

Issue 14 - March 2009

GOYOTE

#14

Y o u t h P a r t n e r s h i p

Coyote theme:
Participation



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You can also contact the editor with your comments, suggestions and ideas at the same address.

Welcome to COYOTE number 14!

Another 10 pages! That's how much bigger this issue of Coyote is compared to last time – and we thought number 13 was big! Of course, we shouldn't be surprised; the theme of Coyote 14 is Participation – a far reaching subject, which in various guises has been on our agendas for many years.

In many ways, participation underpins much if not all of what I think of as Youth Work, and of non-formal learning. People (young or otherwise) grow and develop when they are engaged - when they participate, and likewise, communities, societies, associations and informal groups, also grow and develop when people participate in them.

For me, a significant experience of participation as a young person was taking the lead in a group, heading off into the wilderness of northern Canada and learning how to deal with challenging environments and challenging behaviour from some of my colleagues. The impact of that trip on my adult life was huge: Amongst other things, I learnt about decision making, about representation and the relationship between responsibility and authority – competencies that I've tried to use ever since. One key thing that strikes me about the experience was being trusted with the opportunity: Funders, academics, parents all placed a level of trust in me. At the time I would have said the expedition happened because of our initiative – but the reality was that others provided the environment for that initiative to flourish.

It is perhaps ironic that there are no articles in this issue written by young people. Writing something might have been perceived as a method of participation in the development of thinking about participation (if you see what I mean!) – and

maybe we should have tried harder to find those contributors. But the many articles that are included here are insights from those who currently create the environment for participation: Insights from people who work face to face with young people, from those who develop or influence policy, from those who research the needs and evaluate the outcomes. Given that issue 14 is so large, I do hope that you will find some articles that will inspire you, some that will develop your understanding, some that will challenge you and some that will make you smile!

In this issue we wanted to acknowledge the tenth anniversary of the first Partnership (Covenant) on youth worker training between the Council of Europe and the European Commission. Hanjo Schild's article gives us a great overview of the history of the Partnership and the whole magazine reflects, I believe, much of the work now being carried on.

So, as usual, I hope you enjoy the magazine and find it useful. Feedback, direct to contributors or to the editorial team, is always appreciated. Finally, in case you're reading someone else's copy of Coyote 14, you can always order your own copy, or download it from the Partnership website at www.youth-partnership.net. ■

Enjoy your reading!

Jonathan Bowyer



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By Hanjo Schild

10th anniversary
10th anniversary
10th anniversary
10th anniversary
10th anniversary
10th anniversary
10th anniversary
10th anniversary

10th anniversary

of the Youth Partnership: past achievements, future perspectives

Since 1998 the Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the youth field has taken the form of consecutive agreements or “Covenants” between the two institutions focusing during a first stage on “European Youth Worker and Youth Leader Training” (“Training Covenants”).

In 2003, the “Training Covenant” was complemented by two further Covenants, one on “Euro-Med cooperation” and another one on “Youth Research”. All three Covenants expired during spring 2005. From then on, both partners agreed to strengthen cooperation, to replace the existing partnerships by one single umbrella agreement and to sign a Framework Partnership Agreement covering first the period 2005 – 2006, followed by a second one for 2007-2009. In autumn 2008 the Partnership celebrated its 10th anniversary, an excellent occasion to look back to the major achievements and to look ahead to further perspectives and challenges.

► The political background

The general philosophy on Cooperation and Partnership is formalised by the Joint Declaration between the Council of Europe and the European Commission of 3 April 2001. It is summed up by the following: “The Council of Europe and the European Commission share the same values and pursue common aims with regard to the protection of democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. These common aims have led the Council of Europe and the European Commission in recent years to develop a number of joint programmes for cooperation... we confirm our determination to deepen our partnership and enhance our cooperation taking into account recent developments in our continent and the evolving priorities in our respective activities”.

Invited by the Council of Europe Summit of Heads of State or Government in Warsaw 2005 the Prime Minister of Luxem-

burg, Jean-Claude Juncker submitted a report on the relationship of the Council of Europe and the European Union. This report highlights the achievements made in various policy sectors and in the youth field it appeals for increased cooperation between the two partners, which already has a long tradition. “In the youth field, the Council and the EU are pursuing almost identical policies, admittedly with different resources. There are a few bridges, however. For example, three youth programmes are being conducted under partnership agreements... (they) expire at the end of 2006 and have not been renewed for the period from 2007 to 2013. This is an opportunity to think about new joint initiatives, which would give the idea of a Europe without dividing lines more substance...”

A further - and for the moment last - step was taken in May 2007 by signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union. It underlines that the two partners “will strengthen their cooperation in the youth field by developing and taking part in programmes and campaigns to empower young people to participate actively in the democratic process and by facilitating youth exchange”. 10 years ago, in the youth field itself, the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe was not welcomed by everybody in the European landscape of youth work and youth policy, within the institutions and outside. Some of the stakeholders doubted that a formalized cooperation would produce an added value to the field and lead to a substantial progress in the work of the two institutions. However, at the political level the will for cooperation was evident and had – already before it came to the formal agreement in 1998 - a long history in the youth field.



“Both, the Council of Europe and the European Commission are perfectly able to competently run their different youth programmes autonomously. To replace their good punctual cooperation of the past with a long-term cooperation project within a legally defined framework and thus mutually give up part of their autonomy in the implementation of youth worker training programmes needs a motivation which has to go beyond the political opportunity of the day.”

Today, the cooperation between the two partners is obvious and based on formal decisions and agreements:

The Committee of Ministers in its Resolution on the Youth Policy of the Council of Europe, adopted in spring 1998, regards “the development of cooperation to stimulate a balanced development of youth structures in all member states” as a priority and recommends to adapt existing structures with a view to “making Council of Europe youth activities more coordinated, cooperative and coherent” and to “improving cooperation with the European Union and with other international organisations”.

The European Commissions’ White Paper on Youth (2001) explicitly refers to the Council of Europe and its achievements in the area of youth and suggests improving cooperation and networking, particularly in the area of greater understanding and knowledge of youth. The Council Resolution of November 2004 invited the Commission to set up, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, a European Network of Youth Knowledge. One of the general objectives of the European Unions’ YOUTH IN ACTION programme is to promote European cooperation in the youth field and article 7 stresses that “the Programme shall also be open to cooperation with international organisations with authority in the field of youth, in particular the Council of Europe”.

► The “historical” development of Partnership activities

Consequently the first covenant on youth worker training started on 1 November 1998 for an initial period of nine months only, followed by a second phase of another 11 months until 30 June 2000. The third covenant was signed for a period of nearly four years and the fourth one until spring 2005. As of 2003 two further covenants were signed on youth research and on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. Based on the positive evaluations of all these phases the two partners decided to run in the future one single partnership agreement overarching the earlier pillars. Since then two Framework Partnership Agreements have been signed, for 2005-06 and currently for 2007-2009.

► A new generation of Framework Partnership Agreements

Since 2005 the work programme of the single Framework Agreements set the following priorities:

- European Citizenship
- Intercultural dialogue and human rights education
- Quality in youth work and training
- Recognition and visibility of youth work
- Better understanding and knowledge of youth
- Youth policy development
- Diversity and the fight against discrimination

November 1998 to July 1999	First Covenant on Youth Work Training	Together nine Training courses were run on a variety of subjects. The first T-Kits were published. “All reports present positive ideas for the continuation of the partnership agreement and indications about the training and publications’ offer for the future. They concern the continuation and adaptation of the training offer, the clarity of the target group, the necessity for a long term commitment from the side of the institutions and in general, the wish to provide an adequate framework for continuous assessment of the Partnership agreement”.	
August 1999 to June 2000	Second Covenant on Youth Work Training		
July 2000 to February 2004	Third Covenant on Youth Work Training	Focus on training on European Citizenship and Long term training course for trainers. Activities also included ATTE, Bridges for Training (2001) and Bridges for Recognition (2005), further T-kits and Coyote.	
March 2004 to May 2005	Fourth Covenant on Youth Work Training		
May 2003 to April 2005	Partnership on Euromed Youth Cooperation	April 2003 to March 2005	Partnership on a better knowledge and understanding of Youth (The Youth Research Covenant)
Focused on intercultural learning and cooperation between the Euro-Mediterranean partner countries and the Member States of the EU and the Council of Europe. The aim was to provide further quality training and learning opportunities for youth workers and youth leaders active in Euro-Mediterranean youth projects. It was a joint project of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe and the Directorate of Youth and Sport.		The goal was mainly to collect and to provide detailed research knowledge of the situation, needs and lifestyles of young people in order to inform European youth policy and educational practice. In the very heart of this first phase stands the development of the “European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy” as a state of the art online knowledge management system.	

May 2005 to December 2006	First Framework partnership agreement	Aim of today's' partnership is to provide a framework for the joint development of cooperation and a coherent strategy in the field of youth, particularly in the area of European citizenship & human rights education, intercultural dialogue & cooperation, quality in youth work & training, recognition & visibility of youth work, better understanding & knowledge of youth, youth policy development. Main activities are training sessions, seminars and network meetings. The results of the Partnership are disseminated through the transfer of training modules, the Partnership website, newsletters and research publications, e.g. a series of thematic T(raining)-Kits and the Coyote Magazine, the joint magazine published twice a year. The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP) plays a very special and crucial role in the information strategy of the Partnership.
January 2007 to December 2009	Second Framework partnership agreement	

► The management of the work programme

Today, the Partnership secretariat consists of 8 full and part-time posts. With regard to the management structure there are three main bodies:

- The "Partnership Management Board" composed of representatives of both partners and the staff of the partnership secretariat. It meets twice a year.
- The "Partnership Sectorial Group" meetings are held for the three thematic areas "European Citizenship, Quality and Recognition", "Euro-Med, Human Rights Education and Intercultural Dialogue" and "Better Understanding of Youth and Youth Policy Development"; they contribute to the definition of content and operational management.
- The "Partnership Consultation Meeting" gathers once a year all members of the Management Board, the Sectorial Groups and other interested parties for an exchange of information with the aim to increase synergies among stakeholders involved.

A specific information strategy aims at making the results of the partnership more visible and enhancing the multiplier effect by dissemination of results. From the very beginning activities were documented and results processed to publications and training material.

► Some Conclusions and future perspectives

Both the European Commission and the Council of Europe consider the Partnership as a very useful tool to build on the strengths of each institution and to enhance cooperation between the two institutions in the field of youth. Since the very beginning the partnership led to a dynamic process with a positive reputation in the field and a wide range of achievements and high quality results. The future scope of activities is not limited to the current working priorities and to the regional areas actually prioritised. The period 2010-2013 will be open to further needs and expectations of the whole sector within Europe and beyond. The future role of the partnership lies in its capacity of innovation, trend- and standard setting linked with the provision of high quality work delivered in cooperation with strong networks of stakeholders.

In general terms future activities should focus on democracy and civil society development, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, social cohesion and inclusion. Working priorities could be:

- Training of youth workers and youth leaders.
- The strategy for a better formal and social recognition of youth work and of non-formal / informal learning.
- Better understanding and knowledge of youth.
- The role and position of the youth field in the Third Sector.
- The political priorities of the youth sector in the European Union and the member states of the Council of Europe.
- A specific regional cooperation in youth policy development within Europe (Eastern Europe and Caucasus, South East Europe) and beyond is needed, particularly with the Euro-Mediterranean region, Africa and Asia as direct neighbours.
- Mainstreaming youth into other cross-sectorial policies, including employment, education, social inclusion, health and well-being. ■

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COYOTE THEME

Who leads?

Youth Participation,
globalisation
and democracy

Through youth
participation today
to the **leaders of**
tomorrow

Impact of Youth Participation
on Euromed

Youth Participation as a
factor in **democratic**
values

Under European Light:
Polish short cut
and bypass phenomena

Stand
by me!

An exploration
of **participatory**
research
with young
people

Introducing
Anacej:
Children's and
youth councils
in France

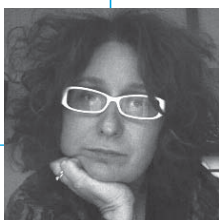
Change the village,
challenge
yourself! You(th)
can make a difference

Participation
in formal education:
No false
promises, please!

What role can training play
in promoting, encouraging and raising
standards in youth participation?

Youth participation in youth
policy development
the case of
Southeast Europe





by Federica Demicheli & Marco Boaria

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Impact of Youth Participation on Euromed

Youth Participation in Euromed is a key factor of the political and social development of society and of a democratic system in the area. Young people from both the sides of the Mediterranean Sea will be the leaders, actors and decision makers in the future. The challenge is to support them to acquire the competences needed to be active citizens. Youth participation in Euromed could bring a new political perspective into the area and change some stereotyped visions.

According to Mark Franklin, *“The future lies at the hand of young people. Young people hold the key of the future because they are the ones who react to new conditions. Older people are, on the whole, too set in their ways to be responsible for social and political change, so most long term change comes about by way of generation replacement”*

► Limits to Youth Participation

Participation is a key issue. Many recommendations, papers, as well as a White Paper have highlighted the need to promote young people's participation in the life of society and their involvement in decision-making processes at all levels.

Despite many different actions and solutions – including innovative ones – which have been identified to foster youth participation, participation is still something limited, especially when talking about its impact on European (and Euromed) Youth Policy. We would like thus to focus on the limits to youth participation, in order to be aware of them, have the possibility to analyze them, create opportunity to discuss and debate about these limits and possibly find appropriate – and, why not, innovative – methods, tools, actions to overcome them and improve youth participation at all levels.

The main obstacles to youth participation can be divided into three different macro-categories.

The first refers to cultural attitudes: The cultural environment influences how youth participation is perceived: each policy and activity promoting participation should consider the different cultural aspects and should aim to promote a “setting” where diversity is a value and where the needs and wishes of young people

are respected and kept under consideration.

The second refers to the administrative and political systems: In order to grant a long-lasting and relevant level of participation, both in qualitative and quantitative terms, administrative and political systems should be re-structured and developed according to youth needs and wishes, based on the direct interaction with the younger generations whenever they are tackling issues that may concern them.

The third – the one we wish to focus on – is related to the individual and collective approaches of young people towards participation: We may ask ourselves: why might young people not wish to participate?

Without considering youth as a homogenous world, we would like to highlight the major difficulties young people face, which limit their full involvement and participation:

- young people today may not be aware of their potential and thus, live without being conscious of the importance of playing an active role and having a say in society;
- young people may face difficulties in communication and lack fundamental instruments, means and tools to interact and employ a critical approach, at all levels;
- nowadays societies push us to act more individually than collectively, and the main victims of this vision are represented by the younger generations: young people should be “trained” to raise their awareness about the importance of cooperating with others in a responsible manner, promoting diversity and intercultural dialogue;
- young people may not wish to participate because they are not familiar with a “problem solving” approach, which may help them to better understand aims and priorities of their individual and collective walks of life without being blocked by problems they are not willing and/or able to face;



- young people are not usually fully aware of the complexity of our global society and they lack instruments to understand and face this issue in a positive manner;
- young people run the risk of being considered more “passive actors” than “active ones” by different parts of society (e.g. politicians, advertising, educational systems...) and they are constantly bombarded by enormous flows of information that they cannot critically evaluate.

These obstacles to participation may be overcome by empowering young people and improving their competencies as active citizens.

► Competencies to Participate

We cannot promote and foster youth participation and its impact, especially on European Youth Policy, without considering the necessary knowledge, competencies and skills youth need to have.

Compared to the past, if on the one hand young people are offered nowadays more opportunities to participate, on the other hand they are “obliged” to develop their skills to overcome the limits to their involvement as active subjects in their own countries and in Europe.

So...what should be in young people’s portfolio of competencies to support participation in Europe today?

The key competencies which are necessary for youth to play an active role in the society - and to have a say and an impact both at the local and at the European level - could be categorized as follows:

Learning to learn

Young people should be able to organize their self-learning process; they should have the necessary skills to identify, select and employ different information sources and training methods (formal, non-formal, informal), adapting them to their own strategies.

Project skills

Young people should be able to elaborate and realize projects related to their own individual walks of life, employing the knowledge gained to define the most significant aims and priorities; they should be able to critically evaluate both limits and opportunities and to draft the most appropriate strategies.

Communication skills

On the one hand, young people should have the necessary competencies to understand different kinds of messages, having different levels of complexity and transmitted through various “languages” and different means; on the other hand, they should be able to deliver their knowledge and their feelings, through different “languages”; employing various means.

Cooperation and participation skills

These “skills” include several different aspects: young people need to know how to interact in a social group, being able to valorise their own and others’ competencies; they should also have the necessary skills to manage and mediate in conflict situations; finally, they should be aware of the importance of their contribution to collective action, as well as the importance of respect for the fundamental rights which are the basis of society.

Autonomy and responsibility

Young people should have the skills to actively participate in the life of the society, with full awareness about their own and others’ needs and rights, about opportunities, restrictions, rules and responsibilities.

Problem-solving competencies

Young people should be equipped to face problems; having the necessary skills to create and verify hypotheses, identify appropriate sources and resources, collect and evaluate data, propose proper and suitable solutions.

Identify connections and relations

In complex societies it is more and more important to be able to identify relations and connections at the basis of our social context; young people should be able to identify and represent these connections, being aware of their systemic nature.

Collecting information ability and interpreting skills

Young people should have the necessary skills to collect and interpret information, employing a critical approach, being able to evaluate its reliability and usefulness and distinguishing facts and opinions. If we want to promote youth participation and promote its impact on European Youth Policy, it is of the utmost importance to know who the actors are who will provide young people with the “competencies to participate”.

One of the most relevant answers to this question is found in the “European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life” adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe on 21 May 2003.

The Charter mainly gives to local and regional authorities – the public entities which are closer to young people – the responsibility to train and support young people to promote their active involvement in society. They are required to play a primary role in the field of youth participation, human and civil rights education and non-formal education, by providing services and tools, as well as organizational support. In particular, local and regional authorities (see Title II, Art. II.1 of the Charter), should promote training opportunities addressed to youth workers, including teachers; develop “civic educational” programmes; favour the exchange of good practice among the different actors involved; and should finally promote the full participation and involvement of the younger generation in the life of the community and in the decision-making process at all stages.

Civil society should also play a relevant role; cooperating with other relevant stakeholders in the community to promote and foster youth participation.

This reflection about competencies started at the European Level, but it represents an important starting point also in the Euromed context. Youth participation and the role of young people in some Meda countries are becoming priorities. Young people need “space”, support and training in order to develop these competencies to become active citizens in their own countries.

Organizations, institutions and schools are looking for models and methods to train young people and to increase their life skills in active participation and democracy.

▶ Youth Participation in Euromed: Something Special?

In the Euromed area, youth participation is seen as necessary for reforms and is considered an on-going process that is increasingly being discussed in civil society and government spheres.

There are at least three reasons that make the youth participation process in the Euromed area of great importance. Firstly, in the Arab countries young people constitute the majority. Secondly, young people present the tomorrow's elite that will be able to bring new political visions and strategies. Thirdly, young people are the base for promoting any kind of political development aiming to a democratic reform.

According to Marina Ottaway (2005), the Southern Mediterranean is an area where “presidents and kings remain powerful, untrammelled by limits imposed by effective parliaments and independent judiciaries. Countervailing institutions remain weak, if they exist at all, not only because constitutions and laws deliberately keep them that way, but also because they are not backed by organized citizens demanding political rights, participation, and government accountability”.

In a recent study about Youth in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon (Jamil 2007), 83.3 percent of young people interviewees, regardless of whether they had experienced participation, confirmed that they were strong believers in their potential as actors in any process of reform, and showed a great degree of conviction that their participation could make a major difference. Beside their determination to promote change, 71.4 percent seemed sceptical about their ability to translate this will into a political reality. This is an important point: they are not aware of the different channels of participation and of the importance of reinforcing their ability to push for change. Participation in some countries is not supported in real life: it may be in the election in the University, but not into political reality.

Youth Participation is not easy in some Meda countries but young people have an important role within civil society organisations and within associations and NGOs.

NGOs and associations provide young people spaces for socialisation and culture rather than one for promoting change. These organisations are the social environment in which young people can start their experimentation of active participation through

local initiatives, projects, etc. Another space for supporting active participation of young people is the international framework of some European programmes like Euromed or Youth in Action (in the context of the Barcelona Process).

▶ Euromed Space of Confrontation and Participation

The cooperation projects are a significant venue for confronting the different experiences, realities and perceptions about Youth Participation and Active Citizenship between young people.

These possibilities allow young people to develop a new perspective about the others and to better understand the realities in the countries abroad.

The impact of Youth Participation on Euromed is visible in the development of new international projects with a strong influence at the local and national level. Young people can develop new tools and competencies in order to be more aware of their role in society, but also to be prepared to take active part in it. This larger perspective supports them to better understand the complex political and social situation in the Mediterranean area. Young people have the possibility, in this experience, to go beyond the political stereotypes and the media information about other countries and to experience active exchange and debate on such topics.

In Euromed, young people have the possibility to be actors in this specific political arena and to implement their competencies on participation.

The interconnection between Euro and Meda countries is very important in this historical moment. Young people have to be able, in the future, to bring a new political stream to the international level.

Active Participation is not merely based on the ability to express personal ideas, thoughts and opinions in a certain context, but also to take part and share a common activity in public life. Euromed, as well as the experience inside NGOs, can be the place to experiment with pilot processes of citizenship and to try to understand limits and opportunities. ■

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by Agnieszka Pawlik

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Under European Light: Polish short cut and bypass phenomena. How to create an environment for youth participation?

Before I share my experience on creating a participation environment for youth in Poland, it is important to get a basic view of the Polish youth work reality.

► Poland before the EU Programmes and other funds for youth work arrived

Before the EU programmes arrived there were only big organisations like the Scouts, Christian or Students' Associations whose offer is quite specific. There were also cultural or community houses with some courses available for young people. There were no youth councils; politicians didn't take much notice of youth problems; there was no youth work as a profession and small youth associations didn't exist. Young Gosia or Grześ could join only the Scouts, a Catholic youth group in the parish or attend piano lessons in the culture house.

► Poland now

The "Youth Programme" brought tools: money and know-how for those who wanted to create a new space for youth. We learned from Western experienced youth workers, we became equipped with new clear values and guidance and got the power: funds which we could independently obtain for our ideas. And who are we? People of different ages, professions and assignments, working voluntarily or earning a living in this way, but very often not prepared by any state education to do youth work. So, youth work exists where there are willing people. And most often the youth workers are peers or other young people not much older than the groups they are working with.

I call what happened, the **short cut phenomenon**. Youth work was created earlier than will appear in state educational curricula. There is still no clearly defined profession of "youth worker" in Poland, but hundreds or thousands of them are working in the communities.

► Youth participation in Poland

If we understand youth active participation as young people influencing and changing the reality they're living in, or youth and adults sharing decision-making, there is another difference to the West. In a country such as Poland, where even though state youth policy was never implemented (although created under European influence), great youth actions happen. Young people are solving those problems which were solved a long time ago in the West; problems that are usually the responsibility of the state or local administrations. Examples of projects done by our 17, 20 or 23 year olds are: first socially integrative workshops for young disabled persons (many of them are staying home without any social integration opportunities, not to mention occupational therapy); organising winter holidays for children from poor families (who otherwise would stay only at home); building benches in the public park; building a basketball pitch in a local school yard (and they can use it after school hours).





So, our participation is not about creating embedded and functional systems within the society yet. It's more about creating a space for young people to act and to learn independence; even more, just spend free time together providing self-organised actions for peers, children, the wider community, the environment or cultural heritage.

I call it a **bypass phenomenon**: thanks to the "Youth" and other programmes young people don't need to struggle with some backward politicians to make a change. Young leaders are trained within these programmes, equipped with good values, guidance, practical know-how and money to realize their ideas independently. Young people, supported by a leader or youth worker, want to show up in the community as valuable members, having their culture and needs but also ideas and power. They may be useful and they may be ahead of political processes and decisions. It is more about participation in society and the local community than in decision-making yet.

► What is needed then to make youth participation in the community sustainable?

In the macro dimension change in the culture of the society is needed; so that young people can freely express themselves, organise their initiatives whenever they want (e.g. public resources are shared), that young adults' decision-making process is natural, and youth can consider society as their space as well. I don't know such a society so I'm not able to give any practical advice.

I can talk only about the micro dimension, where there are persons who use their elbows to gain some space for youth and protect it later on from dangers of the macro dimension (rude politicians, criticising parents etc.). Many of the great grass roots youth initiatives emerged and disappeared just after one social action or two projects. For instance it is very difficult to establish your own association in Poland: you need at least 15 members and strong nerves to go through the legal registration in the court, and then to manage the book keeping according to Polish financial law.

Good practice: participation in society through action

SA_D means Semper Avanti Długoleka (always ahead Długoleka) and Długoleka is a village commune close to Wrocław city. Youth from over a dozen villages meet regularly every Friday to be together and to see what else they can do in the commune, to make it a better space. Their activities very often have an international/European dimension. The oldest person is their leader Waldek, 26, the youngest is 14. There are already three generations of youths who went through SA_D and this experience strengthened their feeling of belonging, which resulted in them having a feeling of citizenship of the commune or Europe. The list of their actions is very long. It includes: numerous trips and indoor activities for children from less privileged families; charity Christmas actions; participation in all commune events by, for instance, setting up a face and body painting stand for children; construction of benches in the public park during an international youth exchange; public park cleaning; St. John's Night events; open common football watching on a big screen; water fights (one of our Easter traditions); integration workshops for youth with disabilities; street ball inter-village competition (for that they built new basketball pitch in the school yard); numerous international youth exchanges...

