



by Luiza Bara

THE TRAINING STRATEGY OF THE EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM:

This is the first of what we hope will be a series of brief articles that explain how organisations think strategically about training. If you are proud about the approach your organisation takes towards training then please contact the editor. Thanks to Luiza - one of the newest members of the Coyote Editorial team, for getting the ball rolling

Empowerment of young people and their active participation in society are a primary focus of the European Youth Forum (YFJ). In order to help achieve these goals the YFJ is committed to providing and promoting training and non-formal education.

The YFJ training strategy consists of a comprehensive training package to assist its 93 member organisations with their events and development, with a view to maximum effectiveness.

In this context YFJ has recently developed and is now promoting its training policy, "*Empowerment through training*". In addition YFJ is seeking to develop its Pool of Trainers and closely follows and contributes to the development of the European training programmes. It co-operates in this with the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport and the European Commission and its SALTO centres. It is actively involved in the monitoring groups of the EC-CoE covenants in the field of training. It is in this connection, incidentally, that YFJ has a seat in the editorial team of Coyote.

► Training policy

YFJ promotes different aspects of training in order to support and complement the training policies of its institutional partners. In this context YFJ sees training as a mainstreaming factor in youth policy and as a tool for promoting sustainable and inclusive youth organisations. Whilst providing a safe space conducive to the development of skills which enable young people to actively participate in a rapidly changing environment, training is also used by YFJ as a frame for constant assessment of young people's needs.

YFJ believes that through implementation of effective training policy it can improve, support and sustain all areas of its work. Training facilitates informed decision-making, which is fundamental to the functioning of YFJ as a youth organisation. Training is also central to promoting active citizenship: young people should be able to create an active role for themselves in society and training enables them not only to understand their position but also to communicate and take action. YFJ therefore supports training as a form of non-formal education.

► YFJ support to the partnership on training

European youth training has been developed through a partnership between the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the European Youth Forum and its constituent members.

YFJ participation in the design, monitoring and evaluation of this partnership allows its partners to promote training opportunities to a wider audience across the continent. In terms of development and capacity-building, especially in CEE and SEE countries, the role of both the member organisations and the Pool of Trainers is central. This grassroots approach gives a clearer picture of local needs, and so allows policy to become reality.

► The Pool of Trainers - a YFJ youth-work development tool

In order to effectively develop its training area, YFJ is continuing to develop its trainer pool.

EMPOWERMENT

THROUGH TRAINING

The YFJ Pool of Trainers (PoT) is a group of about 30 experienced trainers, facilitators, youth workers and youth policy experts. PoT members come from all over Europe and have skills and expertise in various fields of youth work. All are under 35 and come from YFJ member organisations. The YFJ and the Council of Europe Youth Directorate use PoT expertise when organising training courses and seminars. PoT members are invited to help run the annual training courses organised by the DYS, to which they bring not only their quality and experience, but also a deep understanding of the current realities of youth work in different corners of Europe.

Trainers not only run skills training courses on youth topics and facilitate youth events, they also provide consultancy on youth issues according to their areas of expertise. In addition they closely follow and provide input to development of European training programmes.

The PoT is refreshed every two years in order to give new generations of trainers a chance. Following the last refreshment, the PoT met in order to review its role and place within YFJ, its activities and the valuable contribution that it generally makes to YFJ and in particular to developing the training field in Europe. It was also essential for new PoT members to familiarise themselves with YFJ's priority fields and develop a sense of ownership within YFJ. They discussed the purpose of the PoT and its value to youth work and youth organisations and strongly suggested concrete actions and activities to improve its performance. An action plan was drawn up for future PoT work, with special focus on PoT members' contribution to developing better services for YFJ and its member organisations and partners and on giving the Pool's work greater visibility.

C o n c l u s i o n

The European Youth Forum is committed to training as a means of empowering young people, enabling them to adapt to changing realities and allowing them to spread their skills to other young people. Support for training will bring the European Youth Forum closer to achieving its ambitious aim of working for all young people in Europe.

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