Issue 15 - May 2010

COYOTE

#15

Youth work - Training - Research - Policy

Coyote theme:

Social Cohesion

Council of Europe
Conseil de l'Europe

European Union
Union Européenne

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth

#15 Contents

W e l c o m e
W e l c o m e
W e l c o m e
W e l c o m e
W e l c o m e
W e l c o m e
W e l c o m e
W e l c o m e
W e l c o m e
W e l c o m e

Welcome to
COYOTE number 15!

It has been a while coming so please accept our apologies for the delay. The theme is Social Cohesion, and tempted as I am, I will not try to define the term here – there are plenty in the articles included in this issue.

What is clear is that Social Cohesion is inextricably linked with Social Inclusion – you can't have one without the other. I quite like the term: Yes it is complex and yes it might sound like a piece of policy jargon, but it has the advantage of being forward looking.

John Whitmore, in his book "Coaching for Performance", talks about setting goals which are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed) – that is nothing new to many of us, but he also talks about goals which are PURE (Positively stated, Understandable, Relevant and Ethical). Social Cohesion has that sense of being positively stated – it's a fight FOR something not against it; it's about building something valuable and worthwhile.

The political commitment to this concept is demonstrated in the Institutional Perspectives at the front of the magazine: We then have several different perspectives on the issue and the complexity of the challenge starts to emerge. Social Cohesion is not straightforward and therefore the routes towards it will never be simple. One size - certainly does not fit all as demonstrated by our two contrasting examples of good practice.

The "Wide Angle" section of the magazine also contains articles which are relevant to Social Cohesion. Des Burke gives a practical challenge to make sure that young people are safe when they engage in activities designed to encourage social cohesion and Rita Bergstein helps us to make connections between non formal learning and that essential part of the glue of social cohesion – employment.

As usual, I have learned a lot during the production of this issue of Coyote, so my thanks go out to those who have contributed. When we started, Florian Cescon was responsible for coordination of the magazine within the Partnership. He has now moved on elsewhere in the Council of Europe but we send thanks for his efforts in the previous few issues. Florian has handed over the baton to Marta Medlinska, who is no stranger to the Magazine or the issues we cover - welcome Marta!

Having waited too long for this issue of Coyote, you will be pleased to know that you can expect two more in the year. (It is a regular frustrating experience for some, to wait a long time for a bus, only to see two arrive at once - or is this just a UK thing?!). As part of the Belgian Presidency of the EU, a Youth Work Convention will be held in Ghent in July (see www.youth-partnership.net for news!). Coyote Extra will form a pre-convention issue and number 16 will be a post convention issue. In Coyote Extra we will help to explore the agenda for the Convention – and as with all issues, aim to get people thinking. In number 16 we will be bringing some flavours and perhaps some conclusions. We will be trying some new styles and some new approaches – so don't expect the next issues to be the same as before. Even if you are not attending the Convention you can be sure there will be something of relevance for you. ■

Enjoy your reading!

Jonathan Bowyer

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• Institutional

By Hanjo Schild

Social Cohesion
and Inclusion of young people

Underlying the values and principles of Social Cohesion in our societies is the belief that all humans are born equal, that everyone counts and can play an active role in society. It is the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare and well-being of all its members and to minimise disparities.

Social protection and social justice, access to rights for all, respect for the dignity of others, for diversity, individual freedom and the right of all individuals to have the opportunity for personal development, solidarity and participation in the democratic processes are key objectives of social cohesion.

In the youth field, the social exclusion of young people is certainly one of the most important challenges we are facing today, not only in Europe, but in the world. Young people are confronted with multiple forms of exclusion, from the labour market, from educational structures, from social rights and from individual development processes. Many experts believe that the current global economic and financial crisis intensifies the problem considerably – beside the facts of ageing societies and enhanced migration. The figures and data provided in the article of the European Commission in this issue of Coyote speak for themselves.

Consequently both institutions dealing with the development of social and youth policies, the European Union and the Council of Europe, try to find answers to these challenges. In general terms, they seek to develop common democratic, social and legal principles for all their citizens. Both are working towards tolerant and civilised societies on our continent, for political stability, security and peace, economic prosperity, freedom and *social cohesion* — in a fairer, safer world.

In the youth policies of both institutions social cohesion and social inclusion are crucial elements aiming at the creation of more and better opportunities for youth in education, training and working life. They also aim to improve access and full participation of all young people in society, to cultural, sporting and creative activities and they aim to foster autonomy and mutual solidarity between society and young people. Particular emphasis is given to a stronger involvement of young people in the inclusion policies as such and an enhanced cooperation with policy makers. In this context a new role for youth work, which can help deal with unemployment, school failure and social exclusion, is needed, particularly supporting young

people with special needs and those who are socially excluded. The European Commission and the Council of Europe, in the context of their partnership in the field of youth, made the strengthening of social cohesion a key priority in their joint work programme. The overriding aim of the partnership's activities is to secure equal opportunities for all, especially for those at risk of exclusion, through an exchange of knowledge and good practice and by supporting the development of a sense of solidarity. Both institutions agree on the importance of addressing the topic of social cohesion through this issue of Coyote.

It comes at the right moment: the Spanish Presidency in the European Union has made social inclusion and employment of young people one of its priorities in the first semester of 2010. 2010 has also been proclaimed as the "European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion".

It is therefore an excellent opportunity to highlight the variety of good practice in the youth field, but also to discuss the responsibility youth work and youth policy have for the social inclusion of young people. We can also certainly learn from the contributions of other policy sectors, such as arts, culture and employment, which have developed interesting and successful models of supporting young people on their way into society and to fight poverty and exclusion. The articles in this issue of Coyote, however, present the rich experience of youth work at local and European level, of youth policy and research dealing with the many aspects of social inclusion. Together, we can make a difference!

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by Ralf Rene Weingaertner

Social Cohesion
A core value
of the Council of Europe

For the Council of Europe, social cohesion is the capacity of a society to ensure the well-being of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding marginalisation, manage differences and divisions and ensure the means of achieving welfare for all. A cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means. It goes without saying that young people play a crucial role in this framework, both as active promoters of social cohesion and as a target group.

There is, consequently, a strong relationship between democracy and social cohesion. Social cohesion is an essential condition for democratic security and sustainable development, since divided and unequal societies are not only unjust, but also cannot guarantee stability in the long term. Equally, social cohesion and the respect for human rights and the rule of law are inextricably linked, since equality before the law and reliable human rights protection are both a necessary basis for and reinforced by social cohesion.

All societies face actual and potential divisions caused by ethnic and cultural diversity, disparity of wealth, or environmental conditions. A cohesive society is one that develops satisfactory ways of dealing with stress and potential conflict in an open and democratic manner. It takes action to reduce inequalities and to restore equity so that these various divisions remain manageable and do not threaten stability.

Social cohesion is an objective rather than a state, which, once achieved, would not require any further efforts. No society is fully cohesive. Any level of cohesion, once achieved, is subject to change and needs to react to political, social and economic developments. Technological progress and the relations between generations have an impact, as does the environment and ecological considerations. While social cohesion aims at creating solidarity in society with a view to minimising exclusion and disparity, specific measures to support vulnerable members of society are necessary at the same time. Even if

not all young people can be considered to be vulnerable, children and youth are nevertheless a specific group that needs specific attention, both in terms of protection and of being committed to a socially cohesive society.

Since the Heads of States and Governments of the Council of Europe member States recognised social cohesion as "one of the foremost needs of the wider Europe and (…) an essential component to the promotion of human rights and dignity" (Final Declaration of the 1997 Summit), the Council of Europe has developed numerous concepts and activities for promoting social cohesion both within member States and in Europe as a whole.

A first Social Cohesion Strategy was adopted in 2000, defining the objectives and parameters of the organisation's work in this context. The strategy was up-dated in 2004 and gained a new impetus from the High Level Task Force Report on Social Cohesion in the 21st Century "Towards an active, fair and socially cohesive Europe", which had been requested by the Warsaw Summit of Heads of States and Government of Council of Europe Member States in 2005. Reacting to the global economic and financial crisis and its social consequences, Ministers responsible for Social Cohesion decided at their first Council of Europe conference in Moscow, February 2009, to revise the Social Cohesion Strategy in order to take into account the High Level Task Force report and recent social developments, and to use it as a basis for a Council of

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Europe Action Plan for Social Cohesion, which will set the guidelines for the organisation's work in the years to come. With regard to youth policy in the Council of Europe, social cohesion is one of three major priorities identified in the "Agenda 2020", the political key document on the future of the organization's youth policy: human rights and democracy; living together in diverse societies; and *social inclusion of young people*. The integration of excluded young people; young people's access to education, training and working life; their access also to cultural, sporting and creative activities; steps to support their autonomy, well-being and their transition from education to the labour market; and intergenerational dialogue and solidarity are the operational aims specified in the "Agenda 2020" and in a subsequent resolution adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (Resolution CM/Res(2008)23).

▶ **Reinvesting in social rights and in a cohesive society**

The European Social Charter sums up and expresses the Council of Europe's commitment to social rights, in particular with regard to employment, social protection, health, education, and housing.

Social rights must be accessible to all, including, in particular, potentially vulnerable and marginalised groups, such as children, young people, migrants, workers without full social rights, people with disabilities, minorities, recipients of long-term care, people living in poverty, low-income and single and/or young parents, and the homeless. In particular, governments and authorities at all levels must make sure, that these already vulnerable people are not further weakened by the social consequences of the global economic and financial crisis.

Education and health care are important factors of social cohesion. Education, including non-formal learning in the youth field, must contribute to social cohesion rather than promote exclusion and segregation. People must be enabled to cope with multicultural and multilingual societies, with change, ambiguity and with social mobility. They should be made aware of their history, as well as of their cultural and environmental heritage in order to better understand and successfully act in the societies they live in. All members of society should have access to health care based on equity, solidarity, justice, non-discrimination and non-stigmatisation, with special sensitivity towards vulnerable groups.

One of the consequences of the global economic and financial crisis is the increasing number of people living in unsatisfactory and undignified conditions, because they cannot afford decent housing and young people are particularly concerned since they can not leave their families at appropriate times

and become autonomous. Many new models of housing spring up throughout Europe. Their impact and potential should be evaluated in order to develop guidelines for public authorities.

▶ **Building a Europe of responsibilities that are both shared and social**

The essential responsibilities of states and governments for social policy are undisputed. The state is the guarantor of human rights, including social rights, and participatory democracy. However, throughout Europe, new concepts of governance through partnership emerge at all levels. In order to engender a widely-held sense of social responsibility, all stakeholders, not only governments and public authorities at all levels, but also the social partners, civil society, as well as corporate partners and the media, need to develop an awareness and practical application of shared responsibilities. The Council of Europe has developed a "multi-partite social model contract", which sets up a framework for connecting the activities of public and private service providers, thus offering multiple complementary services, especially for vulnerable groups.

Citizens, especially young people are both object and actors in social policy. They need to act responsibly, in particular with regard to their consumption, investment patterns and lifestyle. They can only do this if they are given the tools to analyse and understand what is going on around them and in the world at large, in order to take informed decisions.

Social cohesion contributes also to economic development. A stable society is a more favourable environment for business. Increasingly, business declares an interest in social responsibility and instruments are being developed to put this responsibility into practice. Based on already existing experience, a comprehensive reference framework and guidelines on the contribution of business to social cohesion should be established and disseminated throughout Europe. The social sector as an integral part of the third sector is crucial for economic development, with a continually growing number of work places and ever-expanding investments.

▶ **Strengthening representation and democratic decision making and expanding social dialogue and civic engagement**

Social cohesion is closely linked to democracy, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, since it facilitates participation and improves governance. Individuals participate in many networks and institutions that help to knit society together. Political parties, trade unions and religious bodies continue

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to engage many people in broad social networks. Charitable, sports and cultural associations, together with children and youth organisations, play a particularly important part in building social cohesion and engage many people in socially useful voluntary activities. Through their involvement with non-governmental organisations, people learn to participate and act responsibly in society as well. Governments should create a favourable environment for encouraging such bodies and activities. They should also ensure that appropriate and sufficient representation structures exist in order to encourage all members of society, including vulnerable or marginalised groups, to actively participate.

In this respect the youth field in the Council of Europe has established the unique "co-management" system that allows for joint decision-making between governmental representatives and those coming from youth NGO's; it is potentially a model for other policy fields and copied by various member states in the field of youth.

Keeping this in mind, representation deficits in all fields should be identified and remedied. Vulnerable groups should be actively encouraged, by providing assistance and training, to make use of their participation possibilities. Civic dialogue would thus be reinforced and could be further institutionalised through the creation of dialogue fora at the local level.

▶ Building a secure future for all

The global economic and financial crisis has further destabilised peoples' confidence in the future. This is particularly true for young people, independent of their educational background. Immediate and sustained action to renew people's confidence in their future is imperative for overcoming the social and demographic challenges. This concerns not only opportunities open to individuals for pursuing their family and professional aspirations with a sense of optimism and serenity, but also more global objectives, such as peace, security, justice, and a healthy environment.

Social mobility must become a credible concept again. Guidelines for improving social mobility, which are currently developed by the Council of Europe, should be taken seriously and applied by member States.

Our societies are getting older and the dangers looming over pension schemes are much discussed. Not only for this reason is it necessary to develop policy models for family-work reconciliation, which allow people to choose their preferred form of family life, and combine it with the needs of business in a globalised effort. It is also crucial to enhance models of intergenerational dialogue and solidarity.

If despite their possibility to choose their own lifestyle some plans fail, there must be a possibility for a second chance. Social protection and social networks must be strong enough for people to make their life plan in the knowledge that if they fail, they will not be totally destroyed and can start again. And this is particularly true for young people.

▶ The specific role of the youth sector in the Council of Europe

It goes without saying that the youth sector in the Council of Europe has a very specific role to play when it comes to the realisation of social cohesion, for the benefit of young people and for society at large. Consequently, the programme of the Council of Europe Youth Sector focuses in the period 2010–2012 on the problems of social precariousness and the exclusion of young people and children on the one side and on human rights education and participation of young people on the other. Current work priorities include the promotion of young people's access to social rights, the development of non-formal education and learning to ease the social inclusion of young people and children, the support for young people's autonomy, health and well-being and their access to decent living conditions. The Council of Europe also continues supporting the role of youth work and youth policy in promoting intergenerational dialogue and solidarity.

Finally, in the context of their partnership in the field of youth the European Commission and the Council of Europe regard the strengthening of social cohesion as a key priority in their joint work programme, particularly by making young people, youth workers and youth leaders aware of the social dimension and its values in our European societies. ■

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**By Pierre Mairesse,
Director of Youth and Sport,
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Social Cohesion
at the Heart
of EU Policy

"These are exceptional times: we need a new, much stronger focus on the social dimension in Europe, at all levels of government. Immediate action will be required to fight unemployment today, but also to look ahead to those facing long-term structural barriers to employment, such as the young and low skilled. At the same time, we need to remember the needs of our ageing population and the most vulnerable in our society. This is the only way for us to ensure strong social cohesion as the hallmark of the European model of society."[1]

These opening words belong to Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission. They were part of his Political Guidelines for the new Commission, where he outlined his vision of the European Union's challenges and opportunities in the coming years before his reappointment for a second mandate as Commission President in autumn 2009.

Complementary to finding a response to social needs, President Barroso also underlined the need to strengthen a "Europe of values": "I believe in a Europe that gives every man and woman the freedom and security to develop their potential to the full, free of discrimination. A Europe that celebrates diversity as a major asset and ensures that every human being is treated with the same dignity. A Europe that is proud of its cultural and linguistic heritage, that protects and promotes its diversity as the essence of our identity, the foundation of the values we stand for and the basis on which we engage with the rest of the world."

▶ At the Heart of the Europe 2020 Strategy

In line with these statements, the promotion of social cohesion is at the heart of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Released by the Commission in March 2010 at the start of its five-year mandate, the Europe 2020 Strategy sets clear priorities and benchmarks for how the European Union can excel in econo-mic growth and development in the coming decade.

The Europe 2020 puts forward three mutually reinforcing priorities:
- smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation;
- sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy;
- inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

In other words, social cohesion should not be seen as a stand alone policy objective, but needs to be placed in a setting where it reinforces and is also itself reinforced by other priorities.

Five overall targets are outlined in the Strategy to be achieved by 2020 as a result of an overall effort by both the European Commission and the EU Member States. While two of these benchmarks relate to increased investment in research & development and a reduction in carbon emissions, the other three targets are directly linked to social cohesion, thereby showing the strong commitment of the European Commission in this field:
- The employment rate of the population aged 20-64 should increase from the current 69 % to at least 75 %, including through the greater involvement of women, older workers and better integration of migrants in the work force;

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- The number of early school leavers should be reduced to 10 % from the current 15 %, while increasing the share of the population with higher education from today's 31 % to at least 40 % by 2020;
- The number of people living below the national poverty lines inside EU Member States should be reduced by 25 %, lifting over 20 million people out of poverty. The national poverty line is defined as 60 % of the median disposable income in each Member State.

These targets are interrelated. For instance, better educational levels and a reduction in the share of early school leavers increase employability, and progress in increasing the employment rate helps lift people out of poverty. This calls for comprehensive and transversal policies in the field of social cohesion and inclusion.

▶A precarious situation for young people

Since the beginning of the financial and economic crisis in the first half of 2008, there has been much attention given to how the crisis affects young people. The youth unemployment rate (for youth aged below 25) increased by almost 38 % between spring 2008 and January 2010. The share of unemployed young people stood at 21 % in early 2010 and was still increasing. In Latvia and Spain, more than 40 % of young people who are outside the education system are without a job. At the same time, the risk of poverty rates both for children and young people were before the financial crisis several percentage points higher (19 % and 20 %, respectively) than for the overall population (at 16 %). The concern is that the current crisis will increase these numbers.

Poverty transmits between generations. Children raised in families experiencing long-term poverty are less likely to complete higher education and more prone to take on lower paid jobs or experience unemployment. It is therefore particularly important to develop comprehensive and transversal policy responses for young people that connect the different policy fields of education and employment, social inclusion, health, participation and young people's well-being. The European Union is responding to this challenge and in the last decade the youth dimension of EU's policies and actions have become more clearly articulated.

