Coyote

Youth work / Knowledge / Policy

WHAT'S XTREME ABOUT YOUTH?!

FEBRUARY 2014

No.20

Youth Partnership

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

EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



Contents

Coyote editorial team:
Mark E. Taylor (editor)
Marlies Pöschl
Gisèle Evrard
Darko Markovic
Filip Coussée
Thomas Spragg

Co-ordination and administration
Marta Medlinska
Viktoria Karpatska
SPDP, Council of Europe

Design & layout & Spiffy the coyote
The Big Family

Photos
Shutterstock (throughout the magazine)
Portraits provided by the authors

Edito

by Mark E. Taylor
On behalf of the *Coyote* editorial team

Hello readers!

Well, exciting times are these. But are they extreme? Are young people and those who work with them extreme? If something is classified as extreme, what is the reference point to say something else is normal?

To put it mildly, we had a lot of discussions inside and around the editorial team when asked to put together an issue which – somehow – should link the two concepts of youth and extremism. Some reactions were so strong that we even doubted for a while whether to tackle this at all. What you see here is the result of a lot of soul-searching to find ways of looking at extremism and youth: from the very personal relationship of a mother and son, to a summary of research into the issues, to a tongue-in-cheek manifesto, right through to action which aims to combat hate speech online.

Ranging further we hope to stimulate your thoughts with looking at the consequences of bringing babies into non-formal education, using more visual triggers to enhance learning, being intelligent emotionally and raising recognition at the grass roots.

Back in 1999, a team was asked to bring into being the Partnership's "educational link". This became *Coyote* and I have had the honour to be associated ever since, working with Sonja and Jonathan as editors taught me a lot about getting this inter-structural baby to print. Now it's got to issue 20 – who would have thought it!? And it coincides with the 15th anniversary of the European Commission–Council of Europe Youth Partnership!

Winter is coming, but we shall always find some wiggle room for juggling!

Happy reading.

In the last edition of *Coyote*, a technical glitch meant that some of the illustrations by Marlies Pöschl were not credited — we apologise and want to thank her for her brilliant work which does so much to give *Coyote* its distinctive flair. For the full list of credits please see the online version here: http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/Coyote/19/Index.html

Youth extremism

Do labels create reality?

by Darko Markovic

An abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation is normal behaviour.

Viktor Frankl

Groups of young people burning cars and breaking windows during the street riots in London. A number of young people, members of a far-right movement, marching in the streets and clashing with the police in Warsaw. Hundreds of young football hooligans threatening the organisers of the Gay Pride parade in Belgrade. After watching the evening news, would you label these young people as youth extremists or, perhaps, social deviants? How much does labelling "help" the groups in question? And how useful is it for any kind of youth work intervention? What are the challenges in calling something "youth extremism"? These are the questions that puzzled me while thinking about the title of the current *Coyote* issue.

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE: BEWARE OF LABELLING

Perhaps, labelling the behaviours above as "youth extremism" or "deviant" would seem natural in order to "give a name to a phenomenon", "to call it what it is", avoiding euphemisms and overdoing political correctness.

At the same time, an interesting warning comes from Howard S. Becker, one of the founders of the "labelling theory". In his groundbreaking book, *The outsiders* (1963), he argues that "deviance" is not a given, but is rather created by the society. Becker wrote:

> [...] social groups create deviance by making rules whose infraction creates deviance, and by applying those roles to particular people and labelling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an "offender". The deviant is one to whom that label has been successfully applied; deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so labels.

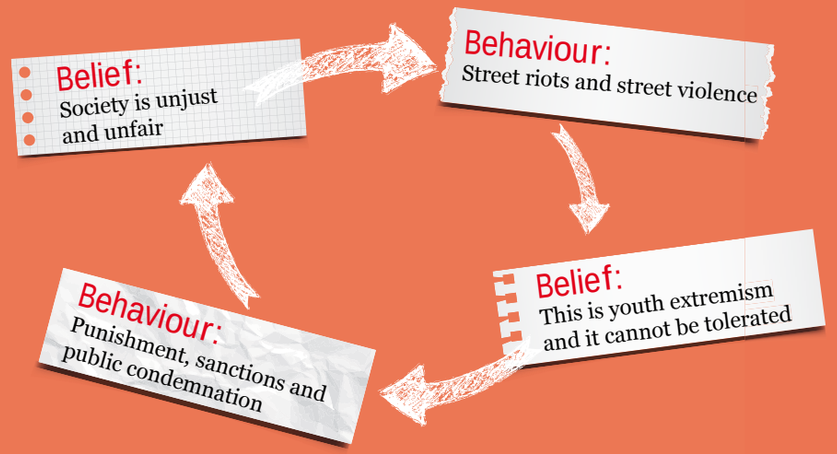
Moreover, Becker's warning goes further saying that "while society uses the stigmatic label to justify its condemnation, the deviant actor uses it to justify his actions".

Hmmm... one could say: "Sure, Mr. Becker, but you cannot say that everything is relative, particularly not violence!" And somehow we get stuck in the argument of having an anchor in positive values and our reference point as human rights. But we should hold onto the idea of the power of labelling by society and need to use it with special care.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE: A VICIOUS CIRCLE

Another approach is to have a deeper look at the possible dynamics of the events described at the beginning of the article.

One could say that the behaviours of young people in the news have been driven by a certain set of core beliefs (such as "society is essentially unjust and unfair"), which are manifested in the behaviour we see and condemn as "youth extremism". The problem is that this labelling does not stop there. It leads to counteractions towards these groups of young people which in turn cement and re-confirm their initial beliefs, just how "society is unjust and unfair". We are caught in a vicious cycle like this one:



The problem here is that being trapped in thinking like this does not help to create a positive educational and youth work intervention. After all, do we still believe youth work can do anything here?

YOUTH WORK PERSPECTIVE: POWER OF TRANSFORMATION

It seems to me that the problem for youth workers interested in dealing with the issues of "youth extremism" is how to navigate between the challenge of "labelling" and the challenge of "losing one's own value base". I believe we need to look beyond "diagnosis" and "fixing those young people to fit better into the society". Instead, we need to recognise their potential and work at the level of values and identities. At the same time, any comprehensive youth work intervention means keeping the critical focus on the society, working on its transformation and tackling the deepest roots of the behaviours we see in the news these days.

Escaping or shaping reality?

On youth, extremism and democracy

by Filip Coussée

It's not time to make a change. Just relax, take it easy.
You're still young, that's your fault,
There's so much you have to know.
Find a girl, settle down, If you want you can marry.
Look at me, I am old, but I'm happy.

I was once like you are now, and I know that it's not easy,
To be calm when you've found something going on.
But take your time, think a lot, Why, think of everything you've got.
For you will still be here tomorrow, but your dreams may not.

("Father and Son", Cat Stevens, *Tea for the Tillerman*, A&M)

You have to be realistic

I start this article with a wonderful song on being young and dreaming of change. When I was younger I thought the song was written by Howard Williamson who used to sing it on each and every seminar for international exchanges supported by the Council of Europe. Quite soon I found out that the song was written by Cat Stevens, today known as Yusuf Islam.

"You have to be realistic." Many young people have been bombarded with this (non-) argument. Actually, not only young people get to hear the argument but anyone who dares to imagine that there may be more just alternatives to today's social system is asked to be realistic. There is no alternative. Even political debates that pre-eminently should tackle the subject of another world do not go beyond the bounds of "reality". Ideas that do not fit within the restricted horizon of maintaining the social project are shoved aside as unrealistic. People who defend ideas that go beyond that horizon are looked at with pity, as long as they express their ideas in a relatively harmless way. This changes the moment one starts to shout a little bit louder or to form a group around "extreme" ideas. A popular strategy to cope with extreme ideas is what Herbert Marcuse (1969) has named repressive tolerance. That is the technique to give dissonant voices a certain forum in society, grinding down too sharp edges. In doing so, deviant ideas about the organisation of society are assimilated into the dominant discourse and dissonant voices are politically recuperated within "realistic" views of the desired social order. The initial revolutionary ideas are welcomed as ideas for cultural renewal. Implications that would go in the direction of social conflict are averted. Ideas that cannot be recuperated find no response. If needed, they are obstinately persecuted and violently repressed. This can in turn initiate a spiral of violence, so the strategy of repressive tolerance is always the preferred option.

What's wrong with a little bit of repression?

In itself there is nothing wrong with a society aiming for stability. As long as this does not mean that the confrontation of divergent ideas on the desired social order is paralysed or too strictly canalised. The risk here is that the voice of people who enjoy the least benefits within the existing social order is not heard. They are further away from dominant ideas and mainstream ideals. They have to shout really loud to be heard. They don't have easy access to the channels that amplify one's voice. This concerns not only questions about the inequality between young people and adults, but also – and perhaps even more important – about the inequality between poor and rich or in more general terms, ethnic, disability or gender differences between the "established and the outsiders" (Elias and Scotson 1965). In a way one could say that young people are "doubly disempowered" if they grow up in poverty, if their parents were migrants or if they are disabled. Sometimes disempowered groups create innovative instruments and techniques to question "reality" or to shape their own realities (often in the areas of the informal economy or housing). Societies are not always willing to support those initiatives. Those who are established in society find it quite nice that the outsiders want to emancipate themselves, but not if they do it on their own terms. Other groups play with different forms of social action, exploring the frontiers of what is acceptable (*Indignados* in Spain, the Occupy movement on a global scale, squatters' movements on a local scale). Other groups that do not have cultural, social or financial resources opt for violent action (riots in Greece or England). Often this is because their voice has not reached an organised level, many members of this group therefore are focused on individual opportunities, more than on getting things moving on a more structural level.

It is clear that a living democracy needs to engage in a lively social debate. This debate can't neglect the existing balances of power in a society. This requires maximum transparency as it concerns the underpinning values of our social order. A democratic society needs a permanent and honest debate on the question of which realities are in whose interests and the grounds on which some ideas or ideals are confirmed as "realistic" while others are not.

To a certain degree these values and grounds are already firmly established. A genuine democracy is supposed to respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. But it must be clear that these rights are not absolute rights that can simply be claimed by each individual person. These rights act as a lever. The confirmation of these rights does not mean that they are realised. It means that we expect the government to take the necessary steps in order to realise those collective rights. The question of course is what kind of social order gives people the necessary space to work towards the collective realisation of these rights. This is the perennial search for democracy. It's nothing new. We need to learn to live with debates and dilemmas in order to reconcile the two inherently contradictory values that underpin a democratic society: freedom and equality. As Tocqueville (1835) argued, the principle of equality can either lead to misery or to prosperity, it all depends on our choices. But one thing is sure, giving up on the deliberate quest for equality will inevitably lead to misery.

Now we come to the point where it's really cooking, for this democratic struggle seems to have come to an end at the dawn of the 21st century. As Fukuyama (1989, p.4) argued after the fall of the Berlin Wall: "What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." There's only one way left to experience democracy, so why debate and discuss any longer?

Escaping or shaping reality? On youth, extremism and democracy

Societal violence?

But what exactly is Western liberal democracy? It concerns a parliamentary democracy, although the significance and scope of parliaments are not very clear. We went beyond left and right (Giddens 1994); no big ideas, no all-embracing ideologies anymore, so what is democracy about? And what about the gross violations of human rights in our Western democracies? What about one in three children in the UK living in poverty? Liberal democracy takes its toll. Why can't the final form of human government solve poverty? Is it because poverty has positive functions in a market society (Gans 1970)? Is the invisible hand of the market perhaps the final form of human government?

Would poor people agree with the statement that our Western societies present the final form of human government? Of course they would not, but global capitalism enjoys near total dominance (Zizek 2009). It is difficult to imagine another world, let alone discuss it. The continuous quest for a legitimate, albeit always provisional, consensus on the organisation of society is referred to the dustbin of history (Lorenz 2005). The causes of persisting social problems such as poverty can no longer be found in the organisation of our society, because "there is no such thing as society", as Margaret Thatcher infamously declared. Private troubles are no longer to be transformed into public issues (Mills 1959). So, poverty must be a problem of the poor. If there is a societal responsibility in solving the problem of poverty, then it must be restricted to a pedagogical mission: helping poor people to work hard or to learn to bear their suffering in a worthy way, without disturbing other citizens. This pedagogy hides possible social responsibility; re-moralising the poor becomes more important than redistributing wealth.

Some people may well have the power to transform their own private concerns about profit maximisation into a public issue. So if one thing is clear it is that a liberal democracy cannot develop without debate. That is simply because it is based on two inherently contradictory values: liberty and equality. The freer the market, the less equity there is, and the other way round. This means that society can't be ruled merely by the invisible hand of the market. The depolitisation of politics itself is pernicious for marginalised people, pushed to the edges of the system. A debate that defines the balance between freedom and equality is indispensable. The influence of trade unions, the church, social movements and youth movements has decreased in these post-political times, but does this mean that we have to leave the governance of our society to invisible hands?

In need of radicalisation, preventing violent extremism

It becomes more and more difficult to believe that individual problems can be transformed into public issues. Policy, research and practice are increasingly obliged to work within restricted, individualised problem definitions. The magic triangle is increasingly growing into a devil's triangle. Our societal horizon to which we situate and define social problems is narrowed down to "anti-social behaviour". There is no question that our social system could be partly antisocial, due to deeply embedded historical and cultural developments. Researchers and practitioners are no longer policy makers. Their practice stays within well-defined narrow borders, reinforcing the social horizon instead of broadening it.

That is why a democratic society is in need of radicalisation. If one thing has become clear throughout history, it is that there is no such thing as the ideal society. A social system that reconciles the interests and concerns of all different social groups does not exist. A society is a social system, carried by a set of conventions, constantly shaped and reshaped, drawing on processes of social learning. Of course we are in need of a broadly shared legitimisation of our system, but no system can ever be the final form of human government. As society changes (due to migration, technical evolutions, global warming, etc.) the democratic debate has to be open. At the same time this openness leaves room for radicalisation, which is the only way, in my opinion, to prevent extremisms that get stuck in their own beliefs, or extremists who for one reason or another see no other way than to oppose the mainstream using strategies of violence and destruction.

Social and pedagogical aspects of democracy

A democratic society has a social mission. A democracy strives for equal access to social resources and a just redistribution of wealth. A democratic society also makes room for all ideas and meanings to be taken seriously and not to be oppressed without dialogue or debate. But a democracy also has a pedagogical mission. All citizens have to learn to participate in the democratic debate. Ignoring democracy's social mission, as we do when leaving equal opportunities to market mechanisms, leaves us behind with the pedagogical responsibility to educate citizens, making abstraction of their social position. In such a "desocialised democracy" education is restricted to the smooth integration of (young) people into the established social order.

There may still be a dialogue with young people who are requested to integrate into the existing system, but this dialogue just instrumentalises them. It starts from the point where we want young people to be, not from the point where they are. It does not make a connection with (young) people's search for identity, with their questions on what kind of life is worth living, with the way they explore their own aspirations against the background of societal expectations. Young people are overwhelmed by life questions, but the only things society seems to have to offer are life rules.

We need to take young people and their possibly extreme ideas seriously. We have to offer frameworks and resources to help them find and express their views on human dignity and a just society. A society that neglects this social and pedagogical responsibility pushes people into a marginal position and drives them to possibly undemocratic frameworks and methods that offer them building blocks for their identity. Even young people that deliberately stand outside the system must be approached in a social and pedagogical way. It is counterproductive to narrow their identity to one extreme aspect. The mere exclusion of extreme ideas does not work and leads in many cases to a violation of human dignity.

Escaping or shaping reality? On youth, extremism and democracy

Youth work and the reinvention of the social

The desocialisation of liberal democracies has also restricted the role of youth work. In many countries, youth work is centred on apolitical play and recreation. In other countries youth work is extremely instrumentalised and is required to contribute to employability and prevention, all in the service of becoming the most competitive market economy in the world. A society that goes to extremes may expect extreme ideas to find their way to extremist frameworks. This goes especially for young people who fail to find their place in this competitive market; a failure that must be individual.

