



KNOW WHAT ?

AUGUST 2014

No. 21

## 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

- 3** **Edito!**  
Mark E. Taylor
- 4** **Youth information and counselling in Croatia**  
**The way we do it!**  
Vedrana Biličić and Ivan Medić
- 8** **Imagining "Imagine"**  
Marlies Pöschl
- 10** **Thessaloniki – 2014 European Youth Capital:**  
**a city, a title and youth information and**  
**counselling services**  
Matina Magkou
- 16** **A golden triangle on white chairs**  
Matina Magkou
- 24** **Compendium on youth**  
**information and counselling**  
Evaldas Rupkus
- 30** **Small country – Big ambitions**  
Fiona McIntyre
- 36** **Youth Advisors and youth information:**  
**a peer-to-peer approach**  
Vera Hoogsteijns
- 40** **#definitiveinfo #kesinbilgi**  
**Young people informing young people**  
Gülesin Nemutlu Unal
- 46** **Imaginary museum of possibly**  
**broken partnerships**  
Mark E. Taylor and Marlies Pöschl
- 50** **Perspectives on online youth information**  
**and counselling**  
Jaana Fedotoff and Mika Pietilä
- 56** **Youth information worker: a profile**  
Imre Simon
- 60** **How do the regional SALTOS see youth information?**  
Andriy Pavlovych, Bernard Abrignani,  
Federica Demicheli and Sonja Mitter,  
Mark E. Taylor
- 68** **Dox Pop—Tell me how it works there**  
**and I'll see how it can work here**  
Matina Magkou
- 74** **Working one to one with young people**  
Jane Westergaard
- 78** **MARKER / LEARN and "trous en formation"**  
Mark E. Taylor
- 80** **Notes on contributors**

*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* 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.

**Coyote editorial team:**  
Mark E. Taylor (editor)  
Marlies Pöschl  
Davide Capecci  
Matina Magkou

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

**Design & layout**  
The Big Family

**Photos**  
Shutterstock (throughout the magazine)  
Portraits provided by the authors except  
for Fiona McIntyre, Sonja Mitter and  
Matina Magkou (photos by Marlies  
Pöschl); Photo of Marlies Pöschl by  
Manuel Riegler

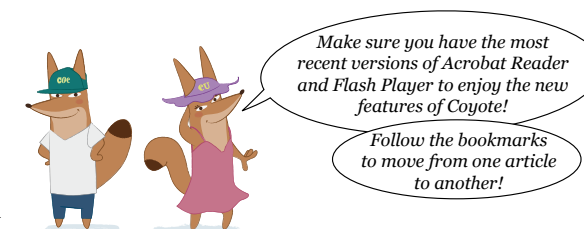


Images provided by the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency — ERYICA in partnership with the Council of Europe.

## Edito

by Mark E. Taylor

On behalf of the *Coyote* editorial team



Listen

*Hello readers!*

If you're reading this edition on paper that means you've printed it yourself. Welcome to the new online-only edition. We are experimenting with the possibilities this time and you will see that this edition is more active, with links to sounds and sites. Please let us know what your reactions are to this change, including what we can do to make *Coyote* more interactive.

Our team attended the Zagreb symposium "Youth policy co-operation in South-East Europe: the role of information and counselling in fostering young people's social inclusion and access to their rights", which gave us the chance to meet many passionate advocates and practitioners in the field of youth information and counselling. As Morana Makovec (Head of department for youth policies in the Croatian Ministry of Social Policy and Youth), one of the main organisers, told me that in addition to learning about new tools for their regional information centres, she was hoping one of the main messages coming from the event would be:

**"Information for all with the same standards and the same opportunities."**

So contributions here really dive into the issues:

How do national policies support youth information?

What role does it play in setting up a Youth Capital of Europe?

How do young people inform each other?

What tools are available to develop the competences necessary to provide youth information and counselling – and what kind of professional profile is necessary?

Where do regional SALTOS focus their efforts?

How does working on a one-to-one basis help facilitate the transfer and use of information?

In addition, being in Zagreb, we could not help but stumble upon the Museum of Broken Relationships (<http://brokenships.com>) which led us into an affectionate look at what the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth has meant for different actors over the years.

Many thanks to the organisers of the symposium for allowing us full access to all areas!

Enjoy your reading!



Listen



# **Youth information and counselling in Croatia**

## The way we do it!

by Vedrana Biličić and Ivan Medić

Images by Marlies Pöschl



*A key event in the development of organised youth information and counselling in Croatia was an initiative of the Ministry of Family Affairs, War Veterans and Intergenerational Solidarity during the 2006 National Conference on Youth, which established concrete collaboration with organisations that could, according to the estimation of the ministry and based on experience, carry out pilot programmes for youth information centres in the four largest cities of Croatia: Split, Rijeka, Zagreb and Osijek. The official government document summarising all the measures for improvement of the status of youth in our society, the National Programme of Action for Youth, recognised the need to establish centres which would increase the level of youth information and inclusion and which could proactively counsel young people and help them to find adequate sources of quality and complete information more easily.*



A youth information centre based on European practices was a whole new challenge for Croatian associations as they were only to starting to build their recognisability and to earn credibility in a society in which informing was still fairly abstract and marginalised. In 2006, almost no organisation, apart from the educational system, was providing organised youth information. Only a small number of organisations were focused on informing and counselling, and only in a small number of fields, while general informing and developing media information services were completely neglected. Accordingly, the development of youth information centres in Croatia is strongly connected with the development of information channels and with approaching young people. Unfortunately, non-profit media (portals, TV and radio shows) are significantly underestimated in Croatia. There is no comprehensive and continuous strategy for their development, which is additionally constrained by bad legislation.

In 2013, some positive changes were made at the national level in the context of legislative amendments and funding for non-profit media. It is also expected that the new national youth programme, for 2014 to 2018, will pay adequate attention to informing and counselling and thus provide a better response to challenges regarding the promotion of youth media. Their development hitherto, in spite of recognised needs, has not been encouraged adequately. The upcoming Law on Youth, which will standardise and define roles and terminology, should contribute to the improvement of the situation in the youth sector.

It is imperative to ensure, through an adequate financing system, the sustainability of youth information centre programmes. They are still being financed through annual tenders which are not called on a regular basis; they are usually late for more than six months every year.

The membership of Croatian youth information centres in the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) has significantly strengthened the status of youth information centres, especially at the local level, where the membership is perceived as proof of excellence. Communication and meetings with government and ERYICA representatives, as well as the structured work of organisations to strengthen the programmes of youth information centres have improved the already good reputation of these organisations.

By signing the European Youth Information Charter in 2012 the current government recognised the problems concerning youth informing and counselling and at the same time acknowledged ERYICA and its members. Since the early stages of the youth information centres programmes, each organisation has been applying its knowledge and adapting its services to local conditions. The experience of the PRONI Centre for Social Education is very important because PRONI has been applying the experience of similar centres in Europe in its work from the start. Although a significant level of diversity in the means of informing and in paying attention to certain subjects is present even today, the social inclusion of youth is a mutual goal.





## » Youth information and counselling in Croatia – The way we do it!

There is also an effort to conduct, through the Croatian youth information centres, a strategy at the national level, which focuses primarily on consolidating the capacities of organisations working in youth information, increasing work quality and expanding the network of youth information centres. This is why the membership in ERYICA is very important. In addition to the exchange of information and knowledge, this membership also gives us the possibility for capacity consolidation through licensed and standardised education, which has led to the establishment of a Croatian team of trainers. This is essential when it comes to increasing the number of workers educated for youth information.

Generally speaking, young people are mostly interested in information regarding the fields of education, mobility and employment. In some youth information centres, the priority is to provide individual youth informing and counselling. Others pay more attention to public discussions, round tables, lectures and other similar forms of group informing. Activities of youth information centres, outside the facilities of the centres, are focused on web-portal maintenance, media appearances, guest lectures in schools and presentations at stands during public events, co-organisation of lectures and participation in public discussions and other similar events.

Some youth information centres have developed their own, original ways of providing information. For example, an event called “Info kopča” is organised within the RICM (regional youth information centre) of the city of Split. During this event, professional speakers visit secondary schools and inform young people about the fields covered by the national youth programme through a series of short and dynamic presentations. An advisory committee, formed by representatives

of institutions and organisations that work with young people, is a successful model of collaboration, development and information exchange between different sectors. This model came to life in 2009 at the RICM in Osijek and other youth information centres are accepting it gradually. In order to establish an even closer contact with young people at the RICM of Osijek, a youth information fair called “Informiranje mladih Osijek” (IMOS, Youth Information Osijek) is held every year. During the fair, institutions and organisations present their services to young people.

“Info zona” started its work in 2006 as a non-formal coalition of associations. Since then, it has been constantly developing in the field of youth information and youth policy. Info zona bases its work on sociological research into the need for youth information, which the organisation conducted in the area of Split in 2011. The research confirmed that young people today can be informed, counselled and encouraged to actively participate in social life while using means and services which are interesting to them. It is important to emphasise that printed brochures and flyers, as well as public discussions, which are the most common means of youth information and inclusion in different activities within many associations, are considered dull by young people.

Info zona pays a considerable amount of attention to informing through different types of media, such as the Internet, radio shows and TV reports on local networks and uploaded on Internet channels. The diversity of information channels is extremely significant when you consider that many young people live in isolated areas, especially on the islands, where young people in general are constrained in many ways, including from the lack of services which could strengthen their personal growth.



Since the very start, the ministry insisted on the inclusion of local authorities in the programme implementation. However, their engagement is often reduced to conducting tenders and sometimes to confrontations with opposing political parties at the state level. Institutions perceive the role of youth information centres, and the possibility to make their services more available to youth, very differently. However, in general, the possibilities for collaboration have not yet been recognised. The city of Split has collaborated extremely well with Info zona. On the local level, Info zona is perceived as an excellent partner when it comes to projects focused on the social inclusion of youth. The city of Split and Info zona are working together towards creating a youth centre and thus using the potential of all institutions and youth associations in the surrounding region.

Croatia's membership in the European Union brings many new challenges. This is why it is imperative for Croatia to become more actively involved in European strategies in all fields. In recent years the Croatian Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes has been trying to implement a Eurodesk service in partnership with civil society organisations. Progress has already been made in youth information centres, but it is necessary to standardise the work of all the centres as soon as possible. Standardisation would facilitate all mutual actions, comparisons and evaluations. It is important to underline the need for the expansion and strengthening of the network of local youth information centres, especially in rural parts of the country and on the islands, where young people are significantly limited when it comes to their personal growth. Government authorities on all levels must assume their role in this process, which is why we hope that the new national youth programme will provide a more adequate response to current challenges.







## Imagining "Imagine"

Marlies Pöschl interviews Ivana Kuzmanic, Svjetlana Marijon and Maja Dragojevic (Zamisli, Zagreb)

Images by Marlies Pöschl

What is it like to be a teenager in need of information in Zagreb? I put on my sneakers and set out to find the answer at the Youth Info Centre Zagreb, which is a project of the association "Zamisli". This might already show you that I'm not that young at heart anymore, because as I will find out later on, most requests are actually happening online – via e-mail or Facebook. This seems understandable since the youth info centre is located in the south of the city, 20 minutes by tram from the central square. The office of Zamisli is a small but friendly space, packed with books, folders and leaflets. The six women who work there are like living books: they have lots of information and experience to share – and like in youth information, each of them joined in the conversation to give her views and expertise.

Zamisli (Imagine) could be called an octopus in the youth field: it is not only one of the four regional youth info centres in Croatia (covering Zagreb and the provinces in the north), but the organisation also provides counselling and support to teenagers with disabilities. Being a professional youth counsellor, Ivana tells me "doesn't mean that we know everything. But we do research and contact people who know the answer, so we can gather all the necessary information or connect the young people with them."

The organisation tries to react in very flexible ways to the needs of the young people that come to consult them – for example they invented a special typewriting service for deaf students, as Svjetlana Marijon (president of Zamisli) told me. "One of the deaf students told us: 'I would like to study, but I am not able to participate in class – so what can you do?' We remembered that at a conference in Innsbruck, we saw that someone was typing for a deaf participant. We thought: that's an example of good practice; we could try that."

One of their aims for the future is to spread out, says Ivana Kuzmanic: "We are hoping to have a bigger youth centre – not just a youth info centre, but a real youth centre." This is an ambitious project since youth info centres and youth clubs, for example, usually have to be in separate spaces in Croatia. "We're now in the starting phase, but eventually we have to talk to the city about the space we would like. The problem is that you need constant money if you want to maintain the quality of your work." The fact that their funding is always project based makes it difficult for Zamisli to plan for the future.

But the organisation wouldn't be called "Imagine" if they hadn't already got an idea on how to make their plan possible. Maja Dragojevic imagines the future like this: "Now that Croatia is entering the European Union, the structure fund will be open for us and we would like to apply for it. Like this we will have more chances for our ideas to be recognised."