▶A strengthened youth dimension in EU policy

The White Paper on Youth, released in 2001, marked the first time that the European Commission issued a comprehensive policy strategy targeting young people. This was followed up with the inclusion of the European Youth Pact in the Lisbon Strategy in 2005 and the focus on children and youth in the Renewed Social Agenda in 2008. Finally, a new nine-year EU Youth Strategy was adopted in 2009, and integrated into the Europe 2020 Strategy in the spring of 2010.

One of the significances of the White Paper on Youth was its strong focus on the active involvement of young people in society. It stressed that the issue of youth participation in civic and political life – a key component of social cohesion policy – must be addressed at all levels of government, and that it must extend to different fields of policy that have an impact on young people. This had a strong effect on many countries in Europe at a time when twelve countries – most of which were from Central and Eastern Europe and with a limited tradition of youth participation – were applying for EU membership and were very receptive to impulses and guidance in the policy field of social cohesion and young people.

▶The Open Method of Coordination

In order to strengthen the mechanisms of implementation of the White Paper, the Council of Ministers for Youth agreed in 2002 to apply the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in the youth field. The OMC is used in several policy areas where the European Commission has limited competencies, meaning that Member States set their own national policies rather than having an EU-wide policy laid down in law. The way the OMC works is that the European Commission and the Member States first agree on overall priorities and some common objectives for how to reach those goals. The Member States are then responsible for implementing the common objectives, and report back to the Commission at regular intervals on their progress. On the basis of these reports, the Commission prepares progress analyses and proposals to the Council of Youth Ministers for how further progress can be made. In this way, the Open Method of Coordination becomes a dynamic instrument for change in the field of youth policy at the national level, and encourages learning from sharing experiences of good practice.

Since 2001, three cycles of the Open Method of Coordination have been implemented. Based on these experiences, a renewed and improved version of the OMC was introduced together with the new EU Youth Strategy which was launched in 2009.

▶The New EU Youth Strategy

After a year-long consultation process with governments of Member States and stakeholders and young people from across Europe, the new EU Youth Strategy was introduced in 2009. The Commission first proposed the strategy in its Communication called "A New EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering" in spring, which was then followed up by a Council Resolution, based in large part on the same text, in the end of November.

While the new EU Youth Strategy addresses all young people, it stresses that special attention should be given to youth with fewer opportunities. The Strategy operates with eight 'fields of action', which are all important elements of social cohesion policy: Employment & Entrepreneurship, Education & Training,

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Social Inclusion, Health & Well-being, Participation, Culture & Creativity, Volunteering and Youth & the World. One particular achievement of the new EU Youth Strategy, adopted for the period 2010 to 2018, is its strong emphasis on the transversal and cross-sectoral nature of youth policy.

Another strength of the Strategy is how it proposes concrete instruments for the participation of young people in decision-making at all levels. Through the so-called "structured dialogue", Member States are invited to set up national committees to oversee the implementation of the Strategy at the national levels. These committees should consist of government representatives, youth researchers and youth workers and, of course, of young people themselves. Even more, the Strategy mentions that the committees shall preferably be chaired by young people themselves (meaning in most cases the national youth council or young people's own organisations). The Spanish Presidency of the EU during the first half of 2010 made it a priority to focus on the establishment of these national committees. Supplementing these national committees, a European committee for the structured dialogue, chaired by the European Youth Forum and with the involvement of both the Commission and the EU Presidency, was set up in the early weeks of 2010.

▶ Youth in Action - an instrument for social cohesion

The European Commission's *Youth in Action programme* for the years 2007 – 2013 is an important instrument for supporting the EU Youth Strategy and for promoting social cohesion in Europe. The programme offers opportunities for young people to take part in youth initiatives and cross-border exchanges as well as voluntary projects outside the formal education system. With its focus on non-formal learning, and reaching out to young people with fewer opportunities as one of its permanent priorities, the Youth in Action programme reaches out to young people who may have quit school early or come from a family background with limited resources. In this way, it is an important Commission instrument to empower all young people, in particular those with fewer opportunities.

In 2008 alone, which is the latest year for which there is complete data, the programme involved more than 130 000 young people and youth workers through approximately 7000 projects. Around 2 100 of these projects had a focus on social inclusion. In addition to having 'young people with fewer opportunities' as a permanent priority target group and theme, the programme operates with rolling annual priorities corresponding to the EU agenda. For 2010, one such priority is combating poverty and social exclusion, in line with the theme of the European Year 2010. This priority has led to an increase in the number of projects on social inclusion being granted by this Commission programme in 2010.

Research confirms that the Youth in Action programme is an important tool for social cohesion among young people.

A study finalised in 2010 documents that the employability of young people who had taken part in the programme was indeed increased, and that experiences they gained made them more competitive on the employment market.

▶ Concrete action in 2010

The European Union has designated 2010 as the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. This elevates social cohesion policy to the top of the European political agenda. It highlights the social responsibility we all have - not only government authorities at all levels, but also every individual citizen – to work together to ensure inclusive societies that provide strong social policies and equal opportunities for all. A large number of initiatives and activities are held throughout Europe as part of the European year, and it is likely to have a long-term or lasting effect on social policy in the European Union.

The EU Council Trio Presidency of Spain, Belgium and Hungary has a strong social dimension in its work programme in the youth field for 2010 and the first half of 2011. The overall priority of the trio programme is promoting better opportunities for youth employment, emphasising close links to social inclusion, youth work and youth participation. The EU Presidency Youth Event and the Meeting of General Directors for Youth (both organised in Spain in April 2010) will have a focus on social cohesion and inclusion of young people. The Spanish Presidency has taken the lead in proposing a Council resolution on the active inclusion of youth, to be adopted by the Council of Youth Ministers in May. Furthermore, the European Commission and the Spanish EU Presidency are co-organising a high-level peer learning activity in June 2010 on implementation of transversal national youth strategies. These activities, all taking place during the first half of 2010, will be followed up by an active youth agenda of the Commission and the upcoming Belgian and Hungarian Presidencies of the EU.

To conclude, it should be said that promoting social cohesion, being among the core values of the European Union, has never been more relevant than today. Europe is currently recovering from its worst economic and financial crisis since World War II, and ensuing social strains and high unemployment rates require resolute and comprehensive social cohesion policies. The European Commission is responding to this challenge through the Europe 2020 Strategy, with ambitious targets set for the coming decade. Young people are placed at the top of this agenda. ■

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▶ **COYOTE** THEME

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by Antonia Wulff

Rights and Responsibilities
in Social Cohesion

Seeking to address as broad a theme as youth and social cohesion in Europe, and the rights and responsibilities inherent in deepening the latter, demands an elaborate and complex analysis of the myriad challenges facing youth across the continent.

• Coyote Theme

Though an article for Coyote may be limited in how far it can undertake such analysis, light can be shed, here, on some of the particular difficulties being experienced by European youth, and how we, as those committed to overcoming these difficulties, can determine responses. The urgency of this theme, both in terms of the goal of strengthening civic bonds – not least at a moment when economic, financial and climate crises compete for column inches – and, perhaps more poignantly, in terms of the impact upon individual lives, makes consideration of improving the conditions and opportunities enjoyed by young people in Europe ever more significant.

While I will focus here on youth as a distinct social group in relation to the rest of the population, it is crucial to remember that challenges of diversity and inequality occur within this group too. Moreover, despite the difficulties of defining "youth", we can acknowledge that it is a growing demographic group worldwide: in addition, changes in lifestyle and "societal structures" have extended the period of transition between childhood and adulthood, meaning that an increasing number of people are living lives and facing problems and challenges that have traditionally been seen as specific to youth. Young people today are studying for longer periods, and marrying and 'settling down' at a later age; conditions in the labour market have changed radically, offering little stability or security; at the same time, the support mechanisms being offered by society are decreasing. These changes have not only increased the challenges that young people are now facing, but they are also contributing to their marginalisation and to the feelings of insecurity that more and more have in relation to both their present and their future.

Deprived of the ability to determine the paths that they wish to embark upon, quite simply, deprived of the ability to make choices in an independent manner, a growing number of young people are limited in their development in both the public and private spheres. This negative trend is reflected in the struggle that many face in accessing not only their civil and political rights (e.g. opposition to the lowering of voting ages), but also their economic, social and cultural rights. This necessarily impedes a young person's capacity to act as a full citizen – the result being exclusion, in varying degrees of severity, and in different sectors of one's life.

The concept of social cohesion can be defined as a process through which a society seeks to actively deal with and accommodate for its diversity and combat all forms of inequality and exclusion. Translating this to the level of the individual, social cohesion can be understood as the full enjoyment of human rights and the autonomy to make choices; further, it is also the experience of being socially recognised as competent and thereby entitled to act and/or participate in a civic context. As such, we can recognise the aforementioned trends as contributing to a lack of social cohesion.

But how can we identify growing trends of exclusion amongst young people, while governments, particularly in Europe, are devoting more resources to furthering cohesion? In view of their particular experiences, needs and demands, young people can be understood as a social category, but also one that sadly often falls through the 'nets' of protection that existing legislation and support mechanisms offer. Essentially, a lack of recognition or awareness of circumstances that are specific to this period of age, or indeed merely because of age itself, means youth are often denied (full) access to many social and economic rights – such as those related to education, employment, housing, and social services.

Looking at the first of these areas; despite the right to education being a widely established concept, many young people still struggle to get access to high-quality education. Free access to education is not only an education free from tuition fees, it is also an education with free learning materials, access to libraries and cultural institutions, as well as subsidised travel to and from school, and possible housing benefits. Furthermore, schools themselves have to demonstrate cohesion; neither extending nor reproducing patterns of exclusion. In this sense, schools should actively acknowledge the diversity of their students and create

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inclusive policies (e.g. those combating discrimination and violence; allowing students to participate in governance and in the determination of curricula).

The transition from formal education to employment is in turn proving increasingly problematic for many young people in Europe. Being employed on a permanent basis is becoming more and more unusual, while short-term contracts and temporary jobs are becoming the norm. Many young people are forced to pursue unpaid internships – some because they are told that they do not have the required experience, some because there simply are no other options. Aside from financial considerations, internships can provide a useful period for training and career preparation; however, there is significant risk of internships being used as 'cheap labour', meaning young people accumulate internships on their CVs, without the possibility to move smoothly into paid employment in a given sector.

Of course, we cannot ignore wider economic considerations when examining the situation facing young people – at a moment of global recession, negative trends can be identified in almost all areas of the labour market. Nevertheless, the global economic crisis has shown youth to be a particularly vulnerable group: according to Eurostat, in the first quarter of 2009, the unemployment rate in the EU27 for those aged 15-24 was 18.3% - equating to 5.0 million young people – significantly higher than the total unemployment rate of 8.2%. The effects of this are significant: the British Medical Journal recently noted that 'unemployment increases rates of depression, particularly in the young', with parasuicide rates in unemployed young men 9.5-25 times higher than for their employed peers (Dorling. D, *Unemployment and Health*, BMJ 2009; 338:b829).

In addition we can identify the specific difficulties that young people face due to multiple discrimination, with inequality linked to age intersecting and interacting with discrimination, based for example on sexuality, disability, gender, and/or race. Such discrimination can be impacted by, or directly linked to other forms of social exclusion. Without sophisticated understanding of the particular challenges and obstacles that such patterns of discrimination can reproduce, young people cannot benefit from governmental strategies designed to build cohesion: as in all the issues that concern them, here it is vital that the voices of young people are heard and central to the determination of solutions. Yet the average age of people in different decision-making structures continues to be shockingly high. One of the main obstacles

to the participation of young people is the perception of age as an indicator of competence. Young people are still often perceived as being too young, too inexperienced and too immature to be able to form an opinion or make an informed decision. Moreover, youth, as a social group, is often portrayed in a negative light – perceived as threatening, reactionary, and troublesome. Seemingly, this can result in disproportionate social policies couched as 'preventative' and based in a wider perception of public safety and order, which limit the independence of young people, and infringe their rights (e.g. the use of the 'Mosquito' device to prevent young people gathering in public spaces). In this sense, we can recognise that there is a gap between the responsibilities and duties of young people on the one hand and the actual rights they enjoy on the other.

The discussion on the rights of youth, and especially children, has for a long time been characterised by a focus on their protection rather than their potential. Ensuring youth autonomy has to be a central aim of all youth policy - meaning a shift towards a rights-based approach to youth and youth policy is absolutely necessary - and the basis of this is the acknowledgement and recognition of the potential of children and young people as well as the particular expertise that they possess. Moreover, the point of departure has to be that young people are affected by a broad range of policy areas, such as the aforementioned examples of education, employment and social services, and thus youth policy has to be cross-sectoral. As a consequence of this, an awareness of the nature and circumstances that are specific for this age group is crucial when designing policy of any kind.

A new legal framework is the only way of ensuring youth rights, the full human rights of young people. The concept of youth rights is based on the notion of young people forming a distinct social category, united not only by the lifestyle and circumstances they share, but also by the problems and challenges related to them. The concept of youth rights offers a contextual framework for responses that is based on the rights of young people and more importantly, on their right to participate in shaping policy. Moreover, the concept is cross-sectoral in its nature and thus offers us a way of not only combating the problems and challenges that youth today already face, but also to create policy with the aim of preventing marginalisation and exclusion among young people. Here, it is valuable to underline the importance of combining legal instruments with different mechanisms for implementation and monitoring, as this is the only way of ensuring that policy works and is kept up to date.

It is of course important to recognise the steps that have been taken so far – for example, within the Council of Europe and in many of its member states. Moreover, the discussion on youth rights offers the Council of Europe a great opportunity - as an institution that is devoted to defending the human rights of all Europeans and that is also celebrating its 60th anniversary this year - to be a protagonist in initiating the discussion on what human rights in the 21st Century are, as well as how the human rights of young people across Europe can be secured.

• Coyote Theme

Any debate on these issues needs to consider the valuable role that youth organisations play in promoting and contributing to "the social cohesion between youth and the surrounding society", and institutional responses to the latter concern have to ensure adequate support is provided to these organisations, both to guarantee their survival, but crucially, their independence and effectiveness. Youth organisations are a demonstration of youth autonomy, and an important arena – often when all others are absent – for civic participation, for young people to influence their (social/cultural) environments, and for them to support – and be supported by – their peers.

Of course, as for individual young people, youth organisations have both rights and responsibilities. While remaining receptive to the needs of their core constituencies, youth organisations must engage in serious efforts to ensure their own, internal, cohesion. To avoid the reproduction of certain patterns of exclusion, youth organisations must remain accessible and open to young people: in such a way, the dynamism of the youth sector can be sustained, and the most pressing needs of young people can be addressed when policies are formed (here we can consider both policy development within organisations, and also in contexts where youth organisations serve as the representatives of young people in governmental policy fora).

Youth organisations can and do lead by example in devising strategies to recognise and work with diversity; moreover, coopera-

tion and partnership within the youth sector remains a very clear and necessary demonstration of this. However, the extension of this partnership to governments and institutions at all levels, is key to enabling sophisticated policies to further social cohesion to be determined; this is at once a strategy to ensure the genuine needs of young people are addressed and itself a demonstration of social cohesion policy. By nurturing the representative and democratic participation of young people in the determination of policies that affect them, the rights of young people are recognised, exercised and promoted. In such a way, young people can play their role in building cohesion in the societies of which they are part. ▪

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by Tracy Shildrick

Young People,
social inclusion and exclusion
within Europe

▸**Social inclusion, exclusion
and social cohesion: some definitions**

Social inclusion and exclusion are often rightly closely associated with poverty and disadvantage yet the problems associated with these terms are broad ranging and complex. The language used to describe the range of issues which are of concern is constantly evolving and far from straight forward. Terms such as social inclusion, social exclusion and social cohesion have over recent years gained widespread popularity as being perhaps better equipped to capture the complex nature of the relevant issues and as a way of describing these problems which is perhaps less value-laden than some of the previous approaches which have been employed. Yet the terms themselves are far from incontrovertible and are at time used with little precision or as interchangeable.

**Levitas *et al* (2007) defined social exclusion as:
‘a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack of or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the quality and cohesion of society as a whole’.**

Social inclusion : might be defined as the inverse of social exclusion. It relates to the ability to fully participate in normal social activities and to be able to live one’s life to the best of one’s ability and not to be obstructed by factors beyond one’s individual control. **Participation** is often deemed to be important for effective social inclusion, which may include economic participation, political and civic participation and social and cultural participation. Most recently the term **social cohesion** has gained some recognition as perhaps a more dynamic way to understand some of these problems. Social cohesion refers to;

‘the capacity of a society to ensure the well-being of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding marginalisation...//...in addition society’s capacity to manage differences and divisions and ensure the means of achieving welfare for all members (Council of Europe 2007).

As the Council of Europe goes on to point out, Social Cohesion...

‘encapsulates the social goals of Europe in a way that other concepts do not. In comparison to social inclusion for example, it is a broader approach and has a much stronger set of references to the functioning of democracy and the healthiness of society. Moreover, social inclusion focuses on ‘specialised’ policies and actions whereas the social cohesion concept seeks a broader, more civic and societal responsibility’.

Whilst appreciative of the fact that social cohesion may well be a more dynamic and inclusive term, for the most part this piece relies upon the terms social exclusion and inclusion as those which are currently most widely known and accepted within youth policy fields.

Unemployment and/or limited formal educational qualifications are important in explaining social exclusion, but the problem is complex and multi-faceted and can encompass things like living in poor neighbourhoods (which are often located in close proximity to prosperous and thriving cities), limiting living conditions, widespread poverty within families as well as neighbourhoods, ill health (often across as well as within generations) young parenthood and in the worst cases homelessness, drug addiction and crime. Walther and Phol (2005) utilize the idea of ‘constellations of disadvantage’ in order to try and capture the ‘complex interrelationships which characterize social exclusion and they point to the interrelationship between socio-economic, institutional and individual factors’ (p 38) which conspire to create situations of social exclusion.

