the chance to take in the surroundings a little - hmm, nice wallpaper, these chairs are a bit hard. Food arrives and after an initial inspection of what is on the plates everybody starts to eat. Did I really order this? Can we have some mineral water without bubbles in it please? Based on your appreciation of what you have eaten already and on discussions with the others, you then make a

choice of what to eat for the second course. Your choice now will be different than if you had made the choice before starting the meal...

Big mouths versus little mouths

Chats during coffee breaks, whispers in plenary, jokes at lunch, discussions late into the night - informal evaluation between participants is going on all the time. There will always be what can, unkindly, be called "big mouths" in a course who will not hesitate to complain or give advice to team members. But what of the "little mouths"? What are they thinking? As has been said somewhere else, the great advantage of having a silent majority is that anyone can claim to speak for it! And here lies a trap for a training team - how much weight should they give to the comments of the "big mouths". My experience is that we tend to spend too much energy on discussing the remarks of the few and that such feedback can cause a lot of unrest and confusion within a team. It becomes too easy for unscrupulous individual team members to push their own (hidden) opinions into team discussions with statements like "I have been talking to participants and they feel that we're spending too much time in working groups" or "The participants think that the workshops should be repeated tomorrow". Certainly, dialogue between team members and participants is important - some of the most vital informal education for both parties takes place during such discussions.

Freeze, Keys, Trees, Rewind, Home, Pow Wow groups

These are just some of the names I have heard of being used to designate continuous evaluation groups during training courses. Such groups have a steady membership consisting of one trainer and a number of participants and they meet usually for around 30/45 minutes at the end of each day. Here is a forum for participants to exchange opinions about the course, challenge themselves and the trainer, give suggestions for change or improvement and, sometimes, help each other make sense of the different intercultural processes they are going through. Here is also a way for the team to get an overview of how all the participants are doing/feeling/evaluating because the trainers can report back to each other when they discuss the day and plan the

next one. The team gets a wider picture, the information can help especially in making those little changes to the programme or the team's approach which can make a big difference. Exchanging views within the "formal" part of the programme can help participants feel more ownership for the course and, if their views are taken into account by the team, they get to see that the team respects them. Sounds great doesn't it?

It is great, but...

and naturally there are some "buts":

- each team member reports only selected highlights of the group's discussions,
- some team members use the increased legitimacy of the group to push their own opinions in their report back,
- some evaluation groups use "their" team member to attack other participants or team members,
- in running their evaluation groups, different team members may have completely different aims from the others, causing confusion amongst participants and frustration for the other team members,
- discussions about these groups can dominate team meetings at the expense of other issues,
- participants often do not get to know the results of their feedback.

It is still great...

- when a team manages to arrive at a real agreement about how to run and report back from Freeze, Keys, Trees, Rewind, Home, Pow Wow groups
- when a team realises that even with such a wonderful method it is not possible to have the whole truth
- when participants can see the results of their feedback.

What's your opinion?

Contact address: e-mail: brazav@yahoo.com



Notes about the contributors

Nynoshca Fecunda has been living in Holland for 13 years. She was born and grew up on the sunny island of Curacao, Dutch Antilles (Caribbean Sea). For the past 11 years she has been actively involved in international youth work. She has also worked as a freelance trainer for the Council of Europe. She is self-employed and works in the fields of consultancy, training and research focusing on the subjects of diversity (intercultural/gender) and skills-management. Her work is based on scientific knowledge as well as personal experience in travelling to various European countries (with her daughter), as a black woman and mother, and working with different organisations, with different histories, organisational structures and traditions of dealing with people of different background and/or colour.

Miguel Angel García López comes from Spain and lives in Germany. He works as a freelance trainer, writer and translator. He was for three years the European Secretary of JECL-MIEC (International Young Catholic Students). As a member of the Trainers Pool of the European Youth Centres, he has been part of the team of several study sessions and training courses held in the European Youth Centres.

Reet Kost has worked as head of the Estonian Youth For Europe Agency since the establishment of the agency in Tallinn in 1997. Before that she worked as a youth commissioner dealing with training of youth workers and international project management for a regional government for six years. At present, Reet is also finishing her law studies at the university, and is proud of it.

Leen Iaconte studied Comparative Cultural Studies in Ghent. She developed *The Imagination*, a rational project on youth-(sub)culture, the arts and multicultural society. After that she was a lecturer and tutor in a school for social workers (or Sociale Hogeschool). At present she works as a project officer for the Flemish Youth for Europe Agency in Belgium.

Peter Merry is a freelance trainer, practitioner and consultant. He works in the fields of intercultural learning, group facilitation, conflict management, the citizen and green issues, among others. He specialises in participative education for transformation, which includes the interactive methods of the Theatre of the Oppressed. His experience extends to many different types of organisation Europe-wide, as well as having spent a year teaching English in rural Ghana. He has a background in theatre, human ecology and modern languages. He has also been seen brandishing a guitar and harmonica, to accompany highly subversive lyrics....

Sonja Mitter lives in Strasbourg where she works at the Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe. She studied English and American studies and history in Germany and in the U.S. As a member of the educational team of the European Youth Centres since 1995, she regularly organises and helps to run study sessions with various youth organisations and is part of training teams for international training courses organised by the EYC. She has been particularly involved in projects dealing with intercultural learning, Euro-Mediterranean youth dialogue and youth work in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the development of the partnership on European Youth Worker training between the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

Carol-Ann Morris has been the Officer for membership services and training at the European Youth Forum secretariat in Brussels since December 1998. Her background is in counselling psychology. After graduating she used the latter as a basis for her training and project work with international and local development organisations in India and the UK (1995-1998).