# Thessaloniki – 2014 European Youth Capital:

## a city, a title and youth information and counselling services

An interview with Babis Papaioannou by Matina Magkou

Images provided by Babis Papaioannou and Yiannis Boutaris



*The “European Youth Capital” (EYC) is the title awarded to a European city for the period of one year, during which it will be given the chance to showcase, through a multi-faceted programme, its youth-related cultural, social, political and economic life and development. The EYC initiative encourages the implementation of new ideas and innovative projects, with regard to active participation of young people in society, and seeks to present a role model for the further development of youth policies in other European municipalities.<sup>1</sup>*



europa  
youth capital

1. To learn more: <http://europeanyouthcapital.org>  
(date accessed 17.07.2013)

You don't become a European Youth Capital every day. Having this “young” but still prestigious title is of a great importance for a city and a unique opportunity to invest in youth. How is the issue of youth information and counselling treated by a youth capital? Thessaloniki has the title in 2014 and *Coyote* interviewed Babis Papaioannou, Co-ordinator of Thessaloniki 2014, to find out what the city plans in this direction.

### What has been the situation concerning information and counselling services in Thessaloniki and in Greece in general until now?

Allow me to start by giving you some historical background of youth policy in Greece. The first time that the government and the public sector in general paid any attention to youth policy was in 1982, which brought in the same year the establishment of the General Secretariat for Youth. Since then, several structures for youth information and counselling were developed (under the title of youth information centres); first in Athens and Thessaloniki (during the 1980s) and then to the rest of the country (during the 1990s).

The youth information centres achieved very impressive results in certain cases concerning youth information, youth mobility and support for local action, while also successfully connecting their work with that of the local NGOs. These centres methodically encouraged hundreds if not thousands of young people to be active in projects with the EU, the Council of Europe or other organisations. Today, the centres still exist, but in my opinion, in a different form which is not really connected with the modern times and challenges. For example, some of these centres aren't up-to-date on the Internet, they don't use social media, they don't follow or constructively support youth NGOs and they cannot help young people to respond to the recent crisis. It is easier for a young person in Athens, in Thessaloniki or in Greece in general, to find the information he or she seeks on the Internet and social networks or through a student or youth NGO than through some of the existing centres.



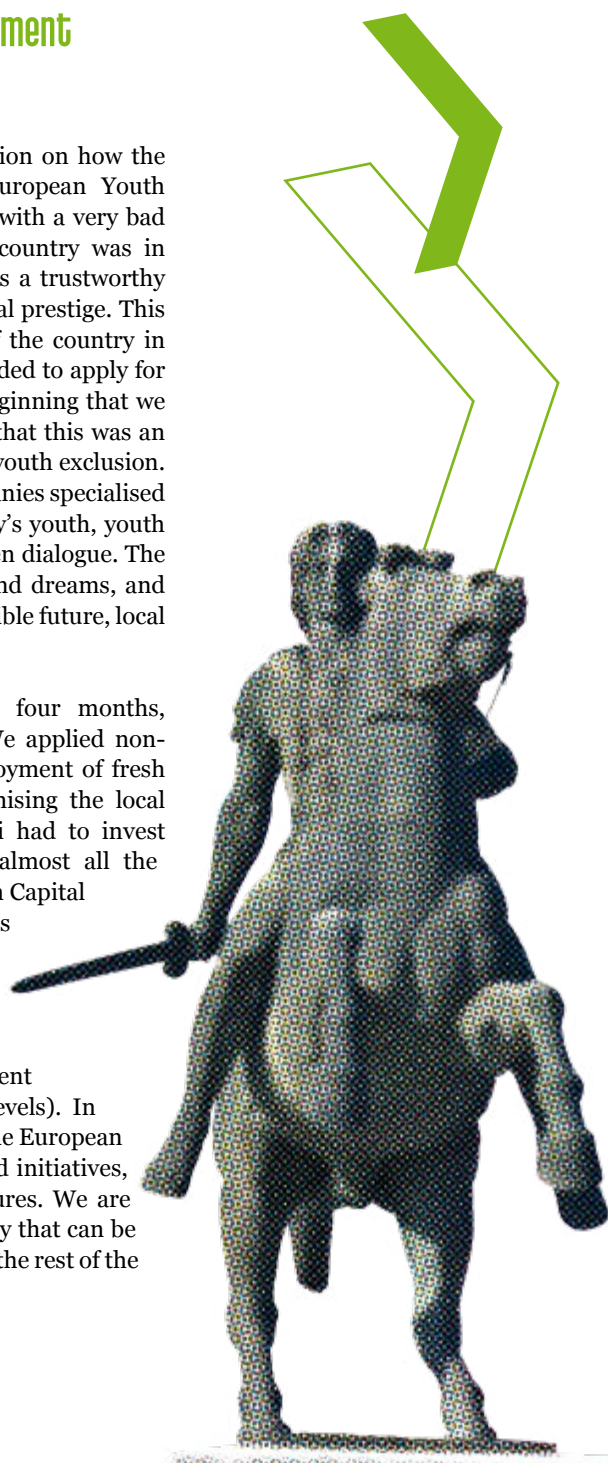




## How did the title of the European Youth Capital change this for you? And in general how can the title boost the establishment or improvement of these services?

Again we should start by providing some information on how the municipality of Thessaloniki won the title of European Youth Capital. I believe it is interesting since it coincides with a very bad moment in Greek history. In January 2011, the country was in the eye of the storm; Greece was not considered as a trustworthy country and was at its nadir in terms of international prestige. This was the result of the negative news and images of the country in European and global media. This was when we decided to apply for the title for 2014. Moreover, we agreed from the beginning that we were going to be open and democratic. We agreed that this was an opportunity for social innovation and mitigation of youth exclusion. So instead of consulting “experts” and private companies specialised in the development of proposals, we invited the city’s youth, youth NGOs and people involved in youth issues to an open dialogue. The dialogue concerned the city and youth problems and dreams, and provided the space for proposing and exploring possible future, local youth projects.

The results of this process were amazing: for four months, Thessaloniki became an open social laboratory. We applied non-formal education methods which allowed the deployment of fresh suggestions for Thessaloniki’s youth, while recognising the local actions in which the municipality of Thessaloniki had to invest resources for the upcoming period and offered almost all the material which was required for the European Youth Capital candidacy. Moreover, apart from the application’s material, the municipality started to formulate a new local youth policy which focused on youth information and support. The European Youth Capital programme ensures the strengthening of existing youth structures and the enhancement of networking (local, national and international levels). In addition, it is improving the co-operation between the European Youth Capital 2014 team and local youth NGOs and initiatives, while supporting the development of youth structures. We are trying to build and support youth structures in a way that can be sustainable for the municipality of Thessaloniki and the rest of the local municipalities from 2015 onwards.



## What have you done so far for youth information and counselling services and what is the profile of the people who offer these services?

For the European Youth Capital 2014 the issue of youth information and counselling is a top priority. In this direction, we have started to circulate a monthly e-newsletter informing the local, national and international communities about activities on youth policy and its implementation and about the activities of the European Youth Capital 2014 programme. On our Facebook page (that counts more than 22 500 friends), we are publishing daily info posts and answers to questions put forward by young people. There one can also find our online helpdesk.

The municipality of Thessaloniki, taking the opportunity of the European Youth Capital programme, is continuing a social experiment in the city with the aim to establish this dialogue in a continuous way; it has created youth counselling and youth support structures with the active participation of young people and youth NGOs. From the experience until now, we can see that people who are engaged with the youth movement field and youth NGOs, and are aware of current European youth policies, can provide more effective youth solutions and proposals. Moreover, the people that work at the youth centres should be able to understand the EU and Council of Europe communications and actions, while being able to adapt European youth policies to the local level by using open consultation methods and tools (as they derive from non-formal education practices). The European Youth Capital 2014 team members, who deal with these issues, have the characteristics described above and have been or still are active members of civil society in Thessaloniki.

## From the inquiries you have received so far, what kind of information do young people from Thessaloniki need?

Concerning the type of questions submitted to the European Youth Capital 2014 until now, the statistics show that the dominant (45%) interest lies in proposals for local projects. Most people have good ideas but they don’t know how to finance them. The second type of question (30%) concerns youth employment, youth entrepreneurship, the social economy and even requests for a job. The third type (20%) concerns establishing international co-operation and international good practices exchange. Also, some want just to communicate their experience of programmes which have already taken place in some other parts of the world. Finally, a small percent (5%) is what we call “building youth policy” which includes institutional issues. This type tries to establish an interactive relationship between young people and the municipality of Thessaloniki that embraces participation and co-decision taking for young people.

On one hand, we aim to be consistent and to answer all the questions and proposals from the young people or older people who are concerned about youth. On the other hand, we try to extract conclusions on the trends in Thessaloniki and what the main problems are, while having in our minds that the crisis is still present in the city and the country. By using this prism, we work to respond to questions that address the most crucial current youth problems.



## Have you been inspired by any other European cities for your work in this direction?

In the last three years, we have travelled a lot across Europe and elsewhere in order to study good examples and practices in the youth field, including procedures for constructive co-operation between NGOs and municipalities. I should say that we found a lot in Europe. They come from cities that survived periods of de-industrialisation which negatively affected their societies, from cities which were in transition from one social system to another or from cities which were led by an inspired mayor who had a vision and made a difference. I will avoid naming these cities, but I will not avoid saying that we will try to adapt and implement as many good examples as possible. Our goal is to develop a new youth support model, conceived with the Greek reality in mind and which has as its foundations EU and Council of Europe youth policies.

## How are you going to ensure that what you do will last after the end of the European Youth Capital year?

The legacy of European Youth Capital 2014 in the city is what concerns us the most. All the people working or volunteering for the European Youth Capital in 2014, from the mayor himself to the local NGOs, are confident that 2014 will be a very interesting year for youth in Thessaloniki and Greece. The coincidence of the Greek EU Presidency in the first semester of 2014, the European Parliament elections in the middle of the year, the EU programming period 2014-2020, the ongoing debate on the future of Europe and the European Agenda 2020 but also the anxious

effort of the Greek youth to survive this socio-economic crisis all provide an amazing, creative and challenging environment.

Our goal for 2015 and onwards takes into consideration all the efforts and huge resources invested by the municipality from 2011 to 2014 and has three axes. The first axis is the development of a permanent structure for local youth information and support. This structure can be the conversion to a complex youth information centre which will take advantage of the local experience and conserve interactive youth spaces (there is no such structure currently in Thessaloniki). The second axis is the establishment and maintenance of open, effective and democratic permanent youth consultation processes for the municipality of Thessaloniki. This process will start by the development of a local youth action plan which takes into consideration the proposals of the Council of Europe on local youth participation and on the Local Youth Council Foundation, as it is a good tool for ensuring tangible positive effects for young people. The third axis is the repetition and institutionalisation of the best actions of the European Youth Capital 2014 programme. The crucial criterion for selecting the best actions is going to be their acceptance by local young people.

The European Youth Capital 2014 is a big bet. We are taking the bet and we have to prove both to the European Youth Forum, which trusted us with the title, and to the local youth that we can respond to their expectations. We are obliged to win the bet, especially for the local youth. They have believed in the municipality and in the city and they have supported our actions from the very beginning. And so did the rest of the citizens who celebrated with us when Thessaloniki was declared the next European Youth Capital. We believe that the legacy of Thessaloniki as capital will be only positive, not only for the youth of Thessaloniki, but for the entire city.

## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Youth participation and volunteerism were the core values at the heart of our candidacy in 2011 for the European Youth Capital 2014, which was prepared and submitted in collaboration with 150 youth organisations of the city and more than 250 volunteers. Hosting the European Youth Capital is a unique opportunity for us to create a communication platform for our youth to openly discuss and exchange ideas.

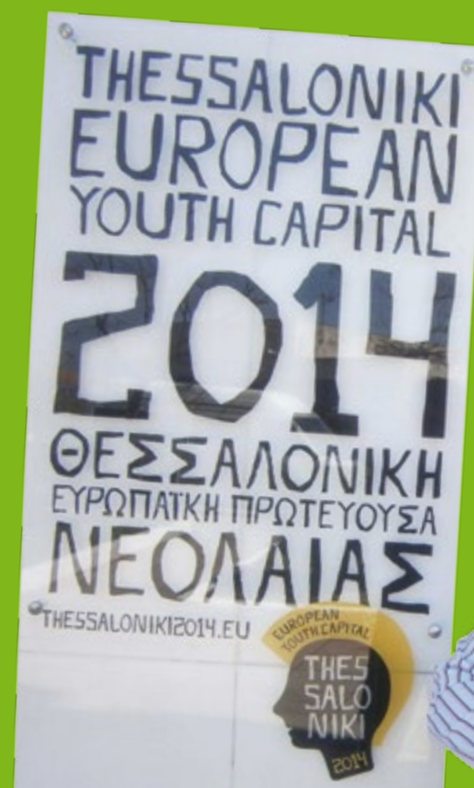
Additionally, it gave us the chance to re-activate the Youth Information Centre Network, in collaboration with the General Secretariat for Youth. The main offices of the youth information centre are now at the city hall and this allows us to considerably improve the information and counselling services provided to young people. We see the European Youth Capital 2014 as an opportunity to build long-lasting infrastructure in the service of our youth.

