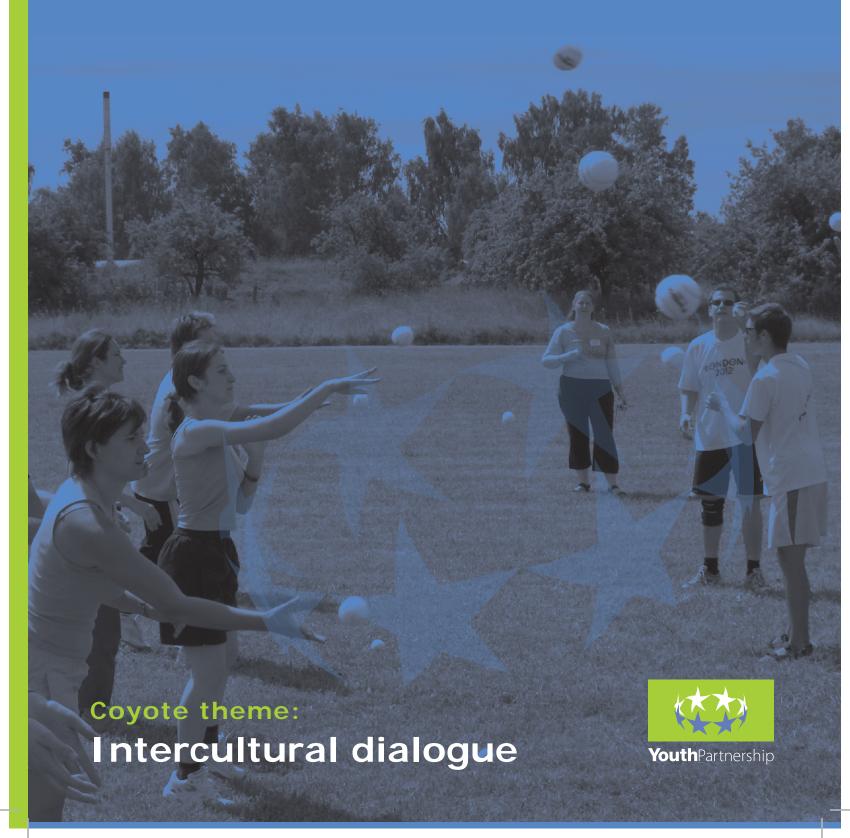
Issue 13 - February 2008





*13 ontents

Welcome to Coyote 02 Calculate the Coyote 03 Calculate the Coyote 04 Calculate 04 Calcula

Special tribute 1 In memoriam Peter Lauritzen – an inspirer and a challenger by Hans-Joachim Schild





diving or sinking? by Laimonas Ragauskas

E-learning and non formal education – making the connection by Gabriella Civico

Updates

Intercultural evenings in training - are we floating,

Updates

56
Update on the European Portfolio for youth workers and leaders by Claude Bodeving

58 Update on the Partnership publications

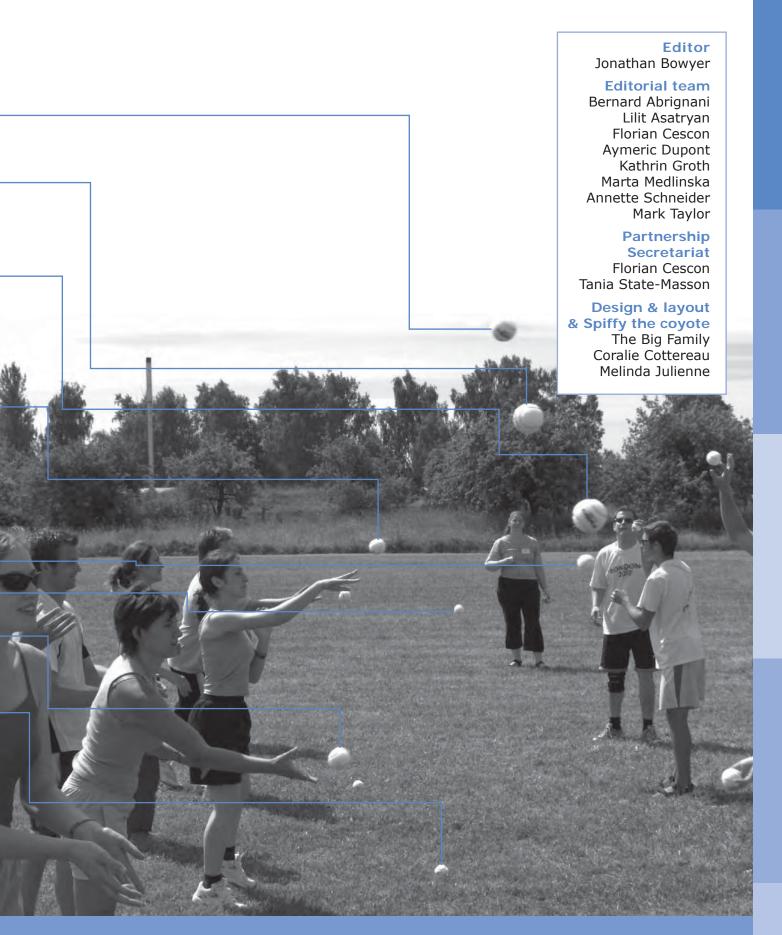
Coyote Spirit

Spirituality and flying! by Nizar Ghanem

Marker

62
Marker by Mark Taylor

55
Spiffy by Mark Taylor



Youth-Partnership Council of Europe & European Commission c/o Council of Europe Directorate of Youth and Sport F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, France youth-partnership@coe.int
Tel: +33 3 88 41 30 77 or 33 52
Fax: +33 3 88 41 27 78 www.youth-partnership.net

Many thanks to all those who have contributed to this issue of Coyote

Published by the Council of Europe and the European Commission, February 2008.

Reproduction of texts and pictures is authorised provided the source and author are quoted.

The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily express the of cial view of the European Commission or Council of Europe,

their member states or the organisations co-operating with the institutions.

To receive further information about Partnership projects or to subscribe to Coyote, please contact the Partnership secretariat by e-mail: youth-partnership@coe.int

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

Welcome to COYOTE number 13!

Just when we thought it couldn't get any bigger, here comes another issue which breaks all records for content and depth. I'm really hopeful that this issue in particular will be a reference resource for a long time to come.

To coincide with the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 and the launch of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, the theme of this issue looks at intercultural and inter-religious dialogue from a range of different perspectives: From the perspective of institutions including the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the European Youth Forum; from the perspective of gender and from the perspective of training and non formal learning. It is possible to see some commonality in the different perspectives but each one provides us with something different.

There is some serious thinking around a serious subject and there is an acknowledgement that not everything is clear. This is a crucial, global issue; if intercultural dialogue were easy to explain and to do, then perhaps this kind of thinking and learning would not be so necessary. So even if, like me, this is not your specialist subject, do apply your mind to the content. I believe there is something here for everyone who works with or for your people in Europe and beyond.

Part of my work involves training management coaches. I often use Johari's window (see Marker in Coyote 12) as a way of discussing how meaningful conversations can be

improved by increasing the size of the "open" (or "arena") window. This happens through *disclosure* and *feedback* about ourselves and in the case of coaching this comes from great questions and even better listening skills. What struck me in many of the articles in this issue was the parallel with this lesson, that any dialogue — be it intercultural, inter-religious or inter- anything else will benefit from the development of those skills and of the courage to use them.

During the production of this issue of Coyote we learnt with sadness of the death of Peter Lauritzen. Peter was an inspiration for so many people, and what was to be an article of celebration following his retirement has now become a testimony to his life and work. I am particularly grateful to Hans-Joachim Schild for his overview of Peter's huge contribution.

There is plenty of conceptual thinking in the issue but we have not forgotten the practical. Laimonas Ragauskas encourages us to make the most of our precious intercultural evenings — or not to do them at all! And we have a thought provoking piece from Gabriella Civico on e-learning — not the most obvious approach to non-formal learning.

I am grateful for the work of all the contributors to this issue of Coyote Magazine. As usual it has been a learning experience for me – and I hope you too as you read. Some articles may require a little extra study, but be assured they will be worth the effort.

Enjoy your reading!

Jonathan Bowyer







By Hans-Joachim Schild



In memoriam Peter Lauritzen an inspirer and a challenger

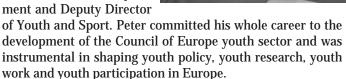
When the editorial team of COYOTE magazine decided to dedicate an article to Peter Lauritzen on the occasion of his planned retirement in November 2007, we did not know that this would sadly become an obituary. The original idea for this article was to look back at his professional career and particularly to the last 10 years when the Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission was one of his many priority areas.

Now, after Peter passed away on 29 May 2007, we have the sad duty to remember his extraordinary contribution to the development of a European youth sector. His impact on what we call today the triangle of Youth Work, Youth Research and Youth Policy and more particularly on the people who work and worked in this sector is immense. It's up to all of us to carry forward his life's work and testimony.

the period 2006-2008 and show how clear it is to see where Peter has left his indispensable marks:

- Human rights education and intercultural dialogue
- Youth participation and democratic citizenship
- Social cohesion and inclusion of young people
- Youth policy development

Peter joined the Council of Europe in 1972 as the first tutor of the then newly-established European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. In 1985 he became Deputy Director of the Centre. From 1995 to 1999, Peter was Executive Director and instrumental in establishing the European Youth Centre Budapest, which became the first permanent service of the Council of Europe in a country of Central and Eastern Europe. Since 1999, he was Head of the Youth Depart-



For obvious reasons it is impossible to highlight all his contributions and stages of life in a professional career that lasted more than 40 years. We would like to concentrate on the current key priorities of the Directorate for Youth and Sport in



Human rights education and intercultural dialogue

When the European Youth Centre was created in Strasbourg in 1972 as a residential out-of-school educational establishment, one of the leading ideas was the 'intercultural learning laboratory'. The youth field started to work with intercultural issues as part of their objective to foster youth mobility. At this time stakeholders in intercultural programmes agreed on an educational

concept which aimed at creating and experiencing tolerance of ambiguity, solidarity, empathy and creativity. This was a combination of critical work on prejudice and cultural dominance with values coming out of youth and community work. Peter, as a first tutor in this time, established and designed the work priorities, the working methods and the programme in a pioneering way. But he did not only invest in the development of practice, he always stressed as well the political



dimension of the work in the Centre, emphasising the need to live and work with basic values and convictions. Thus, within the Council of Europe intercultural dialogue and intercultural learning were embedded in a universal discourse on Human Rights on the one hand and a very specific discourse on the Council of Europe's core values on the other.



This approach generated the "all different — all equal" campaign against racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance in the nineties and is at the origin of the recent new campaign on "Diversity, Human Rights and Participation". It also governs the Human Rights Education Programme and the COMPASS process, which must be seen as a success story as such. Consequently Peter focused his energies to a large extent on crisis regions where he saw the strongest need for intercultural dialogue and human rights education, be it in the beginning in Eastern and Central Europe (and his engagement in building up the European Youth Centre in Budapest), be it in South Eastern Europe and the Balkan region or in the cooperation within the EuroMed region.

But Peter saw also the risk of overloading the intercultural issue: in a Council of Europe internal text he stressed that "many conflicts in the world are simply rooted in political interests, social injustice and economic power. However, challenges like understanding the globalisation process, building the enlarged Europe and opening a promising future for children and young people require intercultural competence, which should become part of the school curriculum and of youth and community work in the future. What has been described for the youth field is just as valid for other sectors of the house — promoting the intercultural issues into a value and knowledge-based understanding of the Europe we live in".

Youth participation and democratic citizenship

The promotion of youth participation and democratic citizenship is one of the corner stones of the work of the Council of Europe in the youth field. In this context, particular value is attached to encouraging and educating young people to fur-

ther participating in public life. It was Peter who paid constant attention to relevant research on this subject, showing that young people are highly positive toward democracy as a form of government, but are increasingly critical towards the way its institutions work, declining participation in elections and membership of political parties.

Peter encouraged his colleagues and partners in the Council of Europe's youth sector to actively engage in the development of policy tools and educational and training activities with particular focus on: specific democracy related issues such as participation in local and regional life; the role of non-governmental youth organisations as a place for learning and practicing democracy; participation in democratic institutions and processes and access of young people to decisionmaking. The Council of Europe European Youth Campaign on diversity, human rights and participation, which was strongly promoted by Peter, is just one example of Europe-wide activities aimed at promoting active participation of young people in further building democracy.

Last but not least the unique co-management system in the Council of Europe must be mentioned: Peter was a committed advocate of putting the issue of participation into practice in this way, often likening the position of the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg to the idea of putting a youth club in a ministry. He accompanied various periods and modifications of this system and played an active role in protecting it and developing it further. Today it is an exemplary model for promoting participation and partnership in democratic institutions since it shares decision-making powers equally between representatives of governments and youth organisations.

Social cohesion and inclusion of young people

It was Peters' deep conviction that it is impossible to build a Europe of Social Cohesion, which is one of the Council of Europe's main goals, without integrating into the mainstream society so-called deprived urban areas, which exist in many municipalities in the member states. Poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion in such areas he saw as a clear violation of human rights of the people living there, as they experience negative effects on their life chances as a result of the simple fact that they live in those neighbourhoods. Especially for children and young people, growing up in such circumstances means a lack of development chances and limited participation in the society right from the start; which represents a blatant discrimination. Therefore he believed that a major strategy for fighting against exclusion and discrimination was to foster identity, cultural diversity and citizenship.

In his speech "The social city as a space for citizenship in human rights education for young people" on the occasion of the conference "Children and Youth policies in Europe – a chance for disadvantaged neighbourhoods" 2005 in Berlin, Peter

underlined that the most fascinating challenge in Europe is its incredible cultural diversity and - as a consequence - the various identities of its citizens. He saw Europe as a source of enjoyment and rejoicing, but also a potential for stereotypes, prejudices, misunderstandings, intolerance and racism.

His crucial question was how such a big European organisation as the Council of Europe, with such a wide mandate can reach out to citizens in Europe? How can it reach out to young people? Is there any chance that this organisation could make a useful contribution to young people in urban areas? Does it have any relevance to the concept of the 'social city'? His answer to these question was simple:

"For us, in the Council of Europe, working with young people on items such as citizenship and identity in a changing world means, paradoxically, to go local. In a second step it means to confront what makes up our own identity - Human Rights, Democracy, the Rule of Law – with the concrete life

circumstances of young people and to show how relevant these concepts are to living a decent life. In a third step it means to develop youth policies and to see to it that these are closely connected to youth and community work practice. Without opening the big chapter of what youth policies are about in Europe I would like to point to the triangle of 'personal

development - employment - citizenship'. By proving the relevance of working with young people, of empowering them and by including them into the running of public affairs youth and community work is a key area exactly for better employment prospects and active citizenship".

Youth policy development

It is only about 20 years ago that the Council of Europe started to focus more strongly than before on youth policy development and on supporting youth policy in member states in order to create the conditions necessary for an effective participation of young people in society and for ensuring their well-being and social inclusion. The first Ministerial conference 1990 in Lisbon stressed the need for more research on youth issues and the 1995 informal Youth Minister meeting in Luxemburg decided to start Youth Policy Reviews in member states. Since then in total fourteen reviews and in addition (since 2002) eight youth policy advisory missions were carried out.

Peter did not only administer these activities; he developed their conceptual framework and participated actively in most of them. Thus, the reviews and advisory missions contributed to better understand what youth policy is about in Europe. In his speech in the Luxemburg EU Presidency conference "Organising Dialogues between youth field actors through networking and trans-sectoral co-operation" in 2005 he underlined that the event was "the fruit of a long historical process of ever-increasing co-operation between research, civil society and public authorities in the area of European level youth policy". He recalled that at the very beginning of European cooperation in the youth field there was not much or even no cooperation between research and policy or research and youth work practice.

It was also the result of Peter's efforts when the third summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in Warsaw 2005 adopted an action plan in which "developing youth co-operation" played a prominent role. According to the plan, a youth perspective will be integrated in all Council of Europe activities and its unique position in the youth field will be further developed. It was for the first time that the summit had given such a degree of attention to the youth field.

Peter was dreaming of a Council of Europe framework conven-

tion on youth policies and a White Paper process at the Council of Europe, complementary to the White Paper on Youth in the European Union. This would bring the

of Europe is going to draft the "Agenda 2020", a document which will pave the way for the organisation's youth policy in the next decade.

triangle of researchers, NGO's and governments together in order to prepare for the future of this sector in the Council of Europe. Today, his vision produces fruit and we are quite advanced: the Council

When defining youth work and youth policy Peter saw as a main objective the provision of opportunities for young people to shape their own futures. Thus youth work is a summary expression for activities with and for young people of a social, cultural, educational or political nature; it also includes sports and services for young people. In this understanding youth work belongs to the domain of 'out-of-school education', to culture and to the domain of social inclusion and welfare. It aims towards the personal and social emancipation of young people from exploitation and dependency. According to this definition Peter aimed at mainstreaming youth in all Council of Europe activities and giving a youth dimension an importance in the whole range of Council of Europe activities. This applies particularly when looking at the core values of the organisation, Human Rights, democracy and rule of law, but also to social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and civil society development. However, he also saw the risk when mainstreaming youth to foster the marginalisation of the youth sector in the organisation. For this reason he strongly insisted on the unity and cohesion of all youth activities, from education to the European Youth Foundation, from mobility schemes to study sessions, from campaign activities to joint programmes with partners such as the European Commission.



⁶⁶ Peter saw as a main

objective the provision

of opportunities for

young people to shape

their own futures.

Final remarks

Many more items could be highlighted and many more areas could be tackled to which Peter contributed in an extraordinary way: the whole area of recognition of non-formal learning, the dimension of quality in youth work and of indicators to measure such quality, the tendency of professionalisation of youth work(ers), the specificities and needs in regions such as South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and in EuroMed, the Third Sector development......... also his contribution to the Youth Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe could be another story as such: situated between critical scepticism, full backing and alignment.

It remains to carry on his legacies, his visions and challenges, his historical memory and sociological thinking, his ability to anticipate needs and trends, his independency in the way of thinking, his institutional scepticism with regard to goals, strategies and methods. By reinforcing networks and dialogues he contributed to overcome the different tribes, as he called the various groups in the youth sector (and beyond), and to create real partnerships and friendship.

When we opened up a special tribute section to Peter on the Partnership web site, contributions flowed in from the different corners of Europe and even from Brazil. He has been a reference for youth work across Europe and gave his imprint to intercultural youth programmes, European youth workers training, non-formal education and needs-based youth policies, as it was expressed in one of the condolences. Others voiced that, over many years, we have all appreciated his warm



and generous personality and respected his solid professional competence. His forceful intellect, analytic strength, sense of humour and his dedication to the promotion of a pluralist, participative and culturally diverse Europe was and will remain an example and guideline for many. As one tribute stated: he was an inspirer and a challenger. Peter Lauritzen's legacy for European youth work, youth policy and non-formal education represents both a cherished value and a great responsibility for us.

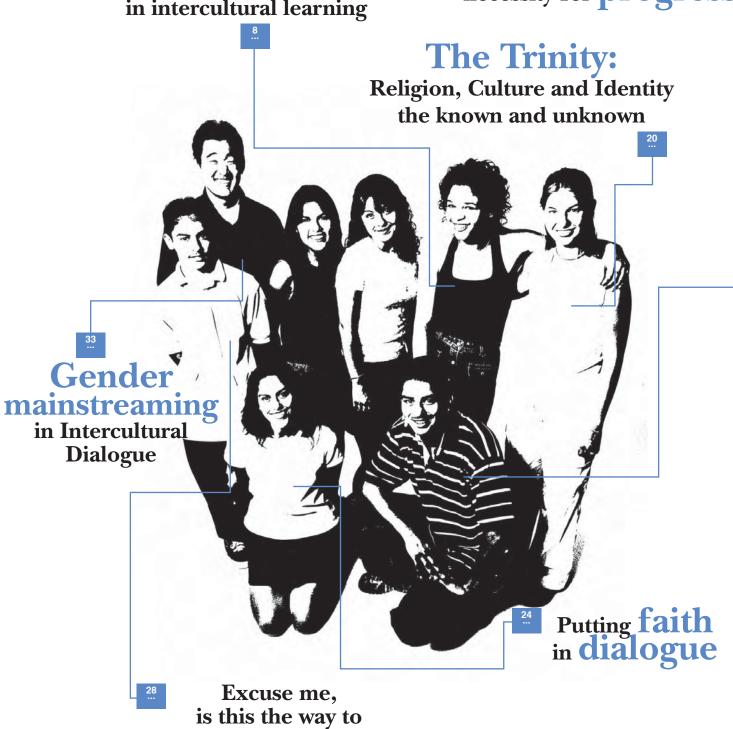




COYOTE THEME

Against the waste of experiences in intercultural learning

Is discontent the first necessity for progress?



intercultural competence? Competencies – Intercultural Dialogue –

European Youth Work





E x p e r i e n c e s E x p e r i e n c e s E x p e r i e n c e s E x p e r i e n c e s E x p e r i e n c e s

x p é r i e n c e s x p e r i e n c e s

by Teresa Cunha

& Rui Gomes

Against the waste of experiences in intercultural learning

Dedicated to Jean-Marie Bergeret and Peter Lauritzen, for the guidance, for the intellectual rigueur and for the inspiration.

Intercultural learning has played a key role in non-formal education processes with young people, especially those associated with youth programmes and activities of the Council of Europe and of the European Commission.

The main purpose of intercultural learning: To inflect ethnocentric perspectives, fight prejudices and to promote solidarity actions that support equality in human dignity and respect for the plurality of cultural identities; remains fully valid and more relevant than ever in European societies, whose futures are further intertwined and interdependent with the rest of the world. This article seeks to engage in a critique of intercultural learning by: i) re-stating its key premises; ii) exploring current challenges; and iii) proposing a renewed criticism of the concepts and practices of intercultural learning as a way to realise the potential it carries for social transformation. The article also explores a possible relation between intercultural learning and intercultural dialogue in which the former can be understood as the necessary educational approach to the latter.

1/ Intercultural learning and critical pedagogy

One of the major sociological features of the XX century in Europe was the clear acknowledgement of youth as a social group and a public entity with a powerful voice; able to claim changes and ask for real participation in social and political terrains. These developments contrasted with the instrumentalisation of "youth" by the totalitarian regimes of the first half of the century. This became more evident in the 60's when youth movements began to seriously challenge the status quo of political actors and public power. One of the most

interesting results of this movement triggered by political action was the inclusion of 'youth participation' as one of the major topics in the political discourse and, symmetrically, a major concern for educators and policy makers (Guilherme, 2002:1). This societal atmosphere and turbulence in Europe and the intense exchange between European and non-European thinkers brought to the arena of the educational discourse a new approach known as critical pedagogy. This 'critical pedagogy' is not only a critique of the past but aims to give to education a strong potential for reflection, dialogue, dissent, empowerment and democratic learning. i.e. To contribute to the shaping of active and autonomous citizens based on criti-

cal thinking. As Paulo Freire² alerted at the time, education is intrinsically a political act because it does not aim to establish just a formal literacy, but the ability to read the world in a critical way in order to transform it (Freire, 1970). So, ethics are crucial and are at the heart of education (Giroux, 1989, 1997).

In the early nineties Europe was intensively shaken again by profound changes: The fall of the wall in Berlin and its enormous political and social consequences; the war in the Balkans countries; the intensification of globalisation processes³; the generalised dismantling of welfare states; the new demographic realities of increasingly older European societies; The perceived increase of migration "waves" from non-European countries; the new transnational alliances among worker's unions and social movements; and a new awareness of common inheritances of humanity. These are some of the most important macro events that influenced the way in which young people, politicians and educators started to re-think education.

Education both inside and outside schools, has become a clear political stake for the construction of a new subjectivity, let's say, a renewed European identity based on a certain set

of cultural specificities: a democratic Europe from the west to the east and from the south to the north; the social European model informed by the Rule of Law and Human Rights; a multicultural Europe living in peace together; and an economically efficient Europe which education and life-long learning would make the most competitive space in the world by 2010 (Lisbon agenda). In continuity with the first experiences of the 80's, it was in this context that

the recognition of the value and importance of non-formal education transformed European policy aimed specifically at young people.

Progressively, the youth policies of the European institutions would adopt some of these realities and transform them into objectives. The various European youth programmes, including youth exchanges and European voluntary service schemes have progressively become instruments for these aims, provided with specific resources, clear aims and functioning as the necessary complement of schooling. It also became clear that the 'critical pedagogy' born in those now challenging decades of the 60's and 70's was not able to change the school system as deeply as necessary nor as was hoped for by those generations⁴. New spaces and methodologies for 'citizen education' started to be recognized among the youth initiatives and youth organizations.

During the eighties and nineties in the Council of Europe, especially within is youth sector and its educational policy, a

relatively new concept became the 'heart' of the most enthusiastic discussions and methodological thoughts and proposals; 'intercultural learning'. The focus on this concept fed on various factors: the evident rise and complexity of cultural diversity in Europe, the role of young people in the public realm and the heritage of 'critical pedagogy' that always accompanied it: dialogue, dialogical relations between subjects and communities, democracy, redistribution of power and peaceful social transformation. The most striking example of this is probably the development of the programme of training courses of the European Youth Centre and in particular the creation and popularisation of the long-term training courses. In the LTTCs intercultural learning became an aim and an educational approach to youth cooperation. In parallel to this process, the Youth for Europe programme (and it successors) played a key role in streamlining intercultural learning.

