

Meeting of the European Knowledge Centre Correspondents 13th – 14th September 2006 Strasbourg

Development of the web page

Latitia Pougary presented the latest developments on the redesign of the web page. It was pointed out that with the merging of the three pillars of the Partnership also one common web page will be designed. The aim is to increase the visibility of the EKCYP and create more hits on the page.

To reach this aim a technical analysis was carried out in January 2006. In April a seminar on web accessibility was organised that showed that many features on the Partnership page have to be restructured.

At present about 2.800 users are registered on the web pages of the Partnership, about 100 users register per month and approximately 3.000 unique visitors can be counted monthly. The registered users are mostly NGOs, young people, youth leaders, youth trainers and youth workers. Policy makers are not to be found in the top five of registered users neither are researchers. Turkey is the country with the most registered users.

The users are most interested in human rights, better knowledge on youth, youth work, European citizenship and in youth policy.

For the EKCYP web page there is an average of 2.600 users per month.

The new design for the Partnership website might help to get more visitors to the EKCYP which is going to become an integrated part of this site. The entrance will be through "themes" section that is more appropriate for people who are not accustomed to the work of the Partnership. People who know already where to go, can also choose the way via the link "activities". On the first page there will also be information on the Partnership, a document library including database search, a regional focus and – certainly – a direct access to the EKCYP.

Additional remarks

It seems important that the interaction with the visitors is fostered.

The attempt to develop the interaction between researchers on the EKCYP web page by creating a sub page youth-debate.net failed. Even though Alana Lentin pushed for participation, the forum was rarely used. Maybe there is too little interest of the researchers to interact or the themes were not interesting enough. Other ways for interaction were not used either. There are many sections with no comments at all. The same happened to other sites trying to provide a space for debates between youth researchers.

Nonetheless a basic feature for feedback has to be present on the web page.

Development of the questionnaires

Philipp Boetzelen pointed out that the Evaluation of the questionnaires carried out from end of 2005 till 2006 showed some clear needs of improvement. The evaluation was done on different levels; in a quality group, through the feedback of the correspondents, via the technical assessment and through and internal evaluation. The recommendations lead to some developments already implemented (printfriendly version of the questionnaires, modification of some titles...) and other that will be worked on during the next month.

The main recommendations of the quality group aimed for higher standards according the scientific approach. So amendments and changes to the questionnaire were suggested as well as the display of comments and sources to the different answers were asked for. Furthermore it was recommended to continue a monitoring of the answers on a regular basis. For the correspondents special training and guidelines to work with the questionnaires were suggested.

These recommendations were followed already and are still to be implemented. For the new webpage it is being considered to show the comments and sources for every question. Changes in the questionnaire aimed for a better wording to get rid of ambiguities, also it was tried to avoid duplications of answers in the head and the sub questions. Furthermore the structure of the questionnaire was altered in some details to avoid complications and ease the work of the correspondents and make it more user friendly at the same time. Guidelines for the answering of the core content questionnaires were developed and are still to be adopted. The monitoring is done until now by the secretariat in communication with the correspondents. For next year some of the questions will not be in the questionnaire, but the answers for this question from 2005 and 2006 will not be lost.

Requests from the correspondents / additional remarks

For many questions <u>more space for the answers is needed</u>, especially since the answers are not limited to the same amount of characters but it is not shown how much space is available for each question. It is good and important that the answers are limited but there should be a warning about the character length. The number of allowed characters could be in the guidelines.

The navigation in the questionnaire should be easier for the correspondent so s/he would be able to go directly to one question. Furthermore a version should be provided how the questionnaire would look like for users after answering to make it possible to adjust answers before they are submitted.

When displaying the answers links to the database search should be provided. Also the implementation of diagrams and graphs is desirable.

For interactive use a contact opportunity to the national correspondents should be given directly at the answers if somebody wants to comment the data or inform the correspondent about new surveys or studies.

Additionally a section for international / European research should be established (on the same level as good practice)

Results of the open space workshops

In the morning session of the second day the participants met in open space working groups that covered different topics.

Recognition on the national level

Until now there is a clear lack of recognition, a lack of motivation to contribute, a lack of data and quality a lack of co-operation with other organisations on the national level.