Yiannis Boutaris  
Mayor of Thessaloniki



## MEMO ON BABIS PAPAIOANNOU

Babis Papaioannou is a youth worker and is currently the Co-ordinator of the European Youth Capital Thessaloniki 2014. He has been active in the civil society of his city for more than 25 years and has a lot of experience on youth issues in South-East Europe. He is a founding member of the Network of Voluntary Organisations of the city of Thessaloniki and has been a member of the board of the European Youth Forum.





# A golden triangle on white chairs

An (atypical) interview on youth information and counselling in South-Eastern Europe from a youth policy, research and practice perspective

by Matina Magkou

Images by Marlies Pöschl



## INTERVIEW FACT SHEET

**The setting:** Youth policy co-operation in South-East Europe, “Symposium on the role of information and counselling in fostering young people’s social inclusion and access to their rights” organised by the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth of Croatia, ERYICA and SALTO RC SEE

**Dates:** 19 and 20 June 2013

**Interviewees:** Ante Martić (policy), Sladjana Petković (research), Zoran Ilieski and Jan Kulenović (practice)

**Duration of interviews:** 30 min to 90 min

**Interview locations:** coffee shop outside the symposium hotel/ corridor outside plenary room/hotel restaurant

**Photo opportunity location:** white chairs on 1st floor lobby

I should start by saying that what you will read below is not a typical interview. It is actually four different conversations driven by curiosity: if we are in a symposium on youth information and counselling in South-Eastern Europe, what makes this region so special and what are the common (if there are any) challenges, wishes or opportunities regarding youth information and counselling among countries in this region? This curiosity pushed me to look for “free” moments during the symposium to talk with four different people representing what we call the “golden triangle” of youth work.

If you are also curious, read below to see what I found out.

## CECI N’EST PAS UN TRIANGLE

If the first thing that comes to your mind when you think about a triangle is geometry or a (special) love affair, you are not too wrong, but you might be missing something there. Using the term “golden triangle” in youth work is a reference to the interrelationship that exists (or should exist) between youth policy, practice and research. The geometrical form of a triangle designates the way these three aspects of youth work are linked to each other and represents what I would call a “holistic approach” to youth issues. There is of course debate concerning the accuracy of the term, since some argue that this “golden triangle” needs to be enlarged to a square incorporating youth organisations and young people.<sup>1</sup> But this is another conversation. Let’s concentrate on our triangle.

The principle behind the symposium held in Zagreb was actually to bring actors from all three fields (remember the triangle corners) together. Even if youth policy makers, practitioners and researchers work in the same field, they rarely have the opportunity to sit at the same table, exchange views or nurture each other’s work. This becomes even more complicated at the international level. Accepting this reality, just the fact of being at this symposium seems to be a kind of a privilege and triggers even more my “curiosity conversations”.

### Curiosity conversation #1: from practice to policy?

The first person I talked to was Ante Martić in a coffee shop outside the symposium hotel. It is quite an untypical interview since I knew Ante from the past when he was working for the European Youth Forum in Brussels. Ante is today Head of the Sector

for Youth at the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth in Croatia. “But my experience comes from my NGO work and the European Youth Forum,” he said. Coming back to Croatia from Brussels, Ante worked for the youth information centre in Rijeka and then joined the public administration and worked in the co-ordinating institution for civil society. “When in 2011 there was a political decision to create a strong youth sector, they proposed me to take this position given my experience on the local, national and international level. When I was working for the youth NGO sector I never thought I would do this, but, as you understand, I couldn’t say no.”

I then asked Ante what was the situation of youth policy in his country. “In Croatia, for the last 20 years the youth sector was somehow neglected and most of the developments have been the result of grass-roots initiatives or financed through tenders for projects coming from EU funds and embassies. In the mid-2000s the scene developed but still youth policy was not articulated in an inclusive or sustainable way. There was no commitment to developing a proper legislative framework – what was there was more of a strategy than a real policy. While youth organisations and activities were developing in many directions at the same time, the main priority of the institutional support in recent years went around the creation of a legislative framework (a law for youth) that could be translated into a sustainable and evidence-based approach to youth policy.”

I wondered how his practical experience had helped him in his current role. He answered with a smile that “for years I was on the other side of the equation and this has helped me to learn the processes”.

1. <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/Publications/Coyote/16/arriving.pdf> (date accessed 31.07.2013)

## >>> A golden triangle on white chairs

*Curiosity conversation #2:  
I need an example of what happens  
in practice*

I joined Zoran Ilieski for lunch on the second day of the symposium. Zoran is Executive Director of the National Coalition of Youth Organisations (SEGA) in the “former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”. “During the last four years, we have been trying to develop a youth information system and mechanisms that will provide opportunities for young people to be in touch with the information they need. We need to take into consideration that in the country there was no previous experience nor any memory of this compared to other European countries,” he explained.

By becoming a partner of EYRICA they tried to use different tools from information centres in other European countries and to negotiate with the government. “But the first steps were very difficult,” he said, “as nobody knew what you were talking about, and they couldn’t understand the value of information systems”. Today, “the issue of youth information is still unknown by the stakeholders, the government, as well as young people themselves,” he explained. In 2010 they opened the first youth information and counselling centre in Prilep. The local government has provided the facilities but the financial support from the central government was only guaranteed for a year. “Although there is a political commitment to open youth information, there is no financial implication in the government’s budget,” he said.

*Curiosity conversation #3:  
one more example from practice,  
please*

I approached Jan Kulenović because my curiosity drove me to ask for another example from a practice perspective. Jan made a presentation during the symposium on good practices in the field of employment and entrepreneurship and – allow me to be subjective at this point – what he said was quite motivating. Jan is the Executive Director and Founder of the Youth Information Agency (OIA) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which works for the improvement of the position of young people and their participation in society. “I need to put it into context,” he said when I asked him to explain me how the agency was founded. “Twelve years ago, when the agency was founded, the key players in the youth sector were international organisations because of the post-conflict and transition period.” Therefore, the Open Society Fund, as part of their youth strategy, established a year-long strategy that afterwards evolved into an NGO with youth information as one of its pillars of work. “There was no and there is still no government support; funding comes from international organisations,” he explained. Jan mentioned that “since the beginning we are trend-setters for a lot of different tools and approaches,” he explained and added that “all our activities are improving the situation of youth officers, teachers in schools and politicians; it is a constant, ongoing process”. In his opinion, what is important right now is to focus on more co-ordinated and individualised programmes in the field of youth employment (entrepreneurship, career counselling, mentorship programmes) and he explained that in his country, in 2012, they opened an innovative social innovation incubator which created synergies between different activities (information points, mentorship, start-up support, networking space) which reached around 2 000 young people in Sarajevo. “This is an interesting model that, in co-operation with other experts, can be transferable to other contexts or communities,” he said.



*Curiosity conversation #4:  
what is the role of research in this direction?*

“I could say that I am one of the pioneers when it comes to the promotion and development of youth information in ex-Yugoslavia, especially Serbia and Montenegro,” said Sladjana when I asked her to present herself. “I was one of the trained youth workers and counsellors and I worked at the local and national levels first to raise awareness of decision makers and create opportunities, like services within existing organisations such as the Office for Prevention of Drug Abuse.” Sladjana has experience in youth work from a practice point of view, but today she is a researcher in the youth field and one of the experts of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy.<sup>2</sup> At the moment of the interview she told me that she is doing a policy, institutional and legal analysis which is going to identify gaps in different areas of youth employment and participation in the region. Based on this research and other input, a specific programme is going to be supported by the United Nations. This sounds promising, but is it really effective? Sladjana thinks that “research needs to be put in the agenda – it is the starting point”. “From my experience and from the recent UN point of view, what has been highlighted as a main obstacle for low youth motivation and participation was lack of access to information,” she added. “Youth information and counselling are the priority needs of young people in all policy areas, especially when it comes to youth employment and participation; however, there is a lack of capacities of public institutions to answer to these burning needs and in Montenegro for example, international institutions are taking over,” said Sladjana.

2. <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/ekcyp/index>



## >>> A golden triangle on white chairs

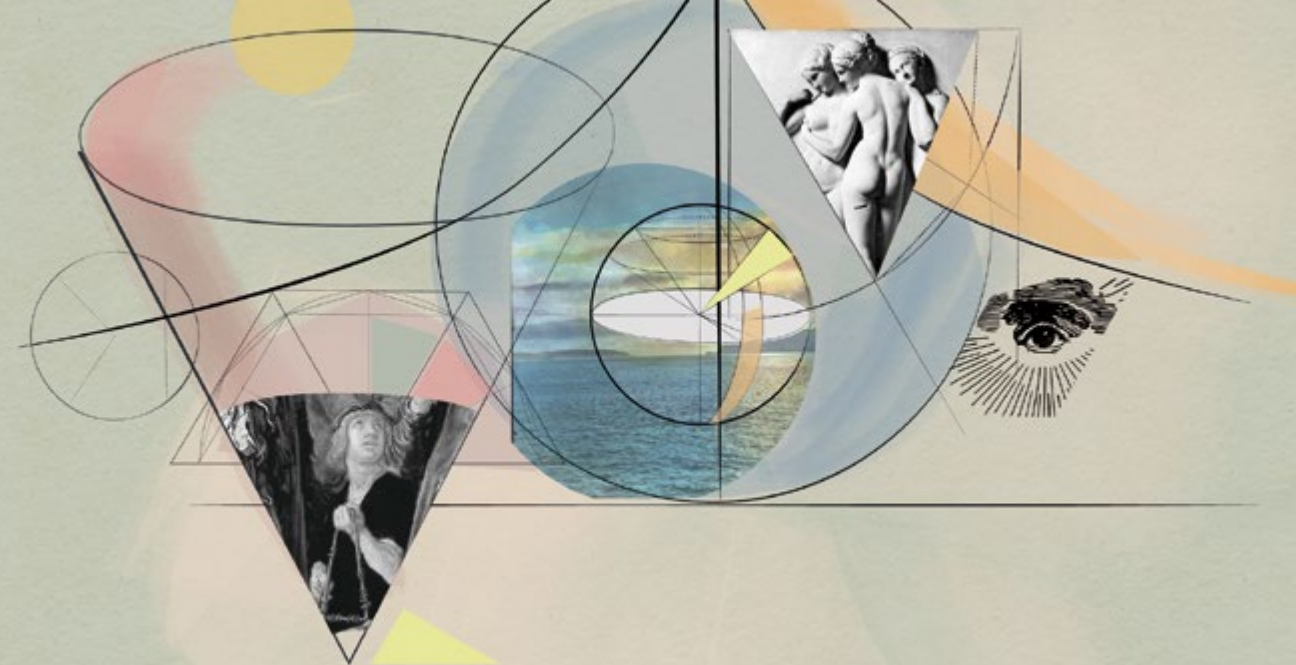
### Talking about challenges

All four curiosity conversations evolved around the issue of challenges faced in the region concerning youth information and counselling. Zoran thinks that “youth information in the region is at a starting point” and “young people in the region don’t know they have the right to information”. Jan mentioned that the disadvantaged position of young people, the lack of an institutional framework (recognising that maybe in Croatia there is one, but quite new) are among the common challenges in the region. “We still have to fight and to promote why youth information is needed instead of working on next steps of defining creative ways and approaches to youth information; it is a pre-period where we still fight for recognition”, he said.

Ante underlined that “first of all there is a big problem of understanding the added value of this kind of work” and he explained that “in many countries of SEE, young people are seen through a prism of prevention and protection instead of participation and empowerment. Efforts to help young people with their self-orientation or involving them in decision making are often seen as encouraging political ambitions. Politicians need to see quick and final results.”

Although SEE countries share geographical and historical connections, Ante mentioned that “the situation in South-East Europe is different from country to country” and added that “in Serbia for example there has been a lot of work in terms of legislation; there are youth agencies and offices on the local level and an umbrella organisation for youth organisations has been put into place with state support”. Croatia’s integration into the EU has also allowed youth information centres to connect a lot with Eurodesk and other international networks, while still working with counterparts in the region. Ante feels that Croatia has the responsibility to transfer its experience to other EU candidate countries within the region. “All Balkan countries are aspiring members, the question is only about the speed, but sooner or later they will join the EU and Croatia can offer a lot of advice based on our experience.”

Lack of funds was a problem identified by all of them. However, Jan underlined that, from a practical point of view, “the contribution that we need primarily from governments is not only through budget allocations but it can also be through infrastructure support, creating the space for official links between youth practice and information provision with the school system and support to NGOs and conditions that can create long-term co-operation between the educational system, employers and the private sector”.



### A triangle in need of its corners

Can a triangle be solid if there is no communication and co-operation between its corners? This was a question that bothered all the interviewees and my curiosity drove me to find some answers on what could be done.

“Policy, especially in the region, needs to come down from the ivory tower,” said Ante and added that “the only way to do it is by establishing an inclusive, sustainable and participatory process that involves the practitioners, otherwise policy is only created to provide a framework for a portion of the population to enjoy their rights, while the ones dealing with implementation or working with a certain target group know best the technical and content needs when it comes to youth information and counselling”.