What is intercultural learning really about?

The works of Hendrik Otten (1997) — with his "Ten theses on the correlation between youth encounters" - and Peter Lauritzen (1998) — had a key role in establishing the conceptual frameworks and the epistemological foundations of intercul-

tural learning⁵.

What we miss is the courage to understand all what we know and to draw conclusions from it.

Sven Lindqvist¹

There are probably as many definitions of intercultural learning as there are of culture. We would like to use the one put forward by Equipo Claves that sees intercultural education as "a process of social education aimed at promoting a positive relationship between people and groups from different cultural backgrounds" (Equipo Claves, 1992:82) not only because it is at the basis of

the Education Pack "all different – all equal" but also because it recognises the necessary correlation between personal/individual learning/action and group/collective learning/action.

It is important at this point to re-visit some of the fundamental topics which 'Intercultural Learning' — as a concept and as an educational methodology — brought into the debate and into educational practices. We present three of the most relevant issues that constructed the corpus of this quest for a positive intercultural living in European context.

a/Tolerance to ambiguity

'The tolerance to ambiguity' (Otten, 1997)⁶ means, on one hand, the recognition of the cultural differences among European societies and communities and the other hand, to acknowledge the intrinsic incomplete character of each cultural system and, therefore, to accept the ambiguity and multiple uncertainties generated by the cultural encounter⁷.



Experiences
Experiences
Experiences
Experiences
Experiences
Experiences
Experiences
Experiences
Experiences

As stated above, the crucial potential of this concept of 'tole-rance to ambiguity' is not only based on the recognition of diversity and difference but on learning how to learn from and work positively with it. It does mean also to include uncertainty, in-determination in education — which is already revolutionary because education by definition should be normative and reproductive. Ultimately, this means not only to develop respect and reverence for the existence of the 'Other' but also to educate our minds and social behaviour to the 'unknown' as a positive cultural research "browser", in order to enlarge our capacities for dialogue and living together.

The very modern presumption that everything has to be explained and verified is seriously challenged by this concept. In fact, 'tolerance to ambiguity' is the precondition of any intercultural approach that de-centres the discourse and the practices from the dominant culture; ensuring that it is possible to voice what is considered the 'margins'. Following this reasoning 'tolerance to ambiguity' is a requisite for a dialogical route even when we do not/will not master every element in the process. This concept announces emancipation for all rather than the assimilation of some.

Some would state that 'tolerance to ambiguity' is, in this sense, a post-modern concept. However it is important to stress that this concept and its translation into educational methodologies ought not to be used as a mere celebration of the differences. Rather it should be a common effort to find multiple senses and potentialities from the cultural encounters. It is a powerful tool of empowerment for local and global transformation.

Peter Lauritzen conceptualized much of this innovative insight and in a co-operative way constructed operational frameworks that could be applied to different educative activities as a paradigm of "European Education". The heuristic⁸ capacity of the 'tolerance to ambiguity' in education has been demonstrated by the development of an important range of European training courses, workshops, and forums, realized and evaluated since the early nineties at the European Youth Centres or supported by its qualified trainers and advisors. At the heart of these initiatives was this main idea: it is possible to live together in peace if we tolerate to build up a Europe where the other, the unknown, takes part of it and is fully recognized as constitutional to its richness. Intercultural learning implies thus discovery and transgression (Lauritzen, 1998) as well to be able to deal positively with insecurity and uncertainty. The ambiguity concerns the very concept of culture and cultural determination: it will be impossible to interpret and explain facts and behaviours on the basis of cultural diversity only - while at the same time expanding the capacity for cultural competence. Intercultural learning values knowledge about cultural diversity while at the same time it implies a relativisation of the role of cultural knowledge. Otherwise, the culturally competent will be the interpreter of the other in the same way that Orientalists9 sought to understand and conceptualise better the "Oriental people" than the ones concerned.

b/ Diatopical hermeneutics¹⁰

Another competence associated to 'intercultural learning' practices and its theoretical discussions is the relationship between majority groups and minority groups in the European social and political context (Brander, Gomes et al., 1998; Council of Europe, 2004a). It is clear that diversity inside Europe happens socially and educationally within a power relations system, where there are some who see themselves and are perceived as the majority and those who are perceived or who feel themselves as minorities. The endless discussion about the overlapping identities and how through them each person can live as a member of a majority and at the same time belong to a minority group, is an important question but is not the main concern of our analysis here. We believe that 'intercultural learning' aims to explicitly question ethnocentrism and its power to become normative (as in becoming the norm) to the mainstream to which the other cultures have to be confronted and evaluated.

In this sense, approaching, discussing and educating for positive relations between majorities and minorities is a strong political and ethical standpoint. It means that we recognize and use cultural dynamism, global interdependency and common responsibilities (Gomes, 1998: 75-77), as analytical and educational tools; putting into question the prevalence of one cultural mode over another one. In other words, a monolithic reason versus a cosmopolitan reason (Cunha, 2007). This can be criticised as cultural relativism but in fact it is not. The main argument is that these dialogues and relationships among and between majority and minorities have to be based on the development of mutual empathy, equality in human dignity and mutual recognition. This mutual humanization (i.e. in seeing and accepting the others as fellow human beings with needs and aspirations of equal value and legitimacy to one's own) requires responsive translation systems between cultures and powerful work methodologies. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2004; 2006) proposes a 'diatopical hermeneutics', which means that emancipatory 'intercultural learning' has to adopt procedures that recognize that all cultural systems have concepts of human dignity, respect for the others, peaceful relations modes, and positive conflict solving mechanisms. By refusing what he calls the laziness of the modern reason, we can empower individuals and communities to build up social justice and balanced relations between majorities and minorities provided that we do not waste the best features that exist in each culture.

This is crucial to the very idea of a European construction process that has to question hegemonic relations and cultural dominance characterised by the monopolistic "hijacking" of positive human values. And it is also, of course, of paramount importance to shape intercultural dialogue between states and people in a globalised world where precisely, some of the globalised elements may overshadow the local dimensions. The incapacity of ethnocentrism to provide education with strong answers to the complex questions faced by young

people today is clear and increasingly accepted. This is why racism, sexism, hetero-sexism or xenophobia are topics to be dealt by education because they were and they are perceived, in each specific culture, as manifestation and blockages to the common good. So mutuality, 'diatopical hermeneutics', consists in discovering in every culture (majority or minority) their endogenous principles that inform non-racist, non-sexist, non-heterosexist and non-violent social practices. This means that inside every culture there are mechanisms that can be mobilized to construct an inclusive, respectful, peaceful society and a better Europe for everyone.

c/ Intercultural learning and social change

The third topic that we would like to address is about 'intercultural learning' as a tool for social change. It becomes clear that using 'tolerance to ambiguity' and 'diatopical hermeneutics' as the main framework for 'intercultural learning' we cannot avoid the following question: what happens if we put into practice those principles, values and methods on a Europe-wide scale? Europe would certainly change profoundly and the main actors of this change would be the young people who have been more exposed to this educational approach. So, why hasn't it happened already?

Empathy and solidarity

These three dimensions of intercultural learning have to be associated and thought over with two other notions as argued by Lauritzen (1998) and Otten (1997). They are empathy and solidarity.

Empathy as the attitude to try to see things from the point of view of the other (or how the other would feel) and ultimately the ability to place oneself in new situations (Ibid.) is also a necessary step towards addressing the prejudice and ethnocentrism that all of us have been educated into. Acknowledging that empathy itself is influenced by prejudice and that it must take into account respect for the identity (and uniqueness) of the other will also be the role of tolerance of ambiguity.

The learning function of solidarity is perfectly described by Lauritzen as "the practical, social and political side to empathy" (1998: 10) and includes the capacity to interact and work with others, undertaking social and political action and the ability to challenge and transgress existing power structures. In the globalised post-modern society a particular emphasis is being placed on the individual responsibility to solidarity, as in inter-generational solidarity, citizenship education or the concern for environment protection. This is particularly strong with the concerns for human security, global warming and climate change, for example, in which the calls for individual responsibility often mask the inability of consequent political actions. In intercultural learning, and a fortiori in intercultural dialogue, the meaning of solidarity has to be rediscovered so as to recognise, for example, the solidarities of

those who are the target of our solidarity and the need to take into account historical injustices.

Within Europe, the sense of solidarity has also to be re-assessed so as to be placed back at the heart of European integration, especially for the young generations who discover "Europe" as a matter of fact. In social terms, the concept of solidarity should also be used to balance the (over) weight sometimes given to cultural difference and diversity in relation to social cohesion. Cultural identities are not the only determining factor in social relations and they can certainly not explain, nor legitimise, situations of social exclusion and growing levels of acceptance of poverty and misery as unavoidable. The role of human rights education in this respect can only be highlighted in the same sense that human rights education and intercultural learning serve fundamentally the same purpose of securing equality in human dignity and the fight against all forms of discrimination.

Taking 'Intercultural Learning' seriously means that we have in our hands not only an innovative re-interpretation of critical thinking and critical pedagogy but also a relevant accumulation of knowledge about its possibilities and limitations. In fact we do recognize that all this work, done all around Europe with so many different young people, qualifying hundreds of multipliers and trainers, to disseminate and make operational these education values, is far from being a wide spread reality. On the contrary, recent years have brought more questions and more awareness about the possible limits of 'intercultural learning' than never before. Somehow it has discredited 'intercultural learning' because it did not produce that decisive cultural change needed to create the balanced and peaceful Europe that the majority of Europeans dreamed of

"The limits of intercultural learning are in this respect, the same as the limits of any educational programme" (Bergeret, 1995: 3), they are also narrowed by the inherent freedom and creativity associated with intercultural learning in non-formal education practices. The popularisation of intercultural learning as mere techniques for group work and simulations of culture has of course, not contributed to its success outside the circle of the converted. But we should certainly avoid throwing away the baby with the water.

It is clear that 'faith' in education has to be harmoniously questioned by a rationality which comprehends that deep changes are crossroads between various and complex factors and instruments. The theme of this reflection gives us some clues that can be useful to a more complete and complex analysis. Firstly we are convinced that this discredit of the potential of 'Intercultural Learning' does not help to interpret the new societal conditions that have emerged in the recent years. A period where terms like unavoidable capitalist concentration, terrorism, exclusivism, fundamentalism, segregation, fear and insecurity, among others, have became a globalised crucial concern. On the contrary, 'Intercultural Learning'

and its associated concepts represent an important tool for emancipation, justice, peaceful co-existence and addressing global concerns together. As with Paulo Freire, also Giroux (1997) underlines in their analyses, the right step forward is

to pass from the 'pedagogy of the oppressed' (Freire, 1970) to the 'pedagogy of hope' (Freire, 2004). This means that we need to look carefully to the new conditions, to use our collective genius to give significance to what is emerging.

Secondly, it is necessary to renovate the collective resilience to act, transform and construct a Europe of and for the People

and Social Justice, Intense Democratic Values, Inalienable Human Rights and the recognition of the pluriversalities of human dignity. It is interesting to recall here the inspirational alert made by Cândido Grzybowski¹¹ when he states that the worse thing that hegemonic globalization is producing is the absence of plural thinking and the destruction of the capacity to hope and dream. We would thus argue that the possibility to undertake a contemporary critique of the 'Intercultural Learning' as we have experienced in the last two decades in Europe remains necessary to preserve intact our capacity to hope and dream.

2/ Intercultural Dialogue

Intercultural dialogue has progressively emerged as a concept. It seeks to embrace the processes associated with the coexistence of and communication between different peoples and cultures in a way that respects the need for social cohesion and for respect of the diversity of identities and pluralities of belonging.

The notion of intercultural dialogue used by the Council of Europe for its White Paper is particularly useful to intercultural learning: It comprises an "open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage" that should lead to the understanding of different views of the world.

By making intercultural dialogue one of its core missions, the Council of Europe gives it a prominent role and acknowledges the need for consistent structures and policies for that exchange to occur. This mainstreaming of intercultural dialogue is also an admission of the coming of age of intercultural matters, too often left to the dedication of curious educational experts and idealists.

Intercultural dialogue and the political emphasis placed upon it is even more open to some of the critique made of intercultural learning, namely the ones elaborated by Gavan Titley (2005). Chiefly among these are the reification of culture and the implicit culturalisation of social matters. How to resolve the equation that culture encompasses virtually all human activity and yet can not be used as the sole criterion for interpreting the quality of human interaction? How to deal with the fact that migrants and minority groups are not only cultural

actors but also social actors? As we will see below, the questions of definition of the terms and language of the dialogue, and of the subsequent power relation, are especially relevant for intercultural dialogue to be genuine and purposeful.

The values underpinning intercultural dialogue, as outlined by the White Paper, are nevertheless, fundamentally the same

as those immanent to intercultural learning. The relation between intercultural dialogue and intercultural learning can probably be developed as between wider political objectives and frameworks of intercultural relations on the one hand (intercultural dialogue) and the social educational and didactical means for it on the other (intercultural learning). This has the disadvantage of ignoring that intercultural learning can be a political and social agenda as well and that human rights education has similar educational objectives, although with a different focus and that human rights are necessarily part of the framework of intercultural dialogue.

One could schematise the relations in this way

The extent to which this scheme is complete and useful is not the most important point of this paper. What it really matters is the need and our ability to problematise intercultural learning in a contemporary context in which intercultural dialogue is used as a remedy for the "clashes of civilizations", a spiritual identity/mission of Europe or the resurgences of cultural domination. It is thus necessary not only to understand the trap of simplistic analysis but also to realize that the mainstream discourse is only the most visible part of the iceberg.

3/ A new impetus for intercultural learning

In this sense we would like to propose some of the topics that have to be present in this critique in order to conceptualize an innovative XXI century 'Intercultural Learning' in Europe. The following proposals are still work in progress but aim to motivate people, trainers, educators and other actors to build up multiple re-significations and new re-appropriations of the potential of 'Intercultural Learning' to change minds, social relations, historical relations and educational approaches.

a/ Dealing with historical injustice

First of all we must admit that 'Intercultural Learning' has often forgotten to deal properly with the historic injustice imposed by European colonialisms and the consequences that

Empathy

Intercultural learning

Critical pedagogy

Solidarity

Breaking political

silences

Distance to

social roles

Tolerance to

ambiguity

Diatopical

hermeneutics

Dealing with

historical injustices

they have had in the collective meanings of the world. In line with Boaventura de Sousa Santos (Santos, 2004), and Enrique Dussel (1985) we share the idea that colonialism as a formal political system is probably finished but it keeps having a central role in social imagery as a system that legitimised roles and relations of dominators and dominated, citizens and subjects, hegemonies and subalterns, based on cultural differentialism, racism, religion, and role in human history. The issue is obviously complex, but can be exemplified by the history of power relations between communities (majorities/ minorities). Too often we assist in the re-emergence of these long lasting histories (at least 5 centuries), in the subjectivities and in social relations of the ex-colonized and ex-colonizers inside Europe. We argue that we can identify several and strong signs of this coloniality¹² as the rise of nationalisms, racial purity obsessions, the repetitive claim of a Christian European identity, and the attempts to legitimate colonialism by stressing its positive role.

Having said that, we need from now on, to include in 'Intercultural Learning' a debate and an educational approach, not only on a contemporary and micro analysis concerning power relations between individuals but also a macro and historical approach: One that better takes into account historical injustices and invites a better understanding of other perspectives of history and, consequently, of the world today. Mutual and responsive dialogue implies that we are willing and able to re-make and update our archaeology of knowledge. If we look carefully to our 'common' history, it is evident that it is full of violence, domination and segregation. Another consequence of this question is that history is only apparently common because the collective memories are deeply divergent about what we call 'historical facts'. For example, the memory and the associated knowledge of a Serbian, a Bosnian, a Croat or a Kosovo Albanian about the recent wars in the Balkans are probably contradictory. The same happens concerning the history of colonialism and the inherent violence between an Angolan and a Portuguese, a French and an Algerian, a Zimbabwean and a British. Role distance as an ability and competence for practitioners of intercultural learning gets its full meaning in these encounters but it is clearly insufficient.

b/ Breaking the political silences

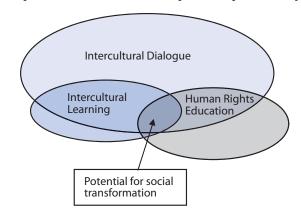
Secondly, we should complement the concept of 'tolerance of ambiguity' with another; 'political silences', to give more density to our analysis. This can be done if we turn political what is normally interpreted as methodological. For example, it is not neutral or a mere question of form or working method, when we work on Interculturality and Intercultural Learning, to discuss and to problematise (or not to discuss nor problematise) the following issues:

- Who is involved in the culture encounters?
- Who defines it as culturally relevant or relevant for dialogue?
- In what language(s) does the process go on?
- What are the un-discussed topoi because we assume as common what is probably divergent and cause of dissent like the notion of emancipation, human rights, women's rights, secularism, sexual

identity, racism, and others?

- Who sets the themes of the culture dialogue?
- To whom are they really important?
- Who has the power to start and to end the dialogue?
- Who sets up the agenda, the place, and the time of the encounter?

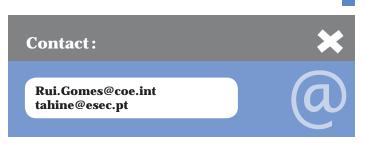
Strong answers to these questions need to be found together, among the participants in any intercultural encounter and this is a political issue, which has often been silenced or, at the best, remains implicit. What we propose is to puzzle up the 'tolerance to ambiguity' with a much more demanding concept of what is relevant at the political sphere, today.



None of this is likely to make the task of thinking and practicing intercultural learning any easier. It requires conceiving and valuing time in another way. Deep changes need time, strong effort, hard work, resilience, perseverance and patience. All these values seem to be out of fashion. But if we do not find any stronger answers we cannot face the possibility of constructing another social and political paradigm, which does not end up in another set of certitudes and values and, in doing so, effectively annihilate the emancipatory role of learning. We do need to educate to an interculturality that empowers people to fundamental serenity in order to deal with transition, openness, diffusion, uncertainty, polycentrism, poly-rationalism, which configures another way of knowing, thinking and keeping in touch with our Europe inside our World.

Are we able to do it ourselves?

As Peter Lauritzen wrote, Intercultural Learning is discovery and transgression, change and revision, insecurity and uncertainty, openness and curiosity - and perseverance, would have added, Jean-Marie Bergeret. How able are we to do it ourselves? A continued critique and reflection about it is a crucial pre-condition.







'Sven Lindqvist, "Utrota varenda jävel", traduction francaise, Le Serpent à Plumes / Editions du Rocher, 1998 (Exterminez toutes ces brutes!")

²Paulo Freire is one of the most known Brazilian thinkers and pedagogue. During the military dictatorship in his country he was exiled for many years in Europe mainly in Switzerland, where he developed an important part of his thinking on education as a political act or, as he called, 'a citizen education'. See, among others books, 'the Pedagogy of the Oppressed' and 'The Pedagogy of Hope'.

³We follow Boaventura de Sousa Santos when he alert us that globalisation is a very complex phenomena and does not consists only by a neo-liberal, financial and capitalist transnationalisation. He says that in the field of transnational social and culture practices the anti-hegemonic transformation consists of the construction of an emancipatory multiculturalism, or, in other words, the democratic construction of reciprocal rules of recognition between distinct identities and cultures. (Santos, 2002: 30).

⁴It can be argued to which extend the Eastern and Central European societies living under dictatorships were part of the same movement. Despite the seemingly opposite political perspectives between youth movements in the East and the West in those times, it can also be argued that they were all genuinely liberation movements that represented a breakaway from the conformism or resignation of older generations.

⁵Youth organizations and their experiences played an important in defining and validating intercultural learning, notably the organizations specifically involved in individual and group youth exchanges and those involved in international voluntary service activities (such as workcamps and long-term voluntary service exchanges). The role of the authors mentioned and the institutions associated with their work was nevertheless essential in translating the diversity of educational and organisational practices that is typical of youth organisations into mainstreamed institutionalised youth policy objectices at the service of the project called "Europe".

6See also "Community Modules for Youth worker Training"

⁷It is not the aim of this article to discuss the concept of culture. Being aware of the complexity and the enormous theoretical and empirical debate going on, we use the term 'culture' in this reflection meaning that set of shared characteristics that gives to a person the sense of belonging to a certain community.

⁸By heuristic we mean using a method that encourages learners to discover solutions by and for themselves.

9See Orientalism by Edward Said.

¹⁰This concept starts from the idea that all cultures are incomplete and can, therefore, be enriched by dialogue and confrontation with other cultures (Santos, 2004: 40). This means the refuse of a monolithical thought but, instead a pluri-topical – diatopical capacity of reasoning and interpreting the reality.

¹¹Brazilian sociologist which cultural background combines Polish/European and Brazilian/South-American experiences. See, among other sources, www.forumsocialmundial.org.br; www.ibase.br.

12 See, among others, the works of Enrique Dussel, Aníbal Qijano or Walter Migñolo where they explore the idea of the remaining understated elements of colonialism as power relations, in social realm and subjectivities after the political colonial cycle, as such, was over.

References:



- Bergeret, Jean-Marie (1995), Re(?): Intercultural Learning, in Multiplier, Council of Europe, Youth Directorate.
 Bergeret, Jean-Marie; Meisch, Nico and Otten, Hendrik (ed.s), 1994, Community Project for Developing Training Modules for Youth Workers. Luxembourg: Service National de la Jeunesse.
- Council of Europe (2004a), Educational Pack "All Different

 All Equal". Budapest: Directorate of Youth and Sport
 Council of Europe (2004b), Domino, a manual to use peer group education as a a means to fight Racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance. Budapest: Directorate of Youth and Sport Council of Europe (2007), White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (draft); available in www.coe.int/dialogue
- Cunha, Teresa (2007), 'Recognizing the Unknown. Education concepts and approaches to Diversity' in Diversity Youth Forum Report. Budapest: Council of Europe Publications.

- Dussel, Enrique (1985), Philosophy of Liberation. New York: Orbis Books.
- Equipo Claves (1992), En un Mundo de Diferencias... Un Mundo Diferente. Madrid: Cruz Roja Juventud.
- Foucault, Michel (1972), The Archæology of Knowledge.
 London: Routledge.
- Freire, Paulo (1970), Pedagogy of the Opressed. Continuum Publishing Company. Freire, Paulo (2004), Pedagogy of Hope. Reliving the Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Giroux, Henry (1989), Schooling for Democracy. London: Routledge. Giroux, Henry (1997), Pedagogy and Politics of Hope: Theory, Culture and Schooling. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Gomes, Rui (1998), Mudança d'Aires. Contributos para a formação intercultural de animadores juvenis. Coimbra: AJP.
- Guilherme, Manuela (2002), Critical Citizens for an Intercultural World. Foreign Language Education as Cultural Politics. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters LTD.
- Lauritzen, Peter (1998), "Intercultural learning one big bluff or a learning strategy for the future?", in European Journal of Intercultural Studies. Vol 9. 1998, Supplement (p. S35-48), London: Taylor and Francis.
- Migñolo, Walter (2000), Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, Border Thinking. Local Histories, Global Designs. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Otten, Hendrik (1997), Ten theses on the correlation between European youth encounters, intercultural learning and demands on full and part-time staff in these encounters, IKAB. Available in www.ikab.de
- Quijano, Anibal (2000), «Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America». In International Sociology, June. Vol. 15(2), p. 217-234. Sage (London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi).
- Said, Edward (1979), Orientalism. New York: Vintage Books.
- Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (2002), 'The processes of Globalisation', Eurozine - Available in www.eurozine.com
- Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (2004), 'A Critique of Lazy Reason: Against the Waste of Experience' in Wallerstein, Immanuel (ed.), The modern World-System in the Longue Durée Boulder. Paradigm Publishers, p. 157-197.
 - Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (2006), A gramática do tempo. Para uma nova cultura política. Porto: Afrontamento.
- Titley, Gavan (2005), Plastic, Political and Contingent: Intercultural learning in DYS activities, mimeo.



by Silvia Volpi

S Ш 0 m posium n n s i u m

Is discontent the first necessity for progress?

The Symposium on Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Youth Work took place in Istanbul, Turkey, between the 27th and 31st of March 2007. It was organised in the framework of the "All different-All equal" European Youth Campaign for Diversity, Human Rights and Participation by the Council of Europe-Directorate of Youth and Sport, Prime Ministry of the Turkish Republic- Directorate General of Youth and Sports, the European **Commission and the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation.**

This dialogue between Mr. Inter-religious and Ms. Intercultura has been inspired by the comments, evaluations of some of the participants and by the input of the key-note speakers at the Symposium.

>> Mr Inter-religious

I am completely disappointed! History is repeating itself! After participating in the last international meeting in Istanbul, I had the same feeling as usual. I felt like I was being manipulated.

I had the strange impression I assisted in a sumptuous encounter set up expressly for politicians and university students to promote their own ideas and agendas. Their aim was not to share their ideas and establish a real dialogue with young people and youth workers, but to use the event to give conscience to their power.