Good practice: participation in decision-making

In Dzierżonów very efficient and remarkable actions happened in 2007 that broke the youth isolation for a while or maybe for longer. It was the Open Space Technology conference titled: "You Can Also Decide!" Over one hundred youth representatives and decision-makers from the county met to discuss how to improve public spaces for youth. As a result the city and county councils financed the establishment of the Youth Information Point "Eurodesk" as not only an information provider but also as a base for youth initiatives. Among other outcomes a breakdance group got space to practise in a school building, moreover, a proposal of free breakdance workshops for children from one neighbourhood was accepted. Prices of the bus tickets in the area were discussed; youths were invited to the council's meetings; the existing youth council became more powerful; a conference about the job market and vocational education for youth was organised with employers, etc.

► So what do we need?

1. THE person: a leader, an idealist who will stay with youth for good and bad times and catalyse, making things happen. There are young people almost everywhere; the YOUTH programme and other funds are available for everyone, but the actions happen and are followed-up only in some places. I would like to introduce two persons I am working with closely. They are very different from each other in terms of generations, areas of living and life situations, but they both have caused intensive and sustainable participation results in their communities.

Waldemar Pawlik (known also as Waldek or Valdi) at 26 he is my younger brother by 8 years. He completed Technical University and he earns a nice living in the private sector... But in his free time he is a leader of a youth club SA_D, co-founder of a youth football club, board member of Semper Avanti association and active community member. He dedicates his free time to make young people believe that they can cause positive changes in their environment, and that they will become proud citizens of today's Europe.

Another of my heroes is Grazyna Wójcik, a clerk in the Dzieżniów County administration, head of an office. Youth work is not her job responsibility at all. She has enough duties and responsibilities to work overtime. But her office almost every day is visited by young people and they are planning future actions together, sharing and creating ideas. Grazyna managed to convince county and city politicians and administrators to put up money and resources to establish a Youth Information Point "Eurodesk" the first in the area, as a base for youth activity. Her actions are very innovative in the scale of the region and Poland, and facing many obstacles and discouragements she keeps on creating new and innovative spaces for youth. Choosing them I would like to show that so far a youth worker's certificate is not needed (even impossible to get one) but personal motivation and certain life situations allow these persons to do the job for at least a couple of years.

To sum up THE person needs to be:

- an idealist with very good understanding of young people, having good contact and relationships with them, with strong motivation and certain leadership and interpersonal skills,
- with a stable life situation in terms of not changing their place of living,
- with stable incomes, or active enough to earn a living away from youth work.

2. THE tools

Waldemar calls it an offer; I would call it a frame or space. The frame has to match the interests of young people. Usually it has to provide personal development and clear achievement opportunities, for others to create a feeling of belonging to the group or community, or just the possibility of international contacts, travel and meeting peers from other countries.

For me the perfect tools, as I mentioned before, are EU and other programmes suited for youth. These programmes are giving frames (young people often need frames), guidance

and money. But some young people are also able to create their own tools by having their own guidance and own ways to find funds and resources for their activities in society.

3. A base

By a base I understand a place to meet and work and keep group belongings safely, ideally equipped with computers with internet.

SA_D is located in the Community Cultural Centre. They have their own room as an acknowledgement of their value in the community. At the start they were meeting for three years in my parents' house and in the bar. To have their own space now at their disposal is a sign of partnership, which they appreciate and don't want to lose. So they keep on going.

Grazyna adds a legal frame, as she wants to secure her youth activities also from this side. She deals with legal issues and her young people don't need to waste energy for that. She created the Youth Information Point not only to provide information, but also to take over those processes that slow down young people or even paralyse their potential.

SA_D doesn't need their own legal status and don't have to struggle with financial annual formalities for instance, where professional accountancy knowledge is necessary. They apply for funds through other organisations with whom they cooperate.

Grazyna underlines that young people need to see the results, either of their actions or consultations and this is what the base should provide as well. And here I want to emphasise one young adults' problem: young people's life is changing much quicker than adults', that's why they have another sense of time. It is not that they are impatient, as adults often blame them for being. That's why cooperation is sometimes more difficult because adults have their procedures, habits, regulations and rules. That's why it's easy to de-motivate youth if they have to wait too long.





▶ What about the wider environment?

It's good if at least it doesn't disturb. In our country all that is happening is new to many people. Parents are checking if we are not a religious sect. Politicians are either looking at us as a danger to their position, competition for community budgets against their interests or first they give help and then demand payback during election campaigns. Luckily more and more we meet great understanding and help from the environment.

▶ What do we do to warm up the environment towards youth initiatives?

First of all the main obstacle is always time. To organise an action and take proper care of a young team and participants usually take all our human resources and private time. Time is in the shortest supply out of all goods. What works is:

- for the community: showing as much as possible at public community events the results of youth activities; visibility (T-shirts, logo, group symbols etc.),
- for parents: organising meetings with parents which would assist projects (in the beginning and as evaluation), providing proper written information about the project ,
- for all: always invite press for actions and collect articles in folders in order to show it later on any occasions when the youth action credibility needs to be proven; nice website, leaflets,
- for potential donors and sponsors: eye-catching and informative annual report, attractive project presentation and project reports, good exposition of their logos ,
- for politicians: individual approach by the leaders.

There was another phenomenon regarding the wider environment's acceptance of increased youth activity: European money. Young people were obtaining significant funds from outside and bringing them to the community. "If Europe trusts them - why shouldn't we then?" And our youth started being observed more closely; sometimes with disbelief at first, but their credibility was rising. And then "If Europe gives money for that, maybe it is important?" And another process of looking upon the causes and noticing new values had happened.

Other points of view

I remember once a discussion with Danish young leaders while planning international work camps. Austrians proposed to clean the park, Slovaks to renovate a building for a youth club, Italians proposed digging fire-breaks on the fields, Polish bringing up St. John's traditions, Danes couldn't come up with any idea for a youth contribution to the community. They said: for us all of that is done by the state. That's why I am aware my experience on supporting participation is not very useful in some other countries.

Where is the way then? I am one of the promoters of youth policy in my region (Lower Silesia- Dolny Slask). My boyfriend, who is a liberal economist, undermines a sense of creating such a policy at all. He says that such a policy and our work in general is a result of insufficiencies in other policies, for instance social policy (which has led to the accusation that families don't bring up their kids properly) and educational (that schools only teach and don't bring up) or economic policy and media (promotion of the consumption culture but not empathy for instance). According to him the way is not to create more policies or more bodies to improve the society, but to improve the existing ones.

Last but not least: today I was singing to my little son songs from the Jesus Christ Superstar Musical. Jesus sings to Judas: "There will be poor always, pathetically struggling". Is it not same with youth participation? It is to be hoped, that more and more people like us can create nice and warm islands in the society as a common space for all generations. ■

End note: *I expressed my own point of view here and will be grateful if you share with me*

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by Thilo Boeck



& Darren Sharpe

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An exploration of participatory research with young people

In Britain over the last decade the political climate and growth in consultation with children and young people as stakeholders of public services has flourished . The political drive to modernise public service has meant new platforms have been created, in which children and young people are listened to and their voices recognized as part of a chorus of public stakeholders. This has meant that practitioners have had to be more innovative in the way they consult and listen to children and young people and demonstrate how their contributions have been incorporated into service plans. Many of the consultation exercises used with children and young people have had to be innovative to include children who have limited speech, who are semi-literate, have challenging behaviour, and are from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Lightfoot et al, 2002, Shemmings, 2000, Sloper et al, 2003, Curtis et al, 2004).

► Why starting a participative research project?

As researchers we have to ask ourselves very carefully if our own approaches to researching young people's experiences are grounded in 'research on', 'research for' or 'research with' young people (Derbyshire, 2005, Oakley, 1994). If we 'research with' young people we need to perceive them as active agents. We have to depart from a 'deficit' model, where children and young people are viewed as unsophisticated or 'silly', as mini or 'incomplete adults'; as 'presocial', and thus incapable of being taken seriously in discussions about their needs (Oakley, 1994, p. 419) or being unable to articulate a set of coherent political views (Scott, 2000, Mayall, 2002).

Youth participation in research challenges the conceptualisation of childhood as a stage of 'becoming' as opposed to 'being', and engages with the 'New Sociology of Childhood' (Wyness, 2006). The Sociology of Childhood 'take(s) it as read that children can be understood as competent social actors [and] as fully constituted social subjects just at the point where late modernity pulls the ontological ground from under the individual' (Wyness, 2006, pp. 236-37). As researchers we need to know why we engage in participative research and have an open dialogue about this with

young people. In our research we have found that sometimes young people feel that participation can be a policy agenda or an adult agenda imposed on them. This could work against the overall goals of empowering young people to take part in research. From our experience we see that participative research might have different dimensions such as:

- Enhancing strengths and competences of young people
- Framing young people's voices
- Adding quality to the research

By reflecting on our own practice, and experiences we hope that in this article we can disentangle some of the complexities within participative research and give some pointers for meaningful participatory research.

► Our Projects

The authors have worked with a number of separate participative research projects in the United Kingdom and hence feel in a position to make a contribution to the debate. A large number of young people have taken part in the projects that have ranged from quantitative surveys with samples of up to 800 people to small group discussions, and qualitative approaches using pho-

to-elicitation with families and the wider community, peer interviews and case studies. This paper is based on these experiences but will draw on three projects:

- Project Re:action
- Young Carer's project
- Young people's research network

► Young People's Participation in Project Re:Action

Project Re:Action is a participative research project by the Youth Action Network and the Centre for Social Action (De Montfort University) funded by the Big Lottery Fund. The research aims to learn more about young people's volunteering experience, the impact it has on their lives and their communities and how much difference full participation makes to that experience. Through residencies and further training, 35 young people were involved in planning, and carrying out the research. In order to establish a strong partnership between young people, researchers and the organisations, the project has also a steering group of seven young people. The project used a mixed methods approach and, pushing the participative agenda forward, we analysed the data with the young people using computer assisted data analysis packages for the quantitative and qualitative data.

► Picturing Young Carers

Picturing Young Carers is a photographic participation and elicitation study with children and young people who care for parents with severe mental health problems completed in 2007. The study was sponsored and approved by the Economic and Social Research Council and completed by the Young Carers Research Group at Loughborough University. The aim of the study was to test the usefulness of photographic participation and elicitation research methods among a group of young carers. The study used photographs taken by young carers as the basis for a study into the effectiveness of 'visual diaries', as a specific research tool, to use with these vulnerable groups of children/young people. A further aim of the study was to provide deeper insight into the young caring experience and the nature of caring and parent-child relationships when parents have serious mental health problems.

► Young Researcher Network (YRN)

The YRN works with fifteen groups across England who are doing young people-led research. The research projects were sponsored by The National Youth Agency. Each group will be using their own research findings –published in November 2008 - to push for change on matters that affect the lived lives of young people. Through the network the young people-led projects receive tailored and generic research training, small research grants, and access to research toolkit and expert advice and guidance in order to successfully complete their research projects.

1. Enhancing strengths and competences of young people

Learning new skills, engaging in discussion, making decisions and taking responsibility for different aspects of the research has impacted on young people's perceptions of their roles in our projects. They describe their roles (as members of the steering group and as peer researchers) as being of equal or greater importance than adult researchers.

The adults listen to what we have to say. If we've got something to say then we sit down and listen to what each other has to say and respect what each other has to say. We've all got individual opinions and there's no right or wrong answer, there are just different points of view and they try to bring all of that together.

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Young man from Project Re:Action

A fine balance has to be reached in focusing on the research process and the contribution to the individual's overall well being. For this to happen it needs investment (monetary, time, resources, and training) and ensuring that young people are resourced appropriately in order to fully participate. For instance, paying for travel and food reduced barriers to participation; having knowledge and control (in parts) of the research budget promoted ownership; giving access to and support in the use of computers/internet aided high levels of communication and accessibility to the adult researcher(s).

For instance, the initial inspiration behind the YRN came from the shortfall in good quality research training for young people, in England, who are involved in youth-led projects. All the groups are using participative approaches as a tool for change. The young people who comprised these groups range considerably in their experience and knowledge of research. This is amplified by their different backgrounds and circumstances. Although the training has been designed to be inclusive and build on young people's mixed abilities, we soon realised that basic research training (and closely related discussions on ethics and safety) cannot always be delivered in a generic way. Training needed to be pitched at different levels and support given to individual groups in their organisations.

2. Framing Young People's Voices

The importance of 'finding a voice' and 'telling one's story' has been well recognised as essential to participatory research (Plummer, 2001). Participatory research works to empower young people in building competencies, confidence, and deepen their understanding of their own set of circumstances.

So for example, the participative approach fostered with the group of young carers did not degrade or control their voices. Quite often the young carers' situation is pathologised or they



are turned into victims with little control over their lives. Our work was focused on their capacities and empowering the group of young carers to have a voice. Thus the participative research encouraged young people to (1) tell their own stories prioritising what is important to them, (2) create spaces for their stories to be told, and (3) feed their views and experiences into policy development and practice.

Giving due recognition to how voices of young people are silenced, we believe that within a participative research project the team should consider different spheres where young people's voices need to be heard:

- within the research project
- within the organisation/school/youth group
- in the outside world (i.e. policy arena)

3. Adding Quality to the Research

As we have argued in the previous section participatory research is beneficial both because of its implicit values (such as empowerment and inclusion) but also because it improves our levels of understanding of the substantive subject area. For those reasons a participative approach to research enhances the quality of the research and value of what is found (see Lewis and Lindsay 2000, Smith et al, 2002).

So for example when analysing data, as adult researchers, we need to be aware of our interpretation of young people's accounts of their worlds. The danger is that the researcher fits his/her findings into a conceptual frame which is not an adequate reflection of young people's experience. Having young people as equal partners on our steering group and participating in data analysis has not only made a difference to young people but also to the adult researcher and has contributed to the whole quality of the research process.

At these data analysis sessions, when Thilo and Jonathon say something, sometimes we think 'no, that's not what they [young people] mean'...We can feed that back. I know Thilo says that this has really changed his view of young people. So I know it's having an impact on them and hopefully when this project gets out it'll affect other people too.

Young woman from Project Re:Action

As such we don't only aim to understand meanings and significance the social world has for young people, but also explore its properties with them. These are generated and verified by and with the young people themselves (Reason, 1990). Involving young people in the whole research process enables them to become active participants in defining and interpreting their actions collectively with the researcher and can enhance their understanding about their own living environment (Abu-Samah, 1996).

► Empowering Young People and levels of participation

Central to 'participatory research' is the principle of inclusion and the recognition that the power relations embedded in the research process can often disproportionately be placed in the hands of the adult researcher. As mentioned earlier, capacity building first needs to take place, along with the acknowledgement that not all participants will want to participate at all levels or stages of the research process. A balance needs to be struck between safeguarding against making the act of participation tokenistic and paying lip service to the politics of inclusion.

Our project on paper is a youth-led project but it is at a point where it has evolved now where Jonathon and Thilo can't do the work on their own but there is absolutely no way we could do this work on our own. It is at a point where I look at it and think we are all kind of colleagues in a way, we all dip in and we all feed in where we can. Thilo learns from us and we learn just as much back. I think youth-led is a misleading term.»

Member of steering group, Project Re:action

Turning the commendable goal of a 'youth-led' participative approach into reality is not always straight forward or without its difficulties. Participants quite often take on a medium level of involvement. High level involvement often implies involvement in the research design, data collection, interpretation, analysis, write-up and dissemination. Low level involvements can simply mean 'dipping in and out' or only being involved in one stage of the research.

A participative approach needs to be flexible enough to include different voices and a range of abilities. Participants within all our projects had different experiences that needed to be addressed in the research process (i.e. physical immobility, health concerns, being 'in the closet', fear of crime and exploitation abroad, family trauma, etc). Participatory research is appropriate because it lends itself to accommodate the complexity of experiences.

► Role of worker

Researchers looking to work with young people, ought to create circumstances for young people to develop critical thinking, active listening and problem-posing skills; it also involves starting with young people's perceptions of their world and facilitating their participation and ownership of the actions and decisions they take (Arches and Fleming 2007:43).

Throughout our projects we have perceived that workers take different roles within participative research. We need to ask ourselves if we impose our own perspectives and methods or if we create the space for young people to explore their own topics, questions and develop innovative methods.

However, a note of caution: participative research is not for all young people. Some young people will not know this until they are involved in the research process and become uncertain about the research itself or how to leave. Some young people will shy away from high level involvement. Their behaviour should not be misinterpreted that they do not wish to be involved. What's more, there will be the intellectual puzzle for the young person to grapple with, alongside time constraints, and the emotional demands of meeting others' expectations. The role of the worker is to buffer all of those concerns and assist in reflective learning and to lead when required. What we have learnt through the projects is that the relationships formed are as complex and rewarding as when working with an adult team of researchers. Our emphasis on reciprocity and mutual trust reinforced the importance of young people taking something positive from the research experience; but 'intent is no guarantee of outcome'. Young people need to feel that adults understand and build into the research process the general demands on young people's lives (work, study, friends, family), as well as the individual needs arising from complex experiences related to mental health needs, disability, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, gender, sexuality and access to social and economic resources.

▶ Conclusion

As adult researchers, we must not underestimate the competencies young people bring to the research process. Equally, we should not expect young people to operate as postgraduate researchers after a weekend's basic research training. This is when you jeopardize the self esteem and confidence of the young person. In our experience, most, if not all young people, will come to the research project with different expectations but overall with a willingness to participate in different aspects of the project. Within an overall awareness of the power relationship and in the right environment of support they go on, to successfully manage their research responsibilities. When basic research training is done right, the collaborative participative approach enhances these qualities to mutual benefit of the young person and research.

We see that, a key task of a researcher is to establish a research process which is in tune with the diverse needs, values and understandings of the young people involved in the projects. (Ward & Boeck, 2000) Participatory research occurs through 'doing together' rather than consultations or tokenistic involvement of young people: it is more likely to occur when young people and workers work in a partnership distancing itself from a 'deficit' model of youth. It has to be based on a commitment to young people having the right to be heard, to define the issues facing them, to negotiate the agenda for action and, importantly, to take action on their own behalf. ■

For further information visit:

<http://dmu.ac.uk/dmucsa>
www.youthactionnetwork.org.uk/index.php
www.nya.org.uk/information/100585/youngresearchernetwork/
www.ycrg.org.uk

The Children Act 1989 provides the legislative backdrop to children's rights. The right to be protected: to be heard; to have choice; to be valued; to have privacy; to social inclusion; and not to be discriminated against. Children and young people's human rights are also upheld in the Human Rights Act

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by Delme Harries

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Change the village, Challenge yourself! You(th) can make a difference

Rural Youth Europe and MIJARC (the International Movement for Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth) were supported from February 2005 for two years, by the European Commission for a two years research project: “Change the Village, Challenge Yourself! Youth can make a difference!”.

This two year project was the result of a long term process that started 10 years ago! It was in 1997 and 1998 that the European Committee for Young Farmers and 4H Clubs - ECYF4HC (Rural Youth Europe's name at that time) and MIJARC Europe held two seminars together in collaboration with the Directorate of Youth and Sports (DYS) of the Council of Europe (CoE) on the question of the prospects of young people in rural areas of Europe. These seminars brought together for the first time our youth organisations (ECYF4HC and MIJARC Europe) and politicians from the youth sector as well as from the Committee on Agriculture, the Environment and Local and Regional Authorities in order to discuss a special rural youth policy. As a follow up, ECYF4HC and MIJARC Europe organised a seminar on spatial development in 2000.

► The fields tackled within this project were:

1. Rural youth and their environment

- Identification with their region
- Role of agriculture
- The 'village' as a social system

2. Needs of rural youth

- Formal and non-formal education
- Employment
- Leisure opportunities
- Values and general needs

3. Youth participation in society and politics

- Opportunities in rural areas
- Are these existing opportunities practicable/interesting for/addressing rural youth?
- The relation between organised and non-organised youth
- The role of politics and how young people experience it

4. Youth work in rural areas

- Activities on a local level
- Role of youth organisations/schools
- New methods/approaches in rural youth work
- (Special) youth policy for rural areas

The project “Change the Village, Challenge Yourself!» was based on a European study, carried out through an on-line questionnaire, rounds of interviews and thematic workshops in our seminars. The aim was to give a relevant picture of the situation of young rural people in Europe while outlining recommendations on rural-related issues to European and national decision-makers as well as to youth organisations.

A further Double Study Session between members of Rural Youth Europe and MIJACR Europe was held at the EYC Budapest in Spring 2006 which dealt with issues like: youth participation and becoming active in your community, rural development, how to change the village, what is rewarding life in the countryside like and how to prevent the brain-drain from the countryside.

Participants highly profited from the exchange of good practice and developed new project plans during the week. The highlight of the week was the talk show - a discussion panel together with the participants and guests representing CoE, EU and other experts dealing with the issues mentioned above.

Through the project, the two movements were particularly interested in coming up with concrete measures to make life in the countryside attractive for young people, both in agricultural and other professions. The entire process, findings and recommendations as well as practical examples showing that young people can make, and have made, a difference in their local communities have now been summarized into a booklet.



The release of the project booklet took place on Tuesday the 23rd January 2007 at the European Parliament. Mme Bernadette Bourzai, French member of the European Parliament and member of the Committee of Agriculture and Rural development, presented with the two movements the project outcomes. Referring to her experience as a small town mayor in the South West of France, she reviewed the problems European rural youth are confronted with.

Amongst the outcomes obtained, the two movements wished to highlight a few points: 50% of the participants answering the survey of the project fear having to leave their rural areas, although most of them would like to stay. Important obstacles such as employment, education, housing, isolation and leisure time opportunities affect them in their daily life. Thus, Rural Youth Europe is committed to raise awareness of these issues and demand action to improve the situation. We would encourage young people to take ownership of their rural areas by continuing with sustainable projects and driving communities forward as well as ensuring that rural youth will have a better future. This can be achieved by young people sharing good practice. Examples of these are included in the booklet.

The feedback received was really positive and encouraging. Actors from the social and political sector who were present at the conference congratulated the two movements for the achievements of the project and expressed their willingness to disseminate the results. We will keep actively promoting the valuable outcomes of our project and ensure that young people in rural areas are not forgotten. ■

The booklet which contains the results of the survey as well as examples of best practice can be found on our website

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by Denis Morel

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What role can training play in promoting, encouraging and raising standards in youth participation?

How to encourage participation
within trainings, seminars, events, youth exchanges, etc.

My dear reader,

I know you are in one way or another connected to the youth participation topic, because Coyote doesn't fall into every pair of hands! So I need to explain briefly my way of thinking in front of my computer, whilst writing this article.

When I was contacted by Coyote to write this article I didn't know what to answer (as I'm not used at all to writing articles in such publications). But then I decided to give it a try and write this article as a tool to help me question my own practice...

My aim is not to gain consensus, or on the other hand to fall into the negative and not-constructive criticism: Most of the questions tackled in this article are first of all for me... But I would be more than happy if you take them for you also!

Here it is - clarification is made, let's start!!! But where to start? Let's decide subjectively on an entrance and write the main questions rising in my mind while thinking and typing...

Before approaching and trying to understand how to encourage youth participation through projects and activities in the youth field, it can be good to ask why?

► Participating why, where, in what?

Participation, youth participation, active youth participation; such topics have become a priority nowadays in the European Youth Field... Everybody agrees on it; we have to promote it, encourage it... But there are other questions that should come first and which we may forget...

Why work on it? I don't want to open a philosophical debate, because we are all able to give nice and standard reasons for it.

To give a voice to youth... But why?

To make young people recognised as social actor... Nice again but why?

To make a better world? Well....

Another way to try to answer this question could be to consider this other question: "Participating where and in what?"

In our organisation... In our activities... In our local community... In Europe?

Following activities we designed for that, in the decision-making process, in taking initiatives, in following our initiatives?

It's impossible to promote youth participation if we are not able to answer concretely to those questions... to know where (concretely) we want to go...

Because our approach, tools, process and activities we'll design will be completely different according to our answers...

For me, for example, now I'm working to support young people to take an active role in the decision-making bodies of their local reality... (either institutional like city councils, associative like in NGO's or in creating their own initiatives...).

► A need of coherence between values and practices in the youth field...

As actors in the youth field, we can say that we promote active participation, and in the end we USE the young people for our own interests / purposes.

After several years of practice, particularly in the training field about youth participation, I realised that most of the participants in the trainings (representing NGO's, local authorities and youth structures) are quite equipped in terms of a theoretical approach to participation, and each of us is able to argue quite deeply on the topic. All of us are also persuaded that we

are actively promoting youth participation and have a good impact of it...

But if it is working so well, why give more and more importance to such a topic at the European level? Why design more and more trainings, tools, materials and projects on such issues?

Even if the political will is to promote and develop Non-Formal Education and youth active participation in countries where recognition is missing, it can not be the only reason... Maybe it is also because the concrete impacts of youth work in Europe are not as great as we could expect...

And here we tackle the concept of participation as such and the levels of participation...You can find plenty of different theories, some similar, some complementing each other, some in contradiction...

Personally, I try to discover new thoughts, models, theories, but till now, I always come back to the «ladder of participation» of Roger Hart.

When speaking about active youth participation, Roger Hart tells us that we speak about having young people directly involved in the decision-making process.

But how many NGO's working with and for young people have members / representatives of their "target group" in the decision-making bodies of their own organisation.

It could be a quiet interesting research to do, no?

We did it at the local level in our local reality of 13 villages... Around 20 NGO's were involved in a local diagnosis... All of them saying that they have young people as members...There is only one which has a few young people (under 30 years old) in their administration council and bureau, and none in the organisations working for young people!!! And most of them said that young people don't want to take responsibilities.

So one of the first conclusions to take from this is a lack of coherence between values we are able to promote in a very professional way, and our real actions.