In apolitical societies, such as our Western liberal democracies, political education becomes one of the core missions of youth work. This mission should not be restricted to citizenship training, although that may be the task that governments want youth workers to fulfil (Giesecke 1972). Youth workers should be well aware that they cannot be objective and neutral to the existing social system. "Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral" (Freire 1985, p. 122).

Three decades of neoliberalism have affected youth work more than we might think. In the 1980s youth clubs participated in protest marches of young people for employment. Youth organisations organised demonstrations against racism or nuclear weapons. Also youth workers increasingly seem to define their social engagement in terms of helping individual young people to scratch out a living, not join the ranks of those not in education, employment or training (NEETs). Inspiration to reconnect youth work with society can surely be found in history (Coussée 2010a; 2010b), but should also be grounded in today's practice of working with socially excluded young people. Political education can be local and modest. Youth workers play a crucial role in engaging politicians in local practices and engaging young people in local debates on neighbourhood redevelopment, playground renovation, traffic plans, re-employment programmes, etc. Lots of young people are not addressed. Their capacities, knowledge and energy remain unused. Many groups of young people are seen as problems, not as resources, even by youth workers (De Block 2012). Through youth work we reconnect young people to the social debate and we revive that democratic debate. We do not resign ourselves to the treatment of the symptoms, but help develop sustained solutions. This can lead to tensions with local governments that provide subsidies. That's good, tensions keep us moving. Handling these tensions in a constructive manner is one of the main fields of expertise of well-trained youth workers. Although it is hugely overlooked in most of our youth work training programmes that focus on other, equally important fields such as creativity and animation techniques, developmental psychology and motivational conversations, youth work is probably the most difficult job in the world (Coussée and Williamson 2011).

Conclusion

A democracy needs extreme ideas. As magnificently illustrated by Cat Stevens, young people have different perspectives than older people. Sometimes the dilemmas that are inherently connected to a living democracy need to be approached from an extreme perspective to come to productive new strategies to cope with them. Of course, not only young people can come up with renewing perspectives. Martin Luther King propagated pretty extreme ideas, as did Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Rosa Parks. It is clear that all minorities turn to extremes to alter their societal position. They show that any social order can be "de-naturalised" by broadening the horizons of reality and showing that there could be alternatives that lead to a more just society. Ideas are not extreme in themselves, but are labelled as extreme because other ideas are identified as normal, natural, real or mainstream. Extreme ideas are necessary in order to demythologise the idea that a society can be guided best by an invisible hand, whether the hand of the market or the hand of God. We need extreme ideas to keep democracy alive and kicking. If we try to define democracy as an unchangeable project carved in stone then we run the risk that young people with extreme ideas will move to extremist frameworks operating with extremist methods – even violating human rights – to have their voices heard.

Without extreme ideas there is no social debate; without social debate democracy becomes a desocialised project; a desocialised project creates extremism; extremism leaves no room for extreme ideas. So, it is vital to a democratic system that people, wanted or unwanted, are listened to, especially if they are standing outside the system. Changing the system from within would be another option, but not really a realistic one for young people. That's what another famous singer-songwriter taught us:

They sentenced me to twenty years of boredom For trying to change the system from within.

(Leonard Cohen, "First we take Manhattan", *I'm your man,* Columbia)

References

Coussée F. (2010a), "The history of youth work – Resocialising the youth question?", in Coussée F., Verschelden G., Van de Walle T., Medlinska M. and Williamson H. (eds), *The history of youth work in Europe and its relevance for youth policy today*. Vol. 2 (pp. 9-14). Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

Coussée F. (2010b), "The saint, the poet, the lord and the cardinal – Learning from youth work's history", *Coyote extra*, July 2010, pp. 10-15.

Coussée F. and Willamson H. (2011), "Youth Worker, probably the most difficult job in the world", *Children Australia,* 36 (4), pp. 224-228.

De Block D. (2012), "Emanciperend jeugdwerk: jeugdwerk voor maatschappelijke verandering", in Coussée F. and Bradt L. (eds), *Jeugdwerk en sociale uitsluiting. Handvatten voor emanciperend jeugdbeleid,* Acco, Leuven, pp. 150-160.

Donzelot J. (1984), *L'invention du social. Essai sur le declin des passions politiques,* Fayard, Paris.

Elias N. and Scotson J.L. (1965), *The Established and the Outsiders. A Sociological Enquiry into Community Problems,* Frank Cass & Co, London.

Fukuyama F. (1989), "The end of history?", *The National Interest,* summer 1989, pp. 3-18.

Freire P. (1985), *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power, and Liberation*. Bervin & Garvey, Westport.

Gans H. (1970), "The positive functions of poverty", *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(2): 275-289.

Giddens A. (1994), *Beyond left and right. The future of radical politics*. Polity Press, Cambridge.

Giesecke H. (1972), *Didaktik der politischen Bildung,* Juventa, Munich.

Lorenz W. (2005), "Social Work and a New Social Order – Challenging Neo-liberalism's Erosion of Solidarity", *Social Work & Society 3*, 1, pp. 93-101.

Mills C. Wright (1959), *The Sociological Imagination,* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Marcuse H. (1969), "Repressive Tolerance", in Wolff R.P., Moore B. and Marcuse H. (eds), *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (pp. 95-137), Beacon Press, Boston.

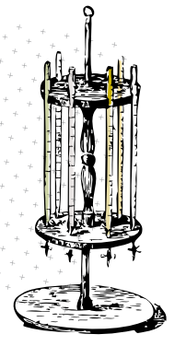
Tocqueville A. (1835/2008), *Over de democratie in Amerika,* Prometheus, Brussels.

Zizek S. (2009), *In defence of lost causes,* Verso, London.

Challenging what is "normal"

Some controversies concerning norms, normality and the conventional in the context of youth

By Marko Pejović | Images by Marlies Pöschl



(How) the context defines the norm

My friend Stojan is a tailor. In the morning, he tailors shirts, jackets and skirts. In the afternoon he attends rehearsals at a contemporary dance theatre. From time to time, he performs in the theatre. In the context of the performing arts in Serbia, Stojan has achieved recognition and enjoys a certain position. He receives praise from theatre critics. When I spend time with Stojan and his friends, I'm a bit confused. I look at their hands and try to figure out what are they talking about. My friend Stojan is deaf and he uses sign language. Among his friends it is "normal" to use sign language. My partial knowledge of that language is not desirable in that community. I have also introduced Stojan to my friends and occasionally he spends time with us. Although he can read lips, it's not easy for him to follow the conversation since we use "common" verbal language. Being in our company, he suddenly becomes the one who is disconnected, the one not in accordance with the norm. This initiated my reflection on context and how it defines what is common, not to use the phrase "normal".

About the criteria of normality

I remember very well from my school days the definition of normality in chemistry: it is another way to express the concentration of a solution and provides information about the number of reactive units in a litre of solution. For example, in a salt such as $MgCl_2$, there are two moles of Cl^- for every mole of Mg^{2+}, so the concentration of Cl^- is said to be 2N (read: "two normal"). The notion of normality is used here to define the relationship between CI^- and Mg^{2+} in the solution. I believe that something similar occurs in human relations. We are constantly measuring relations (ratios) between parts of the community. Which particles are more numerous (which makes the "others" the minority), whether someone is "singled out" from the average, in what direction (positive or negative) and to what extent.

Psychiatry and psychotherapy have also determined what is normal, according to what is common. Some other criteria are present as well, such as the "capacity of reality testing" and/or "ego strength". It is supposed that there is some desirable level in the development of certain psychic functions, as well as in the development of personality as a whole. Consequently, those who fail to achieve this level demonstrate abnormality in personality structure or have an inappropriate structure for their age.

The question I would like to raise at this point is should we measure ourselves against what is average? In ancient Greece civilisation, the benchmark was a philosopher, and educated person or a free individual (to be accurate, this applied to adult males only). The issue is what should be the benchmark in society today, especially in the youth community and who should be the one to set it?

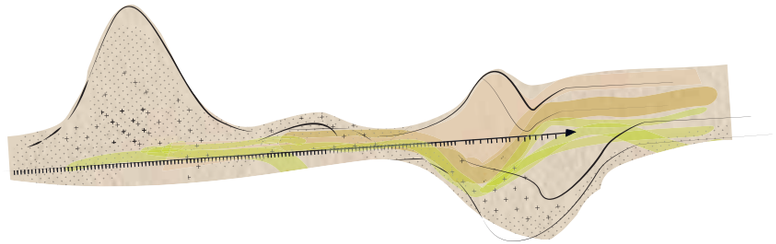
Consequences of an assumption about normality, the norm and "common"

This assumption about the norm (especially when applied to youth) seems to me as very restrictive. To declare that some young individuals, or a group of young people, are beyond some imaginary (or statistical) average, most often means putting them in the margins and abolishing some of their rights. Society forces them to assimilate the majority. Here's a simple example: a group of graffiti artists (and it is well known that a main feature of this sub-culture is to suddenly appear and leave visual comments) is offered to make graffiti on some neatly prepared white walls, in a strictly predefined area. We don't want to have graffiti all over the city, do we? Especially, when we prepared a nice place for it! It makes (some) adults happy (because the number of uncontrolled wall "scribbles" is decreased) and proud because they "support graffiti artists and respond to needs of the youth". However, this is a way to totally restrict and tame one sub-culture in order to transform it into a nice civic sub-category. This is not the context in which society develops. It's a portrait of a society which does not want to face questions or reconsider its values, but to assimilate (graffiti is not the result of too much spare time, but the serious response of young people to social reality). Still, we must not forget that the equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation keeps a social system alive.

The meeting point of "normal" and interculturality

I see interculturality as the process of mutual influence of (sub-)cultures at their meeting points. For this reason, it is most often referred to concerning meetings of groups with different ethnic backgrounds. For me, it also means the meeting of any two groups with distinctive differences. Some groups of young people, members of the same social group, (for example, football fans or software engineers) can be quite different regarding their values, thinking and behaviour. They can be as far from each other as members of different and distant national groups.

When the group "Let's..." (Grupa "Hajde da...") started working on the development of inclusive theatre in Serbia, it was not possible to see the entire picture. We were not completely sure what were we dealing with. We knew from the experience of some European countries and the USA that it was possible to include people with disabilities into dance theatre. However, we were not immediately aware of the obstacles we would have to face. I believe that the greatest obstacles were psychological. A number of experts in the field of disability, as well as part of the community of people with disabilities, believed there was no possibility of success. They didn't think that a paraplegic or a person with muscular dystrophy could be engaged in artistic dance. Their chief "argument" was that performing arts are meant for bodies that are in accordance with the norm. But contemporary dance is exactly the art form that does not require a "ballet body". It is open for different bodies and bodies with different abilities. In Serbia, as far as we knew, there were no previous attempts to work with people with disabilities in the context of contemporary dance.



A totally different, but equally important, issue was that of accessible premises (which is a really big problem in Serbia). Another obstacle was mutual communication channels, which were not easy to establish. At the beginning, there were a sign language interpreter present during workshops with deaf and hard of hearing youth. Later we decided to rely on our own forces. Artists and other participants started to learn sign language. There were a lot of mistakes in this learning process – not knowing all the signs, we simply "invented" new ones when we needed them and these became our "slang". The deaf and hard of hearing participants did their best in lip reading. We managed to create a mutual communication space. Sign language has its own logic. Sometimes it is similar to the logic of verbal language, but sometimes it's completely different. When we started to recognise this logic, it influenced our way of thinking about the world as a whole (since it is not meant only for hearing people). We tried to present the structure of verbal language to our deaf and hard of hearing friends. This was not too hard for them, since they are familiar with verbal language from everyday situations.

I believe that all participants of this mutual work acquired valuable experience – the deaf and hard of hearing people learned what it means to be engaged in theatre in Serbia and the artists learned a lot of about the position of the deaf and hard of hearing people in our society. The result of this mutual work was two shows, produced in professional theatre conditions. The first of these two performances, entitled "The curve for Gaus" (choreography by Boris Čakširan and Sanja Krsmanović Tasić) included five people with disabilities and three professional artists. The other, "Reset" (choreography by Danica Arapović) included six dancers, with and without disabilities. "Reset" won the prize at the festival of contemporary and new theatre in Novi Sad in 2010.

After five years of co-operation with the group "Let's...", my friend Stojan received an invitation to work with Croatian choreographers on a new performance. He may have an international career as a dancer in the future. I sincerely hope that, for people with disabilities interested in theatre and the arts, Stojan's work will be an inspiration and also, let me put it this way – a new norm.

Youth extremism in Northern Ireland – Why now?

by Clare Cosgrove

As a youth and community worker originally from, and practising in, west Belfast, I am often intrigued at how Northern Ireland is viewed by outsiders. For many, the images that prevail are those that I remember from my own childhood: burning buses blocking roads, masked youths throwing petrol bombs, armed tanks rolling through streets left in utter devastation and chaos after yet another explosion. However, following on from the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, when both sides of the political divide agreed to end the 40 years of protracted violence and engage in a process of political power sharing, Northern Ireland is now held up as a beacon of hope. Along with South Africa, Northern Ireland is hailed as a model of good practice in peace building, a success story. We are widely considered a "post-conflict" society.

As a youth worker, a parent and a resident of Northern Ireland, it is my belief that neither of these images quite fit with the reality facing our young people. While we have moved to a situation where our political leaders are working towards a shared future, this has not been embraced at all levels of society, with many young people still as affected by, and engaged in, conflict here as ever.

It will come as no surprise to anyone who has experienced conflict on a societal level that the impact of the conflict on our young people has been complex, multi-faceted and wide reaching. In answer to this, there has now been over 2 billion euros of peace money pumped into projects that aim to heal divisions, increase tolerance and understanding and pave out a brighter, shared future for Northern Ireland. This is a staggering amount when one takes into account that we are a nation of only 1.7 million inhabitants. To put this into perspective, this amount exceeds that which was spent under the Marshall Plan, the economic aid plan to rebuild Europe after the Second World War. Yet, while there is no doubt that the youth and community sector has benefitted immensely from this funding and in turn contributed greatly to the progress that has been made in peace building in Northern Ireland to date, there still remain many challenges in working with our young people in addressing the legacy of the conflict.

© Brendan Howard

"Youth extremism" is not a term that is often used here. However, there is very clear evidence that there remains a youth sub-culture for whom sectarian violence is still very much a normalised part of everyday life. Many readers will be familiar with images of groups of children and young people in Northern Ireland, as young as 6, engaging in anti-social behaviour, rioting and violence. This is particularly an issue around times of tension between communities, such as during the annual controversial marching season, with whole areas of Belfast being shut down due to riots and violence involving mainly young people. This is despite the fact that the current generation of young people, (or at least those aged 16 and under) were born after the IRA ceasefire of 1994, which is still regarded as the main breakthrough towards "peace".

So, why exactly is it that these young people are still being drawn into violence and extremism despite never having witnessed the conflict first hand?

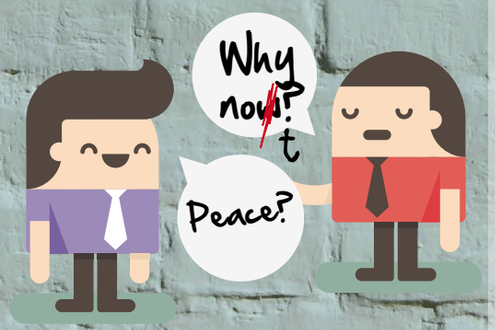
One possible explanation is that the passage of time has allowed for a collective romanticisation of paramilitaries and the violence they perpetrated, and many young people now commonly view the conflict through rose-tinted glasses. This is particularly the case among young people who did not have to experience the horror and utter devastation of the conflict directly, such as through the loss of a family member or witnessing a bombing. For many young people, the stories that are passed through the generations of those who perpetrated violence in the name of "the cause" involve a level of hero worship. Paramilitaries are often hailed as protectors of the community against the "other", and therefore the pain they inflicted on others deemed as "necessary" or "unavoidable" as a result.

