



by Balázs Hidvéghi:

COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH: A SHARED EUROPEAN PRIORITY

► **The Council of Europe – European Commission Partnership in the field of youth is expanding. As Educational Advisor for the partnership Balázs explains here some of the new developments.**

Partnership for Youth

The Council of Europe and the European Commission have been cooperating in the field of youth training programmes for several years. In 2000, the two European institutions identified, "European Citizenship" as the central theme of their co-operation in training. An additional priority for the programme was to make a contribution to quality and the development of standards in the European youth training field. A 3-year agreement was signed in 2000, and an ambitious training and publication programme was launched which came to a conclusion at the end of 2003. The programme was evaluated through the involvement of external academic experts as well as a professional company. Based on the findings of the evaluation, the Training Partnership is now being continued into 2005 while two new Partnership programmes have also been launched. The long-term aim is to consolidate these co-operation programmes into one programme. Below is a summary of the achievements and main objectives of the Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

Training - Youth

► **Conceptual Framework and Curriculum – European Citizenship**

Several "European Citizenship in Youth Work" training courses as well as a 2-year "Advanced Training for Trainers in Europe" ("ATTE") long-term training course were held during the three years. "European citizenship" was not pre-defined in detail:

it was rather set as a challenge for these training activities to contribute to public discourse about the concept. The overall educational approach of the Youth-Training Partnership has been based on the principles of non-formal education whereby participants are an active and integral part of the learning process.

A Curriculum and Quality Development Group provided a general framework for the courses, while the actual course curricula (course programmes) were drawn up by multi-cultural training teams for each course. The training courses being pilot projects, they were all evaluated and fully documented. These reports are available at the following web page of the Partnership website: http://www.training-youth.net/site/training_courses/training_courses.htm.



The training courses touched on a large number of concepts related to Europe, democracy, human rights, European political developments and integration, minorities, youth work, youth policy and intercultural learning. Explicit and implicit methods were mixed in the training approach. Participants were asked to actively contribute to the discussions, to present case studies from their own realities, and to share ideas for follow-up. In the long-term advanced training courses for trainers, participants worked with a number of innovative learning methods. Their professional development was, on the one hand, moderated and to a certain extent directed by the trainers, but they were also encouraged, on the other hand, to use self-directed learning, self-assessment and peer-support during the course, to mention only a few of the methods employed.

► European Citizenship Youth Projects

It was an important part of the course curricula to start the planning of follow-up youth projects with participants. This aspect of the courses and especially the implementation of planned projects were only partly successful for a variety of reasons (insufficient post-course support, lack of follow-up, difficulties with funding). This shortcoming was addressed based on participants' feedback and evaluation reports, so the support for follow-up activities increased in the second part of the programme. Participants in the ATTE course also ran European Citizenship training courses across Europe as part of their training practice during this period.

► Target Group & Multiplication

The Training Partnership targeted young people between 18 and 35 years of age. Participants had to have experience of involvement in youth work and/or youth training activities to be selected for the training courses. In the case of the long-term advanced training, preference was given to more senior youth trainers, while the 9-day courses involved many young people at the beginning of their careers. A crucial consideration in all the training activities was to work with potential multipliers.

► Publication of T-Kits and the Coyote Magazine

Another outcome of the Partnership, in addition to training, has been the production of a youth magazine and training manuals (T-Kits). Coyote – whose latest issue is in your hands – is published twice a year in print as well as online at the Training Partnership's website.

More than 6000 copies of each issue of Coyote are currently distributed. So far a total of 9 T-Kits have been printed. All are also available electronically for free downloading at the website. English, French and German language versions are produced by the programme, while other translations have been made by National Agencies of the YOUTH programme or youth NGOs. T-Kits address a variety of subjects relevant to youth work, such as social inclusion, funding and financial management, project and organisational management, as well as the Partnership's lead theme: "*Under construction... Citizenship, Youth and Europe (European Citizenship)*".

► Co-operation with National Agencies and the SALTO centres

Given the importance of the YOUTH programme in the European youth field, the sponsoring institutions have agreed to put increased emphasis on co-operation and synergies between the various training programmes in Europe. This will include closer co-operation with the SALTO Centres and the network of National Agencies across Europe as well as developing links with the other Partnership Programmes (*see below*). In general, the Commission and the Council agreed to put stronger emphasis on the distribution of materials and products and on raising the visibility of the programme. The aim to put non-formal education higher on the political and educational agenda remains a central one. Work will also continue in the field of standards, criteria and recognition. The Training Partnership will concentrate on developing short-term European Citizenship modules during 2004-2005 in co-operation with the National Agencies.



Expanding co-operation into Euro-Mediterranean Youth Work and Youth Research

Based on the success of the joint efforts in training, co-operation has been extended into two new fields: a programme on **Euro-Mediterranean Youth Work** and another one on **Youth Research**. These programmes began in mid-2003 and are scheduled to run until the end of April 2005. The possible continuation of the three partnerships will be discussed at a later stage.