>> Ms Intercultura

On the contrary, I think that the aim of the event was to give the chance to everyone to be active and to express his/her own opinion, to share ideas and projects, doubts and fears. In a way the encounter had the opposite aim, the one to give power to consciences.

>> Mr Inter-religious

Maybe you are right, but I still feel manipulated! It is a matter of fact that Europe wants to use the fashionable issues of intercultural and interreligious dialogue to enter Turkey. The European politicians take part in these international events, only in order to have the chance to re-establish a good relationship with Turkey and to expand their market areas.

>> Ms Intercultura

Well, I have a different opinion about the relationship between Europe and Turkey. First of all I consider that Turkey is part of Europe even if not yet of the European Union (EU). Second, I think that both Turkey and the EU are interested in developing a good relationship. In fact if I agree with you when you say that EU is interested to expand its market areas throughout Turkey, but I also think that Turkey has gained an advantage by using so called "western technologies" while transforming most of the central Anatolia into an industrial department.

>> Mr Inter-religious

You may be right, but I still have the strong impression that Europeans often want to impose their way of life onto others. For instance, try to think about all the prejudices they have towards our country, a secular country with an important Islamic population. They easily translate Islam into terrorism without knowing a single precept of this religion. They do not know for instance, that our government and its people; with clear Islamic beliefs have accomplished in a few years, much more than the previous ones in terms of women's rights and economic development . They continue to associate religious people and institutions with those who refuse modernity and development.

>> Ms Intercultura

Actually your example makes me want to say that very often we avoid getting to know each other. In a way we use our stereotypes and prejudices to defend ourselves. Unfortunately sometimes, with the purpose of defending ourselves, we isolate and discriminate against others even in our own community and society.



S y m p o s i u m
S y m p o s i u m
S y m p o s i u m
S y m p o s i u m
S y m p o s i u m
S y m p o s i u m
S y m p o s i u m
S y m p o s i u m
S y m p o s i u m
S y m p o s i u m
S y m p o s i u m

>> Mr Inter-religious

Why are people afraid of those who are different from them? Why do they feel destabilised and insecure when confronted with "the other"? Moreover, why are cultural and religious differences often indicated as the real factors leading to discrimination, exclusion and hatred throughout the world?

>> Ms Intercultura

I do not have a precise answer to your questions. I agree with the view of Bauman who says that most of the people seem to feel as though they live, and they probably do live, in "unsicherheit" which means, in German, the complex combination of uncertainty, insecurity and lack of safety. This complex and fairly recent situation brings people to stand in a very defensive position towards "the other"; closing any door for a possible dialogue, reinforcing stereotypes and prejudices and increasing a feeling of distrust and intolerance towards anyone that differs from themselves.

>> Mr Inter-religious

The complexity of our societies influences interreligious and intercultural dialogue a lot. It is increasingly more evident that growing intolerance is affecting and challenging our multicultural societies and our way of living together; too often synonymous with indifferent coexistence.

>> Ms Intercultura

Do you think that it is possible to live differently?

>> Mr Inter-religious

I believe that it is possible to live differently, even if it is not that easy. We should realise and admit our stereotypes and prejudices and also demonstrate our will to challenge them and try to get to know each other and avoid ignorance. Education has a central role in this process as well as the media, governments and religious authorities. All of them need to recognise the diversity of our societies and communities, avoiding manipulation and miscommunication.

>> Ms Intercultura

I also think, as Mr. Giuliani says, that we should provide room for a pluralistic vision of the truth. We should accept that, if there is "a truth", it can show up in the fragmented panorama of different religions, cultures and beliefs.

Living with diversity and continuously negotiating a shared code of conduct may positively influence the process of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and by consequence, our ways of living together.

>> Mr Inter-religious

If it is possible to live differently, why is the gap between theory and practice often too big?

>> Ms Intercultura

Maybe because dialogue requires time and also because it is a process, we should also be aware that there are "forces" in so-

ciety who have an interest in preventing dialogue and maintaining the gap between theory and practice. In fact in the absence of dialogue, they profit by reinforcing their power.

>> Mr Inter-religious

I think that it is also because a strong motivation, will and commitment is needed, of all the parties involved, in order to make dialogue work.

>> Ms Intercultura

If there is no motivation to overcome our own prejudices and stereotypes, our own limits to opening our space to the other and challenge our point of view, we risk reinforcing a misperception of reality and prepare the field for a discriminating attitude.

>> Mr Inter-religious

You may be right, but I still have the impression that when you do not succeed to establish a real dialogue, despite of all your efforts, you get disappointed and frustrated. Discontent can also lead to reinforcing prejudices and stereotypes and to close the door to anyone that differs from you or to simply give up and complain.

>> Ms Intercultura

Well, that is one possibility. But you may consider that discontent for not having achieved a goal often leads people to try again. Discontent is a powerful engine! It urges people to move on, to take action and to work on the issues that are still relevant for their lives.

>> Mr Inter-religious

Your point of view is very interesting, but I still believe that there are a lot of obstacles that prevent a real dialogue among people. Do you see any obstacles to intereligious and intercultural dialogue?

>> Ms Intercultura

There are some very strong obstacles to intereligious and intercultural dialogue. Some of them are:

- Lack of will, sincere commitment and courage to establish any kind of dialogue or communication $\,$
- Lack of mutual recognition especially while speaking about recognition of equal dignity to all religions and beliefs $\,$
- Reinforcement of the dichotomy between the absolute self and the absolute other to be able to face the complexity of our lives
- Reconfirmation and reinforcement of reciprocate stereotypes and prejudices even during such international and intercultural events
- Lack of self criticism
- Lack of critical reflections on the past and present realities and on the information spread by media
- Manipulation and misuse of the information and the realities by the media, the institutions, the political parties and every single citizen
- Growing of selfish interests
- Lack of courage to admit that human rights may be a common code to start to understand each other
- Lack of time to listen to each other and to express our own opinion and thoughts carefully

- Lack of time to state our real intentions, without hiding our ideas and thoughts behind a politically correct but empty speech
- Generalisation or superficial "relativisation" of the problems without a serious contextualisation of the issues and analysis of possible alternatives
- Lack of strategies, ideologies and ethics in the political sphere

And you, can you mention any elements that can foster interreligious and intercultural dialogue?

>> Mr Inter-religious

Of course, I can list several of them, such as:

- Strong will and commitment of any single person
- Less egocentric approach to dialogue, avoiding transforming it into a monologue
- Avoiding generalising and making the effort to contextualise the issue/problem looking for alternatives and solutions
- Recognise equal dignity for every religion and belief, respecting each other
- Look not only at the differences but underline also the similarities between people, cultures, and religions
- Admitting stereotypes and prejudices and looking for ways to know each other better
- Try to avoid wrong assumptions
- Develop a critical perspective of historical facts, with a participatory and collective revision of the history books
- Look carefully at the actual realities and the information received and spread out by media and governments
- Do not worry to love and to be loved: overcome the feeling of insecurity

- Fight for rights with a responsible attitude towards the others
- Use the existing codes of conduct such as human rights to build up dialogue and improve and adapt them to our needs
- Improve and increase mobility, facilities and opportunities, so that people can meet each other and get to know each other better
- Develop and implement projects and activities at grass-root level involving local communities
- Do not speak for the young people but give them the floor more often
- Admit that dialogue is a process that requires time
- Have the courage to tackle and talk abut "hot issues", even if those will lead to disagreement

>> Ms Intercultura

So, what is next in order to improve our way of living together? How can we contribute to a better world in which diversity is richness and in which we do not tend to become a melting pot society in which different identities merge into one?

>> Mr Inter-religious

I believe that it's important to take the risk and responsibility to continue to talk, think and reflect on the sensitive issue of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and also to transform our thoughts and reflections in coherent initiatives and actions, in which everyone has the real opportunity to get involved.

Dialogue is definitely an opportunity to improve our way of living together, with the final aim to accept each other, even without always reaching an agreement or a consensus.



Similar to the conversation between Ms. Intercultura and Mr. Inter-religious, the symposium in Istanbul offered all the actors an opportunity to share opinions, doubts and fears and even ideas for new projects on inter-religious and intercultural dialogue in youth work. During the encounter, while trying to enter into dialogue with each other, the participants also faced challenges. Discontent, often caused by heartfelt views and a strong desire for consensus, may indeed be the first necessity for progress, the engine to provoke changes!

This is nothing new in the world of non formal and experiential education. With inter-religious and intercultural dialogue however, the challenges are particularly real — a daily struggle for progress. The hope is that the Istanbul Youth Declaration will be genuinely helpful in this struggle both at the local and the international level.

Facts and Figures of the Symposium on Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Youth Work

The frame...

The Symposium on Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Youth Work was organised in the framework of the "All different-All equal" European Youth Campaign for Diversity, Human Rights and Participation.

The meeting took place in Istanbul — Turkey, between the 27th and 31st of March 2007 and was co-organised by the Council of Europe-Directorate of Youth and Sport, Prime Ministry of the Turkish Republic-Directorate General of Youth and Sports, European Commission and Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation.

To hold a symposium on interreligious and intercultural dialogue in youth work in Istanbul had a highly symbolic relevance: Istanbul was in fact the ideal place for this encounter; for its beauty, its richness, its historical and cultural heritage and for being a concrete example of a multicultural and multi-religious society.

The main actors...

Young people, coming from more than 40 countries were the main actors of the symposium. Representatives of the European Institutions promoting and supporting the event as well as those representing some governments, were also actively involved in the meeting.

The diversity of the participants in terms of geographical provenance, cultural background, ethnic origins, religion and belief, lifestyles and personal histories mirrored current multicultural societies and communities.

The purpose...

The prime purpose of the symposium was to create an opportunity for young people, their organisations and local, national and international authorities to exchange practices related to interreligious dialogue. The aim was also to propose ways through which interreligious and intercultural dialogue can be further sustained through and as a result of initiatives such as: the "All different-All equal" European

Youth Campaign, the European Union's Year of Intercultural Dialogue in 2008, the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue and the United Nation's "Youth for Alliance of Civilisations" initiative.

The rationale and programme of the symposium...

The programme of the symposium, which alternated plenary sessions and working groups, also took into consideration the following issues:

- the need to give visibility to discrimination issues and how they affect young people today;
- concrete and diverse examples of youth work practice in addressing discrimination and dealing with challenges posed to diversity on a regular basis;
- the possibility to take advantage of the cultural and religious patrimony of Istanbul;
- the need to address general matters while deepening specific issues and concerns.

The main outcomes...

In terms of quality and quantity the symposium achieved impressive results. A large number of people were reached and actively involved in the symposium. In-depth reflections, relevant analysis of our societies and also a final document setting the frame for further work were produced.

- More than 300 persons attended or participated in organising, managing and facilitating the symposium. More than 200 were young people coming from more than 40 countries
- In a very short time relevant issues and topics related to intereligious and intercultural dialogue were discussed, reflected upon and elaborated on by the participants and the guest speakers. Such issues included the relation between Turkey and Europe, Religion and Human Rights, Europe



...taking into account the discussions, fears, doubts and different opinions expressed by the participants during the last session.

stakeholders including young people, local, national and international Authorities, Media, Religious Communities, Educational Institutions to support and foster interreligious and intercultural dialogue processes.

Progress Progress

Editor's Note: Unfortunately we do not have the space to print the text of the declaration in the full here. You can find the document at:

http://www.coe.int/T/dg4/intercultural/Source/ Istanbul_final_EN.doc

and multicultural societies, the role of the Media, the role of Education and educational institutions, the role and the possible actions of Institutions and Governments, the role of young people in working towards intercultural and interreligious dialogue..

- 17 working groups were organised to allow the participants to get know each other, to express their expectations and concerns about the symposium and also about the topics of the meeting.
- 12 thematic working groups were organised to give participants the chance to deepen their discussions and share experiences on specific issues such as:
- -Armed conflicts and intercultural youth work for conflict transformation
- -Faith Based youth work
- -Intercultural learning and education for inter-religious and intercultural dialogue
- -Migration
- -Racism and discrimination
- -Religion, Human Rights and Human Rights Education
- -Religion, Culture and Gender
- -Religious based discrimination
- -The Alliance of civilisations initiative
- -The consequences of terrorism on inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue
- -The role of and working with the Media
- -The role of local authorities in working on inter-religious and intercultural dialogue
- Thousands of ideas and project proposals were floating in the air during the symposium and it seems, from a first evaluation, that some of them are already on the way to being transformed into concrete actions supporting the interreligious and intercultural dialogue process.
- At the end of the event, the participants created the first draft of the Istanbul Youth Declaration, lately finalised by the organisers. It contains 23 specific articles and recommends the active participation and interaction of different

Notes and references:



- The original quotation of T. Edison is "Discontent is the first necessity for progress"
- Read the policy research papers "Islamic Calvinists" on www.esiweb.org
- Read the research "Sex and power in Turkey: Femism, Islam and maturing of Turkish democracy" on www.esiweb.org
- Z.Bauman "Europe of strangers" page. 7
- M.Giuliani: "Le tende di Abramo" Edizione Il margine page 68

Contact:



s.volpi@vebaccademia.it





By Julia Koszewska

R e I i g i o n R e I i g i o n R e I i g i o n R e I i g i o n R e I i g i o n R e I i g i o n R e I i g i o n R e I i g i o n R e I i g i o n

The trinity: Religion, Culture and Identity the known and unknown

Is religion totally independent and different from culture? What's actually the difference between those two terms? Why during trainings on intercultural dialogue is the inter-religious side mentioned only shortly? Do all followers of the same religion face problems with culture? What is the interlink between the two terms?

In order to define a term we may use different forms of definitions: A descriptive definition will provide the details on how the object looks; we can also ask what is the function of the object we are defining? What is it for? Why something

was invented? That will be a functional definition. we may try to define terms such as religion and culture according to which questions they provide answers.

Religion addresses the unanswered questions of our existence. It deals with the unknown. And the greatest unknown out of any unknown is man's future. The most important message religion carries, is the answer to our question about the future; the immediate as well as the eternal future.

Culture is the medium carrying the message coming from the past. This is the answer to the

questions which have been already answered by our ancestors. The way they answered many questions, constitutes our culture. In this aspect culture may be regarded to some extent as a semantic equivalent to the word tradition.

Man exists in present time, which automatically means always half way from the past to the future. Hence man is always half way between culture and religion. As one turns his head back looking at the past, he deals more with culture, while a glance ahead directs him more to religion.

We may say of course, that science addresses any given issue, irrespective of whether the problem belongs to the past, to the present time or to the future. We have to notice however, that science meets only our rational needs, while both culture and religion meet the spiritual needs of man. But it seems strikingly obvious nowadays that science alone is not capable of giving full happiness to society, since it does not meet the most elementary human expectations. It usually reduces man's existence to the present time. It is not an accident that any revolution breaking out in the name of science declares usually something like: it's time to forget the past and start living in the present. The term "modern" is always a key word

in such a condition. So man continues to ask culture and not science the questions concerning the past, and he keeps asking religion and not science to get answers addressing the future. And the future still tends to be the joker in the pack.

For an adequate formation of a culture, the involvement of the whole man is required, whereby he exercises his creativity, intelligence, and knowledge of the world and of people.

John Paul II

Religion and culture as media bringing people together

Religion can connect people of different cultures; and on the other hand culture can connect people of different faiths. In JECI-MIEC European Coordination (European Catholic student organisation) we all come from different realities. From different countries, having a

different background we all come together as the children of God, and what we all have in common is first of all the Catholic faith. It is a uniting factor.

But can culture be a uniting medium more than religion? In Poland, where 90% of citizens claim to be Catholics, the religious minorities have been present for centuries. Many of them (such as Jews, or Muslims: Tatars) are not new comers but have been present in Poland for a long time. If you ask them what is their identity, many of them will first answer that they are Poles, and then of Jewish origin or of Tatar origin (using the meaning as a religious connotation).

Is faith related only to religion? Recently SALTO organized two trainings: one focused on faith and the other one on religion, and their relations with dialogue. I got a great opportunity to contribute to the "Faith and Dialogue TC" as a trainer. The main topic discussed there was the relation between faith and one's identity. And faith not only in a religious sense, but using a more inclusive definition: also political or faith in someone. In many languages the word "faith" is related only to religion. In German (as in Polish) the "faith" term is strictly related to religious faith while the secular faith will be referred to more as an ideology, i.e. political ideology. How cultural is this meaning?:)

▶ How cultural are you? – the trends in Europe

New trends in Europe are: to be tolerant, to have as friends, representatives of different minorities (as a kind of proof of our tolerance), to be aware of many things etc. In the questionnaires-application forms for participants in different trainings I saw a question to measure cultural awareness among youth in Europe. In the majority of cases the question was "How do you rate your own sense of cultural awareness?" with 1-6 scale and space for explanation. Many people rated it as 6 (the highest awareness) and as proof provided information on their awareness of cultural events in their hometown.

How religious are you?

What is the relation between religion and our daily life? Is a religion just to perform special rituals at a sacred time in sacred places, for example only on Sunday for one hour of mass? Religion is something more than that. It's not only strictly about our relation to God understood as a way of praying. Religion is also our relation to the world, it's a lifestyle! However the followers are not always allowed to implement their religious belief in everyday life. We (as European society) are so afraid of all kinds of extremism – especially religious extremism - that we sometimes end up being too sceptical about any kind of relation between religious-based values and the law or public life. Fear of extremism is actually just a current explanation. Other than that we have a long tradition of separating Church and State in Europe and the tendency for secularisation. Nevertheless now we are seeing the waves of different forms of discrimination towards different faith-based groups including anti-Semitism, growing islamophobia and along with these a form of what we might call "Christophobia" slowly appears.



In some countries we see this as a kind of fashion: it's not trendy to be religious. J.H.H. Weiler explains «that the aging children of 1968, now middle-aged and soon to be retired, are upset that, in some cases, their children have become Christian believers.». Nonetheless it influences not only the generation of parents but also the generation of kids.

Sometimes these anti-religious tendencies go further than just fashion or lifestyle; when it comes to politics they might be used as arguments in discussions on legislative documents such as the European Constitution or might slightly influence trade in the country: shops closed on Sundays.

How deep is our daily culture and way of living determined by religion?



Photo taken by W. Koszewski: photo of the screen in a Malaysian Airlines plane showing the direction to Mecca as a practical guideline to Muslims who pray in the aircraft flying to European destination (Amsterdam)

European identity

So who are we in Europe? United in political meaning, proud of the Christian roots of our continent, but cutting the present links to this religion? What does the typical European look like? Are we able to distinguish ourselves from the rest of the globalised world nowadays?

Hearing about a "Europe of nations" we sometimes wonder which nations we are talking about: the so-called old European or the nations of new Europeans?

With the definition of identity comes the question of territory. What is the geographical border of Europe and what does that say about our (European) identity? Do we all agree that Georgia is a European country? And what about Turkey? Is Europe the region defined by the size of the European Union and the member states? Or is it bigger like the coalition of Council of Europe countries? European Identity is changing quickly and is still not finally defined. For ages it was a mixture of cultures, but for many periods we had one country dominating the others so it was easier to define. Now, with a Europe of different nations, a nomadic society and many new comers, and in the state of peace with no one dominating country we have arrived to question our continental identity.

One culture - many religions

European identity (whatever it means) pertains mainly to our cultural heritage. But if one is looking closely into this tradition then it becomes obvious that there are several religions constituting our present identity. European identity — as a specific feature originates from Greek and Roman polytheism, as well as from Judeo-Christian heritage, and also it has some Islamic roots in parts of our continent. It may sound strikingly paradoxical that the main Catholic sanctuary in Portugal carries the name Fatima — the name of the beloved daughter of the Prophet Muhammad. And it is not by chance.

One religion – many cultures

In order to understand the different new topics we first try to make it simple and later go into details. How to understand the world's religions? We just mentioned that in Europe there are Christians, Jews, Muslims, but now we need to update our list also to include Baha'i, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Hindu and others. But not all Jews from Spain are like Jews from Germany. Sephards and Ashkenazi Jews not only have different outfits but also different ways of celebrating their religion. Although the religion is one for them, in Judaism, the cultures vary. Same with Christians, but the differences between Roman Catholics and Orthodox are more known - at least from the mass-media. Let's talk then about Catholics. The Catholic Church in Western Europe is a bit different from the one in Eastern Europe. Not different in theology: the religion is the same, even the religious domination. However it is the national tradition that makes the difference.

Religious cognition as well as emotion can be the same, but religious behaviour and participation varies. Religion is not only the doctrine. It is also a personal question. How religious a person is, but not how that person is religious (in the meaning of practising certain rituals).



photo taken by Julia Koszewska: Multi-cultural mass during International Committee of IMCS (International Movement of Catholic Students)



Multi-culti and inter-religious initiatives

A few years ago, people in Europe realised how culturally various Europe is and what's more how fast it is changing. The great need to understand each others' cultures was stated. And many intercultural programmes (also for youth) were organized. Later — especially after September 11 of 2001 the world discovered that we are too ignorant not only of other cultures but mainly of religions. A great need for exploring the intercultural (but with special focus on inter-religious issues) was found. It is actually somehow a never-ending need. Let's try to increase our efforts again. A great opportunity is approaching: 2008 is European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

In Europe there are just a few active European faith-based youth organisations. A European faith-based youth organisation will be an organisation that gathers national movements from many countries in Europe. The values that the group represents are based on religious faith.

In YFJ (European Youth Forum) the member organisations formed a Faith-Based Expert Group (FBEG). This group is working not only on inter-religious and intercultural dialogue issues, but the organisations that created it found it very important to combine their efforts in order to stand together for the rights of faith-based youth groups in Europe. This initiative is unique and was the first such in Europe.

Quite recently a new initiative was taken by faith-based youth. A new network was founded and called Religions for Peace - European Inter-faith Youth Network (RfP — EIYN). The group is the first pan-European organisation that gathers youth organisations representing so many religions (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Baha'i, Sikh, Judaism). The group is very inclusive and is open also for non-faith-based organisations that are active in inter-religious dialogue, i.e. facilitating it), and to individuals. There are also many local or national inter-religious and intercultural initiatives that are becoming more and more popular.

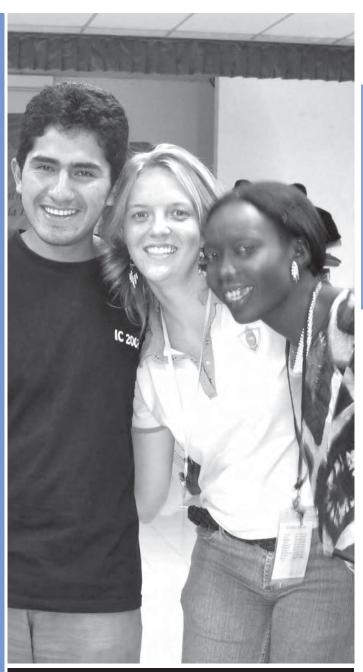
Culture of the language

How much is our culture connected to the language? On the way to better integration in Europe we have all accepted English language as the main in Europe. Even though we have many EU official languages, still the most often spoken is English. But is our English really English? A good example is to take a look at the understanding of "faith". Have you realised how many times the word "faith" in this article was referring to religious faith? Only once to other meanings. Maybe it is because of our native languages, where faith is only religious? That is the reason why the SALTO "Faith and Dialogue TC" was so exceptional. It was the first time that European youth was exploring the varied meaning of the (English) word "faith".

How about you? Are you speaking British English or Globish? Take a test and compare your vocabulary here: http://www.salto-youth.net/globish/

«A language is the vehicle of a culture. Globish doesn't want to be that at all. It is a means of communication.» – said its inventor Jean-Paul Nerrière. So why speak globish: (American version): The real target here is also to decipher what's coming across at you. If you don't, you should not let your friend from California throw one past you; lay it on him, "Hey Bro, this time in Globish please?" Have you understood? If not try globish version: The goal is also to make sure you understand what is said to you. If you don't, you should make it a duty to tell your friend from California, "could you repeat that, in Globish this time, please?". Better now?

Is it now part of our European culture? Not anymore British English? And what has it to do with religion? Try to express yourself about your religion or understand the others (if you are not observing any religion) in English. Or try to pray together with the believers of the same religion, just coming from other countries. If you are not a native English speaker it won't be easy. Same prayer, but do we all know the English version to say it out loud? But it does not mean we are not really active followers, nor have a limited knowledge about our own religion. It means only that the language is not ours. Same European culture, same religion, different national languages.



Notes and references:



"For English-speaking readers: globish explained in American, AND in globish.":

http://www.jpn-globish.com/articles.php?lng=fr&pg=120

Contact:



julia.koszewska@gmail.com





by Simon Forrester

Putting Faith in Dialogue

"When I put Faith in Dialogue, my identity no longer remains a monologue".

This refrain may sound like George Michael going back his Wham! rap days, but it isn't. It was actually dreamt up during an exercise by a group participating in a recent trai-'Faith & Dialogue'.