Andrey Ozharovskii is a nuclear physicist by training. He is a leader of the Russian NGO International Discussion Club - Moscow (IDC).

Major Charly Pauwels was born in Germany while his father, also an officer, was a member of the military force that occupied that country after World War II. He joined the army 25 years ago and moved 15 times with his family to several

places in Belgium and Germany. He completed two missions in former Yugoslavia and is now preparing to go to Kosovo. Besides his Dutch mother tongue, he learned to speak, read and write French, English, German and Serbian during his career. He lives with his second wife in a small town in Belgium called Leopoldsborg. Together they take care of four daughters and one son.

Patrick Penninckx has been a tutor and trainer at the Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe since 1989, where he currently co-ordinates the educational team and programme. He is also in charge of the co-operation with the European Commission in the field of European Youth Worker Training.

Sofiko Shubladze studied social psychology and has a degree in human resources management. During the last 5 years she has been working as a trainer/facilitator and researcher on various projects in the field of conflict management. Currently, she is the director of the Centre 'Partners for Democratic Change - Partners-Georgia', which is an NGO that aims to promote civil society and advance a culture of conflict and change management in Georgia and the South Caucasus Region. Under the programmes of Partners-Georgia she has conducted several training events on various change and conflict management skills during the past 2 years.

Mark Taylor works as a freelance trainer and writer. Until 1993, he worked for four years (1986-89) at the Youth Exchange Centre, London, as development and training officer, and then three years (1990-92) at the European Youth Centre, Strasbourg, as a tutor. Since then he has worked throughout Europe for a wide range of organisations, institutions, agencies and businesses, acting as co-ordinator, trainer, supervisor of teams, or general rapporteur. He has long experience in writing publications for an international public. Major areas of work: intercultural learning, international team work, human rights education, training for trainers, constructive internet use, international youth projects.

Felisa Tibbitts is Director of Human Rights Education Associates (HREA), an international organisation dedicated to promoting human rights themes in education and training activities. Felisa has worked since 1992 in Central and Eastern Europe primarily, working with educational agencies and human rights groups to develop curriculum and teaching materials in the human rights and democratic citizenship education field. Felisa's new area of interest is information technologies, the results of which can be found at <http://www.hrea.org>.

Gavan Titley lives in Dublin. He is currently working on a Ph.D. in the Centre for Intercultural Studies, Dublin City University, and teaches there and for Boston University. His main area of work is communications and issues of cultural identity, with a focus on the Caribbean and Central America. Forthcoming publications include work on tourism and intercultural perspectives, and media/development education. As a freelance trainer he works regularly for the European Youth Centres and with diverse organisations. He co-founded *Beyond the Mask* with Peter Merry in 1997, and since then they have worked throughout Europe on using theatre in conflict resolution and intercultural learning. They have found this useful while sharing a tent for long periods.

Caroline Vink is the head of the National Agency of Youth for Europe and European Voluntary Service in the Netherlands. Since 1989 she has been involved in European youth work through the Dutch youth council and CENYC and later in the European youth programmes. Her interest and experience are especially focused on non-formal education and training, intercultural learning and youth policy.



Job Vacancy

Posts of Educational Advisor in Directorate General IV - Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Environment of the Council of Europe European Youth Centres (Strasbourg or Budapest)

External recruitment procedure

The above vacancy will be filled by competitive examination. On the basis of this competition, a reserve list for other similar vacant posts may be drawn up.

- ◆ Candidates must be nationals of a member State.
- ◆ Candidates must be under 30 years of age.
- ◆ The length of employment being tenable for a maximum of 5 years, the selected candidate will be recruited on the basis of an initial contract of 2 years which may be extended for a further period of up to 3 years.
- ◆ The selected candidates may be appointed to either Centre, in Strasbourg (France) or in Budapest (Hungary).

Under the authority of the Director of Youth and Sport, the postholder will run activities within the annual programme of activities of the Directorate of Youth and Sport. He/she will also be required to play an active part in the study sessions and training courses of the European Youth Centres. This includes the participation in statutory meetings, research activities, publications and the implementation of the programmes of the Centres and the EYF in particular in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Programmes may be run in co-operation with the European Union and other international organisations. He/she will also carry out projects in co-operation with other departments of the Council of Europe. The duties involve frequent travel and work on week-ends.

Qualifications, professional experience, knowledge, skills and language proficiency:

- ◆ Good university degree preferably in communication, languages, social science or humanities;
- ◆ Proven professional experience in either non-formal education, associative life, educational and cultural exchanges or any other relevant field where a youth and/or international dimension is involved;
- ◆ Very good knowledge of one of the two official languages of the Council of Europe (English, French) and good knowledge of the other (knowledge of other European languages would be appreciated).

The official vacancy notice is due to come out shortly. More information can be obtained from the

**Human Resources Department (Recruitment Section),
COUNCIL OF EUROPE, 67075 STRASBOURG CEDEX, FRANCE**



PARTNERSHIP

COUNCIL OF EUROPE & EUROPEAN COMMISSION

TRAINING-YOUTH



EDUCATION
TRAINING
YOUTH



Youth Directorate
Direction de la jeunesse

1994 50 1999



COUNCIL
OF EUROPE

CONSEIL
DE L'EUROPE



European Commission

