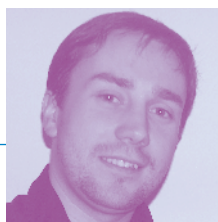


by Nuno da Silva  
(YEU President)

&



Marius Ulozas  
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# YEU and non-formal education An organisational profile

**You cannot teach a man anything  
You can only help him to discover for himself.**

Galileo Galilei [1564-1642]

As we reflected on our involvement in youth work and the significance of non-formal education (NFE) and non-formal learning (NFL) as a fundamental complement of formal education in the personal development of youngsters, we realised that sharing YEU experience working on the issue would be a relevant contribution to this issue of Coyote.

## Have you ever heard of YEU?

YEU is an International Youth organization 'Youth for Exchange and Understanding' and stands for peace, understanding and co-operation between the young people of the world, in a spirit of respect for human rights and cultural differences. The organization was created in 1986 in Strasbourg, by a group of 120 youngsters from 11 different countries who believed in NFL and was the result of 4 years of cooperation through multilateral short term youth exchanges. So this year is special for our organization, since YEU is celebrating its 20th anniversary. Nowadays, YEU counts 26 member organizations across Europe, Africa and the Middle East. And cooperation with partner organizations goes far beyond these geographical boundaries.

YEU is constituted by a considerable number of youth organizations with diverse aims and different scope of activities within their local communities. Nevertheless, we all share the 110YEU mission, all member organizations are democratic, non-political-party-affiliated and all strive to develop youngsters and their communities by being NFL "spaces" and where youngsters can create other NFL and NFE "spaces". Within these "spaces", youngsters can develop themselves via participation,

they exercise their citizenship, they participate in the promotion of a set of values such as Human Rights, Voluntarism, Cooperation, Respect for Diversity, Intercultural Learning, Non Violent Behaviour, Inclusion and Equal Opportunities for all.

In YEU, individuals, involved in the organization in different ways, are the actors in the education/learning process for which they are responsible. This implies that all youngsters are sharing responsibility for the learning outcomes, based on equality and peer education values: **the learning outcomes depend on the active involvement of everyone and each one learns with and from the others.**

The main mission of the organization within NFE is to create a "safe" learning space with different opportunities for young people to further develop their skills, knowledge and attitudes.

Learning is an ongoing process; one of its crucial features is "learning by doing". "Non-formal" does not imply "unstructured"; it is a deliberate, planned, staffed, change-orientated and learner-centred process.

The process of non-formal learning is shared and designed in a way that creates an environment in which the learner is the architect of the skills, knowledge and attitudes to be developed.

Besides the work done locally by member organizations, YEU develops short-term multilateral youth exchanges, work camps, trainings courses and volunteer activities to promote cultural dialogue and intercultural learning. Around 6-8 multilateral short term youth exchanges (usually



ranging from 7 to 21 days and involving between 25 and 80 people) are arranged every year. They involve a few hundred youngsters at different levels of participation: participant, organizer, facilitator, core team member. Besides youth exchanges, YEU also develops other volunteer activities such as European Voluntary Service (EVS), job shadowing and internships, as well as study sessions, seminars and conferences with themes relevant to our network development, training courses, study visits and youth information projects.

Each level of participation is coherent with a particular learning outcome achieved, which is a concrete benefit of non-formal education. They are described in the scheme below.

We have taken the example of the participation in a youth exchange, which is the basic level of involvement for a participant in a YEU activity, and we tried to point out the learning outcomes and the attitudes developed by the participants, but also by the team of organizers and facilitators.



<i>Skills</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Attitudes</i>
<b>Participant's Non-Formal Learning Outcomes</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Language learning</li> <li>• Active Listening</li> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Distance to Social Roles</li> <li>• Conflict resolution / transformation</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> <li>• Self awareness about oneself and the others</li> <li>• Being in a group</li> <li>• Creativity</li> <li>• Emotional development</li> <li>• Sensibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural diversity</li> <li>• Cultural Relativism</li> <li>• Human Rights</li> <li>• Citizenship</li> <li>• Globalization and interdependence</li> <li>• Political, economical and social situation of other countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Tolerance</li> <li>• Voluntarism</li> <li>• Community spirit</li> <li>• Sense of belonging</li> <li>• Responsibility</li> <li>• Active Participation</li> <li>• Non violent behaviours</li> <li>• Open minded</li> <li>• Supportive towards others</li> <li>• Empowerment</li> <li>• Autonomy</li> <li>• Confidence and self-esteem</li> </ul>
<b>Organizer's Non-Formal Learning Outcomes</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team work</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Capacity to foresee and plan</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Interpersonal conflict resolution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Management</li> <li>• Volunteers management</li> <li>• Interpersonal contacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discipline</li> <li>• Share responsibilities</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Patience</li> <li>• Easy going</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitators Non Formal Learning Outcomes</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation</li> <li>• Assertiveness</li> <li>• Implementation of NFE activities</li> <li>• Interpersonal conflict Resolution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group dynamics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion</li> <li>• Equality</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitators Non Formal Learning Outcomes</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design NFE programmes and activities</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Conflict transformation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NFE methodology and methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discipline</li> <li>• Share responsibilities</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Patience</li> <li>• Easy going</li> </ul>

# Ensuring the sustainability of our organization

However, our network wasn't always that dynamic! We entered the 21st century facing a growing shortage of skilful, competent and motivated young people to run our organizations and programmes. This resulted from the incapacity, in the second part of the 90's, to prepare "new" members to continue the work of the "older" YEU generation in a sustainable manner.