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Social exclusion can by caused by, as well as hindered and inhibited by, various aspects of discrimination meaning that some groups are more vulnerable to exclusion than others. Women, those from (some) ethnic minority backgrounds and those with disabilities can be more vulnerable to exclusion. This piece describes some of the key issues facing young people in Europe in respect of social exclusion and social cohesion and ends with a brief note about future research and policy directions.

▶ Youth exclusion and inclusion across Europe

There are close to 96 million young people aged 15-29 in the EU (about 20% of the population). There is no easy way of defining youth both within and across countries and despite talk of a 'European social model' there are wide differences in the experiences of young people from different backgrounds, places and situations. Many young people from the Eastern European countries, for example, are poorer than those from the West and as Roberts (2009:2) points out, many young people in the poorer Eastern European countries are simply 'not catching up' to their wealthier Western counterparts. Recently research has drawn attention to the wide disparities which exist between those countries which are deemed to be more socially inclusive, namely the Nordic countries and those like the UK, where gross economic inequality produces many of its own social ills and problems (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009). Despite this clear diversity and complexity Williamson (2009:129) rightly reminds us that there are also 'strong similarities across nations' in respect of youth policy across Europe and there are a number of over-riding issues which concern young people across different places and countries. As Williamson points out, aside from the dominant issues around education, training and employment and those around health, housing, family, welfare, leisure and justice there are cross-cutting issues around participation and citizenship which are further cut across by issues of safety, multiculturalism, mobility and internationalism. Regardless

of issues of relative wealth and inequality it is clear that there are gaps across Europe between those young people who appear to be better 'socially included' and those who remain stubbornly and persistently economically marginal, sometimes facing the harshest and most damaging experiences of social exclusion. Research has shown that there is indeed much commonality for those most poorly qualified and experiencing unemployment and who are most at risk of social exclusion across different European contexts (Warner Weil *et al* 2005).

Whilst many policy makers have been rightly concerned with social exclusion and its associated problems we ought to remember that many, perhaps even most young people, are probably better 'socially included' than ever before. In respect of the UK Williamson (2009:135) notes that 'the fragmentation of the class structure and the emergence of 'globalization' have produced far greater opportunities for many young people than ever prevailed before'. Whilst such opportunities may not be evenly distributed either across or even within countries, the increasingly de-standardized nature of youth transitions has allowed many young people access to great benefits in the period which some have termed 'emerging adulthood' (Arnett 2006). Most young people face greater choices and opportunities than in the past and many now enjoy longer periods of family support, leading for some at least to the creation of what are sometimes termed 'choice biographies'. Indeed evidence shows that family support is widely and readily accessible for most young people, whatever their social background (although for some of the poorest young people reliance on family support might be the only way they can get by and in some cases survive in contexts of hardship and exclusion).

Most young people across the EU, however, are spending longer in education and achieving higher educational qualifications than ever before. Rising rates of educational participation mostly brings greater opportunities, which can have widespread ramifications for other aspects of young people's lives and underpins much of the drive for greater social inclusion. Rates of participation in education have generally risen across the EU with 76.85% of young people aged 18 engaged in education in 2007 (Eurostat 2009). The UK recently moved to raise the compulsory participation age to 18. Countries such as Finland, Sweden and Poland boast some of the highest rates of participation whilst a few countries, like Turkey, Cyprus and UK still have less than half 18 year olds participating in education (Ibid). Higher rates of educational participation tend to be associated with better outcomes for young people and the risks of unemployment and marginalization can be significantly reduced. In EU-27, the unemployment rate of 25-64 years olds with tertiary education stood at 3.6 % in 2007 compared with 6.0 % for people who had completed at best upper secondary education and 9.2 % among those who had not gone beyond lower secondary schooling. Data also shows an increase in income for longer participation and for those who participate in Higher Education incomes tend to

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be considerably higher (EU 2008). Yet many young people across Europe continue to be subjected to processes of marginalization and suffer severe and on-going inequality and disadvantage. Significant numbers of young people are still leaving education early and with few or no qualifications. Almost one in six Europeans leaves school with a low educational attainment level. Countries like Malta, Portugal and Spain have the highest proportions (30 % or more) of low-qualified young people who are no longer in the education or training system. In nearly all Member States, women are less likely than men to be in this situation (13 % against 17 % at EU-level) (EU 2008).

Poorer educational outcomes are often closely tied to poor labour market and employment experiences. Many marginalized young people find themselves trapped in work that is low paid and insecure, exacerbating wider problems of marginalization and exclusion. The recent onset of global recession has affected some countries more severely than others. In places like the UK fears have risen over the prospect of a 'lost generation' of young people as the young feel some of the worst and most damaging effects of job losses and cut backs. Whilst there has been much policy concern around those without education, employment or training (NEETs) there is more evidence to suggest that many vulnerable young people are more likely to be circulating in and out of a fairly widespread 'low pay, no pay' cycle (Shildrick *et al* 2009). For many this cycle represents a 'poverty trap' as opposed to a stepping stone to something better and more secure. Labour market opportunities vary greatly from country to country and within countries and for some young people mobility, even within their own countries is simply not an option they can afford. Higher educated young people are more likely to be mobile and live, work or study in different countries. These young people tend to be older (25-34) and from more affluent backgrounds. There are also clear disparities between countries with those from some of the Nordic counties, i.e. Finland reporting the highest rates of mobility (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and working Conditions 2008). Bagnoli (2009) notes that engaging in gap years, backpacking, studying abroad or working as an au pair are some of the most common forms of youth travel in Europe, allowing for self discovery as well as identity creation and construction. Yet there are a growing number of poorer, economic migrants who shift countries as a means of trying to improve their lives and for these young people economic survival (and potential improvement) becomes the key goal as opposed to journeys of self discovery and youthful adventure. Research also shows that economically marginal migrants tend to face further poverty and marginalization in their countries of destination (Lelkes 2007).

▶ Conclusions: what of the future, policy and research?

One of the major strengths of the social exclusion perspective (and that of social cohesion) is that it better allows for an understanding of the complex nature of economic marginality. In some respects this is perhaps the greatest failing of policy which attempts to solve the problem of youth social exclusion. All too often the focus is far too narrowly placed on moving young people into employment yet many of those who suffer at the margins of the labour market or outside of it all together also experience a wider and multi-layered set of disadvantages and in some cases discrimination. Whilst social exclusion as a concept has been useful to capture some of this complexity, youth policies have been less successful at taking proper account of these wider aspects of exclusion and their relationship to educational and labour market participation. To give just one example, whilst young people generally are deemed to be one of the healthiest groups in all societies, poorer young people suffer much poorer health outcomes (of themselves and their families) than their more affluent counterparts. It is recognized that health is key to quality of life (Anderson *et al* 2009) yet Anderson *et al* reported that within the EU 'many workers reported problems in reconciling their family responsibilities with the demands of employment' (2009:61). The impact of bereavements, mental strain and caring responsibilities can all work to undermine young adults' attempts to better their lives and escape the worst effects of poverty and economic marginalization. Good educational and employment opportunities are at the heart of social inclusion and cohesion, yet policies will only achieve good outcomes if they are fully cognisant of the complex range of problems that intersect with, and impact upon, economically marginalized young adults' education and work experiences.

A short piece such as this could not hope to cover all the issues in respect of inclusion and cohesion or issues of exclusion of young people in Europe. Rather, it aims to give a flavour of some of the key issues and problems. Social exclusion - as well as social inclusion and cohesion – are complex and multi-faceted terms and as Williamson rightly notes, 'youth policy is a complex and challenging task' (2009:139). There can be few, if any, simple solutions. Too often a focus on shifting young people into the labour market lacks emphasis on the quality and sustainability of work and too little consideration is given to the multi-faceted, complex inter-related nature of many of the problems associated with social exclusion and marginality. Discrimination, both overt and more covert are also key issues that need to be acknowledged and addressed. Further focus could usefully be directed to those young people who escape social exclusion and marginalization. Whilst there is clear evidence that social exclusion can be stubbornly persistent across generations and as yet there is not enough evidence of how young people are able to 'escape' poverty and social exclusion (Shildrick *et al* 2009). ■

• Coyote Theme

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by Filip Coussee

Youth work
and social exclusion:
learning from history?

In most European countries, youth work has become an important topic on the youth policy agenda. This growing attention is partly spurred by the European youth policy agenda and partly stimulated by the renewed belief that youth work contributes positively to individual and social development. This belief is underpinned by an overwhelming body of academic research stating that participation in positive, structured youth activities appears to be of great advantage to a number of areas: it contributes to academic results (Fletcher et al.,2003), to the development of social and cultural capital (Dworkin et al., 2003), to a stronger position in the labour market (Jarret et al., 2005), to the nurturing of democratic skills and attitudes (Eccles et al., 2003)... To put it briefly: youth work contributes to social inclusion. This finding inevitably leads to one central priority on many youth policy agendas: 'Tackling the problem of becoming accessible to non-organised or marginalised young people is now felt by all key players to be essential to increasing participation by young people (Commission of the European Communities 2006: 9).

▶ The youth work paradox: Empowering the powerful?

Youth workers who invest in the programming of structured activities face big difficulties to reach socially excluded young people. Given this problem of accessibility it seems as if the positive relation between youth work and social inclusion fulfils itself. Youth work contributes to the inclusion of young people who are already fairly close to prevailing standards of social inclusion (Coussée et al., 2009). For sure, there are youth workers who succeed in reaching the hard-to-reach. They set up more open and accessible forms of youth work without pre-programmed activities and explicitly outlined schemes of intervention (Williamson, 2005). Rather ironically, the increasing political attention for youth work seems not in the interest of this kind of open youth work initiative, since they are often blamed for not producing the same positive outcomes as the more structured youth work initiatives. Academic research finds these open initiatives ineffective (Feinstein et al., 2006) or even counterproductive with regard to social inclusion (Mahoney et al., 2001). As a consequence youth workers working with excluded young people are increasingly confronted with demands to concentrate on measurable, individual outcomes in order to prove their effectiveness. This "what works" logic goes together with a tendency for standardisation, individualisation and formalisation of youth work and thus leads to paradoxical consequences: the hard-to-reach are excluded from youth work because it's too hard to reach something with them.

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▶ Learning from history: how to counteract the pistachio effect?

This paradoxical consequence of strategies that concentrate on individual solutions to social exclusion has been described as a 'pistachio effect', in which the harder nuts to crack are, at best, left until later, or, at worst, simply disregarded (Tiffany, 2007). It's nearly impossible to go beyond this pistachio effect if the youth work discussion remains confined to a straightforward logic in which non-participation in structured youth work activities is seen not just in correlation to other social problems, but rather as cause to their effect (see Colley & Hodkinson, 2001). To a large extent the actual youth work discussion in most European countries seems to focus on 'who comes in' and 'what comes out' questions. These questions are as old as youth work itself, but the historical consciousness in youth work has never been very high. Rightly, it has been argued that the restriction of the discussion to these rather methodical questions makes youth work a vulnerable practice to those 'who would foist on it warmed-over policies that have been tried and found wanting in the past.'(Gilchrist, Jeffs and Spence, 2001).

In order to learn from our past, the Youth Partnership, together with the Flemish Community, organised two workshops on youth work history. The workshops organised in May 2008 and May 2009, definitely did not aim at purifying an essential youth work concept irrespective of historical and cultural context. Rather the purpose was to identify the close links between youth work developments and broader social, cultural and historical trends. What are the beliefs and concepts that underpin youth work? How do they relate to the recurrent youth work paradox saying that youth work produces active and democratic citizens but at the same time seems inaccessible for young people who are excluded from active citizenship? Tracing back the roots of youth work and identifying different evolutions within and between countries must help us to initiate and stimulate a fundamental discussion on youth work's multifaceted identity and to cope in a constructive way with the recurrent youth work paradoxes. In this article we try to reflect some main findings, based on the Flemish story. The whole report is to be published by the Youth Partnership (see Verschelden et al., 2009).

▶ The social pedagogical roots of youth work

The invention of the social

The birth of youth work in Europe is inextricably related to radical changes in European nation states. The Enlightenment and the French and other Revolutions enforce other, more dynamic views on the relationship between individual and society. The Industrial Revolution definitively denaturalises the maintaining power relations in society. This denaturalization implies that people should learn to behave as responsible citizens. Charity and repression could not be sufficient any longer to secure the social order. The shaping of a social cohesive society is felt as an urgent political problem. Therefore social pedagogical concerns are at the heart of social policies (Mennicke, 1937). As division of labour and increasing organization of social life have diminished the pedagogical strength of the traditional socialisation milieus (family, local community or guilds and corporations) the need is felt to develop a new and all-embracing network of social pedagogical entities. This intermediary register between individual and society has been called 'the social' (Donzelot, 1984). The social functions as a buffer-zone between the private lifeworld, built around personal freedom and exclusivity, and the public system, aiming at equality and cohesion. The social is the field where people learn to participate, where they learn to relate their individual aspirations to public expectations. It provides a democratic forum to participate in the shaping of society, but it also canalizes all too radical political passions (Donzelot, 1984). Through the social, the system also provides support to citizens who need it. At the same time the social protects citizens against too intrusive interventions from the system. The social is the sphere where the inherent paradoxical fundamental values of our capitalist democracies, freedom and equality, are balanced. The social sphere is vital for the cohesion of society. Therefore the social itself is always 'under construction'.

The social question: social movements, social care, 'social' work

This symbiosis of pedagogical and political functions is an essential part of the youth work identity, for it is one of the segments of this 'social' field. Many of these 'social' organizations came into being in the 19th century, a period of big transformations and consequently also increased concerns around social cohesion. It seemed that flourishing capitalist economies instigated the 'desocialisation' of large parts of the working-class. The invention of the social is also meant to find an answer to this social question. In the social sphere different institutions aimed at working-class children and young workers also grow. In many cities patronages or catholic youth groups are installed. In 1843 in Turin Don Bosco was one of the first to start with such an initiative providing a combination of care, recreation and education. Next to these youth groups, often run by priests or people of good will from the bourgeoisie, movements organised by the working classes themselves came into being. In Flanders, as in other countries, socialist young workers organised themselves to fight - next to their fathers - for better working conditions. The Young Guards are often described as a youth movement, but it was in the first place a 'social' movement. The emphasis lies not on being young together, but on social issues. The whole spectrum of social care institutions and social movements organised by different groups and layers in society could be called 'social' work.

The youth question: youth movements, youth care, youth work

Another perspective on questions concerning social cohesion (or social in/exclusion) manifests itself some decades later and first in the middle and higher classes. The 'youth question' is an expression of the tendency to differentiate lower age categories

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from adults. Spurred by the fact that school-attendance finds acceptance in large sections of the population, and underpinned by the emerging science of developmental psychology, youth becomes a distinguished population group and adolescence is constructed as a specific stage of life. Like young workers, students organise themselves in a movement. Whilst workers' youth fights against inhumane working conditions, the Flemish student movement fights against things that are seen as a hindrance to their emancipation, for instance the dominance of French language in schools and society at large. So, this second youth movement is also a 'social' movement spending time to study social issues and to undertake social action. **In this sense we could argue that all youth work is social work.**

From 'social' movement to youth 'work'

The start of the 20th century initiates a double evolution. Developmental psychology is more prescriptive than descriptive in construing adolescence as a crucial life stage in which constructive experiment in a fairly isolated youth world is essential. Youth work is designed as a safe place in which pedagogical interventions are inspired by considerations of individual, positive youth development and not of social and political collective action. Moreover it is the development of "middle-class college boys" that is taken as a model for positive development in the direction of an ideal youth stage. This evolution from direct to indirect participation seems to have clipped the wings of the first youth movements. In other words, the individual pedagogical aspect of the work is over-emphasised and the social political component is obscured.

Next to this confinement, the evolution from social movement to youth work means a double jeopardy for the working class young people as their development - and their youth organisations - are now defined as immature, deficient and even undesirable. Youth work is now an educational method. In between the World Wars in Flanders, as in many other countries, the middle class uniformed youth organisations are set as a standard for all youth work.

The 'resocialisation' of the working-class

In this *pedagogisation of the social question,* youth work has become a powerful instrument to 'resocialise' a part of the de-socialising working-class. The first youth movements gradually are adjusted to adult, middle-class concerns about the desirable development of young people and they are fit into a whole range of youth organisations differentiated according to gender, class and age. Questions about social cohesion are fundamental to youth work's existence, but they are pushed to the background. The youth work discussion now focuses on methodical aspects concerning the acquisition of democratic skills and attitudes. The obscuring of the social political aspects of youth work's identity is consolidated in a new methodical youth work concept, that was initiated in the UK but in no time conquered the world: scouting, an apolitical method (Lewin, 1947) which confirms the shift from social struggle and social justice to cultural renewal and character building.

Most existing youth organisations were transformed and remodelled according to the scouting method. The necessary 'resocialisation' of the working class has turned into a civilizing strategy, with youth work functioning as an 'equalizer', an instrument to clone the middle class. Some organisations, like the Catholic Worker's Youth from Canon Cardijn, did reach out to some working class young people and succeeded in fostering individual social mobility, but it is not surprising that youth work did not appeal to large parts of the working class youth. After World War II the relation between youth work and the so-called socially excluded young people became an issue in youth work policies. In order to increase the attraction for working class kids, some youth workers deliberately dropped the explicit pedagogical aspects of youth work and evolved into providers of leisure activities for young people. In doing so they unwillingly eroded what was left of the social pedagogical identity of youth work. Youth work has become an a-political and a-pedagogical instrument, standing for nothing, falling for everything.

The death of the social?