Isn't it too easy to say that young people don't want to take responsibilities??? Do we really give them the space to take it? Do we think about giving them the competences to be active and take responsibilities? Or isn't it easier to keep this situation as it is, to go on doing as we have been for decades!!!! Because involving young people in the decision-making process can also be dangerous for us... They could question our practice, our way of thinking...

► Should we be more ambitious as youth workers/trainers in the youth field?

Which kind of participation do we want to promote?

Don't we miss some ambition?

Taking part in activities designed for young people is only the

basic level of participation... But isn't it too often the one that we are looking for?

Don't we always look for more young people to be members of NGO's, to take part in the activities of a youth centre?

But how many of us give a real place for young people in the decision-making bodies of our organisation??? And then, in order to justify ourselves, we can often hear that they are not able to understand the context in order to take decisions, they don't have enough experience, they don't have enough keys to understand what we want to do...

Maybe yes, but then it should be our role to equip them for this.

Promoting youth participation for me means concretely supporting young people to take initiative, to initiate social change around them.

Of course here we need also to go deeper and see young people not as one single target group...

The youth field is also full of contradictions. On the one hand, looking at teenagers, we often want them to have a real adult role, having values, taking position about the world around them, projecting themselves in the long term and we forget that they have still one foot in childhood.

But on the other hand, when we have real young adults in front of us, who already take their life in their hands, who are able to take a position and defend and promote a certain vision of society, it may disturb us if their vision is different to ours...And in this case, representatives of the local community may create a gap, be paternalistic, and believe that the young people are still too young to understand exactly what they want, and the consequences.

We want them to be active if it goes in our direction, but not if it can go against us!!!

Isn't it more manipulation than participation?

► Creating new spaces for young adults to take an active role in the society

Why do so many youth structures have most of their young people not older than 15-16 years old like in France for example?

Because youth structures are not perceived as resources for older young people, for young adults who are in fact active citizens (having the responsibilities of their own life), but in the mind of local communities, still future adults...

As youth actors, our role should not be to be actors of social change, but agents of social change... The real actors of social change should be the young people...

And I do believe that youth work in the non-formal education field should be more based on this approach...particularly for young adults (when they reach the majority regarding the law)... Because the existing actors and structures are not relevant to the majority of those young adults.

I don't want to believe that having young adults almost not represented in the different decision bodies of a local community means that they reject society and want to be out...It means more that we have to rethink our social intervention toward them and our educational practices, but also the way we look at them.

► **Multiplying settings of interaction between young people and other actors of the local community...**

We should consider young people as part of a global system with a lot of different actors: the community where they live, parents, friends, NGO's, clubs, schools, local authorities...

If we want to promote active youth participation, it means that we want them to take action in this global system... So we shouldn't work only for and with young people, because it is not considering them as social actors...

The first way for it should be to promote the interaction between young people and other social actors of the community. If we work only with young people, then existing mutual prejudices which the adult community have toward young people (and vice-versa) will never change. Even more, the initiatives of young people that they make unilaterally could be perceived as an "attack" against the "order" organised by the adult community.

Putting young people together with youth workers, local authorities, and other inhabitants can take some time to get over mutual prejudices, but is the only way (for me) to bring about social changes in which young people can have the same voice as other local actors...

I strongly have the feeling that sometimes we direct young people too much even when they take their own initiative... And it has a vicious effect : it doesn't contribute to giving a place for young people as social actors, just as youth leaders...

My main work in my local reality nowadays is toward young adults (18 to 30 years old)...When we really decided to work on active youth participation, our first action was to contact as many social actors as possible that were sharing the same interest to try to understand better the situation of youth participation in our area...

We had representatives of local authorities, youth workers and NGO's but also independent young people that were interested; and we have met regularly, at least every month together, for more than 2 years.

We started with a participative diagnosis, designing together what we wanted to know and how we could collect the information... And all actions developed afterwards were based on this analysis.

It took almost 2 years to get over the mutual prejudices and to have all the members of this local platform feeling equal, stopping fighting (softly) against each other, and starting to understand that they could have some common will to take action together... But now the base starts to be here and ideas for local actions are suggested by the different "categories"; and, what is more important, implemented collectively!

One of the results is that we have three young adults of this local platform who have been elected in the councils of different villages, for the first time!!! We were hoping for such results but we didn't design specific actions for it... It came out of the fact that some local authorities' representatives started after one or two years to work together with some young people and discovered that they were appreciating this collaboration and found the will to continue it.

But then, how to promote youth participation through our activities... I would say first by being able to continuously question our practice and the coherence between our values and practice...

- 1/ *Being clear why we want to promote youth participation, which kind of participation, and participation in what.*
- 2/ *Being able to analyse our values and practices, and look for elements of coherence and non coherence, to improve the first and decrease the incoherence.*
- 3/ *Considering the young people we work with as key actors, but not exclusively, meaning creating the setting and conditions of regular interaction between young people and other key actors of our local reality.*
- 4/ *If needed, supporting them to identify common aims, will, vision.*
- 5/ *Facilitate the cooperation until each actor feels equal in this cooperation.*
- 6/ *Let them fly.*

► **Then finally, how ?**

Good question!

As we speak about educational process here, our training activities should take all of this into account.

For example, we should work more with heterogeneous groups representing the different actors of a local community (young people organised and not organised, youth workers, local authorities...), meaning we should work more also with local realities and not only participants.

And this work shouldn't be just one show event but on a regular and long-term basis in which training should be considered as only one step of this global approach, in order to really look for impacts....

It means also at all levels, from local to international, to maybe make a break in the explosion of trainings, and look a bit more to quality in a long-term perspective...

Let me try to illustrate my words with a concrete example: Still in this long-term project we do on active youth participation, we had several residential training events bringing



together local authorities, youth workers and young people from the same territory together. Six local territories were represented during those training events. But we should consider those residential sessions only as “steps”, meaning as part of a larger and bigger training process. Regarding our reality, this is one “three-years training process”, in which the core element is this permanent platform (meeting every month) with young people, NGO’s, youth workers and local authorities and international and local trainings and workshops etc are just a few of the training tools we use.

This is more what we call an “action training process”; meaning an ongoing process built on the local reality, in which international moments are just a tool, a support for growing motivation and will to act.

The possible results and impacts of such an approach have a big chance to have deeper and stronger roots.

In our local reality, some of the most visible impacts after two and a half years are:

- some local actions designed and implemented collectively between different actors of the youth field including young people (like innovative forms of debates to bring the issue of the role of young people in local social life into the public space),
- some will for young people to bring the European dimension to the local level, and promote it as another territory of action for young people (we support now two groups of young people in hosting a youth exchange on discrimination and a partnership building activity on the environment),
- to reconnect young adults and decision-making bodies as we have three young adults participants of this long-term project who were elected recently onto the council of two different villages...

Of course it is not possible to do a copy/paste of such an approach in every local reality. But we believe it is time to look at youth participation as a permanent and fundamental challenge, which will never stop...

Permanently, we need to:

- understand that there are other ways of looking at youth participation and adapt our pedagogical processes toward young people, in countries where non-formal education is recognised, but also where we take it for granted and we don’t question it any more...
- create new ways of social intervention; taking advantage of the analysis of existing practice without copying it, into countries where non-formal education is not recognised at all...

Often, it is more difficult to change what exists than to create... But if we want to develop opportunities for young people to confront their visions and perceptions of others in a constructive way, we cannot always put responsibilities on the shoulders of others (of the young people, of the local authorities, of the others NGO’s!!!), we need to admit that we all have in this field a part of responsibility to improve and to make things better.

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by Finn Denstad

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Youth participation in youth policy development the case of Southeast Europe

The Council of Europe and the institutions of the European Union have developed a European standard with their strong positions advocating for youth participation in youth policy development and implementation. But why is youth participation so important and how can non-governmental youth organisations play an important role in youth policy development? Some reflections from a youth policy advocate with a special interest in the Western Balkans.

I have, for the last decade or so, had the privilege of following the youth policy sector in Southeast Europe from different arenas or viewpoints. (The terms «Southeast Europe» and «the Western Balkans» refer to the following entities: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia). And let it be said: The situation today – in terms of articulated government policy regarding young people – has certainly improved over the last ten years. With the adoption of the National Youth Strategy by the Serbian government in spring 2008, most countries of the Western Balkans now have articulated national youth policies. Ten years ago, this was completely absent. The only country in the region that does not have a national youth strategy is Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, the entity of Republika Srpska has such a strategy.

But this has so far had a limited effect on the ground. Young people still suffer from an outdated education system, massive youth unemployment (with 40-50 percent and more in some countries), few leisure-time opportunities and a poor family economy with almost non-existent opportunities to travel. The strict visa regimes of the European Union and other western countries only add to a feeling of isolation and neglect among young people in Southeast Europe.

► Participation as a youth policy tool

There is of course no quick formula that will dramatically improve the situation of young people in a few years. Only a long-term strategic effort by responsible politicians and policy-makers will make a difference. Allocating sufficient funding and

applying good youth policy tools are necessary. One such policy tool is to involve young people themselves in youth policy development. This does not have a long tradition in the Balkans however and is often met with either shaking heads or virtual question marks. Why youth participation and how do we do it?

► What is youth participation?

I will come back to the situation in the Balkans, but let me first of all clarify what I mean by youth participation in a youth policy context. The concept consists of two important elements. As the term suggests, it is all about involving young people directly in developing a strategy for how a government should address issues that affect young people themselves. It can be at any government level; local, regional or national. (The term also applies to inter-governmental organisations such as the European institutions and the United Nations, but I will concentrate my reflections in this article to address youth participation at the national level). In particular, it is about letting young people play a central role in identifying what are the main challenges and issues for young people that the government should address, as well as involving them in identifying tools for addressing the youth policy needs. In other words, youth participation is about involving young people in articulating goals, objectives, measures and indicators of youth policy and identifying the way forward. This can be done through surveys targeting youth, the use of focus groups, open meetings between government officials and young people and by involving informal youth groups and non-governmental youth associations. Ideally, young people should be targeted through a combination of all of the above.

But just as important as involving youth in developing youth policy, young people should participate in the implementation of such policy. This means that there must be permanent and institutionalised consultation mechanisms in place that allow young people to be in regular contact with authorities responsible for implementing the government's strategy for youth. Such consultation mechanisms can be annual youth conferences on youth policy, organised by the government; the establishment of and regular contact with a youth commission consisting of young people or regular contact between the government and the umbrella of non-governmental youth associations, typically called a (local, regional or national) youth council.

► The role of non-governmental youth organisations

In most parts of Europe, non-governmental youth organisations (NGYOs) typically play an important role as government partners in youth policy development. Every so often I hear the argument that this is unfair, since this gives youth that are organised a more privileged position over those that are not involved in associative life. Therefore, the argument goes, youth organisations do not represent all young people and should therefore only be given a limited role as youth policy partners.

Long essays can be written (and indeed have been!!) in support of the claim that youth associations do have a legitimate role to play as government partners in youth policy development. All arguments cannot be elaborated on here but a central argument for involving NGYOs, however, is that they are democratic structures which allow them to form democratic positions that represent the opinions of their members. So although it is recognised that they certainly do not represent all young people, they represent groups of young people instead of individuals, making it possible to reach out to and get the opinions of larger groups of young people. For this reason, national youth councils in particular, which are umbrella organisations of NGYOs, are seen as important partners in youth policy development.

The argument just presented assumes, of course, that non-governmental youth organisations are in fact democratic structures. The idea is that all positions of an NGO represent the membership of the organisation. This assumption can be challenged, however, in particular in the countries in Southeast Europe (see below). But let me be clear on this point: To the extent that a youth organisation should have any claim to be involved

in youth policy development, it is essential that it has internal democratic structures, democratically elected leadership and that its positions reflect the opinions of its members.

Those who argue that "organised youth" should not be given a more privileged position as government partners than "non-organised youth" imply that these youth groups are radically different from one another and that young people in NGYOs are somewhat of an "elite" or extra resourceful persons. I believe this is a wrong assumption. My experience is that young people will use the opportunities that exist. Those who involve themselves in a local youth club, join a choir or the scouts or a youth association promoting the environment, are as diverse and different as "unorganised" youth. What they have in common is an interest and dedication in one specific area.

► Why youth participation?

Now that I have clarified what youth participation in youth policy means, and argued that non-governmental youth associations should be included as important actors in both youth policy development and implementation, the fundamental question still remains: Why is youth participation important? Shouldn't the tasks of developing and implementing policy be left to politicians and professionals? Should specific groups of citizens have the right to influence government policy? And furthermore, many young people do not have a developed understanding of politics, so why should they have a right to be listened to by government decision-makers? (Now, you may think that these are antiquated and silly questions, but I have indeed come across them a number of times in my work as a youth policy advocate in the Balkans and elsewhere.)

Young people make up one of the largest demographic populations in any European country; this is also the case in the Balkans. (In Southeast Europe, Kosovo has the youngest population with 60% of the population being between 15 and 29 years old. Serbia, on the other hand, with one of the oldest populations in the Balkans, has 20% of its population in the same age category. Figures are from UNFPA and the Serbian National Youth Strategy.) The idea of involving young people in policy-development and decision-making on issues that have an impact on them is as such seen as a fundamental democratic right. It comes from a vision of young people as full citizens in society, and the right of citizens to have a say and to be involved in issues that have an impact on them. Democracy is not only about transparent

“The idea of involving young people in policy-development and decision-making on issues that have an impact on them is as such seen as a fundamental democratic right.”

and fair elections and majority rule. It is about everything that happens in between.

A central pillar of contemporary democracy is the concept of a strong civil society which will keep government and politicians accountable. An informed and engaged citizenry is the fundament of a civil society, and this is where the non-governmental associations can play a crucial role. By interacting with other people through associations and volunteer work we develop a sense of responsibility and sensitivity for our society and awareness for our fellow citizens. Non-governmental organisations promote citizenship. Democratic youth associations have the added function of serving as “schools of democracy”, where young people participate in elections for the first time, learn about the concepts of representation and accountability and to stand up for their own opinions.

The development of democratic NGYOs should therefore be especially encouraged by any government.

► The European institutions

The view of participative democracy described above is also shared by the Council of Europe, the institutions of the European Union and the United Nations system. They all have clear policies advocating the participation of young people in developing national youth strategies and stress the role of non-governmental youth organisations in youth policy decision-making. The enlargement of the European Union to include most of the countries in the former “communist bloc” has resulted in a comprehensive development of non-governmental associations and civil society in these countries. Functioning national youth councils now exist in most EU member states. Mechanisms of involving young people have been developed, and NGYOs play an important role as government partners in youth policy-making.

► Youth organisations in Southeast Europe

So, what is the situation in Southeast Europe? Is youth participation in youth policy a recognised concept, and are non-governmental youth organisations involved in youth policy development? Unfortunately, non-governmental youth associations in Southeast Europe are typically weak. They are most often not membership-based, but run by individuals or small groups of people that mobilise their peers whenever

they receive funding to do a project or otherwise organise an activity. They are project-oriented and compete for the same limited project funds. This leads to a high level of competition, rivalry, suspicion and a lack of cooperation and partnership. Decisions taken by the leadership are rarely challenged, and the organisations often have a weak democratic culture and are often outright undemocratic. As a result, there are very few national youth organisations, and representative national youth councils do not exist in any of the countries. The situation has not changed much in the last ten years.

The absence of a strong and coordinated NGYO lobby to push for the development of youth policy meant that there was little domestic pressure for the government to develop youth policy. It was instead the European Commission and the Council

of Europe which, through their relations with the Balkan countries, made them understand the need to develop national youth strategies. The Stability Pact Working Group on Young People, effective from year 2000 until 2002, also played an important role in promoting national youth policy action plans in the region.

► Successful lobbying in Serbia

The exception in this regard is Serbia. For several years, the Serbian government gave little

attention to youth policy issues at all, and by mid-2005 there was no government authority responsible for youth. While the other countries in the region developed national youth strategies, Serbia remained at status quo. This finally caused the largest NGYOs in the country to take action. Together they established the Youth Coalition, which conducted a long and effective lobby campaign towards the government. They had two demands: A government authority responsible for youth and a national youth strategy. Today, even government officials admit that the establishment of the Ministry of Youth and Sport in May 2007 is at least partially as a result of this campaign. And the new ministry made the development of a national youth strategy its first and overriding task. So youth organisations in the Balkans can certainly be influential if they act in a strong and coordinated manner!

► Vision of youth policy

A government's own vision of what youth policy is and why it is important is an essential determinant of the level of youth

“If youth policy is perceived as a strategy for empowering young people and for letting them realise their full potential as full citizens in society, there is plenty of room for youth participation...”

participation it will choose in developing youth policy. If youth policy is perceived as the answer to how to keep youngsters away from crime and drugs and HIV/Aids and otherwise have a problem-oriented perspective of young people, there is typically no role for youth participation at all, since youth policy is seen as a policy for young people.

If, on the other hand, youth policy is perceived as a strategy for empowering young people and for letting them realise their full potential as full citizens in society, there is plenty of room for youth participation. Involving young people in youth policy will then be seen as natural, since young people are seen as a resource. With such a positive vision, youth policy is seen as a policy both for and with young people.

The latter perspective has been dominant in Western European countries for some time and is gaining progress also in the new EU member states. It is also the vision promoted by the European Union and the Council of Europe. In Southeast Europe, however, it is the more problem-oriented perspective of young people that prevails. True, all national youth strategies and action plans in the region have been developed with the participation of non-governmental youth organisations – in some countries setting an exceptional standard for how citizens can be involved in policy development processes. Nevertheless, the mentality at the local and regional levels, as well as in most government structures at the national level, remains stuck in the “old thinking” that young people are a problem that needs to be treated. Adding to this is the situation that non-governmental youth associations are often met with suspicion and criticism. This does not create the most favourable environment for youth participation, and at the local and regional level this remains an obstacle to youth participation in youth policy development in all the countries of the region.

► Good examples

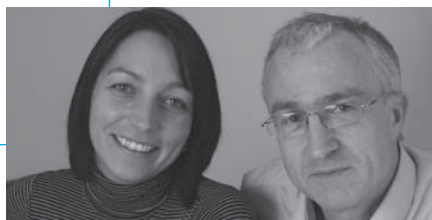
Despite the present challenges, it is important to note the positive developments in Southeast Europe in the latest years. In all countries, developing youth strategies was done with the active involvement of young people.

The latest country to develop such a strategy, Serbia (2007-2008), organised consultations with young people across the land on a scale previously unseen as part of any policy development in recent memory. It also took a positive approach to involve non-governmental youth organisations at the local and national levels, allocating more funding to strengthen the non-governmental sector than any previous government in the region. Finally, the Serbian government started a process of establishing local youth offices with trained staff across the country aimed at promoting the development of local youth policy plans. Involving young people and youth organisations are central elements of the Serbian strategy. For once, Serbia has set a positive example that should be examined and followed by the other countries in the Western Balkans. ■

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by Wiltrud Weidinger & Rolf Gollob

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Participation in formal education: No false promises, please!

By passing a new law for compulsory schooling in 2005 the canton of Zurich set the legal framework for dealing with a variety of new challenges. This new legal framework includes elements such as “block times” and out-of-school care as a reaction to new types of family structures. It supports the schools in dealing with the heterogeneous setup of learning groups by implementing diverse integrative measures. And, it opens up opportunities for the participation of students and parents with the aim of creating a more open and transparent school. The overall goal – as often stressed – is a school for all, which guarantees equal opportunities, a high quality of teaching and learning and the optimal conditions for both learners and teachers.

Compulsory school in Zurich has received a solid basis with this new legal framework, on which it can continue to develop itself without losing proven remedies. In the context of this article our focus will be participation of students and parents. By including this in the framework, elements of civic education or lived democracy have been solidly positioned in cantonal education. But, no false promises, hopes or fears should be associated with participation and co-operation; otherwise, the risk can arise that participation becomes an empty phrase in the context of formal education with high promises that cannot be kept. If this is the case, more will be lost than won. In the following, we will present two approaches which sometimes are not distinguished from each other but are essential for the actual implementation of lived participation.

► Participation – two approaches

It is a common thought that in democracies participation is an essential element, not only in a political context but also in daily social life. The underlying roots of this understanding can be found in the concept of political participation in decision-making and exercising power of a large number of people. Bit by bit the idea has been pushed, that participation also leaves an imprint on the social context of children and adolescents. This is due to the fact that human beings have been imbedded in social relationships since they were born and likewise are influenced by their surroundings. Both school-related daily-life discussions and scientific literature distinguish explicitly and implicitly between at least two ways of participation.

1. Participation as a means of taking over responsibility

This concept of participation grants children and adolescents the right to be motivated and authorized to take over tasks and responsibility. Furthermore, they should have the right to make decisions about issues that concern them. This understanding can be traced back to the convention of children's rights of the United Nations Organisation and addresses in particular the close social context of children and adolescents.





2. Participation as an exercise of power

The second concept is closely rooted to issues of participation of a broader public with the idea of exercising power to influence social and economic aspects of life of a bigger community.

Thus, participation has to be distinguished in these two approaches of a) integration in a social arrangement or b) actual political participation. Children and adolescents experience the first approach in their daily lives and take it for granted. In comparison, the second approach only opens up in growing up step by step. Basically, it can be stated that two different potentials can develop to different extents in this sensitive phase of (political) socialisation: the “grade of participation” and the “decision about belonging”. The different grades of influence depend on the various reactions of parents and school.

Questions about integration of children and adolescents into school life at group or school level have a long standing tradition in Switzerland as in other countries: Class conversations, round table talks, class council and students’ parliament are forms of lived discussion. But, past experiences show that the real potential of these instruments has not been used to its full extent.

► New quality of discussion

The basic guidelines of the new legal framework strongly focus on aspects of engagement of children and adolescents in the social context of school and on participation of parents. These

aspects should not be underestimated as they add a lot to solving tensions within a group, during joint project work or during negotiations of rules for living together. A study conducted by IEA Civic Education (2002) has identified the existence of interdependent relations between participative learning through experience and self-/social competences. Self and social competences improve automatically according to these results. But, what will not happen automatically is transferring the (successful) experience of participation in school to a political identity. In order to develop an explicit model of civic education the approaches in the legal framework of Zurich will have to be adapted. This will also include a reflection of lived participation. In this context, reflection means analysing the experiences or the planned projects systematically. Categories like direct and delegated power, influence, decision-making, agenda setting etc. have to be made explicit and have to be applied to understandable political and corporate situations. Then they will have to be recognised.

► No pretending, please

The expectations for this important step are good in the canton of Zurich, especially when looking at the assets of the new law and, even more important, when examining the manuals which have been developed as a reaction of the people’s voice. Especially the manual “Co-operation and participation in school” offers transparent ways and possibilities of participation of students and parents. The brochure clearly states that participation rests on the pillars of human rights and children’s rights: “The right to state one’s own opinion, to take responsibility and to be part of decision-making processes that affect oneself, is an achievement of our culture and applies to everybody. It is based on the recognition of dignity and equality as well as the perpetuity of rights that are entitled to all people.” (p.13). In this way the article 12 of the Convention of Children’s Rights has been integrated in § 50 of the compulsory education law of Zurich. What remains unclear is where participation ends. This is left up to the different municipalities. Questions like this have to be dealt with in the statutes of the organisation and have to be anchored in the schools’ programmes.






The basic principles that were published by the Zurich board of education (Volksschulamt) states that adults have to create and design learning processes and ways of living together in class and school together with students. This idea of school like a «polis» (Learning and living democracy) has now been integrated into the curriculum of the canton: «Just as childhood is more than just a preliminary stage of adulthood, school is more than just a preparation for life. It is a piece of life that has to be designed.» (Mission Statement compulsory school, p. 3) In its goals the school authority assumes that participation is based on mutual attention and equal value of all people involved. Participation shows its effects – according to the manual

– in the building of community and not only in class or school but also in society and democracy. Actually, the concept of participation has symmetrical communication as its basis. But, every educational relationship is asymmetrical. Education is and always will be a communicative practice between unequal partners. There is a high risk of all participative approaches that the people involved are just pretending. Divisions of power and responsibility which are structurally given still remain the same. Various studies show interesting results: Adolescents know exactly when real involvement in decision-making is the case and when responsibility can be taken over or when this is just pretend. Participation has to be authentic. If the limits are exceeded, pseudo participation develops which has first of all no effect and second can lead to extended passivity and aggravation. Teachers have to know where not to negotiate: because they do not want to or because they are not allowed to (curriculum, structural questions, implementation of pedagogic-didactic professional knowledge). They also have to know where to keep the level of participation rather low. Only those who know a little about participation can know when it will become dysfunctional in short term or long term (teachers, social workers and parents share a unique opinion in this respect).

Summing up, participation can adopt various different faces according to the specific pedagogical intentions. As an interdependent effect, also the underlying opportunities of gathering experience will be completely different from each other. Formal education does not have to struggle per se with aspects of participation when it bears a few things in mind: if it clarifies conditions and limitations of participation but at the same time analyses opportunities and uses them. ■

Notes and references :


- The IEA Civic Education Study is the largest and most rigorous study of civic education ever conducted internationally. This research tested and surveyed nationally representative samples consisting of 90,000 14-year-old students in 28 countries, and 50,000 17- to 19-year-old students in 16 countries throughout 1999 and 2000.

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Introducing Anacej: Children's and youth councils in France

Children's councils and youth councils first appeared in France in the seventies, initially at the municipal level. From 1979 they began to grow in importance throughout the country thanks to committed local councillors and also associations dealing with youth and community education. Two associations were created by these contributors and merged in 1991 to form Anacej (Association Nationale des Conseils d'Enfants et de Jeunes, or National Association for Children and Youth Councils). Along with youth and community education associations and with local authorities, young people participate in Anacej's management through a Youth Committee made up of young councillors from all over France. They set up their own projects within Anacej (for example, "Let's put an end to media clichés about young people") and their representatives sit on the board of directors.