Additionally, with the police not always recognised or accepted as law enforcers, particularly in Catholic areas, residents have historically relied heavily on paramilitaries to police their own areas against criminality from within their own communities.

It is easy then to see how these factors are linked to, and impact on, the mentality of many young people who engage in violence along the "interface" areas (flashpoints where Catholics and Protestants live in close proximity but are divided by physical or imagined barriers, such as the peace walls).

These mainly working-class areas are the most prone to brutal, violent instances of sectarian division. For the young people who live in the shadow of the interface, there is often the perception that engaging in violence with "the other" is their way of having a role within their community. Many see themselves as policing and protecting their area against the "other", just as the generations before them did during the height of the conflict and were held up as martyrs for doing so. Of course, there are many who engage in such violence as a form of recreation, while also cognisant of the fact that they can attempt to justify or excuse their violence as merely defending their community should their actions be called into question. There are even many reported cases of young people who have travelled across the region specifically in order to engage in such violence, which calls into question the rationale that they are doing so in the name of "their" community.

On the other hand, many young people who are still engaged in sectarian violence come from communities and families which have been directly impacted, and for whom the memory of the conflict is incredibly personal and raw. This transgenerational, shared trauma remains evident given that such major atrocities as the Shankill and Omagh bombs are still very much within living memory, with the effects of these still impacting on the current generations of young people and their families. Often, when we see young people engaging in sectarian violence, it is a manifestation of this unhealed trauma. Sadly, in acting out this trauma, these young people create a new cycle of victimhood; by moving from victim to perpetrator they create new victims and trauma in the process.



There is also a strong economic element to the current culture of youth violence. As our young people become more and more demoralised by the absence of employment and opportunities on offer, there is an overwhelming lack of incentive to ensure that they engage with their communities and society in a positive way. This has allowed for the further compounding of the polarisation that young people commonly experience anyway. In turn, this marginalisation makes it acceptable for young people who otherwise feel at a loss when seeking their place or role in their community to form an identity built around violence. Often this is through rioting against a common cause, such as during the marching season, or a common enemy, such as the police or those who live on the other side of the interface.

As in other areas of the world, such as Palestine and Israel, physical structures still ensure that our young people remain very much segregated from each other. The now infamous "peace walls", separate Catholic and Protestant areas to the extent that many of the young people I have worked with have never knowingly experienced or had meaningful conversation with someone from the "opposite" side. While youth and community groups have striven for years to increase each group's understanding and tolerance of the other, it is undeniable that this work still holds many challenges in the context of a society where we live, socialise and are educated almost entirely separately. In the 2001 census, it was reported that more than two thirds of us still live in areas which are more than 90% Catholic or Protestant, with 93% of us still being taught in either exclusively Catholic or Protestant schools. This being the case, one can see the challenges we as youth educators continue to face in our efforts to decrease youth extremism; how can we increase empathy for the "other" when they may have never had an opportunity to engage positively with someone from the opposite side, knowing them only as the rival?

Many youth workers dealing with young people engaged in violence and extremism point to the current funding climate as a massive issue in tackling the problem. Despite the early intervention of funders on the scale previously discussed, many in the sector fear that there is a huge underestimation of the ongoing impacts of the conflict which is still not being addressed. Funding is now being focused on other areas, with the obvious implications this has on areas of work undertaken.

In my view, I fear that for too long we have avoided talking to our young people about difficult questions. Rightly or wrongly, we have wanted to protect the next generation from the horror of the troubles, and have too often mistaken their silence for resilience. While local government need to play their role in ensuring that these issues continue to be addressed at a policy level, it is incumbent on us as youth workers to tackle the hard issues through open dialogue, and to help these young people find a more productive means of engaging with their community and each other.

My kid is an extremist

By Gisèle Evrard and Filip Coussée

One morning of summer 2012 Myrddhin, a 10 year-old kid, stops what he is doing and asks: "What does it mean to be unconventional?" After receiving the relatively standard definition that it generally relates to a behaviour that isn't "in accordance with the given norms and conventions" and some examples, his next question is: "Does that mean that it is necessarily bad to be unconventional?"

The point here is not to try to define what is normal and what is not; other articles in this issue will tackle the question of "normality". Nonetheless, it raises two predominant issues: how teenagers perceive the question of norms and social behaviour and how adults deal with that perception. When linked to social behaviour, extremism is always measured against "something" that is supposed to match a series of norms and standards. The relativity of the latter can and possibly ought to be questioned. If it in any way diminishes the importance of social conventions, it certainly highlights the fact that norms are not only different for each of us or our social groups (something we knew already) but also the fact that adolescents behave differently than adults, for reasons that can be social as well as neurological.

The social brain of an adolescent


© Gisèle Evrard

Let's first take the time to look at how the so-called social brain of an adolescent functions. Recent studies in neuroscience have demonstrated that certain parts of our brain – and especially the prefrontal cortex – develop differently depending on our age and neuroscientists have paid particular attention to how the brains of adolescents evolve. In her recent talks and work on this topic, Sarah-Jayne Blakemore, neuroscientist at University College in London, defines adolescence as a period going from "the one of physical changes during puberty to the capacity of an individual to play an independent role in society". One may smile reading this, wondering when the second part of the definition really comes into reality, if ever. Nonetheless, in numbers this supposedly relates to young people aged 10 to 15, on average.

My kid is an extremist

Now that we managed to place adolescence on someone's personal timeline, what do we mean by the social brain? The social brain and in particular the prefrontal cortex of a human brain is what allows one to understand people's ways to relate and to interact, to understand emotions and to make decisions, among other aspects. It is therefore also a condensed set of cognitive functions that allow a person to take risks or not (to measure the consequences), to elaborate strategies, to plan, to adjust behaviours, to make social decisions, and to almost simultaneously assess the degree of a possibly rewarding process.

So far, so good

Adolescents tend to have an extraordinary capacity to not only understand irony or to measure the part of truth and exaggeration in someone's discourse, but also to feel emotions to a higher degree than adults and, therefore, to experience intensely the rewarding feeling that follows decision making. This also explains why adolescents are high risk-takers, because the emotions and related rewards are as important and relevant as the level of risk to be taken. However, the part of the brain focusing on social relations – our now well-known prefrontal cortex – is less developed during adolescence than in adulthood. This means that factual analysis or reasoning is less predominant in an adolescent mind. This is the reason why impulses, emotions and the need to find greater recognition and support from one's peers and social group is higher than for an adult (in principle, at least). In her book, *The Art of Choosing,* Sheena Iyengar (2010) goes along the same line of analysis when examining how people make choices (in general) in order to highlight the differences between adolescents, young people and adults as well as what motivates them to opt for certain choices rather than others, even for those which could be considered extreme ones.

Knowing how the social brains of adolescents function does not explain it all. When proper guidance and support is not made available to young people, extremist types of behaviour can more easily occur. The social abilities of an adolescent may turn into cognitive and emotional disorders, but knowing this does not justify everything. Being unconventional is not "bad" per se. The fact that conventions and norms exist means that they can also be challenged and questioned.

What is the link between the social brain of an adolescent and extreme behaviours? To answer this one must look at social issues and how social behaviours and societies as such have developed in recent years. Blakemore concludes her work by stating how important education is, especially during adolescence. Adolescence is a vulnerable period. Pedagogical influence needs to be exercised to support the adolescent in becoming an independent person. Adolescence is a turbulent period of *Sturm und Drang*. This brings perhaps bigger risks to positive development, but at the same time "offers a fantastic opportunity for learning and creativity" (Blakemore 2012). This is the huge pedagogical paradox that makes our work so exciting, and difficult: we need to influence and direct young people to become more autonomous and independent, provide them with structures and boundaries for them to either evolve within, or break.

Spaces

A democratic society needs spaces for expression, for reflection, for demonstration, for rebellion, for cohesion and for development. Where are those social spaces today? About 30 years ago, adolescents and young people were able to find spaces to – in accordance with their "social brain development" level – take risks, act, plan, redo the world, change it, destroy it and rebuild it again, in concrete or figurative terms. A democracy needs social spaces to discuss, foment new ideas and new ideologies. Even though some of those new, wild ideas were possibly considered as "unconventional" because they challenged the norms and what dominant streams in society considered as "common sense", these spaces generated creativity, allowing a renewal of thoughts, turning into new sources of inspiration (for politics, social behaviours, fashion, culture and art, etc.) and therefore, were an important source for social transformation. These spaces for "social movement" seem to have decreased dramatically, at least in the view of those who do not want to limit themselves to spaces that are "allocated" to them and considered as "acceptable".

Still, and paradoxically, there have probably never been so many opportunities for young people to get actively involved in their society, to participate, to develop projects, to travel, to study abroad, than during the last decade. Access to education and to non-formal learning spaces has increased, thus allowing higher prospects and chances for professional and personal development.

My kid is an extremist

© Gisèle Evrard

What is the problem then?

Today, those social spaces still exist, but they are more directed at individual development than at social movement. To a great extent they are institutionalised or even privatised, giving much more weight to ideas that fit into the mainstream of society. Instead of creating spaces for young people to practice democratic citizenship they increasingly focus on educating young people to become democratic citizens.

Pressure may be another reason for the mismatch between the way young people (and their identity/ies) express themselves in their "category" (social and cognitive) on the one hand and what society expects from them on the other. Education, learning, behaviour and integration into a constantly changing society are all elements which take on more and more importance in the ways of accompanying and/or educating younger generations.

Education as such requires not only more and more efforts and a huge diversity of knowledge and competences, but is also constantly increasing the level of efficiency and "meritocracy" which are expected from pupils and students. As Ken Robinson (2001, p.58) ironically highlights in his book, *Out of our mind*, in some urban centres the competition is so high and so intense that children are being interviewed for kindergarten.

A certain denial of the existence of "youth" as such has also emerged over the past 10 years. "Adolescents" immediately access the status of "young adults". Society (parents, policy, schools, youth workers, etc.) has transformed the youth period from a moratorium into a preparatory phase. Young people are demanded to fulfil the above-mentioned expectations as soon, as quick and as perfectly as possible. The whole idea of youth as a period of *Sturm und Drang* may still be underpinning our youth policies, but society seems to have decided to pre-structure that period so that experiments cannot go wrong and are channelled into safe environments instead of social spaces. We still talk about "young people" and refer to that age group between 14 and 20 year-olds as such, but there is no space anymore to "just be young", or even to "just be"; young people are "adults-to-be". Yet, it has become difficult for young people to be themselves. Their "social brain" is focused on exploring boundaries, taking risks, discovering the unknown, while our youth policies (or let's say policies aimed at young people) focus on guiding young people into predefined territories of what we call "the democratic society", based on economic development and individual meritocracy. The development of young people is pushed forward and further, stretched and confined into a concept of "rights and responsibilities" to be understood and practised from the youngest age possible. The younger children learn to behave as democratic citizens the safer our maintaining societal project will be.

Making connections

The above does not mean that we detest the concept of "educational guidance" and that we should not foment a sense of initiatives, responsibilities and participation, but perhaps that we ought to allow more flexibility in the way, and when, this is effectively acknowledged, understood and a certain ownership of such process and concept is developed.

Without a bubble spacious enough for young people to express themselves, resist, contrast, confront, explode and come back, the risk of extremely divergent social behaviours gets undoubtedly higher. Indeed, together with a clear cognitive improvement during adolescence comes an increasing rate of antisocial and/or risky behaviours. As explained earlier, social properties and their related emotional significance are of utmost relevance during adolescence. Without proper spaces to develop and express themselves and without a proper "distant guidance" and support which allows for the former, frustration, impulse, inhibition or the incapacity to channel emotions can contribute to isolation, extreme risk taking and cognitive recession. In other terms and because adolescence is a period where recognition from peers is not only looked for but necessary for identity and personal development, the lack of spaces to "safely experiment" in one's youth can lead to a certain rigidity of the identity, and therefore to extreme behaviours and to youth extremism.

That doesn't mean that such a process is only one sided and negative (as we try to demonstrate in this issue, "extremism" is not necessarily bad and the connotation we give to the word is socially and politically biased), but the danger of "losing young people on the way" may be higher. This has an impact not only on the young person as such, but also on the whole society. We need "extremist" spaces for young people to develop and express themselves because it helps the society to grow, to renew itself, to get inspired. Without those sources of social development, the rigidity reaches us all. But let's not isolate those spaces from society. Youth spaces are not reservations where young people can grow up in splendid isolation. This attitude creates the conditions for young people to develop either "borderless" or "template identities".

If you wonder if adolescents are different, think differently and behave differently than adults, you are totally right. Not only because they are "young" but because their bodies and minds function differently. Space and support, flexibility and guidance are the paradoxical, yet necessary elements to help them grow and develop into autonomous, critical and independent people. If we really are in favour of democratic societies then young people must have the freedom to experiment and express themselves, even in extreme ways. In our youth work jargon, we usually say that "to be challenged is a good thing", don't we? A bon entendeur...

"As long as any adult thinks that he, like the parents and teachers of old, can become introspective, invoking his own youth to understand the youth before him, he is lost." Margaret Mead

Inspired by Muse, *Uprising*, Mushroom records

References

Blakemore S.-J. (2012), "The mysterious workings of the adolescent brain", TED Talk.
Blakemore S.-J (2008), "The social brain in adolescence", *Nature Review*, Vol. 9, Nature Publishing Group.
Iyengar S. (2010), *The Art of Choosing*, Twelve, New York
Robinson K. (2001), *Out of Our Minds: Learning to Be Creative*, Capstone Publishing, Oxford.

Edgeryders: towards de-ideologising the "radical"

by Noemi Salantiu

Illustrations by Malica Worms

This contribution aims to show how individuals experimenting with radical, innovative work are paving the way to solving collective problems for a better future. Edgeryders is a community of social innovators, artists, activists, global thinkers whose projects have very high social and cultural value, despite having little or no financial support. Once we came together in a European-funded project and model of citizen–institution collaboration, our next goal is to wire seemingly disparate initiatives towards scalability and greater benefits for the mainstream. I am writing from two standpoints: a community builder who is part of the project staff and a member of the Edgeryders community, pretty well immersed in it. My deepest thanks go to every one of my new friends who inspired this account: Elf, Alessia, Petros, Lucas, Gaia, James and the rest of the community.

Briefly, it started with the Council of Europe and the European Commission wanting to understand one of Europe's most ardent problems: the situation of young people who navigate unstable environments, who question the return on investment of formal education, who don't have a place in labour markets or simply step away from traditional channels of participation; basically those who do things that don't show up in statistics or official reports because there are no instruments to measure the type of work they do. And so the Edgeryders distributed think tank was born: an open, online, highly interactive platform where young people from all corners of Europe come together to meet one another, share their struggles and equally the creative solutions they find, and collect everything into a fresh vision of what the future may hold for young Europeans if the right instruments are in place to support their work.

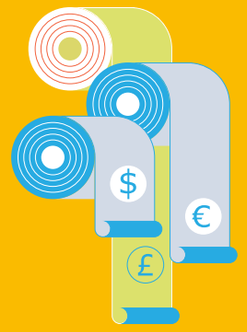
The community: radical problems need radical solutions

Meet Elf, he has been living stateless and moneyless for over three years, by choice. Like most people, he used to have a job, as a web developer, but decided to let go of humanly produced artefacts that do nothing but condition our exchanges. How does this work? Well, he does things he enjoys for free, building software, sometimes helping grow food and supporting others without expecting anything in return and using sharing as a currency. Yet this comes around, as he receives food, shelter when travelling (across Europe only because he doesn't have identification documents) or whatever he needs for basic survival, and when he doesn't he dumpster dives – not so outrageous when one stops to think about all the perfectly good food that's being wasted daily. Not surprisingly, Elf's way of tweaking his lifestyle is allowing him to experiment with new skills and surface needs in communities he didn't know existed, and all this helps build great relationships with those around him, generating high mutual trust and environments that feel safe.