The course was part of a number of learning activities being run this year through the SALTO Resource Centres on a theme looking forward to the 2008 European Year of Inter-Cultural Dialogue. This particular event involved a group of youth workers and activists from 11 countries across Europe, gathered for a week at a venue in Northern Ireland. There was no sign of George Michael, but down the road in a concert venue in

Belfast, there was the distraction of Justin Timberlake performing! Another related course, exploring the theme of Inter-Religious Dialogue, will take place in Istanbul, in Turkey, late in 2007; we'll wait to see which pop stars show an interest in that!

The main driving force in the design of the course was that it was going to explore participants' understandings of 'faith', looking at it from the broadest possible perspective, and thus it was not focussed on institutionalised re-

ligion or religious doctrines. Because of this, there was no content that looked per se at the historical development of religion in the European context nor at the existing beliefs and doctrines presented in the Community today. This is what differentiates it from the Istanbul course.

Secondly, the course aimed at helping participants to see how faith shapes identity and how that in turn influences how we might dialogue. Thus, the flow of the sessions was designed to take participants from a very personal perspective of faith through to situations where 'the personal' meets 'the public' in areas of dialogue. Considerable time was also spent looking at how space for dialogue might be widened and how to prepare for dialogue. Through this flow, the training team were able to introduce a range of tools and exercises that the participants may later use in their own practice. There was also some emphasis on trying to illustrate the theme of the

 \Box

 \Box

training with the particular local experience and practice in Northern Ireland.

g

g

g

0

U

u u е

This article is not going to attempt to define what might be meant by 'faith' or 'dialogue', nor to prescribe how such definitions might be agreed, but rather tries to capture some of the experiences of faith and dialogue shared during the course.

Throughout the training both the training team and participants often compared the content of

sessions to the metaphor of taking a journey. This was also reflected in the project visits organised around the locality on Day 4 of the training. At The Corrymeela Centre - a centre for peace and reconciliation housed in a collection of beautiful buildings on the stunning Northern Ireland coastline - one of the Social Workers told participants that "we are facilitating dialogue by 'walking along with people'. It's a little like taking a journey through someone else's life".





Mapping the concepts of Faith, Identity & Dialogue

The first part of the training journey for the participants was an exploration of the key concepts of 'faith', 'identity' and 'dialogue'. On Day 1 participants began to describe their personal understanding of 'faith' by compiling Faith Biographies in pairs. This was a simple and productive exercise whereby participants interviewed each other, asking 'what 3 words describe your faith? What were the key 'faith' experiences in your childhood, teens, 20s 30s and now? How would you complete the sentence "I believe that..."?

With the Faith Biographies pinned up on the walls, participants next attempted a collective exercise to produce a Dictionary of Faith. This was to be an A to Z of words and expressions that participants associated with the concept of 'faith'. Small groups tackled different parts of the alphabet and a plenary session then brought all the parts together. Some parts of the A to Z came out predictably - G was for God, Glory and Guide; H for Hope, Holy, and Heart - whereas for some letters participants threw up some interesting associations - E was for Equality, N for Nature, O for Opportunity, and S for Saoirse (meaning 'freedom' in Irish) and Tuomiokorkko under T (the Finnish word for 'cathedral'). And if you're wondering, Z was for Zeus and X was for'erm, we'll have to think a bit more about that one'!

For the next part of the journey the trainers guided participants through an exploration of 'identity'. Of course this process had actually begun with the production of the Faith Biographies, but before unpacking identities further there was a brief input on what might be understood by 'identity' and how

it might be analysed. How much more is there to our personal identities than the data that appears on our ID Cards? Do we have single or multiple identities? What can we learn about that part of our identity that derives from our 'faith'? How much can a sociological, psychological or philosophical approach to the analysis inform us?

No matter what theoretical framework or tools for analysis might be used to uncover the make-up of identity, participants on the course understood that some process of 'uncovering' must take place. "When we look at this question from the perspective of a Youth Worker it's useful to remember that identity is formed by a challenging process : we all have an ongoing 'inner dialogue'", remarked one of the participants. To help look at this inner dialogue before linking to any process of public dialogue, participants spent a large part of Day 2 creating very personal 'mandalas'; a concentric visual image capturing the significant moments in the participants' lives influencing the shape of their gender identity, national identity, ethical identity, and faith identity. Mandala is a Sanskrit term - literally meaning 'circle' or 'completion' - used to refer to various objects. It is of Hindu origin, but is also used in other Dharmic religions, such as Buddhism. In practice, mandala has become a generic term for any plan, chart or geometric pattern that represents the cosmos metaphysically or symbolically, a microcosm of the universe from the human perspective. Having completed their 'mandalas' as individual, very personal pieces of work, participants then worked in small groups to focus on the impact of their 'faith identity' on 3 key aspects of daily life: The Family; Work; and Leisure time. Thus, the training journey moved on to the part where the 'personal' meets the 'public'. Participants were getting ready to dialogue.

Understanding 'why dialogue ?'

Training on dialogue has to be one of the most challenging, but enjoyable experiences. On the Belfast course the trainers approached the objective by helping participants through this particular section of their journey by firstly comparing the concepts of dialogue, communication and discussion. Then looking at what form dialogue may take and what purpose it may have, and lastly exploring how you might prepare for and actually begin dialogue. The essence of these sessions, made up largely of small group discussions and plenary feedback, was well summed up by one of the participants:

"...I do not see any need for dialogue to have a defined purpose. It is a process-orientated activity".

In the setting of Northern Ireland, the venue for the training, this sentiment was very much echoed in a group presentation

on the 'constraints to dialogue'. One of the group members, a youth worker from Belfast, reflected on his own experience that there was a continued need to motivate for dialogue:

"In Belfast the younger generation is now growing up in a more stable, calm environment and therefore members of the different communities do not any longer understand the importance of maintaining dialogue. For them the job has already been done. But for me it is essential for continued peace for there to be continued dialogue."

Preparing for Dialogue

So, how do you motivate and prepare for dialogue? The training team

presented one approach to this taken from David Bohm (an American born quantum physicist, who also made significant contributions in the fields of philosophy and neuropsychology). Bohm likened discussion to an activity where we throw our opinions back and forth in an attempt to convince each other of the rightness of a particular point of view. In this process, the whole view is often fragmented and shattered into many pieces. This is in sharp contrast to Bohm's view of Dialogue, which he saw as being something that moves beyond any one individual's understanding, to make explicit the implicit and build collective meaning and community.

Bohm suggested that there were 4 essential skill areas that needed to be woven together in order to facilitate genuine dialogue:

- Suspension of judgement
- Assumptions have to be identified and named
- Listening to diverse perspectives
- Inquiry and reflection this is about learning how to ask questions with the intention of gaining additional insight and perspective

With these prerequisites in mind the participants were invited to a session fondly entitled 'Village People'. This was not an invitation to disco, but to a prepared space where participants were asked to imagine themselves gathering under a large tree in the centre of a village. Participants could start the dialogue in any way that they liked, but the reason given for the dialogue was itself to explore 'the need for dialogue in the frame of faith-based youth work'. With these instructions given, the trainers left the space and left the village people to dialogue.

The dialoguing practice lasted for around 45 minutes. Of course, just a beginning in dialogue terms, but a useful exercise that clearly illustrated to participants how much investment was needed in order to make dialogue work. It also again stimulated participants and trainers alike to express their different views on what 'dialogue' is and how it might be perceived. In the plenary wrap up to the Village People session one of the participants commented that the exercise was rather confu-

sing and that it didn't promote dialogue. The Trainer leading the session therefore highlighted how important it is to actually have dialogue about how to run a dialogue process!

Another participant noted that "dialogue has to be well informed and we didn't have enough knowledge to make the dialogue work". And yet another described the learning experience as being so demanding 'that I wanted to run away'. Demanding in that the exercise was both a little surreal and not easy for a group that had formed just 3 days earlier.

Thankfully the participants didn't run away, instead they spent a day visiting projects and people engaged in

promoting dialogue between the communities in Northern Ireland. This was an excellent opportunity to see theory being put into practice and being out of the training venue was a refreshing catalyst for the remaining sessions on the course.



Tools & Resources to Support Journeys into Dialogue

The final two days of the training journey were devoted to embedding the skills and knowledge that may assist in preparing for dialogue, and to looking at the practicalities of succeeding in 'next practice' - applying the learning.

One part of this leg of the journey took participants into the Inter-Faith Kitchen. This session asked participants to describe how such a 'kitchen' might look, bearing in mind all the essence of creating a safe and conducive space for dialogue, as well as what might be the tools and ingredients for cooking up dialogue. Participants were grouped for this work according, broadly speaking, to the composition of the target group of their own youth work: faith-based; non faith-based;

and targets with no single indentity. In this way participants were able to describe 'kitchens' and give 'top tips for dialogue preparation' that may apply to these different target youth groups. In one of the working groups participants moved beyond the image of a 'kitchen' and described their ideal space for dialogue as being "the Land of Safe Place. It sounds amazing! I want to go there now!!"

The 'faith and dialogue' training journey set out to strengthen youth workers skills and resolve in tackling the challenge of addressing issues often seen as taboo. Early on in the training a participant from Armenia had commented: "Faith links to religion, but whereas religion is usually an open subject, discussions on faith can be taboo. For example, in my community to question someone's faith is to question their honour, it's therefore a taboo or risky topic." By the end of the 6 day course it seemed that the participants were better equipped to take the 'personal' to the 'public' arena of dialogue, and to help others begin to take some risks.

To conclude this piece I should tell you how I know so much about what went on at this Faith & Dialogue training course. Well, I am lucky enough to be the Rapporteur for the course and will also be for the Inter-Religious Dialogue course in Istanbul. The result of all my listening and observation will be an Educational Report on 'Faith, Religion and Dialogue', narrated in the words of the trainers, participants and others. This will be available from the SALTO web site (www.salto-youth.net) and will also be presented at a Tool Fair in December 2007 in Antalya, Turkey. For more information on the Tool Fair see the Euromed Resource Centre's pages on the SALTO net, and for more about the wonderful trainers putting their faith in dialogue - Barbara Bello, Behrooz Motamed Afshari, and Julia Koszewska - go to the trainers pages on the Cultural Diversity RC on the same SALTO portal:

www.salto-youth.net/find-a-trainer





Notes and references:



- All methods and activities run by the trainers during this course can be found at: www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool.
 Some inspiration on the background of the sessions can be found at: www.salto-youth.net/faithdialogueresources
- www.salto-youth.net/diversity
 - SALTO Cultural Diversity Resource Centre responds to the needs of the users of the European Youth in Action programme in order to provide training and resources about Cultural Diversity. Over the last year we have been concentrating on Communication, with a seminar on effective and sensitive intercultural communication, leading into this Faith & Dialogue training course. We hope to take these issues further in the European year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008.
- You can learn more about David Bohm and his approaches to dialogue by reading the articles and training resources available from the Dialogue Group at www.thedialoguegrouponline.com
- Banathy, Bela H. & Jenlink, Patrick M. (2005) Dialogue as a Means of Collective Communication, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, New York,
- Bohm, David and Edwards, Mark. (1992) Changing Consciousness, Exploring the Hidden Source of the Social, Political and Environmental Crises Facing our World. Pegasus, New York, NY.
- Bohm, David. On Dialogue. David Bohm Seminars. Ojai, CA.
- For more about the innovative support to dialogue at the Corrymeela Centre see www.corrymeela.org
- A good website to find training resources using and explaining 'mandalas' is www.themandalaproject.org

Contact:



simonforrester@yahoo.com





by Hanne Kleinemas

C е е р t е n е 0 m р е С С 0 р С

Excuse me, is this the way to intercultural competence?

How do these terms come together?

Earlier this year I found my "mission": to explore the spheres of intercultural dialogue (ICD). The "mission" was not only inspired by the fact that I had to write my MA-thesis but also by the European Year of ICD 2008 and the fact that youth is an explicit target group of the European institutions in connection with ICD. Alongside these reasons ICD is seen as topical by youth workers in Europe due to lack of integration of an increasing number of immigrants.

In my thesis I explored ICD from a scientific and political point of view as well as from a "practical" point of view in my case study. I examined ICD situations and learning developments during the "Faith and Dialogue Training Course" in Belfast which was organised by the SALTO Cultural Diversity Resource Centre.

ICD takes place in intercultural contexts — consequently intercultural communication is involved and plays a big role. Since the field of intercultural communication is huge, I suggest going into some aspects, which will give an insight into the field, its chances and challenges. Let us start with a very basic and simple definition by Lustig and Koester (2003: 51):

"Intercultural communication occurs when large and important cultural differences create dissimilar interpretations and expectations about how to communicate competently."

The problem of uncertainty and unpredictability

The quote above highlights a special feature of intercultural communication – the problem of uncertainty and unpredictability in intercultural encounters. Barnlund (1989: 40f) states that all human beings need predictability and meaningfulness of things, words and the like to survive. In our every-day life, an attribution of meaning to many objects, words, intonation, etc. has already taken place. The predictability of situations enables us to react to them appropriately and verify our behaviour where necessary. This is often done "automatically" or "unconsciously", which is useful, especially in situations that demand a quick reaction. The attribution of meaning is – in theory – absolutely arbitrary (though in practice depends on convention) and subject to the creativity of the individual. If you want to be understood in English you would call a chair "a chair". But nobody hinders you to name it differently, like

"ein Stuhl" or even "a table". The problem in communication "simply" is that we cannot read the other's thoughts. However, it might be easier to follow another's thoughts when the people involved have common features in their social and cultural backgrounds. Some similarities of attribution need to exist since they are crucial for understanding each other.

In intercultural settings, however, this predictability is reduced: A question might not have the same intonation at the end of the sentence or the same sentence structure. This could mean the other doesn't recognise it as such. It is easy to imagine that for some people the lack of predictability causes uncertainty, which in turn can lead to further miscommunication, not understanding or misinterpretation.

Putting things into context

When we interpret words or a situation, it is not only important what and how something is said, but also "where" or in "what context". You may have heard a sentence like "there is not just one truth". This becomes evident when you think of how many interpretations a certain situation can have and all of them seem to make sense. The situation is looked upon from different perspectives or is put into different contexts:

The utterance "Tickets, please! Tickets, please! ... Step to the rear of the bus, please!" (Gumperz 1982: 164f) would make sense on a bus in London. If it was said on a plane, on the other hand, you could understand it as a joke or you may assume that the person who said that must be a bit mad, since you don't expect a conductor to check your tickets in a plane.

In intercultural encounters interpretation is more complicated since you usually choose words and behave in a way that you are used to. The same word or gesture, however, may be unsuitable in the same situation but another cultural context: A smile means satisfaction and confidence in most European cultures and contexts, whereas it can also be a sign of uneasiness and discontent in Asian cultures.

So what actually is Dialogue? The journey is the reward!

Without being able to give a proper definition of the term "dialogue", I will introduce some salient features that are defined for instance by Bohm (1996) and Evanoff (2001). These two see dialogue from a more philosophical perspective. (It does not differ so much from what is understood by many politicians.) But as you read along, you will probably find bits and pieces yourself when you think about practical life and may question the feasibility of the concepts.

David Bohm sees equality of/among the participants as What is so different an important feature of dialogue. He says that this equality can be reached through a fair hearing of all parties involved. This demands of course also a certain degree of openness among the dialogue partners and that everyone has the chance to participate. Bohm claims that hierarchical power structures would be counterproductive to the interaction. In his eyes, a discussion – in contrast to a dialogue – aims at a win-lose situation, where the parties "play" against (i.e. not with) each other. In a dialogue, on the other hand, people aim to reach a win-win situation.

To say it differently, dialogue is not about convincing or persuading the other. (This would mean that I know everything about my opinion, but nothing or little about the others'.) It is through listening carefully to each other without judging the others' opinions that everyone can create the "same" stock of knowledge. Bohm is not saying that you should suppress your opinions and feelings. On the contrary, talking openly about facts and feelings is also important to reach what he calls "coherence of thought". He stresses that if there is a coherence of meaning (or thought) the process and outcome will be much stronger and more effective. Let me sum up these three features of dialogue with David Bohm's words:

"How can you share if you are sure you have truth and the other fellow is sure he has truth, and the truths don't agree? How can you share? Therefore, you have to watch out for the notion of truth. Dialogue may not be concerned with truth – it may arrive at truth, but it is concerned with meaning. If the meaning is incoherent you will never arrive at truth."

(Bohm 1996: 15f)

The aspects explained above suggest in a way a moral appeal and something demanding. Dialogue is also given a cooperative connotation which presupposes equality, openness and coherence of meaning. With an open mind you can receive new impulses and if you do not have a fixed aim, you are in Bohm's eyes, free to create something new together. This "new thing" should be a synergy resulting from the different inputs and opinions of the dialogue partners. Dialogue can thus be understood as a process of cooperation between the parties involved, which – according to Bohm and others – does not only imply talking, and conversations, but also concrete action.

about intercultural dialogue?

Intercultural dialogue is in the first place seen as an instrument to prevent or solve conflicts etc. in intercultural encounters (Evanoff 2001, Pratt 2004). In a cross-cultural setting new contexts and frameworks are created; intercultural dialogue can offer the platform to exploit that. This means that cultural values and norms we bring with us into the dialogue situation are not self-evident and will have to be discussed and created anew through a dialogue process. If we take the opportunity to suspend our judgement of the others' opinions and scrutinise our own, ways are opened up to recognise the positive and negative aspects of both sides and thus to create a new (maybe even better) work basis. Ron G. Manley (2004) suggests that an intercultural group should create their own culture. He admits that this is time-consuming, but he also claims that people will work more effectively and together.

The described processes do not only demand respect among the people involved, but also sincerity. Both aspects are needed in dialogue in order to build up trust within the group (Bohm 1996, Carbaugh/ Boromisza-Habashi/ Ge 2006). Trust, in turn, is usually the basis from where you can and need to start your work in the group.

Especially in the context of inter-religious dialogue, it is criticised that people are unwilling to take risks and thus hold on to their own position. Again, this does not mean that you should give up your position and not have an opinion at all. Instead Kandel (2005) calls for the courage to talk about taboos and hot topics. This, of course, can threaten one's standpoint. Therefore trust among the participants and room where debate can take place, needs to be established.

Having introduced different elements of dialogue, let us have a look at the combination of intercultural dialogue and reality. Do they go well together?

Well, talking about equality, one has to include also the circumstances of the dialogue and ask, "In what way are different resources distributed?" In their concept of four types of social interaction, Jones and Gerard (1967 quoted in Thomas 2003: 148) would call this distribution in many situations an asymmetric relation of interaction, in which one interaction party has more resources in terms of know-how, power, money, etc. available. This asymmetry consequently affects ICD and the



C o m p e t e n c e
C o m p e t e n c e
C o m p e t e n c e
C o m p e t e n c e
C o m p e t e n c e
C o m p e t e n c e
C o m p e t e n c e
C o m p e t e n c e
C o m p e t e n c e
C o m p e t e n c e
C o m p e t e n c e
C o m p e t e n c e
C o m p e t e n c e

exchange process (Scherer 1997). Scherer even recognises a tendency that ICD is used to "colonise" other societies by imparting (or even forcing) Western values on them: Does the EU really practice an exchange of know-how with developing countries or should the interaction rather be called "passing on know-how to the other"?

This "colonising attitude" however, collides with the basic tenet of ICD of being open to new interpretation and promoting equality as a main prerequisite. ICD as a tool is still more familiar to politicians and researchers than to "normal" citizens. Nevertheless there are many who use it in various contexts. The difference being that some are aware of it and others are not. If ICD is supposed to be used as the instrument for sustainable peace and conflict prevention in our intercultural societies, it needs to become a practical concept for more people, especially at the grassroots level. This is important, since the understanding of dialogue described here is an active dialogue, which demands the participants' willingness to act and to cooperate.

Ready – steady – go!? What competencies do I need for intercultural dialogue?

As there is not one truth, there is not one list of competencies that can be ticked in order to successfully hold an ICD. The examples I have chosen are taken with respect to the characteristics of ICD as described in the paragraphs above. Some aspects are especially relevant for the intercultural dimension of dialogue, which are partly also relevant for and thus derive from the field of intercultural communication; others could be seen as intracultural dialogue competencies. In general I argue for intracultural competencies, i.e. especially social skills, to be the source for intercultural competencies and the basis for any intercultural interaction no matter if it is a dialogue, discussion, conference or argument — just as you need to become conscious about your own culture in order to understand others (e.g. Thomas 2003, Mae 2003 and Castro Varela 2002).

>> Empathy – have a look from the other side!

Empathy is a skill that presupposes the ability to realise and understand another person's feelings and needs, i.e. to communicate in a way that complements the moods and thoughts of others. Imagine how the other/the stranger is feeling, not how you would feel in the other's position.

>> Listening carefully and showing interest in the dialogue partner

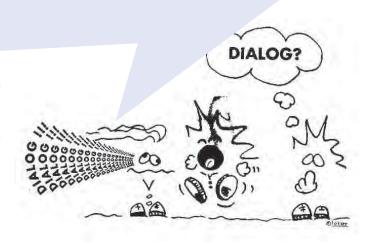
It is important to listen carefully, to be really interested in what the dialogue/communication partner is saying and to understand his or her perspective and viewpoint on the matter discussed (Lustig/Koester 2003:72ff; Gudykunst 1998: 232f). It is so important in dialogue because it implies involving the other — rather than presenting something to him or her (Scherer 1997). A presentation in turn would lead to asymmetries in the relation between the dialogue partners.

>> Mindfulness – leave your "automatic pilot" at home

The term "mindful" or "mindfulness" may seem strange especially to the native speakers of English among you. William B. Gudykunst (1998: 233) created this term; he says that we usually suppose that the others see the world the same way we do. To communicate mindfully, on the other hand, enables us to imagine how strangers feel. In other words, we have to become aware of our communication behaviour in order to correct or change it and make the interaction more effective (Gudykunst 1998: 31).

>> Reflection – or: a special mirror to look into

Tightly connected with mindfulness and the ability to become aware of one's communicative behaviour is the skill of (critical) reflection. The cultural scientist Michiko Mae (2003) also argues for reflection on and acceptance of both one's own limits and the strangeness of the other. This skill is essential for Bohm's suspension of prejudices and negative feelings. ICD is about exchanging ideas, cultures and experience as well as about being open and curious for new, different things (Bohm 1996, Byram 1999: 365f). This process presupposes that we critically reflect on our own culture, values and practices. It also requires a certain amount of spontaneity and the courage to take risks since one engages with something unknown and as I mentioned earlier on in this article, there are new norms, rules and principles to be discussed and set.



Now that I've bombed you with a couple competencies, do you feel ready to go into dialogue? Probably yes and no, since you feel that you have some of these abilities already. The problem with these kinds of competencies is that most of them seem to be hard to grasp; they are nothing you can learn easily from a book. It's probably also annoying that you cannot tick them on a list at one point, because there is no top-end, when you are, for example, absolutely mindful. (There is not even a guarantee that the dialogue will succeed, even if you feel competent.) There will probably always be room for improvement, and it may also happen that you find yourself competent but your communication partners don't think so in that situation.

Anyway, to end this part of the article with a positive thought, I would like to encourage you to do something, if you don't do it already: Learning a foreign language is a very good way to open new doors for interacting with the people around you and people from other cultures. It can help to understand alternative perspectives and to understand how complicated cross-cultural communication can be. I think that the SALTO booklet "Language and Culture on Trial" gives a very practical, easy, funny and interesting insight into "adventures" in intercultural environments.

Intercultural Dialogue as a political objective

Not only have scientists been discussing intercultural dialogue, but also politicians. Both the EU and the Council of Europe (CoE) have been dealing with the topic in various papers and treaties. In recent years, however, the term and idea of "intercultural dialogue" has become more concrete and explicit. The CoE is now working on a White Paper on intercultural dialogue. They preliminarily define the term as follows:

"Intercultural dialogue is an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures that leads to a deeper understanding of the other's world perception."

ICD as a political strategy is in line with achieving the Lisbon goals (employment and life-long education) and also connected to "creating an ever closer union". The EU enlargement and increasing mobility have intensified contacts between people, cultures and religions. With respect to Europe's cultural diversity and equality of people and cultures, an excessive freedom cannot be given. Instead, the CoE suggests that cultural democracy is needed, which means that the protection of cultures and the recognition of their specialities are needed to enable expression of personalities and identities. ICD is thus seen as a way to acquire skills to deal with these challenges.

There is one aspect that is often forgotten when talking about cultures. Cultures, groups and nations consist of individual people. Though a person may have a collective identity as a member of a group s/he also has an individual identity. Therefore we have differences and commonalities in behaviour, opinions and understanding. Similarly Europe consists of different countries, cultures and people. Concepts such as culture, intercultural dialogue or cultural diversity may be understood differently. This again leads us to the assumption that a culture of debate is needed in which differences can be presented, discussed, understood and eventually worked with.

And what about the Training Course?

In the case study of my MA-thesis I examined especially a selection of intercultural (dialogue) situations and activities. The exercises had different foci and not all of them are suitable to address aspects and competencies of ICD. The activities allow

us to experience situations in a more or less playful way, which means the gap between a kind of simulation situation of the training course and our work in real life needs to be bridged e.g. in the debriefing discussion afterwards. The participants were facing challenges that I described above as well: Different understanding of what dialogue is and different knowledge of English (the language spoken), for instance, made it difficult to create the aforementioned equality.