Of course this is an over-simplified description of the conception of youth work, but it may have the power to show us how the attention for the 'social' has gradually disappeared from youth work discussion. The social pedagogical perspective on youth work has not only become undesirable, but even unthinkable. The social question has not disappeared, but is constricted in the youth question. This leads to a narrow interpretation of emancipation and an a-political interpretation of social cohesion and thus social in/exclusion. Every now and then concerns about individualisation, uncertainty and the social cohesion of our society crop up (Castel, 1995). These are the moments that a social pedagogical perspective knows a revival and critical voices from youth work practice find a renewed response, but since Thatcher (ex-prime minister in the UK) has proclaimed that 'there is no such thing as a society', it seems very difficult to broaden the discussion: prevention and positive development are key-

• Coyote Theme

concepts of youth policies in most European countries, but the discussion is framed in a discourse that restricts social integration to institutional integration: integration in schools, labour market, youth work, … All young people are entitled to receive the educational support they need, but entitlements are self-evidently translated to questions of the accessibility of the existing agencies, organisations, institutions… occupying 'the social'. The agencies themselves do not have too much space to play their 'social' role. In many countries youth work's role as a democratic forum has been diluted. Youth work has become a question of risk management, a question of preventing undesirable behaviour and stimulating healthy behaviour. The social in youth work is restricted to a 'transit-zone' from point A (immaturity) to point B (maturity). This seems to be a one-sided interpretation of the essential 'social' nature of youth work. This finding urged Giesecke (1985) to call for 'the end of education' or as Rosseter (1987: 52) argues: 'The essential nature of their work is concerned with bringing about change. It is about moving young people on in some way from point A, not necessarily to point B or C, but to some position beyond A' (Rosseter 1987: 52).

► What's social about youth work? Learning from history

You could argue that the interpretation of youth work's history as described above may be just too depressive or depressing! Of course youth work offers a forum for young people to make themselves heard. Of course we should not keep silent about the thousands of young people who found in youth work a place to shape their identity, to gain unknown experiences, to acquire a distinctive style and to experiment with relations and behaviours, but all this happens on a fairly intuitive basis; which is at the same time the strength and the vulnerability of youth work. It creates the room to maximize the potential of one of youth work's core features: the pedagogical relation. But at the same time it gives youth work a blurred, unclear identity, which makes it difficult to defend open youth work practice with socially excluded young people. Above all however, we fail to reflect on an essential part of our identity. Many youth workers underemphasise the 'social' in their work. Their forum function is often predefined and social divisions between young people are rather consolidated than transcended. Other youth workers are being disempowered (or disempower themselves and the young people) by interpretations of the social as a transit-zone and they are increasingly forced into formalised, methodical and individualised youth work concepts. History can inspire us in the ongoing construction of a youth work theory, that gives us opportunities to revalue youth work as a social pedagogical practice and at the same time prevents us from seeking solutions in formalising the informal. ■

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by Milena Karisic

Social cohesion,
mobility and migration:
The refugee youth perspective

"All human beings are in truth akin – All in creation share one origin

When fate allots a member pangs and pain – No ease for other members then remains

If, unperturbed, another's grief canst scan – thou are not worthy of the name of man"

Saadi

Social cohesion, mobility and migration: For some these concepts are familiar, for young refugees, however, these terms can be misleading. How can young refugees be a part of the social cohesion process when they have to lead clandestine lives? And how can young refugees experience their youth when life, war and poverty makes them adults in one night?

VYRE is a network aiming to raise the voices of young refugees, to make them more visible, and to advocate for their rights and their inclusion into the host societies. (To get involved either as an individual or as an organization all you have to do is to communicate your interest by sending us an e-mail to vyre.net@gmail.com where you may request more information and the membership form).

Back in 2006, we stated that *"We did not reach Europe by accident. Migration and refugee flows do not exist in a vacuum. People left their home countries for a reason, strong enough to undertake the risk of dying. This situation cannot be combated with any restrictive border policy".* For young refugees, mobility and migration is not primarily a matter of choice. It is matter of life, preservation and hopefully a dream of a better world. The journey to the host country is a perilous one and arrival in the host country cannot always guarantee safety and refuge. As we said in 2006 *"The sun shines differently behind bars".* This is a reference to detention of refugee youth which is becoming all the more the rule instead of the exception.

Arrival in the host country is a new page in the book of challenges refugee youth have to face. Some young refugees will have access to protection and legal documentation. While others have no other choice but to live clandestinely in deplorable conditions, like ghosts not existing for the law but being there, present, fighting for their lives. Both situations are challenging.

In 2006 we underlined that *"After a long journey full of fear, loneliness and darkness, in the back of the truck, I have reached a destination that promised "safety", but where am I? Who are these people? I do not understand..."*

For refugee youth with access to protection the new chapter of integration begins. Facilitated or not, it is a challenge. A new language, new societal and cultural norms. Assimilation or integration? What is my identity? Do I belong here? Can I be a part of this society? Am I welcome?

Can I travel abroad without my fear of borders? *You have no idea how hard it was for me to come to Strasbourg...Why do capital and goods circulate freely and not me? Being fully aware of your rights is not always granted. How to claim your rights when you do not know them?*

For refugee youth, forced into a clandestine life, arrival in the host country is simply a matter of survival. Almost literally, these youths do not exist. They have no papers, they have no existence... They have access to nothing and learn to live with fear. Fear for everything.
In this framework the discussions on social cohesion, social inclusion and mobility seem obscure. It is a sad truth but refugee youth feel excluded. Refugee youth might be mobile but at the same time stand stranded between administrative malpractice and hard legislative barriers. Exemptions to this

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reality do exist but remain only a few. It is important to learn from them.

Indeed, migration can contribute to diversity and mobility but young refugees firstly need to be given the access and right to contribute to diversity and cohesion. And this circle of exclusion is a vicious one. The more excluded young refugees feel, the more difficult it is to encourage their active participation.

Back in 2006, when the campaign "All different-All Equal" was still on we encouraged people to *"Just look around!"* and assess to what extent we are indeed all different-all equal. We also asked all stakeholders *"to go back in time and think how often young exiles are offered to participate in national or international youth events"*.

To this end we recommended that *the initial practical introduction to the host society is an essential part of the long-standing integration process. The host societies should put more effort into transforming assimilation into a two way process, with mutual respect and understanding"*. **Furthermore we called** *for active participation of young exiles in national youth activities in the host country and recommended that States and Youth organizations should encourage and support young exiles participation in various activities that could contribute to their empowerment and facilitate the integration in the host community as well as reintegration in the country of origin.*

In June 2009, during VYRE's Study Session «Participation as a tool for social inclusion" we concluded that it is «the role of all» to promote tolerance, open-mindedness, respect for difference and others' values. Cultural diversity in Europe should be taken as an advantage and celebrated, instead of being seen as a negative thing.

There is a need for more opportunities to learn about people from other cultures in Europe, and governments have an «important influencing role» to help establish or facilitate frameworks to aid social cohesion.

Valuing multiculturalism is also another important aspect for social cohesion: A cohesive society does not think in an either/or way about issues concerning migrants, newcomers, and refugees.

The importance of communication between diverse groups, has underscored the need for a common language, therefore assistance with learning local language(s) is crucial. As well as encouraging migrants to retain their native languages, the learning of other languages should be promoted as a way to appreciate different cultures and world views.

VYRE sees education as one of the main factors contributing to social inclusion. People who cannot speak the language of the dominant majority fluently and who do not have an educational background that gives access to information, or permits them to be employed in more stable and sustainable jobs, are bound to remain socially excluded and discriminated against.

In this regard, VYRE is doing its outmost to assist refugee youth in their self-empowerment and to raise awareness of all relevant actors that refugee youth have a strong potential to be a part of social cohesion. And hopefully, in this common effort of all we have found support by the Council of Europe and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and our local organizations that together with us as individuals constitute the life and spirit of VYRE.

We, refugee and exiled youth *"Carrying the burden of our personal testimonies, life stories, having suffered and escaped from terror, violence, armed conflicts, persecution, fears, poverty/Traumatized by witnessing atrocities and being tortured by uncertainty of the fate of our beloved ones left behind/Wandering around feeling nowhere as home/But armed with determination, ideals and hopes"*… Continue in *"Keeping faith in solidarity and humanity"* we are *"Strongly convinced in our common future"*. ■

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by Sylvain Abrial

Is there life in social work after the riots in France?

Attempt to give a real answer to a fake question

French youth and social worker confronted with the need for social innovation

▶ **Facts and figures**

October 2005, France is in the spotlight of the global media, exposing the hard and true reality of its suburbs to the world, confronting European citizens with their representations of a presumed French model of integration, which would suddenly finish its reign: the violent riots, which started in Clichy-sous-Bois (Paris region) quickly extended to other big urban areas all over France. Some facts as a quick reminder: on the night of 27th-28th October 2005, two young boys died whilst trying to escape a police control, by hiding in a power substation. As soon as this piece of news was confirmed, groups of young people started to gather and protest in the streets. The protests turned quickly into urban riots, violence, car-burning, looting and so on.

▶ **"Paris is burning!"**

Headlines and world press cover pages indicated the stupe-faction and incomprehension from other countries, when looking at the event. Reporters from all over the world were sent to the "burning suburbs" of Paris, following the same process like war reporters.

▶ **What to understand beyond the riots?**

Of course, these events were tragic and of course the way they have been reported reflects the way they have been (mis-) understood. Let's not doubt also that these riots indicate something is going wrong in the land of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity". Since then, some other riots took place in France (November 2007), but also in Greece (December 2008). So, yes this has to be questioned and explored further!

In line with the issue of this Coyote, you, as reader of this magazine, being a representative of the European civil society, most probably an actor (activist?) of social cohesion, believer in inclusion, knight of the holy non- formal education field, you were very probably touched in one way or another by these riots just like you were by the riots in Greece. You probably tried to understand more about it, to read between the lines of the mass media in order to allow yourself an analytic view of this extinguishing model of integration, that France is known for. These riots might have been a unique occasion to understand the symptoms but also the foundations of French society. And because you are in the field, you would like to know how the social field, the youth sector, the NGO's, the world of non- formal education in France – how all of them were affected by such an explosion of violence. How did they react, to which extent did it change their approach to the problems? Which new means were they given? A bunch of questions, and all very legitimate, that I would also ask myself if I would see the situation from another country.

▶ **What do I want to understand from the "post-riots era"?**

From my place and point of view, answering directly to the questions "What came after the riots, how did the social field react? Which initiatives did they implement" would mean falling into the same trap of the mass-medias and of most politicians:

A sudden breakdown / some sensational events / a lot of noise around it / a sudden process of awareness-raising by the whole society / the urgent search for change / the announcement of exceptional measures / and life goes on!

Therefore I propose to use these events as a way to explore and understand a little part of the history of the non-formal education field in France (also known as "popular education") and its

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evolution. Please, be aware that the following analysis is a very personal point of view. My position is indeed the one of a French former professional youth worker, who went through 15 years of experience in European non-formal education and who became a trainer in the field. This European perspective surely influenced my introspection and analysis of my former working field.

▶ A French history of non-formal education in line with a French model of integration

In order to understand what is now the state of social cohesion in France, we have to step away from this phenomenon of riots or at least to keep them as only one indicator among others of what hasn't been working anymore now for decades in French society: the French "one law for all" republican model of integration. From that perspective, we can then analyze how professionals of the non-formal education field have been working so far at local level, how they have dealt with this heavy responsibility of transmitting the values of such a model of society and how their work has changed (or not) recently.

Unlike the American and British multicultural models of societies (which one could describe as "Lets' co-exist a reasonable distance apart and ignore individual initiatives and regulate the collective wellbeing"), France has constantly been trying to integrate its different populations into a formatted and historic model of society, which is proudly inherited from centuries of successful democracy. Integration into French society is linked to a model of assimilation, supposed to bind all citizens to each other and to the symbols of the French Republic.

This article is neither about a French history of integration, nor about the ethnic aspect of urban riots. What is to be understood is how all representatives of the non-formal education field in France (youth workers, community workers, social workers) have been also impregnated by this model of integration in their education, in the way they approach their profession and their involvement in the field. As I've been one of them, I can of course refer to my own experience but because I'm nowadays training some of them in diversity qualifications, I've been observing quite a lot of common approaches.

For those of you, who don't know yet, non-formal education is France is named "popular education"[1] and refers to a long history in line with the separation of church and state[2]. Popular education, as complementary to the free and republican public school, is put into practice with what we call "animation socioculturelle" (socio-cultural animation), which gained most of its positive image after the establishment of "congés payés" (paid leave) by law in 1936 and was considered to be a social innovation. Young people had then to be "occupied" in an educational way during their free time. Over the years, "popular education" has extended its influence, has become professional (different levels of qualifications for professional youth workers), has got institutionalized (different kinds of organizations, some of them under contract with municipalities, some organized in national federations and lobbies). Nowadays, all districts, suburbs and villages have their "centre social" or "maison de quartier", "MJC", "amicale laïque" (community centre, youth and culture clubs...). These structures have the reputation of playing an important role in keeping the social links in the community, at a local level.

As mentioned before, most of the people working in these organizations are professional youth and social workers, trained and qualified according to harmonized national formats. They all went through the history of popular education, they all learnt about the French concept of "laïcité" (secularity), they all heard about "projet éducatif", "projet pédagogique"[3], "autonomy of the child", "education to citizenship", "integration"... In brief, and that's fair enough, they all were taught their job according to their historic republican model of society. In that way, they can be considered as guardians of social cohesion, through the transmission of society values.

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▶ Youth and social worker: from capacity of observation to limits of action

Therefore, and to come back to the subject of riots, such structures are on the one hand the essential link between people and a barely sustainable model of society. On the other hand, they can easily be considered as the instruments of social and youth policies.

Regardless of the way they are considered, professionals in such structures are working on a long-term basis, by being present in the districts. From this position they could observe the development of inequalities and the constantly growing anger of young people and they were never surprised by the explosion of riots.

For a long time now, and in an accelerated way recently, these professionals have been fed with a lot of new directives, integration programmes and means of action by the different governments. According to the different policies in place, they have been swinging between more or less repressive policies, and with more or less funds injected into social action.

Their challenge has always been the same: Trying to keep their independence while carrying on with a focused action plan on the ground. One of their difficulties in this is to deal with a bunch of different social measures and funding programmes. New ones emerge; old ones are cut suddenly. Trying to move around in this jungle of programmes and funding for social cohesion can easily restrain any freedom of initiative.

The main issue is indeed: How can you innovate when your major concern is about how to fill in strict application forms, with just this amount space for question A and just these kinds of answers expected to question B, in order to make sure you will get sufficient funding for your structure to survive and go on working?

I hereby affirm it: In order not to become only experts in "technocracies", most French youth and social workers urgently need a new breath of innovation and new space of action. The answers might be European...

▶ Europe as a space for social innovation?

According to the European Commission, *"social innovation means the design and implementation of creative ways of meeting social needs"*[4]. It has to be admitted that Europe has a long tradition of social innovation. Following the "European year of innovation and creativity" and entering the "European year of fight against poverty and social exclusion", we can now easily link the issue of our French youth and social workers with the necessity of a broader perspective, which might help them to open up and get out of a constrained French-French framework.

Why not use then the operative arm of social innovation in Europe, the so-called "social experimentation" approach?

"Experimentation is described as the carrying out of controlled experiments with a view to testing hypotheses(...) it is non-spontaneous and subject to evaluation"[5]. In the social field, experimentation is produced by NGO's and might become a way to test and renew practices and responses to new social needs at grass root level, with a bottom-up perspective, which hopefully contributes to renewed and effective social policies[6].

Isn't it what the European field of non-formal education has been claiming since it began? Isn't it even what defines the best in our field of work: Proposing educational situations, non-spontaneous but non-formalized, learner-centred, with no preconceived idea of what it might create but with a real plan for measuring and valuing their (learning) impact? And on the top of it, the most valuable educational tool: Transnational cooperation as the playground, in which diversity, creativity and mutual confrontation question constantly our practices and therefore permit the renewal of youth and social policies!

▶ Some conclusions

As a conclusion, this article has tried to demonstrate how the French youth or social worker can easily feel constrained into a valuable but over-strict historic model. It has also referred to the riots as a symptom of something not functioning anymore in the society without pretending that it would necessarily provoke a big change in practices of social work. The article has been through the idea of social experimentation as a response to new social needs and as a track towards innovation.

Basically, my conclusion might sound very simplistic and familiar to you: Transnational cooperation and non-formal education at European level is the way to bring back creativity and innovation in the practice of social and youth work at a local level! It has to be experimented with and transposed into local practice.

This sounds familiar and not innovative to you but does it sound familiar to local youth and social workers, who never worked at European level? What is indeed a routine here might be an innovation there and vice-versa! The challenge is to keep our mind in the sky but our two feet on the ground; otherwise we might lose creativity on the one side or the link to social reality on the other. ■

Notes: ✖

- [1] To explore more in English: *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular education*

- [2] Law of 1905 setting up the framework for the French concept of «laïcité», often translated as "secularism"
To understand more about this law in English: *http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/1905_French_law_on_the_separation_of_Church_and_State#encyclopedia*
In French: *http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/dossiers/laicite/index.shtml*

- [3] « Projet éducatif » in French refers usually to the educational and social plan pursued by an organization. It is usually seen as a global roadmap of the organization, made of values, global objectives...
"Projet pédagogique" is more specific and refers to the educational approach, the methodology used and to some operative objectives, which can be measured. It is more operational and focused on 1 or 2 concrete actions/projects

- [4] Meeting of President Barroso with social innovation experts and stakeholders in Brussels, following a workshop organized by the Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA) on social innovation, January 2009.
http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/81&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr

- [5] Extract from "Social experimentation in Europe, towards a more complete and effective range of the EU actions for social innovation", study by Marjorie Jouen, edited by the independent think tank *Notre Europe*, at the request of the French High Commissioner for active inclusion against poverty for the forum on social experimentation in Europe 21-22 November 2008 in Grenoble

- [6] Let's mention here that the French High Commissioner for active inclusion against poverty and for youth has launched in June and November 2009 a call for projects of social experimentation in the field of youth (specifically for those with less opportunities) on different themes (international mobility being one of them). This call for long-term projects is targeted to NGO's, educational institutions and public bodies, active in the field of youth. It is clearly and fully in-line with social experimentation approach (given an important place to evaluation and conditions of generalization). To understand more in French: *http://www.lagenerationactive.fr/*

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by Nadine Lyamouri Bajja

ENTER!