► Partnership in Euro-Mediterranean Youth Work

The Mediterranean region has been the focus of specific youth projects for both the Council of Europe and the European Commission. Among others, it is worth mentioning the "all different – all equal" youth campaign of the Council, the Euro-Arab dialogue process as well as the inter-regional youth training programme and the Transmed Programme of the North-South Centre. The European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe has maintained an open policy on project funding and participation of young people from neighbouring regions in youth activities. Peace, intercultural learning, conflict resolution, migration and mobility, religious dialogue and tolerance are only some of the issues that appear regularly in the Council's programme and these educational events associate and involve youth from all sides of the Mediterranean. The Euro-Mediterranean YOUTH Action programme of the European Commission was initiated in 1999 and is based on the Barcelona Process, now involving 25 European and 10 Mediterranean partner countries. The joint Partnership between the two institutions began in mid-2003 and is scheduled to run for a two-year period. The Partnership is jointly run by the North-South Centre and the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe as well as the Youth Unit of the European Commission in Brussels.



The aim of this partnership is to provide further quality training and learning opportunities for youth workers and youth leaders active in Euro-Mediterranean youth projects. The programme for the initial 2-year period is composed of various training courses as well as the production and/or translation of training materials.

► Training courses

A training course on "*Intercultural Learning and Human Rights Education in the Mediterranean*" (Mollina, Spain, May 2003) provided an opportunity to share good practices and develop the skills and competences of youth workers in the fields of intercultural learning and human rights education. The course also produced a series of innovative Euro-Med youth projects.

The training course "*Citizenship Matters – Promoting the Participation of Women and Minorities*" (Alexandria, Egypt, April 2004) addressed thematic issues related to the Euro-Med programme, which are equally relevant to the culture of human rights, namely women's rights, minority rights and approaches

to citizenship and participation of young people. As a practical side to the course, participants identified guidelines for applying those principles in youth exchanges and other Euro-Med projects.

A long-term training course "*Youth Participation and Intercultural Exchange in Euro-Med Youth Projects*" (February 2004 to February 2005) aims at developing the capacity of youth workers to plan, manage and evaluate sustainable youth projects. It includes a series of local youth pilot projects addressing the priority issues in Euro-Med co-operation.

A "*Training Course for Trainers*" (Starting November 2004) will be implemented in co-operation with the SALTO Euro-Mediterranean Resource Centre. The course

will develop and consolidate the skills and competence of 30 trainers active with projects in the region. It will also contribute to the development of quality of training in general and the existing informal pool of trainers in particular.

1. The "North-South Centre" is the unofficial, albeit widely used name for the "European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity". The Centre is a partial agreement of the Council of Europe located in Lisbon, Portugal. To find out more about its mission and activities, visit http://www.coe.int/T/E/North-South_Centre/

► **Training materials & Euro-Med T-Kit**

The development and translation of training materials form an integral part of the programme. An important publication will be the *“Training-Kit on Euro-Mediterranean Youth Work”* to be printed in 2005. The approach of this manual will be similar to the successful model of previous T-Kits. It will logically focus on educational experiences and methods used in the Euro-Mediterranean region and training activities.

The Compass resource book, published recently by the Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe, will also be translated into Arabic. Although a project of the Council alone, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Programme will surely benefit from this book. The Arabic version will be widely distributed among youth organisations in the region.

The Euro-Med Partnership is monitored by a Monitoring Group consisting of the European Commission, the SALTO Euro-Med Resource Centre, the European Youth Forum and the Euro-Med Youth Platform.

Partnership in Youth Research

The Partnership Programme on Youth Research also began in mid-2003 and will run for a 2-year period until mid-2005. This initiative of the Council and the Commission aims to contribute to evidence-based youth policy making and educational practice. The Partnership holds seminars and publishes research papers. The co-operation builds on the follow-up process to the Commission’s White Paper on Youth and addresses many of the priorities outlined therein. Three seminars were held in 2003 (*“Resituating Culture: Reflections on Diversity, Racism, Gender and Identity in the Context of Youth”*, *“New Generation YOUTH Programme”* and *“What About Youth Political Participation?”*). Please see issue 8 and this issue of Coyote.

► **“The Youth Sector and Non-formal Education/Learning” Research Seminar**

The research seminar, held in April 2004, critically explored the role of non-formal education and learning in the youth sector vis-à-vis the third sector and European-level life-long learning policy. The event also provided the launch for the joint text between the European Commission and the Council of Europe on validation aspect in the youth sector. The seminar examined the role and contribution of the youth sector’s educational work with respect to supporting and encouraging participation and active citizenship, social inclusion and the employability of young people. Various recommendations were made on these topics and a publication is being prepared from the results of the seminar.

► **European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy**

In the light of the rapidly increasing role of information technologies in the educational and youth training fields, it has been decided to create a virtual knowledge centre on the Internet. This *“European Knowledge Centre”* should primarily serve those contributing to and making youth policies. It is designed to provide up-to-date information on youth realities, along with the priority topics identified by the White Paper on Youth. It will also serve as a virtual *“meeting place”* where knowledge, experience and good practices can be easily exchanged and found. This knowledge centre will be regularly updated in a systematic way, providing reliable and user-friendly information. Some of the special features of the service will be a sophisticated search facility; an easy-to-use guide to youth policy; a glossary of terms and definitions; and a database of articles, seminar reports and research and youth policy publications.

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