Anacej's purpose is on the one hand to promote participation by children and young people in public decisions and their engagement with local representatives, and on the other hand to assist local authorities in setting up youth participation structures, particularly through children and youth councils.

Over time, children and youth councils have expanded beyond town council level into the departments, regions and metropolitan districts which have become members of the association. Anacej has thus become a reference on matters relating to child and youth participation in local life and related issues.

Ever since it was created, Anacej has been fully aware that noble ideas are not enough to foster youth participation and that it is critical to support the councillors and youth workers who set up these councils through a wide variety of activities. While our primary role is to create a network of members, making it possible for them to follow each other's initiatives as well as the latest developments within each council and to organise meetings at the local and national level to exchange good practices and views on various matters, we have a particular concern for the quality of these exchanges. Our training programme for councillors, youth workers, professionals from the youth sector and voluntary workers concerned with this issue is built around this idea, as are all our educational tools

which help to help set up councils (our handbooks) or discuss their operation (known as «Les Cahiers de l'Anacej»).

Supporting local government organisations in this initiative for children and young people involves a close attention to developments affecting these participation forums and awareness of the questions they raise, their challenges and their implications. That is why Anacej also conducts studies and surveys about children and youth councils.

The expertise built up on youth participation in community life allows us to publicise and promote this issue among authorities and in the media.

If you want to know more about Anacej, please consult www.anacej.asso.fr ■

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by Romina Matei

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Stand by me!

**There is a big world outside and to walk alone it might not be so funny ...
that's why networking exists.**

One of the first questions raised in the process of “participation” is: participating in what? So, in the article below I will try to share with you the experience of participating in the international youth network, Youth Express Network, an international non-governmental organisation, a non-formal structure with 15 years of experience in the field of promoting and supporting youth participation.

Once upon a time ... to be more precise back in 1991, when the word “participation” wasn't so famous, a group of youth and social workers came together in a seminar organised by the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France. After this seminar some of the participants remained in contact and one year later, in October 1992 the network called “Cable5” had its first seminar in Strasbourg. In 1993, based on the local law, the association “Youth Express Network” was registered in Strasbourg. In the beginning it started with 17 member organisations from 7 European Union countries and now the network has 29 members from 17 countries, EU members and Armenia, Belarus, Croatia, Iceland, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Moldova and Turkey.

2008 was a special one, because Youth Express Network celebrated its 15th anniversary... HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO Youth Express Network!



Why networking in the context of youth participation? ... Because nothing is for free and nothing is definitive for you, what you have received can be taken away from you. Participation is a right and it comes with certain liabilities and it can have many faces. A network can provide many options, but the responsibility to choose the proper way to participate is in the hand of the person who wants to take part in the process. Youth Express Network offers the space to participate for everyone; it can be through arts, it can be through sports, through drawing and so on. There is a way where everyone can enter, because it exists as a youth organisation involving youth workers and young people together. The network just opens the doors and makes the meetings possible; what comes out of the meeting, well, it is a never-ending surprise! Youth Express Network means flexibility, richness of experiences and a communication tool for exchanging various information and best practices. This mobility is in harmony with the concept of active youth participation and the feelings of youngsters.

To be part of a network means partly that you receive as much as you give, sometimes even more. It is an opportunity concretely to get involved, to participate. The unique aspect in Youth Express Network is that you have the support and willingness to step out and actually go where nobody else is going and doing things which nobody else is doing, simply because there are elements of working with young people to which nobody is paying any attention. An example is the seminar made in 2000 in the European Youth Centre on the topic “Life and Death”. According to Nicholas Paddison, the initiator of the seminar, “This seminar was intended to open our eyes to the responsibility we as youth workers have to the young people we work with – in the context of one of their friends dying. The seminar explored the subjects of death and bereavement. As a group we explored what our role is, what things we could do, ceremonies and symbolic acts that allow young people to express their feelings. We studied grief, secondary grief, the different impacts that different deaths have; an accident, murder, illness, suicide. We looked at different cultural and religious practices that allow or restrict young people from taking part and expressing their feelings. We looked at the different reactions young people / adults have when faced with the death of someone close. We used discussions, role plays, small group exercises, life experience and raw emotions of ourselves throughout this seminar.”

► The ingredients of a network: a lot of spices – for the colour ;) “From exclusion to integration”

Youth Express Network brings to the European level the situation of the organisations, active at the local level, which deal with young people with fewer opportunities. Therefore Youth Express Network promotes participation, from local to international and from international to local, as a tool to fight against social exclusion. The diversity of Youth Express Network's member organisations offers a clear image of this with members from all over Central, East, North, South, West Europe, Caucasus, Balkans, Euro Med region and so on.

Together, all the members basically exchange, network, keep in touch; they keep the spirit going. They are a network which brings people with their heart and creates the feeling of belonging. The persons who participate in different activities of the network are coming together looking at different ways of working in the field of participation and inclusion. Through exchanging experience from the local participation and adding the value of the international participation, each participant has the chance to learn new methods, tools and after it to implement it, in their local environment. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't, but it is an on-going process of encouragement and support for what they already are doing. Youth Express Network is contributing to the concept of “participation” by being itself an example of what the phrase “from exclusion to integration” means.

Nowadays it is kind of fashionable to use words like “participation” or “intercultural dialogue” and because of that, sometimes these words lose their simple and beautiful meaning. For me participation or intercultural dialogue should become a natural process for everyone. You just need the proper space and the cooperation of the people to do it. During all the years, thousands of young people had the chance to grow, to develop themselves and to experience by their own the diversity of the world. The abilities and knowledge gained during and after participation are very hard to put down simply in a few lines in an article. Sometimes the learning is about self-management, improving organisational skills, ability to change ways of thinking, being aware of the personal role in society, being an example for the other young people, taking responsibilities, having the ability to transfer the knowledge and sharing with the others, giving and so on.

► What to be: the road to hell or stairway to heaven? What's the “price” that you have to pay for participation within a network?

The path of a network is not an easy one. Of course it is full of challenges and both positive and negative emotions. But Youth Express Network might be a good practice example because it



keeps permanent and strong links with the grass-root organisations; it has clear policies and answers to the problems of the young people; it provides equal access to information, possibilities and trainings; it keeps itself human, easily accessible and able to turn each failure into success.

It is true that, to participate in the frame of an international network might be very time consuming. It costs a lot, mainly in terms of motivation and commitment of yourself. Especially going international within a network can become more challenging. Networks are flexible organisms, which need to be kept alive every second and to be inspired. A recent statistic made by the office of Youth Express Network showed that the commitment and voluntary work for the network would have cost more than 100.000 Euros per year and still there are people willing to give their commitment for participating on a voluntary basis.

I can tell that when you have a dream, sometimes you think that it is only a dream and that it would not work in reality, but through participation inside a network, you meet people and you realise that it can happen, because you are not alone. Maybe there is someone who already implemented your ideas and it worked, or there is someone who just gives you the needed support and it is enough for your dream to become reality. I managed to see my dream becoming reality thanks to the people whom I met in Youth Express Network.

The added value of a network in a local and European environment is that it brings new dimension to our work. It brings the international reality and provides the possibility to participate at the European level, where you can share your reality with other countries and learn from the diversity. When you work in your own environment, you might think that there is only one way to approach this specific target group but when you look in the reality of other countries, you might see very different



points of view and this diversity can be a strong motivation to become more active in the local activities. For example, Youth Express Network organised in March 2007 in Ostia, Italy, an international seminar “Act to create for Social Inclusion and Intercultural Dialogue” where the method of Forum Theatre was used. A participant from Bosnia and Herzegovina, very active in her local organisation learned the new method and started to implement it back home with the group of children with whom she already worked. This new approach to the group, forum theatre, improved the results in her work. In May 2008, Youth Express Network organised “Balkan Tour Sunshine Bus” - a mobile seminar in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. After this project most of the participants, said that this experience changed their life. The international cooperation with which they had to deal, the fact that they had to share the same space for almost two weeks brought them a new perspective about intercultural dialogue. Visiting the local organisations from the different countries, gave them the opportunity to see concrete examples of what participation really means in the local environment. After such a successful experience, Youth Express Network is thinking of organising another mobile seminar in the Caucasus region. As a result of an evaluation of this and other projects, a “cook book” for organising good intercultural projects was created and it will be available for everyone who would like to use it.

► To participate is also about having fun ... This part also multiplies within a network

Being in a network everything multiplies ... starting with ideas, commitment, receiving and also the fun part is increasing. What do you think? Would you have had the “courage” to make fire on the terrace, in the European Youth Centre of the Council of

Europe in Strasbourg, alone? Hmmm maybe not ... but together with 20 other people wishing to have a barbecue party, it might happen.... Or to organise a mobile seminar in a Trans Siberian train? Or maybe to sustain your participation, by making a bridge of ropes between the third floor and the fourth floor of the European Youth Centre, (it was still safe and organised by trained rope course experts!)... Again, maybe not ... these things can happen only in a network of crazy people who are doing serious things.

► Instead of a conclusion... let's walk together!

The lesson learned by the network is that people feel motivated to participate when they really get to know each other and friendships are being created. “Youth Express Network broadens the horizon of young people and youth and social workers; it's empowered them with knowledge, ideas and contacts; stands for equal opportunities for all – more than enough good reasons to participate from local to international.” Boyka Zagorova, ex-president and Board Member

After 15 years of experience in youth participation, for us this is only the beginning. There are so many things, so many ideas still out there that we haven't touched yet. There are so many needs that we haven't talked about. Even if there are many common problems, many solutions already proposed, there is still a lot to be done. Many things are taken for granted, about democracy, participation and so, but seeing also other realities around us, listening to the youth, we realize that we can lose everything so quickly ... our rights, our voice, our power, our participation ... so we are responsible to design the path, while we are walking. Let's see ... let's walk together!

[With many thanks to Boyka ZAGOROVA, Brigitte LUDMANN, Eylem CERTEL, Filippo LANGE, Gabriele CESPA, Georges ROSENBERG, Mario D'AGOSTINO, Nicholas PADDISON, Olafur OLASON, Veronique BERTHOLLE ... and to all our members and the ones who support us by participating within the network, because without them, Youth Express Network does not exist]

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by Bernard Roudet
(translated from French)

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Youth participation as a factor in democratic values

Participation is an inseparable element of the founding project of Western democracies. These democracies are legitimised by the sovereignty of their citizens, to whom they attribute a responsibility with regard to the running of public affairs. They consider them as independent individuals, capable of engaging to ensure the recognition of collective interests and of exercising an influence on those who govern. Participation reflects the vitality of a civil society that is the intermediary between the private and the political and State spheres. In such a context, participation can be seen as both a value and a practice. As both an individual and collective practice, it can be broken down into two main forms, both of which feed the democratic process, namely political participation and participation in organised groups.

However participation is also a value: One of the essential democratic values of our societies, from the perspective of building a public space to promote the common good. Every society is based on shared values and collective ideals acquired throughout the socialisation process. During Youth, this socialisation phase is continued mainly under the influence of family and school, which prepare them to carry out their adult roles and for the stages that introduce those roles. As the age of possibilities, of engagement and of choices, youth is a period for learning responsibilities, constructing an autonomous identity and also the period when political participation is experienced for the first time.

Any discussion of youth participation, therefore, immediately brings up the following questions concerning democratic values and their relationship with new generations; the conditions under which they are transmitted and implemented and their influence on political or associative participation: The questions are...

- Are democratic values solidly established among the new generations and what are their ties with the current modes governing youth participation?

- Is participation a factor in the transmission of democratic values and if so, what are the institutional conditions required to enhance it in the eyes of young people?

This paper will put forward elements of answers to each of these questions. The trends referred to in this paper reflect the outcomes contained in the third survey on European values. For a more detailed presentation of these outcomes, we recommend consulting the books that summed up the results for young people and more specifically the two relevant chapters (Bréchon, 2005), (Roudet and Tchernia, 2005).

► A more fragile relationship with democratic values, greater distance from the political process and new forms of participation in organised groups

Democracy is a value that is generally defended by young people throughout greater Europe, since the vast majority agreed with the statement that: «while democracy is not perfect, it is still better than any other form of government».

This approval of democracy is linked to a knowledge of politics: young Europeans continue to take an interest in politics, although less so than adults and without giving it a central place in their lives. Another indicator of the democratic vitality of a society is the level of involvement in associations: overall, the level of young people's participation in various forms of organised groups is quite high, although there are significant differences between countries. **However, setting aside these positive elements, this enhancement of democracy is not exempt from weaknesses and contradictions.**

Alongside the clear support for a democratic political regime, other forms of government, such as technocratic or strongman regimes, also meet with the approval of a significant proportion of young people. Almost half of young Europeans think that it would be good for their country to be governed by specialists rather than a government. Even more troubling, a significant majority of young Europeans are prepared to accept a strong man leader, who would not have to take either a Parliament or elections into account, as head of state. Trust in democratic institutions is on the decline: the negative image of Parliament and political representatives bears witness to a generalised crisis in representation. In addition, while they continue to be interested in politics, young people are less so than in the past, which has had an impact on political participation, and this non-voting attitude increases during election periods. The forms of participation that have developed have tended to be of the protest politics variety and mainly involve better-educated school goers or young people from privileged social groups.

While considerable numbers of young Europeans continue to belong to associations, it is rarely to those associations signalling a militant engagement to defend the common interest (unions, ecological movements...). Young people today veer more towards those focussing on personal development and providing an opportunity for a shared sports or leisure activity that will allow them to make new friends. Nowadays, associations tend to distance themselves from any political link likely to divide the group. The desire to remain independent within the association has replaced an ongoing engagement reflecting a global vision of the world: the involvement of young people is more distanced and their engagement tends to be on a one-off basis aimed at immediate efficacy (Roudet, 2004). Their forms of associative participation also appear to be heavily influenced by national cultures. Southern and Eastern European societies participate

less in associative life than do Scandinavian or Dutch societies, where the participative culture and grassroots organisation is well-established and where civic and political engagement remains buoyant, along with a real sense of belonging to a group.

“While democracy in Europe would appear to be well established and where democratic values are supported by a wide number of institutions, it would seem that the attachment to such a political system is perhaps not strong enough to withstand all attacks.”

While democracy in Europe would appear to be well established and where democratic values are supported by a wide number of institutions, it would seem that the attachment to such a political system is perhaps not strong enough to withstand all attacks. Young people's attraction to the populist movements found in many countries reflects this apparent fragility. How should we interpret these ambivalent trends? Their wariness with regard to the parliamentary institution and their attraction to technocratic regimes most certainly represent less a distancing from the democratic idea itself than from current forms of political representation. However, this withdrawal from politics is potentially damaging

for democratic life, since a political area for both deliberation and representation is an essential component of the democratic ideal. The expressed desirability of an authoritarian government could be interpreted as the expression of a need for stronger regulation of public life by the State. This desire for a strong hand concerns primarily public morality in the minds of young Europeans and much less private morality: young people are more permissive and tolerant with regards to private morality and stricter with regard to the respecting of standards in public life.

The influence of educational levels on these trends cannot be ignored. **While the most highly educated young people are critical of the political class, they nevertheless remained positively attached to the operation and principles of representative democracy.** Needless to say, a good educational level does not automatically eliminate the depoliticisation process and non-voting but it does sustain adherence to the universal values of tolerance, openness to the world and other people that compensates for political withdrawal and guarantees an attachment to the democratic system (Grunberg and Muxel, 2002). **On the other hand, ties with democracy have come increasingly under pressure among the least educated young people.** As is the case with xenophobia, the anti-democratic attitude is very sensitive to educational levels: as social integration is now linked to school results, less-educated young people reject a political and social system that seems to have no place for them and can even reject outsiders.

As these young people tend not to participate in conventional and protest politics, they are more likely to accept authoritarian leadership styles. They accumulate a democratic deficit: the absence of education coupled with a low level of social and vocational integration consolidates a refusal of democratic principles as a way of regulating how people live together. **Generational renewal does not, therefore, automatically ensure the continuity of the democratic model.**

► Enhance participation during youth in order to encourage the transmission and exercise of democratic values

Given the importance for the future of our societies, what policies will help consolidate democratic values among young people and reinforce their political participation? It is clear that schools alone, via civic education and other subjects, cannot guarantee such a transmission. Educational institutions pass on knowledge but are less equipped to transmit values, especially as the young people who are the most critical and radical with regard to institutions and democracy are often those who attend school least or have dropped out completely. Democratic values are likely to be best transmitted **via the development of a democratic regulation throughout the whole of the social body and the implementation of participative projects at different levels of society** (Bréchon, 2001). Young people who have had the opportunity to experiment with it in their daily lives will have greater faith in the efficacy of the democratic process.

While politics tends to be linked to the negative image of political parties and power struggles, it can have a more positive connotation for young people in terms of the concrete aspects of their day-to-day lives or to the issues arising from living in society. While they are quick to criticise those in power, young people are usually more comfortable with major social issues. Their social identity is built on the quest for personal development models rather than on political or ideological positions: it is more a question of personal choices made throughout a more varied and fragmented personal path and based on a diversity of experiences. **Young people today, through their values and engagements, bear witness to new forms of involvement in the public arena:** the social and political forms of youth involvement and expression are being reconstructed via

less institutionalised and more individual conditions (Becquet and De Linares, 2005).

Areas for dialogue and the elaboration of collective choices, set up at different territorial levels in public life, need to be recognised to ensure the enhancement of participation. Experiencing participation at local, district or community level can also contribute to the construction of democracy (local youth councils, district committees...). In other words, young people's strong identification with the areas they come from should not be ignored. Almost half of young Europeans have stated that they come from the social space closest to them, namely their town or locality. They are attached to a space that structures daily life in terms of social relationships (Belot, 2005). As a result, **the local level will certainly become a more significant area in terms of the organisation and expression of civil society**, essential to ensure the establishment and implementation of areas of participative deliberation (Loncle, 2008).

The purely democratic dimension of such areas of deliberation and participation will be determined by their openness to diversified populations. For that to happen, these spaces should be defined in terms of relevant political issues that give meaning to what

is said by those involved, rather than by a predetermined categorisation (involve young people, poor people, immigrants...). In France, for example, there is a deficit in participation and representation in so-called "sensitive" areas found in underprivileged suburbs. The pressing issue is less to encourage the young people who live there to participate (since they are often already experiencing social difficulties) than to define the relevant issues and the needs of the inhabitants (in terms of public facilities, for example), and then to collectively come up with an adequate response. **This approach would avoid using areas reserved for young people and where they are in a majority in favour of a more intergenerational ap-**

proach that would facilitate contacts between young people and adults.

Another aspect of such deliberation areas is the question of participation in the decision-making process. In France, participation frameworks have been set up in some institutions, such as pupil councils in schools or youth municipal councils in many municipalities. However, these institutional frameworks are rarely in a position to really impact the

“**Democratic values are likely to be best transmitted via the development of a democratic regulation throughout the whole of the social body and the implementation of participative projects at different levels of society.**”

Bréchon, 2001

decision-making process. More often than not, they are consultative rather than decision-making bodies: real participation in decision-making is thus either completely absent or rather indirect. However, the recognition of the input from actors in the deliberative process and the establishment of a link between them and the elaboration of the public decision-making process would be a way of establishing the democratic dimension of such areas of participation. In return, the stake in decision-making would ensure greater involvement of all the social actors, both at local government (district and municipality) and institutional (school...) levels. **Young people only act when significant causes are at stake.**

In conclusion, we believe that the exercise of participation will consolidate the recognition of the democratic values behind such a practice and which such a practice translates into action. In European societies faced with a more complex relationship between young people and democratic values, with their increasing distance from politics and creation of new forms of engagement in organised groups, the implementation of participative projects, based on active citizenship, could be a way of passing on democratic values and reinforcing the political link. Young people's commitment, given its one-off, concrete and pragmatic nature, would thus find areas and causes to support in either cultural or social fields alongside the traditional political area that such projects can eventually bring about and rejuvenate. ■



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by Marie Schneider



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Youth Participation globalisation and democracy

Globalisation and its consequences have led to transformations of various life stages. Childhood and youth are especially affected by these shifts. Formerly known as a moratorium for the preparation of adulthood through education and apprenticeship, this description of youth has changed. Young people have to design their lives not only for adolescence but also to be able to fulfil future expectations.

Not only does the individual side have to be seen when talking about globalisation and its consequences, but also international relations and accompanying challenges for nation states have to be considered. Migration and heterogeneity, denationalization tendencies are some of the challenges today. Democracies are grounded on the concept of political participation – citizens need to participate and they need to learn how to do so. Therefore attitudes and the capacity to engage in dialogue, respect, solidarity, tolerance and a sense of responsibility are required (Willems 2007). In this way citizenship through participation is not only considered as a legal status, but also as a competence, whose acquisition cannot be left to chance.

► Youth Participation – conceptual and theoretical implications

Youth participation is one of the main programmes for the promotion of young people's active engagement in societies today. The 1989 *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* is based on four main categories: *survival rights* (right to life and to have the most basic needs met), *development rights* (enabling children to reach their fullest potential), *protection rights* (safeguarding children and adolescents from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation) and finally *participation rights* (permission to take an active part in the community) (UNO 1978; Human Rights Education Association). There are also numerous campaigns and initiatives like the *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000* or the survey *EUYOUPART* focused on democratic learning processes for and with young people. The 1999 IEA study *Citizenship and Education in Twenty-eight Countries* revealed that the political attitudes and (political) willingness of young people to participate is clearly high. Students in most countries have an understanding of fundamental democratic

values and institutions and they agree that good citizenship includes the obligation to vote. But there are also some negative indicators about youth participation. Depth of understanding is still a problem. At the same time students are very sceptical about traditional forms of political engagement but many are open to other types of involvement (Torney-Purta et al. 2001). But what exactly is youth participation and why is it so important? Does it only cover political participation or are there other participation levels as well? What alternative forms of youth participation can be identified?

Participation is a broad concept which pivotally refers to active partaking of citizens in collective (political) concerns such as decision-making processes. Democracies are based upon citizen's rights and will to take part in decision processes. Without these two preconditions democracies would not function (Kaase 2003; Schubert/Klein 2006). According to the United Nations World Youth Report 2003, *youth participation* is not an end in itself. It needs to be defined as a procedural right and represents the means through which young people "take part in and influence processes, decisions and activities in order to achieve justice, influence outcomes, expose abuses of power and realize their rights" (United Nations 2003: 271).

The European Commission 2001 White Paper *A New Impetus for the European Youth*, lists five pivotal principles which frame the underlying concept of European governance. *Openness* which includes the provision of information and active communication for young people; *Accountability* stands for the development of new and structured forms of cooperation between Member States and the European institutions. *Effectiveness*, which means the holistic involvement of young people; *Coherence*, which includes the provision of an overview of all the different forms of policies concerning young people. And finally the provision and



encouragement of *Participation*, which includes the consultation and involvement of young people in decisions is listed (European Commission 2001: 8; Barrington-Leach et al. 2007). In real life young people experience only very limited access to political participation – under 18 they have no voting rights. Furthermore, access to participation is unequally distributed due to socioeconomic differences like family background, educational differences or migration status. At the same time the understanding of the reality of youth participation leads to a broader demand for the recognition of the rights of young people. Young people need to be acknowledged as active agents rather than simple recipients of adult protection (United Nations 2003: 272; Fatke et al. 2006).

Hence youth participation takes different forms and can include *political, social, economic and cultural participation* (United Nations 2003: 279). These dimensions have to be located on a continuum since they cannot be completely distinguished from each other. The linkage between youth participation and *political processes* is stricter – it is located within representative democratic systems and refers to concepts of active citizenship. Here engagement includes voting, participation in election campaigns or party work. A broader definition connects participation to *social and public processes* and contains social involvement which is indirectly connected to political issues. It is located outside representative democratic systems and describes alternative forms of participation. Here different participation modes can be distinguished. Social participation also includes the initiation of political discourses by collecting signatures or holding political speeches, political protest and/or strikes as well as illegal and violent forms of political participation. Also membership in NGOs (e.g. Greenpeace) is an example for social participation (Gaiser/de Rijke 2001:11f.). Another example is product boycott. EUYOUPART revealed that ethical consumerism is the most common day-to-day reclamation by young people. 25% of the Finnish, 17% of the Italian and 16% of the Austrian youth boycott certain products on a regular basis (Ogris/Westphal 2006: 10). *Economic participation* relates to work and development as “economic participation and civic engagement are two critical indicators of the success of investments in the development of knowledge and skills of children and teenagers” (Barrington-Leach et al. 2007: 61). *Cultural participation* refers to the arts, cultural values and expressions (United Nations 2003: 279) and includes two interrelating dimensions of adolescence. First cultural participation is found in the various expressions of youth culture and lifestyles. Not only through music and fashion do young people innovate

“Citizen participation is the redistribution of power which enables have-not citizens – people who are presently excluded from political and economic processes – to be comprehensively included in the future.”

Arnstein, 1967

their life and lifestyles but also through a deep influence on society. Therefore on a second level cultural participation can lead towards changes within society – orientations and norms can be transformed (for example, the so-called «sandwich generation») (Willems 2007).

Taking these different concepts of youth participation into consideration, different types of participation can be distinguished. In an older but nevertheless relevant article Sherry R. Arnstein (1967) connects citizen participation as an equivalent term to citizen power. *Citizen participation is the redistribution of power which enables have-not citizens – people who are presently excluded from political and economic processes – to be comprehensively included in the future* (Arnstein 1967). A participation ladder clarifies three dimensions of participation:

- *non participation*: manipulation, therapy
- *tokenism*: information, consultation, placation
- *citizen power*: partnership, delegated power, citizen control

The objective of *manipulation and therapy* is not to enable people to participate in society but to allow leaders to ‘educate’ or ‘cure’ participants. *Information, consultation and placation* describe forms of so-called participation, since participants are allowed to speak but have no decision-making rights. While *partnership* enables participants to actively negotiate and engage, *delegating power* and *citizen control* describe power processes where citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats (Arnstein 1967).

