



by Katrin Oeser and friends

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## Let's get excited !!!

**You won't believe it but according to rumours there are still young people around in Europe that didn't yet get the spirit of the "all different – all equal" Youth Campaign. This definitely urges for a change and as some of you phrased it well during the symposium in 2005: not everybody is waiting for the campaign to come but we really need to get people excited. We want to spread our message of building up more peaceful societies with equal rights and without discrimination to all young people in Europe and beyond. We want to change policies, we want to activate young people and we want them to stand up for their rights and for those excluded or discriminated against in society.**

Fine so far, but how do we actually do that, how do we get them excited? When it comes to the question of how to do things, spreading so-called "best practice", has become fashionable in training and education as well. Education and training on the themes of the Campaign are just one part of the Campaign; we also need visibility, outreach to new target groups, coverage in the media and creativity. We want people to be campaigning on the issues of Diversity, Human Rights and Participation and so we are looking for best practices of campaigning that also reflect different approaches. Google offers only 30 hits for this combination, so we try with this article to help produce some more! To present best practice always means to inspire other people and to make them think about taking up the idea for their Campaign and for their context and to explore how it fits their needs or how they could modify it. I had a look around in several countries, searching for creative ways of campaigning and I hope the following examples encourage you to develop a campaign activity in your country! Don't forget that while reading this article there are various campaign activities going on all over Europe.

### ► Finland: don't judge a book by its cover!

The "All different, all equal" – Campaign was launched in Finland in May 2006 at the World Village Festival in Helsinki. There were over 60 000 visitors to celebrate diversity and demonstrate the power of civil society action. The Campaign was presented in a big ADAE tent where over twenty youth organisations organised various activities linked to the Campaign. The main attraction of our tent was the first Living Library ever organised in Finland.

Living Library is a method to promote intercultural dialogue, diversity and human rights. Living Library works as a normal library, where people come in, borrow books, read them and return them. The only difference is that instead of books, they borrow living people and instead of reading, they get to talk with a person. After a conversation it often happens, that the "reader" will have less prejudices and more knowledge of this certain group of people he didn't really know before. Living Library is a place to connect people. It gives an opportunity for dialogue for two people, who wouldn't meet and talk to each other in their daily life.



the most typical stereotypes they represent. These prejudices were agreed upon beforehand to be the most common ones people have about certain groups. During the conversation the reader noticed that the person representing the book was quite different to the introduction. Nevertheless it is really important to underline that the introductions are made to irritate and to draw attention. Also it is essential that every book feels comfortable with their introduction.

Since May three Living Libraries were organised in Finland, one took for example place in a shopping mall. The biggest one was a Living Library organised in the Finnish parliament in early December. We aimed to offer parliamentarians a chance to meet diverse young people from all over Finland and to learn more about the life of youth in our country. The young people were the books this time! The library is always a dialogue and learning experience for both the readers and books!

The more Libraries are organised, the more experience we get to develop the method. From our experience so far we can conclude that the method is easy, but demanding. The main threat for the future is that the method will be used in an improper way. It needs to be clear for all the organisers what a Living Library demands. It requires thorough planning, recruiting, training and marketing. The first question to ask is for whom are we organising the library? Which books are of interest for this target group? To find these books is another challenge. Not everyone is ready to perform as a book. A good start for the recruitment of books is to ask local organizations. For example to find people belonging to minorities might be easier through an organisation. The training of the books must be done professionally and trust-building among books and other organisers has to take place. Everybody involved needs to feel comfortable with the method and needs to be

prepared for the problems that might come up. So far we have not faced any unsuitable behaviour or verbal attacks against books. But we have prepared our books for indecent situations. The books always have the right to end the conversation at any moment they wish. Also marketing in advance as well as during the Library is essential. It is important to have enough customers to keep the library running. A great tool, which helps to organise the library is the Living library organiser's guide published by Council of Europe. You can download it from <http://www.eycb.coe.int/eycbwwroot/HRE/eng/documents/LL%20english%20final.pdf> Allianssi offers also various types of support in organising a Living Library. Have a look at the website ([www.elavakirjasto.fi](http://www.elavakirjasto.fi)) or get in touch with us!

Long live the campaign!