A 2-year project on
the access to social rights for young people
from disadvantaged neighbourhoods

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has defined "Social Inclusion of Young People" as one of its main work priorities alongside "human rights and democracy", "living together in diverse societies" and "policy approaches and instruments". The aim of this work is to support the integration of excluded young people by ensuring their access to social rights. It consists in working with young people who are excluded, not given the same opportunities and often discriminated against. Amongst these young people are young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Therefore, in the beginning of 2009, the Directorate of Youth and Sport (DYS) launched a 2-year project called ENTER! about Access to Social Rights for Young People from Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods, with the support of the Flemish Authorities and in close cooperation with other directorates of the Council of Europe.

▶ What is ENTER!?

First of all, it is a multidimensional, pluridisciplinary project which involves various activities, various stakeholders and various methods of intervention. At the core of the project stands a long-term training course (LTTC) for youth workers and social workers active in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This course should represent a stable ground for bringing youth work, youth research and youth policy together. It will be accompanied by various seminars and inter-sectorial meetings on themes related to the topic, such as youth counselling and information, gender equality in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, etc. These seminars should enable participants of the LTTC, together with additional participants, to explore these specific aspects and issues further and deepen them in a common reflection. Finally, the 2-year project should lead to a concrete policy document by the Committee of Ministers and which should consolidate the

lessons learned from the project in youth policy and youth work at national and European level for young people and youth workers in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

▶ Why Access to Social Rights?

There are many ways of analysing the situations and challenges faced by young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, many possible sources and intervention possibilities. The realities across Europe covered by social exclusion of young people are very diverse; as diverse as the associations we make about "disadvantaged neighbourhoods". In the current youth policy and youth work debates, we have come to the conclusion that common to all of them is the lack of access to their human rights, and more specifically their social rights. The end result of the exclusion, precariousness, violence and discrimination to which young people are directly and indirectly exposed is a violation of their human rights and a threat to their dignity.

The purpose of youth work and youth policy interventions in these contexts therefore has to include restoring conditions for equality of opportunities; and stopping or reducing accepted levels of tolerance to humiliation and exclusion. In other words, they have to restore dignity and hope. Similarly, youth projects

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have to be themselves supportive of change in the way they engage with young people, in the way they relate to public authorities and in the way that they are managed. They should be truly human rights education projects, in which learning about human rights is also about acting towards making them a reality. The Directorate of Social Cohesion of the Council of Europe is currently working on an approach based on "well-being", which might be another way of responding to the situation. What is needed in a society for all members to feel well? In relation to a rights-based approach, a valid question could be: Is it enough to work on the access to social rights to change the life of young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, e.g. would their challenges be solved if their access to social rights was ensured?

Violence, discrimination, exclusion

It is of course a big challenge to try and define what a disadvantaged neighbourhood is, taking into account 47 perspectives, country specific situations, political, economic and historical aspects. We spent some time in exploring what makes a neighbourhood disadvantaged, what makes a place a neighbourhood, and if we should specifically work on multicultural disadvantaged neighbourhoods or if it would be too specific. As Laurent Bonelli, Senior lecturer at the University of Paris-Ouest Nanterre and member of the reference and support group of the ENTER! Project rightly pointed out, not all disadvantaged neighbourhoods are multicultural, and not all multicultural neighbourhoods are disadvantaged.
Violence, exclusion and discrimination were the 3 common denominators identified to describe the situation faced by the young people we target, independent of the country they live in. It was therefore decided to put the main focus of the project on these three issues.

Who is part of the project?

Such a project can only be successful if it is developed by a pluridisciplinary group of people, structures and institutions with various experiences and perspectives. To start with, the DYS-port organised a preparatory seminar in March 2009 which brought together 20 youth workers, trainers, researchers, and other institutional partners. Together, they set the ground for what the project should and should not be, raising main dilemmas and questions to be considered. The results of this seminar were taken into account for the construction of the project.

Following this, a reference and support group, composed of 10 people from various disciplines and areas of conduct, was created. This group has the mandate *"to monitor the process of the project, to be the think tank and to provide concrete support through their expertise"*. It is com-

posed of researchers, youth workers, trainers, but also representatives of the statutory bodies of the Council of Europe, a Member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, a member of DGIII Social Cohesion of the Council of Europe, Salto Participation, European Youth Forum, etc.

The LTTC – long-term training course
In September 2009, we started a long-term training course on the access to social rights for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. 32 participants from 24 countries were selected to take part in the course. All of them are working directly with young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and to the first residential seminar, they brought with them concrete experiences, challenges and a lot of motivation to bring social change. The course will last until 2011 and includes different aspects:

1. Residential seminars
Participants met for an initial seminar in September 2009 in Strasbourg. One of the main outcomes of it was the development of 32 projects which participants will implement back home over the next year. A consolidation seminar will bring the participants back together in September 2010 in Budapest to look into where participants are with their projects, which competences they still need to develop and what support they need. Finally, an evaluation seminar should take place in 2011 to finalise the process and make conclusions on the LTTC. In between the seminars, participants are provided with a range of support measures to help them overcome challenges and develop competences.

2. Support measures
• **Mentoring:** The team of trainers set up a system of mentoring. Each participant has a mentor who follows their project development closely, provides them with advice and gives them feedback on their projects.
• **Project visits:** In spring 2010, the mentors will visit some of participants' projects or organise regional meetings with the mentees to check how they are going and share the reality of a project itself. This should be an important moment to take stock of how participants are feeling and what needs to be readjusted in the course.
• **Common meeting:** In 2010, we would like to organise a meeting with all stakeholders involved in the course: the participants, some of the young people benefiting from the projects, local authorities, institutional partners etc. This meeting would be a key moment for sharing, but also for making sure that young people are directly involved at some stage in the development of the project, and on a long-term perspective, in the final policy document...
• **E-learning:** Another important element of the course, apart from the residential seminars, is the e-learning platform developed for the LTTC. Once a month, an online unit with

"**they have to restore dignity and hope**"

• **Good Practice**

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concrete tasks is developed by the trainers' team. Participants thus keep working intensively on the course, sometimes having to solve some tasks in groups. This platform helps to link the course to participants' local reality and to enable the transfer of competences developed directly into their youth work practice.

- **Funding:** The European Youth Foundation has defined the 32 projects of participants of the LTTC as a priority area for funding of pilot projects in 2010. This should enable participants to get financial support in their project implementation.
- **Website:** a website for the overall ENTER! Project is currently under construction. It should be a public space for sharing participants' projects with the outside world, but also a place where the young people themselves can have a space to get involved and express themselves about what the ENTER! Project means to them. Finally, this website could also serve as a connexion place between local authorities, various stakeholders involved in the project, plus researchers interested to contribute or share relevant findings.
- **Evaluation and documentation:** In order to keep track of each step of the project, a documentalist collects all information. The documentation of each seminar of the LTTC, but also of the online learning items, will be published and made available. An external evaluator will follow the whole process of the LTTC and evaluate it in relation to set criteria. The ongoing evaluation will help the team and the institution to readjust regularly and improve the course, and the final evaluation should help us to see if our aims were achieved and to take some lessons for the future in this field.

▶ And as a result?

It is of course difficult to know now what exactly will come out of the course and the project. We expect 32 projects to be developed and implemented, thus touching possibly 900 young people in Europe and bringing social change. But in order for the course to be a success, various aspects have to be considered:

- **We need to make sure that the projects are sustainable.** Therefore, a set of criteria for projects with concrete indicators was developed and worked through with participants.

- **The project needs to be carried by more than just the participants:** we believe that it can only work if the local authorities are partners and support the organisations that run the project. Therefore, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe is an important partner. They will try to support participants in putting them in contact, when needed, with representatives of local authorities. The participants also need to be supported by their organisation or association in the project, making it an organisational aim rather than just a personal one.
- **The course should not only focus on the projects.** They are, of course, an important element, but competence development for participants is as well. At the end of the 2 years, they should have developed concrete skills and knowledge to deal with exclusion, discrimination and violence in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Through the mentoring system, participants have the possibility to work on their own competences and what they need, with one-to-one support from the trainers.
- **Finally, participants' experience should be the basis to feed into the policy recommendations which will be developed at the end of the project.** This bottom-up approach is innovative in itself and therefore very promising, as the grass roots level youth work will be combined with the European, institutional perspective in order to develop inclusive and realistic recommendations.

The strength of the ENTER! Project is that it is and will be under construction throughout its development, depending on needs which arise, projects developed, involvement of partners. I believe that this is a positive thing, because the Council of Europe is willing to listen to youth workers' experience and expertise, to accompany them in building bridges and to look together how the institutions and the young people themselves can respond to exclusion, violence and discrimination in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. We hope that both the projects at local level and the policy recommendations will bring some relevant, sustainable social change.

As Rui Gomes, head of the education and training division of the DYS told participants of the LTTC: *"A good carpenter is one who gets the idea that he is not just building a door, but a cathedral." In the same sense, participants should not just aim to develop their projects, but to contribute to the protection and respect of Human Rights in Europe."*

For more information on the project you can also visit the website: http://enter.opencontent.it/eng ▪

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by Lilit Asatryan

Quilting and Social Cohesion in Armenia

The Mission of the Armenian Young Women's Association's (AYWA) is to lead social change and to achieve equality of opportunity and reward for all Armenian women, as an integral element in creating a just and productive society for all.

AYWA envisions a sound community without marginalized people, which is gender just, culturally plural, socially and economically equitable and politically participatory, peaceful, democratic, secular, and ecologically sane.

Based on human values of compassion, caring, nurturing and sharing, where women, men and children enjoy the basic rights to live in dignity and security and attain fuller growth and development with autonomy, where the communities and people are the master of their productive resources, living environment, and where social justice, equality, freedom, truth and love reign forever.

The involvement of young women in public life through leadership development, democracy education, and social inclusion is the daily agenda for AYWA. During the past years AYWA has implemented many social projects in Armenia at regional and national levels. These projects are aimed at the development of personal skills for young women in the regions who then use them in social settings and to earn for themselves.

One of the bright examples of these implemented projects is the "To mend life with needle and thread" project supported by the Canadian International Development Agency and Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO). In the Quilting project two quilting studios were opened. The first studio opened in Yerevan in 2009 following a training programme for eight women. The second studio opened in Akhtala, Lori Region. The trainings were provided by CESO volunteer advisers Donna Denham and Joan Gillespie.

► Why Quilting?

Quilting is an art, a type of sewing which has a unique method. Quilting is very common in the US, Canada and some European countries. It is also called "patchwork". If you are a quilter you will know you have to use small and various kinds of pattern pieces in your quilt. How colourful your handcraft is, how extraordinary it is, determines if you have managed to create a masterpiece. The quilting products being made include home accessories: place mats, table runners, bread basket liners, cushions, wall hangings; ornaments, stuffed animals, tote bags and purses, passport folders and cell phone holders.

The project beneficiaries are young women aged between 19-35 years old. The overwhelming majority of the project beneficiaries, before project launch, saw their role in community life as housewives and mothers only. They lost their jobs due to the financial crisis and survived awaiting their husband's money transfers from abroad where they are working from season to season. Now these women are working independently. They become "Quilting Bees" while working together on a common big product. They work as bees. They all are full of motivation, enthusiasm and new ideas. And they are proud of the work they do. Gayane, a 21 year old project beneficiary said: "Firstly, I have not believed in this initiative and had a lot of doubts, but

• Good Practice

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now I realize that I have got a new profession, employment, friends and a network, as well as I am earning money, which is quite important for me and my family. I would like to express my thanks to Armenian Young Women's Association for this project implementation which is very important for Armenian women and for our region, in particular."

**What were these young women doing
before they became involved in this project?**
They were unemployed. There was no opportunity for them to work because of lack of workplaces (especially in the region); also they didn't have enough qualifications. Besides this, the global economic crisis has created some new problems for people. Lusine 27 year old project beneficiary says: "Owing to this project I am sure that I am participating in the social life of our community. I am realizing the role of women in the society; I have awareness of women rights and opportunities. I hope that this project will cover all Armenia, it is indeed very useful and a good initiative".

Now the Quilting project helps these young women not only to work, to realize their wonderful ideas but also helps them to be socially active and to take part in public life, be a real part of society, participate in decision-making processes realizing their rights and responsibilities in society.
Not only quilting skills but also civic education is provided to these women in both the training course, as well as within the framework of their main quilting activity.

In the near future AYWA will establish another quilting centre in the Vayots Dzor (Southern) region of the Republic of Armenia. This will support the widening of the Quilting project – a project which really has a positive result on making young women socially inclusive.

▶ Puppets

Another way for AYWA to include young women and men in social life is the Puppet Theatre project. Since 2005 the Youth Puppet Theatre established by AYWA has performed many times, in different places from the capital Yerevan to small

towns, villages, and hard-to-reach communities. Initially, the Puppet Theatre was performed by professional actors; however during the years, members of AYWA got relevant qualifications and they are now the key figures in the performances.

Youth Puppet Theatre actively participated in the "All Different – All Equal" European Youth Campaign, too. More specifically, the Youth Puppet Theatre has taken world famous tales and changed them to reflect European values: Children's rights, Women's Rights, Human Rights, Participation. Thus, watching the performance the audience (young people and children) enjoy the show and at the same time get new knowledge on the specific subject and "take their own place" in the tale.

Through the Youth Puppet Theatre a lot of young people and children (by the way, the performances for young people and children are separate) have become more socialized into the society. Youth Puppet Theatre on wheels makes the life of young people and children more enjoyable and at the same time uses the opportunity to make them responsible citizens who are aware of their rights and possible ways of participation.

The project also promotes socially inclusive conditions for those young actors who work in the Youth Puppet Theatre; earning for themselves and making a number of young people's lives happier.

For more details about the project visit AYWA website: www.aywa.am, or contact Ms Lilit Asatryan – the President of Armenian Young Women's Association: lilit.asatryan@aywa.am ■

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by Rita Bergstein

Does Youthpass help you to find a job???

When I was asked to write an article with the focus on answering this question, immediately a lot of aspects popped up in my mind. When starting to map the article it turned out that I want to tackle a lot of aspects and of course raise questions for you the reader. So let me take you on a journey to see what Youthpass is, how it contributes to the current developments in youth policy and education policy developments. Finally I would like to raise questions and find some answers for the sake of young people's future.

▶ What is Youthpass?

In theory Youthpass is the official validation instrument to recognise non-formal learning within the Youth in Action programme. In practice it means a lot for the time being. The most important message is that Youthpass is much more than a certificate. Very clearly from the intention of the people involved in developing Youthpass, the process is the key for what we might call successful "Youthpassing". The Youthpass process is a path from experience to recognition of what is gained; it is a reflection process as an integral part of an activity such as a Youth Exchange, European Voluntary Service project or a training course. Project organisers are dealing with learning in their individual projects – learning at different levels: at the individual, at the group and at the project level. And at the end of such a project including this reflection Youthpass invites participants and the project organisers to evaluate and describe the learning outcomes. This common description finds its place in the Youthpass. Finally the Youthpass Certificate is a document for participants which describes their learning outcome in an understandable way. The European Key Competences provide the framework for the description.

Is this a description you can link to your perception of Youthpass so far? Did you ever discuss it with anybody? Did you have a chance to talk to people who are already working with Youthpass pro-

cesses? What kind of further questions do you have?

▶ Who receives Youthpass Certificates?

Looking at the reality of Youth exchanges, European Voluntary Service and Training Courses the people who received a Youthpass Certificate so far are:

• Young people from various backgrounds who did or did not finish school, who are doing an apprenticeship, or engaged in another type of training measure...
• Youth workers and youth leaders in various professional or voluntary contexts as well as trainers being active at national and/or European level.
So far more than 45 000 (young) people already received it.

By the way do you know someone who received a Youthpass Certificate? Have you ever asked if he or she has used it already outside the youth field or how he or she thinks about it? Did it change their perception, for instance, in terms of looking at learning?

• Wide Angle

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▶ Why does Youthpass exist and what are the aims of Youthpass?

The core idea of the Youthpass development can be clearly linked to the developments of the Lifelong Learning strategy at European level. You will find there a holistic view of learning; taking into account all different kinds of education and learning related to an individual: formal, non-formal and informal. With the Lifelong Learning strategy, the European Union made a clear shift from looking at systems to focus much more on individuals and their personal and professional development. Of course if you look deeper into the programmes and policy initiatives there is a very strong economic dimension behind it too. If you follow these thoughts of course Youthpass has potential to foster employability for the future of young people. Making young people aware of their potential and chances at the individual level, making learning opportunities much more obvious and strengthening their self-esteem, contributes very much to their growth. We turn to answer finally the question "Why then the Youthpass development?" For the initiators it turned out that the whole learning potential of activities within the Youth in Action Programme was not visible at all. This in some areas leads to the insight that not a lot of actors using the Youth in Action Programme were taking part in discussions linked with education policy development or even the development of social policies. But a lot of important and good things are happening in the international youth work field which need to be incorporated in policy discussions and not just at the individual level. So the idea was born to take care of the recognition of individual learning processes, of social recognition of the youth work field, of the contribution to active citizenship and to employability of young people. Obviously in the light of current Lifelong Learning policy, the main focus was given to the individual.

What do you identify as the major learning potential in (international) youth work? What is your experience with making it visible? To what extent do you have the feeling your work is recognised within society? Do you have experience with evaluating young peoples' activities with a focus on employability?

Having read all this you can draw your attention to several aspects which need to be discussed when looking at Youthpass. Of course you can discuss the educational value of looking at learning in the context of youth work: one can discuss the shift from systems to individual in the policy developments and what this means economically; and you can discuss in general if youth work should anyway be seen in such a context. Here I focus more on the situation of young people and to the

question if Youthpass can help some to create jobs for themselves as entrepreneurs, some to develop their career path to something they really want to do in their life and some to find finally a job and to make a difference in the labour market with the experience and competences they gained?

▶ What is the situation of young people in Europe?