In my opinion there are aspects that a training course such as the SALTO one on "Faith and Dialogue" can contribute to "imparting" ICD competencies:

- · Raising awareness and understanding
- Sharing experience and techniques
- Fostering self-criticism and reflection



However, the training course situation needs to be adapted to situations at home/ work. It is also the abstractness of ICD itself that makes it difficult for youth workers as well as for politicians to deal with it. Examples of good practice are often needed in order to understand the concept and find a connection to reality. Experience and practice, however, seem to be crucial in order to foster the competencies in this area.

A training course cannot be seen as a dialogue, since some of their basic aims differ. Participants of a seminar want to learn something and expect some training and guidance, whereas in dialogue there is ideally no explicit facilitation.



What's next?

Unfortunately it was not possible for me to go into a deeper analysis for my Master-thesis. However, there is still potential. Just as the training course can be described as a starting-point for dealing with and going into ICD; the thesis can be seen as a starting-point for further research in the field. Analysing questions such as

- What are the real needs of the youth workers in terms of ICD?
- What are the long-term learning effects of the seminar?
- How are the youth workers going to implement the learning? might be helpful to design resources for ICD in European youth work.

Notes and references:



- My MA-Thesis "Developing Competencies in Intercultural Dialogue for European youth work – a case study" served as a basis for this article.
- Barnlund, Dean (1989): "Communication in a Global Village." In: Bennett, Milton J. (ed.) (1998): Basic concepts of Intercultural Communication: Selected Readings. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 35-52.
- Bohm, David (1996): On Dialogue. Reprint 2006. London/ New York: Routledge Classics.
- Byram, Michael (1999): "Acquiring Intercultural Communicative Competence: Fieldwork and Experiential Learning." In: Bredella, Lothar and Werner Delanoy (eds.): Interkultureller Fremdsprachenunterricht. Tübingen: Narr, 358-380. (Giessener Beiträge zur Fremdsprachendidaktik)
- Carbaugh, Donal, David Boromisza-Habashi and Xinmei Ge (2006): "Dialogue in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Deciphering Communication Codes." In: Aalto, Nancy and Ewald Reuter (eds.): Aspects of Intercultural Dialogue: Theory Research Applications. Köln: SAXA, 27-46.
- Castro Varela, María do Mar (2002): "Interkulturelle Kompetenz ein Diskurs in der Krise." In: Auernheimer, Georg (ed.): Interkulturelle Kompetenz und pädagogische Professionalität. Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 35-48.
- Evanoff, Richard (2001): "Discussion Paper on intercultural dialogue and education." UNU — United Nations University.
 http://www.unu.edu/dialogue/papers/evanoff-s5.pdf> March 2nd, 2007.
- Gudykunst, William B. (1998): Bridging Differences: Effective Intergroup Communication. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. (Interpersonal Commtexts; Vol. 3)

- Gumperz, John J. (1982): Discourse strategies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kandel, Johannes (2005): ""Dialog" mit Muslimen ein kritischer Zwischenruf." In: Zehetmair, Hans (ed.): Der Islam: Im Spannungsfeld von Konflikt und Dialog. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 321-333.
- Lustig, Myron W. and Jolene Koester (2003): Intercultural competence: interpersonal communication across cultures.
 4th ed. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Mae, Michiko (2003): "Transkulturalität und interkulturelle Kompetenz." In: Erwägen, Wissen, Ethik. Heft 1, 194-196.
- Manley, Ron G. (2004): "Building an international organisation." In: Pratt, Mary Louise, Ron G. Manley and Susan Bassnett: Intercultural Dialogue. London: British Council, 32-47. (British Council 70th Anniversary 1934-2004, Birthday Counterpoints)
- Pratt, Mary Louise (2004): "Planetarity." In: Pratt, Mary Louise, Ron G. Manley and Susan Bassnett: Intercultural Dialogue. London: British Council, 10-31. (British Council 70th Anniversary 1934-2004, Birthday Counterpoints)
- Scherer, Bernd M. (1997): "Machtstrukturen in interkulturellen Dialogen: Universeller Ökonomismus und kulturelle Diversität: Zu den Rahmenbedingungen interkultureller Dialoge." In: Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft e.V. (ed.): Interkultureller Dialog. Ansätze, Anregungen und Konzepte für eine interkulturell ausgerichtete Kulturarbeit und Kulturpolitik. Bonn: Klartext Verlag, 49-58.
- •Thomas, Alexander (2003): "Interkulturelle Kompetenz: Grundlagen, Probleme und Konzepte." In: Erwägen, Wissen, Ethik. Heft 1, 137-150.

Contact: hannemas@gmx.net



by Mariam Yassin Hagi Yussuf - Jirde

Gender mainstreaming in Intercultural Dialogue

Thoughts on culture, intercultural dialogue, encounter of people, gender mainstreaming and Europe

When I was asked to share my vision on Gender Perspectives of Intercultural Dialogue with Coyote readers, I was very happy to be given this opportunity because this has been my field of work for the last 10 years and intercultural learning has become a very important component in my daily life. However, I did know that this was going to be a difficult task because it is a wide theme and there is a variety of issues related to gender and intercultural learning, the notion of culture, dialogue, gender, identity, etc. I will try to summarize and share my vision on such themes and explain why I believe that mainstreaming gender and intercultural learning is crucial for European multicultural societies.

I will start by sharing my vision of intercultural learning, dialogue and gender mainstreaming by taking into account the very important issues of culture, identity and encounter between people from different backgrounds. I will focus on my personal experience as a trainer in intercultural learning and a cultural mediator by bringing my specific perspective which is the experience of a migrant woman living and working in Italy and in Europe.

I have been living in Italy for 16 years and intercultural learning has been a constituent in my life throughout these years. I moved to Europe in 1991 after the Somali Civil War broke out, it was then the first time I encountered the "other": new country, new culture and different people. I have travelled since I was a child, meeting new and "different" people, but this time it was different because I was not a tourist anymore: I was an immigrant who had to integrate and adapt to the way of living of the receiving country. Suddenly, I realised that in several diverse settings — school, society, etc - it was me who was regarded as the "other", the foreigner and the "stranger". Being the only foreign, black and Muslim girl in my school, I remember the thousands of questions asked to

me by my schoolmates: Why did you come here?, How come you chose Italy? Why is your culture so different from ours? Why did you fast (during the holy month of Ramadan) in your country? Why, why, why? I remember that I felt like being on trial! Rapidly, I realised that what I considered to be "normal" and "usual" were not fully understood by the new society I was living in and they were being questioned. I must say that I was irritated by all those questions and by the fact that my values, my culture and religion were being questioned.

I decided not to be intimidated and bullied and I started to ask them questions about their culture and their traditions. This way my schoolmates and I started to dialogue and share information about our respective countries and cultures, and I truly enjoyed that.

Around the age of 18 I decided to volunteer in intercultural women's organisations in Torino, I liked very much the varied environment and got fascinated by how women from different backgrounds could work together for the same goals: understanding one another and promoting women's rights. This experience motivated me to get involved in intercultural learning programmes and to recognise the importance of gender

mainstreaming in dialogues between cultures. However, besides the positive experiences with these organisations, there were also negative ones that led me to interrupt my collaboration with them. I left many of these organisations because their vision of intercultural learning did not go beyond organising nice intercultural evenings in which the immigrants were just needed to play the role of "the exotic" one. Being a migrant woman, I really had to face many prejudices, I was asked many time to play the role of "the different" one. Pre-

judices and stigmatisation have been the enemies I have been fighting since I started my activism in intercultural organisations. I always believed that intercultural learning is not a slogan and it is more than organising parties and preparing "ethnic" foods "all together".

To better explain my vision of intercultural learning I will refer to the Italian pedagogue Antonio Nanni. Nanni explains interculturality as a "movement of reciprocity, it strives to overcome any prejudice in the transmission of knowledge". Intercultural learning is not a one direction journey. It's a journey with and towards the "other". Antonio Nanni highlights the need to pay attention to the point of view of the "others", which means understanding their history, memories and vision of the future – to list just a few aspects. I very much appreciate the fact that Nanni speaks about "vision of the future". While giving an explanation of what intercultural learning is, we usually tend to focus on the present - for example, the dialogue and coexistence

of different cultural groups in our societies — not taking into account the future: what Europe are our communities willing to build? In my opinion, the dialogue must lead to a genuine intercultural policy, thus building the backbone of our societies in the present and in the future.

The relationship between people of different cultural backgrounds is in fact, a relationship between different cultural identities. When people encounter each other, they exchange

cultures in movement, which makes in my opinion, more challenging the process of intercultural dialogue. In the process of intercultural dialogue it is therefore essential that people do not have a "fixed" idea of their own culture so that they can be open to dialogue, exchange and learning from each other.

Another important aspect in intercultural dialogue is equality: a genuine dialogue can only take place if the parties involved in it are equal and equally represented. Women and men need

to be equally represented, with the same rights and responsibilities in this dialogue.

d

I believe that gender mainstreaming is needed to measure the implications for both men and women, of any policies or programmes, including intercultural programmes and policies. Mainstreaming gender in intercultural dialogue is crucial not only to ensure women's participation in the dialogue but also to avoid stereotypical female and male roles, which represent the obstacle to equality between men and women.

Intercultural dialogue can lead our societies to gain a better understanding of one another and to set up long-term intercultural policies. Therefore it is important that as many citizens as possible take part in this process and bring in their own contributions. Through my experience in intercultural organisations in Italy I have realised that women and men are not equally represented in many of these organisations, or, more often, the majority is represented by women. Despite this, I have noticed that often gender balance does

not translate into women's issues being taken into account in the political agenda of intercultural dialogue, which is crucial. I am highlighting this because culture and tradition are often used as a tool to discriminate against women at all levels of societies. The mentality that "women should stay at home" is unfortunately still widespread and anti-women policies and harmful traditional practices are being carried out in many countries.

66 Culture is an important aspect linked to the concept of intercultural learning. Culture is what people exchange when they encounter. In regards to this, I would like to highlight that cultures are not "fixed" ones but they are in a constant process of change. Culture is one of the main elements in one's identity, when we speak about the culture of an individual we are actually dealing with her/his cultural identity. As cultures go through a changing process, identities are, therefore, in constant movement. 33

Should only the positive aspects of the cultures be discussed in intercultural dialogue?

I do believe that intercultural dialogue should be open and tackle as many issues as possible, including the misuse of culture in order to oppress women. Unfortunately, in many years of activism in intercultural organisations I have experienced how difficult it is to bring the gender perspective into the agenda and to deepen the discussion to analyse the misuse of culture to oppress women. I believe that while engaged in dialogue, women and men from different backgrounds should discuss the obstacles that women face within the different cultures and look for and share possible solutions. In several years of activism in intercultural dialogue platforms I also had to struggle to make sure that my voice as a migrant woman was listened to and respected; refusing stereotypical roles. Minority women in fact face a double discrimination: being a woman and belonging to a minority group. This fact leads me to highlight more and more the importance of equality in intercultural dialogue as I believe that minority and majority groups have to have the same voice while engaged in dialogue.

Coming now to Europe, where, in our societies, diversity is often feared. How can we build an intercultural Europe based on mutual respect and equality? I believe that Europe's multiculturalism should be seen as a richness and not feared. After September 11 many hidden forms of racism have arisen and xenophobic groups are more and more taking part in the European political arenas. Some talk of the end of multiculturalism in Europe, I say that Europe is multicultural and it always will be. Multicultural Europe is a reality and to know more about its roots we must go back to history: movements of people have always taken place and their encounters have been a constant element in Europe's history.

The challenge today is how to strengthen the dialogue between different communities in order to establish genuine intercultural dialogue that in turn can lead to a long-term intercultural policy. An important step towards an intercultural Europe is to introduce intercultural learning and gender mainstreaming in school curricula to overcome any prejudice in the transmission of knowledge.

I believe that dialogue and encounter between people from different backgrounds, if based on respect and understanding, can bring positive results: we can improve ourselves by sharing experience from others and enriching ourselves with new and positive elements.

With regard to the role of women in intercultural dialogue, bearing in mind the successful role that women have had in peace-building processes in different countries of the world, I can only believe that their role will be a very important and fruitful one.



Notes and references: Nanni, Abbruciati (1999): Per capire l'interculturalità. Parole-chiave, Emi, Bologna Contact: mariam.yassinhy@gmail.com



by Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni Coordinator for Intercultural Dialogue of the Council of Europe

D i v e r s i t y D i v e r s i t y D i v e r s i t y D i v e r s i t y D i v e r s i t y D i v e r s i t y D i v e r s i t y D i v e r s i t y D i v e r s i t y

Institutional perspective on ICD: Council of Europe

Cherish diversity, don't fear your neighbour

"Intercultural dialogue" has become one of the buzzwords of international politics. Expectations run high: intercultural dialogue is widely seen as the preventive medicine against inter-community conflict; as the political answer to the fears triggered by cultural diversity; as an antidote against social fragmentation, stereotyping, racism and discrimination.

Undoubtedly, the nature of cultural diversity — and our awareness of it — has changed profoundly over the last two decades. There is the increasing internal diversity of European societies in the wake of strong migration movements caused by the economic globalization and the political upheavals prompted by the fall of the Berlin Wall. There is the increasing perception of international conflicts as conflicts between different cultural value systems. The revolution of transportation and the communication media facilitates intercultural exposure and contact. In the face of globalization and the European integration process, cultural minorities (and majorities) demand more forcefully than in the past, the recognition of their identity.

So, what can intercultural dialogue achieve?

The term «intercultural dialogue» appeared widely in the political debate in the 1990's. In spite of its lack of conceptual clarity, the term gradually made its way into the political vocabulary and in 1995 emerged for the first time in an international legal instrument – the Council of Europe "Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities". At world level, the United Nations declared 2001 the "International Year of Dialogue of Civilisations".

As regards the Council of Europe, stimulating the interaction between cultures has been one of its tasks right from the beginning, long before the term "intercultural dialogue" appeared in international politics. The groundbreaking European Cultural Convention of 1954, which has been signed by 49 states so far, did nothing else other than to encourage dialogue and co-operation across borders.

However, priorities and concepts have changed over the last 50 years in line with political developments. To simplify just a

little, one could say that the Council of Europe followed the international trend: from international cultural co-operation as a means of post-conflict reconciliation, to intercultural education as a contribution towards peace in a divided world, to the social integration of migrants and the protection of minorities, to social cohesion and human rights in multicultural societies. In 2005, the member states of the Council of Europe made intercultural dialogue a political priority of the Organization.

In formulating its strategy for the promotion of intercultural dialogue (the "Faro Strategy"), the Council of Europe set down four ground rules:

- Every policy for the promotion of intercultural dialogue must be transversal in nature, i.e. it cannot be pursued as a sectoral policy independent from other policy areas, but must overarch and include these. To name just one example, intercultural dialogue without an immigration and security policy and practice respecting human and minority rights, and without guaranteeing everybody involved the fulfilment of their basic material needs, will surely fail.
- Intercultural dialogue is the task of the state and public authorities, certainly, but it can be advanced only in co-operation with civil society: it will be successful only if as many people as possible are ready and acquire the necessary skills to master the cultural variety of our environment productively.
- Understanding another culture is not equivalent to approving and accepting all of its values and practices. For the Council of Europe, this implies that the protection of human rights, the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law are essentials that cannot be compromised in the process of intercultural dialogue. Intercultural dialogue does not mean value relativism.

• Intercultural dialogue is a task that cannot be tackled within the borders of our continent alone. Cultures are interconnected at world level.

Since 2005, the discussion has focused on the question of how to implement and mainstream this strategy. Many models and modules exist already, including legal standards, monitoring mechanisms, school curricula, guidelines for police and law officials, recommendations to the media, guidelines for the work of local and regional authorities, and the educational tools developed in the Council of Europe youth sector during its long-standing work in favour of tolerance, diversity and human rights.

In 2008, the Council of Europe will publish a basic political text - a «White Paper» - on intercultural dialogue, in order to add further strength to the political debate, to develop the inner coherence of our policy, and to encourage others and ourselves to make a long-term commitment in favour of intercultural dialogue. The document will offer recommendations and guidelines for all stakeholders, and promote the many existing examples of successful practice.

In preparing the White Paper, the Council of Europe has adopted a new approach. 2007 was used for intensive consultations with as many "stakeholders" as possible – governments, parliaments, towns and regional authorities, civil society organisations, minority and migrants' initiatives, women's federations, cultural organisations, journalists and many others.

Youth organisations were involved in this consultation at various steps. The "Diversity Youth Forum", organised in October 2006, was a first occasion to discuss the threats to diversity that young people experience today, and the responses that European institutions, national political authorities and civil society organisations must give in order to make our continent a space where cultural diversity is promoted and protected, not feared. In the "Istanbul Youth Declaration" on interreligious and intercultural dialogue in youth work (March 2007), youth organisations reiterated their commitment to the indivisible, inalienable and universal human rights as enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights and made numerous suggestions about how to take this policy further. The statutory organs of the Council of Europe youth sector expressed themselves on several occasions on the priorities they wished to see in the White Paper.

The White Paper will take account of these views and suggestions, in order to lay the basis for a widely co-ordinated and broad-based policy for the promotion of the intercultural dialogue. Five areas of action emerged during the consultations, and they will form the core messages of the White Paper:

• Europe must improve the democratic governance of cultural diversity. This relates to the legal framework and the standards of law enforcement, but also the political culture of our societies. Issues at hand are all forms of discrimination, hate

speech against minorities and many more.

- Europe must strengthen its efforts to enable everyone not only to know more about other cultures, but also to develop the co-operative skills necessary for living in a culturally diverse environment. Education in all contexts, including nonformal and informal education through civil society organisations and the media, is a particularly important aspect.
- Europe must develop the structures and opportunities for the participation of all, and for democratic citizenship. This implies for instance a more vigorous strategy to offer citizenship to all, but also a stronger encouragement and empowerment of minorities to engage themselves in the democratic dialogue.
- Europe needs more and better spaces for intercultural dialogue. The media, civil society organisations and religious communities are among the actors who can contribute most in this respect.
- The principles of intercultural dialogue must also inspire relationships at international level.

The White Paper is expected to launch a widespread debate on practical policies at all levels. This is where youth organisations, and young people generally, will have an important role to play. We can take intercultural dialogue much further – but only if Europe's young generation shares the basic conviction that diversity makes us richer, not poorer: That the essence of diversity is the protection of the human rights of everybody: That the future of Europe lies in our ability to listen and to learn from each other – in dialogue and respect.

The framework for action in 2008 and beyond is already prepared. The Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue will mark the starting point of numerous programmes and projects, to be implemented over several years within the Organization, nationally and locally. At UN level, the new «Alliance of Civilizations» initiative is about to enter its operational phase. The European Union prepares for 2008 the «European Year of the Intercultural Dialogue». These are ample opportunities for all of us to learn to cherish diversity, and not to fear our neighbours.

Notes and references:



 For more information on the Directorate General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport, visit the website: www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/

Contact:



youth-partnership@coe.int





Monica Urian de Sousa

р P р

Institutional **perspective** on ICD: European Commission

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue

What does living in today's world mean in our relationship to others in our daily life? Each of us has at least one member of our family, a friend, a teacher or a boss from another cultural background. Each of us is the product of a mixture of cultures from which we create a hybrid identity; visible in the music we listen to, in the way we dress or talk or even feel. And there is a «magic» word to define this reality: intercultural. Add the «dialogue» ingredient to it, and you have much more than a concept: you have a way of life! The intercultural Europe that we want for the future is based on a respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different cultural backgrounds, on an equal basis.

What is the «history» of the topic at the EU level? Since the early 1990s, the Commission has implemented a wide range of initiatives that have stimulated intercultural dialogue: academic conferences, cultural projects or educational initiatives to mention some examples. In November 2006, the European Commission organised a conference on best practice projects implemented by a wide array of organizations in different EU countries, which had benefited from EU funding. (From programmes such as Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Jean Monnet, the Youth programme and Culture 2000 from the Directorate-General for Education and Culture or programmes from other DGs like Employment, Social affairs and Equal opportunities or DG Research.) Many of you have already benefited from these programmes and worked together on the concept of intercultural dialogue.

By declaring 2008 the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID), the European Union fully acknowledges the complexity of our societies, our cultural diversity, the coexistence of different cultural identities and beliefs that are at the heart of the European project. But intercultural dialogue cannot be imposed from above, by the EU or a national administration. It is therefore essential to find best practices in civil society, support them, learn from them and share them at national and European levels. The «bottom-up approach» chosen for the Year means that the Civil Society, including youth organisations like the Youth Forum, have been involved in preparing the Year from the very beginning. The European Commission is collaborating with the Civil Society Platform for Intercultural Dialogue, ensuring that the voice of the organizations with a rich experience in this field, is heard.

What does the 2008 Year mean for you in terms of youth policies and programmes at the EU level?

First of all intercultural dialogue will be the main subject in the youth field in 2008, with implications going beyond the Year. In fact intercultural dialogue will become a transversal priority in various EU policies, actions and programmes, in fields such as culture, sports, citizenship and, of course, youth. In the framework of the structured dialogue, young people at all levels – local, regional, national and European – will have the chance to pronounce their views on this topic and to get their opinions heard by policy-makers.

The highlight of the structured dialogue will be a European level youth conference on intercultural dialogue, probably in the framework of the European Youth Week 2008.

The Youth in Action Programme will tackle intercultural dialogue as a priority next year. This will support young people working together on this issue by offering co-funding for projects. Last but not least, a European youth event on inter-religious dialogue is envisaged during the Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

At this very moment, an open call for proposals published by the European Commission is ongoing. One of the award criteria is the number of people involved directly and indirectly in the project, with a special emphasis on young people. In parallel, at the national level, the National Coordination Bodies are in the process of selecting and preparing projects, many of which have youth as their target group.

The website for the EYID has a special section dedicated to Partners, online at **www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu**.

Here you can register your organisation and exchange best practice and ideas with colleagues from all over Europe; search for partners; learn with and from the experiences of other organisations. You have the opportunity to give visibility to existing web features dealing with the issue of intercultural dialogue, which can be published on the site or linked to it. The full version of the site will be a window on the activities of the Year; informing you about the events organised at national and European level, in all official languages of the EU. Even more important, you will be asked to contribute with your own story, testimonial, definition, etc. to the concept of intercultural dialogue and its expressions in daily life.

As you can see, at this stage many initiatives are in a preparation phase and a lot is going on in 2008 directly related to you. We will surely have the opportunity to present in more detail certain initiatives in the field of youth as they are planned and implemented. The objective of all these initiatives is to encourage you to explore European cultural diversity, leading to a mutual understanding and a better life together and last but not least, to foster active European citizenship and a sense of European belonging. Being open to the «other» and to the condition of «otherness» will help you develop your cultural sensibility and literacy — the capacity to acquire, interpret and apply knowledge about cultures.

Your curiosity and your creativity are key to the success of this European Year- so put on your intercultural glasses and join us!







by Jovana Bazerkovska

Institutional perspective on ICD: European Youth Forum

The Youth Perspective! Political climate for intercultural dialogue

When speaking of intercultural understanding as basis for intercultural dialogue, we will immediately start with a question:

How does our daily reality build the foundation for intercultural dialogue to begin?

Let's start with observing the media. The media is still full of **How do we understand** information promoting fear of people different than yourself and fear of cultures different to our own. If we look at the political arena, we see that we are faced with national political debate based on populist discourse. If we look at our educational system we realize the education we go through made very little or no progress in responding to diversity, as it is still based on normative and "national identity" approaches encouraged through school calendar, school books, history education, pedagogical methods, etc... We are still confused by the debate: cultural relativism vs. human rights, especially when it comes to women's rights! Our daily surrounding does not reflect the diversity we live in, and the political efforts we hear about still do not or hardly ever reach or change our world and the perception towards it.

Definitely the presence of the issue on the political agenda at the European level assures us that there is willingness, understanding and importance given to it. It is implemented in different political contexts and processes, but still it brings us to one very direct conclusion that:

Promoting diversity and intercultural dialogue is not the sole responsibility of decision-makers and of the European level, but has to be tackled at all levels and with the involvement of stakeholders: People who are able to put forward the vision of the different social groups they represent and the knowledge of the ways these groups can be reached in the most effective and direct way.

intercultural dialogue?

Europe is by nature a culturally diverse continent. This fact directly gives us all responsibility to ensure that this diversity is recognized, promoted and celebrated.

In this sense dialogue between cultures is necessary in order to create an inclusive European society for everyone. This is the precondition for social progress of each individual and at the same time a precondition for the promotion of the cultural diversity of the continent.

In the European Youth Forum (YFJ) we believe that intercultural dialogue is the only way forward in shifting the political debate in a new direction towards respect and understanding.

Quoting the former UN Secretary General:

«I see ... dialogue as a chance for people of different cultures and traditions to get to know each other better, whether they live on opposite sides of the world or on the same street»

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan

We also see dialogue as the only way that will bring people of our local community, country, Europe, and world together, and would help for all the phobias to be overcome!

What we are reaffirming and what we believe is still to be done!

As YFJ we follow all the processes in the field of ICD closely and we are involved in many of them to bring the perspective of youth organizations. Magazines very often tend to make "YES" and "NO" based analyses of different political actions. I will use the same method to analyze what has been done and what is to be done on European level.