Ante commented that in Croatia there is an effort to connect research with policy and practice. They engage researchers in dealing with strategic and legal documents. They also did extensive research on youth needs and they based the new national youth programme on the results. But as Ante noted, there are some limitations to research outcomes, “especially when it is ordered research, it depends who commissioned it,” he said. Another problem that he identified is that research needs to be inclusive of the real population it examines and that if there are no satisfactory data, then the research is not complete. “In recent decades, every five years the different is huge, therefore we need full insight and updated data, we cannot rely on selective ones,” he added.





## » A golden triangle on white chairs

Zoran thinks that youth research is one of the issues to be included as a permanent practice in youth work in order to ensure real information on the needs of young people. “In that direction, in my country there is no youth information research and having information on the topics, the quality and type of information that young people need will allow us (practitioners) to better define the approach on how to deliver it to them,” he said.

For Zoran, what practitioners need from policy makers is “strong political commitment for youth information and allocating the specific budget for youth information support”. But he underlined that the issue of “how to put youth information on the priority list of politicians, since they are the people that take decisions” remains one of the challenges for practitioners. Zoran considers that the support of the Council of Europe and other international institutions could be valuable in order to involve deeper the politicians through recommendations to the government.

“A research project done by the UN, ‘The voice of youth’, was an example of how we occasionally need concrete, evidence-based statistics and analysis. It is interesting to see from a research point of view how they access this information and with a quality analysis we can decide which approach is more suitable,” said Jan. However, what he pointed out was that, “there is no structured approach to research, it happens ad hoc and it’s pretty improvised, that’s why I am not sure that this type of ad hoc information exchange can really have any impact”.

“Evidence-based decision making is super important, the role of research in this direction is super important, but what is most important is the communication between the famous triangle,” underlined Sladjana. Luckily, symposiums like this one try to promote of this kind of communication that is so needed.

## Wishful thinking?

For Ante, the ideal information and counselling service would be “a space with little or no boundaries, a welcoming place where young people would come and get what they need without administrative burdens. A youth-friendly place with peer communication, liberated from prejudice. It cannot be a place where you are judged. It’s place where people can find shelter from their own worries. And of course it needs to be well equipped in technical terms and with a well-trained staff.”

Zoran said with a smile that he wishes “that small villages have a youth information point as a structure – especially for those young people who want to have a future to live in the village”.

Jan foresees that “youth information in the next years will be influenced by new technologies – just think that five years ago in 2008, almost no one in Bosnia was using Facebook, therefore it is difficult to predict”. For him, youth information needs “to be immediately looking and updated towards new technologies and in close co-operation with young people, but what will stay the same is the need for a youth-friendly language and approach”.

“Youth information should be put on the agenda. I mean seriously. I am not sure how, but the EU and other international institutions can help to pressure governments in order to prioritise the issue. Then we should seriously analyse existing resources, see what public institutions offer and what they can offer – it is the only way to become sustainable and visible,” said Sladjana. Ante from his side also made this point clear when he said that “no matter if you are an activist, or a researcher or a policy maker, no matter on which side you stand, you contribute somehow to the improvement of the lives of young people; the ideal situation is not an antagonistic one and all actors should be working together instead of on opposite sides”.



## Musical (white) chairs and mathematics

Just before the symposium’s end, I finally managed to put them all four of them together (with the help of Marlies) on white chairs, hopefully not only for a photo opportunity. We had four people interviewed but only three chairs available – because a triangle has only three corners. If I asked the four of them to play musical chairs, they should all be able to win because a “golden triangle” only works when all its three corners are held together: research, policy and practice in youth work should be interconnected. So, don’t be surprised if Jan and Zoran (who were both interviewed to bring in a perspective from youth work practice) are sharing the same chair – we had to apply the “pigeonhole principle” as it is called in mathematics.<sup>3</sup> We could still spend hours thinking where to place young people in this photo if we wanted to represent the geometry of the youth sector, but I think we can leave this question for a future mathematical problem-solving exercise.



3. In mathematics, the pigeonhole principle states that if  $n$  items are put into  $m$  pigeonholes with  $n > m$ , then at least one pigeonhole must contain more than one item. So, imagine that four pigeons need to be placed into three pigeonholes. Can it be done? The answer is yes but there is one catch. The catch is that no matter how the pigeons are placed, one of the pigeonholes must contain more than one pigeon. The idea is simple, isn’t it?



# Compendium on youth information and counselling

## A first-aid kit for initiators of structures at national level

by Evaldas Rupkus

Images courtesy of LiJOT



The right to information is so self-explanatory and such an integral part of our everyday life that one could wonder why we need specific information services for youngsters. In the same way, for me, an urgent need for youth information and counselling is just too obvious to be ignored. I observed my classmates and friends who were having a lot of trouble making decisions about what to do with their lives after school, or to finish it at all. It was especially hard for them because of their background: living in a small town, distant from all economic, academic or cultural centres in a post-Soviet country which has just joined the EU. Therefore they felt the change only because a lot of EU flags were around but they were not experiencing the opportunities the EU had to offer. Some of them were facing financial obstacles or social problems in families which meant they were not able to make their own lives better than their parents managed to. Now some of them have managed to find their place in society and to create their own businesses and families here, others are doing this successfully outside of Lithuania – mainly in the UK. Sadly, a couple of them have not managed to finish their education because of early pregnancy or a lack of motivation – they still cannot see where they are heading.



Images provided by LiJOT - Lithuanian Youth Council

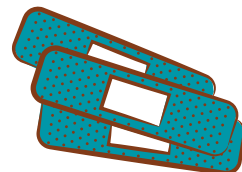
There are some success and failure stories, however most of the time those who are doing what society expects them to do and who belong to the so-called middle class are not doing “just fine” or even OK. They are gaining education, however only one third of them are sure about their choice of studies, most of them are still unemployed or poorly paid and very dependent on circumstances that will find them on the spot. Most of them still do not know how different things function; how to solve financial, social, health problems (let’s not forget, that Lithuania is still a “leader” in suicide rates); what opportunities in general are open for them. During a couple years of work as a Eurodesk relay I noticed that something more holistic in terms of general youth information and counselling was needed for our youngsters. They do not need to be in the worst possible, vulnerable situation – for every youngster the transition period to adulthood is a crucial time of their life, where parents cannot help in every case, because “in their time” most of the things we have today worked in another way. So they need some professional and youth-friendly support.

### Setting up structured information services in Lithuania

When I started working as the Eurodesk Lithuania national co-ordinator, I noticed that youngsters were searching for information in very different ways. They needed some “down-to-earth” communication in language they understood – so we established the “I know it all” programme for renewed online services – a revamped portal and social media. Together with the national agency

for the Youth in Action programme we established a young journalists’ network, which still works as a peer-to-peer network and provides content for our portal by youngsters themselves. However this was not enough, because quite a lot of young people still do not know about us or do not have access to Internet or ICT skills. Therefore we made a pilot of youth information centres as Eurodesk representations in regions of Lithuania. The main task for them was to implement work that could be done outside Vilnius, reach out to young people where they are and let them know about us and answer their questions directly on the spot. It works, it is needed, but there is a need for a bigger second step: establishing generalist youth information services with trained youth information workers.

Thinking about the structure of youth information and counselling at national and local levels started in 2011 after a Nordbuk seminar, where there was a small working group on youth information by Finnish colleagues and representatives from ERYICA. While sharing experiences and seeing what generalist youth information actually is, I got the feeling that this is exactly what we were still lacking and had been looking for. Just after this we organised an international seminar on the structure of youth information with our regional partners from neighbouring countries and ERYICA. The Lithuanian Youth Council (LiJOT) has attained the goal of establishing national and local structures for youth information and counselling (YIC) in the national programme of development of youth policy, which now is the main starting point for further work on this topic.



### A “first-aid kit” for initiators

While we are moving along with the creation process, there are still plenty of European countries which still do not take this existing pillar of youth policy and a great tool for working with young people into consideration. Especially countries with the same historical past as Lithuania do not see the need to have a clear system of how to provide youngsters with more than specialised information services (most of the time for employment only). However young people are moving on without this help and struggle with different decisions which are important for them, and should be for the state. As I started thinking and collecting information on the establishment of youth information and counselling structures in my country, I noticed a lack of them. It is great to have the opportunity for your own innovation and creativity, however there are some experiences in other countries that are better to avoid.

Of course, many good practices could be adjusted right away to your national context, you just need to know them. A general overview of the history and determinants of youth information in Europe is also where everyone interested should be starting his or her research. Another very important aspect for initiators of YIC structures is having a list of arguments and some empirical data on the impact of YIC, when it comes to lobbying and the policy-making process, where it is very easy to get lost. That’s why ERYICA came up with the idea of having a publication – a kind of compendium – on national YIC structures, which would be helpful for initiators of youth information and counselling structures at the national level and for youth policy experts and politicians who are making decisions on this issue. A “first-aid kit” is a practical tool, which I also needed when I started working on explaining what generalist YIC is, and what it is not. The compendium also aims to gather the most important facts and figures and to put some structure to the essence of generalist YIC – to make it more clear and concrete for everyone. Let me show you what are we preparing and how helpful it could be if you are thinking of starting a YIC structure in your country.



### Compendium: to produce arguments for policy makers

The compendium has been divided into four parts: concept and development, state of the art and impact as a policy measure, ERYICA and its services, establishing youth information and counselling structures at national level. The first part of this publication outlines the definition of YIC through a brief presentation of youth information history – major developments, determinants in which the concept has emerged. For this purpose not only existing documents were analysed, but also pioneers of the concept of YIC in different European countries were interviewed, they are contributing to the publication with their own articles and insights. Since the compendium should be universal in all European countries, a short overview of international institutions, organisations and documents has been prepared. The Council of Europe and the European Union input into YIC and other European networks such as Eurodesk or the European Youth Card Association (EYCA) will be introduced to readers. Probably the best way to understand how YIC works, and what the different models of structuring it on national levels are, is to present functioning models in different national realities. Looking at descriptions of Austrian, Finnish, French, Portuguese, Croatian as well as Scottish, Welsh and Flemish YIC structures by the same criteria allows the reader to compare differences. It will include short comments not only from pioneers who are most often youth workers, academics or representatives of NGOs, but also from politicians who have supported this new way of working with young people from the beginning. Therefore it will help today’s initiators to see arguments which have helped in the past to promote the establishment of YIC services.

### Impact of youth information – Is it possible to measure?

The compendium is not only a compilation of documents on YIC which have already been created by different actors, this tool also aims to make YIC more concrete and to provide initiators with information on the impact that YIC has for youngsters, the society and state. Every day, during all these years of work in thousands of youth information centres in different countries, youth information workers see that their work is needed and what impact they have on the lives of young people. So the key to demonstrating this lies in the method. Meanwhile there is an ongoing YIC services users’ survey, which will provide us with some very concrete quantitative data on the impact of YIC services. The second part of the compendium will include a summary of interviews with co-ordinators of national YIC structures and also academics will explain their research, which should be transferred into a qualitative analysis. We will provide readers with a list of problems that YIC services can solve. Today, youth unemployment is one of the biggest obstacles for successful youth integration into society, which is why we will go more into detail on YIC and possible synergies with “youth guarantee” and youth employment in general. To sum up, if the first part of the first-aid kit for initiators of YIC on national level is more introductory and provides an overview of YIC, the second part aims to give some quantitative and qualitative data and arguments which should help initiators and lobbyists to explain and defend the idea of YIC and show its impact.

Generalist youth information and counselling are main concerns of the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA), which has been dealing with this topic since 1986. ERYICA



## Compendium on youth information and counselling

is still actively helping countries which are considering the establishment of YIC services and promoting this actively at European level. ERYICA offers a wide range of services, which can be very helpful when starting a YIC structure at national level. That is the main reason why the third chapter of the compendium will present different methodologies of training, good practice sharing platforms (such as SHERYICA), publications and projects created and offered by ERYICA. This should help interested organisations or even policy makers in the debates on how YIC should look in their countries and provide them with a package for a successful and easier start, preparation of the first professional youth information workers and international co-operation.