Meet Alessia, she is a social innovator, designer and activist. Among other things, she is travelling across Italy to save endangered cultural heritage sites. What Alessia and a diverse crowd do is occupy theatres or spaces for culture as a protest against their degradation, private buyoffs, decreasing wages of artists or teachers, and economic decay of knowledge workers in general. Inside theatres the protesters organise workshops and debates on cultural commons or welfare policies, or set up art performances, even transform them into after-school care centres. While occupying state or private property runs against the law and is criminalised, the logic is that they in fact operate to protect these spaces, and their actions are legitimate from the standpoint of the values occupiers fight to preserve: public goods funded by public money belong to the people; access to culture by all; preservation of historical heritage; arts, culture and knowledge that needn't be measured by monetary value. Essentially these guys are putting forward a new model of governance, one that takes into account the knowledge-based economy and is much more inclusive than the current one.

Meet Petros, he used to run an Internet company before the crisis hit. And it hit hard, as Petros and his wife Natalia went bankrupt and decided to move to rural Poland to found the Laboratory of Freedom on a rent-free estate. The FreeLab is a community of international residents researching solutions, offering technical support and building new skills, working together in waste control and electricity (they build rocket stoves or solar water heaters). Very importantly, they're teaching others to become self-organised and live independently from economic systems. Petros believes intentional communities are the best way to cope with the crisis and really be free as they live "off-the-matrix": "We don't want to reintegrate within the system. We are free and want to use our restored freedom for creating."

Edgeryders: towards de-ideologising the "radical"



The folks at FreeLab are not the only ones working towards increasing communities' resilience. Lucas, Gaia, James and others in their crowd are looking into breakdowns of health resources (staff, supplies, equipment) and are devising alternate plans. Lucas is a public health physician, Gaia is a researcher and social network analyst, James is a community volunteer and avid cycler. What they question is how we go about leveraging community to improve the resilience of a place. Theirs is an interdisciplinary model for collaboration through networks of individuals, health and non-health professionals alike, who instead of fighting against each other when resources are scarce, work together to better respond to economic meltdowns. This has enormous value in terms of promoting solidarity, mutual aid and strengthening community connections.

What do Edgeryders Elf, Alessia, Petros, Lucas and the others have in common? First, none of these ways to experiment for the greater good are funded or are commercial activities; therefore they don't exist in the market economy. But rather than being isolated, their initiatives are connected to a larger, virtual network of change makers, people who do groundbreaking work often at the cost of living day by day. Radicalism is a cheap way to try new things that only have a small probability of working, but it costs a lot in terms of personal commitment and security. Whether it's re-appropriating commons in mercantilist societies or designing tools to increase transparency and accountability in democracies, Edgeryders are driving the change. Doing work outside the system doesn't equal being outsiders from the real world; on the contrary, their actions are based on deep awareness of the global problems affecting individual lives and communities.

Building bridges

How do we connect the dots and offer support and recognition to people at the edge of change, especially starting with our institutions? First of all, Edgeryders are pretty much against social categorisations of any kind, whether or not we are the "category" in question.[1] I don't think many would think of themselves as radicals. During an open debate at the "Living on the Edge" offline community event in June, someone's attempt to make a general statement about Europe's youth as extremist and violent was abruptly disqualified by the community in the room on the basis that if institutions antagonise citizens they cut off chances of finding constructive solutions, especially together. Also, thinking of Edgeryders as leading radical lifestyles falls short of fully grasping the meaning of their work. Edgeryding is not freeriding, our paths and risks are individual but highly connected because our success stands to benefit all. We are all part of a common future that some have started to build already.

So far the platform is home to over 1200 participants, Europeans and non-Europeans, young or not so young. There are hundreds of shared stories, many of them similar to the ones above, and thousands of comments in conversations. In June 2012 we set up an offline event bringing in over 150 Edgeryders at the Council of Europe. People from all over the Internet met Big Government, up close and personal, to make a case for the immediacy of solutions such as theirs, and they did so successfully. The "Transition handbook for policy makers" in preparation draws a list of policy recommendations that would make it easier for radical innovators out there to continue to do their "jobs". It starts with making a case that policy makers should come closer and understand the lives of young people, and goes on calling for policies to accommodate the isolated, turns-out-not-so-isolated cases of risky transition into cultural norms, so as to relieve some of the societal pressure and stigma associated with doing something outside the mainstream.

Each recommendation can be fleshed out in concrete lines of action to give people in institutions, particularly local ones, the tools to help the young. Edgeryders started with the European institutions willing to lend an ear, and now we want to be lent a hand. With the right incentives aligned – among others, commitment from public servants in key positions[2] – we are moving from a think tank advising on youth policies, to a "do tank" that multiplies positive experiences and puts transformative action at the heart of its collective existence. If you're reading this and you'd like to be part of the change, Edgeryders style, don't hesitate to get in touch. Edgeryders started out as a project by the Council of Europe and the European Commission in 2011. Upon termination end of 2012, the community spun off and built itself a new interactive web platform. A social enterprise, Edgeryders LBG, has been created to maintain and support the community's infrastructure. See more at: http://edgeryders.eu/

[1]This was one of the project's research findings. A small research team was commissioned to do ethnographic analysis of all the platform content, structured into several broad transition themes. After validation of the findings by the community, all papers are now being aggregated into a "Transition handbook for policy makers" http://edgeryders.ppa.coe.int/finale/making-sense-edgeryders-experiences-where-do-we-go-here.

[2]Many in the community don't trust institutions – deemed as machines that are highly resistant to change, limited in their ability to reform – but acknowledge that institutions are made by and of people; and that public servants can build precedents for good practices and cannot be discarded as untrustworthy. The team at the Council of Europe driving the Edgeryders project is a good example, it can be thought of doing radical work from an institutional standpoint, and the fact that people like Elf or Petros are engaging in conversation through an institutional channel is a good sign that collaboration and mutual support is possible, and that we should move forward and not away from the radical, in any of its forms, depending from where one looks.

No Hate Speech Movement

A campaign of young people for human rights online

by Rui Gomes

This article gives an overview of the campaign and ideas about how to get involved, as the campaign will run at least until the end of 2014. The name of the campaign has been adopted as the No Hate Speech Movement.

The campaign took its present format through several consultation events, preparatory meetings with experts, youth workers and young people. The main aim is to create an online community of young people motivated to discuss and act against hate speech online. The campaign is not run to limit freedom of expression online. Neither is it against hatred online nor about being nice to each other online. The campaign is against the expressions of hate speech online in all its forms, including those that most affect young people, such as cyber-bullying and cyber-hate. It is based on human rights education, youth participation and media literacy. It aims at reducing hate speech and combating racism and discrimination in their online expression; raising awareness about these phenomena is the first objective of the campaign.

The objectives of the campaign

- to raise awareness about hate speech online and its risks for democracy and for individual young people, and to promote media and Internet literacy;
- to support young people in standing up for human rights, online and offline;
- to decrease the levels of acceptance of online hate speech;
- to mobilise, train and network online youth activists for human rights;
- to map hate speech online and develop tools for constructive responses;
- to show solidarity and support to people and groups targeted by hate speech online;
- to advocate for the development of and consensus on European policy instruments combating hate speech;
- to develop forms of youth participation and citizenship online.

National campaigns

National campaign committees and support groups

The campaign is decentralised through national campaigns in the member states. Governments were invited to set up national campaign committees. The Council of Europe considers the committee as ideal if it involves the government, youth organisations and other civil society actors, as well as the relevant segments of the business sector. At the time of writing there are 36 member states of the Council of Europe that have started national campaigns. Campaign support groups may be formed in cases where a national campaign committee is not (yet) feasible. Interest for the campaign is spreading beyond Europe: NGOs and institutions from Mexico have recently expressed interest in implementing the campaign.

National online platforms

National committees can operate their own national online campaign platform and online tools in the languages that are relevant in the country. National campaigns may translate the tools into local languages so as to take into account the linguistic and cultural context of each country; this is already happening in a number of countries.

Online campaign tools

No Hate Speech Movement website

www.nohatespeechmovement.org

No Hate Speech Movement: Online platform for user-generated content uploaded by young people with their emotional and rational contributions about hate speech, identity and ideas. This site is the main landing page of the campaign available for the widest public with testimonials through self-made videos, photos or other visual manifestations. Young moderators are working to ensure safety and respect.

Hate Speech Watch

This is an online platform to monitor, collect and discuss hate speech content on the Internet. It is a user-generated online engine where registered users can link in any hate speech content from the Internet. Users can tag them, comment them and discuss them. Moderators are monitoring and facilitating the site, creating focus topics every month based on the main interest of the online community. Special "take action" features will also be available if the identified and discussed hate speech content requires further action. It's the perfect place for online activists!

*The **No Hate Speech Movement** platform and the **Hate Speech Watch** are developed and maintained by the Council of Europe in English and French.*

Campaign co-ordination website

This is the portal for campaign organisers and activists with updated information about the work behind the campaign. Organisations that are interested in taking part in the campaign can join by filling out a form on this website.

The campaign co-ordination website:
www.coe.int/youthcampaign

Online educational tools

This is a campaign about education. Tools for education and action are thus very important. The following will be made available shortly.

Online campaign toolkit: The Council of Europe has developed an online toolkit for young people and their organisations about ways of involvement in the campaign. The online toolkit provides knowledge and information about the campaign and its media, and gives concrete practical and methodological support for online campaigning.

Learning module on hate speech: This online learning tool helps people to understand different aspects of hate speech. The module provides "basic and essential" knowledge about hate speech and hate speech online.

School campaign pack: This online tool supports campaign promotion and action in the school environment. The Council of Europe has developed this pack for secondary schools to help teachers when discussing online hate speech with students, to organise a European competition among secondary school students on hate speech online and cyber-bullying, to introduce the online campaign tools in schools and to involve secondary school students in the online campaign.

All three tools will be available in English on the campaign websites, and the Council of Europe provides them free of charge to national campaign organisers to be translated and implemented in the national campaign context.

European Action Days
Throughout the campaign several Action Days will focus on different aspects and targets of hate speech. Each Action Day will have a special programme and online activities co-ordinated by international youth organisations.

17 May: Action Day against Homophobia and Transphobia online
20 June: Action Day in support of refugees and asylum seekers
22 July: Action Day against hate crimes
12 August: Youth Day
21 September: Action Day for religious diversity and tolerance
14-20 October: Local Democracy Week: local actions against hate
9 November: Action Day against Fascism and Anti-semitism
10 December: Action Day for human rights online.

Want to get involved?

There are many ways to take an active part in the campaign.

Individuals can join the campaign by uploading their self-expression statement about their identity or about hate speech and they can also register as a user at Hate Speech Watch and take part in the debates and monitoring of hate speech content on the Internet.

Organisations and institutions that are interested in taking part in the campaign can join on the co-ordination website by registering as a campaign partner and advertise their activities on the campaign co-ordination site. Local and national youth organisations can take part in the national campaign in their own country by organising or contributing to online and offline activities of the national campaign. For this they can contact the national campaign co-ordinator. The list of national campaign co-ordinators is available on the campaign co-ordination website. An organisation can also join one of the European Action Days that has the theme closest to the objectives of the organisation, by organising a local or national activity on that day.

European and international youth organisations can take the lead in proposing and implementing a European Action Day that has a focus or target group within the interest of the organisation. If such an organisation has an idea they can contact the campaign secretariat with their proposal for a European Action Day within the campaign.

Schools can join by downloading the campaign pack for schools and implement activities for their students, and they may also register as campaign partners on the co-ordination website.

For further details or questions you can contact the campaign secretariat by email at
youth.nohatespeech@coe.int

Morrissey made me do it!

Popular music and extremism

Views from Italian kitchens

by Giacomo Bottà | Images by Marlies Pöschl

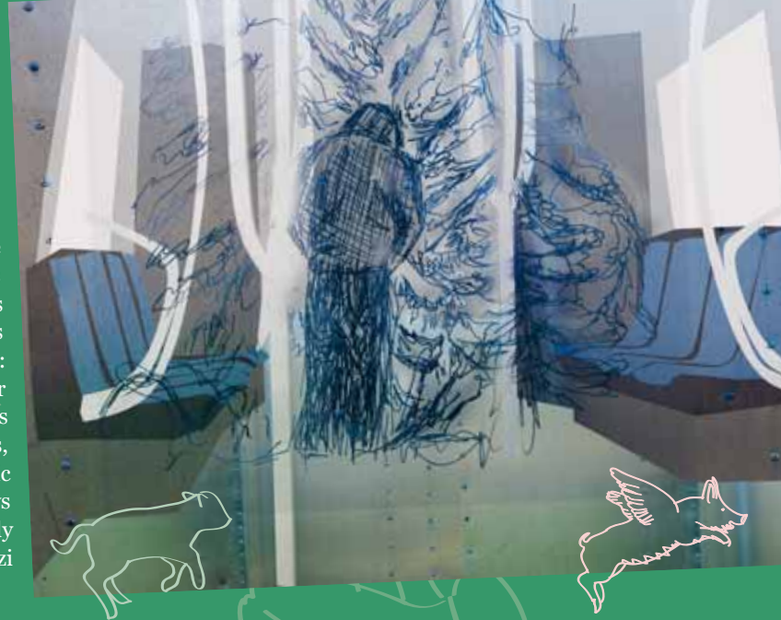
We are in an Italian kitchen on a Sunday in 1985 and a typical Italian mother is serving a roast for lunch to Stefano, her son. Stefano says: "Mamma, I'd rather not eat this. I decided to become a vegetarian. Can I have some boiled cabbage instead?" Stefano's mother is shaken and hurt. She doesn't know what a vegetarian eats. She only knows her son listens to too much music and she is scared of the satanic backward messages you can find on records.

A few days before, Stefano had bought The Smiths' LP *Meat is Murder* and was impressed, deciding never to eat meat again. Going vegetarian in the land of prosciutto crudo and mortadella was an extremist decision. It was well beyond the borders of the ordinary, in regard to the cultural trait that is food, which was/is at the heart of Italian-ness.

However, what is interesting for us is that Stefano became a food extremist because of a record. The extreme act of depriving himself from animal proteins makes him feel a bond to a band, to a group of fans and to a certain lifestyle; he adopts it as the signifier of who he really is. This is the secret of much extremism connected to popular music, it is adopted as an individualisation process; it makes young people feel real.

Let's now time travel to an Italian kitchen in 2012, Stefano is still vegetarian and he is sitting next to his teenage son, Luca. Luca is 16, has long hair, a pentagram hangs on his neck and he is wearing a t-shirt from his favourite band, Burzum, from Norway. The singer of Burzum served time in prison for murder and for church burning. Luca has some basic notions about Satanism, mostly from Wikipedia and from some interviews with Burzum he found on the net and he doesn't consider himself a real Satanist. He just finds black metal to be really good music and he likes the goat skulls imagery and the ancient Nordic connections. He wants to study old Norse when he gets to college. Despite listening to extreme music and sharing the look, Luca has some ironic distance towards its extremist ideology.

When we talk about "extreme music", the sound in our head is always close to a distorted and confused noise. This has been there since the beginning: in the 1950s Elvis sounded like a screaming monkey to the older generations and his supposed influence on juvenile crime and rebelliousness were openly condemned. New genres are born every day, keeping popular music extreme, and it is still clearly a sign of ageing when someone suddenly realises their inability to understand the new. To me, this happened with "Speedcore", a sub-genre of techno, which rarely drops below 300 beats per minute (an average song has 120).



We talk of extreme metal, for instance, when we are referring to the fastest and most distorted variety of metal. Satanism and/or paganism are thought to be simply embedded in this sound; they are the fries that we always expect with the steak. Interestingly this doesn't happen with classical music: the German composer Richard Wagner made wide use of thundering basses and complex gloomy orchestrations, however no one thinks of his music as extreme or as linked in any ways to extremism, even if – coincidentally or not – it was widely popular in Nazi Germany.