In the spirit of future-oriented approach this time I will leave out the "NO". The YFJ "Reaffirmations" and "Must do's when it comes to intercultural dialogue and the views of young people in making a difference on European and national level are below.

We reaffirm:

- The European understanding of ICD as a mainstream issue as it affects: gender issues, education, social inclusion, etc
- The successes of the campaign "All Different All Equal" in reaching and bringing together young people on different levels to celebrate diversity
- The EU European Year of ICD putting the issue in focus is very important and we believe that it will open many new doors and perspectives for ICD in Europe
- The preparation of the COE White paper on ICD
- The promotion of the Euromed dialogue and cooperation, as it represents an important part of ICD on a European level

Must do list:

- Involve youth organizations and thereby young people in ICD at all levels
- Recognize non-formal education as tool for the promotion \textbf{Young people and youth organisations} of intercultural learning
- Encourage ICD at all levels: International, European, regional, national and local
- Include intercultural dialogue as part of global education in the school curriculum
- On the macro-level expand and ensure wider funding for intercultural and inter-religious dialogue programmes
- Have civil society and decision-makers acting together
- Promote dialogue as a tool for embracing diversity in Europe and worldwide
- Examples of good practice for ICD to be promoted by all institutions

What we as YFJ do to promote intercultural dialogue?

We understand intercultural dialogue as a mainstreaming issue and therefore it is part of our work in several fields:

- Education
- Global Youth Work Development
- Equality and Human Rights

We promote non-formal education as a tool for intercultural learning. We promote the role young people have to play in intercultural dialogue. We promote the concept and its importance towards our member organizations and we encourage them to get actively engaged in promoting it in the context of their national, European or international level work.

u

h

We have been actively engaged in Euro-Mediterranean and global cooperation in general, and for us they represent an important step in bringing young people of different cultures to work together. The Euromed cooperation has been voted as a priority area for the YFJ work on global youth work development by the YFJ member organisations. In that regard, it is important to add that the Youth Forum has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Anna-Lindh Foundation. The Foundation is a far reaching partnership between the European Union and its partners in the southern Mediterranean region. It was launched at the Barcelona Conference in 1995.

We have created an YFJ Faith-based expert group, which is composed of the faith-based member organizations of the Forum where FEMYSO (Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations, not member of the YFJ) is permanently invited. The group aims to develop cooperation among young people belonging to different religious communities and to support the work of the YFJ Bureau in the field of interreligious dialogue as part of intercultural dialogue. Another relevant memorandum of understanding for inter-religious dialogue has been signed with the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation.

Last but not least, the YFJ is actively involved in the consultation for the white paper on ICD and the contact group for the preparation of the EU 2008 Year of ICD.

As actors of social change and in many ways the avant-garde of European young people and youth organizations, we are ready to make a difference and ready to take a step towards the development of a dialogue- and understanding-based society! Through our activities and programmes we are actively contributing in this sense.

We are convinced that the dialogue must start with us as the present and the future of the societies we live in! We call for an intercultural dialogue that takes this fact into consideration!





by Jean-Luc Frast

Intercultural Dialogue Through Sport

The contribution of sport and physical activity towards intercultural understanding

The International Sport and Culture Association



INTERNATIONAL SPORT AND CULTURE ASSOCIATION

The International Sport and Culture Organisation ISCA is the world's leading umbrella in Sport for All. ISCA is an organisation bringing together sport, culture and youth organisations from across the globe. ISCA believes that everyone should have the chance to participate in international activities such as festivals, exchanges and sports tournaments. We call this «Sport and Culture for All». Sport is not just about competition and exercise, but also involves having a good time and making friends. Moreover, sport regulates social behaviour and creates a feeling of belonging – which in turn leads to a strengthening of democracy.

Throughout the last 3 years ISCA implemented a large-scale innovative EU YOUTH project, entitled International Youth Leader Education (IYLE) focussing mainly on education through sport. During the implementation of this project we had the opportunity to try new ways of using physical activity in regard to a variety of social issues. Later in this article we will have a look at results from the IYLE training course "Intercultural dialogue and social inclusion through sport".

ISCA is involved in various projects focussing on intercultural dialogue. One of them is the EU Study on National Approaches to Intercultural Dialogue initiated by ERICarts; European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research GmbH.

The study is addressing different fields, in particular:

- Education as a means to provide the basis for understanding and respecting diversity:
- Youth and sport activities which facilitate practical experience with intercultural dialogue;
- Culture which can connect different value systems and provides aesthetic challenges.

The information and analysis gathered will assist in the development of strategies and programmes in the context of the upcoming EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 and in future European Commission programmes. For more information have a look at http://www.ericarts.org.

Debate

From a political point of view, sport and its structures and settings are often referred to as important solutions to the major challenge of creating intercultural dialogue in European societies. However, the popularity and the preferences for using sport and its structures in the processes of creating an intercultural dialogue are not always enough to secure successful interventions and results. Transversal organisational policy and activities in regard to intercultural dialogue and social inclusion are extremely important to enable isolated actions to be set and recognized in an overall organisational framework.

Main characteristics of sport as a tool for creating an intercultural dialogue in Europe:

- 1. The interventions and activities are mainly planned and implemented at a local level without an overall strategy or policy.
- 2. The interventions and outcomes are often described through "good practice" more than evidence-based research.
- 3. Civil society organisations (sport associations, clubs, etc.) with their voluntary based structures and commitments are often the settings where the intercultural interventions are implemented.
- 4. Focal points of the interventions are "challenge oriented" (social inclusion or anti-racism), and "target group" oriented.5. The "intercultural learning dimension" is mainly based on non-formal and informal learning settings and processes.

The main characteristics indicate the complexity and some of the strengths and weaknesses that sport faces and the role sport plays in the struggle for inclusive societies.

The political and financial support is primarily based on the general assumption that sport promotes social integration. The political assumptions are supported by similar assumptions among the European citizens. [Sport and Multiculturalism. PMP in partnership with the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy Loughborough University, August 2004.]

Results from a Eurobarometer analysis shows that close to three out of four European Union citizens (73%) view sport as a means to promote the integration of immigrant populations.

Although this is the view of a majority in the 25 countries surveyed, this proportion seems lower in several central European countries. [The citizens of the European Union and Sport, Fieldwork October-November 2004, Publication November 2004]

In promoting the integration of immigrant populations, sport is also perceived as acting as a means of fighting against discrimination according to two thirds of European citizens (64%).

The general assumptions or claims made for sport in this field of intercultural dialogue and its relation to research is very precisely described in the following statement:

«The role of sport in promoting social integration, in particular of young people, is widely recognised. Sport ... is a recognised social phenomenon. Sports offer a common language and a platform for social democracy. [Sport] creates conditions for political democracy and is instrumental to the development of democratic citizenship. Sport enhances the understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and it contributes to the fight against prejudices. Finally, sport plays its part to limit social exclusion of immigrant and minority groups.» [The Council of Europe's study on Diversity and Cohesion - Niessen 2000]

To categorise the interventions and projects at implementation level we can describe the major categories and examples of specific target groups.

The major challenges dealt with in the interventions and projects within the sport sector are:

- Social inclusion and empowerment of excluded or marginalized individuals and groups
- Combating racism and xenophobia
- Post-war reconciliation

Here the argument is, that it takes more than the sport and physical activities to facilitate a useful and valuable Intercultural dialogue.

It takes:

- an objective beyond the pure sport activity
- an educational perspective and process

 \bullet settings where the educational perspective is transformed into action

The educational framework for most projects dealing with in-

tercultural dialogue is non-formal and in-formal learning. [Pathways to recognition of non-formal learning 2004.]

The aforementioned IYLE project is indeed all about non-formal education and intercultural learning as such. IYLE uses a learner-centred approach, which considers the cultural diversity of the individual and places it in a larger socio-economic context. We combine proven relevant strengths of non-formal education with our definition of education through sport or/and physical activity.

We develop culturally-sensitive methods that can be adapted to different social, economic and ethnic frameworks and we empower and encourage young people and youth workers to use them to promote intercultural dialogue. Through the IYLE project we find large support in the belief that non-formal education is the qualification wheel and quality wheel of the NGO-sector.

Intercultural learning and intercultural competences are key aspects in all group-related learning processes, especially if you are dealing with a diverse public. Exploring your own identity in order to understand the other and the world around you is one of the pillars of the IYLE project and essential to making social change a process to which all individuals can contribute.

Key competences

We identify 3 key competences in intercultural dialogue

- The ability to ask questions
- The ability to answer questions
- The ability to create an environment where questions can be asked and answered

T-course "Intercultural dialogue and social inclusion through sport"

The course was held from 11th to the 17th of July 2005 in Alantos, Lithuania and aimed at:

• exploring sports and physical activities as a tool for intercultural dialogue and social inclusion and adapting different ty-

pes of sports and physical activities to different target groups, in particular young people;

- developing knowledge, attitudes and skills for the positive use of sports in an intercultural context;
- developing a value for sensitivity towards individual differences;

The trainer team, composed of Dirk Adams, Kathy Schroeder and Jean-Luc Frast, tackled the topics by developing a set of activities emphasising physical activity, personal and collective experience-making, experience-based learning and intercultural reflection.

The training process built on 4 main steps that linked intercultural learning to social inclusion:

- "Teambuilding" as part of most training courses.
- "Identity and culture exercises" during which personal, cultural, educational and social differences and similarities were emphasised.
- "Intercultural dialogue" where aspects such as individual identity, group identity, stereotyping, generalization and tools for intercultural learning were investigated.
- "Social inclusion" where strategies to overcome discrimination and create inclusive environments through physical activity were worked out.

You can access the process and the activities by contacting ISCA.

Regional and national examples

>> SOUTH EAST EUROPE Democratic Development Through Grass-root Sport in South East Europe

ISCA's involvement in South East Europe began in the postwar period in the late 1990's. There was an interest in assisting the new countries of former Yugoslavia in finding a sports model to fulfil the wishes of citizens and contribute to the reestablishment of democratic processes. Furthermore, ISCA has been interested in the role of sport in the ongoing development process in these countries and the ongoing interest of local clubs, regional associations and national federations. The ISCA project Democratic Development Through Grass-

root Sport has included six locally-developed model projects, seven seminars and two conferences with beneficiaries coming from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia and Albania. The overall objective of the project was to assist the development of local associations and groups with a focus on popular sport in order to create regional interaction and co-operation between NGOs in popular sport and to establish a regional operational network of NGOs which has the capacity to serve as a platform for future regional and international cooperation. The project has received support from SAD and from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

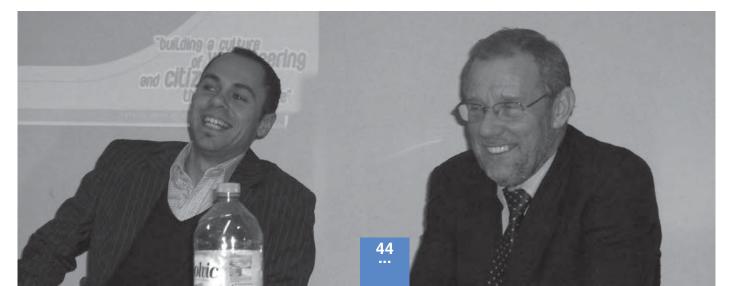
>> BELGIUM Coloured Sport Clubs funded by the King Boudewijn Foundation

The initiative was taken by the King Boudewijn Foundation to develop an active non-discrimination policy within the sports clubs and to generate an integrated sports co-operation between the Belgian and foreign population. The goals are:

- to raise the number of migrant participants,
- to stimulate the active involvement of foreigners in the club,
- to provide quality tutors and coaches and to stimulate youngsters to follow coaching programmes,
- to develop connections to local actors
- to react to long-term social challenges and developments

The first campaign started in 1996. Twenty four sports clubs were selected to receive financial support from the Foundation to implement a sports and participation policy for foreign youth. As for the coaching programmes, ten candidates were selected. Each of them received a scholarship and a tutor. In 1997, it was extended to 34 clubs and sixteen youngsters were taken on for the coaching programme.

Inspired by the "Coloured Sports Clubs" campaigns, some local community sports services organised valuable sports and integration initiatives during holidays. They expanded their range of holiday sports camps for youth and offered some weeks with new contents aimed specially to attract migrant youngsters. Furthermore, during the whole process of organisation the dialogue with migrant organisations was intensified.



>> IRELAND SARI (Sport Against Racism Ireland)

This organisation is involved in projects designed to use sport as an integrating force. It is a voluntary organisation and does not receive government funding. To mark World Refugee Day (June 20, 2004) the African Refugee Network in partnership with Dublin City Council, NCCRI, UNHCR, SPIRASI Integrating Ireland organize National Awards. The awards highlight the positive contribution that asylum seekers and refugees have made to the local communities in which they live and to individuals from those local communities who are extending the hand of friendship and solidarity to refugees and asylum seekers. There are five categories under which awards are made which include sport and leisure.

>> ITALY Unione Italiana Sport Per Tutti (UISP)

The organisation has developed a series of programmes, which concentrate on communication and dialogue between migrants and Italians while promoting initiatives to build contacts. The aim of these programmes is to provide immigrants communities with assistance to organise sports activities. UISP works also with provinces in organising sporting projects that aim at intercultural dialogue and mutual acceptance.

The initiatives are developed at five levels:

- 1. recreational, cultural and sport activities that aim at maintaining specific cultures and identities of immigrant communities in Italy
- 2. promoting intercultural dialogue: project of Centro Olympic Maghreb in Genoa aiming at immigrants from North Africa, South America, Eastern Europe
- 3. promotes events such as an anti-racist world cup which involves mixed teams (men and women) from different ethnic minorities (Mondiali Antirazzisti)
- 4. initiatives to combat ethnic and social prejudices such as the "Ultra Project" targeting football fans at national and international level.
- 5. At international level: Peace Games (http://www.peacegamesuisp.org) which aims at promoting peace through sport and other recreational activities in areas of crisis in Africa, the Middle East and the Balkans. For instance the campaign "Una speranza per il futuro", ("a hope for the future") collects funds for the reconstruction and administration of a sport camp in Mostar.

>> SPAIN : Cricket for All

Another example from the province of Barcelona comes from the area of Sant Adrià de Besos, where the Hispano-Pakistani Cultural Association organises cricket courses in collaboration with the town hall. The courses are open to everyone and include a tournament.

These examples highlight the existence of collaborations between the voluntary (particularly associations representing immigrant populations) and public sectors in the provision of sports activities for immigrants.

The overall estimation of the current situation in Europe

Approximately 70 millions Europeans are members of/or directly related to a sport association, club, etc. Many sport organisations are involved in the question of intercultural dialogue and integration through sport, and this number seems to be increasing. In other words, it is on the agendas of European sport organisations. However, few organisations are today beyond the "critical mass", when it comes to involvement in work with integration through sport. In other words, this is not very high on the agendas.

Consequently, very few organisations seem to have Corporate Social Responsibility or Organisational Social Responsibility included in their general policy. This failure illustrates that the topic of Organisational Social Responsibility is not an integrated part of organisational objectives. Organisations need to be realistic in the definition of their aims and should assess the distinction between education for, by and through sport. What exactly is it that they offer and what exactly it is that sport can offer? Education for sport develops technical competences. This is normally linked to well-defined disciplines of competitive sport. Education by sport uses physical activity instrumentally to attain certain social goals such as ethnic reconciliation, public health, citizenship or social integration. Education through sport is physical exercise that creates existential learning between human beings. Here, education is a way of empowering people.

Therefore, we believe that one innovative approach is to create partnerships between sports clubs and human rights and cultural associations. In the framework of the International Youth Leader Education project we strongly promoted the benefits to bring the sport world closer to the rest of the NGO world and vice-versa. We know that sport has a great potential to promote social change. We believe that this potential is not fully used by the Sport world and by the rest of the NGO world. Throughout the IYLE project, we took first steps to give the Sport world tools inspiring them to look beyond the positive aspects of physical activity and to use sport as a method to enhance social change. Further we try to encourage the NGO world to use physical activity as a tool to engage people in reflective processes that they might not reach by using their traditional ways to promote social change.

We hope that many new partners will join us in this effort.

To conclude with the words of the European Youth and Sport Forum 2007: "Welcome diversity – Let's move Europe" [Declaration of the EYSF2007 http://isca-web.org/english/news/eysf20070]





by Meg Rybicki

Exploring the use of the Arts in intercultural and inter religious dialogue

My interest in instigating youth arts programmes and youth exchanges dealing specifically with the themes of inter-ethnic, and inter-religious dialogue, came about after an upsurge in violent incidents involving young refugees and locals where I live in County Donegal, Ireland.

Part of a bigger picture

My organisation implemented a series of projects that involved local young people and young people from marginalised backgrounds in a bid to "problem solve" on neutral ground, to defuse tensions. A programme of arts-based activities, using drama, film, music, and role-playing workshops, led to a slight reduction of those tensions within the community and pointed

the way for community leaders and youth workers to conceive of future "seed beds" for reconciliation between protagonists and people who have been on the receiving end of verbal or physical racial abuse. ("Seed beds" are, literally, a neutral ground upon which to "plant" and "nourish" ideas, ideals, and solutions to problems).

Our organisation obtained funding from our National Agency, Leargas, to run a year-long project entitled "Embracing Diversity, (The Aswun Film Project)" which produced a training/

information film exploring exclusion, media distortion and misrepresentation of minorities, and the asylum seeking process. The project was chosen by Leargas to represent Ireland at the recent European Youth Week in Brussels in early June 2007.

The actual shooting, editing, and distribution of the short film was undertaken by young volunteers and their friends. This brought the issues of intercultural dialogue, inter-ethnic and cross community cooperation to the fore, as our group of young people came from Ireland, England (a group of young Muslim men), Sudan, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, and

France. The subject matter of the film was extremely uncomfortable at times - for all the participants - as it covered the topics of increased immigration to Ireland, the "ghetto-isation " of parts of inner cities and suburbs, immigrants being perceived as accepting lower wages than locals and the mass emigration of the Irish to Britain during the Great Famine from 1845 onwards. The young collected press cuttings which painted a picture of chaos, civil disorder, "race" riots, "wage under-

> cutters" and ghettos, if immigration to Ireland from the EU and beyond continued at its present rate.

> The young decided to film the extracts from the newspapers in "mock" documentary style, comparing the alarmist, misleading, Irish headlines of 2006, (for example: "A Tsunami of foreign workers threatens to flood Irish Shores!!!", "TB epidemic caused by increased immigration", "Polish workers live 18 to an apartment", Ireland, March 2006), with the vitriolic and

trumpeting headlines in the English Spectator Newspaper in 1845, which declared, "The Irish are FLOODING into Liverpool, with pestilence upon their backs, willing to live 16 to a room, to work for the clothes on their backs, and food in their bellies!!", "There is already a 'little Ireland' slum in Manchester!"



Important intercultural dialogue took place after the actual shooting of the film, as cultural, linguistic, and religious differences were discussed impartially amongst the young people and organisers, so they were able to understand, (after taking on "roles" within the filmed workshops), why fear and



mistrust of cultural diversity is so easily exploited by politicians, the media, and those within our communities, who are intolerant of difference, and do **not want** to acknowledge the benefits of interculturalism.

In my opinion, young people who have been at the "interface" of racism, and religious or cultural intolerance, are often totally ignored by policy makers, politicians, and statutory bodies, and their voices, ideas, and possible solutions to instigating dialogue, **are not heard**. NGO's and community Youth and Arts organisations must take up the challenge of providing a link between voices from "grass roots" levels, and those with the power to effect change.

The training methodologies adopted for the duration of our film project were inter-linked workshops, which increased the learning curve of the participants' perceptions of difference and diversity, and acceptance of each others' ethnic and cultural heritage. We used visual arts and newspaper articles to demonstrate how certain groups are stereotyped by the media and political parties, and we ensured that our participants experienced and understood these issues in workshops using drama, role play, music, dance and film.

Some may argue that a more formal approach to intercultural training/dialogue is required, in order to achieve "concrete" and valorised "results". I strongly disagree with this view having been involved in the non-formal sector for many years. Film is a wonderfully fluid platform from which to base intercultural dialogue as *intercultural learning involving a rigid "Trainer-participant" framework sometimes has no spontaneity, and could actually stifle creativity.*

A remarkably effective intercultural dialogue training workshop was to film "live" a role reversal and disempowerment exercise called "The Refugee Experience" which can be adapted, honed, and used by many groups in a variety of situations.

The group was briefed by a leader who gave each individual a new identity. Their stories were similar in that each individual had supposedly lost their homes, jobs and families for the "crime" of belonging to a new political party in the Military Dictatorship of Ireland. Each individual was asked to envisage fleeing their home country, leaving behind everything and paying ruthless people-traffickers everything they had to give them passage to Africa. They were asked to imagine themselves reaching the safe haven of Lagos, Nigeria, only to be turned away after the Nigerian government had affiliated itself with the Military Government in Ireland. Finally, they were told that they were to try to enter Yaounde, Cameroon with no documentation, papers, visa or money, (a reality for many asylum seekers who are then given derogatory labels by the media such as "bogus" and "illegals").

The confidence of the "Doctor", "Lawyer", "Reverend", "Teacher", "Pilot", "Human Rights Activists", in their ability to convince the "Immigration Officials" of their identity and purpose in trying to claim asylum in Cameroon, (because of the political situation in Ireland), soon gave way to the real emotions and even tears, of anger, confusion, hopelessness, despair.

As soon as the exercise was over, it was very important to debrief the participants and ask them to sum up their experience in a few short sentences. We have included versions of this "live" filmed workshop in our short film (named Aswun – Diversity Reels) and its impact on the participants was very successful in measurable terms, as during our filmed evaluations some of the participants admitted that they felt that asylum seekers, refugees, and economic migrants were causing problems in their communities. By taking on the role of someone desperately striving to gain the right to reside and work in a "safe" country, the young people were able to embark on a process of real dialogue and suggest ideas and solutions for their own situations.



Under further debriefing, the UK Muslims admitted feelings of resentment towards the "new communities" of Muslim young people in their area who are mainly from Somalia, Sudan, Iran, and Iraq and they admitted that they had been openly hostile to these young people attending "their Mosques".

After a full evaluation of the youth project our organisation was able to conclude that by using drama, role play, media studies and digital film, we had surpassed our expected outcomes of the impact of the project, as the film is being used by a variety of both NGO's and statutory bodies to promote intercultural learning. Unless more emphasis is placed on inter—ethnic and inter-religious dialogue in Europe, we are at risk of creating fractured communities with dividing lines drawn firmly along the issues of ethnicity, religion, culture and cultural heritage; restricting integration of communities and leading to segregation of education centres, workplaces, and housing.

Our programme was never intended to be a "stand alone" project, and has successfully resulted in "spin off" projects. It has "multiplied" into at least four separate strands: a Polish Youth Exchange involving filmed workshops; a website with our Bulgarian partners highlighting joint projects, (www.the-bigger-picture.ie); funding from our local Development Agency to facilitate an Arts-based action to enhance cross-community integration and the commissioning of a short film to be made by asylum seekers.

Our Arts-based projects have included producing and recording an intercultural music CD with young musicians from Togo, Congo, France, Ireland, Cameroon, and Cote D'Ivoire. We have made three short films, produced a community centre mural, a stained glass sculpture, and a huge mosaic to name but a few examples. By using Arts-based projects as a tool for both intercultural learning, and intercultural dialogue, we have enabled young people and facilitators from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, to work together towards common goals, which in itself necessitates bonds being formed and networking to take place.

Our films, music and materials are available to interested groups and individuals and we welcome new partners and ideas to maintain a fresh and innovative approach to our work.





by Laimonas Ragauskas

The "intercultural evening" in training - are we floating, diving or sinking?

Usually you can hear questions like this in preparatory meetings before a training course: "What are we going to do for the intercultural evening? Should it be something usual or something else?" It's important to mention that recently it seems that hardly anybody takes into consideration such questions as "Why such an evening is really needed? What are its objectives and foreseen learning outcomes?" So I wonder if we simply leave it in for the sake of informal learning, which should happen anyway?

To be honest, I did not plan to write this article as I thought about the subject of it. I thought that "intercultural evenings in trainings" could be worth maybe a short paragraph in the Marker section at the end of Coyote. However it appeared that all my questions and ideas could hardly fit in three sentences. When reading this article I would recommend that you reflect not only on intercultural evenings as such, but also on any other method or training session that you use for the sake of intercultural learning.

Whenever I ask my participants during a training course, what are the things they like about intercultural evenings, they start naming various sorts of alcohol and sausages from various countries across Europe. I would answer the same if someone asked me! The first time I experienced an intercultural evening was back in 1999, in a training course for those willing to set up international youth exchanges. It was not my first training course. Along with my friends I used to have parties during courses before that. The difference was that no particular title was attached to them. Don't ask me if I had learned something about other cultures during those evenings, but at least I know it was the first time that I tasted Irish whiskey and since then it's one of my favourites! One may claim that this is also a learning outcome, but at this point the question arises: is this the effect we strive to achieve in courses during such intercultural evenings?

If you read applications for international trainings or youth exchanges, you will discover that probably 8 out of 10 applicants claim that they will address "interculturality" through intercultural games and intercultural evenings. Probably most of the people writing these things were participants in trainings or other events where the word "intercultural" was mentioned only during such intercultural evenings. I have a feeling that such methods create opportunities to get to know culture merely on the surface.