But the recognition on the national level is essential to produce traffic on the EKCYP web page.

Promotion of the EKCYP - outside and inside the research community

It is important to get support for the work as a correspondent since it is not possible to do everything alone, single handed. Therefore supporters (with data or work power) and contributors are needed, but it is hard to find some. For these supporting parties more motivation is needed, this leads to a higher financial support. But to make the EKCYP known at first it needs leaflets, posters and web links. But the quality and the usefulness of the data have to be improved.

It seems essential to get co-operations with the ministries and NGOs.

Marketing of the EKCYP

To improve the visibility and the use of the knowledge centre an increase of marketing is needed.

The EKC brochures should be available in more languages as well as the data. And national activities to make the service known should be initiated.

Sustainability

The financial support for the EKCYP correspondents is different in the different countries. But all need money to fulfil their tasks. Only with financial support (from the ministries, from the Partnership) it will be possible to go on working and keep the database up to date. Until now the work is very often voluntarily and has to be put aside if other projects come up. There could also be the possibility to apply for some funding in the framework of other programmes.

Usability

For an increase of the usability of the EKCYP a re-wording of many questions is important, since the users do not understand what is meant with the questions. Also a short explanation would help to understand, what the topics in each section (priorities) are.

A country fiche additionally to the statistical data could be good, but his narrative form will never equivalent to the data of the questionnaires.

For the users there should be feedback possibilities.

Facilitating the data collection process

Some of the data asked for in the EKCYP questionnaires are not collected in the countries, some other data are not available or not open to public and some data are just to expensive to buy.

Beside the obvious solution to give more financial support to buy the data, there is also the way to initiate (and fund) the national researches on the topic. The

formulation of a common research survey would also provide a higher grade of comparability of the data.

And to give the correspondents more power to ask for the data an official note of the Partnership that shows that it is the task of that person to collect data on behalf of the Partnership and the countries would be of help.

Comparability of data

Regarding this question it is first important to guarantee good quality of the data. To get really comparable data surveys or research results in the participating countries should be managed centralised. At the end of a multi-national common research approach could stand a European-wide survey

In the long run it would be desirable that the EKCYP disposes of technical applications to compare the data gathered by the correspondents.

And again also for the implementation of this recommendations extra funding is needed.

Over all 4 dimensions for an improvement of the EKCYP can be summed up:

• Review of the content

The broadening of the range of topics covered in the knowledge centre is as important as a re-wording of the questionnaire and a broadening of the age group. The age group could cover children since this topic becomes more and more important on European level. As new topics, the themes of the European youth pact are important.

• Promotion of the knowledge centre

In this regard it is important to provide good quality data first and start promoting the centre later on. Then promotion material and marketing tools for different user groups of the knowledge centre and in more languages is needed.

• Financial situation

The financial dimension of the EKCYP has to be reconsidered. Not only the staff of the Partnership but also the national correspondents need more resources to fulfil the upcoming increase of work. Since it is the obligation of the EU member countries to provide the data for the knowledge centre it is a decision of the EU commission not to finance the work on national level. So there is the need to find other sources for financing the EKCYP.

• Technical development

The knowledge centre needs some technical adjustments of the users as well as for the correspondents. An easier structure to work inside the questionnaire, additional fields for comments and improvements in the layout are needed.

A feedback possibility for users should be established.

A new design of the Partnership-website can be considered as a chance to improve visibility and accessibility of the. EKCYP and hence lead to an increasing number of visitors interested in youth all over Europe and beyond.

Joint session of the Experts on Youth Research and Information and the European Knowledge Centre Correspondents 13th September 2006

Introduction

For the morning session of the 13th September the EKCYP correspondents joined the meeting of the youth researchers. The aim of this joint meeting was increasing of dialogue, exchange and co-operation between members of these two networks.

Publication of "Dialogues and Networks"

Marianne Milmeister from the CESIJE in Luxemburg presented the publication "Dialogues and networks. Organising exchanges between youth field actors". The CESIJE is the national youth research centre in Luxemburg with the main working fields in research, evaluation, documentation and consultation. The publication presented was done as a follow up of the conference held in Luxemburg from 16th to 18th June 2006. This conference focused on possibilities for social co-production of knowledge and brought together the different actors in the youth field: youth researchers, youth NGOs and youth policy makers. The political context of the conference was the White Paper on Youth in which the open method of co-ordination on the 4 priority topics (voluntary activities, participation, information and better understanding and knowledge of youth) was introduced. The theme of the conference followed the common objectives of the priority "Better Understanding". The editors of the book are Marianne Milmeister and Howard Williamson. In the publication examples of good practice on co-operation of young people, youth research and policy are presented: In the city of Trier (Germany) children are involved in urban planning; in Luxemburg the "plan communal jeunesse" was created in co-operation of the different actors in the youth field representing all angles of the "magic triangle" ...

Also the outcomes of the workshops of the conference are presented in the book. One workshop was held on the identification of research areas like cross-European research, to produce a common understanding of youth work or generational exchange. The second workshop dealt with the management and co-ordination of research where a clearinghouse or youth knowledge agencies were asked for. The transfer of knowledge was topic of the third workshop in which national networks and their co-operation with the EKCYP was discussed. The last workshop defined the structure of knowledge production channels.

The conference has shown that the EKCYP is a virtual hub for knowledge exchange but can not and will not substitute personal communication and reflection. Furthermore the knowledge development through dialogue of the actors on local, regional and national level is important. But it is essential that no hierarchy of knowledge is produced.

The publication draws the conclusions that the triangle is a simplified metaphor for the organised dialogue, which needs to be structured and organised to come into action.

The discussion highlighted that knowledge based policy asks for applied science. Policy makers and youth workers expect conclusions and advice from the researchers. But this will not mean that only applied research is done and it can not mean that research loses its independence. In the last years it became evident that universities and individual researchers have to work together with policy makers. The gap between fundamental and applied research is not so big. But until now it is academic policy that researchers have to have scientific publications, which is not easy to achieve with applied research. The political world changed already and asks for research results to ensure evidence based work, maybe the academic world has to change too.

Networking on European level

Ekaterini Karanika from the European Commission launched a discussion on possibilities for an increased networking on European level. Up to now three networks exist on European level, all aiming at a co-production of knowledge and a better understanding on youth: EUNYK, EKCYP and the researchers' network. EUNYK established by the EU is a network to foster national networks on youth. It aims for a social co-production of knowledge by inviting different actors of the youth field – youth researchers' community, administration in charge of youth and youth organisations - in all EU member states. The first meeting of this network was in March 2006, the next one will be in March 2007.

EKCYP provides – via a network of correspondents – a data collection that allows comparisons between different countries on certain topics connected to the White Paper priorities. It serves more as a tool in the implementation of the Common Objectives on a Greater Understanding and Knowledge of Youth.

And the network of researchers which is a link between the Partnership and the national youth research communities.

The aim is to increase the co-operation between these networks. The first step can be that all members of these network register to the ECKYP to have the same amount of information delivered through the Knowledge Centre. This would help to identify the other actors on national level and might induce a dialogue. It is also thinkable that the ECKYP can act as a virtual library for the planned MA EYS.

One of he most important developments would be an enlargement of the range of topics of the EKCYP; this would make it more interesting for youth researchers. But an increase in the number of topics would lead to an increase of workload for the Partnership, for which further resources would be needed. At the same time it is essential to invite the researchers to make their papers available through the knowledge centre. Furthermore European studies, especially those run or financed by European institutions should be present on the EKCYP.

A different approach for further networking would be to conduct more European studies and surveys with the involvement of the three existing institutionalised European networks.

Finally, Ekaterini Karanika stressed out that the Commission gives its political support to the work of correspondents. It is necessary that the participant countries understand the importance of the EKCYP and the correspondent's work and fully support it.



Council of Europe & European Commission Youth Research Partnership

EXPERTS ON YOUTH RESEARCH AND INFORMATION NETWORK

12[™] MEETING

European Youth Centre Strasbourg $11^{th} - 13^{th}$ October 2006

EUROPEAN KNOWLEDGE CENTRE FOR YOUTH POLICY CORRESPONDENTS

1ST **MEETING** European Youth Centre Strasbourg 13th – 14th^t October 2006

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