If you have a look into the new "EU strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering" you can find statistical data that 80 % of young people between 25 and 29 have completed secondary education. At the same time one fifth of children do not have basic standards of literacy and numeracy and six million young people leave school without any qualifications. If you go deeper into the statistics – reported by the Member States – you will find much more data which are quite shocking, concerning the social situation of young people and children. But I guess you may have young people in your mind
• who are suffering from not finding any job after following a so-called "good educational path" or a lot of internships – key word «precarious», or
• who are suffering from missing education caused by social problems in the family, or
• who never had different opportunities during their educational path – caused by geographical or social disadvantages.
And at the same time you can find in some Member States that the demographics are seriously problematic as there will not be enough children born in future to stabilise the social systems. To me this is very strange and contradictory when looking at investments in education for all young people, in the effort Member States are making to develop education systems, or providing opportunities to overcome social problems in the countries – which are mainly linked to education policy and social services.

▶ The contribution of the youth field to change the situation of young people and to current policy developments

NGOs working with young people – no matter if they are working with disadvantaged young people or so called "normal" young people - are dealing with their social and educational situation. And young people organise themselves in youth groups and initiatives, no matter where they are coming from or where they are going – sometimes they do it just for fun, sometimes with a good reason for example to change something in society or sometimes even to learn something specific. In all different ways NGOs in the youth work field have a lot of knowledge about the situation of young people – I would say more than anyone else – and in a lot of cases they consciously or unconsciously contribute to the well-being of young people. The young people often know best what goes wrong and what

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motivate and support him or her to think about their learning, what they want in life and finally to describe their learning outcomes.

With this different approach – developed in the non-formal education context - a different approach to learning and education is available. This is present nowadays in education discussions – at the European level, more and more at national level and sometimes regional and local levels.

they would like to change; and on different levels they try to do so. But of course one can ask here immediately if young people are consulted about or involved in changes in society? Are they involved in discussing, creating and developing future policies? Do they really have opportunities to contribute to changes in education policies – in youth policy?

▶ One answer is recognition of youth work

Of course to bring about change and to have influence on changes in society there are a lot of steps needed. We see the Youthpass strategy with its strong emphasis on recognition of non-formal learning and education as one important answer and field of influence within the Youth in Action programme. The different levels of aims focus and foster different levels of impact in society.

Young people taking part in a Youth in Action activity who have the chance to learn a lot, who take a big personal step forward in Europe and maybe in their life have the opportunity to hold a Youthpass Certificate in their hands, should get the opportunity for a conscious learning process and be enabled to talk about their learning. Organisations using the Youthpass process encourage and support young people to recognise and name what they gained in an activity, in a project. For sure this will contribute to raising their self-confidence.

The organisations which have used the Youthpass process in an international partnership have had the opportunity once more to reflect on their contribution to education and learning of young people. And at the same time they use Youthpass maybe in their environment to present their impact on young people's learning to others. They might use it to discuss about the situation of young people, their great work, the resources they need, the wish to contribute in developing a local/regional community further…

Youthpass provides at least an opportunity to look at young people's learning in a different way than the usual "schoolish" one – I am not saying that school is always bad but there are prejudices existing and it will still take a while to change education towards something much more flexible and open. Of course it needs an effort to follow the young person and to

Which discussions about development of education policies are you involved in or aware of? How do they look on young people? How do they involve experience gained outside the formal system? How do you think one should make his/her learning in general visible?

So coming back now after this journey into the Youthpass world to the question "Does Youthpass help to find a job?" I guess you imagine that I will say "Yes, of course it does sometimes, but not always and it depends on the situation…" And so let me explain it a bit further here…

Quality aspects of Youthpass are raising awareness about learning in an appropriate way, the competence-focus (especially on the Key Competences), the resource-orientation, the dialogue process, the open-result orientation and a focus on first ideas for the future. If these quality elements are realised in a Youth Exchange, EVS project or a Training Course I would say the Youthpass process could be very successful. The person who receives it will be very proud about it and of course might use it to apply for a job. And then Youthpass might make a difference… So it might help, but it is not an assured effect! ■

> **" Youthpass provides at least an opportunity to look at young people's learning in a different way than the usual "schoolish" one "**

• Wide Angle

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by Des Burke

Ensuring
Quality and Safety
in International Youth Exchanges

How safe are young people when they participate in exchanges or volunteer in different organisations? Sadly it seems they are not as safe as they should be. The communities they live in and the temporary communities they form or join during international events need to be places of safety and security. Those who are affected by abuse, bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour, are excluded from full participation and its benefits. If we are to ensure full, safe and equitable inclusion then we need to spend some time considering the issues raised in Des's article. Thanks to Des for writing and to the Working Group for their important contribution.

▶ Introduction

In recent times there has been increasing identification of the importance of issues relating to risk and protection of young people. In the last edition of Coyote in the article by Lilliam Solheim and Adriana Armenta: *'A Youth Campaign against Violence'*, we heard that violence against children and youth is a global issue that cuts across societies, cultures and countries. This issue has also been discussed in the UK journal The Lancet.

Those of us working in the Youth in Action Programme are conscious of the need to build safety measures into our Programme. Youth in Action is the Programme the European Union set up for young people. It aims to inspire a sense of active European citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans and to involve them in shaping the Union's future. Youth in Action supports mobility of young people within and beyond the EU's borders, non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue, and encourages the inclusion of all young people, regardless of their educational, social and cultural background.

Youth for Europe exchanges are one of the actions that are used to meet the objectives of the Programme. Thousands of young people travel to different countries to meet and take part in projects with their partners each year. The benefits and opportunities deriving from these youth exchange projects to young people and youth workers alike are innumerable.

We pride ourselves that the Youth in Action Programme is well-run and that there are safeguards in place to ensure safety. However we know that no one working with young people can be complacent. There are risks that must be managed. We still have work to do if we are to ensure that these risks are minimised.
Protection and safety of young participants have been declared to be important principals for international youth exchange projects in the Youth in Action Programme.

Applying standards of good practice requires development of materials, sharing of good practice, training and awareness raising for those taking part in the Programme.

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▶ Working group

A working group of National Agencies and the European Commission on training in Risk and Young Person Protection in International Youth Exchange has been working on the subject. The National Agencies of Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Poland, Ireland, Norway, Portugal, UK, Italy and Turkey have taken part.

The overall purpose of this group is: *"To reduce risk for young people on YOUTH in Action Programme Exchanges"*. The working group brings together perspectives from the different countries to develop resources and training that improve the quality of youth exchanges.

- **With the introduction of Youth in Action across Europe in 2007 young people from thirteen years of age are participating in international exchanges.**
- **Legislation and Services for young people vary greatly across the countries that participate. There are also huge cultural differences.**
- **The age of sexual consent ranges from 13 years to 18.**
- **In some countries people working with young people either as professionals or as volunteers must undergo police checks.**

▶ The Guidelines for Good Practice

The European Commission and the National Agencies have been working with youth organisations, experienced youth workers and trainers to develop and share good practice in youth exchanges. In 2003 a seminar was held in Portlaoise in Ireland. Experienced youth workers from France, Germany, Greece, Sweden, Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Ireland met at the seminar. During the seminar the youth workers established a series of checklists for child protection in international youth work. The lists are aimed at preventive and crisis management activities and refer to the preparation and selection of leaders, involvement of parents, police checks, accommodation etc. The checklist was published as *'Child Safety and Youth Exchange Programmes Guidelines for Good Practice'* in 2003. The European Commission then translated and distributed the document in twenty Community languages.

The guidelines have been updated since then and are now available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/youth/focus/doc/protection_and_safety/safety_and_protection_guidelines_good_practice_en.pdf

Other linguistic versions are also to be found at:
http://ec.europa.eu/youth in the section Protection and Safety

Youth workers were concerned about specific issues pertaining to international youth work which included:
- **Insurance**
- **Legal responsibilities and obligations of youth workers**
- **Alcohol and substance abuse**
- **Health & Safety**
- **Researched evidence of the prevalence of abuse and neglect of young people**
- **Under reporting of abuse**

Following the introduction of the Guidelines training in their use was given in Malahide for national agency staff and in Paris for project promoters.

▶ The Country Guide

The Country Guide gives a quick reference guide for leaders and young people who are planning to have an exchange project in another country.
The Guide was developed by the network of National Agencies of the YOUTH in Action Programme. This network has a unique insight into international youth exchanges across Europe. This Country Guide is aimed at improving the information available to young people and those working with them about countries that they intend to visit as part of a Youth in Action Programme exchange project. This information specifically relates to youth work and to information that will be of use during a youth exchange. The publication aims to enhance the experience of international youth exchange for young people as a safe, effective and enjoyable learning experience. The Country Guide is produced with the Support of the EU Commission. The source of all of the information is the network of National Agencies of the Youth Programme.

The Country Guide (Risk and Young Person Protection in the European Union) is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/youth/pdf/doc1236_en.pdf

▶ Safety in Youth Exchanges

Chris Gould CEO of the charity Childsafe and former Police Detective Chief Superintendent has carried out research into risk in the area of international travel for young people. He has participated in several training seminars in the framework of the Youth and Youth in Action Programmes. Chris Gould brings a different perspective - one that youth leaders do not often hear.

At our trainers' seminar in Antalya Turkey in 2009 Chris gave a talk on safety for young people from a police perspective. His focus is on prevention of criminal acts against young people.

• **Wide Angle**

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Every year millions of young people travel to take part in gap year volunteering, language schools, sports and youth club trips. International youth exchanges form a part of this. Chris believes that for many people working with young people it is time to take a reality check about abuse of young people. Chris carried out an international study of police forces with UK Home Office and EU Commission funding. Out of 2000 cases of abuse in international travel less than 1% were reported to any law enforcement agency. In Chris' area – Avon and Somerset in the UK, 5000 cases of abuse per year are reported. Chris Gould is very experienced with dealing directly with offenders and has built up a picture of how paedophiles operate. As safeguards are put in place, offenders are driven to seek new places to go to gain access to young people. Chris believes that there are many such people now operating in the world of youth travel. Abuse is a horrific experience. There is a low risk of abuse in statistical terms but when it does happen it is of great significance for the young person involved.

Child Safe Booklets are to be found via the websites:
www.child-safe.org.uk
www.travelsafe.info.com

▶ Protection and safety of participants

The European Commission places a high priority on safety in the Youth in Action Programme:
In its simplest form, protection and safety address every young person's right not to be subjected to harm. In that perspective, there is no issue that is not potentially in some way related to young person's safety and protection. Protection in this context covers all kinds of inappropriate behaviour, including sexual and moral harassment, but also intercultural problems, insurance, accidents, fire, alcohol and substance abuse, neglect, bullying, degrading treatment or punishment, etc.

The fundamental objective is to ensure that all those who work with young people recognize a duty to safeguard the protection of young people and are able to fulfill this duty. To this end each promoter participating in the Youth in Action Programme should have in place effective procedures and arrangements to promote and guarantee the welfare and protection of young people. This will help to enhance the young people's experience as a safe, effective and enjoyable learning experience.

▶ Awareness Raising

To raise standards, awareness raising on the subject of safety needs to be provided for many youth leaders. A training module is being developed. It is based on an existing awareness raising module developed by the National Youth Council of Ireland. Work is being done to adapt this module for international work. The training has been piloted with trainers experienced in international work. The module is intended to be delivered in two short sessions. This module is designed so that it can be incorporated into training events that address other subjects as well as risk awareness.

▶ Training of trainers

European trainers are key people to reach youth leaders in international work.
Resources of the training and cooperation plans that are available to National Agencies in the Youth in Action Programme can be deployed for this purpose.

Quality standards and safety management are facets of good youth work practice both at home and in international work.

Awareness raising is delivered in a way that also brings practical ideas for managing international youth exchanges.

In piloting the Guidelines and the awareness modules experienced trainers such as Clement Dupuis (France), Kathy Schroeder (Netherlands), Gearóid O' Maoilmhicíl and Louise Monaghan (Ireland), Jose Soares (Portugal) and Jo Claeys (Belgium) have participated in this work.

▶ Introduction of the New Awareness Modules

Training of trainers events are being prepared to introduce the modules to a new groups of trainers.   These trainers will then use the module in national and international trainings with youth leaders around Europe. We aim to maximize the number of leaders who receive this training, particularly from countries where there is no similar training available. This will require cooperation from trainers and from National Agencies. There will be two further training of trainers seminars during 2010 - in Bulgaria and in Malta. Applications from youth leaders for these training events will be made via the National Agencies of the Youth in Action Programme.

Des Burke is the Programme Manager for Youth Affairs in Léargas that provides the National Agency for the Youth in Action Programme in Ireland. Léargas operates under the aegis of the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in the Department of Health and Children. Des is a member of the working group on risk and young person protection that is composed of representatives of Youth in Action national agencies and the European Commission. ■

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• Wide Angle

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by Leo Kaserer

Facebook and Co. connects people!
A laptop or a perfect computer
instead of an old fashioned youth centre?

▶ **The use of social networks by young people: the advantages and the risks**

Social networks have become a recognized medium of communication and information. They help people from all around world, from different cultures and backgrounds to communicate easily, to keep in touch and to share information and data (pictures, movies…). What started with an experiment in the United States went on to become the most known social network. Individuals started it but then companies, political parties, groups… jumped in to use it to spread their purpose. And now it is part of the communication of modern society.

There are many advantages to this; old friendships can be found again, you can keep in touch, be informed regularly, easily, quickly, you can share, ideas, pictures,… and you can do it for free or little cost.

It has its advantages but as with all internet services it comes with some risks. This would include the creation of false identities. Some do it just for fun, but also to leave their real identity aside; maybe because of a challenging background, a partner or friendship or because they can describe themselves in an ideal way as humans tend to do when given the chance.

A challenge as well is identity theft (hacking); invading people's privacy and widening the opportunity to harass others. Because of the size of networking sites there is easy access to personal information with the risk of misuse. It opens up gateways for paedophiles and stalkers. This is one of the dangers that we as social and youth workers have to educate the youth of modern society about. The information and communication we deliver should follow a high standard of pedagogical work. Values should be addressed and respected.

Social networking sites can give an illusion of reality. Humans have the tendency to present their best side and not expose their weakness which might affect real relationships and cause individuals to become anti-social. Young people might spend a lot of their time in the virtual world which could cause damage in the form of addiction, diminished language skills and other health issues.

By the time adults get involved more and more in Facebook, Twitter and the like, youngsters and especially children are getting into something which might become the more popular use of new media: it seems that the booming sites for youngsters are a mix of social networking with online gaming (Club Penguin, Habbo Hotel, Stardoll, Poptropica…).

▶ **Why not use a social network to get in contact with young people also at a local level?**

I have the impression that a youth centre, a youth club or youth NGO addresses the interest and attention towards youngsters at a limited level. As social networks are so popular nowadays you are able to reach more of the young population at a lower cost.

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Your organisation could offer up-dated information about their aims and activities, invitations and advertising can be forwarded easily. Access to videos, pictures and other material can be made to attract youngsters. Networks can also be used to educate the youth on values, opinions and concepts of living together. Sites, articles, communications and information with a doubtful content have to be detected as such.

Networking sites help people with the same interests and views to become part of a group or movement which could help with communications between different cultures. Some of the most important movements include anti-racism and environmental protection issues.

▶ The role of social network in the daily working life of a social or youth worker

Beside the points on information and updates we already mentioned, there are other important qualities of social networks for daily work.
I presume that some of the profound desires of young people (the pursuit of a successful life, together with others, the quest for success and acceptance, the aspiration for recognition and the feeling of being important and valuable, the longing for a positive future) haven't changed.
The virtual world might offer to satisfy some of these needs. Very easily you can become part of a group; you can find people with the same interest or opinion and have the chance to find someone with whom to talk. This is very interesting. But is it a true group? Or is it still virtual?

It also makes it easier to establish contact between youngsters and social services and helps to reduce the barriers between them. Youngsters would not have to be there physically in the first place and would not have to reveal their identity. You could keep the counselling anonymous.

What do you think about that idea?
There is the challenge that in times of an information society the ones with less access and the capacity to use new media and not having the knowledge to use them may become more excluded. In our work we have to guarantee to have methods and facilities to close this growing gap.

▶ Did the use of the social network change the relationship with your target group?

Social networks could reveal a lot about your organisation, but also about yourself. Sometimes it could reveal more than you would like to share with your youngsters and clients.

While Facebook for example, offers to the opportunity to "become a friend" of someone; your relationship is automatically
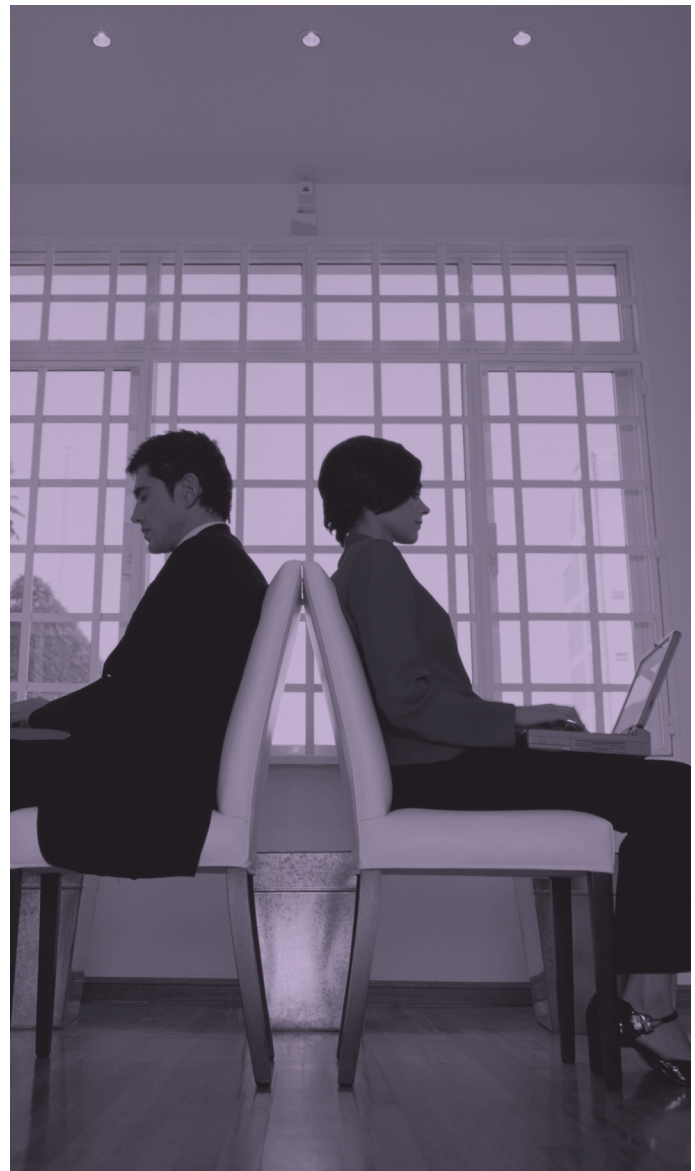
defined through this pattern. I see two important aspects in this. The first one is the relationship between youth workers and youngsters. By this process the relationship which is a professional one, changes from «youthworker and client» to «friends». It could mislead the youngster or client in relation to what you offer as an organisation and/or youth worker. It is not friendship in the first place we offer, it is professional support and advice. I believe it has to be pointed out very clearly what we are offering and what the individual roles are.