This participation ladder demonstrates why participation is important for society as a whole and even more so, for young people’s growing up processes. Regarding the link between participation and democracy, John Dewey interprets *democracy as a maxim of the associated life* – as an idea of communal life itself. Therefore democracy commits to the principles of freedom and equality and is located beyond dogmatism or ideology. At the same time democracy – for Dewey – is a *creative process*. The main condition is the provision of opportunities to participate through curiosity, active engagement, creativity, protest or resistance (Dewey 1993; Himmelmann 2004). According to Himmelmann the *main benefits of citizen participation* can be found within three dimensions of democracy. The *first dimension* is the *form of government*. Here human rights, the constitutional state, elections and the sovereignty of people, parliamentarism and competition of parties, division of powers and social security are the main objectives. The second societal dimension is its *corporate form* including pluralism, social differentiation,

peaceful conflict settlement, competition, free market economy, openness, as well as public and civil society. The third dimension is reflected in certain *life forms*. Civility and fairness, tolerance, pursuit of happiness, variety of chances, solidarity and self-organization belong to this dimension (Himmelmann 2004).

This rationale points towards the importance of *democracy learning* as the main requirement of participation possibilities for young people. Education for democracy is a universal challenge and takes place on a *continuum between the transmission of knowledge through older generations* for the younger and *self-learning processes* (Reinhardt 2004). The main outcome of these learning processes is the development of competences that allow young people to meet the demands of their social and societal life. Insofar as the concept of competences “is the meeting point between structural requirements and individual capacities. It is dependent on knowledge; however the challenge is not only to have more knowledge or be more qualified, but rather to be able to translate contextual problems and competence demands into information and knowledge queries” (Mørch 2002: 66).

► Settings and Opportunities of Youth Participation

Although a lot is being done, the reality of youth participation within representative democracies is not promising. The political interest of young people is decreasing dramatically. Günther Ogris and Sabine Westphal point out that the voter’s participation in the 2004 election for the European Parliament was disappointing. More than two thirds of 18-24 year-olds did not participate (Ogris/Westphal 2006: 7). General or council elections within the nation-states echo the same picture (Hurrelmann 2007: 150f.). This leads to the assumption that low interest and frustration of young people with politics could be mainly focused on conventional forms of political participation whereas alternative forms of engagement as shown above are mobilizing more and more young people (Hurrelmann 2007: 151).

EUYOUPART identified three main sources of political participation – *families/peers, school and political organisations*. Next to the important influence of families it has been widely accepted that schools offer the best chances of promoting political knowledge and democratic values and skills. Democracy learning for youth participation needs the interconnection between schools as places for formal education and the community (family, peers etc.) as places of informal learning. As Birger Hartnuß and Stephan Maykus (2006: 48) point out, only through intermediary interchange between the two main dimensions of youth growing up processes can political participation be realized.

Political socialisation through family and peers influences political opinion making processes the most. “Parents are perceived both as an arm of society – as a mediating agency between society and the child – and as powerful sources of primary and enduring influence on the internalization of values and norms” (Liebes/Ri-

bak 1992: 619). Within politically engaged families, young people learn through role modelling, discussions and participation experiences of their parents (Ogris/Westphal 2006).

Schools provide learning environments where young people not only learn premises and characteristics of politics. This is where young people also get to know what participation through activity is through electing class representatives, meeting with visiting politicians or setting up a youth parliament. The above mentioned IAE study *Citizenship and Education in Twenty-eight Countries* revealed that schools who model democratic practice are most effective in promoting civic knowledge and engagement (Torney-Purta et al. 2001).

Learning processes in schools refer to didactic principles which not only count for this specific environment but also bear a meaning for the understanding of political socialisation processes through families and peers. The interplay between objective factors and subjective views offers a great chance for democracy learning and participation processes; therefore the *orientation on lived-worlds and individually developed learning ideas* is one main principle of democracy learning (Schelle 2007: 88). In addition the *orientation of scientific knowledge through reflection and decision-making* is also a principle of democracy learning (Gagel 2007: 156ff.) *Problem-focussing* including *problem solving* processes is another way of democracy learning. The aim is to initiate reflection for following actions (Breit 2007: 108f.). The encouragement of participation includes also *controversy*. This principle follows two main ideas: education for citizenship and education towards enlightenment (Grammes 2007b: 127). Learning processes also point towards *different forms of action*, not only within the school environment but also in families and peers. It is obvious that concepts of democracy learning mainly focus on schools. Nevertheless students transport their formal knowledge into their lived social worlds. Therefore the connections between the various environments influencing young people’s opinion-forming and decision-making processes cannot be neglected. Although studies of youth participation are not new there are still various challenges and frequent points of criticism. The following paragraph will highlight some of these remaining issues.

► Remaining Challenges

A growing number of young people throughout the world are affected by social exclusion and various disadvantages. Raising poverty levels not only in poor non-western countries but also in the rich westernised world have implications for the day-to-day safeguarding of children’s and adolescents’ basic needs. When these needs are met participation levels for young people still remain low. Some youngsters look and find chances for participation far away from traditional political systems. Some engage in radical forms and choose extremism as their form of opposition.

Future concepts and political programs of youth participation should therefore focus on strengthening processes in families,

communities and the representative political system. Also different ways of supporting young people's democracy learning have to be provided – ideally in close interrelation between formal and informal learning environments. Attempts to promote youth participation have to lead towards young people's impressions of their impact on decision-making processes. ■

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by Bettina Schwarzmayr

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Who leads?

Through youth participation today to the **leaders of tomorrow**

Supporting and encouraging young people to participate, giving them the opportunity to voice their concerns and aspirations, is necessary if we want to ensure that they will be equipped to deal with the challenges of tomorrow. This article addresses three approaches towards meaningful participation of young people: inclusiveness, legal measures, and empowerment.

► Increasing participation through inclusiveness

Youth organisations play a key role in reducing the gap between where decisions about society are made and where they are implemented. We do this by being there both when decisions are made and when they are carried out. We are engaged in opening up political processes at all levels, and making them accessible to young people. Efforts to ensure equal participation are central to the work of many NGOs, who remain conscious of the internal atmosphere at meetings and in their structures, given that exclusion happens easily and is sometimes hard to notice unless specific attention is drawn to it.

This can, however, unfortunately not counter balance the inadequate representation of youth in parliaments or in governments. The marginalisation of many young people and the discrimination of many women, migrants, people with disabilities or those living in poverty, leads to exclusion. Racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia are still, like other forms of discrimination, not abstract but a sad and daily reality and hinder the full participation of many people living in Europe today.

Increasing the awareness of teachers, police officers, health and care workers, public administration, and Human Resource Units, to name but a few, is indispensable to increasing opportunities for all. Such action implies the genuine extension of opportunities to the most marginalised in society, to enable them to exercise the power that the rest of society takes for

granted; for youth organisations and NGOs, this means reaching out to oppressed youth and making sure that they are provided the space to speak for themselves, are listened to, and are heard.

The struggle for proportional representation seems to be the same – from biblical times to the present day. Matthew's Parable of the Talents starts with each servant receiving money according to his ability. Matthew 25:29 concludes «For the one who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough. But the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.» The servant receiving the least money is in addition condemned for his lack of action.

Looking into participation projects, we can sometimes see the same effect; some projects often tend to give more opportunities to those who already have many opportunities, to those who are well integrated and articulate, especially when it comes to one-off events without prior support schemes. If we want to advocate towards a culture of participation – we must ensure disparities are counter-balanced – being proactive and 'hands-on' is not equally feasible for every citizen.

► Increasing participation through law

In 1950, 40% of the EU25 population was under 25; that figure fell to 30% by 2000 and is expected to be less than a quarter by 2025, according to the Bureau of European Policy Advisers' consultation paper on Europe's social reality. The proportion of the EU25 population over 65 is forecast to rise from almost 16% in 2000 to 22% in 2025 and 30%



in 2050, contrasting with 9% a century earlier in 1950. Due to this rapid demographic change, young people are facing growing challenges to finding their place in a society where older generations, who are stereotypically more conservative and reluctant to change, become a majority. As young people are becoming a minority in Europe, the decisions taken by the majority are becoming less reflective of young people's views and expectations. The YFJ, therefore, brings to the European debate the lowering of the voting age to 16 across Europe.

**“ It is time
for more diversity
in Europe's leadership,
no matter if they be
majors in the military
or business CEOs –
decision-making must
be more reflective
of constituents in order
to be sustainable. ”**

The decisions taken by the majority are becoming less reflective of young people's views and expectations. Lowering the voting age to 16 could ensure a broader representation of young people in collective decisions affecting them. Whereas young people between 16 and 18 often have responsibilities as employees, taxpayers or parents, lowering the voting age to 16 would restore the balance between their rights and responsibilities. A minimum representation of young people in elected positions should also exist in order to lower this demographic gap. Any political strategy for youth cannot succeed without the engagement of young people themselves. An investment and empowerment strategy for young people is what we need to overcome all these current social challenges. Helping them achieve an autonomous life through education that renders them employable, through accessible and decent jobs, through social security and access to health and housing will be an investment that will pay off with interest. At the same time, enabling them to become responsible citizens, and to be actively involved in the life around them, will empower young people to feel secure in taking responsible choices in life. After all, youth prosperity is everybody's responsibility.

► Increasing participation through empowerment

EU communications commissioner Margot Wallström recently highlighted her dismay regarding the «reign of old men» in Brussels corridors: «An inner circle of male decision-makers agree behind closed doors on whom to nominate to EU top jobs,» she told the Swedish daily *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, in February 2008. Observations such as these indicate that the same old story is being repeated - those who are in power reproduce the power structures to preserve their own positions.

NGOs as well as public authorities must be conscious of the risk of reproducing structures of exclusion, and serving as the hothouse for elites. In seeking to demonstrate that we are responsible leaders, youth leaders must embody the diversity of our constituencies, recognising their heterogeneous needs, and duly articulating them. For youth organisations, reaching out goes beyond quota systems, political correctness, or ill-thought out idealism; reaching out means providing excluded youth with opportunities for participation, and access to those opportunities. This signifies a true acceptance of the agency of young people to make decisions and act on their own behalf no matter where they stand in life right now. We must also actively encourage young people to constantly voice their views, needs, and concerns - towards youth organisations and also, with their help, towards other stakeholders.

WASP is a term used in the United States - an acronym for White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, referring to a group that was ruling the country for centuries. In Europe WHAM (white heterosexual able-bodied man) is used to describe the leading elite.

It is time for more diversity in Europe's leadership, no matter if they be majors in the military or business CEOs – decision-making must be more reflective of constituents in order to be sustainable.

Let's leave WHAM in the 80's. ■

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by Diogo Pinto

C i t i z e n s h i p
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Institutional perspectives – European Youth Forum Citizenship, Participation and Youth Organisations: meeting young people's needs

When do we become citizens? When we're born? When we get involved in the life of our community? When we vote for the first time? It's a little bit of all these things, and of all of them combined. Besides, there is no doubt that a person who participates in the life of their community is a citizen, whether a national or European citizen, whether young or old, or even a foreigner.

This article aims to show that the participation of young people in the life of a society is of major importance, emphasising the relevance of youth organisations in promoting this, and highlighting the importance of youth organisations being representative.

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) is a participatory and representative platform - in the sense that it offers the possibility for all young people to participate. The YFJ sees participation as a sustainable process in which young people or a group can find the necessary means and space to express themselves and to be active members of a given process. Of course, not all such spaces have necessarily to be created and made available by youth bodies; nor do they have to be linked to a political decision-making process. However, it is crucial that these spaces exist and that they are made possible with relevant support from public authorities.

Why - because youth, in particular, are an engine, a source of energy and of innovation, and while a distinct section of society, youth is also a particular moment in one's life - a pe-

riod when one develops and constructs oneself. To provide youth with the means to participate is to offer today's young generation, but also those generations to come, the means to 'drop anchor' and to take part in both the decisions that affect them and those that will concern them in the future. Young people need to experience democracy, to learn to assume responsibility and to build a sustainable citizenship. Of primary importance to young people is the creation and provision of structures, programmes and opportunities which enable them to participate.

Youth organisations remain such significant spaces for youth participation due to the fact that being a member of a youth organisation does not only mean being a consumer, but also implies creating, implementing, and contributing to the life of an organisation.

Hence youth organisations are

not only participation spaces at the disposal of young people, but they are also spaces where every young person has the means to contribute to the participatory process. A youth organisation allows a young person to be the one who learns

“ Participation is about having the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, where necessary, the support, to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society. ”

YFJ General Assembly

• Institutional perspectives



and experiences, and to become the one who trains or supports the development of the organisation, and of its structure and activities. Within a youth organisation, everyone should be offered the same training possibilities, opportunities and means.

Participation then, lies at the heart of the concerns of youth organisations and of the YFJ. It is a principle implemented daily by thousands of volunteers throughout Europe but also within each organisation. At the YFJ level, its strict and well-determined membership criteria aim at enabling participation by all (i.e. youth organisations) within the YFJ, granting all (i.e. young people) a place within these structures. This way the YFJ ensures coherence, the sharing of values, and involvement in the platform, it refers to transparency, internal democracy, openness and inclusiveness, and guarantees that youth organisations recognise each other.

The role of youth organisations doesn't only consist of offering young people a participative space but also in ensuring that authorities support them so that youth organisations, and above all youth participation, can enjoy sustainable and continued existence: in this way, structures in which the voices and positions of young people are heard and listened to can be guaranteed at all levels. This demands differing approaches, forms and structures, according to the decision-making level, but also to the context concerned – e.g. from one European country to another. Such approaches can then vary from a local youth council, to the implementation of a structured dialogue between the YFJ, its Member Organisations and the European Union, to the implementation of a co-management system. While this diversity is necessary, the YFJ believes it is still not sufficient, and thus is working on different aspects of youth participation such as participation in decision-making alongside the possibility to vote at an earlier stage.

There are several arguments supporting the YFJ advocacy and lobby work for the lowering of the voting age to 16 in all elections:

- a combination of factors (demographic, cultural, and social) that are changing the spectrum of European societies, and affect political participation;
- to enable young people to vote at an earlier age means granting them a voice, responsibility for society and also a certain degree of recognition;
- young people need to be given the means to become involved, together with improved civic education in order to understand the importance of participation.

Not all citizens vote, but as it is a right in most European countries, there is therefore no reason for young people to be put in a special category which is radically different from the rest. Youth organisations are more or less faced with the same difficulties as the rest of the democratic system. The latter is a system open to all citizens that have the right to vote – just like youth organisations are open to all young people; in a democratic system each and everyone is given the same rights and opportunities – just like in youth organisations. Nevertheless, not all citizens vote – just as not all young people are in youth organisations. Is this a reason to denigrate both their work and level of representation? Maybe not... If youth organisations want to be representative bodies through their structures and nature, it is essential to pay attention to the inclusion of all: this is the reason to develop programmes targeting at-risk youth, and young people facing low standards of living, or discrimination. This is also the reason to implement guidelines to ensure diversity and a better awareness of diversity in their bodies; and last but not least, this is why they should equip themselves with the tools to ensure the quality of the structures and activities they propose, to offer everybody the means to participate and develop. These are the principles for which the YFJ and its Member Organisations stand, and which they implement in their daily work. Youth organisations naturally face new difficulties as regards to the integration of all, just as in wider society, but they remain structures at the avant-garde in relation to inclusion and respect for diversity, in order to enable the participation of every young person who is willing. ■

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by Fatima Laanan

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Institutional perspectives – SALTO

“Youth Programmes”:

European tools for Youth Participation

Participation of young people is one of the main priorities of the Youth in Action Programme alongside European citizenship, cultural diversity and the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities. It aims to encourage young people to take an active role in society, to increase their participation in the system of representative democracy as well as to support any initiative that encourages and teaches active participation.

The purpose of this article is to describe the steps that have been taken in this field within the framework of the European Commission Youth Programmes, to give some example of projects and practices and to provide details about useful resources.

Background

One of the main concerns over the last two decades has been the improvement of the active participation of young people in the life of their community. There have been many policy developments in this field at European level.

However for many years, the European Commission Youth Programmes were almost the only tools for cooperation aimed at encouraging the mobility of young people and promoting their active participation.

The Programme known as “Youth” (2000-2006) supported a large variety of projects such as youth exchanges, European Voluntary Service and youth initiative projects directly aimed at young people or training courses and networking activities for youth workers and NGOs.

During the implementation phase of this programme, another important step was taken in youth participation policy development. With the publication in 2001 of the White Paper on youth entitled “A new impetus for youth” a new framework for cooperation between European Union member states in the youth field was set up in order to involve more young people

in decisions that concern them. It is also important to mention that the White Paper process was very “participative” as it represented the results of a wide-range of consultations with young people at national and European level.

As a result, this publication put youth participation in the top four priorities in the European Youth field alongside information, voluntary activities and greater knowledge of youth. It also became obvious that besides its educational aspect, the Youth Programme also had a role to play in supporting the achievements of the White Paper objectives.

► **Some achievements... Youth Initiatives**

As far as youth participation as a priority is concerned, the most significant contributions of the Youth Programme have been observed within the framework of Youth Initiatives.

Indeed, through “Action 3” of the Youth Programme, groups of young people from 15 to 25 had the opportunity to get support for projects they implemented themselves at local level and which were aimed at benefiting the local community.

By being actively involved in planning and carrying out projects, young people had the opportunity to express their creativity as well as to show their willingness to positively interact with their local neighbourhood.



- The Jamklub is a youth club for young people with fewer opportunities in the harbour area of Ghent, an excellent example of a “traditional” remote area. The youngsters wanted to make a video about their daily life, tackling ‘daily’ subjects they are dealing with: free time activities, school, parents, family, love, racism, drug abuse... The main aim of this youth initiative project was to use video as a tool to communicate with the local community and to open up a discussion on the existing prejudices from the local community towards the participating youngsters.
- A group of 4 young people implemented a youth initiative aimed at designing environmental education tools addressed to other young people from 6 to 12 years. The main aim of the young promoters was to raise awareness in the local community for the protection of the brown bear of the Pyrenees Region in France.
- In Lithuania, a group of 15 teenagers were supported in a Youth Initiative project which consisted of an original Youth Bus which provided useful information for young people, such as cultural activities organised in their hometown and about the local and international organisations. There was free access to the bus as daily public transport.

Accessibility is a key factor: Any group of young people (a minimum of four) wherever they are and whether involved in an organisation or not can apply for a grant for their project. Although there are no statistics available at European level yet, it can be underlined that in many programme countries, Youth Initiatives were and still are the Action most used by young people with fewer opportunities. Because of its local setting, it is often seen in the youth field as a first step before jumping into international youth activities.

Another important aspect to be mentioned is that through Youth Initiatives, a lot of new organisations have been created and are still working. This is the case of an organisation based in Romania called “Alter Eco” which was created after the completion of a Youth Initiative Project called “Brainstorming” and which aimed at creating a European magazine where young people from Romania and Spain expressed and analysed the realities of their countries within the European context. This bi-national project was made possible because Action 3 allowed the development of projects at local level with a networking dimension, thus enabling the exchange of practices and raising awareness of other realities in other countries.

► Support for Youth (participation) Initiatives

Significant support was provided which positively affected the quantity and the quality of Youth (participation) initiative projects implemented in the Youth Programme countries. Indeed, as a fairly new action introduced into the Youth Programme, it took a lot of work at national and European levels to advertise

this action and to empower young people to realise such initiatives.

In this context SALTO-Youth Initiatives Resource Centre (currently known as SALTO-Youth Participation) was set up in 2003 with the aim of promoting Youth Initiatives at national and European levels. The main focus was to provide support and resources for National Agencies, young people, youth workers, social workers, educators and any other actors involved in local or European youth initiatives. The centre worked closely with National Agencies to promote youth initiatives as a tool for **youth participation** in society, to develop the **European dimension** of local projects, to facilitate the search for partners for networking projects, to support young people on **project management**, to develop a **coaching process** for youth initiatives, and most importantly, to strengthen the **quality of Action 3 projects**.

In addition, priority was given to the **ongoing evaluation and development of Action 3** in the frame of the YOUTH programme and the preparation of the new Programme in 2007.

Here are some examples of practice developed and which seem in my humble opinion the most significant:

1. COACHING: a coaching process was developed to support young people involved in Youth Initiative projects:

- **Coaching Youth Initiatives: a Guide for Supporting Youth Participation** was published in spring 2006. It presents concrete examples of youth participation projects, tools and guidelines to support youth workers and youth leaders who are willing to coach Youth Initiative projects. The Coaching Guide is available for download on www.salto-youth.net/participation and hard copies can be ordered online.
- **The Coach2Coach course** is aimed at contributing to the development of high quality Youth Initiative projects by the means of coaching. The target group is youth workers and those who directly work with youth initiatives as a coach/support person during the creation and development of the projects

2. GET IN NET is a training course for young people organised at European level. The overall aim of this course is to increase the quality of networking projects (currently called trans-national youth initiatives) and to explore their added value (European dimension) for the local community. The target group was young people from 18 to 25 involved in local projects related to the topic raised by each course and who wished to develop Networking activities.

The Resource Centre also organised the **international seminar “Feedback on Youth Initiatives”** in cooperation with the European Commission and National Agencies from a number of programme countries. Beneficiaries, coaches and National Agencies gathered in Brussels to share and reflect on their



Youth participation in the Actions

As an instrument for the implementation of the European Youth Policy, the Youth in Action Programme put a strong focus on the participation of young people in democratic life in order to encourage them to be active citizens. This is based on the Council resolution on the common objectives for participation by and information for young people :

- To increase the participation of young people in the civic life of their community;
- To increase participation of young people in the system of representative democracy; and,
- To allow a greater support for various forms of learning to participate.

Next to Youth Initiatives, Youth in Action introduced two new activities which, in essence, can be seen as “participative”: Youth Democracy Projects (**Action 1.3**) and the Meetings of young people and those responsible for youth policy (**Action 5.1**).

Youth Democracy offers financial and technical support for groups of young people eager to play an active role in society. Because this is a new Youth in Action activity (Action 1.3), there is a free place for innovation. Nevertheless, it's clear that a Youth Democracy project has to be based on a real partnership both at local and at trans-national level. More technically a project should involve at least 2 countries with 2 local partners per country.

Here are some examples of projects supported by National Agencies in late 2007 :

• “Youth Participation – learning and doing!” - (Akzente Salzburg)

Young people from Portugal, Germany and Austria got the chance to learn about a project called “Participation in my hometown/in my city”. The aim was to enable young people to learn about structures, methods, processes and backgrounds to finally be able to participate in an appropriate way.

The public authorities involved are supporting this process as well as they can gain knowledge about young peoples' wishes and concerns. Within 18 months it is supposed to have three international meetings of young people and their multipliers (in each country) – to plan activities, to reflect, to evaluate. On local level 10 measures (youth-events, open-spaces, conferences...) are planned in each participating country. The aim is to experience methods of the partner countries and reflect about their applicability and suitability. Communication will work via E-mail and a common Website to ensure regular exchanges between the groups.

In the long run the project wants to tackle the issue related to the involvement of young people into the decision-making processes as well as their commitment in participative structures.

• Voice It Europe

Using the power of podcasts to empower young people to take an active part in their local, national and European democracy.

respective experiences. The participants' input was the essential part of the seminar, since the evaluation of the Youth Initiative projects was solely based on their experiences. The output from the Feedback seminar consisted of conclusions on the benefits and impacts of the supported projects, recognition of their educational value and recommendations for the future programme resulting from the common discussion of the different participants.

The Resource Centre also contributed to the International **Conference for youth participation “Please Do Disturb!”** organised by the National Agency in Germany in 2005. The aims were to exchange, compare and discuss national concepts and youth participation projects, to find common strategies and answers to some of the open questions in youth participation. As a result of all the debates, participants agreed on the Hanover Declaration for Youth Participation which sets down concrete political requests on this issue.

▶ Youth in Action Programme

Further steps for youth participation

The fourth generation of the European Commission's youth programme was adopted in November 2006 following a lot of consultation with different stakeholders from the youth field.

The name given “Youth in Action” is quite significant. Indeed, there is no doubt that it is meant to be an instrument for encouraging young people to play a more active role in their community and in Europe in general.

It also aims to support European youth policy developments and in particular, the Youth Pact and the “Structured Dialogue” which aims “to stimulate a wider debate between the European Union's democratic institutions and (youth) citizens”.

Youth in Action is based on permanent priorities such as cultural diversity, inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, European citizenship and participation.

Youth in Action is divided into five Actions which can support a large variety of projects implemented by individual or groups of young people such as youth exchanges, voluntary service projects, youth initiatives and youth democracy projects. Adults are not excluded as youth workers, trainers, representatives of NGOs or public bodies can also benefit from the programme either as support persons or as participants in Youth in Action activities such as seminars or training courses.

16 people aged between 13-19 (half from the United Kingdom and half from Latvia) collaborated using shared web space to plan, produce and publish programmes based on interviews with their peers and elected representatives.

They will be trained in journalistic skills and given the confidence to arrange and conduct interviews with influential people that might usually appear «out of reach».

They will upload the edited pieces to their own space on the global Radio waves website, making them available as podcasts to a worldwide audience of people who need and want to know how young people think.

The two groups will collaborate online to decide what Europe-wide issue or issues they want to report on - issues that effect them all, despite their geographical distance. Together, they will identify who they want to talk to. They will be supported in trying to go 'right to the top' in the European political process.