The association between extreme music and extremism is of course not a given. Young people definitely tend to identify certain extreme sounds with extreme feelings like hate, anger and frustration but this doesn't necessary lead to extreme behaviours in society. Sometimes extreme sounds have a cathartic effect and young people immerse themselves in them to handle certain feelings, for instance when they use earphones, which build a "bubble" to defend oneself or create the right soundtrack for a hostile environment.

Popular music has also developed, throughout its history, deep relations with political extremism, whether of left- or right-wing connotation. This is mostly based on the weakness or better the malleability of music. Any kind of music can become a vehicle of political thoughts and ideologies. For instance, if not referring to some minor semiotic elements and sometimes to lyrics, it is very difficult to distinguish a neo-Nazi punk band from an apolitical one or a Christian emo from a proper emo. This uncertainty has been exploited widely by political groups: for instance in 2009 Nicolas Sarkozy used the song "Kids" by MGMT in his presidential campaign. "Kids" is a catchy, successful song that uplifted the spirits of UMP supporters and enhanced their political experience. MGMT later sued Sarkozy for the use of the song and there was a settlement of about €30 000.

Extreme political thoughts and ideologies in popular music also raise some major difficulties in terms of freedom of expression and censorship. The Polish band Behemoth for instance has been sued for blasphemy in their country, but the European Commission issued a statement concerning freedom of expression as one of the values at the basis of the European Convention on Human Rights, advising Poland to follow this treaty to which it is a party. In Germany, a considerable amount of records are banned or indexed every year, mostly in connection to racial hatred, homophobia and sexism, while in the US the "Parental advisory explicit lyrics" sticker has been put on new releases since 1985.

It is surprising to see that extremist content can be available also in music genres that are considered to be somewhat harmless. For instance reggae is normally associated with a relaxed lifestyle in the sun or with positive political activism, but homophobic lyrics are also widely represented. Racist lyrics in country music are also widespread, along with more known texts about homesickness and love.

The main point however is that popular music nowadays is ubiquitous, you find it everywhere; it streams out of your mobile phone into your ears while you are commuting, from your PC when you are working; it's in the shop where you buy food and in the bar where you're having a beer while reading *Coyote*. You can easily access (legally or illegally) all the digitalised music ever created with a simple move of your finger. This of course also means that music's power in conveying extremist or non-extremist meanings and in defining life, or life-threatening, choices weakens considerably, and not only in Italian kitchens.

Did you know that?

Youth and extrem(es/ism) in statistics

by Thomas Spragg | Images by Marlies Pöschl

1 EXTREMELY YOUTHFUL COUNTRIES

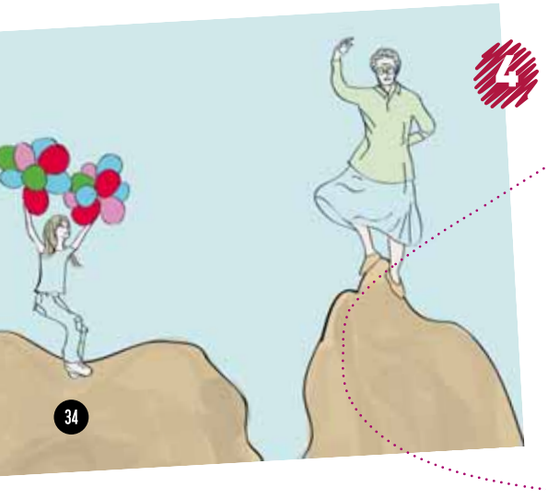
In Turkey, 26% of the population is under the age of 15. This is closely followed by 23% in Albania, 22% in Azerbaijan and 21% in Iceland!

2 EXTREMELY YOUTHFUL CITIES

Since 2006, Podgorica, Montenegro has been the youngest European city.

3 EXTREMELY RICH YOUNG PEOPLE

Europe's youngest billionaire is Prince Albert von Thurn und Taxis, 29, from Germany – who is worth a whopping €1.5 billion! Prince Albert is the only European under the age of 30 who appears on the 2012 Forbes list, but he is closely followed by 35 year-old Maxim Nogotkov (Russia) and Yvonne Bauer (Germany).



4 COUNTRIES WITH EXTREME GENERATIONAL GAPS

1. Monaco
Old to young ratio – 2.18:1
65 years and over – 26.9%
0-14 years – 2.18%

2. Latvia
Old to young ratio – 1.25:1
65 years and over – 16.9%
0-14 years – 13.5%

3. Slovenia
Old to young ratio – 1.25:1
65 years and over – 16.8%
0-14 years – 13.4%

TOP FIVE EUROPEAN EXTREME SPORTS

1. Cheese rolling, Gloucestershire, England
2. Kite skiing, Chamonix, France
3. Caving, Iceland
4. Snowmobiling, Greenland
5. Mountain biking, Morzine, France

6 COUNCIL OF EUROPE: AN EXTREME COMMITMENT TO YOUTH

Since 1972, 5 000 young people have been trained every year in one of its two residential youth centres. Between January and June 2013, it has awarded 58 grants for a total of €676 000 to youth projects.

7 EXTREME MUSIC

Shock Rock: an umbrella term for artists who combine rock music with elements of theatrical shock value in live performances.

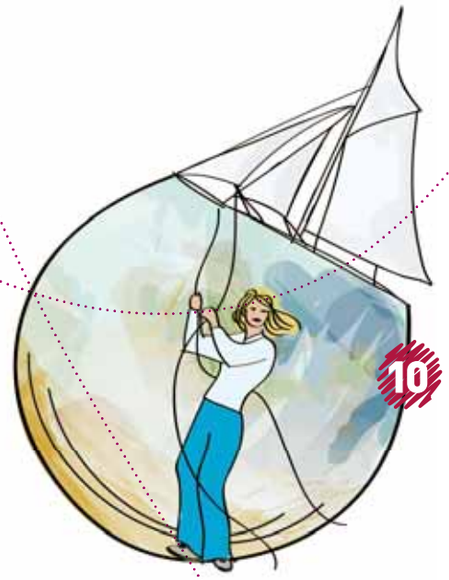
Notable European shock rock performers are King Diamond (DK), Screaming Lord Sutch (UK), Rammstein (DE) and Lordi (FI).

8 EXTREME LACK OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Less than half (40%) of children believe that voting in elections is an effective tool for improving the situation in their countries (as high as 50% in western Europe and EU candidate countries), but 16% believe that elections are ineffective (particularly in transition countries within the western CIS and the Caucasus).

9 EXTREME HAPPINESS

Two thirds of all children feel happy most of the time, more so in western Europe (80%) than transition countries (60%). In general, girls feel happy more often than boys, as do urban dwellers compared to rural children.



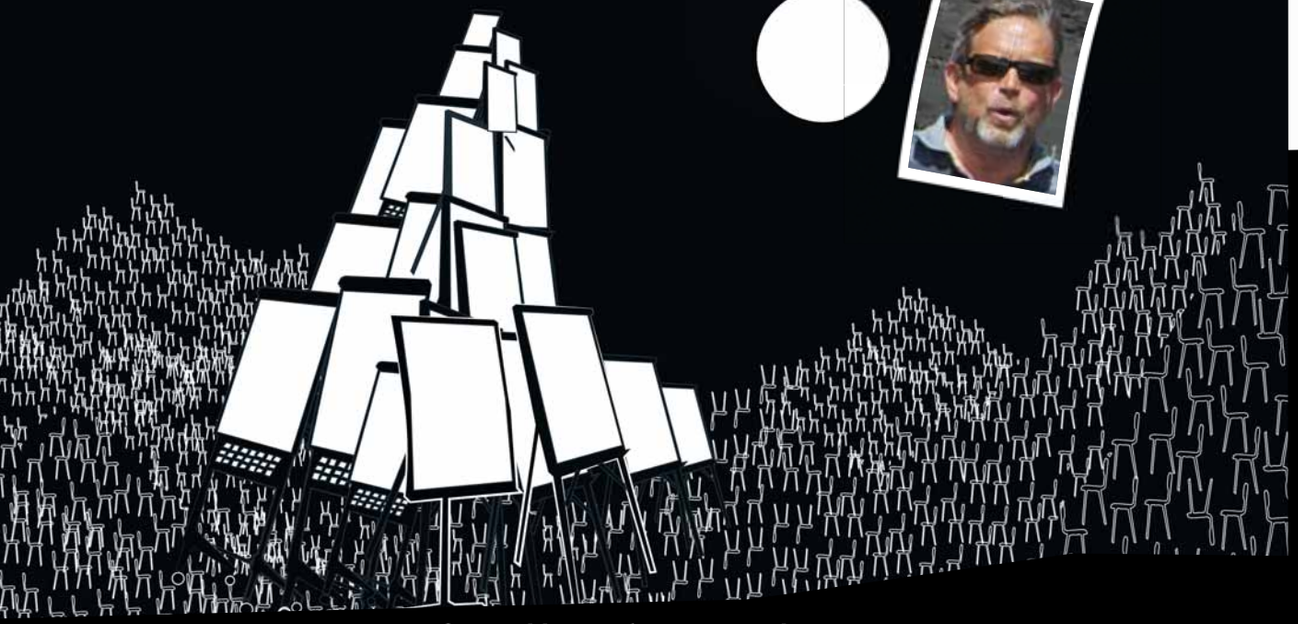
10 YOUNG EUROPEAN EXTREME ADVENTURERS

The youngest person to have stood on the top of Europe's highest peak (Mount Elbrus, 5 642 meters above sea level), is the Ukranian Yunona Bukasova, at the tender age of 9 years and 1 month old. Aged 16, Dutch teenager Laura Dekker became the youngest person to complete a solo around the world sailing adventure in 2012. Dutch authorities tried to prevent the expedition, as the girl should have been in school. *The Guinness Book of World Records* also refused to recognise the feat, stating that they did not want to encourage other young people to skip school. The youngest relay team to ever have swum the English Channel consisted of six 12 year-old boys from the Royal Tunbridge Wells Monson Swimming Club. The mammoth swim was completed on 4 September 1968.

The survival guide
of the dogmatic facilitator

by Gisèle Evrard, Darko Markovic and Mark E. Taylor

Illustrations by Marlies Pöschl

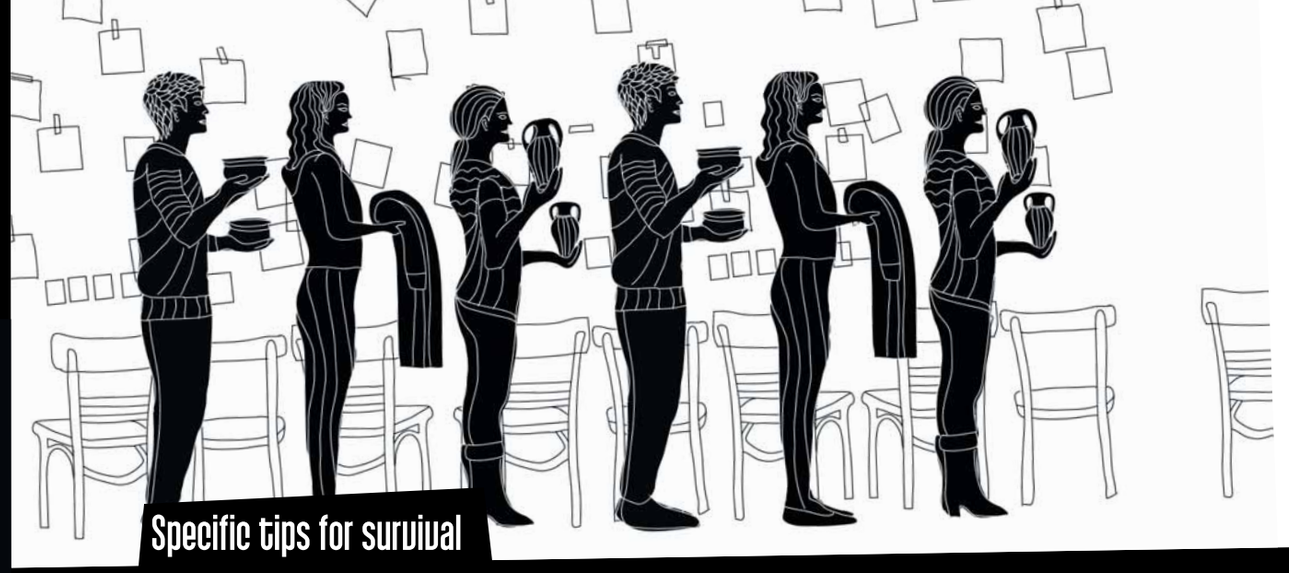


General bases for your work

Frankly speaking, your truth is greater than the participants' truth. Meaning that at the end of any educational activity facilitated by you, the participants should see your truth as their own truth.

Transferring your wisdom to participants is more efficient than wasting public money on individual discoveries. Trusting in the group process makes no sense, because if they don't know where to get to, how would they know how to get there? If you give freedom to your participants, they will certainly abuse it. The best questions to ask are the ones leading to conclusions you would like the group to make.

It has been said that there are no such things as "good groups" or "bad groups". Still, if something goes wrong, it is obviously not linked to your brilliant facilitation skills – only to the resistance of some group members. The principles of non-formal learning in educational activities? Of course you know them. They exactly describe what you do and the way you do it. Learner-centred is precisely the approach you follow. In the end, it is just about making people feel and express their needs as you create them.



Specific tips for survival

When sharing a theory, make sure you bring numerous related books along with you that you'll leave on the table "for display only". Mark several pages (randomly, it doesn't matter), write down some notes and open and close the books about a hundred times to make them look old and very much used. That will contribute to your undoubted credibility. Use "yes, but" as many times as possible when someone contradicts you. Make sure that what follows the "but" is complicated or complex enough to end the discussion. Alternatively and not to repeat things again and again, you can also nod regularly while the participant shares his/her/hir views on the topic. Onomatopoeic interjections such as "Hmmm" are allowed too. If you feel lost at some point (it will probably never happen), create confusion and send the ball back to the group. It always helps in escaping a difficult situation.

Allow participants to choose their own working groups as long as you are in agreement with the composition of the groups. Make sure that every working group includes at least one of your trusted participants. Give working groups their tasks in writing. Include one question that even you do not really understand. Then criticise the groups for failing to provide the correct answers. Provide useful templates for plenary reports – in the form of PowerPoint presentations – ensuring that the correct answers are already included as helpful examples. Praising all learners who are supporting your way of thinking will set a good example for others. Promise good participants that you will give them free online coaching after the event. Use some nice positive music and an emotional slide show of photographs from the event during the evaluation; this will help participants sign the prepared evaluation form happily.

And, if you are not alone as facilitator...

If you have the misfortune to be forced to work with a colleague with a different approach, it is clear that s/he/zie must be wrong. (Correct your colleague in public, so s/he/zie can learn from the experience.) Do not allow your colleagues to take bribes – make sure you take them for yourself. Don't ever, ever share your material (presentations, handouts, session outlines). Even if some people say that you did not invent everything, it doesn't matter: from the moment you used it, it became yours.

And, finally: On no account allow others to use humour to undermine your authority – always make sure you use it first to undermine theirs.

Babies in non-formal education:

thought-provoking testimony of a peer trainer

by Kateryna Shalayeva

It is after midnight as I start to draft this article for Coyote. This might come as no surprise, as late-night sessions of preparatory teams are well known to you. So they were to me. What is unusual is the fact that my late-night session has its start, and not its end, after midnight.

Alexander is in bed, sleeping peacefully in his cot. Alleluia... His mum can share her story of being a mother-trainer who brings her child on board for non-formal education.

© Kateryna Shalayeva

The parent-trainer issue has already been raised in *Coyote* back in 2003.[1] That article about being a trainer and a parent made me think how far we have come in understanding of the subject in ten years. I have even thought of three major periods of "evolution" of parent-trainer identity and of the attitude to the presence of children in the non-formal learning space.