Do you remember the iceberg concept of culture with its two parts – visible and invisible or the part of culture that we are aware of and the other not? The concept was recently criticised by researchers, because it can be used to present too much of a simplified, static picture of culture. But it is still probably one of the most understandable introductions to the concept of culture for young people or youth workers and that's why I will use it to visualise my thoughts.



ntercultural Intercultural

In my experience the majority of intercultural evenings in European trainings, are keeping people just on the top of iceberg. People may explore cooking, music, dance or language, but the "underwater parts of the iceberg" - deeper aspects of culture - are still undiscovered. Intercultural learning is not just about sitting on the top of iceberg, but diving deeper underwater to discover new things about one's own and others' identities and cultures within the group. I wonder if it is possible to start diving by just making one intercultural evening or two simulation games during training?

Intentions to dive

Once I and some other trainers were preparing a training course on cultural diversity and we decided to avoid long traditional presentations of every country (in fact, not even the culture) with maps & flags, ancient songs and dances, enormous amounts of food and alcohol, and a terrible hangover next morning. We had an idea to make it also less national and more intercultural...You have probably considered those

We thought that the intercultural evening could be based on interpersonal conversations in pairs where each person presents a symbol from the culture with which they identify themselves. The symbol was just a reason to start a conversation, to go deeper into exploring the "invisible parts of the iceberg" by speaking about things that are important parts of one's own identity.

It looked like everything had been done in order to implement this idea: participants were informed in advance, information for them was written in a pretty detailed manner, etc.

Unfortunately the rule "we see things as we want them to be" **Why the floating continues?** applies too often in reality. In the event the "symbol of your culture, which could be a present for the other person" was perceived as a bottle of local vodka or bread and the participants were completely ready to present it to everybody and to make all people taste it. It was very interesting to observe how this evening developed further, because I saw part of the group quite confused about this idea of just having an open conversation with a peer from the group. There was such big ambiguity compared to the "usual way" of presenting each

diversity and exp other definit TO KNOW THE DIFFERENT APPROPRIET TO mens in CULTURAL DIFFERENCIES understand of cultural diversity a ritical reflection on exis

country. Participants were still asking when and how could they finally present things that they had brought and give them away for tasting. Finally the evening evolved into something that people felt comfortable with – just having a drink, a song or dance.

It might be that somehow it is possible to speak about your culture via presenting vodka as symbol of it, but forcing others to taste it becomes much more important than simply having a conversation about your own culture, or cultures, existing in your country, etc. Hence, at that moment I lose the feeling that I am exploring cultures...

Confronting perception

Then I understood that we were changing an old and very well-rooted traditional way of doing intercultural evenings and confronting people's conventional perception of such an evening. Yet it was not as easy as the trainers thought it might be. I think we also met a challenge to explore interculturality in training in general.

Nevertheless this article is not about participants, who don't have a clue. The case, mentioned above is perhaps the consequence of other training experiences that people had before. As far as the intercultural evening is seen partly as an "informal part of the programme" nobody is really reflecting on its usefulness or meaningfulness. People just take some parts of the training programme for granted. Remember my mentioning of my own first intercultural evening experience? Having participated in that one I got the idea that this is the way to do it and it has to be in all international events like that. Nevertheless I was much more critical about other parts of the training when adapting them in other situations.

Then I ask myself, what keeps people perceiving intercultural evenings in the "traditional way"? Here, a colleague of mine helps with some ideas. People having very few international experiences feel safer when they present their "own culture" by using very tangible things - drinks, dances, flags. Quite often those presentations are made in a slightly ethno-centric way (e.g., my country is at the centre of Europe, my country has the most sophisticated cuisine, my country has the most beautiful landscape or the most unique language). Indeed, people can feel stressful without having an opportunity to present "the beauty of my country" even though the objectives in trainers' heads might be different.

Therefore the way we present culture to others is very much influenced by how we understand our identity and the culture we live within. When a person has had only a few international experiences, she/he perceives many things within their own culture as unique and, indeed, representing the essence of her/his culture. Things like a special local beverage, mom's cake, a folk dance about wild bears and a national flag somehow meant a lot to me at the beginning of my "international career". The more contacts with other cultures I had,

the more I understood, that the uniqueness or specificity of my culture lies in far less visible and tangible aspects of my culture, than just cuisine and dances. Eventually I found it not so interesting to find out what do you eat and drink, but it's much more fascinating to explore subjects like: what are taboos in one's own culture, what are the power relations among people and institutions, or what does personal independence in life mean?

Another concern of mine is what I see as a lack of developed critical thinking in training events; a lack of qualitative reflection (about the learning outcomes), or meta-reflection (about the method itself), even about partly informal elements of the training programme. Actually here is the trap which I recently discussed with colleagues of mine. If any part of the training programme is considered as "informal time" or "free time", it seems that trainers should not organise any reflections about it or highlight methodological questions or learning outcomes. However, if the evening programme is planned in advance, mentioned in the description of the training and even special preparation from participants' side is requested, then it becomes pretty much an "official part" of the whole learning process. Yet it was the most important thing for me to agree on an objective for such intercultural evenings. If the objective is just to provide space and time for people to be together informally, then I would do almost nothing except ensure the appropriate time and space. If the objective is about intercultural learning of participants, then I would not really agree that the typical intercultural evening might help.

Still we can try...

From the moment when I understood that I should write this article I started making small experiments in trainings. I was providing space for open discussions with participants how such an evening should be organised. Is it really needed? What would make this evening intercultural and not cultural or national(-istic)? I was not only collecting proposals, but also confronting people's ideas in order to discuss how one or other activity would help to experience the richness of interculturality within the group. I started the next day with a small reflection on the previous evening in order to understand what happened and grasp the learning outcomes. However I felt that even though it was a nice evening, it was still held on the very top of iceberg. It was a kind of open air party. Sounds good, doesn't it?

Nevertheless if you decide that participants should have space to share their traditional food, here I suggest some ideas to consider for exploring culture through taste (still being aware, that only very limited parts of cultures will be explored). Instead of an intercultural evening, one could make an intercultural morning, lunch, or coffee breaks, giving space and time for participants from every country, represented in the training event. Going further, those time slots could be dedicated not according to countries, but to cultures if you manage to identify such...

Furthermore, instead of asking people to bring food and drinks, we could ask them to bring a symbol or three photos or prepare a short sketch, visualising various aspects of one's own culture. Useful questions could be: how do people work in their youth organisation? By what means do people show they are in love? How do they interact with the authorities? How do they understand time? How do they see the outside world and themselves? Such sketches can be prepared in mixed groups, where all people need to share certain aspect of their culture.

I finish the article with a few methodological questions to be considered: Is the intercultural evening a part of the "official programme" or part of free time activities? If it's a part of the programme, how often do we reflect with participants on it during the next day? Do we help participants to learn anything from it?

Some people tend to say that the Intercultural Evening just serves to speed up group dynamics. I agree, but once again the same question arises — what is the main purpose? How does it correspond with the aim of the training? Why should we do country presentations for group dynamics? In my experience, there are many more (effective) ways of doing it.

If an intercultural evening is expected to contribute to intercultural learning of every participant, let's think what kind of activities can help with this educational process? How should people from different countries interact? When should the activity happen? How should it be prepared? How should it be debriefed?

Finally I'm still asking: is an intercultural evening obligatory?

Notes and references: T-kit no.4 "Intercultural learning", Council of Europe and European Commission, November 2000 Contact:



by Gabriella Civico

E - | e a r n i n g E - | e a r n i n g E - | e a r n i n g E - | e a r n i n g E - | e a r n i n g E - | e a r n i n g E - | e a r n i n g E - | e a r n i n g E - | e a r n i n g E - | e a r n i n g E - | e a r n i n g

E-learning and non-formal education – making the connection

To consider e-learning it would be much easier if it were possible to show you online using our tried and tested Learning by Doing method. Since this is not possible I will use this article to describe to you what e-learning is, how it works, what it can offer the youth training sector, what the cost implications are and why I think it is a positive development for youth training delivery.

What is it?

E-learning uses internet software to provide an online environment for training. This makes it possible for trainers and participants to communicate online from different locations, 24/7 (twenty four hours per day, seven days per week). In other words, wherever and whenever internet access is available.

Communication can be:

- 'Synchronous' in real time when people are online at the same time.
- 'Asynchronous' with discussion and debate building up over a period of time as contributions are made at a time convenient to each participant or trainer.

Have you ever wished, either as a trainer or participant, that you could arrive late to a training session and quickly catch up on what had been going on? With asynchronous e-learning where all contributions and comments are stored online, this is possible.

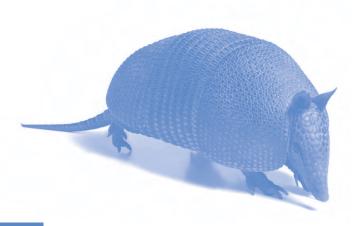
E-learning software provides online space for:

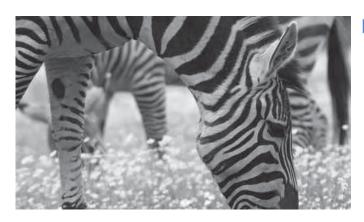
- group work.
- one to one contacts.
- links to websites and documents.
- possibilities for group writing of documents
- individual assignments.
- and much more...

Here's what some of the participants of the YEU e-learning Pilot Project said about e-learning when asked to describe how they felt about it after a few initial opportunities to try it out:

- "when it comes to animals and e-learning for me the picture is pretty clear – a Zebra!. Not because it is black and/or white but:
- because it is something exotic but very real,
- because it is the same good ol' horse (education) but in a different shape/colour,
- because you need Internet for that and sometimes you are on-line (white) sometimes you are NOT (black) but it is still part of the Zebra... I said it, HAU!" (Marius Ulozas)

"animal is a TATOO (or TATU) (Australian small shell plate animal) because is exotic as any foreign animal (internet learning), because is plated (sometimes internet can be hard to get in from outside), but for the ones who know it is easy from the inside" (Mara Traistaru)





How it works?

Some third sector organisations have interpreted e-learning as using ICT technology for participants to individually interact with digital content online or on CD-Roms. This model using e-learning simply to digitally transmit information content fails to recognise and harness the full potential of e-learning for training. The challenge for youth organisations is to appreciate and exploit all that e-learning offers and use the ICT tools that other education and training sectors, such as Formal Education and Business, are using to good effect.

Regardless of the sector, training using e-learning has many parallels with some of the pedagogical characteristics of nonformal education. It uses both Social Learning Theory and Experiential Learning to underscore the importance of group learning, peer education and co-mentoring. This fact that the nature of e-learning is in tune with the core educational values of youth organisations and non-formal education is a factor that makes its adoption as a training tool in these fields a logical step.

E-learning offers additional opportunities for youth trainers and those wishing to learn, to communicate and to share experiences and expertise. It is a method of providing a space for contact between young people without boundaries of time and location. The only requirement is access to the internet and some basic ICT skills.

There are many versions of software that can be used for elearning but, as with any training, in order to ensure that learning aims and objectives can be reached the e-learning must:

- · Be well facilitated
- Use content appropriate to the learning environment and participants' needs.

What can it offer?

Using e-learning for training can increase learning outcomes in many ways. These key words highlight a number of them.

Equality Organisations can ensure that the quality of their training delivered at local level is equal for all.

Life – Long – Learning: This becomes a reality as training can be more easily adapted to an individual's specific needs.

Language Confidence in participating in a foreign language will be improved as the time to read and understand contributions and compose responses is increased when compared to a face-to-face alternative.

Engagement The learning process can be extended for participants in face-to-face training courses with e-learning either before or after the activity.

Access Limitations relating to cost, visas or physical disabilities preventing attendance at face-to-face events are avoided.

Recognition Institutions which formally accredit nonformal learning can have online access to the training process reducing their time and costs requirements.

New Knowledge The latest, most up-to-date information can be distributed quickly to both trainers and participants. Avoiding the need for re-printing publications also makes it a more environmentally-sustainable method for information distribution.

Intensity With 24/7 access to the training participants and trainers can work at their own pace at times best suited to them. The frequency of training opportunities can also be increased.

Numbers Travel and accommodation costs are eliminated meaning very little limitation on the number of participants or trainers that can be involved in any one training activity.

Geography The training sphere becomes truly global as geographical barriers relating to location, language or visas are removed.

Good initial and ongoing training plays a major role in realising and retaining a youth organisation's human resource potential. This can result in increased learning outcomes and higher membership figures. The ability to train youth leaders efficiently, effectively and continually - once the investment has been made in their initial training - is invaluable to organisations.

Using the principals of Peer Training, Co-mentoring and Communities of Enquiry e-learning will enable youth organisations to manage the existing knowledge throughout the organisation more efficiently and effectively. E-learning gives training the potential to become truly lifelong as co-mentoring using e-learning becomes a normal part of the youth leader's tasks.

In contrast to peer training where there is an intrinsic difference in knowledge and experience between those doing the training and those being trained, the underlying principle of Co-mentoring is that those involved have similar knowledge 'levels'. Working on the premise that everyone can continue to learn, explore new ideas and continually assess old ones; co-mentoring gives the opportunity for people to share their good practice and any questions and challenges they may have with their co-youth workers around the world.

It is likely that the potential answers and responses to challenges can be found from within the wealth of experience and expertise that other youth workers have. Sharing knowledge and experience in this way will increase the overall quality and efficiency of delivery in the non-formal youth sector as a whole. E-learning platforms have the capacity for discussion and illustration of questions and solutions and can provide a space for development of new ideas and initiatives in a structured and supported way.

Financial Considerations

There are both fixed and variable costs that must be calculated for any e-learning programme. For voluntary organisations, in particular, costs must be looked at both in relation to:

- Internal cost implications for the organisation
- Costs which volunteers themselves at grass roots level must meet

For many organisations the introduction of e-learning would mean a radical shift in approach concerning the allocation of financial resources to training. This could mean in the shortterm a re-alignment away from training events and publications towards staff time in the analysis and amendment of pedagogical processes for achieving learning outcomes online.

The use of free or cheaper generic Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) as opposed to individually-designed platforms will also keep costs low. Open source software however such as Moodle must not be mistakenly seen as a 'free' option. Whilst the software is free, its development into an actual user-friendly interface is not, and paid professionals are usually needed for this task.

An organisation must take time to evaluate what technology they have available, or can be made available and is acceptable to the membership. Consultation with both volunteers and staff will prove vital in choosing the most appropriate investments in hardware and software for e-learning.

The technology to enable the use of e-learning, together with the training in the use of that technology, are major considerations for expenses related to the introduction of e-learning. The training requirements for the trainers in the pedagogical processes intrinsic in effective e-learning must also be prioritised and budgeted.

e a

e a

g



For youth organisations there are obvious savings in travel and accommodation costs. Savings will also be made in the time needed to be committed by the volunteers to receive their training both in terms of amount and also the point in time when the training must take place. It can be argued that elearning can result in some costs, for example those related to hardware acquisition, being passed onto the participants. It is possible however that obtaining access to suitable hardware to undergo training may be a more acceptable cost to volunteers than finding the extra time needed to attend face-to-face courses.

It can be foreseen that expensive and time-consuming faceto-face training will be reserved for learning objectives strictly requiring the intensive interaction only possible in such contexts. Other learning aims and objectives can have training programmes designed to meet them using e-learning. Ensuring that the investment in e-learning has been properly **Pilots** planned and prepared for will do much to ensure that the investment proves to be a success. The cost of not introducing e-learning, and harnessing the potential that ICT has to offer for improved learning outcomes could prove more costly than the investment required to work through the process described here for the effective use of e-learning.

In Conclusion

The failure to meet the training needs of vital human resources can result in an organisation failing to operate to its maximum potential. The challenge for the non-formal education sector is to ensure that the training requirements for their youth leaders can be met using techniques and procedures that can be successfully integrated into volunteers' already busy lives.

E-learning can compliment traditional face-to-face training or even completely replace it if it proves to be the best option to achieve the required learning outcomes. It is unlikely that e-learning could deliver all the training needs of an organisation and it will often be the case that training by e-learning sits alongside face-to-face training. The provision of blended learning in this way will most efficiently meet the full spectrum of training needs of an organisation. This may mean that e-learning is used to deliver training that has previously been handled on a face-to-face basis or that it makes new training possible for topics and people that were somehow previously excluded.

There is a growing need for flexibility of training opportunities on the part of both learners and trainers, requiring new approaches to training in terms of frequency and duration of training activities. This is especially important in order to continue to attract volunteers from population groups that perhaps due to time or mobility constraints have not traditionally been involved in non-formal education. E-learning can contribute to this new reality and youth organisations can be at the forefront of the development of this innovative form of training for the Third Sector.

Throughout 2007 several pilot e-learning training initiatives with youth organisations were conducted. The full conclusions and results including recommendations for good practice with advice and guidance specific to youth organisations considering using e learning for training will be published and available from early 2008.

The initiatives are as follows:

WOSM (World Organisation of the Scout Movement):

With 7 international offices at different locations around the world the potential of using e-learning for staff training is being explored. Information, support and training about e-learning is being provided to National Scout Associations. E-learning is being piloted as a way to train volunteer leaders around the world.

YEU (Youth for Exchange and Understanding):

E-learning is being employed as a way of providing on-going training and support to participants following training events and in preparing participants in advance of face-to-face training.

NUS (National Union of Students, UK):

This pilot is a new training initiative delivered wholly online on Trusteeship and Good Governance. Participants are student representatives in universities throughout the UK.

Spectrum (Christian Youth Work Training, UK):

The e-learning being developed here is training on 'How to Learn'. The e-learning programme prepares learners for the non-formal education nature of their youth leader training programme.





by Claude Bodeving, National Youth Service, Luxembourg

European Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers

"Happy to see

that it finally came out.

We needed it."

(Excerpt from an evaluation received during the trial phase)

People who work in youth organisations or as trainers in youth activities, are fully aware that they need to know their own strengths and weaknesses concerning contact with young people. They may find themselves thinking "I find it very easy to accept criticism and defuse situations." However that in itself is not enough. First of all it is a personal judgment which is necessarily subjective (how do my colleagues see me in this respect?) and it is important not just to let things stand there. What does it mean exactly? How is it of benefit to young people, to the group or group dynamics?

Moreover, is it actually important in my work? Should I not focus on other aspects of my conduct? The latter points are tied up with a fundamental question: "what actually are the key characteristics of a youth leader/worker?"

Identifying and listing: functional analysis

One of the chapters in the Council of Europe's European Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers addresses these very questions ("When you think of yourself as a youth leader or youth worker, what is it that you do? What functions do you fulfil?") and draws on a functional analysis of youth leaders/workers. Five key functions are listed (each is explained in detail in the portfolio):

- 1: To empower young people
- 2: To develop relevant learning opportunities
- 3: To accompany young people in their intercultural learning process
- 4: To contribute to organisational and youth policy development > Assessing and describing:
- 5: To use evaluative practice

In the international context of the Council of Europe, it is not easy to produce such an analysis. It has to reflect a huge range of working environments and varied youth work concepts and youth policy approaches. Nevertheless, during the trial phase of the portfolio, the analysis received a largely very positive reception. It seems sufficiently extensive to reflect the diver-

sity of situations and realities on the ground while at the same time offering the necessary precision and clarity to respond to practitioners' needs. (For instance, one evaluation received read as follows: "In my recent youth work experience I had the opportunity to see in practice these functions and at the same time they constitute the reality of my youth work.").

In the long term, the functional analysis pursues two objectives, being geared towards:

a) social recognition, which refers to the regard in which youth organisations are held and the status of this type of education in the eyes of society in general (yes, we do have clear and important functions in our work for and with young people!)

b) the quality of youth work: the functional analysis is a major contribution concerning the issue of the potential of non-formal education and seeks to trigger a process of reflection on the very nature of youth work and the functions and capabilities of voluntary and professional youth workers.

And it should be remembered that we are at the very heart of non-formal education for young people here:

What are the basic concepts of non-formal education and to what extent do they influence my approach to and actual performance of youth work? How does my own youth work situation stand in relation to the Council of Europe's approaches and principles? What are the underlying principles of my approach to non-formal education?

Assessing and describing: the competency framework

How can youth leaders and workers perform the functions listed in the functional analysis? For each of the five functions, the portfolio sets out a list of the competences needed to perform them, along with aids to reflection.

If, for instance, we return to our initial statement ("I find it very easy to accept criticism and defuse situations"), in the

list of competences, under the function "To empower young people" we find the competency: "I am ready to have my ideas challenged" (with, as an aid to reflection: "Are you open to constructive criticism? What are the limits?").

Under the function "To accompany young people in their intercultural learning process," we find, inter alia, the following competency: "I can cope with ambiguous situations" ("When things don't turn out the way you think they should, or your ideas are not immediately accepted - what do you do?").

The portfolio then becomes a self-assessment tool which enables youth leaders/workers to assess their competences and then demonstrate the competences they have acquired ("When did I last demonstrate this competence? What kind of examples do I have to show this? Who was involved?").

We have already said that the portfolio is a tool for social recognition. Now we can see that it also involves personal recognition: What are my competences? How can I describe them? Do I have proof? How can I list them in my CV?

Moving ahead: personal development and learning plan

"I find it very easy to accept criticism," is easily said as we see ourselves in a positive light but is it really true? To find out, we would need to have the queen's magic mirror from Snow White, which can put things in perspective ("Mirror, mirror on the wall, who can accept most criticism in the country overall?"). After self-assessment of competences, the portfolio asks users actively to seek feedback and ask people they trust to give their views on the assessments. That is also an active appeal concerning our ability in terms of "I find it very easy to accept criticism."

This leads to a broader and more concrete view of our own competences (perhaps: "I was too willing to accept criticism X in a particular situation and I avoid the debate young people want.").

The last section of the portfolio is given over to working out the most specific possible personal development and learning plan: "What do I want to do? How? With whom? When?"

Here we come to the very heart of one of the characteristics of non-formal youth education, which focuses on the learning process and should be seen in the broader context of lifelong learning. Learning depends on people's willingness to learn and educate themselves: any form of recognition must not only provide "proof" of what we are able or not able to do but must also encourage this willingness to learn and seek personal development. In providing a functional analysis, describing the necessary competences and thereby facilitating self-assessment, the portfolio seeks to encourage users to draw up their own development plans (development self-assessment instead of cognitive assessment). In short, the approach reflects that of all non-formal work with young people: young

people are encouraged to think about themselves (including their strengths) and to determine their own personal development needs and seek their own learning environments, while being aware of their resources.

For our initial statement, that could mean:

"At the next training course, I will not avoid criticism but will actively seek clarification of the criticism, compare it with my thinking or approach and encourage genuine discussion about the various points of view, while not losing sight of the goal of developing joint action and learning."

Identification - assessment - personal development

In short, the long (never-ending) but interesting road to personal development begins with clarity about our own position, and the portfolio is an incentive:

- to find out where we stand in relation to youth work and to examine our relationship as youth leaders/workers with young people and youth work;
- to describe our own competences and assess them;
- to draw up our own personal development and learning plan.

In this respect, the portfolio remains a flexible instrument suited to non-formal education, which was devised on the basis of the underlying values, principles and standards of the Council of Europe's policy in the education sector.

At the same time, it is a tool which increases personal and social recognition of non-formal education and youth work.

One last time, "I find it very easy to accept criticism." While this statement can be seen as an active approach to exchanges and the reflection of a desire to build on the reality of individual situations, it is also the approach of the authors of the portfolio, and the final sentence in the words of welcome to the portfolio therefore reads as follows: "And please let us know what your experiences have been in putting together your own portfolio - although this is officially the "final version", we know that this process must go on."

The Portfolio can be freely downloaded here: **www.coe.int/youthportfolio**



p u b l i c a t i o n s p u b l i c a t i o n s p u b l i c a t i o n s p u b l i c a t i o n s p u b l i c a t i o n s p u b l i c a t i o n s

Update on the Partnership publications

Please feel free to download the publications at

www.youth-partnership.net

T-Kits

T-Kit 12 Conflict Transformation

(expected 2009)



T-Kit 11 Euromed (expected 2008)

T-Kit 10 Educational Evaluation in Youth Work

ISBN: 978-92-871-6023-2

T-Kit 9 Funding and Financial Management

ISBN: 978-92-871-5365-4

Also available online in English, Latvian, Polish & Turkish

T-Kit 8 Social Inclusion

ISBN: 978-92-871-5229-9

Also available online in English, Estonian, French, Italian,

Hungarian & Polish

T-Kit 7 Under Construction... Citizenship,

Youth & Europe ISBN: 978-92-871-5228-2

Also available online in English, Bulgarian, Estonian, French, Italian,

Polish & Romanian

T-Kit 6 Training Essentials

ISBN: 978-92-871-5961-8

Also available online in English, Estonian, French, Italian, Hungarian,

Polish & Serbian

T-Kit 5 International Voluntary Service

ISBN: 978-92-871-5568-9

Also available online in English, Estonian, French, Italian, Hungarian,

Polish & Turkish

T-Kit 4 Intercultural Learning

ISBN: 978-92-871-5364-7

Also available online in English, Bulgarian, stonian, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Serbian & Turkish

T-Kit 3 Project Management

ISBN: 978-92-871-5567-2

Also available online in English, Estonian, French, Hungarian,

Latvian, Polish, Russian & Turkish

T-Kit 2 Methodology in Language Learning

ISBN: 978-92-871-5923-6

Also available online in English, French & German

T-Kit 1 Organisational Management

ISBN: 978-92-871-5566-5

Also available online in English, Estonian, French, German, Hungarian, Latvian, Polish, Romanian & Turkish

CD-ROM

Contains the educational materials and training reports developed within the partnership programme plus a selection of youth policy documents.