Action 5.1 **“Meetings of young people and those responsible for youth policy”** is aimed at initiating a dialogue between young people, the youth field in general and the policy makers. It is par excellence the instrument provided by the Youth in Action Programme to implement the so-called «Structure Dialogue in the Youth field».

These meetings can be organised at national level or at European level and can be aimed at either opening a space for political debate or consultation or for building bridges between different stakeholders, such as a dialogue between the formal and non-formal education fields.

► Support available from SALTO Participation

So...there are new opportunities offered by the programme to support youth participation. In 2007 the European Commission asked our Resource Centre to widen its scope of action to tackle this new priority and to help promote political and social youth participation.

In response, SALTO-YOUTH Participation is working to gather and disseminate resources and information related to this priority through its website and publications. The aim is to create a space for reflection and for exchanging practices and ideas that should enable young people and youth workers to develop quality participative projects.

Concretely the Resource centre organises **seminars** on Youth Participation and **training** courses on Management of trans-national Youth Initiatives (GET IN NET); Youth Democracy projects (Get Involved and Let's meet for participation training concepts) and on coaching young people. We also support partner finding for the sub actions 1.2 or 1.3 and we provide **publications** (reports, magazines, newsletters) and offer to disseminate information and interesting practices related to youth participation in general and Action 1.2 and 1.3 projects in particular.

► Conclusion

We can conclude that during these two last decades, the youth programmes evolved amazingly. From educational programmes, they became rather fairly unique tools for European cooperation in the non-formal education field and for implementing the priorities and objectives of the European Union's Youth Policy. Youth Participation within this framework became real for many young people in Europe and not only a good political idea. Youth in Action is offering new opportunities in this field. So, if I have a last encouragement it is to say “let's Get Involved in Youth in Action”. ■

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by Iris Bawidamann

Institutional perspectives – Council of Europe

And what do institutions do?

The Council of Europe

and youth participation

Young people are not only the future, look around; they are present, already now! And who would know better about their needs and potentials than young people themselves? This has been – in very simple words - the basic approach of the Council of Europe and in particular it's Directorate of Youth and Sport towards youth participation for more than 30 years.

The Council of Europe is convinced that democracy can only be safeguarded if we start to involve and educate people from the youngest possible age. Young people are key players when it comes to democracy in our present and future societies. In this context, youth **participation is always to be seen in a framework of values** such as human rights, democracy and non-discrimination. Only when these related values and concepts are accepted and respected as well, can young people fully participate and have a real say.

► On a political level - the Committee of Ministers

In its recommendation No. R (97) 3 the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers recommends to all member states to :

- promote partnership between youth organisations and authorities at national, regional and local levels;
- encourage young people to participate in the voluntary sector;
- encourage the implementation of the Charter on Youth participation (see details on the Charter below in section "the Congress"). The importance of cooperation between youth, non-governmental youth structures and governmental structures was strengthened as well during the 7th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth (MJN 7 (2005) 3 rev).

► On a local and regional level – the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (usually known as the Congress) is an important key player within the Council of Europe as regards youth participation. It developed back in 1992 a first version of a charter on youth participation which was revised in co-operation with DYS – and thus with the involvement of youth and governmental representatives - in 2003. The full name of the document is **revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life** and contains sectoral policies in which young people should have a say as well as concrete instruments for structured youth participation.

In April 2008, the Congress adopted a resolution and a recommendation on the integration and participation of young people in local and regional life (CG(15)8RES and CG(15)8REC) in which it calls all its members to acknowledge the contribution that young people can make to improving local and regional democracy and gives recommendations on how to do so effectively.

In cooperation with the Steering Group on Local and Regional Democracy and with involvement of the Council of Europe's youth sector, the Congress organised a **European local democracy week** in 2008 with the aim of fostering the knowledge of local democracy and promoting the idea of democratic participation at a local level.

► In the youth sector – the Directorate of Youth and Sport

To translate the promoted concept of youth participation into practice, the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport (DYS) has set up a **co-management system**, in which the votes of governmental representatives and representatives of European youth NGOs have the same weight. They are taking decisions together with equal votes on important questions of the sector such as the priorities of the Directorate and the budgetary allocations to different priorities. Also the concrete programme of the DYS itself is decided upon by representatives of governmental and youth representatives together. One of the work priorities decided on for the Directorate of Youth and Sport has been for some six years "youth participation and active citizenship".

As general instruments, the DYS supports not only youth participation projects in the two **European Youth Centres Budapest and Strasbourg** with logistical, financial and educational support, but also offers financial support to projects and activities taking part outside the European Youth Centres through the **European Youth Foundation**.

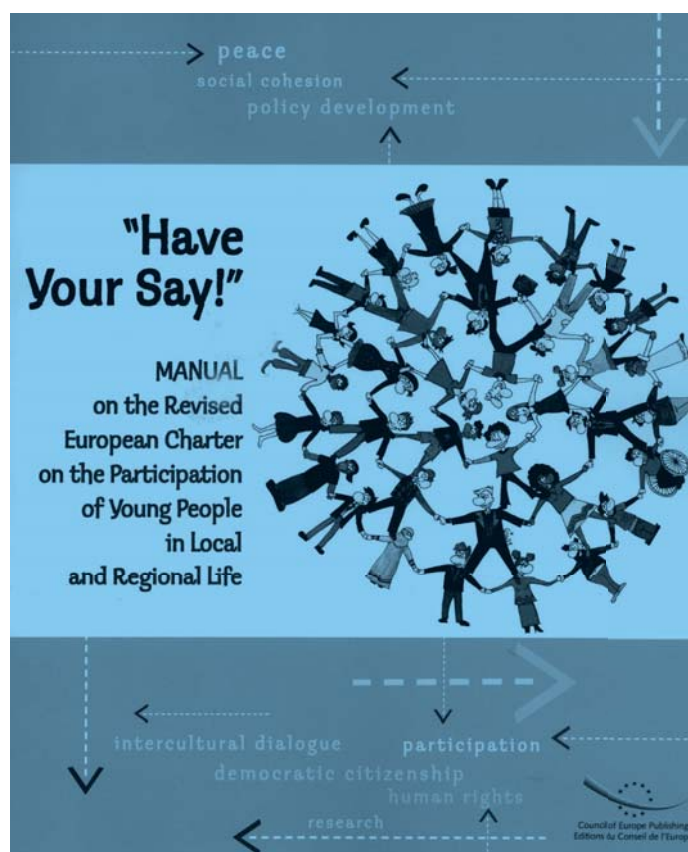
On a more grass-roots level, the DYS is organising **educational activities** for youth leaders, youth workers as well as governmental representatives responsible for youth issues mainly on local and regional levels. These activities comprise intense training courses, big symposia with up to 120 participants and study sessions (being seminars organised in cooperation with European youth NGOs).

Different **materials** to multiply the outcomes of these activities have been developed, which serve interested people as important tools in their work on fostering youth participation. Such materials include reports and documentation of the activities, a youth-friendly version of the above-mentioned Charter in different languages, a leaflet on the full Charter in different languages, an interactive CD-Rom with the youth-friendly version of the Charter on it in different languages, as well as a manual on the Charter with background information and hints and tips.

In 2008 DYS worked on an impact study of its training courses on participation as well as on a publication containing useful references and resources for people wishing to work more on youth participation issues.

In 2006 and 2007 DYS ran a **European Youth Campaign "all different – all equal"** on human rights, participation and diversity, in the framework of which many projects on local and regional level in nearly all of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe took place.

All activities and materials of the DYS aim to empower young people regardless of their social, economic and ethnic background; and multipliers to participate actively in public life and democratic processes, and to be actors of social change.



► Looking forward – challenges

Looking forward to coming years, a challenge will be to further multiply a value-based approach to youth participation in Europe and beyond. Until today, the term youth participation is widely used but unfortunately still partly misused. The aim needs to be that youth participation becomes a widely accepted concept where young people are not only a token or decoration but have a real say.

A further challenge we all face is the integration and participation of young people with fewer opportunities. In this light it is very important to recognise existing pre-conditions to youth participation and to create an inviting environment where possibilities for participation are created and open for everyone.

However, these challenges can be overcome by a close co-operation between all actors involved in youth participation issues – on an institutional, governmental and non-governmental level.

Finally it is good to highlight that in the so-called Agenda 2020, a political paper on the future directions of the Directorate of Youth and Sport, which was adopted at the Ministerial Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth in Kiev (10 and 11 October 2008), youth participation and democratic citizenship is mentioned and will therefore stay a priority of the Council of Europe's youth sector.

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by Jutta Koenig-Georgiades

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Institutional perspectives –European Commission

Structured dialogue and Youth in Action: instruments for active citizenship

Writing an article about youth participation at European level leads back to the White Paper on Youth of 2001 which recognised that young people need to be encouraged to play their full role in civic and democratic life and identified four priority areas for action: participation, information, voluntary activities and a greater understanding and knowledge of youth.

Member States decided to have a coordinated approach and developed the so-called Open Method of Coordination (OMC) to cooperate in enhancing the four priority areas. The first step was to identify major challenges in the Member States, legislation and examples of good practice. To this end, questionnaires were sent to the Member States. Each country was also asked what it wanted to see happen at European level. On the basis of the answers, the Commission drafted common objectives for participation and information of young people. The European Youth Forum was consulted before the Commission made its proposals.

The Member States then agreed on the following common objectives to increase participation:

- increase young people's participation in the civic life of their community,
- increase young people's participation in the system of representative democracy,
- provide greater support for various forms of learning to participate.

► Structured dialogue

The structured dialogue is a means of mutual communication with young people in order to implement the above-mentioned priorities of the open method of coordination in the youth field and in general to have a substantial working relationship between authorities and young people on all levels.

The structured dialogue between EU institutions and young people has been implemented by the European Commission in co-operation with the Member States, the European Youth Forum and the National Youth Councils since the beginning of 2007.

The concept is based on the conviction that youth participation in democratic institutions and a continuous dialogue between policy makers and young people contribute to make our democracies function and youth policies sustainable.

The structured dialogue has also to be seen as a contribution of the youth field to the implementation of the Commission's Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate. Plan D stresses the need to give all citizens – particularly the young – the tools to actively participate in the European decision-making process and to reinforce their sense of ownership of the European project. The structured dialogue is an instrument that contributes to achieve this objective.

Through the structured dialogue, the EU institutions want to make full participation of young people in society a reality. EU institutions and policies have a key role to play, but at the same time young people as well have to play their part and take their responsibilities.

The structured dialogue is organised in thematic cycles. During 2007, the thematic priority was inclusion and diversity, whereas two thematic priorities were treated in 2008: the Intercultural Dialogue in the first semester and «Future challenges for young people» from April onwards. The Commission attaches particular importance to the cycle on «Fu-



ture challenges for young people» giving young people the opportunity to make proposals for the next decade of youth policy cooperation and to react and provide feedback to the Commission's proposals.

The structured dialogue is developed with and through youth organisations. It involves a large diversity of young people and a broad scope of different youth organisations.

Another important aspect is that the structured dialogue gives young people the opportunity to acquire skills and competences through non-formal and informal learning experiences in a European dimension.

The structured dialogue takes place at the national, regional and local level, as well as at the European level. EU level events of the structured dialogue are Presidency Youth Events and European Youth Weeks. The objective of the European Youth Events is to draw conclusions, in terms of formally adopted text which will be a subject of political discussion with EU institutions.

In 2008, the Youth Event of the Slovenian Presidency focused on the outcome of the cycle of debates on the «inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities» organised by the team presidency of Germany, Portugal and Slovenia. The Youth Event of the French Presidency which took place in July, focussed on intercultural dialogue.

The European Youth Week in November 2008 had as main theme «Future challenges for young people»; celebrating the successful implementation over a period of 20 years of EU youth programmes, whilst also reflecting on the future direction of EU youth policies beyond 2009. During the European Youth Week, activities happened throughout Europe, major stocktaking and evaluation exercises were organised in all Member States and a visible centralised event took place in Brussels.

► Youth in Action: an instrument for active citizenship

The Youth in Action Programme is the privileged instrument to implement and put into practice youth policy cooperation. Up to now, European youth programmes have not only had an impact on young people, on their immediate environment and on the organisations working in the field of youth, but they have also had a political impact and have clearly contributed to the awareness of citizenship among young people.

The Youth in Action Programme which entered into force in 2007, funds projects which are designed to encourage a sense of active European citizenship in young people and encourages young people to become more involved in the democratic process at regional, national and European level. It promotes active citizenship, non-formal learning and mobility of young Europeans by supporting a large variety of youth activities, such as youth exchange, youth initiatives, trans-national voluntary services and training and networking for youth workers and youth organizations.

“Getting young people more involved in the life of the local, national and European communities, and fostering active citizenship thus represent one of the major challenges, not only for the present but also for the future of our societies.”

the White Paper notes

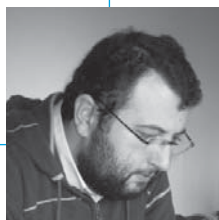
The Youth in Action Programme is the instrument for supporting the structured dialogue in Member States and at European level. Its Action 5.1 «Meetings of young people and those responsible for youth policy» offers means of supporting the structured dialogue at the local, regional and national level.

Youth in Action gives young people the opportunity to take part in the development of society in general and of the European Union in particular, by developing the intercultural learning of young people, by supporting a sense of belonging to the European Union, and by promoting the fundamental values of the Union among young people. ■

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by João Salviano Carmo

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Young people for a life without tobacco? A European Youth Manifesto!

In 2005 the European Commission approached the European Youth Forum to become a partner of the Help campaign, an anti-smoking campaign at EU level. The idea was to involve young people across Europe in the campaign while assessing their opinions and views about tobacco and how this affected their lives. The European Youth Forum before associating itself with the Help Campaign decided to organize an EU-wide consultation with young people and build a European Youth Manifesto which would reflect the views, needs and concerns of young people about tobacco.

Throughout the first four months of 2006, the European Youth Forum together with its member organisations organized an EU-wide consultation process that led to the development of national youth manifestos and engaged thousands of young people across all member states in various forms of participation spaces: workshops, concerts, smoke-free parties, conferences, debates, surveys and questionnaires, campaigns, etc. The outcome of the national manifestos, together with the outcomes of an online forum set up for the consultation process, was then conveyed and merged in a European Conference, held in Belgium in May 2006, where the first ever European Youth Manifesto for a life without tobacco was developed and created by 25 youth delegations of all the then EU Member States.

This was mostly a youth participation process. It aimed to empower young people and bring their voices from the grass root level to the European level decision-makers and policy-makers.

The whole process was youth-led and organised by the European Youth Forum and its member organisations, with the support of the Help Campaign. This was a key factor for the success of the initiative for it allowed for a climate of trust to exist among the participants of the consultation process, which in turn led to a better understanding of the purpose and intent of the whole process, thus making it possible for thousands of young people to engage out of their own free will.

The first stage was a clear consultation process without any interference from external voices or opinions. Young people - smokers and non-smokers alike - were faced with facts and research information on the effects of smoking and tobacco and

they were given the chance to reflect, debate and come up with their own views and opinions on the matter. The outcome was a clear call for "a Life without tobacco" for European youth.

► Contributors notes...

The participation of young people in the decision making process of youth policies and programmes, has been increasing and gaining more importance. In the era of transparency and active citizenship, there is an urgent call for young people to get involved and give their contribution on central topics such as (just as example): environment, education and health.

Within the health sector, the first youth network on alcohol policy was established in Budapest, in March 2008: Alcohol Policy Youth Network (APYN). The Constitutive Meeting of



• Good practice
in Participation



APYN gathered around 30 participants in the European Youth Centre.

In total, 21 youth organisations, identified among the member organisations of the European Youth Forum (National Youth Councils and International Youth Organisations) are already members of the network and participated in the Constitutive where they gave a great contribution for the elaboration of the strategic plan for the next 2 years.

APYN aims to capacitate young people to be active players at the definition, implementation and evaluation of alcohol policies and programmes at the local, national, European and international levels.

This summer, the network has already planed its first Training Course on “Alcohol and Youth” that is going to happen in Almada, Portugal, from 14th – 19th July. The training will be oriented to provide to the participants the necessary skills to start working on their own projects and will be focused in 7 areas of action: cultural reality, social inclusion, role of youth organisations, underage drinking, marketing and promotion, protection of third parties and impact of price and availability.

APYN’s project is promoted by Eurocare, in partnership with the European Youth Forum, and with the support of DG SANCO of the European Commission, as well as in cooperation with other International Intergovernmental Institutions, such

as WHO and UNICEF. APYN is also a member of Alcohol and Health Forum. ■

For more information please visit our webpage at www.apyn.org



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by Andreas Karsten and colleagues

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Nonformal education goes world wide web...

In May 2008, the Estonian National Agency of the Youth in Action programme hosted a networking seminar for people interested in bringing together nonformal education and the web. Around 20 people joined to explore different web-based initiatives and projects, to discuss their role and potential, and to develop strategies for further developing the synergies between nonformal education and the internet - both exciting places and ways to learn. After the seminar, some people met again – online from time to time - to chat about the impact of the online world's connectivity on youth participation, and sometimes they missed each other as you will see. You can contribute to the ongoing long-distance chat, and read more about the seminar itself, at Nonformality, the co-operation partner of the Estonian Agency's initiative: www.nonformality.org/nfewww.

► June 2008: Somewhere in a corner of the world wide web ...

Andreas K.

Hello everyone to our joint exploration of youth participation in a connected world. Good to see ya here! Here are some questions to start us off with:

- How can youth participation and the internet come together?
- How does social networking influence youth participation?
- How can new media and online participation help shape the world?

Marit K. & Ülly E.

To kick off, one of our ideas – related to the first question about bringing youth participation and the internet together: it's impossible to exclude new media nowadays when thinking of young people and their realities. When trying to support youth participation, we must therefore also consider and understand – or, actually, first understand and then consider – web-based approaches, ideas and solutions.

Pablo C.

This will not be an issue with next generations of youth workers because, as young people today, they will know and use the web in a variety of ways.

Marit K. & Ülly E.

True enough, but in many countries there are no youth work studies yet...

Rui M.

Yes indeed – yet in most countries, there are youth work practices at least! The point is though: if the activities that 'traditional' youth workers offer young people are not attractive to the generation of digital natives – who then will want to become a youth worker?!

Pablo C.

They may want to become youth workers more likely because they consider their current youth workers and their offers as too old-fashioned :-)

Rui M.

I don't see this happening...

Marit K. & Ülly E.

The question then arises if offline is 'old-fashioned'? Or is online just an extra value that we could and should use meaningfully – especially when speaking about developing opportunities for youth participation?

Rui M.

I see possibilities for online participation as well – without extra



value to something offline. It's just there, and online only: take blogs, for example.

Pablo C.

It depends whether we consider the internet as a space where non-formal learning experiences can exist by themselves and in their own right – or whether we consider the internet an additional resource supporting all those 'offline' nonformal learning experiences.

Marit K. & Üllý E.

There are quite some good practices in the European youth field about how to bring additional value to youth participation measures, involving web-based actions as complementary tools – like questionnaires about key issues in young people's local communities.

Pablo C.

Certainly some things would simply be harder without the internet. Just think of getting and staying in touch with all our international partners...

Marit K. & Üllý E.

But the very challenging but truly attractive perspective is now to try and develop exclusively online opportunities for young people and youth participation!

Rui M.

And not just limited to the internet as we know it – we need to think, just to give one example, also about mobile phones!

Marit K. & Üllý E.

Which brings us smoothly to the second question about the influence of social networking on youth participation :-)

Pablo C.

In the last Coyote, Mark brought this up by asking how we could use social networking in our educational work as youth trainers and youth workers...

Marit K. & Üllý E.

Youth participation has a lot to do with feelings of belonging, with having the comfortable feeling to say your thoughts aloud and to be heard... And social networking, taking place online, provides such possibilities even easier than before – to meetings you might have to travel to, but the web is just there.

Pablo C.

For many young people, social networking is about friends and fun, though...

Marit K. & Üllý E.

Yes, but they say this about youth exchanges, too! We guess there is

quite some potential for a stronger educational impact in both formats – online in social networking and offline in youth exchanges :-)

Pablo C.

And a ten-day youth exchange is as much 'real life' as the world wide web...

Rui M.

I also spent some time thinking about the third question – how can new media and online participation help shape the world? I find it is interesting that many alternative and opposition movements are connected with the internet. I think it has to do with the fact that using new communication technologies are comparatively cheap, that they can bridge large distances and extend geographical scope easily, and that they can provide anonymity – especially in dictatorial regimes an essential advantage for the opposition.

Andreas K.

I am sorry to be late – some silly offline thing kept me from the online world!

Rui M.

So the moment we all have to leave you finally enter the chat?!

Andreas K.

blush

**“ In a nutshell,
participation means
to be involved, to have
tasks, to share and
to take over
responsibility.
It means to have access
and to be included.**

Peter Lauritzen

Rui M.

But you are a good example that the internet does not reach everyone all the time, and that it doesn't reach many people at all. And yet, the digital divide is not only geographic, it is also economic and can be very regional, even local – between rural and urban areas, for example.

Andreas K.

I will just stay here now and wait until someone comes back! (20 min later) Ladila ladilu shalalala. (40 min later) Shubidu shabida. (60 min later) Trilala trialalulu. (120 min later) Shuwab-duda. (240 min later) Yeah yeah yeah. (360 min later) World? HELLO?! (480 min later) I give up. For today!

Mohammed D.

Why is it when I left you came in and now you have left I come in...

Andreas K.

Damn good question, but you are gone again now. Will be back!

Pablo C.

I feel so lonely :-)

Am I again the only one entering this chat?

Sakis K.

Late and eventually nobody is here... Have you ever tried to go online in a remote village in the Bulgarian mountains? The digital divide exists, I say.

Sakis K.

Some people claim that social networking is a way out of youth participation, not a way in. I want to challenge that claim tonight! Take Peter Lauritzen's definition of youth participation as an example: "In a nutshell, participation means to be involved, to have tasks, to share and to take over responsibility. It means to have access and to be included."

Sakis K.

About involvement. More and more people, especially young people, are involved in social networking. See the numbers! Check. About tasks. Even digital immigrants can upload photos or buy a digital beer for their friends. Check. About sharing. That's what social networking is all about. Check. About responsibility. People take over responsibility on their platforms, they develop ownership, promote it, improve it, shape it – and all this without the fear of making mistakes, being pointed or laughed at. Check. About access. Accessibility to the internet is increasing rapidly, digital divides are shrinking. Check. Looks like 5 points of 5, doesn't it?

Mohammed D.

Sorry I missed the chat! I would like to follow up on a number of issues.

Youth work is changing in nature – it is certainly not the same as 15 years ago... Back then, youth work was detached work, you would go out on the streets and talk, engage, discuss with young people. Trust developed, and everyone was part of a two-way process. Nowadays the focus is on things like employability, output counts much more than outcome – as long as the numbers fit, things must be alright. But young people may not be interested in this factory-type, conveyor-belt, one-way youth work approach.

There is, of course, still great youth work – but more and more youth workers are leaving because their profession is not any longer about nonformal education. Others are staying and put up a fight – and to those, new technologies can be an added value in their efforts to foster youth participation. But youth workers need to be, just like in real life and offline youth work, creative and innovative.

Young people use so many things we didn't know or have earlier: mobiles, ipods, wiis, notebooks... How do we use these technologies to engage with young people – without losing every contact in the offline world? How can interpersonal skills be developed through such channels, if at all?

Pablo C.

New technologies are a great tool for self-directed learning, and while some youth workers might be afraid of the web's chaotic nature, this chaos is in the end all that nonformal education is about! With creativity and innovation, we could create brand new non-

formal learning environments online, or use existing resources such as Second Life to allow young people to develop skills and competences through their engagement and participation in such online endeavours. And there is a real contact point between online and offline worlds – the skills developed in one world are almost always useful in the other...

Andreas K.

Sometimes I wonder whether we are too late already? How can we develop a relationship of trust with young people, when we begin to utilise their social networks – and let's face it, they were there long before us – for our own purposes with them? Doesn't this feel like invasion?

Maybe we should first try and use such social networks for ourselves – for our co-operation and communication, between youth workers and trainers. Maybe we should first leave them kids alone, and learn about the potentials and obstacles through the experience with our professional networks. All else then will come, I believe.

Mark T.

Seems like there was one good interesting chat when there were people with interesting reactions and viewpoints coming in at different times; plus a few incidents of irritation, loneliness and frustration at just having missed someone or just hanging around waiting for anyone to show up! A nice microcosm of online working and co-operation!

Pablo C.

You are making an interesting point about contributions that are not simultaneous – indeed, the internet is a universe where time and communication are really relative and communication happens not only in brand-new ways, but also challenging and astonishing ways. But in the end, when it comes to action and creating change, offline seems the place to be.

Mohammed D.

And it brings up another point of relevance again – the question of access. Consideration needs to be given to access to internet, which could be limited for a range of reasons including poverty, infrastructure, geography...

Andreas K.

Or soccer! Who will come here now, once that the European Football Championship has started? Another aspect of realities on the web: some offline things simply are more attractive for participation than the web ...

And indeed, no one else came. ■

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compiled by Klavdija Cernilogar

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Examples of youth organisations reaching out to support participation of young people

► Dutch National Youth Council (DNYC) - Location: the Netherlands - Target group: all young people

The activities of the DNYC are mostly project-based and directed towards 'autonomous' or 'independent' youth; meaning young people not being a member of a youth organisation and therefore not being represented through (member) organisations. The main goal of DNYC projects is to let the youth participate, and ultimately if interested, join DNYC member organisations.

1. Ik ben geweldig

This is a school tour for a campaign to encourage young people to engage in voluntary work. Not only schools with a higher education profile are visited but also pre-vocational secondary schools. During interactive workshops, non-profit organisations present themselves and show the young people the possibilities to volunteer at their organisation.