Period 1

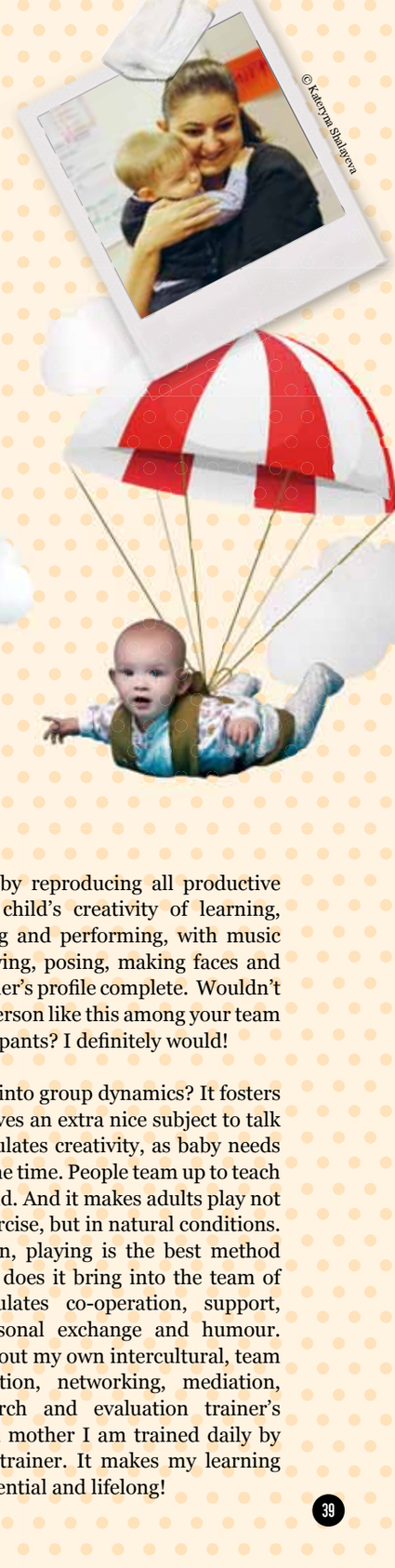
At the beginning of the continuum, we find parent-trainers who were desperately looking for child care in "irregular" hours and on weekends, and were terribly missing their little treasures while they were away at a training course. The above-mentioned article belongs to that period.

Period 2

They, the parent-trainers and the participants too, have later decided to bring their kids along with them. This marked the second period of evolution. It turned into a "family" trip, as trainers who were travelling with their children were also accompanied by their partners, parents, other relatives or family baby-sitters. The role of "accompanists" was to provide baby-sitting services during the training hours and preferably to keep kids outside of the training setting.

Period 3

The revolution is near. Babies, infants, young children and their older peers, together with young adults and other generations find themselves all together in a common learning space. Trainers bring their children to a course and keep them integrated in the learning community. This is the momentum of the third period of evolution. And here I stand.



© Kateryna Shalayeva

Disclaimer – I did not plan this article for the European Year of Active Ageing and Inter-generational Dialogue, nor was my child born for this reason. :-) But this European year is particularly dear to me, as I am living my dialogue between the generations every day in my European family.

And I am living daily in this mixture of roles of a mother, a wife and a professional woman. And even with all the existing affirmative actions and support structures, this mixture of roles remains very uneasy for a modern woman.

One of my present challenges is how to integrate us (a parent and a child) into the non-formal learning process. I therefore wanted to return to this subject and to list certain pros and cons of having children share the learning space with adults in non-formal education. I would also invite fathers to have their say!

I shall be more specifically focused on the challenges of being a mother-trainer who is accompanied by her child, both of whom are members of the preparatory team of a non-formal learning activity. I will raise the following issues: what makes learning special when a baby is involved? How does the baby influence interaction among team members and with participants? How does becoming a parent influence a trainer's competences? I should immediately mention that I do not necessarily have answers to all these questions.

Why would I recommend inviting baby into the preparatory team?

The most adorable competence of my fellow baby-trainer is his intercultural competence, where his smile is his strongest skill. His ability to approach everyone with a smile and without any hesitation always positively surprises me. Once he arrives at a course, he makes friends very fast. On a training course he joins working groups and participates in plenaries. His natural ability to communicate and network is simply amazing. Persistence, wit and courage compose his mediation and negotiation skills. He usually gets what he wants. It is hard to say no to him. His reaction to people and events is immediate and clear. His research and evaluation skills are in constant development.

Alexander has legendary leadership potential. People who have never met him have heard about him. People who have met him once keep talking about him. Teaming up with his mum 24/7 (24 hours a day, seven days a week) makes him an excellent team player. I shall further add learning skills, where his strongest point is doing, by simply copying what others do and by experimenting. It is a child's natural non-formal way of learning, which is by playing and by reproducing all productive inputs. Finally, a child's creativity of learning, by singing, dancing and performing, with music or without it, drawing, posing, making faces and jokes, makes a trainer's profile complete. Wouldn't you like to have a person like this among your team members or participants? I definitely would!

What does it bring into group dynamics? It fosters communication, gives an extra nice subject to talk about. It also stimulates creativity, as baby needs to be occupied all the time. People team up to teach and entertain a child. And it makes adults play not in a simulation exercise, but in natural conditions. As it is well known, playing is the best method of learning. What does it bring into the team of trainers? It stimulates co-operation, support, profound interpersonal exchange and humour. What shall I say about my own intercultural, team work, communication, networking, mediation, negotiation, research and evaluation trainer's competences? As a mother I am trained daily by my adorable peer trainer. It makes my learning non-formal, experiential and lifelong!

Babies in non-formal education: thought-provoking testimony of a peer trainer

Why would I leave baby home?

Travel

In this section I would name the size of the suitcase, mobility barriers and misconception. From now on our suitcase includes items that I was previously not even aware of (food, toys, clothes, diapers, soaps, creams, tissues and other hygiene products, exclusively provided for a baby). Our hand luggage is a miniature version of our suitcase. It contains all the items necessary in an emergency situation (late arrival, missed transfer, lost luggage). Baby also comes with a personal vehicle, the carriage. I have already forgot what it was to travel "light", with a minimum of things, as most trainers used to travel.

I shall add to this security checkpoints, which I need to go through with all my hand luggage (computer, of course, water), carriage and baby in my arms. I have to give a good reason to border police for why I am not "kidnapping" my own child. Getting on and off a plane or a train is a true experience! Plus delays, transfers, lost luggage, in addition to staircases, curbs, narrow doors and dark corridors upon arrival, all these give a completely new colour to life when baby is involved in travelling with me.

Time

A child has a rhythm of life which does not necessarily correspond to the well-structured programme of a training course. Indeed, children need to eat, sleep, be changed and receive attention. As a mother I take time to change and feed my baby, and put him to bed. As a trainer, I skip important elements of the programme here and there. It is "not good", say some fellow trainers/participants. Non-formal education requires "full participation".

This concept of "full involvement" in relation to parent-trainers and parent-participants seems outdated. Traditional training schedules do not allow for a very basic human need of parents. Our need is to be available, when required, in order to satisfy the very basic human needs of our kids.

For instance, when there are two of us (a parent and a child), we need twice as much time to get ready in the morning. And our lunch break or tea pause is only a half break or a half pause. The two of us have individual needs and we split our free time in two. Time pressure, therefore, is very high.

Could this sort of time pressure cause tensions within the team of trainers? Indeed. The presence of a baby leaves much less time for debriefings and might be distracting. There is also a constant need for support during the course. It is impossible to anticipate when a baby might suddenly have those "little needs". Are the fellow trainers always willing/ready/capable to provide back up? Tell me, what do you think?

Opportunities to mingle with participants decrease significantly; not from arrogance but simply from the pressure of multiple responsibilities.

Above all, my professional reputation suffers when it comes to deadlines. I submitted this article to *Coyote* with four days of delay. I have never been as bad with deadlines as since I became a mother.

Security

There are places where I will not take my child. Those places might be in conflict zones or simply do not have special arrangements to guarantee security to children. Places like this are not appropriate for children.

Comfort

Children learn by playing, but they also scream, run and make other noises. Screaming, when everyone is concentrated, is very impolite. It is annoying to participants and to members of the team. But, after all, it is a baby screaming. We all screamed when we were babies.

Babies like to climb up the stairs, but they also climb on trainers and participants. I saw different reactions to this. Someone would be happy to take a baby next to her/him. Someone else would feel disturbed. Solution: talk about it!

What are the baby's favourite toys? Items that adults use, of course. In a training course this means pens, markers, papers, but also mobile phones, laptops and other intriguing stuff. A baby would love to play with all that, preventing its functional use.

Putting flip-chart paper on the floor is not a good idea either. Everything paper-like is very attractive to babies. Especially, when there are bright colours and funny drawings, shapes and letters on it.

Last, but not least, there is the breastfeeding issue. Without going to extremes, I breastfeed in public. Still, not everyone likes or accepts that. There are certainly cultural, but also individual, differences and preferences. My choice is functional: I either leave and skip a session or I stay and breastfeed, where I am. I invite people who feel uncomfortable to come and talk to me about this very sensitive issue, a long-standing taboo.

In conclusion

First of all, I believe that children do not simply "follow" their parents to a training course, but once they are there they become full members of a peer learning community. It is not only that children learn from adults. Adults can learn so much from (their) children too. Discovery is mutual.

Second, we learn at all ages. The presence of a baby in a learning setting shows how we learn to learn! And we shall be grateful for this gift.

Third, a "hidden agenda" persists. Instead of blaming children and their parents for discomfort that children might cause, we had better think of how to re-organise and modernise our learning space and techniques in order to allow full participation and comfort for all generations.

Forth, non-formal education equals inclusive learning. No one can be in two places at the same time. Scheduling, therefore, is in question. The challenge is to tailor (or be willing to tailor) training schedules with consideration for a special parental need in terms of time.

Fifth, the relations of a parent-trainer with fellow team members and participants are two sided. "Ice was broken" between the baby and the participants, but it is not necessarily the same for a parent-trainer and the rest of the group. A fully booked schedule prevents informal mingling. This is just one more issue to take into consideration.

All in all, it is up to everyone to decide whether or not to take up a challenge and bring a baby on board for non-formal education. My choice, I have made it.

Morning and sunrise. Time to go to bed. I might be lucky to get a couple of hours of sleep.

If you have had similar experiences and wish to share, please, do not hesitate to contact me: kateryna_shalayeva@yahoo.com. This subject needs a good lobbying force.

P.S. I would wish to thank all my fellow members of learning communities for contributing a great deal to my thinking on this issue.

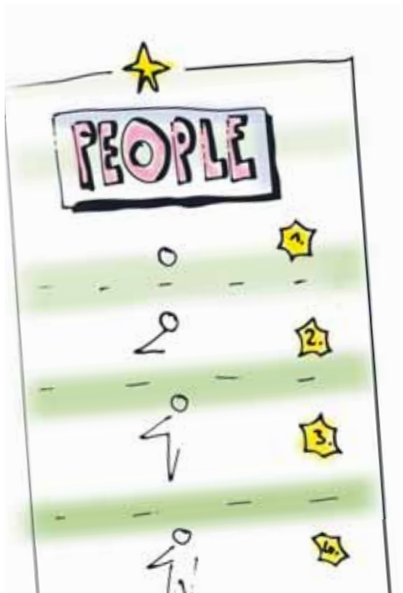
[1] Carina Stabauer, Annette Mutter, Ragga Stefansdottir (2003), "Being a Trainer and a Parent", *Coyote* No. 7, pp. 28-30.

Flictionary – Towards a more visual language

By Torben Grocholl | Images by Torben Grocholl & Marlies Pöschl

Throughout educational careers most of us experience a vast number of tiring and pretty much text-centred activities. Far too often the transfer of knowledge, ideas and information is mainly organised with a strong focus on the spoken and/or written word, confronting us with filled blackboards and text-heavy slides. The digital revolution came along, raising big hopes for almost everybody in the field of education. But although it brought us an overload of new media and communication technologies offering various multimedia applications for presenting information in a more joyful and human way, the situation of learners worldwide did not change that much for the better. The former analogue media was more or less displaced by the omnipresence of presentation software that even allowed for "attacking" audiences with an amount and density of text and data that was thus far unimagined. The medium changed, the dominance of text stayed. "Death by PowerPoint" became a widespread and symptomatic phenomenon of our time.

But recently the field is in movement. What we can see at the moment is an ongoing shift towards more visual communication and language in many areas of society – including the field of education.



What's the point of visual language?

Visual language can be defined as the integration of words and visual elements. It is thus the combination of text, shapes and imagery to illustrate content in order to support the transfer of knowledge and ideas, and to increase understanding and retention. Especially when it comes to situations where the density of information or the level of complexity is rather high, the use of visual language is of a great value for perception and overall understanding, and has a deep impact on the further processing of information.

Visualisations can grasp attention and increase a learner's level of motivation and commitment. Combining spoken and/or written words with visual elements and thus offering multi-sensual stimuli has an impact on how people perceive information and retain facts in their memories. Even complex issues can very often be sized down into strong and meaningful images that complement the written and spoken words and contribute to so-called big-picture thinking.

In fact almost every communication – especially in the field of education – goes along with the intention of a communicator to "draw" or to develop a clear and detailed picture in the mind of the receiver. The common phrase "I see what you mean!" makes that aspect literally quite clear. So the challenge is to stimulate and evoke these inner pictures for your audience by applying visual language into your presentations.

The flipchart as an underestimated tool

At this point the "old-school" medium of the flipchart becomes relevant again. The simple use of (large) paper and pens offers a huge potential and variety of – mostly unused – opportunities regarding visual facilitation. It can be seen as a really flexible and interactive tool for (live) visualisations as well as for "normal" presentations in groups up to 20 people. The following tips and tricks can thus be easily applied to the flipchart but not only. Most of them are however relevant for almost every other medium or presentation tool such as handouts, whiteboards or even presentation software.

Flictionary – Towards a more visual language

Creating a visual language – What does it mean?

In order to work more visually there are some general principles and fundamentals that can be combined and applied in designing your educational materials:

1. Typography: Textual information remains important, even though it should be considered as equal to the visual elements and – most important in presentations – to the spoken word. The shape of text and letters can vary in many ways and thus underline the content and your message.

2. Bullets: Bullet points are important little tools that help to categorise information. You can make many different kinds of bullet points: round, squares, stars, etc. They can even be shaped specifically to the topic you are talking about in many different ways.

3. Frames: Frames are essential and easy-to-draw tools to structure your content, to set focus and to increase the readers' ability to retain information. Via frames you can cluster your information and make explicit that "this is something and that is something else". Frames can be modified and shaped in many ways and can even give hints to what kind of information you are actually talking about. For example, speech bubbles for statements, thinking clouds for thoughts, banners for headlines, etc.

4. Connections: Use eye-catching and visible arrows to make explicit correlations between the individual elements of information. It makes it easier for your audience to understand an overview and to keep track of the "bigger picture". Dynamic signs can also be used to create a flow of information and liven up your presentation.

5. Images: Use simple smileys and cartoons to add emotions to your content; draw little stick figures to make your presentation more human. Pictures can provoke emotional reactions that support learning processes. Visualisations and images contribute to the understanding of a topic by helping people grasp an idea more easily. Sometimes a simple image can explain more than a lot of words – just think about traffic signs for instance. In order to provide significant imagery it is really helpful to be clear about the core point of what you want to say. What is your message and what image can underline or even replace it? How can it be visualised quickly?

6. Colours: In addition to all this, the strategical use of a limited range of colours (maybe 2-4) is highly recommendable. Use colour to ground your information and to accentuate structures. Draw outlines with dark colours and fill in the spaces afterwards. Be aware that colours – as everything mentioned above – can support individual learning and group processes, but can also create confusion.

Hurdles and barriers

A lot of the information mentioned above might sound like common sense to you. But even though the benefits of visual communication in the learning process are quite obvious, documented and traceable, its implementation into everyday working or training practice remains challenging, tricky and very often an insurmountable hurdle. Why is that? What makes it so difficult to implement techniques we had much fun with when we were kids into our work?