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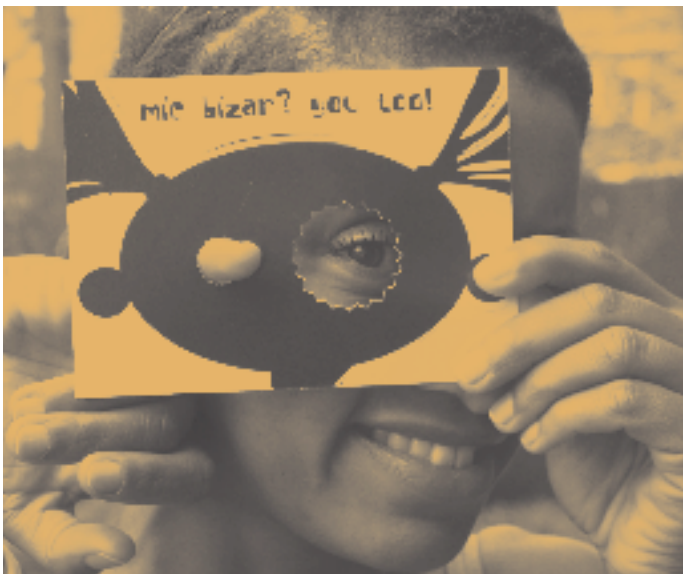
## ► Flanders: bizarre people take over

The Campaign Committee in Flanders opted in favour of a broad youth media campaign for children aged between 6 and 12 and for young people aged between 13 and 18. We seek to organise a diversity campaign that makes children and young people aware of the similarities and differences between people. It is about similarities and differences and about how children and young people deal with them and put a meaning on them. By embracing what is 'different' or 'new', you discover an abundance of new insights, ideas and talents within both yourself and your environment. When you meet someone "different", after some time this person does not seem so different after all.



## ► Mie, Mo & Company

We wish to achieve this through a positive campaign which addresses children and young people in their own language with a simple message about diversity. In the end, each one of us has something which makes us unique or somewhat bizarre. The mascots of "All Different, All Equal" are called Mie Bizar and Mo Bizar. "Bizar" (in English: bizarre) because they have a number of peculiar characteristics, just like everyone else. Mie and Mo feature on all the campaign material. The creation of these figures was carefully considered, as Mie and Mo must appeal to a very broad target group. On first acquaintance you can hardly see any differences. They are recognizable and have a sympathetic appearance. It is only when the target group finds its way to the web site that it meets (virtually) with Mie and Mo together with their friends, families and neighbours. In this way we offer a model to explain the concept of diversity in society in a simple and realistic way. The goal of 'All Different, All Equal' is clear: To make children and young people aware of the fact that all people are equal, without putting people in pigeonholes or labelling them on the basis of gender, origin, race, social background, financial status, handicap or any other possible differences between people. The "All Different, All Equal" campaign calls on young people to respect "the other one" and therefore also themselves. "All Different, All Equal" dares them to show that they believe in a multi-coloured and tolerant society.



## ► Marketing Arsenal

In order to launch Mie and Mo on a large scale and at all levels, we used a wide range of marketing instruments: postcards, a magazine, stickers, badges, banners, and textile stamps. Youth work is an important partner in the distribution of this material as well as the Department of Education,

which distributes several magazines of "Klasse" to teachers, parents, young people and teenagers. Meanwhile, Mie and Mo are finding their way to a great number of other potential partner organisations.

As music is also very important to children and young people, we looked for cooperation opportunities with a number of artists. Raymond van het Groenewoud, the "mentor" of the Flemish musicians is a big fan of Mie and Mo. He wrote the lyrics for a song about "All Different, all Equal", a song called "The other one". Several well-known Flemish artists want to make a contribution: X!nk, Sweet Coffee, Sidus and Stijn have each made their own version of "The other one". Ranging from punk to dance, the songs offer something to suit all tastes. Songs that can be freely downloaded from the campaign web site. This is an excellent way to get media attention as well as airplay on different national radio stations.

## ► Join the Bizarre Brigades!

Still, the success of the "All Different, All Equal" campaign completely depends on the Flemish children and young people. We challenge them to reflect, to enter into dialogue with one another and to take action themselves. The biggest challenge now is to start up Bizarre Brigades here and there in Flanders who will make this campaign known in the neighbourhood, at school, in the youth club or the favourite pub. This can range from a merely communicative action (for instance hanging the pictures of Mie & Mo along the high street) to the organisation of an entire project. The most important thing is that the ideas and the initiative come from the young people themselves. If possible, the campaign secretariat will lend you a hand. Only the members of our Bizarre Brigades receive a cool and exclusive badge. Examples? In Mechelen (near Antwerp) a number of children from the same multicultural neighbourhood composed and recorded their own rap song entitled "All Different, All Equal". Several youth centres will make their own films about the theme of respect. We are looking forward to the actions taken by other Flemish young people!

## ► Like a train...

The Flemish campaign is going like a train. Different carriages are hooked up to the train along its journey which it has started on the basis of a good concept and without fear of advertising techniques. We are associated with existing products and projects and enter into new partnerships. This allows us to conduct a campaign which has sufficient impact, using (relatively) few resources.

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## ► Bulgaria: listen very carefully

In Bulgaria we have a quite good example of getting people closer and closer to the values of the “All Different – All Equal” Campaign of diversity, human rights and participation. We succeeded in the creation of a milestone of the Campaign in our country by producing a Music Compilation “All Different – All Equal”. We brought together quite different musicians from all the Balkan countries - Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Macedonia, Turkey, Serbia, and Albania, who agreed to take part in a unique CD that could motivate young people from different cultures and religions to speak together using the common language of music. We invited one of the most famous Rap groups of Bulgaria called “**Rumanetsa i Enchev**” to produce a song especially for the Campaign. With great honour they accepted the idea of being goodwill ambassadors of the Campaign in our country. So, they became the authors of the so-called anthem of the Campaign with the name “ALL FOR ONE” that consists of lyrics in Bulgarian, Romanian, Macedonian, Turkish and English. Thinking how to spread our ideas and how to reach out to as many young people as we can, we initiated a big concert in the city centre of Sofia. With the great efforts of the “Rumanetsa i Enchev” group we brought together singers from the CD organizing a great music show in the city centre of Sofia. After the Music Show we made a promotion of the CD in one of the best Sofia night clubs. In that way we tried to reach a quite diverse audience and new target groups.

It was a very good experience for the Campaign in Bulgaria because it brought together singers from very different countries, of different religions and cultures who accepted the challenge to play their music together on stage. On the other side, we succeeded in gathering together thousands of rap

admirers and supporters from all the Bulgarian regions. We distributed thousands of copies of the CD all over the country trying to reach every young person who shares the values of diversity, human rights and participation.

Through the production of the CD we tried to encourage all the virtues of the youngsters in Bulgaria that could be the basis of a more united, tolerant and cohesive civil society in our country in the future. We have achieved quite good results through the means of art and artistic people in the country and through the participation of quite a lot of youngsters.

The idea for the creation of the Music Compilation came all of a sudden, directly out of a small group of young workers and the musicians as well. We were provoked by the inspiration to express the understanding of diversity on the Balkans. In order to lead young people to more tolerance and respect to people who are different, we call on all our friends, NCCs members, youth organizations and all people to embrace the “All different – All equal” values of diversity, human rights and participation:

- to seek for very simple, mostly artistic, ways of reaching out to diverse young people
- to spread the information and their ideas among young people as much as possible in order to involve more and more workers in the activities
- to give the opportunity to young people to get involved in the whole organization of the activities.

It is our **PERScription** for a successful, useful and fruitful activity. We hope that we have given a small contribution for overcoming intolerance in our society.

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► **Norway:**

**How to reach youth with the message?**

Get some famous artists, have them say “no to racism” promote the logo and then the world becomes a better place? To the Norwegian campaign “reaching” is not about having as many people as possible merely recognizing the All Different – All Equal logo. How many actually change their attitudes towards diversity from merely putting a pretty pin on their shirts?

>> **Invisible theatre**

The goal of the Norwegian campaign is that those who meet the campaign have had an experience, have felt something that will make them remember. Not an easy task, but one of the tools we have chosen in an attempt to achieve this goal is invisible theatre. This means that the participants think they take part in an ordinary activity, while in reality they are part of a theatre play where they themselves are the actors, without knowing so. Not until the activity is over are they told what they have been part of.

>> **The concept**

The thought is that prejudice can lead to discrimination which again can lead to human rights violations. The participants think they will take part in a test developed to find out to what extent they have discriminatory tendencies or not. They are divided into categories, where the idea is planted that single people are selfish, think only about themselves and can't cooperate and are thus more likely to discriminate. On the other hand you have the super girl/boy friends who are concerned with others, listen, have empathy. These people are less likely to discriminate. The theatre develops through group work and works with judges who are instructed beforehand and know that this is a theatre performance. Our experience is that it takes a very short time before “us” against “them” emotions arise between the singles and the super boy/girls friends, and the groups start to discriminate against each other.

>> **The debrief**

The most important part is the debriefing where the game-leaders help to connect the personal experiences of the invisible theatre with the realities of discrimination and human rights in Norway. “Did you during the play feel that someone judged you because of the group you were in? Who do you think feel like that in Norway today?”

>> **The goal**

To give the participants a simulated experience about what it means to be marginalized and how it feels to be socially excluded due to other people's prejudices.

>> **The outcome**

This works! The campaign reached about 20 summer camps between July and August 2006 and, currently, we are creating peer-educators to travel the country with the discrimination test.

>> **Concrete tip**

Get in touch with youth that are involved in theatre or role-plays and ask them if they can help you to develop an invisible theatre!

Hope you got some inspiration from this article and you join the Campaign in your country. For contacting your National Campaign Committee, please have a look at:

**<http://alldifferent-allequal.info/?q=node/18> !!!**

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