A new version of this CD-ROM will be available from September 2008.

Coyote Magazine

All the past issues of the Coyote Magazine are available online at www.youth-partnership.net



Issue 12 - April 2007

«All Different, All Equal» Youth Campaign

Issue 11 - June 2006

Non Formal Learning and Education

Issue 10 - June 2005

European Year of Education through sport

Issue 9 - August 2004

Human Rights Education

Issue 8 - February 2004

Inclusion and people with disabilities

Issue 7 - July 2003

European Citizenship

Issue 6 - November 2002

The White Paper and Non-formal Education

Updates

Issue 5 - January 2002

Journeys to the south-eastern parts of Europe and beyond, to Central Asia and North Africa

Issue 4 - June 2001

Youth training in Europe

Issue 3 - December 2000

Non-formal education

Issue 2 - May 2000

Conflict Management -- Young Disabled People --Gender relations -- Quality standards in non-formal education

Issue 1 - December 1999

Methodological reflections, training strategies and results in youth work

Supplement 1: Voyage

A simulation game based on a novel inter-generational approach to intercultural learning.

Supplement 2: Our European youth Centre

An intercultural exercise wherein participants act according to certain roles.

► Advanced Training for Trainers in Europe (ATTE)

ATTE Volume 1 – **Curriculum description** Miguel Angel García López (ed.) Council of Europe, 2005.

ISBN 978-92-871-5792-8

ATTE Volume 2 – External evaluation

Lynne Chisholm, L. with Hoskins B., Sorensen M. S., Moos L. & Jensen I. Council of Europe, 2006. ISBN 978-92-871-5797-3



ATTE is a part-time programme for trainers active in training youth multipliers. ATTE was implemented successfully as a pilot course from November 2001 to October 2003, involving 30 trainers from 21 countries.

Euro-Med

Citizenship matters: the participation of young women and minorities in Euro-Med youth projects

Ingrid Ramberg. Council of Europe, 2005. ISBN 978-92-871-5913-7 This report deals with two fundamental dimensions of human life: the individual's right to recognition, security and protection and the right for collectives of various kinds (ethnic or religious groups, nations and minority groups alike).

Youth Research / Youth Policy

Social inclusion Diversity - Human Rights - Participation (expected 2008)

"Social inclusion and young people: breaking down the barriers"

Helen Colley, Philipp Boetzelen, Bryony Hoskins and Teodora Parveva Council of Europe, 2007. ISBN 92-871-5826-6

Social exclusion, the polarisation of the types of chances life offers to different groups of young people, is increasing, it is spatially concentrated in some regions and neighbourhoods and is arguably linked to social class. Race and gender can also contribute to this phenomenon, as can other inequalities such as disability.

Charting the landscape of European youth voluntary activities

Williamson H., Hoskins B. with Boetzelen P. (eds.) Council of Europe, 2006. ISBN 978-92-871-6100-0

How does the voluntary engagement of young people enhance their active citizenship and solidarity? Can youth policies facilitate social inclusion through volunteering?

Trading up – Potential and performance in non-formal learning

Chisholm, L. & Hoskins, B. (eds.) Council of Europe 2005. ISBN 92-871-5765-0

Understanding, explicating, recognising and evaluating the quality of non-formal learning in the youth sector.

Revisiting youth political participation

Forbrig J. (ed.) Council of Europe, 2005. ISBN 92-871-5654-9 Provides an interdisciplinary panorama of conceptual, historical, sociological and institutional analyses of young people and their democratic involvement in Europe today.

Resituating culture

Titley, Gavan (ed.) Council of Europe, 2004. ISBN 92-871-5396-5 The interdisciplinary contributions to resituating culture combine overviews of relevant cultural theory with the research and perspectives of the individual contributors.

Brochures, Leaflets and Newsletters available online and upon request from the Partnership Secretariat

You can purchase the ISBN publications from:

Council of Europe Publishing, F - 67075 Strasbourg Fax: + 33 (0) 388 41 39 10 ; Tel: + 33 (0) 388 41 25 81 Internet: http://book.coe.int ; E-mail: publishing@coe.int



by Nizar Ghanem

S p i r i t u a l i t y S p i r i t u a l i t y S p i r i t u a l i t y S p i r i t u a l i t y S p i r i t u a l i t y S p i r i t u a l i t y S p i r i t u a l i t y S p i r i t u a l i t y S p i r i t u a l i t y S p i r i t u a l i t y S p i r i t u a l i t y

Spirituality and flying!

I was once discussing with a friend of mine, who is a trainer himself, about using spirituality in training courses. He looked at me smiling then said "Well, you don't want the training course to end up like an ashram, you the preacher, and participants flying in the air!" While I am not a preacher and am not planning to become one, I found it rather interesting to think of a training course where participants fly through the air!

Spirituality is looked upon as something different from religion, something that has a more individualistic aspect to it that can perhaps challenge religion as a social structure or an organisation that has been historically involved in political polarisation or mobilisation. Spirituality might be a good way to break the exclusivity of the religious experience creating a more humanist perception of it. Spirituality is seen as a path of individual seeking and as a deeper form of contemplation. It's more of an individualistic path that seems to stress the direct experience of individuals rather than customs, social norms or tradition. In this way many see spirituality as a liberating force that can create a humanist space between the different religions on matters of ethics and values. The question of using spirituality definitely depends on the particular context in which it is to be used.

While working on a project with Iraqi NGOs on peace-building, I had a participant who ticked the names on the participants' list, categorizing them as either Sunni or Shiite! Religious tensions between the different Iraqi groups, for example, make it practically impossible to initiate a religious dialogue between the participants without going into politics. Since religion is used and immersed in politics, I found out that talking more about individual beliefs, spiritual values, and paths is a more powerful tool that can bridge gaps between the two different sects. Thus spirituality can be helpful in peace-building initiatives where religious identities can be problematic and still in tension.

In Lebanon with its civil war that has lasted for 15 years, there are NGOs that use spirituality as a form of peace-building tool that can be helpful in bridging gaps between different communities and initiating communal reconciliation. For example, the Moral Re-armament Group, which is a group of Lebanese ex-militia men from different Christian and Muslim sects, uses spirituality as a forum to meet and renounce violence.

Each coming from different religion and history, they don't renounce their religion, but they meet on the same spiritual path and utilise meditation, and tell their stories of confession while asking forgiveness. During the course, I was able to utilise that group to start a wave of confessions and apologies between the Iraqi participants.

BUILDING PEACE—A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

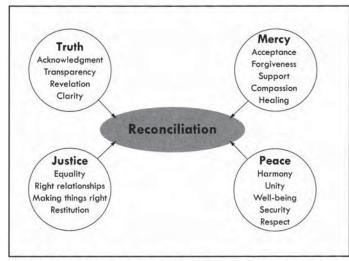


Figure 1. The Place Called Reconciliation.

Here is an illustration from John Paul Lederach's book called *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies.* Reconciliation has four elements as shown above. Utilising spirituality fits in "encouraging values of mercy, compassion and (mostly) healing". In many cases trying to intervene in conflict situations, we tend to focus on problem-solving, interests, finding alternative solutions and case studies; but we might miss that essential part that triggers a *change of attitude.* Spirituality fits there, in establishing a link



between the mind and the heart, thus launching a change of attitude that can build later into a transformation of conflict. In other words, you might explain to participants for days the importance of values like mercy, acceptance and forgiveness, but you can never explain to them the meaning of healing. If participants cannot feel and experience compassion and forgiveness they will never be able to become peace agents in their respective societies. Solving the underlying causes of conflict like disputes about resources, interests or political issues could stop the violence, but it doesn't resolve the attitudes of mistrust, hatred and xenophobia. Spirituality, by focusing on the individual and on direct experience can be a great tool for healing, which will lead to forgiveness. Thus, spirituality as a method has to be utilised in conjunction with other tools and systems of intervention.

Spiritual moments can be moments of deep reflection and letting go of one's fears and inhibitions, it can also be fun at times; where participants express their inner desires and dreams away from the pressure of the social structure and the battling identities. Although spirituality can be used in peace-building and conflict transformation, its use is still uncertain in promoting the needed transformation. Not every participant might be inclined to share, or to live these moments. Also spirituality, if not used in the proper context, can be actually "boring" and may be too sentimental for some.

If spirituality is an individual effort and "path" that involves self-inspection and reflection, it also fits with modern views of tolerance, individuality and self-awareness. Sometimes seen as a rebellion against religion, many people find it modern or suits modern values. Nevertheless, spiritual practices have appeared in different cultures and times. The EuroMed region has many spiritual traditions like the Celts and the Sufis. Using these spiritual traditions to boost a dialogue between the cultures of the EuroMed region can be interesting and powerful. It was always amazing for me reading Celtic poetry and find its similarity to Arab poetry. In EuroMed youth work, spirituality can be used as a theme of cultural exchange, discovering the different practices in EuroMed. On the other hand, spiritual practices can help inter-religious dialogue since spirituality can be much more inclusive and broader than religious practices.

I have a German friend from Hamburg who is a Muslim Sufi, but at the same time a member of a clowning group. Jumping with him in the streets of Beirut, hugging people and laughing our asses off, was a great experience. In his belief, Islam is all about laughter and to him he spreads the message of his faith through clowning. His inclusive view that sees everything as connected made me think of how to use such methods to fight Islamophobia and racism. While spirituality is always seen as something rather "serious", "deep", "reflective" and "profound", spirituality can be in creative jubilee using dancing, music, art and poetry to state the essential idea which is — in my opinion- "we are all one!"

Finally, I haven't been able to make participants fly yet, but maybe when space journeys become more frequent, we can all experience spiritual moments without gravity! Until then, I leave with the poetry of the Thirteenth century Mystic Jalaludine Al rumi who was born in what is today Afghanistan:

I hold no religion or creed,
Am neither Eastern nor Western
Muslim or infidel
Zoroastrian, Christian, Jew or Gentile.
I come from neither land nor sea,
Am not related to those above or below,
Was not born nearby or far away,
Do not live either in Paradise or on this Earth
Claim descent nor from Adam and Eve
or the Angels above,
I transcend body and soul.
My home is beyond place and name.
It is with the beloved, in space beyond space.
I embrace all and am part of all.

Notes and references:



• Kinzer, S., All the Shah's Men, New Jersey 2003, page 26

 Lederach, J., Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies, United States Institute of Peace, Washington D.C., page 30.

Contact:



nizarghanem@cyberia.net.lb





Non-Sense; when trainers get together; hey student!

your right foot and can you face up to it?

«Marker» is a regular column in Coyote, written by Mark Taylor, looking at issues in training and hoping to encourage debate, questions and even - who knows? – dialogue about intercultural learning...

Non-sense

As I was taking the dog for a walk through the mean streets of Brussels, thinking about themes for this column (I mean, I was thinking about it, the dog was probably thinking about the chicken bones scattered along the path!) this kind of song kept going round in my head. It can be sung to a slight variation of "Bella ciao":

J'étais pressé J'étais stressé Et j'ai comprimé Toutes mes pensées Dans une boîte de sardines*

* translation:

I was in a hurry I was stressed And I compressed All my ideas Into a tin of sardines

And you may ask me Yes you may ask me What the hell does this mean?

When I was very young my dad told me that the most depressing job in the world had to be "working in a fish factory with the task of closing the eyes of sardines before the tin was closed". He may well have been right. Reminds me of fairly useless things we do as trainers, like giving participants a copy of a deadly powerpoint presentation, or introducing a massively long "energiser" when nobody actually needs one...

Hey student!

Once again I was jumped on by a student! They are crazy people, some of them! This one was researching for a dissertation on the use of humour in training! Not just any training, but youth work training! Another one told me that he had just been accepted as a PhD student; the subject being – and I paraphrase here – training of trainers in international youth work and non-formal education! Great! Interesting! Is there a list somewhere of all these masterpieces?

When trainers meet

It's a curious thing when you bring a large-ish group of trainers together in courses, pools, networks, consultation meetings or even parties. It's hard to work out what is really happening and, who knows, maybe one day some youth researchers will take the opportunity to map and decode such gatherings. There's certainly a whole lot of greeting going on. As a result of the project-driven nature of our work, quite a number of people get the chance to work intensively in a whole range of short-lived teams and then split up and go their separate ways. So hugs abound when they get the chance to come together again. For newcomers it can look like one huge happy family whose members love each other to bits! In a way, it is and the exchanges can be really stimulating and beautiful with many bubbling ideas and shared experiences and concerns.

In a way, it isn't. Those bubbling ideas? Could be marketable, turned into a concept for a course. Those concerns about daily rates of pay you raised? Find yourself a new area to work in, darling; there will always be others prepared to work for less. That dramatically original report back you just made? Could lead to you being "noticed" and invited to join a project team.

Yes, it's just like real life. Yes we need to look under the surface, but let's remember to keep some of that surface real and really happy.

Can you face it?

Have you been throwing sheep at your friends lately? Poking them? Inviting them to the Oktoberfest? Sending them fortune cookies, flowers or smelly sprays? Comparing your ratings of lousy films or "the things that attract me"? Have you woken up to find your own private zombie has been attacked or that someone stuck chewing gum in your hair overnight? Have you been invited to be friends with someone you have never met, even virtually? All of this, and more, can be yours if you allow yourself - like me - to be bullied into joining that thing called Facebook. You can find lots of potential friends, even the President of the European Commission is a member, and they can find you.

A growing number of people are starting groups on Facebook for participants of training courses (and, at the time of writing this, there are 138 members of the group called "We have been to European Youth Centre Budapest"). I thought it might be interesting to find out if there were any interesting ways to use Facebook for learning or training, so I used the tool which allows you to distribute a question to your "friends". Within a couple of hours I had a fair number of answers, which can be summarised as follows:

- no! leave us (participants) alone! Facebook is for fun!
- yes, we are using it to share and collect ideas for a website
- yes, you can ask other trainers a load of silly questions to keep them awake at night
- yes, it really helps to get a deeper awareness of other people from different countries and cultures, especially
- maybe, because it allows people to "hook up" again or be invited to particular events, but we should use other more efficient tools for learning

After using it for a couple of months, two aspects strikes me strongly: there are so many different ways to interact on Facebook that it does allow you to get very different visions of people you think you know; and it can really help to cement relationships. Is that enough?

Your right foot

A strange little e-mail landed in my inbox recently and I was reminded of Sonja Candek's encouragement to make interesting shapes with our feet and hands in the last is-

- 1 Sit on a chair and raise your right foot off the floor and make circles with your foot in a clockwise direction.
- 2 When you are happy that your foot is making sufficiently beautiful circles, take your right hand and draw the number 6 in the air.
- $\ensuremath{\mathtt{3}}$ If you have followed the instructions correctly, then you will notice something very odd has happened to the direction in which your foot is making circles.
- 4 Try this as an exercise in your next course and be prepared to devote quite some time to examining the unbearable lightness of being...

And finally

Thanks to the invisibly present trainers who reacted to the last "Marker" by tapping on the window of my soul. Next time we work on the pataphysics of cultural codes and imprints in the run up to the US presidential election...



References, influences and sounds



- Sonja Candek (2007) "The spiritual part of trainings: the size of the paper", Coyote, N°12
- Michel Delville, Andrew Norris (2005): Frank Zappa, Captain Beefheart and the Secret History of Maximalism, Salt Studies in Contemporary Literature & Culture
- Cathy Hopkins (2002): Mates, dates and sole survivors, **Piccadilly Press**
- Robert Plant & Alison Krauss (2007): Raising Sands, **Rounder Records**
- Clotaire Rapaille (2007): The Culture Code: An Ingenious Way to Understand Why People Around the World Buy and Live As They Do, Broché
- Tinariwen (2007): Aman Iman: Water is life, Independiente / EMMA
- Anne Winkelmann (2006): Internationale Jugendarbeit in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft. Auf dem Weg zu einer theoretischen Fundierung, Wochenschau Verlag

Contact:



brazav@yahoo.com



Contributors NOtes

and Heritage, Youth and Sport. She is the first woman ever to be nominated to the rank of Director General in the Council of Europe, post she holds since 2001 when she was appointed Director $\,$ General of Social Cohesion. Since 2005, Mrs. Battaini-Dragoni is the Council of Europe's Coordinator for Intercultural dialogue. In this capacity, she is overseeing the preparation of the Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, the first of its kind at international level, due to be published later this year. Mrs. Battaini-Dragoni is a frequently invited guest speaker at World Bank, UN, OECD, OSCE, and EU meetings.

Jovana Bazerkovska, Bureau Member of the European Youth Forum (YFJ), is 22 years old. She comes from Macedonia, but she is currently working in Brussels as Secretary General of OBESSU (The Organising Bureau of the European School Student Unions). As member of the YFJ Bureau, she is following the areas of Equality and Human Rights, Global education & Global youth work development, Euromed/Middle East.

Claude Bodeving is working in the National Youth Service in Luxembourg and is responsible for the training unit and employability projects. Within his work he focuses on non-formal education and trainings in the frame of employability projects for young job seekers with fewer opportunities. His academic background is social psychology and client-centered coaching. Since 1999 he is member of several international expert groups on non-formal education as for example of the group of experts on the European Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers.

Gabriella Civico is a former president of the British Youth Council with organisational roots in the UK Scout Association. She had various roles in international youth structures at european and world levels throughout the 1990s. Currently completing a Hull University (UK) Masters degree in E-learning online from home in Spain, she works as a freelance online and face to face trainer and consultant while continuing as a volunteer when needed.

Teresa Cunha was born in Huambo, Angola but she is based in Portugal. She has been engaged in the youth field for a long time as a youth organization leader, as a trainer and as a policy maker. She studied Philosophy, Education and Sociology. She has published five books and many other articles on education, human rights, gender issues, intercultural learning and citizenship. She is currently engaged as a leader of the 'Action for Justice and Peace' NGO and the World March of Women. She collaborates with the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe since the early nineties and belongs to its Trainer's Pool as one of its senior trainers. She is a Professor at the Education College in Coimbra.

Simon Forrester is a Social Development worker and has spent the last 15 years in various countries, in Europe and Asia, contributing to efforts that he hopes reduce social exclusion and promote a more inclusive dialogue in community development. He has attempted to do this through his work as a Trainer - building organisational capacity of voluntary groups, many from the youth sector - and through a range of research and dissemination activities. He is currently living in Turkey and working on a number of EU-funded projects that are contributing to the Accession process.

Jean-Luc Frast is ISCA's International Youth Leader Education programme officer. He has been active in the field of youth policy and training since 1998. Before joining ISCA, he worked as a trainer and acting Director of the European Peer Training Association EPTO. He also served as labour $negotiator\ for\ Luxembourg's\ Independent\ Trade\ Union\ Confederation\ (OGBL),\ after\ his\ involved$ ment as project officer for the National Youth Council of Luxembourg (CGJL) and the European Youth Forum Jeunesse (YFJ).

Nizar Ghanem is currently working as a project officer for a three-year project on peace-building in Iraq. The project brings together 15 NGOs in order to improve their skills on conflict resolution. Nizar is also working as part-time trainer in the Palestinian camps in the south of Lebanon and on few EuroMed projects in his organisation, the 'Forum for Development of Culture and Dialogue'

Rui Gomes is the Head of the Education and Training Unit at the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe. Based at the European Youth Centre Budapest, he has been coordinating the Human Rights Education Youth Programme as well as the Partnership activities in the area of Euro-Mediterranean youth cooperation, human rights education and intercultural dialogue.

Hanne Kleinemas finished her M.A. in Intercultural Communication and European Studies in $\label{eq:continuous} \textit{July 2007}. \textit{ Since then, she has been working as a free-lance trainer for European Volunteers as well}$ as for students in social, political and religious education. She has been working for several years for GrIStuF, a NGO organising among other international student conferences

Julia-Maria Koszewska was born in 1982 in Poland, where she lived for 1/4 of a century. She studied religious studies as well as library and information science. For the years 2006-2007 Julia was a member of the European Team (coordinators) of JECI-MIEC European Coordination. Julia is very active in inter-religious and ecumenical dialogue in Europe. Working as a trainer and being a full-time student for many years, she got into youth reality from two perspectives: as a participant and as a leader. Her life motto is "be brave enough to realise your dreams", while her hobby is photography. Online profile: http://www.salto-youth.net/find-a-trainer/801.html

Laimonas Ragauskas is a free-lance trainer in the area of non-formal learning, working for various youth work organisations, as well as local and European institutions. He is currently living in Vilnius, Lithuania, but working across Europe and beyond. He is mainly dealing with topics such as diversity, networking, participation and citizenship in the youth field. He gathered his most valuable youth work experiences in the Centre for Creative Expression since 2000 and is currently active in the Association of Youth Non-formal Education in Lithuania. At home he is exploring youth life by dealing with his three children and other young people around. Additionally he is involved in informal exploration of clubbing and sauna cultures in the World.

Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni is the Council of Europe's Director General of Education, Culture Meg Rybicki was born in Zambia to a Polish father and an English mother. She has lived in Ireland for the last sixteen years. She is strongly involved in volunteering activities in the North west of Ireland, and works closely with groups of young refugees and asylum seekers, plus local youth, many of whom have left mainstream education. Many of the projects that she runs use art, music, drama, and film as a tool to reach youth who have become marginalised from mainstream society. She also works closely with local schools and youth organisations, and provides anti-racism and interculturalism training to youth leaders, facilitators, and some statutory bodies. She has five children, a husband and a menagerie of animals!

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

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

> Monica Urian de Sousa has found roots in many cultures in Europe, Latin America and the Middle East, while cherishing her Romanian origin. By growing-up behind a «Wall», she learnt that tolerance and dialogue are not empty words, but living concepts that can change your daily life. She joined the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue team in July 2007, after working several years in consulting and cultural marketing.

> Silvia Volpi studied Linguistic and Philology and holds a master degree in International Studies. In 1992, she created with 5 friends-colleagues an independent local association promoting "alternative" ways to learn how to live together peacefully, through non-formal education activities, mobility projects, international meetings, etc. She is a founding member of the European Network of Animation, promoting action-trainings as a tool to foster youth participation and empowerment. She is working as a trainer at local and international level. Her main areas of interests are youth participation, human rights education, evaluation and follow up of the educational processes.

> Mariam Yassin Hagi Yussuf was born in Somalia in 1977 and moved to Italy in 1991, when the Somali civil war broke out. Her experience motivated her to work for the integration of migrants and refugees in Italy. She started her human rights activism at the age of 15 and has been working since then for different organizations, designing, planning and evaluating various projects on inter $cultural\ learning,\ cultural\ mediation,\ integration\ and\ human\ rights\ development.\ She\ also\ works\ as$ a trainer and lectures on migrations issues. She is the president of Young Women from Minorities (WFM), a member of the Advisory Council on Youth Issues of the Directorate of Youth and Sport (Council of Europe) and of a Somali Women NGO (IIDA Women's Development Organization).

Jonathan Bowyer is a consultant trainer working in a variety of fields in the UK and Europe. He has a particular interest in values-based management and partnership development for organisations. Jonathan worked for youth NGOs for over 18 years, most of which was with the national Council of YMCAs in England. He was editor of the T-Kit on Organisational management and a contributor to the T-Kit on Funding and Financial management. He lives in the beautiful English Lake District with his wife and two sons.

Co-ordination and administration of Coyote

Florian Cescon is currently working as educational advisor for the Youth-Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe. His main responsibilities include planning, implementing and evaluating the Partnership training activities, as well as coordinating the Partnership educational and training publications (including Coyote!). Previously Florian was the general manager of a large European NGO organising vocational trainings for young professionals. He also worked in European affairs & EU policy in Brussels, and in the field of organisational management in Paris. Florian now lives in Strasbourg with his wife and three daughters

Tatiana State-Masson is the administrative assistant for the training activities and publications of the Youth-Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe since August 2006. Previously she worked in France as a project manager in the private sector and in Brussels as an expert for different projects at the European Commission.



The Adventures of Spiffy

Mark Taylor The Big family

 N°_{sic}

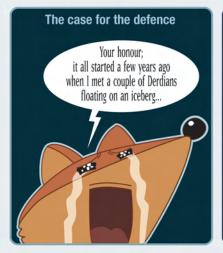
SPIFFY and the intercultural police











Policy makers! One of the most difficult questions at the moment is: How do we recognise non-formal learning? Spiffy Animal Products are happy to announce the introduction of a new line in analytical talking parrots. Whatever the educational occasion, your new parrot will let everybody know: 'This is non-formal learning!' Parrots come with instruction manual and in a range of "non-formal" colours...



Magazine #13

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

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

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

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

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

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

Coyote is not responsible for the content and

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

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

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

www.youth-partnership.net