Most people are convinced that they are not creative or good at drawing, mostly because they were told so by parents, teachers, etc. At some point in life we seem to lose interest in expressing ourselves visually. In the "adult world", drawing, doodling and playing with colours and shapes becomes inappropriate for most of us, even though it can be considered as something very inherent to human nature. Instead, we unlearn our natural skills and suppress them in a culture in which learning and working is very much text oriented.

Time to unlock creativity!

If you decide to (re)discover these abilities and to think and work more visually it only takes a few steps to kick off a fun and joyful learning process. Developing a visual language takes time of course. But once you are on the way it is an inspiring journey with surprising moments and results. You can start practising by implementing visual language step by step into your everyday life and/or work. First for personal note taking, project planning, mind mapping – you can even spice up your shopping list with visuals – and at a later stage or at the same time in your work with others, in groups and presentations. You can also get a personal sketch book from an art store to practise. It is a good way of keeping track of your visual learning path. Be open and look for visual inspirations that you can adopt into your field of work. The Internet is a great resource. Search for images according to your specific topics and interests. Adopt, modify and draw them with a pen on paper. Play around with forms and shapes! As a personal resource and helpful tool you can also create your own visual dictionary – a kind of collection of useful images that you can keep with you in your work and go back to them whenever you need. It can even be used the same way as a sticker album – just with visuals – to share with your colleagues.

You don't have to be Walt Disney!

While exploring the field there is one thing that you should always keep in mind: you don't have to be Walt Disney! Working more visually does not mean drawing beautiful pictures. It is all about simple little drawings that activate people's attention and foster understanding. In fact, people's brains are mostly activated when looking at drawings that are not perfect but slightly ambiguous. Following a concept by Scott McCloud – a leading theorist on comics – "amplification through simplification", it can even be stated that sizing down an image to its very essentials by taking away features and making it more and more abstract actually allows the individual viewer to put more meaning into it. In other words, a simple stick figure can be more effective than an elaborate and well-drawn character!

Further reading

McCloud S. (2004), *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art,* Harper Collins.
Roam D. (2008), *The Back of the Napkin: Solving Problems and Selling Ideas with Pictures,* Portfolio.
Brandt R.C. (1989), *Flip Charts: How to draw them and how to use them,* Pfeiffer.
Sibbet D. (2010), *Visual Meetings: How graphics, sticky notes & idea mapping can transform group productivity,* Wiley, John and Sons.

Do trainers need emotional intelligence?

by Darko Markovic

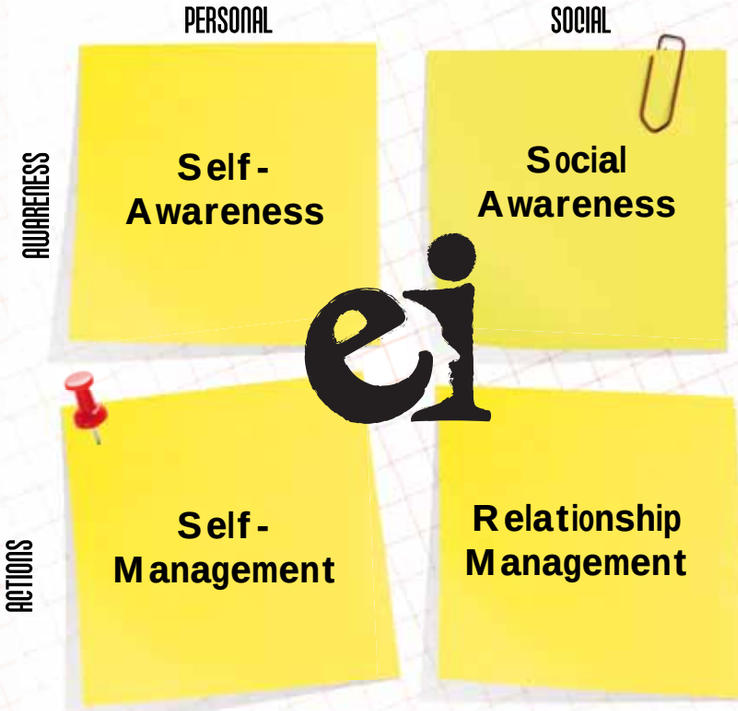
Learning to ride a bicycle, practising new guitar chords, writing your very first project application, getting feedback on your first training of trainers... It seems that all significant learning is followed by significant emotions. Perhaps Claxton (1999) is right in saying that "learning itself is an intrinsically emotional business". Following on this thought one could say that if the job of a trainer is to help their learners to learn, a trainer needs to be able to recognise the emotional dimension of learning and work with it. (adapted from Mortiboys 2005)

If you have ever been "on the other side" of a non-formal learning activity, you certainly remember moments of managing different perspectives in a team of trainers, dealing with multiple expectations from the institutions and participants involved, giving plenary presentations when the beamer was collapsing, handling conflict in a group, realising that the planned programme had to be totally changed on the spot, etc. These situations are numerous, and the emotional spectrum connected to them is large. Certainly, training is an intrinsically emotional business, too. In order to cope with these challenges and to facilitate learning, I believe trainers need emotional intelligence. But what is it exactly?

The term itself was popularised by Daniel Goleman in his groundbreaking bestseller book in the mid-1990s. The concept is often defined as follows:

> **Emotional intelligence is the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and feelings of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships. (Goleman, 1998)**

In the following years, Goleman and his colleague Richard Boyatzis, further developed the concept and today it is seen as a set of competences grouped in the four competence areas, as presented in a four-quadrant model (see image). The model is a combination of personal competences (how we see and manage ourselves) and more social competences (how we sense and interact with other people). But let's see what is behind the competence headings.



(Boyatzis, Goleman, McKee 2002)

Self-awareness is the ability to accurately perceive your own emotions as they happen, to be able to give a realistic assessment of your own abilities and to maintain a well-grounded sense of self-confidence. It includes competences such as emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence.

Self-management is the ability to use awareness of your emotions to stay flexible and positively direct your behaviour. This also means managing your emotional reactions to all situations and people and having the ability to motivate yourself, take initiative, strive to improve and persevere in the face of setbacks and frustration. The competences in this cluster are emotional self-control, transparency, adaptability, flexibility, achievement, initiative and optimism.

Social awareness covers the ability to accurately pick up on emotions of other people and to "read" situations. It is about sensing what other people are feeling and being able to take their perspective using your capacity for empathy. The competences in this cluster are empathy, organisational awareness and service orientation.

Relationship management concerns the ability to use the awareness of one's own emotions and the emotions of others to manage interactions successfully, help others grow and handle challenging situations. The competences here include helping others to develop, inspirational leadership, change catalyst, influence, conflict management, teamwork and collaboration.

Do trainers need emotional intelligence?

When deployed, these competences help trainers create resonance with their learners and create a learning climate that helps learners become more open to learning, with an increased likelihood of learners being engaged, motivated, ready to take risks, positive in their approach to learning, ready to collaborate, creative and resilient (Mortiboys 2005). So, no matter how experienced and skilled we are as trainers, and how many tools and methods we have in our toolbox, the main tools in training are ourselves with our personal and social competences. The good news is that these competences can be learnt. Indeed, it is one of the greatest areas of lifelong personal and professional growth for trainers.

An emotionally intelligent trainer is able to:

1. recognise and respond to his or her own and participants' feelings, as they occur;
2. support a positive learning environment;
3. read the group mood accurately;
4. express flexibility and readiness to respond to changing needs;
5. manage relationships successfully;
6. give an accurate self-assessment of one's strengths and weaknesses;
7. maintain a well-grounded sense of confidence;
8. create a resonance with groups and teams easily.

In case you are wondering how to implement this development process, you may consider using the model above to assess yourself and see where your strengths and development needs are. Inviting colleagues to give you feedback on how they see you in these competence areas could be a source of important information as well. In addition, if you are wondering from which competence area you should start, remember that self-awareness is the key, since this aspect of emotional intelligence is the basis for the other ones. This is one of the reasons why pure training interventions in the relationship management competence area don't work if the level of self-awareness is low!

When thinking about enhancing your self-awareness as a trainer, you may consider the following three levels:
a. awareness of your feelings at any moment in relation to training;
b. awareness of your values and attitudes as a trainer;
c. awareness of your behaviour as a trainer and how others see it.

An interesting exercise to start working on developing self-awareness is found below:

What's on your T-shirt?

Imagine yourself standing in front of your participants wearing a t-shirt. The t-shirt carries a message which tells the group what you are going to do with them. For example: I am going to show you how much I care, I will convert you, I am going to take you out of your comfort zone, I will save you, I would like to challenge you, I am going to impress you with my knowledge, I will make you laugh, etc.

1. Take a moment and think what your message(s) would be.
2. How do you think that your message(s) will make your learners feel?
3. How will that feeling affect how they relate to you?
4. How far is their likely response helpful to their learning?

Finally, being an emotionally intelligent and resonant trainer is not a static state, reached once in life. Due to chronic stress and burn-out, trainers can slip into dissonance and need to renew these capacities. As said above, in training the trainers themselves are the main tools and these tools need proper care and polishing from time to time.

References

Boyatzis R. and McKee, A. (2005), *Resonant Leadership: Renewing Yourself and Connecting with Others through Mindfulness, Hope, and Compassion*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston.

Claxton G. (1999), *Wise up: The challenge of lifelong learning*, Bloomsbury, London.

Freedman J. (2007), *A Case for Emotional Intelligence in Our Schools*, 6 seconds.

Goleman D. (1995), *Emotional intelligence*, Bantam Books, New York.

Goleman D. (1998), *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, Bantam Books, New York.

Goleman D.; Boyatzis R. and McKee, A. (2002), *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Importance of Emotional Intelligence (aka The New Leader)*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston.

Mortiboys A. (2005), *Teaching with emotional intelligence*, Routledge, New York.

Rogers C. (1983), *Freedom to Learn*, Merrill, Ohio.

"Unique RIDE (2009, 2010, 2011)" – final report from the event, Unique Network.

Recognition of non-formal learning: solutions at the grassroots level

by Jo Peeters

For more than 10 years, recognition of non-formal learning has been in the spotlight. Many policy papers have been written, many conferences and seminars have taken place, and many people and organisations have shown interest. However, not every youth organisation knows how to develop and implement a recognition policy or strategy in its daily work. With this article I hope to inspire organisations to start working on it.

Once upon a time there was a youth worker. His job was to train and support volunteers in youth work. After doing this for a while, he found that these volunteers learned a lot from their volunteering, although this was not their reason, or at least not their main reason, for being a volunteer.

How did he find out? Well, mainly because the volunteers told him. Not directly, by saying: "Hey, look what I've learned!", but indirectly, by asking: "I am applying for a job, can you provide me with a testimonial?" or: "I am at a school for vocational education where I have to learn in the classroom all kinds of things that I already learned by volunteering."

So, the youth worker thought, well, I think that **my volunteers deserve some kind of support in this area.** He managed to get some project funding, and after two years proudly presented a "recognition toolkit", developed with and tested by volunteers. It was mainly based – to be honest – on things that others had developed here and there in Europe. It was titled "Erkenning voor de competenties van scoutingleid(st)ers"(Recognition of scout leaders' competences).

One of the things he was really proud of was a CD with a portfolio for volunteers, based on a model that had been developed in Switzerland. Unfortunately, a study among volunteers, done two years after the presentation of the toolkit, showed that no one used it and that it was assessed as the most useless part of the toolkit.

The "competence profile for the youth leader" however appeared to be the best part of it, since **this helped the volunteer to explain his competences to other people.**

And now, almost 10 years after producing this first toolkit, here is the youth worker again. It's me, I am that youth worker. And after 10 years of experimenting, searching, developing, travelling through Europe, attending conferences and seminars, I ask myself: **why do we still not have a well-established, well-known, well-accepted system to make the competences of volunteers visible?**

My main concern is still that the "volunteer around the corner" can benefit from volunteer work by getting his or her competences recognised. And maybe this is also a way to make volunteering more attractive, and attract new volunteers.

Recognition of non-formal learning: solutions at the grassroots level

So, this is an individual process that can be different for every volunteer, even for volunteers who are doing the same kind of work in the same organisation. Because, on one hand every volunteer has a different level of awareness of his or her competences, on the other hand the value of and need for (external) recognition is not the same for every volunteer.

In this context it is important to be aware of the differences between recognition, validation, and accreditation of prior learning, although the abbreviations RPL, VPL, and APL are very often used as if we were talking about the same thing.

Does this individual approach mean that there is no “common process”, something that the organisation can contribute? No, the contrary is true. There is a lot that the organisation can offer to support the volunteer in having his or her competences recognised, validated and accredited. Some suggestions:

Training certificate

A good training certificate mentions the contents of the training programme, how long it lasted, the level (for example, related to the European Qualifications Framework), and a reference to the (website of) the training institute.

Testimonials

A good testimonial gives a description of the work the volunteer has done, his or her responsibilities, and the level of autonomy: did he or she work with support, independently, or in an executive position. It’s also important to mention the duration (one year? two years?), the number of hours spent per day/week/month, and a contact person.

Suggestions on how to describe your voluntary work on your CV

Things to consider: do you put your voluntary work under “hobby/free time” or under “work experience”. Can you describe the importance of your voluntary work to the job you are applying for?

Competence profiles for the various positions of volunteers

A competence profile is a list of competences that you can acquire by doing a certain voluntary job. It helps the volunteer to reflect on his or her own development. It also helps to “translate” the voluntary work to the labour market or to vocational education.

Tools for self-assessment

Self assessment is done by the volunteer to get an impression of the competences he or she has acquired. It also helps him or her to explore how useful these competences are outside the voluntary work. Self-assessment can be done in two ways. One way is to define on which level he or she has acquired the competence, the other way is to compare the competence with an external standard.

Assessment by others

Assessment by others can support and strengthen, but also nuance and relativise, the outcomes of the self-assessment. It can be done by other volunteers/team members, the manager of the volunteer, or the clients/members he or she has worked for.

Documenting products/results of the work of the volunteer

One of the most important steps in the recognition process is that you are able to show examples of the work you have done as a volunteer. Here you can think of reports of activities, minutes of meetings, pictures/movies of things you have made or of activities you have performed. Also signed declarations from your manager, thank you letters from participants, and your own written reflections on the job you have done can be useful. Be sure that it’s clear what your role was: a general programme of a summer camp or a training course that you were responsible for is not enough.

Gathering evidence

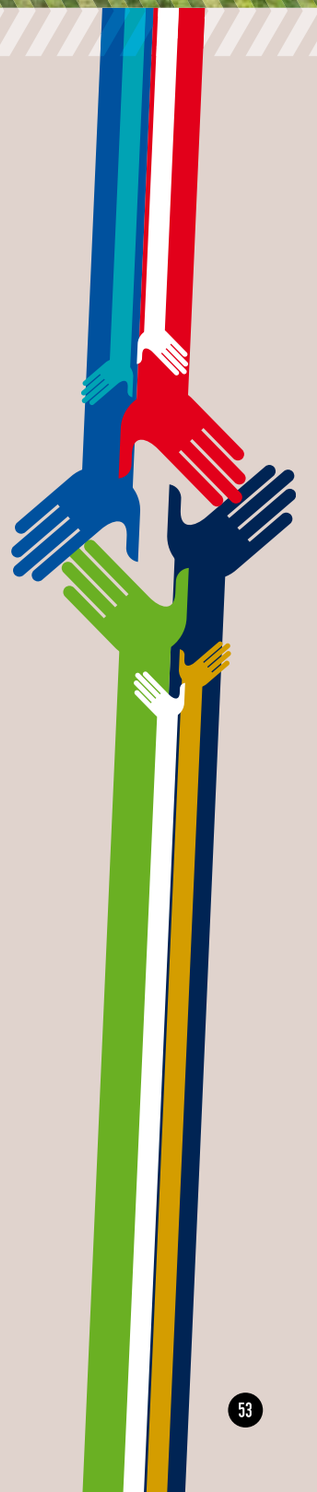
Criteria for evidence are authenticity (is it really about you), relevance (does it really say something about the work process and your level of control), topicality (how recent is it), quantity (how often have you done it, how many things have you made), and variety (have you done the voluntary work with different target groups and/or in different situations).