5 years ago we decided to invest our energy in the following three directions:

- **Allowing more young people to get involved in YEU through the clarification of YEU structure, procedures and policies.** It made clear the way in which YEU can support the development of members who wish to develop their competencies in the youth field and allowed the initiation of youth workers careers in our structure.
- **Raising the quality and quantity of non formal education and learning opportunities within the network.** We promoted participation of our members in international training courses, such as those provided by the Council of Europe (CoE), SALTO centres and by the Covenant between the CoE and the EU. The direct result of this step was the development and the higher quality of our own training activities.

- **Developing cooperation with other NGO's and International Youth Organizations to share best practice and resources.** The European Youth Forum has been a privileged space for the development of those partnerships and for the raising of YEU knowledge in many youth areas, especially those related with youth policy and with youth work practice. This opens existing NFL spaces to people from other organizations and creates peer-to-peer cooperation with different organizations, thus creating new NFL spaces.

## YEU as a space for development: find your place!

Every organization provides a lot of opportunities to get involved and develop yourself in the most appropriate way. Network organizations working across the borders, in this case YEU, gives a lot of opportunities for self-development on different levels. Below you will find a simplified scheme which shows how and where a person can get involved in YEU and what social and personal competencies a person may acquire. Some people go through all this "development chain" from involvement in a local organization to international structures; some only get the few things they need and stay at the primary level or leave; but the most important thing is to provide opportunities for everyone to develop all the potential a person has and wants to develop.



Most commonly youngsters first get involved in YEU member organizations at the local level, be it Tunisia, Portugal or Lithuania, and then via participation in the events they become motivated to take responsibilities in the organization or organize exchanges themselves. Some of them undergo more training and become involved in the international structures; governing board, YEU pool of trainers and facilitators. But it

is not a "must-go" path; some people continue working on the local level bringing their experience to the grass-root level. The most important thing for us is that everyone can find an appropriate place for learning and sharing his/her experience. At the same time, the structure of the network enables greater accumulation of experience and its transfer.



## The conclusion

The last two decades brought big changes in the youth field and recognition of non-formal education in Europe. Since we no longer need to advocate the importance of NFE and necessity of NGOs, now it is our responsibility to make the best use of it.

In twenty years of existence YEU has evolved and developed a long way. But organizations are nothing without people; its members who engage themselves to develop themselves and thereby strengthen the organization. Creating safe learning spaces, making opportunities and structures transparent and the personal approach to each member, will ensure the best results. It worked out well for YEU, why it should not work in your case?



## YEU [Youth for Exchange and Understanding] is:

- an international youth organization founded in 1986;
- more than 5000 young people in 26 countries around Europe, Asia and Africa. These youngsters are youth leaders and future leaders of their countries and societies;
- full member of the European Youth Forum based in Brussels and we are recognized by the Council of Europe and the European Union as an International Non Governmental Youth Organization.

### YEU Mission

Youth for Exchange and Understanding works to promote peace, understanding and co-operation between the young people of the world, in a spirit of respect for human rights. As an international network, we are the representative body of our members in contacts with the institutions and partners in the youth field.

### What YEU stands for

Over the years, YEU has managed to distinguish its philosophy and working methods. The primary aims of the organization are:

- To foster closer co-operation and better understanding among the young people of the world, both between and

## PERSONAL TESTIMONY

by Marius Ulozas

I engaged myself with a YEU member organization in Lithuania back in 2003, after two years' involvement in a political youth organization. YEU attracted me with its intercultural offer and possibility to implement my own ideas in a multicultural environment. Participation in seminars and training courses gave a lot of insights and an understanding that others can think in a different way and that nothing is wrong with that. It also gave me confidence and motivation to go on and share learned things with others.

The nice thing about YEU is that you can get as much as you want – because it depends only on your motivation and dedication. Since I like management and wanted to develop training skills, I went in both directions. On the one hand, after working two years for the YEU Lithuania governing board I was elected YEU Vice-President; whilst in the training field I continued working on different topics and started giving trainings even outside the YEU network. Also, I am representing YEU at the European Youth Forum and its working group, to advocate needs of YEU members and to share our experience with other youth organizations working across Europe.

To sum it up, involvement in YEU gave me a lot of experience and opportunities. It helped to develop skills, attitudes and knowledge; to meet new people. And last but by no means least – it helped me to overcome my stage-fright

within countries, particularly by encouraging the exchange of information & experience;

- To stimulate mutual support between countries, communities and people for cultural, educational and social purposes
- To encourage the interdenominational exchange of ideas and opinions
- To improve the relationship among young people from countries with differing political systems, religious beliefs and traditions, thus fostering tolerance, mutual respect and most of all acceptance

### YEU:

***Different people, Common values  
Common expectations, Different backgrounds,  
Different ways, common outcomes,  
MUTUAL ACCEPTANCE,  
and Universal respect!!!***

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