



by Michael Raphael

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The View from the Campaign Director's Chair

Amongst other things, MichaelRaphael has been a trainer for the Council of Europe for more than ten years. Currently he is director of the All different - All equal campaign so we asked him to share his perspective...

Here we are again in the midst of another campaign of “All Different All Equal.” Even though none of the secretariat was involved in the 1995 campaign, it seems as if we have been here before. When people ask what the difference is between this campaign and the one ten years ago, the answer they will get will be something along the lines of: “It is the same campaign, just more decentralized with much less money, but a positive emphasis this time around.” This is the new European Youth Campaign for Diversity, Participation and Human rights of 2006-07. It no longer has a negative perspective AGAINST discrimination, but rather portrays a more positive preventive model with the goal of building an inclusive, multi-cultural European society based on mutual respect. The campaign also portrays the effectiveness of building a Europe that takes advantage of its diversity, while respecting human rights as a common platform – a mouthful for what is to be a pan-European awareness-raising campaign, which should be simple and clear. The concept we inherited is complex, abstract, and you need at least a few hours to explain it to someone else. The challenge we face, and the question left to answer is, “How do we turn this complex message into a practical and widely-spread campaign without being shallow or even worse, misunderstood?”

We are living in a period that is one of the more culturally sensitive periods in recent history. Influenced by the 9/11 tragedy, and the invasion of Iraq by the United States and its allies, we are in a world where cultural and religious differences seem to be more divisive than ever before; where every Muslim is a potential terrorist suspect; and where some are leading a new crusade while others are heading up a jihad. The protocols of Zion are again on the bestsellers' lists as Jews are seen again as leading a world conspiracy. Furthermore, disabled people

everywhere do not have equal access and are denied basic privileges of public transportation. We are in a world where a “new Europe” means that you are “free” to make homophobic remarks even though you are a politician in power.

The secretariat of the campaign has been discussing the aforementioned issues during the last few months. We have been going over the professionally-written symposium reports, focusing on the summaries and conclusions. We are striving

to build a cohesive strategy that will make this campaign relevant on the local level as well as on the pan-European level. We want to form a campaign that will include the vision of many young people in Europe – a vision that could be easily adopted and included in their agenda, and a vision that they can attempt to make a reality.

We must work on a strategy that will engage young people in their natural environment and create projects that will be relevant and directed towards the interests of young people. The campaign logo is only effective if used with a concrete issue, such as the protection of the human rights of the LGBT community. However, when the logo is used by public figures without direct relevance

to a challenging issue, it then loses its relevance, and it may appear to be used in a cynical way, or even to cover up real issues facing that society.

This is a challenge that we have tackled by choosing concrete issues that are on the public agenda – like the recent racial violence seen in some large eastern countries – and by focusing the campaign on the values relating to those policies or behaviours that display discrimination. These issues should be discussed and identified. Likewise, they have been in our symposiums where relevant topics of the campaign are discussed and analysed.

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allegear	gelyk	όλοι	ίσοι
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allen	verschillend	all	different
allen	gelijk	all	equal
tous	différents	herkes	farklı
tous	égaux	herkes	eşit
सब	भिन्न	tutti	diversi
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The secretariat has envisioned the campaign engaging in a series of thematic weeks, which will include sponsoring public events, educational activities and street actions. These thematic weeks will bring together some of the themes that are being discussed at the educational symposiums of the campaign. These weeks will be primarily organized by local NGOs in any given country in order to bring together people with a variety of interests to focus on a specific topic. The topics of the thematic weeks will include some of the discriminations mentioned in our symposiums, including Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, homophobia, disablism and Romaphobia. The events will bring together a network of NGOs and the NCC (National Coordinating Committee) to create a collaborative and effective intervention. The events will also focus on an inclusive process that encourages participation from groups that are the target of the discrimination. The call for the protection of human rights for discriminated groups must be as large and diverse as possible to guarantee an effective outreach to many different groups within the given society.

The large symposiums that will be conducted throughout the year, as well as the NCC meetings and training courses, will bring together social analysis research, and will be the basis for our common social action and grass roots activities. The thematic weeks will support the principles of participation, diversity and human rights through the topics they rally

around and in the process of the creation of the events and projects. The secretariat will initiate a series of pan-European events that will be coordinated with the thematic events. The goal is to achieve as much collaboration on the national and pan-European level so that we can maximize the visibility of the campaign while staying relevant to concrete issues on the ground across Europe.

We have only a few months to go in the campaign, so it is important to use the coming spring and summer to give the final push to move the issues of the campaign to the top of the social agenda. I know that the majority of youth in Europe can stand firm behind the values and principals of this campaign, but this majority is silent. The minority of extremists of all kinds get the attention of the media while we - the majority - lower and shake our heads in disbelief.

If this campaign can empower youth to step up to the challenge and face the minority who advocates hate and exclusion... If we can inform and educate young people in the themes of diversity and human rights so they can go out there and transfer this information to their peers... then we can call this year a success.

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