Offering a portfolio for volunteers

A portfolio is an organised collection of everything you have learned and all the (voluntary) work you have done. It can also contain personal information. The idea comes from the world of art, where artists use a portfolio to show examples of their work. It can be digital, but also in the form of a case with everything on paper in it.

Making an agreement with institutes for formal recognition

Institutes for formal recognition are different in each country. Some countries have award systems, in some countries you have to get in touch with schools for vocational education and/or employers’ institutes.



Coyote gets to 20!!

As Coyote reaches its 20th edition, we asked the first two editors about their memories and their vision of the magazine as it is now.

SONJA MITTER ŠKULJ (Editor from 1999 to 2002)

How was it for you to be editor?

In 1999, when we started, *Coyote* was a new project, the first European networking tool for trainers active in European youth work. At the time, there were no social platforms like Facebook or tools like the SALTO TOY or Toolbox that would encourage exchange and give visibility to the different reflections, approaches, practices, etc. of all those trainers working in the European youth work field. So the idea of creating a tool that would encourage just this was very exciting and challenging. The Youth Partnership as a whole was a new project which had to develop its role and identity. So did the magazine. It was great fun to work with the other members of the team, brainstorming about what we felt was relevant and important, what our readers might like to read and how to make it all serious, readable and fun at the same time.

What do you think of *Coyote* as it is now?

My first thought? I'm very happy *Coyote* still exists! None of us would have dared to expect this when we started. In a great way, *Coyote* has gone with the times and remained innovative and inspiring.

The approach has changed, without giving away its core. It's become wider and more focused at the same time. To me this makes sense: there's so much happening out there, and so much information is floating around in different places, it's good to have a place to bring it together, focusing on one theme per issue. European youth work has become more influenced by policy issues, and youth workers, trainers and others involved also want to have a say, so it's important to pull attention to political priority topics, to allow people to take a wider look, encourage reflection and active involvement. Each *Coyote* issue is a great kaleidoscope of experiences, stories, and perspectives. At moments I'm thinking that *Coyote* should make sure not to lose focus by being so all encompassing, to stick to what makes it special and leave out contributions that can be and are covered by others. I wonder.

I very much like the new design and layout! It's in line with our digital and fast moving world, dynamic, moving, colourful, yet special and really attractive.

Is there an incident or an article that stands out for you during your editorship?

Going through the different magazines again after so many years has been amazing. Some of the big topics of today were present already 10 years ago, the same questions and concerns. International volunteering and EVS and its role for the personal and professional development of the volunteers, for instance, and competences and skills gained in (European) youth work and their recognition by employers.

It is interesting to see how much we've moved forward, but also to realise that the concerns and questions posed in these articles are still surprisingly to the point also today.

From my personal perspective influenced by years of work with the Balkans for the SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre, the articles of those first *Coyote* issues that stand out for me now are those addressing the situation in the Balkans. With some years having passed since the end of the wars and conflicts in this region, political attention, like that of the media, has shifted to other regions of the world. Much has happened in this part of Europe since then. Maybe it could be time to take another look.

Happy birthday, *Coyote*, and all the best for the next 20 issues!

JONATHAN BOWYER (Editor from 2003 to 2010)

Reflections on *Coyote*

It would be easy to only remember the number of times I missed deadlines or struggled to accept a version of English that everyone else understood apart from me, but if I go a little deeper, I also easily remember the way in which *Coyote* educated me. I learned so much about intercultural competence – not only though reading drafts several times over, but also though the example of my colleagues in the editorial team. *Coyote* is genuinely a group effort, and the changing editorial group over the years has been full of committed and insightful people.

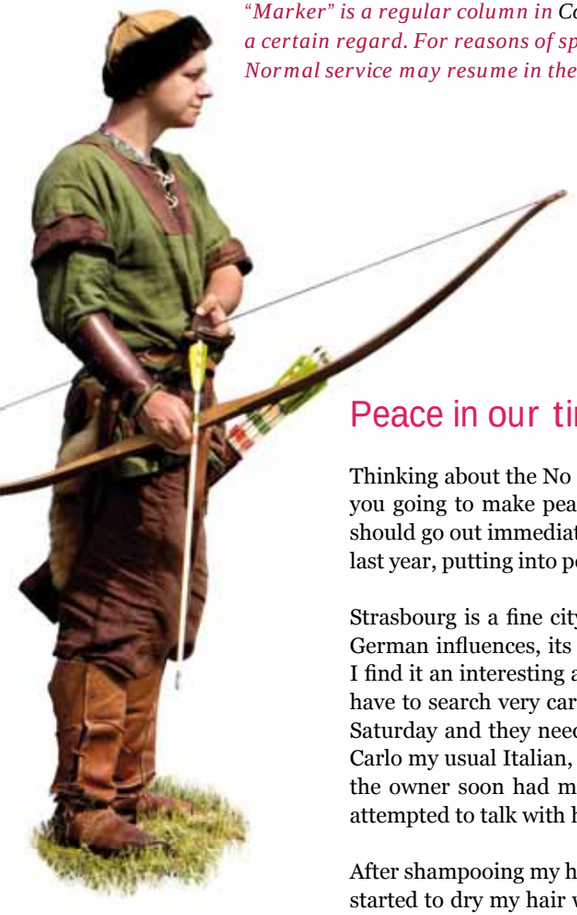
Looking back through many editions of *Coyote*, it is really difficult to pick out one article that I would call a favourite. I particularly enjoyed the early interviews and the articles where two individuals are in conversation. There is one article in issue 12 which exemplifies this and would be great if not for the violent orange colour of the whole edition – which editor allowed that?!

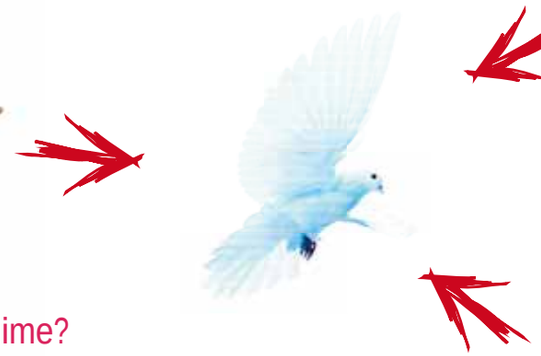
Coyote now is a breath of fresh air: the creativity in the layout complements the content so well. I'm sure that this makes it more accessible and more attractive to a wider audience. Indeed it makes it more of a "Coyote" – as the definition on the back cover states – "a resourceful animal whose success and blunders explain the condition of life in an uncertain universe".

Peace in our time? How many is enough in a team?

by Mark E. Taylor
brazavil.training@yahoo.com

"Marker" is a regular column in Coyote, hoping to encourage debate, questions and a certain regard. For reasons of space, this "Marker" is longer than in the previous edition. Normal service may resume in the next issue.





Peace in our time?

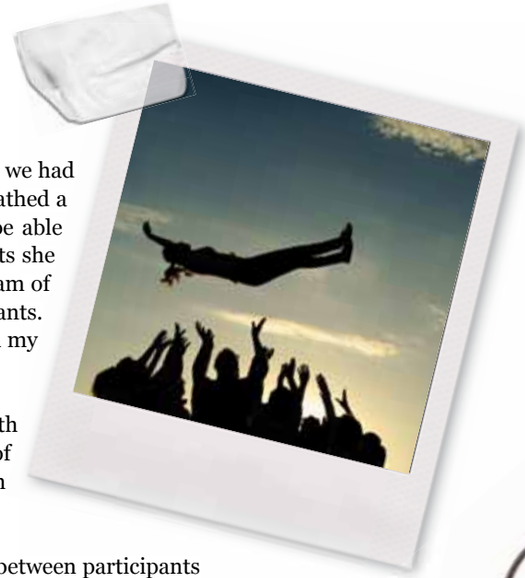
Thinking about the No Hate Speech campaign and one of its recent slogans "who are you going to make peace with today?" It's a nice slogan and I wondered whether I should go out immediately and make peace? Then I remembered an experience I had last year, putting into perspective those who have been through more recent conflicts.

Strasbourg is a fine city and I love living here with its great mixture of French and German influences, its European vocation and an increasingly global mix of people. I find it an interesting and lively place. If you need a haircut there on a Monday, you have to search very carefully – most barbers take that day off as their busiest day is Saturday and they need time to recover and sharpen their scissors. Unable to go to Carlo my usual Italian, I found myself in a previously unknown establishment where the owner soon had me identified as "a British" due to my "tout petit accent" as I attempted to talk with him.

After shampooing my hair with some vigour and rather cold water, he got a towel and started to dry my hair with his knuckles (when you bend your fingers to make a fist, your knuckles are the parts of your fingers which show the most). This was rather painful and after several seconds I cried out for him to stop. He grinned. I asked him why he was doing this. His reply: "That's for the Battle of Agincourt, m'sieu!" I'm still not sure whether he meant it as a joke.

Agincourt was a battle between the French and the English back in the 15th century – 25 October 1415 to be precise. It seems that it might take some time still for peace to break out. Maybe I have to get my haircut on a Monday again soon…

How many is enough in a team?



Evaluating the successful elements of the training course we had just run, one of my colleagues sat back on her chair, breathed a contented sigh and said how happy she was to finally be able to work again in a team of three. Most of the assignments she gets these days are for working alone or, at most, in a team of two – and that with groups of sometimes over 20 participants. Cost-cutting reasons are supposed to explain what is – in my view – a growing sinister tendency.

Instead of detailing the negative effects of working with reduced teams, I asked her what was the added value of having the third trainer (or more)? An excited discussion resulted and we came up with this:

* The third trainer allows for more personalised contact between participants and trainers – in non-formal and informal learning situations, this is crucial when so much emphasis is placed on participant-centred learning.
* The third trainer is the third point of the triangle when considering any issue in the training – discussions, observations, arguments and solutions can all be so much richer.
* The third trainer allows the other two – quite simply – to breathe occasionally; otherwise you are always either performing or preparing – there is no respite.
* The third trainer might even bring light and joy and challenge to a duo who have already worked together…

This list of points could be read as a plea to course organisers and funders to think again about how many trainers should make up "a team". What would you add?

And finally

Thanks to those who write or give informal feedback. Next time we consider motivation and the "pataphysics of inner readiness".

Sounds, words, inspirations

Brian Eno interview Paul Morley, The Thing Is… Channel 4, 1992 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sJqMkIh_zQ accessed 20 September 2013.

Laxness Haldor (2000, original tranlsation1966), *The fish can sing*, Vintage.

"The Idiot", Iggy Pop

Willingham Bill (2009), *Fables Volume One: Legends in Exile*, DC Comics.

Notes on contributors

Giacomo Bottà is adjunct professor in urban studies at the University of Helsinki, but he also teaches in Freiburg and Karlsruhe. His research focuses on urban cultures, popular music, temporary uses and interculturalism. He enjoys strumming ukuleles and pushing casiotone keys. He currently lives in Strasbourg.
Find him at: www.giacomobotta.wordpress.com

Clare Cosgrove is a professional youth worker from west Belfast. Having won a scholarship from Early Years to do so, she is currently completing a Masters in Applied Peace and Conflict Studies with Early Years at INCORE, University of Ulster. She is interested in all aspects of youth development, but has a particular interest in the legacy of conflict and the prevention of the transmission of trauma to generations of young people born in the period after the conflict in Northern Ireland. In her current post, she acts as co-ordinator of a programme which helps tackle barriers to employment faced by some of the most marginalised young people in an area of extreme social deprivation.

Filip Coussée co-ordinates an assessment centre for young people in care. He is also a researcher at Ghent University. In his work he focuses on social pedagogy as a perspective on social work and youth and community work. He studied the history of youth work in Flanders and its connections to developments in the other social fields and in other European countries. He is a member of the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR). *Coyote* editorial team member.

Rui Gomes is head of the Division for Education and Training at the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. He is currently co-ordinating the youth campaign "No Hate Speech Movement". He has authored and co-authored various publications on intercultural learning in youth work, such as *Compass*, and *Mosaic*. After 10 years at the European Youth Centre in Budapest, Rui now works in Strasbourg.

Gisèle Evrard has been working as a project co-ordinator and trainer for the past 16 years. Today her main fields of work consist of learning, competence development, recognition of youth work and non-formal learning and Euro-Arab co-operation. In addition to her work and deep beliefs in alternative educational systems and social transformation, a passion for photography and the English Renaissance, Gisèle is also one of the founding members of Taaluma, an international training and education network. *Coyote* editorial team member.

Jo Peeters lives in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, and is an experienced youth worker. Since 2002 he has been involved in projects concerning recognition of competences acquired through volunteering. He works with/for youth organisations and volunteer centres.

Thomas Spragg lives in Brussels and was communications officer of the European Youth Forum at the time of writing of his article. *Coyote* editorial team member.

Darko Markovic is from Belgrade, Serbia. He is a trainer and consultant, one of the founders of the "Hajde da..." group and owner of "Inn.Side – people and training". His main areas of interest are learning and development, intercultural competence, emotional intelligence, European Voluntary Service and better recognition of non-formal learning at both national and European levels. *Coyote* editorial team member. SALTO ToY profile:
www.trainers.salto-youth.net/DarkoMarkovic

Marko Pejović works as a psychologist, trainer and playwright. He is the editor of several publications and manuals in the framework of non-formal education, and co-author of many programmes for intercultural learning. He is also the author of several projects for inclusion of members of sensitive groups in theatre work. He works as programme manager for the group "Let's..." (Grupa "Hajde da...", Serbia) and as executive director of the festival of socially engaged theatre "Off Frame" in Belgrade.

Marlies Pöschl is a visual artist and filmmaker currently based in Vienna. Her work is centred on questions of language and education, as well as the relation between text and image. *Coyote* editorial team member.

Noemi Salantiu comes from in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. She has been trained in social research and is the proud co-founder of the Edgeryders social enterprise. As a community manager and healer, her passion is to support and show love to seemingly disparate initiatives which are in fact part of a larger change in economy, society and democracy.

Kateryna Shalayeva is a freelance trainer, empirical researcher, policy analyst, assessor and evaluator in youth and development affairs. She is a member of the Pool of Trainers of the Youth Department, Council of Europe, and the Pool of European Youth Researchers of the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth.

Torben Grocholl has studied Political Science and Communications in Vienna and Copenhagen. He currently lives in Graz, Austria and is working as a freelance trainer in the European youth field. He is passionate about creative facilitation and the power of visual language.

Mark E. Taylor is a relatively nice ukulele-playing dinosaur who freelances from his current base in Strasbourg, France. You can find him around the place facilitating meetings, training, running workshops and consulting organisations. One of his passions is to be found in writing what he hopes are useful educational publications. A founding member who became editor of *Coyote* magazine, he is still waiting to meet Spiffy...

The Adventures of Spiffy

Mark E. Taylor • The Big Family

N° 20XXL [sic]

Spiffy looks back at hir training life...

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

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

Coyote is a magazine addressed to trainers, youth workers, researchers, policy makers and all those who want to know more about the youth field in Europe.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth
c/o Council of Europe / Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation Youth Department / F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, France
youth-partnership@partnership-eu.coe.int / Tel: +33 3 88 41 30 77 or +33 3 90 21 49 16 / Fax: +33 3 88 41 27 78

http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It includes 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

www.coe.int

The European Union is a unique economic and political partnership between 28 democratic European countries. Its aims are peace, prosperity and freedom for its 500 million citizens – in a fairer, safer world. To make things happen, EU countries set up bodies to run the EU and adopt its legislation. The main ones are the European Parliament (representing the people of Europe), the Council of the European Union (representing national governments) and the European Commission (representing the common EU interest).

http://europa.eu

Youth Partnership

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

EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE