

New Pilot Training Courses in the Partnership Programme

The Partnership Programme is offering two new training courses this autumn, for which recruitment will have been finalised by the time this issue of "Coyote" appears. They have long been in preparation, and there is quite a lot of expectation around them in the European youth field.

Let me summarise a bit the background to their evolution:

The Partnership (also often referred to as "the Covenant") offered training courses during its first two years in 1999 and 2000 with themes such as Voluntary Service, Roma Youth Leaders and Intercultural Learning. Then, following a thorough evaluation of the experiences of the first years, the Council of Europe and the European Commission made a decision to embark on an ambitious plan to develop two training courses that address the fundamental and topical issue of European Citizenship. To identify this as the subject matter for courses in youth training was seen as the right decision to have been made. The term "European citizenship" has become a popular one during the past few years, to the extent that it is somewhat over-used. At the same time, probably not enough conceptual and practical debate has accompanied this popularisation, so critical debate is necessary. The discussion of what relevance European citizenship has for young people and what different but overlapping layers it has, will be ever more exciting with two different realities of Europe represented within the Partnership programme: the European Union of 15 states entering yet another new phase of its integration process with the advent of the common currency, and the pan-European Council of Europe which now embraces amongst its members 43 countries - almost the entire continent.

The Curriculum and Quality Development Group

Addressing an issue of such profound relevance, *the Curriculum and Quality Development group* (CQD) was set up with the mandate to ensure the provision of high quality of the training programmes as well as to develop curricula for the courses. Representatives of the Council of Europe Directorate of Youth and Sport, the Youth Unit of the European Commission as well as YOUTH National Agencies, INGyOs and higher education institutions were invited to participate. The CQD met three times over a period of 12 months and the main result of its work is the curricula for the courses. It also addressed the issue of quality standards and recognition of non-formal education programmes in Europe.

Contributing to the Debate on Trainer Qualifications

One of the key conceptual debates in the CQD group was whether it should be an aim (even if only a longer-term one) to establish a formally-recognised degree in the field of training for trainers in youth work. Obviously, an underlying dilemma remains whether it is a good idea to try and introduce a formal way of recognition in an educational field which is so explicitly non-formal. Although various scenarios and plans were proposed about how such

an initiative may be realised, the most feasible solution would seem to be to link it to a higher education institution that would cooperate in such an effort. Nonetheless, some fear that our non-formal education programmes might have to sacrifice too much by entering into the terrain of formal education. The CQD did **not** reach a final conclusion about this issue, but the debates were useful and are to be continued. Certainly an essential input will be the experiences and conclusions of the two courses: the training course on European Citizenship in Youth Work and in particular the long-term training course for trainers, called "*Advanced Training for Trainers in Europe*".

"Advanced Training for Trainers in Europe" (ATTE)

The course is designed in a way that ensures maximised participation and personal development in a number of ways. Certainly, as in any long-term course, the thirty final participant-trainers selected will have to attend all course elements over a period of two years. However, *participation* in this pilot course is understood in a number of other ways as well:

Participant-trainers are viewed as partners in and active shapers of ATTE. The team will count on their input, assessment and suggestions throughout the

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various phases of the course. (This was explained by members of the training team in a workshop at the **Bridges for Training** event in Brugge, in September 2001, where they pointed out that the course was meant to be a “joint thinking process” between trainers and participant trainers.)

A number of new elements are also worth mentioning, such as the tutoring system (each participant-trainer will have a tutor, selected from team members or outside experts) with whom they are to be in continual touch analysing the professional development process that takes place. Also, participant-trainers will be asked to develop a training project during the course. A **self-perception** inventory and, based partly on its results, a long-term personal development plan will all add new, hopefully effective elements to this training for trainers.

Another addition that ought to receive some attention here is the insertion of an **Introductory Seminar** at the beginning of the course, preceding the first seminar which is scheduled for January 2002. This will be a meeting to which a higher number of applicants than the final thirty will be invited. The meeting is designed to be an occasion for dialogue about training and European youth work. The main goal of this seminar will be to create an atmosphere of trust and professional discourse whereby both the team members and the applicants can reflect on the potential usefulness and added (personal) value of the course. It may turn out that not all applicants think in the end that they want to participate or they may feel that they would benefit more from it at a later date. In other words, the Introductory Seminar will be an opportunity to refine and clarify expectations, content and individual aptitude. In addition, the selection of the final thirty participants will be made based on the seminar.

The course will be well-documented and updates will be made available on the Partnership web site regularly.

Training Course on “European Citizenship in Youth Work”

This course will be held during the autumn of 2001 and then repeated a year later in 2002. It will examine the historical and political concept of Europe and the evolution of European integration. The possible meaning(s) of (European) citizenship will be discussed with resource persons invited during part of the course to answer questions and provide some factual background for participants. All this will be placed in the context of young people in general and youth work in particular.

The content of the training course will be built up around a few key values, such as an intercultural approach, a strong emphasis on discussions of minorities and the challenges

young people of minority background face in different parts of Europe today. In other words, the training course will attempt to construct an understanding of citizenship and especially European citizenship based on exchanges about concepts, values and challenges.

The course will also look at projects linked to European citizenship that participants could develop following the completion of the course. These might include a variety of types of projects based on the priorities of the sending organisations as well as the individual participant’s strengths and interests. The course team will facilitate the process of identifying such project plans during the course.

The training course will be thoroughly followed and analysed by two contracted outside evaluators and a rapporteur. The content, structure or organisation of the second course in 2002 will be modified, if necessary, based on the recommendations and reports produced by these specialists. Updates and the report of the course will be made available on the Partnership web site.

If you’d like to receive more information or share your thoughts, please visit the Partnership web site at <http://www.training-youth.net> or contact the Partnership Secretariat at the European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe (30, rue Pierre-de-Coubertin, F-67000 Strasbourg) or send an email to

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