2. Youth 8 Battle

The "Youth 8 battle" was organised for young 'urban' youth (mostly without sufficient starting qualifications for the labour market). The main goal was not only to inform highly-educated youth but all youth, about the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). To communicate the message of the MDGs in an attractive way, MDG 6 (HIV/AIDS) was selected. The young people were challenged to show their skills during a rap battle in a local club in The Hague, the theme for the rap was HIV/AIDS.

3. Pimp my Block

The project title is influenced by an MTV programme («Pimp my ride») popular with young people, and it reaches out to socially and economically disadvantaged youngsters. It runs in four different cities in the Netherlands in the deprived areas. Young people between 14 and 23 years living in districts where not much is organised for them, are challenged to make plans how to 'pimp' their area. They can do this by organising a festival, a sport event or a hangout place. The best plan gets rewarded with € 5000 to execute the plan.

4. Youth welfare work

This project coaches and supports the youth council that represents young people within judicial institutions or young clients

dealing with other institutions due to their social, economical or psychological problems. The Dutch NYC helps these young people within the council to represent themselves in several official commissions and forums related to youth welfare.

5. Youth panel

This project researches the opinion of young people between 12 and 20 on current social issues. Four times a year a different subject is chosen, approximately 600 young people from 10 different schools participate by completing questionnaires. To have an adequate representation of Dutch youth 60 % of the respondents are pre-vocational "VMBO" secondary education students, which equals the same percentage of all Dutch young people participating in this form of education. Also by researching, the Dutch NYC tries to include minority and/or emancipation topics.

Website: <http://www.jeugdraad.nl/>

► World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM) - Location: Slovakia - Target group: youth from the Roma community

Scouting in the Roma Community in Slovakia: Some Roma youth leaders founded a small independent 'Club of Right Roma Boys and Girls' in 2000, with the aim of providing Roma children with more educational opportunities. These youth leaders developed an interest in the Scout Method and decided to transform their 'Club' into Roma Scouting. They contacted the leaders of the Slovak Scout Association, who were able to welcome them and listen to their expectations. The project has contributed to the increased tolerance of Roma youth in the region.

Website: <http://www.scout.org/>

► Service Civil International (SCI) - Location: Belgium - Target group: disadvantaged young people/young people with lesser opportunities

SCI works on reaching out to disadvantaged youth in several ways, and one of its member organisations, VIA-Belgium has developed a step-by-step approach to working with marginalised young

people, based on the New Sheltered Placement Programme. Inclusion of disadvantaged young people in international voluntary projects is done through the following process:

step 0: Getting in touch;

step 1: teenage exchanges

(Bi-, Tri- and Multilateral Group Placements);

step 2: Sheltered Placement Programme (SPP);

step 3: BLISS – Blissful Longer Immersion Stepping Stone.

The idea is to give marginalised young people the opportunity to gain cumulative experience through non-formal education. All actors including institutional caretakers, social assistants or guardians are involved in profiling the participant's background, experience and needs. Following that, a tailor-made project is identified for the young person and constant guidance is provided throughout the entire involvement process.

Website: <http://www.sciint.org>

► **Austrian National Youth Council (ÖJV) - Location: Austria - Target group: young women**

The project's main aims/objectives are:

- To encourage and empower young women to become publicly involved
- To strengthen young women in starting positions of responsibility
- To strengthen women's networks
- To promote an inter-generational dialogue
- To develop participants', as well as the public's, awareness of women's and political equality issues.

The participants are young women («mentees») between 18 and 30 years, coming from various backgrounds and sharing an interest in politics in a broad sense. Within the project each mentee has a mentor for one year, and in total there are 20 to 25 mentoring pairs. To date, successful women from parliamentary parties, various NGOs, the administrative sector and religious denominations participated as mentors. They constitute a representative cross-section of politics in the broadest sense and reflect a wide variety of political functions. Among them were the Minister for Health and Women, the State Secretary for Youth, who was named Minister during the project, the subsequent second President of the National Council, a high-ranking UN employee, the Chairperson of the Catholic Women's Movement, a Protestant superintendent and the Press Secretary for the Muslim community.

As varied as the mentors were, so, too, were the mentees: women from different parts of Austria, involved in schools, in apprenticeships, jobs, and with or without experience in children's or youth organisations. Over the period of one year they had the opportunity to get to know a woman with political experience, to look over her shoulder, and to get a look behind the scenes.

The ÖJV organises the whole project, searches for the mentors and mentees, matches the pairs, organises five events during the year and supports the participants.

The results of an evaluation of the first round of the project made it possible for the programme to be appropriately adapted, contributing to an improvement in the quality of the programme.

The mentee peer groups in the second round were grouped according to topics, which the participants dealt with over the entire mentoring year: structural injustices; (women's and men's) education; work/life balance; career planning + women's networks / men's groups. By the end of 2006, the result of this work was a catalogue of requirements, which provided the basis for a position paper addressing the central concern of the mentoring project: the creation of a general framework of what young women need to become actively and creatively involved in the concerns of their society.

About half of the participants are involved in member organisations of the ÖJV, thereby the project helps to develop the awareness of women's and gender equality issues in the organizations.

The project was a good starting point for gender equality issues within the ÖJV. In the meantime a gender mainstreaming process is taking place, which is, for instance, affecting language use, and which has also led to a quota system for the elected board, to ensure the participation of both young women and young men.

Website: <http://www.jugendvertretung.at/>

► **Don Bosco Youth-Net - Location: Netherlands - Target group: young homeless people**

Don Bosco Jonathan is a voluntary organisation by the Salesians of Don Bosco that works to bridge the gap between homeless youth and their more mainstream peers, involving both groups of young people in a participatory process. The Salesians of Don Bosco is a Roman Catholic religious order founded in the late nineteenth century by Saint John Bosco in an attempt, through works of charity, to care for the young and poor children of the industrial revolution. Don Bosco Youth-Net is an international network of Salesian youth work offices and youth organisations which work in the style of Don Bosco. Currently, an estimated 10,000 young people are homeless in the Netherlands. A network of shelters and hostels keeps most from living literally on the street. While they may forge bonds among themselves, these young people are often stigmatised by society – left feeling isolated and alone.

Don Bosco Jonathan works to foster a deeper connection between homeless young people and a network of 45 young volunteers, eager to make a difference. The work begins with educating mainstream youth about the challenges faced by homeless youth, while underscoring their shared humanity. This is achieved through a series of publications written by volunteers and homeless youth, and through a variety of creative events. For those wishing to get involved in a more substantive, "hands on" way, Don Bosco Jonathan offers a host of volunteer opportunities. Each month, volunteers, age 17 to 30, engage in group activities – skating events, bowling, sporting, beach outings, etc. – where they interact with

their homeless peers. Those willing to get involved more, go once a week to a hostel to share time together while eating and playing games. Others serve as a buddy to a homeless youth. The buddy pairs regularly go to the movies, museums, parks, or simply socialise. The goal is to have fun together based on values of shared respect and equality.

In the recent years, Don Bosco Jonathan has been focusing on homeless pregnant girls and young mothers. Carrying this big responsibility mostly has a negative effect on their social networks. Therefore a monthly activity for young mothers and pregnant girls is organised focusing on the recreation of the mother and child. The volunteers take care of the children while the mothers can chit-chat and exchange experience. Next to this Don Bosco Jonathan organises theme-days for young mothers and pregnant girls. These are bi-monthly workshops on topics like baby massage, language stimulation or first-aid for children. The topics are suggested by the mothers.

Through the programmes, the volunteers learn and gain as much as the homeless youth. Both feel enriched by taking an interest in the others' situation. Given that many of the homeless youth suffer from poor self-esteem, the volunteers help nurture their interests and abilities. The volunteers, on the other hand, often express admiration for their homeless peers, many of whom persevere in the face of adversity, refusing to give up. Forging strong bonds among young people and fostering a sense of community is central to Don Bosco Jonathans' philosophy. It is about being there for youth, listening to them, and being sincerely interested in them.

► **Location: Slovenia - Target group: all young people**

"Never wait for the child but come to it," is the philosophy of Skala - the Bus of Joy – a tool aimed at reaching out to young people and at lowering the barriers for young people to take part and get involved in civic projects. The bus is a mobile unit in which two different types of activity are organised for young people between the ages of 10 and 18: weekly activities in Fuzine and Nove Jarše and occasional activities for young people in different regions of Slovenia. One social worker and three volunteers regularly accompany the bus, which boasts a hot drinks machine, dartboard, table football, a table, sofa and literature on various topics.

As it is a mobile unit, the Bus of Joy can be used for various activities in response to specific demands from schools or youth organisations. It can easily access neighbourhoods that have no venues suitable to host youth events, and is the only means to provide a meeting place in the evening for young adults. The bus also serves as a tool for promoting Skala's activities and image to, among others, institutions and young people.

Website: <http://www.donboscoyouth.net/>

► **Norwegian Children and Youth Council (LNU) - Location: Norway - Target group: all young people**

The Norwegian Youth Council (LNU) initiated the project Open and Inclusive organisations as one of the two main priorities for the mandate of 2004 to 2006. The project was built on the following premises:

- organisations will not be diverse if this is not taken seriously at the grass root level. It is at the grass root level where potential members become actual members;
- there is too little knowledge in this field. Therefore the work carried out must be well documented;
- LNU can supervise and support the work to create open and inclusive organisations – but the work has to be carried out by the member organisations themselves.

Six pilot organisations within the membership of LNU were appointed, involving at least one local club and the central body of the organisation responsible for the project. The participating organisations were diverse: scouts, school bands, queer youth, party political, cultural and religious. The project Open and Inclusive organisations looked specifically at how the member organisations of LNU could approach children and youth with a multicultural background.

The project started in 2005 and an important milestone was achieved when a representative of the Government launched the new tool kit for open and inclusive organisations in October 2006. The toolkit builds on the experiences of the 6 pilot organisations and includes concrete methods and advice on how the rest of the membership of LNU can become more diverse.

Some results include: one single employee in the school band's association started up several new branches by sitting down in the school yard and attracting the school students by playing her trumpet. Queer Youth Norway works with double discriminated groups – continuing to learn new things in the process. The Labour Party Youth has learned when and how to organise meetings to become more diverse – and in a participating local branch the majority is now the minority. There are now more members of multicultural background than ethnic Norwegians – which is a better mirror of the actual municipality.

Website: <http://www.lnu.no>

For more projects, please consult the publication "Report on Youth NGOs: Reaching out to more young people, and in particular, disadvantaged young people", published by the European Youth Forum.

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by Lillian Solheim



& Adriana Armenta

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Youth Participation from The Hague to Mexico City – A **Youth campaign against violence** affecting children and youth

Violence against children and youth is a global issue that cuts across societies, cultures and countries. The United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children released in 2006 was a global effort to describe the nature, extent and causes of violence against children and youth, and to propose clear recommendations for action. Professor Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, the independent expert appointed to lead the study, presented the report to the UN General Assembly in New York in October 2006. According to the study, violence against children happens in all cultures and societies within a diverse range of situations and settings with detrimental effects on the lives of children and youth.

Rather than waiting for adults and politicians to implement the recommendations identified in the study, a few youth organizations decided to take up the challenge and to push for a change in their local societies. The campaign, Stop Violence against Children and Youth, was initiated by the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY) and four member organisations took the lead in this campaign. The four organisations are: GZO Peace Institute (Philippines), International Palestinian Youth League (Palestine), Peacelinks (Sierra Leone) and Dinamismo Juvenil AC (Mexico). This article will focus in particular on the activities of latter, but more information about the campaign and the members can be obtained by contacting the authors.

► United Network of Young Peacebuilders

UNOY Peacebuilders is a global network of young people and youth organisations active in the field of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. UNOY Peacebuilders was founded in 1989 and the international secretariat, which is run entirely by youth, is based in The Hague, The Netherlands. Currently, there are 34 members in more than 20 countries. The main areas of action are networking, capacity building, campaigning and advocacy. UNOY Peacebuilders has been promoting the Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence in the World and working

within the All Different All Equal campaign of the Council of Europe.

UNOY Peacebuilders has been working with a number of other NGOs on the issue of violence against children and youth in the build-up towards and during the launch of the study. UNOY Peacebuilders participated in a study visit to the Philippines, lobbied Dutch Members of Parliament, visited the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and held meetings with UN agencies and NGOs in New York, Geneva and Brussels. Following up on the above-mentioned activities and achievements, UNOY Peacebuilders wanted to work closely together with some member organisations in advocating and campaigning for the implementation of the study recommendations by governments and other relevant institutions at local, national and regional level. Four member organisations were eager to become part of this campaign, which is funded by PLAN Netherlands.

UNOY Peacebuilders has formulated several recommendations, which include: Prioritise prevention; promoting non-violent values and awareness-raising; encouraging participation of children and youth; and building capacities of youth organisations. The role of the international secretariat is to coordinate the campaign, which includes sharing information, identifying opportunities and building the capacities of the members. In order to facilitate sharing and dissemination there is an extensive use of the



internet as a tool of communication through the use of emails, social networking group, online forum and an online petition. Throughout the year, various campaigns and awareness-raising activities are organised, including the celebration of the International Day of Peace.

The members are responsible for their own fundraising and formulate their own goals and strategies to deal with their local and regional challenges as they know which issues are most pertinent in their own community. They are responsible for developing their own projects, but UNOY Peacebuilders assists upon request with the development of project proposals, policy papers and gives advice.

► **Dinamismo Juvenil**

Dinamismo Juvenil is a Mexican non-profit organisation established in 1999 and has six young and two adult staff member and 20 volunteers. The mission is to promote and create spaces for children and youth and to transform their communities. The topics include violence prevention, conflict resolution, culture of peace and promotion of economic and social youth initiatives. The general objectives of the organisation are to promote youth leadership in actions which construct community values and to train young people as peace educators. The organisation has developed an attention model for children, adolescents and young people and a training school on violence prevention in families, schools and communities.

The organisation is working mainly in poor communities in Mexico City, which face many and diverse problems that affect the development of the community and the inhabitants. The children, adolescents and young people the organisation works with come from poor families. Many of them encounter violence, sexual abuse, addictions, delinquency, family issues and other situations that generate emotional and psychological alterations. The established social roles cause a high lack of equity, social mobility and opportunities. A quarter of the population is young and many live in poverty and have limited prospects of improving their living conditions. A high number of youth drop out of school and join the labour market instead.



However, reducing «youth» to unemployment rates, drug addiction or crime generates generational divisions and misunderstandings that depict youth as the stereotypical rebel without a cause. Youth are a highly diverse group. Youth connected to each other create unique identities, forms of behaviour, language and thoughts depending on the context in which they develop, a process that does not necessarily have to be negative. Dinamismo Juvenil recognises the skills and potential of youth. The organisation seeks to analyse the interests of young people by opening spaces where youth can engage in and share what they like to do and have a healthy coexistence. These are spaces where youth can experience a sense of belonging and inclusion, based on teamwork and actions, while at the same time helping transform their community. The organisation creates a collective leadership group which works directly addressing children, families and peers to initiate an educative process. Youth are trained as leaders and concrete initiatives are put into practice in the community, schools or families. At the same time, the youth learn self-recognition, enhance their socialisation and cognitive skills while learning to handle emotions. They learn to live in harmony and to be aware of what is happening in the community, reaching and transforming towards a culture of peace.

With these activities, besides succeeding in channelling the energy of youth, the organisation helps to develop the skills of children, showing that they are cognitive and intelligent beings, with their own points of view. When adults realise how well young people work with children, they no longer see youth as a source of danger but as an important didactic and productive part of society, by closing the circle of violence in a positive way.

► **Advocacy and campaigning**

The campaign members planned a number of events throughout the campaign period. Simultaneous activities were organised on the International Day of Peace on 21 September and on the World Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse on 19 November 2008 to raise awareness both in the Netherlands and Mexico. Both organisations produced campaign materials, for instance posters, flyers and postcards, which were handed out during the campaigns.

On the International Day of Peace 2008, UNOY Peacebuilders organised a street campaign in the Netherlands to raise awareness of the issue of violence. Various information materials were disseminated and children were encouraged to leave handprints for peace on canvases, which were displayed in a public location. While children were leaving handprints, adults were informed about violence issues. Similar campaigns were also organised on other occasions, for instance on the Dutch national day.

Dinamismo Juvenil also organised an event to celebrate the International Day of Peace 2008. The event began with a reflection week with children in communal activities, in schools and with families, on violence against children and youth in every day situations. This week ended with a peace fair together with



activities. The governor's office asked Dinamismo Juvenil to lead city government initiatives in favour of youth and to make an action plan to coordinate actions to achieve even better results.

▶ Global campaign – local action

The UN study recommendations are addressed to all nations in the world, but it includes also specific recommendations to non-governmental organisations. By linking up, UNOY members are taking steps to address these issues. The study identified that violence against children is a global issue with need for global action. However, local action is also needed to address the various issues efficiently. This is why the campaign is very much local in terms of outreach and target group. Campaigns are organised in Palestine, the Philippines, Mexico, Sierra Leone and the Netherlands. In addition, advocacy is done at local, regional and international level.

Another purpose of the campaign is to help youth organisations worldwide feel part of a larger initiative and to create a sense of belonging. Participation in the campaign was a very important experience for Dinamismo Juvenil because it created an awareness of what other organisations are doing in very different realities. It was important to establish links of cooperation and collaboration between groups who work with and for youth with the same subject in different countries and realities and the campaign is a pilot project for closer cooperation among UNOY Peacebuilders' members.

In addition to tackling the important issue that an uncoun- ted number of children face violence on a daily basis, the campaign also breaks the stereotype that youth are only a problem that needs to be solved. In fact, youth are taking issues into their own hands and trying to create a better society and culture of peace. ■

References and further reading: ✕

- To read more about UNOY Peacebuilders, please visit the following website: www.unoy.org.
- To read more about Dinamismo Juvenil AC, please visit the following website: <http://www.dinamismojuvenil.org.mx/>
- The full UN Study on Violence against Children can be accessed here: <http://www.violencestudy.org/>

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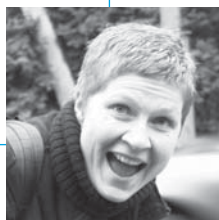
20 other organisations, 30 educational institutions and the local government in Mexico City. There were educative workshops for children about their rights and workshops for youth as well as cultural and artistic shows. By organising these events, youth are given an alternative to violence and are trained in non-violence and peace.

The campaigns are also complemented and followed-up by advocacy and lobby work to ensure that policy makers follow-up on the UN study recommendations and uphold their promises to reduce violence committed against children and youth. One crucial recommendation asserts that states should ensure participation of children and actively engage with children and that children's organisations and initiatives addressing violence should be supported and encouraged. Also, through their action and campaigns the members make policy makers aware that youth can make a positive contribution to society.

As a global network, UNOY Peacebuilders is also trying to advocate for youth participation in general and that youth are taken seriously and included in decision-making processes that relate to and concern them. Children and youth were part of the consultation process leading up to the UN Study and should subsequently be part of the implementation and follow-up of the study.

UNOY Peacebuilders is also participating in regional and international conferences and public hearings related to this issue, and has also held meetings with organisations working in the same field. UNOY Peacebuilders participated in a debate during an international conference on this issue, speaking up and sharing youth perspectives. The International Secretariat has, together with a group of other Dutch NGOs, discussed with the Dutch Minister of Development the need to improve the cooperation between youth groups, civil society organisations, local and national governments and Dutch Embassies worldwide. UNOY Peacebuilders finds it crucial that governments and embassies build their capacity to learn to listen to youth and cooperate productively. During these meetings, examples and experiences of the members were presented to the Dutch Minister of Development so that these can be incorporated in future policy development of the Ministry. This is an example of local actions being fed back into the system of national governments to create policy change, which in turn will benefit the local community where development policies are being implemented. Together with the informal coalition of NGOs, the international secretariat is trying to push for a child-friendly check-list in Dutch development aid, to mention a concrete example. This toolkit has been developed by a youth delegation and will hopefully be included into the Dutch developmental aid policy as a means to ensure that aid is more child and youth-friendly

Dinamismo Juvenil has also lobbied locally and met with the Mexico City governor's office to introduce the organisation and



By CandyCactus

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Adventures in Adjara, confusions with PARTICIPATION or playing football with hands

“What is your experience with participation?” Some of the applicants to a training course answered that their experience consists of being not disturbing in the seminars and conferences. They would not make any trouble for the trainers asking questions. Hmm, pretty much the contrary of what I thought participation was...

It looks like that there could be some serious confusion about what participation could be. Most probably some hundred years ago people would have thought of it as some kind of culinary term. Fact is that the idea of taking part in decision-making processes and the term participation itself are very much connected to our time and the geographical space around the Western countries. Experience in the mountains of Adjara – which go along the border between Turkey and Georgia, in the Caucasus – and dealing with the applications for the training course revealed to me that participation is far away from being universally understood, as I was starting to believe. In this essay I would like to address some of the confusions connected to the idea of participation and share my experience in one village in Georgia.

► Football versus volleyball

Looking at the structure of interaction, participation could be compared with a game – a mindset with certain rules and goals to achieve. But the mindset of participation is less clear and obvious than for example the rules of playing football. Because participation is rather about an attitude and not about a set of rules, it can become a wicked game. Practising participation you might believe that you play football and become angry about people grabbing the ball with their hands. You still think it is football? No, in reality it became actually two sets of volleyball! I want to use this metaphor for participation – exactly the same confusion can happen with participation, only it is less visible. I would like to tell you a tale about my experience in a small Muslim village in the mountains of Adjara in Georgia. And it was just like it – funny and disastrous at the same time, just as confusion of football with volleyball can be.

► How it began

So, what was happening in Adjara? Let me tell you the begin-

ning. Pondering on what would be the best thing to do with my life several years ago I decided to try the way of personal action – independent of any fund givers, just doing with minimum resources what I believed was good and right. So I gave up my normal life, my career as a trainer and set off by bike to go to see the world and find the places where my efforts could possibly make sense. I set off and among other things I went to Gypsy villages in Romania, taught girls to ride a bicycle in Anatolia, celebrated with Kurds their New Year Nevroz on both sides of Ararat, etc. Enjoying the magic of the moments I learned from the people on my way and gave to them what I knew and felt in exchange.

► Adventure

Finally I came to Georgia. One of my expeditions there was hiking in the highlands of Adjara. I did not know at that time that only very few foreigners come there. Even if they would come just once in a decade, they usually would not be a woman on foot carrying nothing except a panduri, a Georgian string instrument, and that was the case with me.

Since there was no precedent for the appearance of someone like me, some men in the mountains decided that I was a spy and arrested me! Children gathered in crowds to see what this «spy» and «bandit» looked like. There was no phone connection to call for help and no way to get out from there.

After several hours of despair and being trapped I took off my long socks. Then I asked for potatoes. Then I put them into the socks and started doing poi. [Poi is a form of juggling invented by Maori, by the way]. It worked. The situation started to change as if by magic. Young people of the village brought the stereo system to the spot and everyone, from very small to very very old was dancing to some techno music surrounded by the peaks of the mountains and clouds. Children said «there is no way she is a bandit if she can swing potatoes in the socks like this...».

Women gave me food and slowly we became friends. I stayed there several days, milking cows occasionally and by doing this giving the people a good laugh. When I was about to leave, the sun was setting and the clouds were coming down to surround the houses, we waved good bye to each other like in a film. And then they said – also like in a film – «don't go away, we will miss you so much». «I will miss you too», I said. «What can I do for you?» «Come, play with us, and teach us English since we don't have a teacher here!» «Ok», I said, «I will come back in winter!» Violins playing...

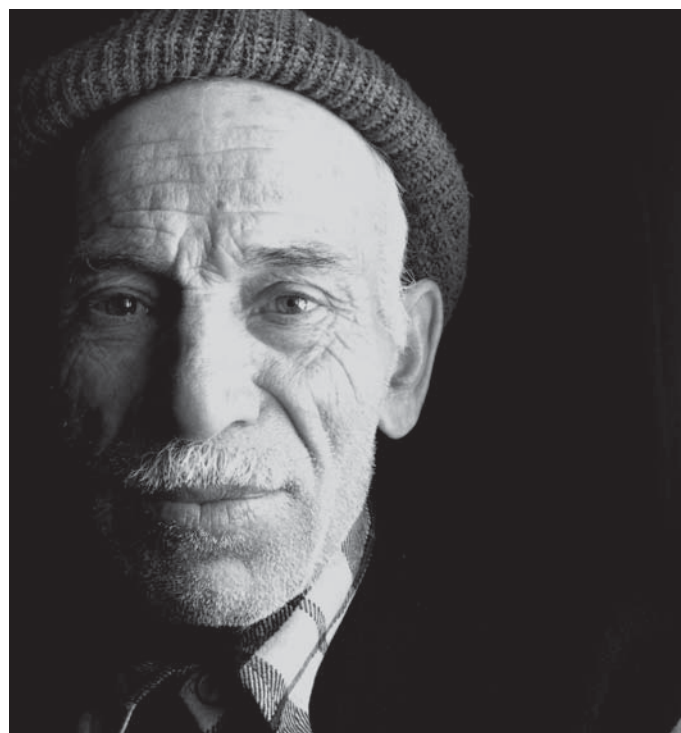
► In the mountains there is time

I knew the winters in the highlands are very hard. Meters of snow lying around and covering the roads, very cold and very little to do. They have time, I thought to myself! Me too – an excellent condition to do things together. Otherwise sometimes I feel like losing my time while working with young people in the cities or in the training courses, because they have so many possibilities, that sometimes they cannot even concentrate on enjoying one. But in the mountains there is time...