The second one is the meaning and quality of friendship. In Facebook you have just to click and to accept a "friend" and you are in a friendship. But this has nothing to do with the appropriate meaning and values of friendship. Youngsters will tell you in your work, how many friends they have. You know their background and you understand that they count their networking friends. Friendship means to have time, to make an effort, you have to meet, to share, to work on the relationship. A friend stands beside you when things are difficult. It is not just to be online or not, sharing pictures and stories.

• Wide Angle

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The kind of social network used by young people in your experience

There is a huge variety of social networks in Europe and the world. Some of them are more regionally or used in language areas, some are used by different groups and ages (netlog, tuenti, bebo). And there are worldwide ones, like msn, hi 5 and myspace. Facebook seemed to be used by certain types of people, but lately it seems to be spreading into all age groups and social groups. It has become the most important social network. It is a very important player in opinion making and communication of daily life of millions of (young) people around the globe.

Experiences to share…

It is not always true what you read!
Sometimes youngsters have competitions to see who can fool the most people.

They like to create false identities, movements and groups. They sell none existent goods, announce and invite people to events which do not exist or offer relationships with virtual created identities. The more people they get to believe in their created idea or false identity the better fun it is for them.

Responsibility of youth workers
The huge potential and capacity of social networking ideas has to be recognised by social and youth workers. We have to learn to use them in an efficient and effective way. We have to be aware and to learn about the possible impact in our society and the lives of our young people. We still do not know enough about the effect of new media and how they influence our social behaviour. We can see or imagine the financial, individual and political benefit for some of the providers. But we can't detect if there are any other hidden plans or purposes set by the ones who offer these services.

It seems to be scary if we think about the deeper impact of social networks. New ways of being and communicating are created. As already mentioned you have to have a certain capacity of using the sites properly. The fast, outgoing and smart ones are "in".

As it was years ago when cell phones stepped into our lives, then the internet and some years ago social networks, now new technical devices make it possible to have access to our messages and communication any time. For many youngsters life is…well have you seen the movie Matrix? Scary, isn't it?

Social networks attract hundreds of millions of people. The rules, the content and ways of communication are arranged and controlled by a few companies. Wikipaedia, Google search and the social networks are telling us what is right, in and appropriate. The content of user's pages, groups and

forums promoting controversial topics such as pro-anorexia and holocaust denial are not detected and removed easily.

Even though social networking seems to connect and have a relational spark, the virtual world never could replace the quality of personal face-to-face interaction. Personal contact with young people is vital for functioning youth and social work. For this reason we also have to continue to work on the intellectual and physical mobility of our society. Our quality work should fill the gaps, questions and orientation young people are looking for. Social networking for sure can't!
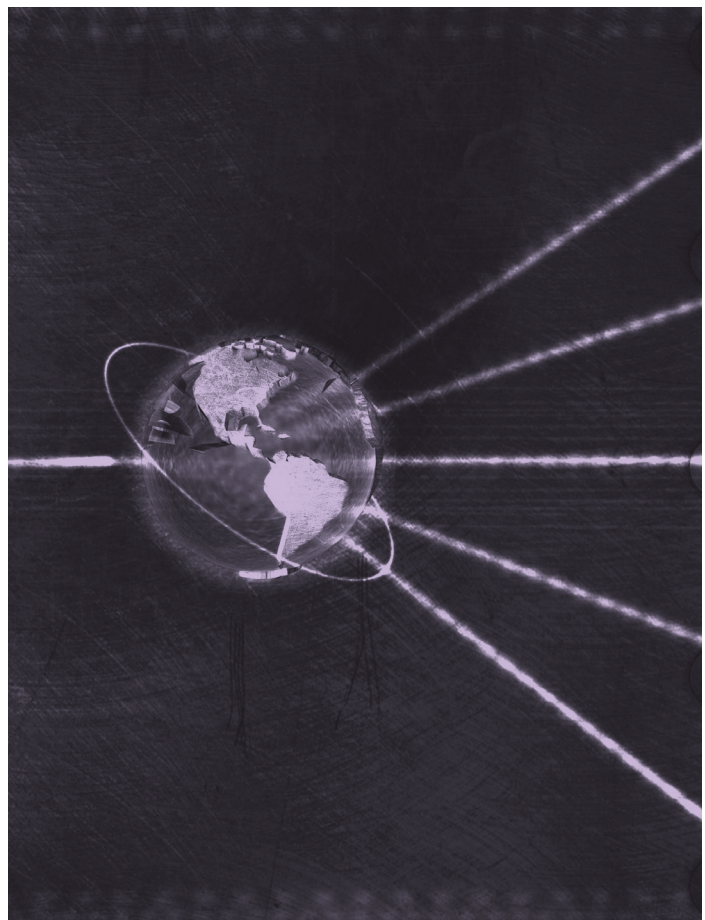
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by Nik Paddison

The Art
of Co-Working

I have spent a lot of time working with trainers and youth workers in the last years, conducting observations of their work, group mentoring sessions, supervision and support work. Something I have noticed is the difficulty many people have in working with other people. There seems to be an inbuilt assumption that by sticking youth workers or trainers in the same room as each other they will do what they do, and do it well. In reality the opposite is often true.

Co-working is something that as youth workers and or trainers in the youth field we often take for granted. We rarely work alone, and over the course of time we work with quite a large number of different people. Yet each one of these people has a different character and temperament, attitude and belief, a different understanding of professionalism and different ways of working. Working with another human being is actually quite a complex thing.

As a youth worker and trainer I like to develop a group contract / working agreement with groups. Rarely in my past did I give the same consideration to the people with whom I was co-working. 'We are professionals', 'we don't need to think about this kind of thing', 'surely good co-working is automatic', 'we will just work and it will be great'.

As a participant and as a trainer I have experienced the trainer team on a seminar or training working long into the night, every night. Huddled in a backroom somewhere away from the participants, fighting and arguing, talking in circles, and trying to find solutions to this or that problem! Sometimes it's a tough seminar or a tough group but often it is because the team has not actually considered who they are co-working with, regardless of whether they are friends or not, in reality they are professional strangers.

As much as it is important to get a group to work together it is equally important, perhaps even more so, for the people delivering the training to be able to work together. We are coming from different organisations, countries, cultures, gender, ability, experience, and so on... We need to build our relationships, to get to know the other worker(s) professionally.

We need to challenge our assumptions and discover who we are working with and try to understand how we actually operate ourselves.

Below is a selection of questions from a questionnaire I developed at Triagolnik – Centre for Non-Formal Education, Macedonia. I took and adapted the questions from different sources, and this list is being used at the beginning of every new co-working relationship in Triagolnik, both for youth workers and trainers.

• How do you deal with excessive talkers?
• How do you feel about long periods of silence in a group?
• What do you do when strong emotions are expressed?
• What do you do when someone comes in late?
• I would like to learn more about... ...during this training
• Are you more nurturing or confronting in style?
• What is not negotiable for you as a co-worker?
• My signal to ask for my co-worker's help is...

This is just a short selection, there are many others and in reality the type of questions need to reflect your own organisation or type of work. The process of asking ourselves these kinds of questions about our individual working methods raises our consciousness about what we do and how we do it. The next step would be to share your answers with your co-worker(s) and explore how you work. Let's not kid ourselves, we will still get into conflict and have problems from time to time with our co-workers but at least we stand a better chance of being able to deal constructively with the difficulties that arise during our work together.

• Wide Angle

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The following Model does not give answers to all the above issues about co-working, it is a model that highlights some of the most common mistakes that are made among co-workers. It is designed to help us be self-critical of how we are working with our colleagues and it provides an opportunity to explore how they are working with us. It is a tool for reflecting on the quality of our working relationships and can be used to discover what we sometimes do wrong. Although originally designed for teaching and training staff who work in pairs it was later also used by youth workers. It is also applicable for groups of co-workers and can be adapted to probably any work environment.

▶ Co-Working Models©

Created and Developed by Nik Paddison 2009

The Model below is written in the context of a pair of co-workers in the context of conducting training:

Working in Parallel

This is where the co-workers are aiming in the same direction doing all the right things but there is a lack of open and honest communication between them. They have a surface level working relationship. The level and quality of their training is based on what we might call «head knowledge» but there is little or no emotional connection in this relationship. It can also be a sign of poor preparation, neither is completely sure of where the other is going because the training programme has not been developed enough between them or talked through in enough detail.

Typically what I have witnessed here is the trainers each carefully preparing their part of the programme independently of the other. When they come to the actual training, the first introduces an activity or theory, it is effective and achieves what it needs to. The second trainer facilitates the next hour of the session, again it is effective and achieves what it needs to. But there is no link between the first part and the second part, except that it is to the same group, on the same day and fits within the overall training subject. The specific topic has just jumped from one aspect to another. There is no flow or rhythm for the group to follow, they receive information on each part but it is not linked and so it is for them to make the connection – which in reality rarely happens!

Working in Conflict
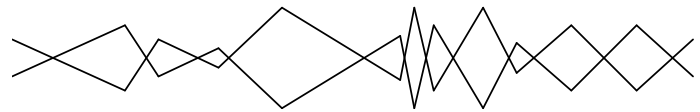
Here there is a conflict between the co-workers; there is a relationship breakdown and therefore a communication breakdown. Neither has confidence or trust in the other. Each trainer is focussing on the work of the other; what mistakes are they making? What are they doing wrong? 'I could do that better...' It is difficult to hide any conflict between co-workers from a group however subtle the conflict. It directly affects the quality of the training and if not quickly resolved will influence the nature and ability of the group to develop and learn.

I was in a trainer team some years ago where two co-workers were in conflict. Both had very different but strong personalities. In front of the group they acted professionally, but behind the scenes, they were in open war. Each one was sure that they were right and the better trainer. Every team meeting lasted for hours and hours because they would not listen to each other, they had no concept of communication in each other's company. On the surface this did not affect the participants but it did affect the quality of the training. All the trainer team had to endure this conflict and the long meetings were focussed on these two and not the participants or the programme.
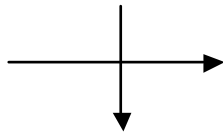
Working in Competition
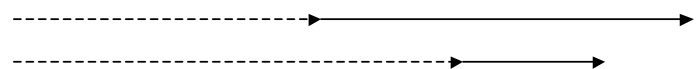
In this context one or both co-workers do not believe in or accept the abilities of the other. Each is striving to be the lead worker and to show the group, themselves or the other, who is the better trainer. As one does something «amazing», so the other responds with something more «amazing» and so on... The focus of the trainers is on the self and being better than the other, not on the development of the group. This is not necessarily on a conscious level, from my observation it is usually happening without the individuals being aware of what they are doing.

This is perhaps the model I have observed the most over the years. It is especially common with those of us with big egos. One trainer I worked with was constantly looking for bigger and better ways of presenting activities to the group. It seemed at times that the most important thing for him was to be the most popular trainer with the group, it did not seem to matter about the quality of the training. This was not done consciously, yet whatever his colleagues did he had to go one step further, do it bigger and better, and be more creative and energetic. The training became a competition of personalities, rather than a development and learning of the subject.

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Working at Cross Purposes

Working at cross purposes means "to misunderstand or to act counter to one another without intending it" (Webster's Dictionary). There is a lack of communication between the co-workers. The trainers have witnessed a situation or incident and each tries to resolve it in their own way but without understanding what the other is trying to do. Both trainers know where they want to go but assume the other will just follow or is thinking in the same way.

Another aspect of this is when the trainers are attending to a number of small groups and each trainer is giving slightly different or even contradictory information to each group. One trainer gives the instructions for an activity and splits the participants into small groups. The second trainer then floats among the small groups unconsciously giving contradictory instructions. The first trainer is also floating and continues to give his or her original instructions. Confusion is created and the trainers and the group have to sort it all out in order to complete the activity. While this does not have catastrophic effects on the participants and they are able to complete the task, the quality of what they achieve is poor and not what it could be.

Working in Shadow

This example sees one co-worker far more experienced than the other. It does not show the experienced supporting the inexperienced, instead it shows the experienced trainer dominating all aspects of the work. This includes preparation and actual training time. The experienced trainer is very visible and the inexperienced is either not visible or is overshadowed in all they do. The role of the experienced should be to support the inexperienced in trying new things and gaining valuable experience.

I was observing a colleague trainer working once in this kind of scenario. There were just two trainers. The more experienced trainer totally dominated the session, her co-worker might as well not have been there. He was virtually invisible, his parts of the session were not only minimal but also overshadowed by her greater experience and larger than life personality. He sat next to the flip chart making little or no effort to engage himself in the process or the group. She on the other hand was unstoppable, she was totally immersed with the process and engaged with the group. It did not occur to her for a moment that she had totally excluded her co-worker or that she had a responsibility toward his development.

Working as a Rescuer

This scenario is very similar to 'Working in Shadow'. The difference here is that one of the trainers is constantly stepping in to rescue the other trainer, whether they need it or not. Each time one of the co-workers starts to explain an exercise or deliver a theory the other co-worker steps in. They do this either during the explanation or they repeat in their own words afterwards what was said by the first trainer. There is no cooperation here but it is not competition, it is a lack of trust or the ego of one trainer preventing the other from being able to do anything effectively.

I experienced this with a colleague some years ago. Her approach to the work was much more process oriented while at the time I was more task based. We had divided the week of training between us, each had his or her own part. Each time it was my session I would introduce the activity, we would go through it and then arrive at a discussion or debrief. And without fail, each time as I was facilitating she would add something and then suddenly she was facilitating the discussion and I was excluded to the sidelines. Each time she thought I was struggling with the discussion and knew that she could handle it better so she stepped in and rescued. Through some good discussion between us after a couple of sessions we were able to resolve the situation.

However it should be noted that a Rescuer can be a positive model as well. If one of the trainers is having problems facilitating a discussion or delivering a theory or an exercise, they need someone to step in and take over for a moment. The positive model will take over, but when they see their co-worker is OK or get a signal that the co-worker wants to continue, they give back the lead as appropriate.

Working with a Wanderer

In this scenario the trainer is alone and unsupported by their co-worker. One of the trainers is delivering a theory or instructions for an exercise and their co-worker has disappeared. Sometimes this means the co-worker's concentration is

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somewhere else, staring out of the window or thinking about dinner. Sometimes this means the co-worker physically removes themselves and is off somewhere, for example; preparing materials for another exercise but still within the training space. In either case the majority of the group becomes attracted to the distraction created by the co-worker rather than what the primary trainer is doing at that moment.

I think this is one of the most frustrating of the Models for me. I was supporting a dialogue day and had completed my part of the session, I was now sitting as a member of the group. One facilitator was introducing some important aspects concerning the development of national youth policy. Her colleague – who was also sat in the circle with the group – suddenly got up walked across the circle to go behind where the participants were sat. She then proceeded to arrange chairs, tables and materials in the background, walking here and there across the room.

Working Together

Working together is a constructive and positive working relationship that will include small conflicts and it will include a little co-worker competition – but on healthy levels and even – sometimes – the rescuer. This relationship is about working together with strong communication, verbal and non-verbal, and a willingness to understand the other. It is about respect for the work of the other, a desire to see the other develop, an openness to ask for help and offer support, analysing the session together, problem-solving together, willingness to give and receive open and honest feedback, developing the programme and activities in close cooperation and so on...

Since I first used this Model in a training in February I have heard several colleagues referring to it. One colleague remarked that she used it to analyse what was wrong with her co-working relationship on a course she was conducting; she worked out that she was 'working in parallel'. Through reflecting on the Model she and her co-worker were able to make the necessary changes and developed their co-working relationship constructively and thereby the quality of their work. Another colleague explained to me how she used the Model in the preparation phase when working with someone she had never worked with before. They used it to raise their awareness of the potential problems they might face as new co-workers during the training. As they started to work together by referring to the Model they were able to identify the ne-

gative approaches they were using and quickly through discussion adjust their approach to each other. They had a very successful training.

There are many ways in which we work together, in pairs or in teams, this Model does not explore every difficulty that could be experienced but covers some of the most common issues faced. Most of the time we do not think about how we are going to work with other people, we just assume that we can and that there will not be problems. In reality we have to work at our working relationships as much as personal relationships and be constantly aware of the issues as they arise. This Model can be used as a reminder of the things we tend to do that are wrong, that work against good co-working relationships. The Model can help better the work we do with our co-workers and therefore the quality of the work we deliver to our participants.

▸ A Closing Request

I am looking to continue developing this concept. I would therefore like to hear from you if you have some examples of any of the Models or if you can think of any alternative Models.

I can be contacted on the email address linked with this article. ■

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● Questions and statements are adapted from:
Younger, R. Wade. *The Art of Training: Co-Facilitation*.
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by Marija Gajic

Theatre as Rehearsal for Reality: Homage to Augusto Boal

Theatre of the Oppressed – almost everyone has heard of it. It is theatre that should liberate a person to become the best he/she can be. It's revolutionary theatre: Theatre for human rights, for dialogue, for dignity, for empowerment. The Theatre of the Oppressed is a worldwide non-violent aesthetic movement which seeks peace, not passivity.

The great man, Augusto Boal, author of The Theatre of the Oppressed (ToO), has died in May 2009. He left behind him thousands of theatre troupes all around the world practicing ToO, many political and social changes, a large number of friends and colleagues, an impressive amount of workshops held and books published and wonderful enthusiasm, inspiration and a deep belief in human nature, equality and art.

Boal (March 16, 1931 - May 2, 2009) was born and raised in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He was formally trained in chemical engineering and attended Columbia University in the late 1940's and early 1950's. Although his interest and participation in theatre began at an early age, it was just after he finished his doctorate at Columbia that he was asked to return to Brazil to work with the Arena Theatre in São Paulo. Since the beginning Boal believed in the Brechtian tradition and that theatre must contain/be activism and carry relevant social messages in itself. Still, it took time to develop widely-recognized techniques and that development never stopped till the end of his life. His work at the Arena Theatre led to his experimentation with new forms of theatre that had an extraordinary impact on traditional practice.

In the 1960's Boal started to develop a process whereby audience members could stop a performance and suggest different actions for the actors, who would then carry out the audience's suggestions. But in a now legendary development, a woman in the audience once was so outraged the actor could not understand her suggestion that she came onto the stage and showed what she meant. For Boal this was the birth of the spect-actor (not spectator) and his theatre was transformed. He began inviting audience members with suggestions for change onto the stage to demonstrate their ideas. In so doing, he discovered that through this participation the audience members became empowered not only to imagine change, but to actually practice that change, reflect collectively on the suggestion, and thereby become empowered to generate social action. Theatre really became a practical vehicle for grass-roots activism.

Because of Boal's work, he drew attention as a cultural activist. The military coups in Brazil during the 1960's looked upon such activity as a threat and in 1971 Boal was arrested, tortured, and exiled to Argentina, then self-exiled to Europe. While in Paris, Boal continued for a dozen years to teach his revolutionary approach to theatre, establishing several Centres for the Theatre of the Oppressed.

ToO as a system started around 1960 and consists of interactive theatre workshops and performances based on the assumption that all human beings desire and are capable of dialogue and that when a dialogue becomes monologue oppression ensues. A process in ToO is therapeutic itself when it allows and encourages a man to choose from several alternatives to the situation in which he finds himself, the situation which causes him unwanted suffering or unhappiness.

• Tribute

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ToO is comprised of: Theatrical games, Image Theatre, Forum Theatre, Invisible theatre, Legislative theatre, Rainbow of Desire and, in Boal's later years, Aesthetic of the Oppressed. ToO is used in social work, psychotherapy, education, anti-discrimination and human rights movements, conflict management.

Theatrical games are those that serve to heighten our senses and de-mechanize the body, to get us out of habitual behaviour, as a prelude to moving beyond habitual thinking and interacting. **Image theatre** uses the human body as a tool to represent feelings, ideas and relationships. Through sculpturing others or using our own body to demonstrate a body position, participants create anything from one-person to large-group image sculptures that reflect the sculptor's impression of a situation or oppression. Image theatre provides a tool to challenge stereotypes and promote empathy. The most well known technique, **Forum theatre**, is a theatrical game in which the problem is shown in an unsolved form and to which the audience is invited to suggest and enact solutions. The problem is always the symptom of oppression and generally involves visible oppressors and the protagonist who is oppressed. Many different solutions are enacted and the result is a pooling of knowledge, tactics and experience on defeating the oppressor and at the same time a «rehearsal for reality».

The «Joker», as leader of the process and performances, had a huge role in Boal's system. The main impact of Boal was the great balance that he kept between art and activism – he believed in art and the power of aesthetics to transform reality. In that sense, for all practitioners of ToO of crucial importance is to keep that balance – not to lose activism, message and impact for the sake of beauty, but also not to lose great theatre for the sake of a message. The better theatre you make, the

bigger change you can provoke – said Boal. In an essay on the Aesthetics of the Oppressed, Augusto Boal said that art is love and art is knowledge and as such, has power to transform reality.

Theatre of the Oppressed has served worldwide as an important instrument for peace and social justice. For its successful, global application, Boal was nominated for the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize and named 2009 UNESCO World Ambassador for Theatre. Unfortunately, this international recognition for Boal's contributions came late in his life.

In his interview with «Democracy Now», Boal said: *"There is a poet, a Spanish poet, Antonio Machado, who says "The path does not exist. The path, you make by treading on it. By walking, you make the path." So we don't know where the path leads, but we know*

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- Gajic, Marija; Matthijssen, Ronald (2007): *Power of Dialogue - Manual for Creating Participative Drama Workshops and Performances*. Formaat and InterArt, Belgrade: Excelsior.

- **Interview with Augusto Boal**
  http://www.democracynow.org/2009/5/6/augusto_boal_founder_of_the_theater / Date accessed 14/08/2009

- **Glossary of Terms**
  http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/1999/12/glossary_of_ter_1.php / Date accessed 25/04/2008

- **International Theatre of the Oppressed Organisation and Declaration of Principles**
  www.theatreoftheoppressed.org /
  Date accessed 14/08/2009

- **World Theatre Day Message 2009**
  http://www.iti-worldwide.org/theatredaymessage.html/
  Date accessed 14/08/2009

- **A Brief Biography of Augusto Boal,
  by Doug Paterson**
  http://www.ptoweb.org/boal.html /
  Date accessed 14/08/2009

Further reading: ✖

Books by Augusto Boal:

- Boal, Augusto (1979): *Theatre of the Oppressed*. London/New York: Pluto.

- Boal, Augusto (1992): *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. London/New York: Routledge.

- Boal, Augusto (1995): *The Rainbow of Desire*. London/New York: Routledge.

- Boal, Augusto (1998): *Legislative Theatre*. London/New York: Routledge

- Boal, Augusto (2004): *Aesthetics of the Oppressed – The Prometheus Project*. Available at: http://www.theatreoftheoppressed.org/uploads//library/Aesthetics%20of%20the%20Oppressed.doc

- Boal, Augusto (2006): Aesthetics of the Oppressed. London/New York: Routledge

Important websites:

- www.theatreoftheoppressed.org
- www.cardboardcitizens.org
- www.janasanskriti.org
- www.headlinestheatre.com
- www.formaat.org

the direction of the path that we want to take. That's what I want, and not to accomplish, but to follow, until I can't."

Thank you Mr. Boal, in the name of all of us who have been honoured to learn, experience and use ToO. Our lives and the lives of our beneficiaries have been changed by it. ◼

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• Tribute

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by Mark Taylor

When we could be diving for pearls…
Letting go as a trainer – how and when is it possible?

Puff the tragic dragon
Where should we be doing these things?

▶ When we could be diving for pearls…
Letting go as a trainer - how and when is it possible?

Working a lot on the key competence «learning to learn» brings up a lot of fairly intense challenges. Very noticeable in the observation of our practice recently has been a growing tendency amongst facilitators and trainers to say «we have to learn to let it go» – by this we mean that we have to integrate into the way we work the fact that it REALLY is the learner who makes the decisions about what and how to learn. At some point it is the learner who decides which direction to take and they must then go their own way. The trainer/facilitator has little choice but to accept that development happily and wish the participant well with a hearty «YO YO MF!» [An expression coming from wil-derness medicine and could be translated as «you're on your own, my friend» or something like that…] This also means getting away from being what I call «su-per trainers» who have to make the «real» conclusions at the end of each session for their participants! We are really at the beginning of realising the many consequences of operationalising a learning to learn philosophy. It is tough as a trainer to know when we reach the limits of accompanying learners on their way; and we need to share much more about our thoughts and experiences here.

> **"we have to learn to let it go"**

▶ Puff the tragic dragon

Life is just a series of breaks in between cigarettes… (The thought is not original but, sadly, I cannot find a reference to the person who came up with it first). Translated into training practice, this means every time you manage to convince participants to go away and occupy themselves in a working group, the trainer can nip outside and enjoy a cigarette or two in the wind/rain/snow/sun. And when its coffee break time, then it is also time to join the smoking group and meet in the wind/rain/snow/sun. What fun they (seem to) have and what conver-sations! Some non-smoking people even complain that such smoking groups have more in-fluence over events because they are better networkers. For over two years now I have been a man without a lighter, a man without cigarettes as I don't need them any more. But, you can still find me quite often standing with the smoking group in the wind/rain/snow/sun – or I might miss something!

Where should we be doing these things?

Deciding on a location for a training course is not always a neutral thing. And sometimes you don't have much choice and this can lead to surprising results. Do you try to find a venue which has a direct connection to the theme of the course? For instance, an old warehouse, renovated by an NGO working with inner city youth would seem to be ideal for bringing people together on a programme for exactly that target group. Not for everybody: there was no soap and shampoo in the showers (!) and one person complained of bread crumbs and chewing gum on their mattress… Or how about finding yourself in an organic «bio farm» well outside one of the capital cities when the theme of your course is about European institutions? Some countries have a real shortage of reasonably-priced educational centres, so organisers are forced to look for alternative venues for bringing people together. And this can mean that you find yourself wearing a bracelet which gives you access to all corners of a 5-star hotel including working groups next to the palm trees and the swimming pool, because that's the most economically viable option available! Funny old world, isn't it?

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?

▶ We are working on the concept

Language colours the way we see the world, gives us the means to describe what we see and experience to others. Translation from one language into another can bring unexpected difficulties and this was brought home to me with great force with this example: I was discussing the difference between «evaluation» and «assessment» with a German language native speaker. An interesting conversation turned white hot for me when he said «actually we don't have a direct translation for 'assessment' in the sense you mean. And you'll see that most languages use a word which looks like 'evaluation' to cover a lot of things». Have a look in the Cedefop glossary referenced below, it is worth it!

And lastly

Thank you for writing and reminding me that Coyote is now over ten years old. Who would have thought it? Still looking for the Seville oranges. Next time we look more closely into the pataphysics of blue-eyed peas and the search for a pillow-shaped keyboard for late-night writers continues.

Sounds, words, inspirations ✖

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- André Giordan and Jérôme Saltet (2007): *Apprendre à apprendre*. Librio, Paris

- Sido (2009): *Sie bleibt* [the pig video], Aggro Berlin

- The Hundred in the Hands (2010): *Dressed in Dresden & Undressed in Dresden*, Warp Records

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Contributors notes...

Sylvain Abrial has long experience as a professional youth worker in France and is a trainer and consultant, working in the youth field at European level for over 15 years. He is a member of a number of trainer pools: for the French National Agency, SALTO Euromed, SALTO TCP and in the Youthpass trainers group... He works also at national level, consulting and supporting strategies for international mobility and cultural diversity, implemented by local authorities. He is the co-founder and co-manager of the cooperative company KALEIDO'SCOP. (www.kaleido-scop.eu)

Lilit Asatryan is the founder and president of Armenian Youth Women's Association. She is an expert in the youth field, giving lectures and trainings on youth participation, women leadership, skills development and other subjects. From 2003 to 2009 Lilit was the representative from Armenia in the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ). In the period 2003-2005 she served as a Deputy Minister of Culture and Youth Affairs of the Republic of Armenia.

Rita Bergstein lives in Germany (Cologne) and is currently working for the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre - main focus: Youthpass and recognition of non-formal learning. Before that she was active as a trainer, social worker and project manager at national and international levels. She believes in the potential and value of non-formal learning and its contribution to the lives of (young) people and to the world.

Des Burke is the Programme Manager for Youth Affairs in Léargas which provides the National Agency for the Youth in Action Programme in Ireland. Léargas operates under the aegis of the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in the Department of Health and Children. Des is a member of the working group on risk and young person protection which is composed of national agencies and the European Commission.

Filip Coussée has a background in local youth work and youth work policy. Currently he is senior researcher at the Department of Social Welfare Studies (Ghent University). He has a PhD on the meaning of youth work from the perspective of young people and its significance for a social pedagogical understanding of youth work. His current research focuses on participation in and through youth work. He is involved in the European ongoing study on the history of youth work.

Marija Gajić (1972, Belgrade, Serbia) is an international freelance trainer in personal, professional and civil society development programmes; and she often works as a theatre director and performer. She has expertise in the following areas of training: training of trainers; conflict transformation; intercultural learning; teamwork and leadership; and creativity development programmes. Founder and director of the training agency and creative platform "Miracle Factory" www.miraclefactory.rs

Milena Karisik works for VYRE, the only network of refugee youth in Europe aiming to make their voices heard. VYRE's long-term aim is to positively change the lives of young refugees/exiles through unifying our voices in order to influence social and policy change at national, European and global levels and to realize our equal human rights and dignity.

Leo Kaserer (Austrian) was born in 1970 and is currently living in the United Kingdom and Austria. He works as a freelance trainer for SALTO's and National Agencies among others. As the founder and president of the youth centre Big Banana and as one of the initiators of the Rückenwind Strategy his focus is the work with young people with fewer opportunities. Since Autumn 2009 he lectures on social area analysis at the University of Innsbruck.

Nadine Lyamouri-Bajja works as an educational advisor in the European Youth Centre of the DYS in Strasbourg. Her main working areas are intercultural dialogue and social cohesion. She is coordinating the long-term training course on the Access to Social Rights for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Pierre Mairesse studied engineering and information technology at the universities of Lille and Montreal. He joined the European Commission in 1984 and worked in the Directorate-General for Staff and Administration until 1992. Between 1996 and 1999 he was the Head of Unit for «Programming, Budget, and Finance» in the Commission's Directorate-General «Information, Communication, Culture, Audiovisual». He later served as Head of Unit for «Youth – Policies and Programme» and as acting director before he became director for «Youth, Sport and Citizenship» in 2006. He is the Director of Youth and Sport in DG Education and Culture.

Nik Paddison is a professionally-trained youth worker from the UK currently working as a freelance trainer and developer with Team Mais in Portugal. He started European level training in 1998 with Youth Express Network and later with ENOA. For the last six years he was teaching a Non-Formal Education certificate level youth worker course across the Balkans with Forum Syd. And for two of those years he worked with Triagolnik – Centre for Non-Formal Education in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. He was responsible for the implementation of the youth worker course into South East European University (SEEU). He writes monthly articles on facilitation and group work for HR Global, a human resources magazine.

Hans-Joachim Schild has been living in Strasbourg since summer 2005 and works as manager of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth. 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.

Tracy Shildrick is a Reader in Sociology at the University of Teesside. She convenes the Teesside Youth Research Group and has researched and written widely about young people.

Mark Taylor is a freelance trainer and consultant currently based in Strasbourg. He was recently re-elected as president of the UNIQUE network. He has worked on projects throughout Europe and beyond for a wide range of organisations, institutions, agencies and businesses. Major areas of work include: intercultural learning, international team work, 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!

Ralf- Rene Weingaertner studied law, psychology, economics and political and social sciences in both Germany and the United States (LLM). He holds a PHD in Sociology on Theories of Modernization. Since 1988 has held posts in both national and international public administration including higher management positions in various institutions, including the European Commission and the German Representation to the European Union. In January 2004, he was appointed to the post of Director of Youth and Sport at the Council of Europe.

Antonia Wulff has a background in the school student movement and is currently the chair of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe.

The Adventures of Spiffy

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Mark Taylor   The Big Family

Panel 1:

So, point 7, we are all agreed on proposing a new meta-competence to the commission: "learning to earn, the challenge for 2021". And our new non-native speakers will draft the text by the end of next month.

And that brings us nicely to point 8 and our eternal question: how to fund our next massive step in support of harmony and world peace?

I have a terrific idea for a type of subvention we never tried for yet...

Spiffy's singular organisation meet for the annual general meeting in their favourite bar

Panel 2:

What are our deadlines? Or are they "lifelines"?

FEBRUARY

That's amazing! What a great programme!

Yes, let's work backwards from the deadline – none of that last minute stuff for us!

Aha, this means we have to make a plan! Who does what and when?

We must put into operation what Spiffy was training us about in the last workshop!

Panel 3:

You have probably heard of Lithuanian pioneers Learning at Ease...

Spiffy Travel brings you Learning in the Financial Squeeze. Go to new places in the world and experience climbing the walls of their banks as they collapse. Non-formal acquisition of competence at its most dangerous. Soundtrack provided by Einstürzende Neubauten and Lady Gaga.

Panel 4:

Today is 24 FEBRUARY

23 FEBRUARY

22 FEBRUARY

21 FEBRUARY

20 FEBRUARY

Panel 5:

We are late! It's all your fault, you big noodle!! Can't you even construct a balanced budget??!!

Today is 24 FEBRUARY

Oh, you can talk!! I bet you think Excel is the size of your t-shirt!!

Come on! Keep going! We should really try to finish before 3 in the morning!

Constructive harmony helps working relationships...

Panel 6:

Flag sheep for sale.

Open to highest bidder. Cause: mistake in bulk wholesale order. Should have been "flag ships" as part of post-Lisbon goals public relations campaign.

Somehow our heroes manage to draft the application, but then they realise that you have to upload the application through the internet! And all over Europe project organisers are attempting to do the same thing at the same time...

Panel 7:

Oh these modernisers! What was so wrong about e-mail attachments?!

✕ ERROR MESSAGE

Will Spiffy and friends ever receive a "subvention" again? Watch this space for a convention special!

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Magazine #15

"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, researchers, policy makers and all those who want to know more about the youth field 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 partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth. 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. Their results are disseminated through different channels including this magazine.

Coyote can be received free of charge (subject to availability; please contact: youth-partnership @coe.int) and is available in an electronic format at:**http://www.youth-partnership.net/ youth-partnership/publications/Coyote/ 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 organization.

Coyote aims to use a form of English that is accessible to all. We aim to be grammatical-ly 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 contribution and others are commissioned specifically by the editorial team in order to achieve a balance of style and content. If you have an idea for an article then please feel free to contact the editor.

www.youth-partnership.net

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European Commission Education and Culture DG

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