When I came later I consulted with the people about the idea of setting up an open house, where young people could come and create their own space - maybe for doing theatre, maybe just to drink tea together or play games. If someone else would come from abroad, young people of the village would have a possibility to learn English. I had in mind an open youth centre and was trying to communicate this idea and bring it to reality there.

► Youth centre and the old men

Everyone seemed to like the idea, since there used to be similar places during the Soviet times – some sort of cultural house. Therefore, people were very eager to get involved and to support the house. As a main carrier of the idea with the help of the people I bought a wooden house there. Young people would come and we would work together, building chairs, making electricity work and at the same time having English and Georgian learning sessions and theatre sessions.



During the cold winter evenings the elder men would come to the house and would play cards. There was no other place in the village like this. I was happy about people using the space, but the problem was that they did not help to work. After they would leave there would be a messy place left. Since there were elder men, children stopped coming. Women would come sometimes to bring me some food, but they would not stay. Their husbands did not allow them to go to the place where men play cards. Some youngsters were afraid of the rather dominant and loud men...

Seeing this, my face would lose colour and would be get a puzzled expression like from the comic books. I asked the men again to help with building the house if they wanted to come. They said yes, but did not do anything. So - I told them not to come, reminding them about the common idea that the house was meant for young people, children and women. "But we are young!" the elder men said and roared laughing. "And our women are proper women; they go to the barn to work and not a place like this."

It was cold outside. The men would meet in the street of the village and would become bored and angry because they could not play cards inside anymore. Then they started saying things, like "You want to spoil our youth!" When some young people would want to come to the house, some old men would say – don't go there, or we will beat you up. I was stuck playing my own football with the youngsters, surrounded by the people who played a different game.

► Horizontal versus vertical

This experience and the question, why we played different games became for me a base for reflections on participation, resulting in some insights. There are many ways to perceive and analyze this story. Here I just want to address one point that became my main insight from this experience.

I realized that in my interaction with the local people there was a pattern. Many times when in Georgia I was trying to act in the way that puts the partners on the same level - some horizontal

line - I got into trouble. If I would propose to clean the dishes while being a guest somewhere in Western Europe, it would be a gesture of appreciation and my offer might be accepted, while in Georgia it would result in an unbreakable resistance. The guest is appreciated so much, but at the same time the guest has to obey the rules set by the host. I could never sit on the floor, or where I would have preferred to – I had to do exactly what the host expected me to do. I realized slowly that most of the interactions here were based on the vertical line – the game about swapping or keeping the superior and subordinate positions. Someone with an expensive mobile phone will be more respected than the one with an old one, someone who drives in a jeep will deserve respect even if the person is nasty.

As a generalisation, I observed in the villages of the Caucasus and in the Middle East in many contexts, that a man whose wife makes decisions in the family will be laughed at as being a loser. Someone who works for the other without taking money does not deserve respect and according to the local opinion is actually to be treated like a slave. Pretty much the contrary from the values that we seem to share and promote in most of the European societies and the ones I was trying to act along while living in the mountains. Now I see that there was a very small possibility that the elder men from the village, who turned out to be the crucial decision makers, would support me, firstly because of the fact that I am a woman and, secondly, because I was working but not charging anything. And even if the people of the village liked the idea of building up a centre together, practically men, women and the young people seemed not to enjoy the idea of being equals in terms of participation. They rather expected clear orders from me and money for the work they would do in the house.



I started asking myself, why I would perceive such a big cultural gap in the values of participation and equality in Europe and beyond? Why an idea of an open youth house is so much more accepted in Europe and so difficult to realize in more traditional societies? Digging among many ideas I stumbled over the sixties.



► Sixties here and there

In the sixth decade of the last century many Western societies went through the specific phase that mentally had an effect going far beyond wearing the funky glasses and long hair. Liberation from norms set by the tradition, religion and generally the establishment, went along with putting individual freedom of choice into the focus. The sixties can be seen as a last wave caused by the volcano of the French revolution putting the individual into the centre and building the base for our current understanding of the civil society.

In terms of mass psychology the societies that stirred up in the sixties developed the concept of society as one based on the egalitarian relations of individuals. My hypothesis is that the countries that practice now democracy but did not have the movement of the sixties do not have the naturally grown “intrinsic” understanding of democracy. Many of the new democracies were “top down” ones, requiring from the population that they practice something they have not “inside”. Regarding the development of EU and its neighbours I would say it is the case with most of the post-Soviet region and Turkey. These societies were forced to be egalitarian and in a way are still in a phase of resisting that force. Therefore the revival of nationalism and the authority of religious institutions in many of those countries can be observed.

In many cases resistance goes along with the recollection of the old, already tried out values. In Georgia it is the clinging to the tradition that has proved to be the successful strategy for the small state in the Caucasus to survive. The perception of relations therefore are probably unconsciously influenced by the classical vertical line of superior and subordinate positions - host and the guest, the man and the woman, the old and the young, the employer and the employee, the rich and the poor. The balance in the society is being kept through the mutual interdependence of both poles. The rich can be only if there are poor; the woman can survive only with the support of the man, etc. Thus both states are justified.

► Participation or football with hands?

Understanding of society in the countries that went through the movements of the sixties seem to be more based on the individual freedom and sharing the space and resources. The idea stated from the French revolution that the freedom of the individual ends up where the freedom of the other starts seems to be a base for the concept of the civil society.

We could be proud of this. If it would correspond to reality. But, despite the fact that the values are being supported by the institutions of the EU and the fact that you read this issue of Coyote, there is still a question of how much the concepts of participation are implemented in our daily lives? No, in many cases we don't have the problem with authoritarian hierarchical understanding. The traps in western societies for participation to become a practiced value lie in a different spot.

► Participation starts with simple things

What about looking at participation from a more basic perspective? It is obviously not only about sharing opinions in decision-making, but also sharing in practical things - the space in the bus, the time you speak in the group, the attention that you give to TV or internet instead of people around you, the money that you might give for a corporation or rather a small local producer makes a difference to the general balance of resources. It is difficult to expect to share ideas on an equal basis if people do not share the resources in a fair way. It will remain difficult to make major ideas work without having solved basic questions of sharing the social, economical and ecological resources. And it seems that every single personal action counts... Your personal small resources – attention, time, money – can make a huge difference and foster participation values every day if used consciously and deliberately supporting the fair balance.

To act along PARTICIPATION values one does not need to be involved in the project or wear a sticker with big words. It seems that it is much more about the sensitivity concerning the balance of resources, about fairly taking your share and giving space to take for the others. Asking yourself might help to track back your personal impact: Do I get involved enough concerning the decisions in my local environment? Do I let others enough room to speak up? Do I contribute to the economical and ecological imbalance by buying products from big corporations instead of local producers? What do I promote that cultivates a life style that uses up immense amounts of earth resources?

The inhabitants of Europe could be proud to be from the continent that has developed an advanced concept of participation based on the equality of individuals. Europe state programmes and NGOs contribute to its realization. But on the basic level ... reality there is a lot of confusion with the value of participation. If the resources are distributed unfairly and we are contributing to the imbalance – talking of participation becomes pretending to play football, while individually and on the state level we still grab the ball with our hands.

The idea of participation is very much connected to the history of Europe. We might be able to “seduce” other cultures to practice it as well, as I was trying it in the Adjarian mountains, but first it seems to be more crucial to be consistent in our own actions, reflecting not the mere aspect of sharing the decisions, but keeping in mind that the vision of the world based on partnership and equality can work only if there is a fair balance of social, economical and ecological resources around the globe.

What do YOU do to contribute to the equality and participation in your everyday life?

Examples of playing football with hands – some ideas to think about:

- *Buying Coca-Cola products means contributing to the international corporation that is accused of committing crimes, like killing trade unionists in South America. At the same time it means not giving the chance for the local lemonade producer. If you in addition work in a social programme for unemployed – you might be in a perfect paradox, playing football with hands!*
- *Listening to Britney Spears or Robbie Williams could mean that you are not giving your attention to the potential local star just on the other side of the street. Turning on mp3 on your cell phone loudly means than someone who could otherwise sing - will not. Maybe you work in a project to support local cultures or fighting for the rights of natives somewhere? Well, if you and your surroundings do not regard it as crazy, it still might be...*
- *Flying to a training course about the human rights in a remote place you are definitely using more ecological resources than it would be enough for everyone on Earth if we would have to share equally living this way. Are you also engaged in an ecological initiative? You must be crazy. Calculate your own ecological footprint here: www.myfootprint.org*

We pretend to play football, but individually and on the state level we still grab the ball with our hands.

Are you?

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by Mark Taylor

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Stretching zone for Intercultural Learning? Clicker training in the future?

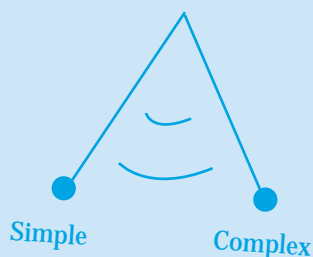
Peter's legacy.

«Marker» is a regular column in Coyote, written by Mark Taylor, looking at issues in training and hoping to encourage debate, questions and even - who knows? - a cultural glasses exchange programme with added clickers...

► Stretching zone for Intercultural Learning?

Last issue was full, full, full of articles and references to intercultural learning - one of my passions since many years. Some of the articles, together with voices in other fora made me question strongly whether or not this passion of mine had actually been a counter-productive waste of energy, time and other resources. That what many of us had been doing was even reinforcing negative stereotypes and prejudices – especially because there was rarely enough time to go really deeply into all the processes involved.

Some years ago, trainer and linguistic animator Philippe Crosnier de Bellaistre introduced me to his idea of the pendulum:



His idea was that in our intercultural learning activities we needed to swing like a pendulum between the simple and the complex. Put things simply so that people can gain an overview, see the patterns, orientate themselves. But never forget that life is actually incredibly complex, thus the need to compare «simple» ideas with our different realities.

I love the pendulum concept because it is at one and the same time simple and complex. You may say that is because of my small brain and you could well be right.

Within intercultural learning we can play with this model, for example, by substituting the two poles of «simple» and «complex» with «difference» and «common ground» (or even solidarity). We look at difference and the acceptance and understanding of differences, but we must not forget the things which bind us, which allow us to live and work together. Some would say that we forgot those things too often in the past. We left people in the hell of thinking «yay! We're different! They are different! Therefore we are better!» Or even «It's true, we are worse, worth less, it's clear!».

Sometimes this has thrown up very bizarre experiences and wonderfully obscure defences of inappropriate behaviour. To give one little example: the scene was a European seminar about the politics of immigration during which time we had also looked at intercultural learning and the mechanisms of prejudice. From the beginning, two male so-called participants from a predominantly green island chose to get drunk each evening and would arrive in plenary the next morning at the end of the coffee break or even later. When challenged, their reply was «look, we've been learning about respect for differences and our culture dictates how we are – what do you expect? we can't help it!»

Clicker training

My family decided recently that we should get a new dog while our old dog Othello is still alive. The idea being that Othello (who is very nice and a big softy, or so we thought) would teach the new dog some good ways to behave. For the past six weeks our lives have been turned upside down by the arrival of Dexter – if you have ever seen any of the adventures of Winnie the Pooh, you will know the effect of Tigger the tiger who bounces into everything and every body! And sometimes he tries to ignore us completely. So we have embarked on a series of training sessions in order to go from this:



To this:



Using «treats» and what is known as a «clicker».

The idea is to reward and praise positive behaviour by giving a little treat or biscuit and, at the same time, to make the clicker make a clicking sound. In this way the dog associates the clicks with nice treats and, the theory goes, you don't need to give treats after a while.

I was wondering what are our «clicks» and «treats» in training for (for instance) European Citizenship? Or in participation do we need clicks and treats to get up the famous ladder?

Peter's Legacy

After fighting against cancer, Peter Lauritzen left us too soon. As Hanjo Schild's article in the last Coyote made plain, Peter's legacy was impressive and there was much more than could fit in there. Luckily now there are two books which go some way to giving some more detailed impressions: *Born in Flensburg, Europe* contains reflections and ideas and tributes from colleagues and friends and gives a multi-faceted picture of Peter the man; and then there is *Eggs in a Pan* which shows his work, articles and speeches spanning a very full career; and what makes it even more special is the inclusion by the editors of internal papers he wrote only for debate with close colleagues – fascinating glimpses into how he brought so many ideas together!

And lastly

Thanks to those who wrote and those who responded to the Coyote on-line survey. Constructive remarks and suggestions were very helpful, but it is hard to know how to react to one person who felt that Spiffy the coyote should be killed and put in a museum. Next time we look more closely into the pataphysics of Seville orange marmalade...



Sounds, words, inspirations



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Contributors
notes...

Adriana Armenta participated in several activities of UNOY, among which the UNOY's Campaign designing the flyers' images, the project "Empoderate, Ya" (a program for the prevention of violence in the families). She took part in the coordination of the training for the Ixtepec Municipality (indigenous Totonaca Community). She has also participated for 5 years in the evaluation and following-up of the reports of her organisation's prevention activities.

Iris Bawidamann is working as Educational Advisor for the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport, based in the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. Within her work she is mainly focusing on participation and youth policy development. Her professional background is youth and social work. She has been active for several local, national and European NGOs and was also working in the youth department of a municipality and in an international university office.

Marco Boaria works as Project Development Officer and Youth Expert for the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies, an International non-governmental organization based in Strasbourg and founded in 1999 as an initiative of the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. He has a 10-year experience in the field of youth at the international level, working as trainer (co-operating with different European youth training agencies), project coordinator and supervisor. In the last 3 years, he has been specialising in local democracy, active citizenship and participation issues, cooperating with local authorities and civil society organisations in Europe.

Thilo Boeck is a senior research fellow based in the Centre for Social Action at De Montfort University, Leicester. He worked in Youth and Community Development in Peru, Germany and the UK, which has influenced his strong commitment to participative and transformative research. Currently he is the academic lead on several participatory research projects with young people, exploring volunteering, social capital and community cohesion.

CandyCactus is an artist juggling with several things as slow life, a small ecological footprint and the beauty of the moment. Living consequently as a nomad she is after life beyond the books. CandyCactus stayed with communities that are in disadvantaged positions for different reasons – Gypsies in Romania, Kurdish in Turkey, Arabs in Israel and recently with Muslims in Georgia.

Klavdija Cernilogar is the Head of the Policy Development and Advocacy Department at the European Youth Forum (YFJ), which has supporting and promoting youth work and reaching out to young people among its continuous and overarching aims. Klavdija was previously professionally involved with the Council of Europe, and has then followed both the Council of Europe and the Partnership on Youth from the YFJ perspective, as the Council of Europe Relations Coordinator.

Federica Demicheli is a free lance trainer and social worker in the field of Youth Policy and Euromed.

Finn Yrjar Denstad is Senior Advisor in the Department of Youth Policy in the Ministry of Children and Equality in Norway. He has a background from the Norwegian Youth Council (1995-2000) and the European Youth Forum, Belgium (2000-2002) and served as Youth Programme Manager of the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina during 2002-2004. As a freelance consultant, he has been involved in the development of national youth strategies in Moldova, Armenia, Montenegro and Serbia. Denstad holds a M.A. in Political Science from Purdue University, USA (1995).

Rolf Gollob and **Wiltrud Weidinger** are Co-Heads of the institute "International Projects in Education" (IPE) of the Zurich University of Teacher Education. Next to various projects in EDC/HRE across South East Europe, IPE and the Council of Europe are in the process of publishing a series of volumes about EDC/HRE for teachers.

Delme Harries is originally from Puncteston in west Wales. He joined Lllysfan Young Farmers Club at the age of 11 and over the years held every office in his club, he represented the Federation on the National Council, chaired numerous county committees, and was also chairman of Wales Young Farmers Clubs. Delme has also represented the YFC at European level, and is the current Chairman of Rural Youth Europe. He has worked for the NFU and NFU Mutual for 20 years and is currently working at the NFU Mutual Head Office in Stratford upon Avon.

Andreas Karsten is co-founder of Frankly Speaking, a small non-profit agency in the area of education and learning devoted to supporting the capacity development of organisations and individuals. He works at the crossroads of research, policy and practice and is currently fascinated by topics such as European citizenship, youth participation, and e-learning. He lives in Berlin.

Jutta Koenig-Georgiades is working since June 2007 for the Youth Policy Unit of Directorate Education and Culture of the European Commission. She is responsible for the development of the structured dialogue between the EU institutions and young people in the EU Member States. Before joining the Youth Policy Unit, she has been working for six years in the Youth Programme Unit of the same DG developing and implementing the YOUTH Programme and the Youth in Action Programme. She is of German nationality, living in Belgium since 1993 and working for the European Commission since 1996.

Fatima Laanan is currently the coordinator of SALTO-YOUTH Participation Resource Centre, based in Brussels in the "Bureau International Jeunesse" (National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme in the French Speaking Community of Belgium). She defines herself as a "pure product" of the youth field, as she has been involved in it since she was 8 years old, first as a participant of a youth club located in Brussels and later while she was 17 as a deputy president of the youth centre "Jeunesse Maghrebine" based in a less privileged area of the Capital of Europe. She has been working at Bureau International Jeunesse since 1997, where she was successively in charge of the European Voluntary Service, the coordinator of the training and cooperation plan of the National Agency and of the cooperation with the neighboring countries, such as the EuroMed cooperation. Her motto is "don't let your dream going to waste".

Romina Matei, aged 22 from Romania, is graduated in journalism and works as a youth project coordinator in the Intercultural Institute Timisoara, a national NGO which deals with cultural diversity, intercultural learning and active youth participation. She is a Board Member of the international youth network "Youth Express Network", being in the Board since one year and having the position of the secretary. Romina is a strong promoter of non-formal education in the formal education system and of active participation seen as a tool for fighting against social exclusion.

Denis Morel, coming from Bretagne, France, works for Luciole NGO which aims to promote active participation of inhabitants in social life, particularly of young adults and intercultural and human rights education through 3 ways to act: coaching, training, project designing. Active participation of young adults in their local community became one of the main aims of his work today, in all part of the daily life (social, political, economical). The target groups of this work are all actors of education from local to European level: children, young, teachers and trainers, teachers of teachers and trainers of trainers, youth workers, civil society, local authorities.

Agnieszka Pawlik, born in Poland, currently lives in Scotland. She works as a trainer, a consultant and a project manager for NGOs, public institutions and businesses in the field of non-formal education, youth and European issues. In the year of 2000 she was a co-founder of Semper Avanti association, and then led the association for 7 years until 2007. She is specialised in youth participation, local community development, youth policy and volunteer management. One of her favourite tools is Open Space Technology. Agnieszka holds a MSc degree in political science. She used to be an elected member of the Wroclawski County Council. In her free time she plays flute and dances, or observes bright life paths of young leaders she conceived in her life.

Diogo Pinto is the Secretary General of the European Youth Forum since 2005. Having been involved in youth organisations, both as volunteer and professionally, for the last 15 years of his life, he has been National Director of Intercultura – AFS Portugal, the world leader of international learning and students' exchanges. At the national level, he has also led the Portuguese National Youth Council, being elected President in 1995, while he participated in the creation process of the present European Youth Forum. He has also been Project Officer for the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union as the liaison person between the European Youth Forum and the Portuguese National Youth Council. He holds a Bachelor degree in Sociology.

Nathalie Rossini is a sociologist in charge of Studies and Training with ANACEJ (Association Nationale des Conseils d'Enfants et de Jeunes).

Bernard Roudet is a sociologist. He has been working since 1991 as a Research Officer at the National Institute for Youth and Community Education (INJEP), based in Marly-le-Roi in France. He also teaches youth sociology at the University of Paris X – Nanterre. Specialised in youth values and youth participation, he is the editor or the author of numerous publications in the field of youth sociology.

João Salviano is responsible for the management of Human Resources and for securing the implementation of the objectives of APYN (Alcohol Policy Youth Network). He is also in charge of lobbying and fundraising on behalf of APYN. João is a former Bureau Member of the European Youth Forum (2005/2006), where he was responsible for United Nations, Global Youth Cooperation and Health. He is a student of European Studies in the University of Oporto.

Darren Sharpe is a Visual Sociologist and co-ordinator of the Young Researcher Network at the National Youth Agency. Based in Nottingham, in the UK, he has lectured in the social sciences at Nottingham Trent University and Loughborough University as well as being active in participatory research. Darren's work combines theory and practice with a specific focus on children and vulnerable adults.

Hans-Joachim Schild has been living in Strasbourg since summer 2005 and works as manager of the Youth-Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe. Previously Hans-Joachim lived and worked in Brussels for the Youth Policy Unit in DG Education and Culture of the European Commission; amongst other topics he was responsible for the relationship of the youth sector to «lifelong learning», specifically for the whole subject of recognition of non-formal and informal learning. In this period he was involved in drafting and implementing the White Paper on Youth.

Marie Schneider has a diploma in pedagogy at the University of Trier. She has been, since June 2007, assistant at the University where she works on doctoral thesis about migration types and their different lifestyles in Luxemburg. Main interest fields: (Trans)migration and social work, international social work.

Bettina Schwarzmayr was, until the end of 2008, the President of the European Youth Forum, a platform of 97 youth organisations across Europe that promotes the interests of young people towards the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

Lillian Solheim is the Advocacy Coordinator at United Network of Young Peacebuilders. She is originally from Norway but is currently living in the Netherlands. Lillian has an MA in International Relations and Peacebuilding from the University of Kent and experience from various international organisations and non-governmental organisations.

Mark Taylor is a freelance trainer and consultant currently based in Strasbourg. He was recently elected as chair person of the UNIQUE network. He has worked on projects throughout Europe for a wide range of organisations, institutions, agencies and businesses. Major areas of work include: intercultural learning, international team work, human rights education and campaigning, training for trainers, and developing concepts and practice for the recognition of non-formal learning. A founding member of the Coyote magazine editorial team, he is still waiting to meet Spiffy!

Helmut Willems is professor doctor at the University of Luxemburg, sociologist and vice-director of the research unit INSIDE (Integrative Research Unit on Social and Individual Development). His main research areas are: sociology of children, youth, generation, school and violence, political sociology; conflict and mediation research.



The Adventures of Spiffy

Mark Taylor The Big Family

N° 30
sic

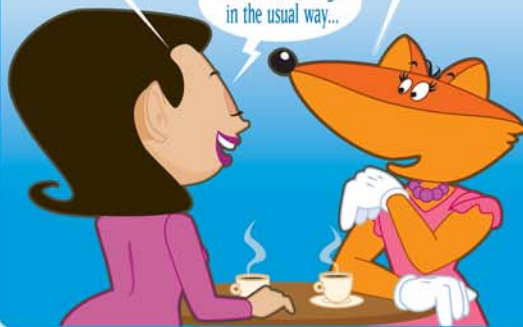
SPIFFY Report writing is never easy...

Spiffy meets her friend who has an offer for her

And, Spiffy, we have a great seminar coming up – would you like to write the report on it?

YES! What do you want it to include?

Oh the usual things in the usual way...



The seminar is about to start, Spiffy speaks with some participants who have agreed to help her.

So, you'll record the working groups! You'll take the photos of the flipcharts! I'll take my own notes and ask the speakers to give me their files and – er – power points!



Training and the financial crisis new practical guide from Spiffy Publications, with free packet of small, pink self-inflating balloons. How to convince public officials that training is still useful at a time when budget cuts are everywhere and education gets hit the hardest? Convincing arguments specially printed in gothic script on small, pink, self-inflating balloons can really help give your presentation a boost! Only 85 Euros. Recharge packs of balloons on request.

An exciting array of presentations and group work and final conclusions



oh jeez, hope we have everything here... tomorrow its off to the next training course, have we got a participants list?



Seminar over, Spiffy sits in her hotel room

You have heard of "hot evaluation", you have heard of "ex-ante evaluation" and you have possibly heard of "responsive evaluation" – Spiffy Research Unit announces new, improved "double responsive evaluation". This technique, devised after many sessions and double dynamic workshops enables our researchers to produce participant-centred evaluations BEFORE your training course or seminar. Be one step ahead of your colleagues! Optional scribe telephone interview with each report.

3 months later, Spiffy sits in front of her computer playing a game of solitaire

So Spiffy how is the report?

????

Our Sem... in... nar!!!!

Oh, yes!!! Of course!!! I am working on it NOW



10 years later, Spiffy sits in front of her computer playing a game of solitaire...

So Spiffy how is the report?



Magazine #14

"Coyote - a resourceful animal whose blunders or successes explain the condition of life in an uncertain universe."

(In: Jack Tresidder, The Hutchison Dictionary of Symbols, 1997)

Coyote is a magazine addressed to trainers, youth workers and all those who want to know more about the world of youth training in Europe.

Coyote wants to provide a forum to share and give new insights into some of the issues facing those who work with young people. Issues relating to diverse training methodologies and concepts; youth policy and research; and realities across this continent. It also informs about current developments relating to young people at the European level.

Coyote is published by the Youth-Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe. The main activities of the partnership are training courses, seminars and network meetings involving youth workers, youth leaders, trainers, researchers, policy-makers, experts and practitioners. The results of Partnership activities are disseminated through different channels including this magazine.

Coyote can be received free of charge from the Partnership secretariat in Strasbourg (subject to availability; please contact: youth-partnership@coe.int) and is published on the Partnership website under : **<http://www.youth-partnership.net/coyote>**

Coyote is not responsible for the content and character of the activities announced in this magazine. It cannot guarantee that the events take place and assumes no responsibility for the terms of participation and organisation.

Coyote aims to use a form of English that is accessible to all. We aim to be grammatically correct without losing the individuality or authenticity of the original text. Our aim is that the language used in the magazine reflects that used in the activities described.

Some articles are offered by contributors and others are commissioned by the editorial team in order to achieve a balance of style and content. If you have an idea for an article then please contact the editor.

www.youth-partnership.net

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Education and Culture DG

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