### Guidelines for the beginner: how to start?

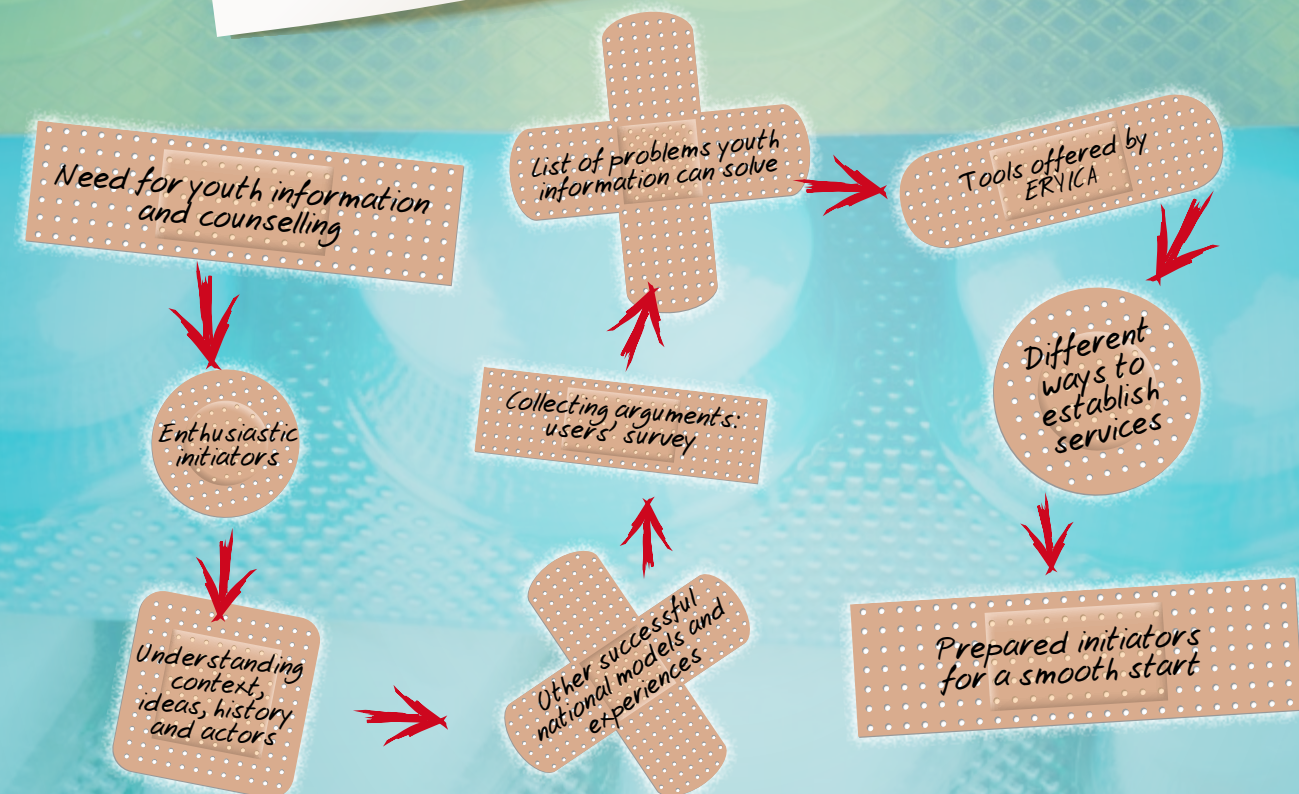
Another important goal of the compendium on YIC national structures is to enable beginners to plan their own model YIC structure in their national context based on experiences of countries where it already exists. With input from different national co-ordinators the compendium will present possible ways to provide youth information at national level. It includes all the main steps of the process – starting with a situation analysis of young people needs, finding a suitable role for YIC in the national context of youth policy, awareness building and lobbying policy makers, getting YIC as a part of youth policy in national and regional law. A very important point is to decide which model of governance of the YIC system will be chosen, so readers will have the possibility to see the comparison of existing models with their strengths and weaknesses. Ensuring stable financing in a time of restructuring of public finances is a timely aspect, so some links to existing financial schemes will be provided. Hiring and training staff, quality of services and how to measure it, together with some ideas on how to set up the regional network and how international co-operation helps ensure quality will enable initiators to see very practical

aspects of the establishment process. Nowadays it is not possible to avoid the online part of YIC work, so an article on planning and implementing online services, communication and branding of online and offline services will give some basic guidance. More general overviews on methods of YIC services, breaking down and explaining different types of services, paying special attention to the youth participation and peer-to-peer method and also having a list of topics currently covered by YIC in Europe should help as a source of ideas or a good starting point for those who are planning and taking decisions. Moreover, the European Youth Information Charter's principles and how they are being implemented will help to evaluate work and is meant to set a framework, which helps when there is no other reference available. A list with contacts of YIC structures and experts across Europe will be also provided. Finally, the fourth chapter of the compendium is a practical step-by-step toolkit with further referrals for those starting something like YIC in their country.

Since the compendium by its nature is a collection of different views and the variety of different models of how YIC works in European countries, we are not aiming to show one best way of how YIC could function in your reality. It is too complex and every situation must be taken as an individual one. Therefore the "Compendium on national structures of youth information and counselling" will be a good starting point for explorers of the very fascinating world of youth information. We are doing our best to provide initiators and policy makers with some empirical quantitative and qualitative evidence on the impact of youth information work, provide practical tools and show some different experiences in other countries, with further guidance. However you need to be passionate about youth information and counselling and believe that every youngster should have the best possible knowledge on how society works in order to create his or her life and be an active, happy, healthy, critical, open-minded person and national and European citizen.

### Step-by-step: how to establish a national youth information structure

- analysis and evaluation of important actors and stakeholders
- young people's needs
- defining relevant topics
- role of YIC in the national context of youth policy
- awareness building and lobbying with policy makers
- having youth information as a part of youth policy in national law
- structure and governance
- funding and staff
- quality of services
- setting up a regional network
- planning and implementing online services
- communication and branding of services
- international co-operation





# Small country – Big ambitions

by Fiona McIntyre  
(with a comment by Mika Pietilä at the end)



A small country on the edge of Europe, Scotland is renowned for its rugged mountainous landscape. And the Scottish Government has lofty ambitions too, saying it aims “to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up”.

So here, especially for *Coyote*, we’ll investigate how they will make that happen and the role that youth information and counselling services can play.

With a population of 5.3 million and almost one million young people aged between 10 and 24, the complex range of needs is startling. Never daunted, the underpinning national strategy is called Getting it Right for Every Child. And they mean every child.

The entire concept of Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is based on addressing the needs of the whole child/young person, with their overall well-being as the ultimate priority. The move toward achieving this goal started with a change of government in 2007. There was a fundamental shift in policy from focusing on process to working toward outcomes.



A national performance framework states the five strategic objectives along with 16 national outcomes. These are further broken down into national indicators. GIRFEC is all about the Scottish Government, youth services and agencies, and young people working together to promote children and young people’s rights and support their well-being. One of the desired national outcomes for GIRFEC – shared with the Curriculum for Excellence in schools – is that Scotland’s young people are successful learners, responsible citizens, confident individuals and effective contributors.

The GIRFEC approach is to encourage services for children and young people to work together to meet the needs of those they support. All the main public bodies in Scotland support the GIRFEC principle. At the heart of this approach is the well-being of children and young people. This is defined as when they are:

- safe
- healthy
- achieving
- nurtured
- active
- respected
- responsible
- included.

This is not a short-term fix but aims to inspire long-term cultural change at individual level for all children and young people in Scotland. There is a series of clearly defined indicators at national level and the government are looking at developing indicators for each child. Already, all school children do a self-assessment of their well-being, based on the categories above, which is regularly repeated and recorded throughout their school life.

Youth information and counselling services contribute to young people’s well-being by giving them access to information and support which enable them to make positive life choices. In 2009, a cross-sectoral working group developed a national youth information framework for Scotland using a model adapted from the Finnish youth information network. This defined three broad areas of need. It’s worth noting this is not a rigid categorisation – young people move up and down and between groups as they grow and develop, or as circumstances change.





Animated videos by Marlies Pöschl



## YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE ABLE TO FIND INFORMATION INDEPENDENTLY

They know what they need/are looking for and can find it on their own or with a little (perhaps exploratory) help. Increasingly they are digitally agile and find this information online. Youth information services play their part in guiding them toward “trusted” and ever more impressive youth information/youth-card/youth-portal websites. They, in turn, can become involved in peer youth information initiatives in and out of school.

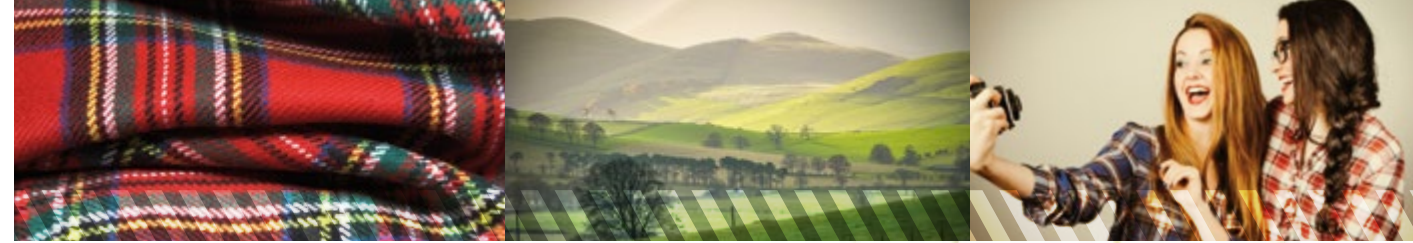
Within youth information centres, professional staff can help young people explore beyond any initial query with examples of possibilities and new directions.

## YOUNG PEOPLE WHO FEEL THEY NEED/WANT SOMETHING

Some young people need support to clarify their needs and/or assistance to access the information/services they want. There are often unidentified or unarticulated needs which require the intervention of trained, skilled peers or youth information workers.

## YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE PROBLEMS AND FACE CHALLENGES

Here the key is to identify information to help them access the services and support they need. This may be counselling for those who have chaotic lifestyles, difficult life circumstances, or emotional or physical health issues. Youth information and counselling services will work with other local agencies and departments to co-ordinate and develop relevant support.



A report out in July from The Children’s Society found the happiness of children in the UK is in decline, with 15% of young teenagers reporting low well-being. The Good Childhood Report says well-being has dipped since 2008 after a period of improvement from 1994. Although four out of five can be described as flourishing, teenagers aged 14 and 15 are said to have the lowest self-satisfaction. Psychologist Linda Papadopoulos said it was important not to dismiss this dip in well-being among 14 and 15-year-olds as inevitable and “just teenagers being teenagers”.

*“We really must talk to this generation and listen to what they have to say.”*

*“Children and teenagers deserve proper support, choices and a decent say in their own lives. Being unhappy is definitely not an inevitable part of growing up. We owe it to our children to help them flourish as much as possible.”*

Those last two statements underline the role of youth information in equipping young people to be active participants in their communities and societies. Not only does every young person need access to relevant information, they need to build their capacities for interpreting that information, making positive life choices and taking their place in society. In Scotland, at national level, several voluntary organisations are working alongside the government and local authorities to deliver just that. Young Scot is the national youth information and citizenship charity for Scotland. It provides young people, aged 11 to 26, with a mixture of information, ideas and opportunities to help them become confident, informed and active citizens. This is done in a variety of formats, including magazines, online, phone, etc., so young people can access information in a way they are comfortable with.





## Small country – Big ambitions



Animated videos by Marlies Pöschl

The aim is to provide information which will enable them to:

- make informed decisions and choices;
- turn their ideas into action;
- take advantage of the opportunities available to them in Scotland and the rest of Europe;
- have the confidence and knowledge to take their place as active citizens in their communities – locally, nationally and globally.

Young Scot also works with other agencies to involve young people in the co-design of services which affect them as well as working with hard-to-reach young people to influence change. Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament are elected in every constituency, by young people, in some areas using their Young Scot youth card to vote electronically.

Scotland also has its own Commissioner for Children and Young People whose job is to make sure all children and young people in Scotland have their rights respected, their voices heard and that they can live safe and happy lives. The current commissioner was previously a youth worker.

Moving towards making Scotland the best place in the world to grow up is not without its challenges, but youth information and counselling services

stand in an ideal place to meet these challenges now and in the future:

- they are seen to be safe/trusted/young people friendly;
- information on opportunities to participate is key;
- as are opportunities to be active citizens; for instance, promoting and supporting volunteering opportunities (see *Coyote* No. 17);
- they are egalitarian and holistic (as per the European Youth Information and Counselling Association Charter);
- they already, by providing a broad range of youth information, practice cross-sector working – a key factor in combating social exclusion and fostering well-being;
- they have developed innovative outreach initiatives, especially in working with hard-to-reach young people.

In this year's independence referendum, for the first time, 16 and 17 year olds in Scotland will be eligible to vote. Whatever the outcome, Scotland's government and youth services will continue to honour its commitment to them.

Our young people need to be equipped to thrive – not just survive. They need inspiration, not desperation, and wherever they are to be “the best place in the world to grow up”.



## Comment on Fiona's article

by Mika Pietilä, planning officer, Koordinaatti – Development Centre of Youth Information and Counselling



It was very interesting to read how Scotland is working for young people's well-being. Finland is also a small country, just as Scotland. It has a population of 5.4 million with long distances, municipalities with relatively small populations as well as young people who live in remote areas, far away from youth services.

Hearing from young people, the current and future users of services, is very important, and not only in youth information and counselling services. I was glad to notice that this is such an important part in GIRFEC in Scotland. In Finland, we have the Child and Youth Policy Programme which is adopted every four years by the government. Both programmes are focusing on outcomes to support young people's growth and well-being, maybe from different angles but both are based on young people's needs.

I was also delighted that Scotland could use the model we are using in Finland when defining the information and service needs of young people. I felt proud when I heard that this model is used in Scotland. This happened in summer 2013, in Croatia, at the Symposium on Youth Policy in

South-East Europe, where Fiona was one of the keynote speakers. In youth information there is a very strong tradition of sharing good practices based on experiences in the field. It is great that work done in the Finnish network has been spread around. The division of information needs into three levels was originally developed by the youth information workers in the youth information centre “Kompassi” in Helsinki.

This kind of division has helped a lot when talking about information needs and the provision of youth information and counselling services. I would say that is used in much the same ways in Scotland and Finland. I would also say that our youth information structures are similar in many ways.

The discussion Fiona and I had after her speech was amusing. I was of course interested in how they had found our model, but at the same time I also had to try to remember how we had distributed information about it. After returning home, I found out that the model had been published in a report about youth information and counselling in Finland, which had found its way to Scotland.



# Youth Advisors and youth information: a peer-to-peer approach

by Vera Hoogsteijns

Images courtesy of Jong & Van Zin



## Youth Advisors

Our “Youth Advisor” project started in 1991 as a co-operation programme between our organisation (youth work) and the JAC (Youth Advice Centre), which is part of the general welfare centres (Centrum Algemeen Welzijnswerk (CAW) in Dutch). Since then, about 4 000 youngsters (15 to 18 years old) have officially been trained to be Youth Advisors.

The idea is simple: we believe in the power of peer support and that’s why Youth Advice Centres train young people in their region in communication skills, the ability to listen to their peers and the ability to recognise problems. We try to work within the informal networks that exist between young people and to make young people more resilient, while focusing on their personal strengths. They are also informed about available support systems in the Flemish context so they can refer their peers to the right service when needed and provide them with quality youth information.

### Making young people stronger

Jong & Van Zin focuses on the talents and strengths of children and young people. We pay close attention to their capabilities. In everything we do, produce and organise, we focus on the things they’re good at. Because of our expertise in training and informing, we have the possibility to make children and young people stronger:

stronger in what they’re already good at, but also stronger in their basic skills of communication, interaction, listening, etc. Through interactive methods, they practice their skills and we expand their ability to be a good friend for their peers.

### Making young people aware

By working in a group, we try to make young people aware of signals which peers can send. We show them how to react when they think there might be something going on in the life of one of their peers. We believe that being aware of feelings, opinions and possible problems of friends and peers is a very important first step.

### Making sure they know their options when support is needed

When we want to enable youngsters to refer their peers to the correct information or support system, it’s very important they know about the options and possibilities available. In this part of our training, we work on their knowledge about the Flemish support system, but also about specific topics. It can be about support for psychological problems, but also financial support, support for studies, health care, youth information services, etc. The information we provide them can be about different subjects, for example drug (ab)use, divorce, sexuality and relationships.

## Jong & Van Zin

“In Petto” is a youth information and prevention service. It is a youth service covering the whole of Flanders and is recognised by the Youth Work Department of the Ministry of the Flemish Community. We work closely together with the Youth Advice Centres (JACs) and youth work practice. In Petto is specialised in youth information and prevention, with a particular focus on peer education.

In December 2013, In Petto will merge with two other partners in Flemish youth work: “Zin-d’erin(g)” and “Jeugd en Seksualiteit”.<sup>1</sup> Together we will become “Jong & Van Zin”, a training organisation for children, youngsters and intermediaries (for example, trainers, youth leaders or educators). We will produce informational products, with and for children, young people and youth workers or other intermediaries. In addition to this, we’ll focus on developing educational games, training programmes on specific topics (like resilience, communication, group dynamics, sexuality and relationships, etc.) and facilitating participative processes and peer support. Our main focus is to empower children, young people and their trainers, to be stronger and more resilient in their daily lives. In our work, we always take young people’s experiences and opinions as the starting point.

1. Zin-d’erin(g) and Jeugd en Seksualiteit are two Flemish organisations that are active in Flemish youth work. Zin-d’erin(g) is specialised in interactive training courses (on several topics) with young people and in non-formal education. Jeugd en Seksualiteit is specialised in training and informational courses about sexuality, relationships and different topics related to this.









# #definitiveinfo #kesinbilgi

## Young people informing young people

by Gülesin Nemutlu Unal



Reliable information is a crucial precondition for those who would like to enjoy their right to association and freedom of expression. If you cannot get reliable information about what is going on in the streets from the ones in charge of reporting, what do you do? You go out and report it yourself!

What had been going on in Istanbul since 27 May 2013 had a lot to do with youth and it had a lot to do with information. Yet one has to cross his or her eyes to see what it has to do with “youth information”.

## JULY 2013

The circumstances that led to what I choose to call a civic resistance were a series of events in which people were asking for their right to participate. It was neither the first “demand to participate” nor it will be the last. Yet here we are. I am trying to put this article together while jumping between screens from several social media sites and this page. Because it has been almost two months since it started and tonight – as I write in July 2013 – it is still going on.



## What was going on in Istanbul?

Let me tell you the background story as briefly as I can. It started just before the general elections in 2011. The governing party started to announce their “development” projects as the elections were getting close. Out of many “crazy projects”<sup>1</sup> for Istanbul (for some reason that year, journalists preferred to refer to the major projects as “crazy”) one of them was about the renovation of Taksim Square. This project<sup>2</sup> would take all the vehicle traffic underground leaving the square for the pedestrians and re-build the long gone Topçu Barracks in the place of Gezi Park.

Depending on your visions of life, city planning and economic growth, you could take different sides on the value of these projects. And people did just that. A group of architects and city planners argued against the Taksim renovation project and formed an initiative called “Taksim Solidarity”. They also called the project “crazy” but with a different tone of voice. The craziest part for them was that at no time were people of the region<sup>3</sup> consulted about this project. At the end of an unannounced non-participative process, the project was there on the table, decided.

As an opposing initiative, Taksim Solidarity not only took their case to several committees and the courts, but also started to organise gatherings and festivals in the park to spread the word. Meanwhile the square was closed for construction and their

court case was accepted and then rejected several times. (Finally, in the last days it was accepted again).

Then one night in May 2013, the construction machines start to take down some trees in Gezi Park. A fairly small group of people rushed to the park to stop this demolition, and they managed to do so. The day after, the machines approached the park again and for the guardians/protesters it became evident that they would have to stay there day and night. Even though, legally, the demolition was not allowed, the machines were there.

The response from the authorities quickly escalated from municipality forces to the state police. The police interference was brutal on the second morning when the tents were burnt and teargas and water cannons were used excessively.<sup>4</sup> That was the moment when many young people said “enough is enough” and rushed to the park to help. By the end of the day, thousands of people were trying to reach Taksim Square.

Why mainly young people? It was because they could get the news and pictures from online social media. Meanwhile the older people were away from the Internet, enjoying several TV shows on how to bake and who is the most beautiful and what to do in the summer. And “the” news channel aired a three-hour documentary on penguins.<sup>5</sup>

1. <http://www.euronews.com/2011/04/27/turkey-3-pm>
2. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22753752>

3. <http://www.taksimplatformu.com/english.php>

4. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22780773>

5. <http://youtu.be/kxeZILofFzM>



## >>> #definitiveinfo #kesinbilgi – Young people informing young people

### Where are the young people? Here they are...

Throughout the course of history in Turkey, young people were called by several names associated with different roles. At times they were the “light of the future” and at other times “the soldiers of democracy”. In the political history of Turkey, young people were always present and reserved for a duty of saving or protecting. This was the case until the 1980s.

For the youth of the 1980s and afterwards young people started to be referred to as “apolitical”. The common discourse was that these young people only wanted to have better, newer and more commercial goods and that they had absolutely nothing to do with politics. Knowing this is not true, I would like to suggest a very good study by Demet Lüküslü, summarising the history of youth in Turkey and making a detailed case that the youth after the 1980s are not apolitical at all.<sup>6</sup>

As a self-proclaimed youth worker, I personally have been asked several times in the last decade why young people in Turkey were not interested in politics anymore. In a nutshell, how I responded was based on what I hear from young people and also believed: “It is not true that young people are not interested in politics. They have unlimited ideas and proposals about how things should be dealt with and how a country should be governed. Their lack of interest is towards the system as such, which they refer to as slow, corrupt and dirty.”<sup>7</sup>

And there they are. From the first day until now, young people are on the streets, in the parks, in the forums, online, offline. They are the ones gathering information, sharing, spreading the word and shaping their lives. Several responsible adults apologised explicitly to young people for their “apolitical” labelling. Especially people from my generation. We were the ones oppressed and cut off from being political. The least we could do is to provide support now.

### Are you chapulling too?

During the first week of resistance, in one of his speeches, the prime minister declared that he was supported by the 50% of the votes at the elections so he did not need permission to change Taksim Square from anyone, not from the opposing party or from a few *çapulcu*.

A very rough translation of the word *çapulcu* to English would be “looter”. Young people didn’t assume this name as an insult but rather took it with humour and joy.

In a short time, this new name formed a common identity to call out the messages of the resistance, a common “brand” under which communication would flow easily and in a united manner. Thousands added this “brand” to their profile names on various social media sites. The meaning of the word became “resister” in public use.



Symbols of Gezi Park, Anonymous, 2013



Taksim square volunteer medical help, Mstyslav Chernov, 2013

### Forming and informing

Already the first day it became evident that traditional media would ignore whatever was going on in the streets. The resistance spread to more than 20 cities and the speed of information flowing on the screens was way too fast to follow.

Following the changes in profile names, the hash tags came. (Pause for some language training: *diren* means “to resist” in Turkish). #direngezi was the one related to Gezi Park. All the neighbourhoods in Istanbul and cities in Turkey started to form their own hash tags. #direnbesiktas, #direnankara, #direneskisehir, #direnadana. Profiles that shared news from the streets were quickly formed and followed. The information flows started to form hubs.

The speed of online information and the uneasy feeling of turbulence began to form a risk of spreading misinformation. Online trolls were a known concept after all. Everyone became a volunteer journalist and the responsible attitudes we expected from journalists were our responsibility now. Confirming any information you came across before sharing it again became a constant struggle. When you see pictures of people in need of a doctor and also the phone number of a volunteer infirmary, you want to share it immediately. But no, you should call the number and quickly check it before doing anything.

In time, standards started to form. If you are the witness of what you are writing, then you also write *kesin bilgi*, which means it is definitive information. And then it is up to the receivers of course to re-distribute it. Another norm: you should not say “happening now!”, instead you

should type the time. You should be as clear as possible about the place, and hash tag it if possible. Pictures and videos are considered crucial, both in spreading the news and collecting evidence for judicial cases afterwards. And most importantly, you should keep yourself safe while reporting.

### Is this a Spring or an Occupy?

The ignorance of the mass media was so extensive that young people needed to call their parents and relatives in different towns to inform them. Not only uncles and aunts but the whole world should know about what was going on. I think it was done for two reasons: firstly, to put foreign pressure on the government to stop the police brutality<sup>8</sup> and secondly, because we could!

The collective memory we shared in the last years of the “Occupy” movement and the Arab Spring were not through television but through other channels of information. So it was in Istanbul. The Erasmus students in Istanbul shot a video and posted it on YouTube.<sup>9</sup> Facebook groups were informed.<sup>10</sup> Tweets were sent with occupy hash tags and in different languages. The word of resistance was out there for the world to see.

Wide-ranging responses were received. Videos from all over the world from support demonstrations started to arrive. Opinion leaders and artists started to post about the resistance. The uprising in Brazil added a whole different level to the feeling of international solidarity. My personal favourite video was from Egypt, recorded in the dark room of a young protester who shared his experience and comments on what the young resisters in Turkey should be careful of.

6. Lüküslü G.D., “La jeunesse turque actuelle: La fin du ‘mythe de la jeunesse’?”, EHESS, Paris, 2005.  
7. <http://www.taraf.com.tr/nese-duzel/makale-gulesin-nemutlu-yoruk-kurtaran-gencler.htm>. (In Turkish)

8. <http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/full-page-ad-for-turkish-democracy-in-action>  
9. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moYcEUHxTuY>  
10. <https://www.facebook.com/chapullinginternational>



## » #definitiveinfo #kesinbilgi – Young people informing young people

### Life and information in Gezi Park

The number of people staying in Gezi Park was in the thousands in a short time. And the first thing built was an information board, together with an infirmary. In time, as the police attacks started to subside, workshops, concerts and discussion forums took place.

Apart from the young people staying in Gezi Park, there were also others, volunteering to visit and then move to a place with Internet coverage and report, as coverage in the park was down for several days.

During the sit-in at the park, exam time arrived for high school students. As there were many high school students and university students or graduates living side by side, they quickly formed a “classroom” where older ones could tutor the younger ones for their exams.

At the 1st European Youth Work Convention in Ghent, a researcher said: “For young people nowadays, owning is not as cool as it used to be for previous generations. Now what is cool for them is to share.” Life at Gezi Park was proof of this statement with its library, stage, day care corner, classroom, food corner and tents. It was cool.

### Clark Kents are on the move

As the weeks passed by, apart from the heroes, heroines and others living in the park, many young people start to live a kind of “Clark Kent” life. All through the day, workers went to work and students went to school. And at the end of the day, all these people from different neighbourhoods start to walk to Taksim, together in groups of hundreds. And to different parks and squares in different cities too.

How were these walks organised? What was the information structure? For this part, I would dare to say, none. People were getting on with their daily stuff and then started to walk.

Night time was filled with encounters with police trying to block the way to the park, which became a given condition. But what was happening during the daytime?

### Humour and language

During the day, the pictures and videos from the previous night were being edited; websites and blogs were being updated; animations and illustrations were drawn.

Humour and laughter are powerful tools against a stubborn solid authority. Henri Bergson says in his book on laughter<sup>11</sup> that what is funny is the stiffness (where flexibility is needed), and laughter is the punishment to it.

At a time when people needed each other, the echo of laughter played a uniting role.

### So what about youth information?

If Gezi had not happened, I would probably have liked to write a *Coyote* article on “Who sets the agenda when informing youth?” What do young people need to know about? And what do we want young people to know about? Where is the pointer? Who holds it?

And in that imaginary article, I would probably argue that the expressed needs of young people should be setting the agenda so the pointer should be in their hands. If the need is jobs, let the information be on the topic of employment. If the need is expression, let the information be on the topic of art.

11. Bergson H., *An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, The Macmillan Company, 1911



After the experience with Gezi Park resistance, my position about agenda setting was not changed but more deeply seated. In the youth work field, we work a lot on skills and attitudes. Demanding, receiving and critically analysing information also require a certain set of skills, so does producing the information.

I believe it is time to provide means and support for young people to consolidate and share their own set of information. With the Gezi Park experience, I believe now more than ever that any structure which is not fast in giving a response, not participative or not clear will be resisted.

### The spirit

So here you are, at the last lines of this article. You know what? I would like to ask you to do something, if you will allow me? Think of something that bothers you. The best would be if you could think of a situation in which your participation was not allowed although the consequences would also affect you. It is probably a situation about which you were misinformed.

And now stand up.

Just stand up.

And think of what you will do next.





# Imaginary museum of possibly broken partnerships

by Mark E. Taylor and Marlies Pöschl



## Introductory imaginary text – Only some connection to reality is guaranteed!

*Driving with Coyote editorial team member, Davide, into Zagreb to work on the symposium, we started talking about romance in our lives. One thing led to another and we fell into a passionate embrace which would change our mutual futures forever! “My goodness,” we thought, “isn’t it romantic to work for the Partnership?!” And then we cast our thoughts into the next years and wondered what would life be like if the Partnership did not exist anymore? Suddenly the joy we had felt seemed to fly out of the side window of the taxi...*

*A couple of days later the remaining members of the editorial team – Matina, Marlies and I – decided to follow our instincts and make a pilgrimage to one of the remaining wonders of the modern world: The Museum of Broken Relationships.<sup>1</sup> Emotions ran high, as they do, and we decided to dedicate a couple of pages of the next Coyote to an imaginary world in which the Partnership ceased to exist. So we have asked people who, like us, have engaged passionately with this pioneering partnership in the youth field to provide us with an image, a story or a word which sums up their feelings... here we are.*



photo: Mark E. Taylor

## Peter Hofmann

TALE: I created this object at the end of Training Advanced Learners in Europe – guided by my intuition, feelings, state of being after this intense two-year journey. I do not really know what it should express but it resonated a lot with me; for a while afterwards it was a kind of personal logo. Somehow it has to do with growing, diversity, confusion ... all this and much more was present throughout TALE for me.



## Gisèle Evrard

Big. Strong. Literary.

If there are only three words to describe most of the memories I have of my co-operation with the Partnership and all the people who are linked to it, those would be the ones.

BIG in all ways possible: a big amount of work, big publications, big visions, big hearts, big projects, big hopes.

STRONG ideals, commitments, values, beliefs and people.

LITERARY... oh... that is another story... literary because of the publications, of course, and pages and pages of projects-to-be and thoughts-to-be, but also literary like poetry. And what all that co-operation brought me... but shhh...

And if you are wondering why Obelix is proudly standing on a keyboard, it is because that is the symbol I had chosen, among others, while starting the work on Coyote 20.

EXTREMELY motivating, challenging, puzzling at times, but so enjoyable.

Thank you, Partnership!





## Imaginary museum of possibly broken partnerships



Photo: Howard Williamson

### Howard Williamson

I was a member of the original Youth Partnership protocol on youth worker training in 1998. I have been involved with the work of the Youth Partnership ever since. My trusty little travel guitar, bought five years earlier, has always come with me. It was a prop when I spoke at the start of the All Different All Equal campaign in 2006, with the words in the image projected behind me. The author of those words – Cecil Patton, youth worker, musician and personal friend – had died of a stroke the week before at the age of 41. But, before and after his death, he contributed this song to the work of the Youth Partnership and the youth agenda across Europe. The Youth Partnership lies at the core and is the bridge between the values of the Council of Europe and the objectives of the European Union. A broken Partnership, like shattered glass, will produce a fragmented Europe. Whenever I think of the Partnership, I also think of Cecil's words.



Photo: Mark E. Taylor

### Mark E. Taylor

"Balls!" we said, in answer to a question from Balazs Hidveghi (then administrator for the Partnership) about what kind of gadget would be appropriate to use at the upcoming Bridges for Training conference, held in Brugge in 2001. He was a little perplexed, so we explained that trainers often use balls in training – for energisers, problem-solving exercises, learning to juggle, name games and the like. So we had a couple of hundred balls for distribution. I can still remember the looks of astonishment as Sonja Mitter opened the box during the "training fair" and rolled what looked like hundreds of oranges across the floor! Who knows where they all went and how many course participants had them in their hands? They were very good anti-stress balls as well. I still have these three: as you can see one of them looks a bit worse for wear as it was attacked by our old dog Othello. But that's another story...

### Charles Berg

#### About knots and nails

In my mind, one of the most beautiful books on my shelves is related to the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth. It is a first and numbered edition of Adriano Sofri's *Il nodo e il chiodo* [The knot and the nail] translated into German. My copy is numbered 3134.

One evening in the late 1990s, I was walking from the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg to a downtown restaurant. I was in the company of Hanjo Schild. We shared thoughts about what we were reading at the time, and he mentioned Sofri's work. I bought the book and for a long time it remained on my desk. I have never read it from the first to the last page, nor have I quoted from it. But very often I leaf through it and read a random paragraph.

Adriano Sofri was a former leader of the autonomist movement "Lotta Continua". Arrested in 1988, he spent several years in prison (see Ginzburg 2002). But above all he is a great intellectual and a philosophical writer with an amazing cultural sensitivity.

In the course of the years, I have become convinced that the Partnership is also about knotting, weaving and knitting. It is in need of both knots and nails, of both a right hand and a left hand. Very often opposite forces are interconnected. By labouring to enhance the Partnership's yin and yang, we can ensure its success and a long life under radically altering circumstances.

#### Further reading

Ginzburg, C.(2002), *The judge and the historian. Marginal notes on a late-twentieth-century miscarriage of justice*, Verso, London.  
Sofri, A. (1995), *Il nodo e il chiodo. Libro per la mano sinistra*. Sellerio (Fine secolo, 1), Palermo.  
Sofri, A. (1998), *Der Knoten und der Nagel. Ein Buch zur linken Hand*. Eichborn (Die andere Bibliothek, 160), Frankfurt am Main.



photo: Mark E. Taylor





# Perspectives on online youth information and counselling

by Jaana Fedotoff and Mika Pietilä

*According to one definition, the principal tasks of the youth information and counselling field are the provision of information, guidance and counselling to young people. How does this work change when it goes online? Do the approaches and requirements change from face-to-face meetings? What professional skills are emphasised and what are the prerequisites for online counselling? In this article, we attempt to address these questions by comparing face-to-face meetings with online meetings, and by considering the principles of the European Youth Information Charter. In this context, “web-based” or “online” youth counselling comprises both real-time and non-real-time guidance and counselling as well as extensive Internet-based information resources directed at young people.*



## Requirements for workers in web-based youth information and counselling

Besides national legislation and strategies, youth information and counselling services follow the sector’s European guidelines as found in the European Youth Information Charter (2004). In 2009, the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) adopted the European Principles for Online Youth Information. The provision of services is the act of providing access to information and counselling services for all young people. The aim is to guarantee the equality of access to information for all young people, regardless of their situation, ethnic background, gender or social category. Special attention should be paid to disadvantaged groups and to young people who may have specific needs. In addition, services should be easily accessible without any appointment being required, and the information available should be primarily based on young people’s needs. Each young person should be treated and respected as an individual and the response to his or her question should be personalised. It is also important that the services are free of charge and that information is given in a way that respects young people’s privacy.

In addition to the European principles, the heart of youth information and counselling services lies in children’s and young people’s right to access information, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Youth information and counselling services throughout Europe have also taken into consideration the European Union’s proposed Youth Strategy 2010-2018, the objective of which is to improve access to youth information and help disseminate information through all possible channels at local, regional and national levels.

Besides provision of information, guidance and counselling, web-based youth information and counselling services involve producing informational content on various themes for young people. This information deals with topics that relate to young people’s lives. Producing this informational content is challenging. Workers have to process all available knowledge and pick the relevant, usable and easily applicable pieces of accurate information. The skills of information management and handling of information and its deciphering will not necessarily have been in the curriculum during the youth worker’s professional training.

Youth workers that we have met in various training events have, in many cases, stated that their skills and expertise in working with young people in various web-based environments are not appropriate. There is not enough knowledge on the possibilities of social media services, and their technical skills are inadequate for working in an online environment. There is also uncertainty about real-time online interaction. However, the quantity, quality or availability of web-based services targeted at young people should not be dependent on whether or not workers possess adequate skills and expertise for web-based work. It is not enough to know various forums and platforms of social media; such knowledge should also be supplemented by a deeper understanding of the meaning of digital operating environments and cultures and their impact on individuals and communities. An overemphasis on tools only gets in the way and prevents a deeper vision of the work’s educational objectives.



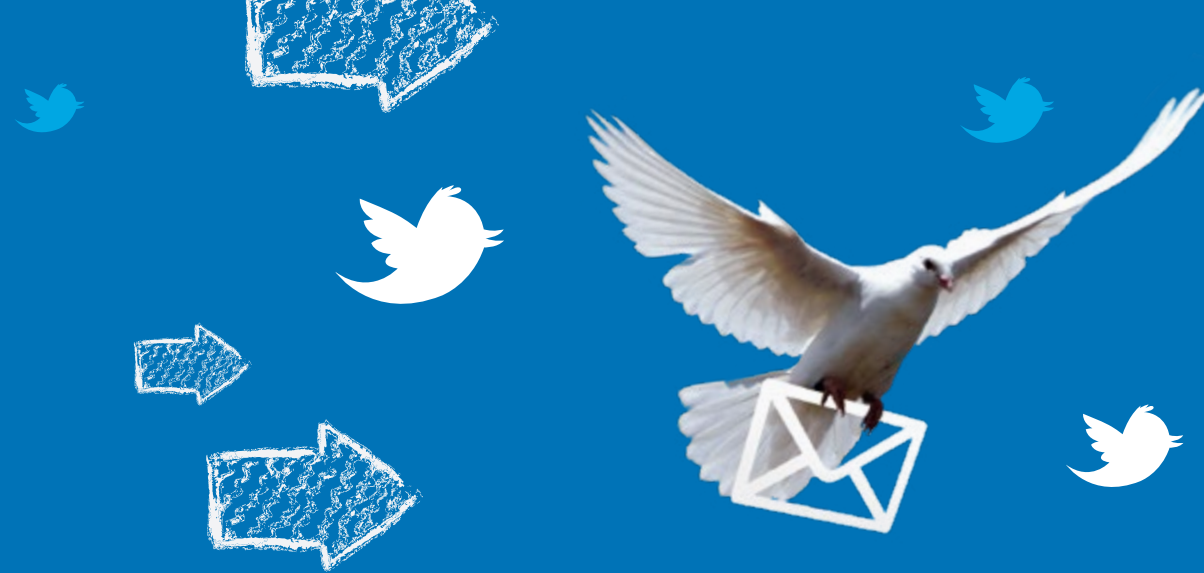


## Two types of web-based information services: real-time and non-real-time services

In recent years, the tools and channels of web-based youth information and counselling services have become more diverse. In addition to websites, social media also present new opportunities, and they have made available an expanding, diversifying matrix of services and organisations.

In Finland, within the existing web-based youth information services, questions from young people are mainly sent to non-real-time Q&A services. However, there are also services with a real-time chat function. When answering questions sent to a Q&A page, the youth information and counselling worker makes an assessment on the basis of the nature and topic of the question and his or her own professional experience and decides whether the approach to be adopted should be a guiding or a counselling one. It is possible that the worker may have to act in a situation where additional questions cannot be asked. A challenging feature in these services is that the gender, age, home town or home district of the person asking the question are not always known. The answer, however, must be written in such a manner that the customer receives enough information and can make an informed decision.

A much-debated issue among people working in youth information and counselling services is whether web-based and face-to-face services are essentially different, and if they are, where the difference is. Participants in the basic training course on youth information and counselling in Finland, arranged by “Koordinaatti”, considered the question of whether face-to-face situations are more challenging, in one respect or another, than contacts made by young people through non-real-time online services. The participants concluded that a particularly challenging feature in face-to-face situations is that the worker is immediately thrown into interaction. A guidance situation begins instantly, and even a little uncertainty about the subject or the situation may cause young people to grow anxious or hesitant about asking their questions. The worker’s skills and professional expertise are immediately at stake, and a professional support network is not always available. A web-based, non-real-time service is more forgiving in this respect, as it gives the worker time to think about the answer. A non-real-time service is often free of external, disturbing factors that may have a negative impact on the worker–customer interaction. When the topic was discussed with the participants of the basic training course, they also insisted on the fact that a web-based service, whether it is real-time or non-real-time, makes it possible to ask even sensitive questions, such as those dealing with sexuality. This may be an issue particularly in small towns where “everyone knows everyone else” and asking face-to-face questions may be more difficult for privacy reasons.



## Real-time service demands a lot from the worker

An example of real-time information and counselling services is a one-to-one chat service between the customer and the worker. Chat functions are provided in many web-based youth information and counselling services in Finland. Experience of one-to-one services has been encouraging. In these situations, well-functioning interaction is easy to achieve, and work can be based on a guidance approach. In this type of dialogue, the customer takes an active role in solving the problems under discussion. The worker then works to strengthen the recipient’s ability to function and avoids offering ready-made solutions. Factors that often limit the possibility of offering real-time online services are limited resources and the practical organisation of the service. A real-time online service needs specified business hours, and it always demands personnel resources and premises at certain times of day. The required IT facilities must also be available.

What has been perceived as challenging in real-time services is the dialogue with a young person in an acute crisis situation and the support and help provided to them. The worker’s experience and expertise and agreed courses of action contribute to a quick understanding of the situation and a

subsequent solution, as does a good knowledge of the youth support and crisis services. Also, the fact that support and crisis work specialists are available helps to shorten the time it takes to assist the customer. Emergency and crisis situations are always unique, and much depends on what information the customer provides for the worker to have an overview of the situation. The worker should ask further, tentative questions in order to assess whether the situation is genuine and how serious it is, where the person is, whether there are any other people present, what sort of mood the person is in and whether there are any adults nearby. The purpose of this is to offer the young person mental support, give confidence and advice for a possible resolution of the matter, as well as help to find the individual or the organisation that can provide the most appropriate assistance in the situation. Solving emergency and crisis situations is challenging and mentally strenuous for workers. Often there is no certainty that the young person has followed the advice given, and the case may haunt the worker for a long time. It is crucial that workers have the possibility of discussing such cases – for example, in regular, supervised sessions. Peer discussions relating to young people’s questions and situations are also necessary in the working community. Regular, high-quality training for workers guarantees high-quality dialogue and supports workers’ well-being at work.





## What does quality mean in web-based youth information and counselling?

In web-based guidance and counselling, quality assurance is another challenging area. This is a particularly acute question if young people's questions are answered by several people, but common principles for answering questions do not exist or are not known. An example of this could, for instance, be where one worker thinks that an URL without any further information is an adequate answer, while another collects information from several sources, checks the accuracy of the sources, uses them to draw up a reliable, comprehensive answer to the question and, if necessary, refers the person asking the question to an appropriate specialist. Which answer is better quality and who should assess it?

As a rule, the quality is assessed by the young person who asked the question. It is, however, reasonable to ask whether young people are able to demand enough information and whether the worker is able to provide it without this being specifically requested. The objectives of web-based youth information and counselling services are young people's educational guidance and strengthening their social identity. Quality can also be measured by assessing how the counselling and guidance provided contribute to these objectives.

Workers' expertise concerning matters related to young people's lives and pedagogical skills play a key role in web-based work. All guidance and counselling, whether they take place online or face-to-face, should be based on the educational targets set for youth information and counselling so that they provide support for young people and guarantee equal opportunities for all of them. In addition to an educational approach, familiarity with the possibilities of the online world is important. These elements of professional expertise make up the foundation for high-quality work, in web-based services and elsewhere.

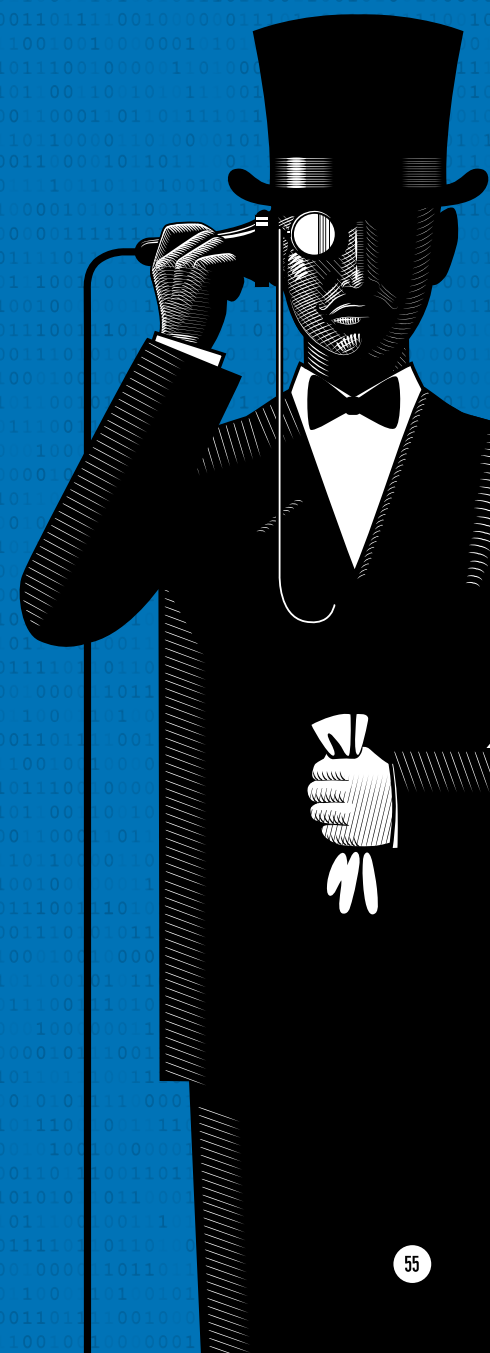
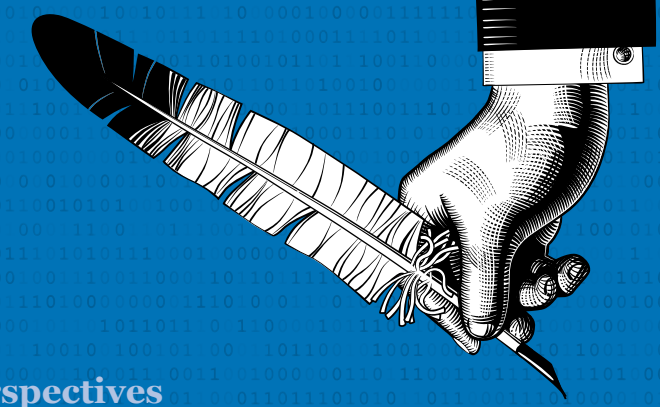


## Future outlooks and perspectives

If Facebook pages are the only available youth information and counselling tool, this does not meet the criteria for high-quality provision of information, guidance and counselling. However, social media services can be utilised in supporting provision of information in youth information and counselling work. It is important that the provision of youth information and counselling services also takes into account local service points. Some youth information and counselling service providers have, often in co-operation with young people, developed new approaches to youth guidance and counselling. These services are suitably complemented by web-based services that help make guidance and counselling available even to young people who live in remote areas. In addition, they are available to young people who, due to one limiting factor or other, cannot use their local services. For them, web-based youth information and counselling services constitute an important source of information and support.

Web-based services – in particular, the utilisation of social media – have improved availability. In the future, multi-disciplinary and inter-professional co-operation will play a key part in the planning and development of web-based services. Mutual dialogue is important, if not crucial, in order to avoid the duplication and oversupply of services.

Development of the necessary additional services related to local and web-based services is important from the perspective of equal access. It is impossible to predict future technical progress and the associated possibilities, but it is likely that the development of web and mobile services will open up many new options. Society expects even young people to be critical media users and to be able to adopt new things quickly, solve complex problems and collect information independently, but in planning and implementing these services, a customer-orientated approach and interactivity should be kept in mind.





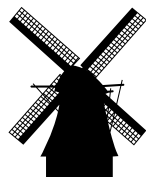


# Youth information worker: a profile

by Imre Simon



Photo: Information Right Now! Ioana



*What do the Belgian guy who once wanted to avoid the obligatory military service, the Slovenian one who wished to escape the national bank and the Dutch former lighting technician have in common? They all excel in their field: youth information.*

Even though the urge to change careers is not an obligatory part of becoming a good youth information worker, it is frequent and enriching. Just like several other professions, youth

information and counselling is a job that is best learnt by doing. What is more, besides possessing knowledge and skills, it requires a certain personality and approach. This is one of the reasons why I set out to describe the “unofficial” profile of youth information workers in this article.

The above-mentioned variety does not only benefit youth information and counselling but it exemplifies some peculiarities of this profession. The first youth information centre was opened in 1961 and as the concept spread, its pioneer professionals did not follow a regular training or career path. Specific training in formal education was not provided until recent years and even though formal training is available in most European countries at the moment, it usually concerns youth work in general and covers youth information and counselling as a minor part

of it. To our knowledge, no academic degree is currently available that explicitly focuses on youth information, thus coming from different fields is still common, and rather beneficial.

The reason for this is that much in counselling depends on the person. Just as there is no such thing as good or bad language schools but good or bad language teachers, it is not youth information centres that do the job; it is the youth information worker. That’s why face-to-face counselling is a unique service.

Let’s see what the necessary soft skills are for a youth information worker. The best place to find this out is among the practitioners themselves. At one point participants of ERYICA training courses are asked to “design” the ideal youth information worker. You can see some of their results among the illustrations on these pages.

A recurrent element is open-mindedness, which incorporates other characteristics such as interest, tolerance, knowing one’s possibilities as well as limits and most importantly respect towards the young person. It might be surprising that such soft skills are put in the foreground but this exemplifies our preceding statement that personality outweighs a degree.



## The body of our youth information worker



### THE HAND

- a combination of good planning and flexibility
- good communication skills
- use of communication and counselling techniques — in practice
- fast action and constant updates
- the ability of giving without asking
- active listening
- teamwork skills
- solid and confident action
- respect of confidentiality and gaining trust

### THE HEAD

- knowledge about people, institutions, tools and methods, the current situation and issues for young people
- critical thinking
- motivation for lifelong learning
- filtering, selection and assessment of information
- ideally specific youth information training
- ...and yes, an open mind!

### THE HEART

- a welcoming attitude
- a positive approach, charisma
- patience
- care
- respect
- guidance and advice

*No profession can be fulfilled without specific knowledge; let’s then take a look at training content.*

Many training courses are designed to prepare youth information workers. Their content can be grouped under four major topics, namely:

- 1 historical and theoretical background and principles of youth information work;
- 2 youth information in practice;
- 3 communication and work with young people;
- 4 evaluation, promotion, quality control and possibilities for development.



## Youth information worker: a profile

### 1. HISTORY

Knowing one's history is important in every situation and a relatively young profession is no exception to that. In our case, the beginning of this history dates back only to the days when the specific needs of young people were recognised. Do you remember the Beatles? Their hairstyles provoked scandals but they were wearing suits and ties – just like everyone else those days. It is just after this time that young people were recognised as a distinct target group and that is when our history starts. The principles of the European Youth Information Charter (1993, revised in 2004) and the Principles for Online Youth Information (2009) also deserve mention here.

### 2. YOUTH INFORMATION IN PRACTICE

On the practice side, youth information workers need to be aware of young people's information needs (a constantly moving target), find and select quality information, organise and design it appropriately for the target group and – the most difficult of all – get it through to them.

### 3. COMMUNICATION - THE ART OF WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Besides the knowledge of communication techniques and principles, the particular setting of counselling requires confidence in one's professionalism, having sensitive topics, trust and confidentiality issues in mind. A youth counsellor also needs to be an excellent diplomat, as the real issues of young people are usually not spoken out directly but can be deduced.

### 4. QUALITY, PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT

A particularly important aspect is quality. Guidelines, insurance, control, (self-) assessment, logos and seals of approval are being created to ensure the same quality in youth information networks – a service that has to be promoted as well as constantly developed – just as everything else. In the beginning of this article we mentioned some examples of youth information workers who had unusual career paths. This variety is present on the "other side of the counter" too, as information is not always obtained from people who provide it as a profession. Youth workers are present in most countries of Europe, even though they work in different contexts and carry out different activities. Some of them provide information on free-time activities, others work in a country-specific system of youth houses or "playgrounds", whereas others hit the streets and go where the target group is. They all work with young people and as soon as they earn their confidence, they receive questions and they are expected to provide answers. We call these colleagues, from the youth information and counselling point of view, youth information mediators or "Jimmies".

This concept is of Dutch origin, hence the name "Jongeren Informatie Medewerker" (or Jimmy). Its underlying principle is the creation of a bridge between youth work and youth information, increasing the outreach of the latter, as well as the capacities of the former. Jimmies are trained to provide basic youth information, as part of their work, in a professional way as well as in co-operation with youth information centres.

The characteristics of the two ways of providing youth information are compared in the table below:

| YOUTH INFORMATION WORKER                                                               | YOUTH INFORMATION MEDIATOR (JIMMY)                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| works at a youth information centre                                                    | works as a youth worker in various settings, in a youth house, street work, outreach work, etc.             |
| the main scope of work is the provision of youth information and counselling           | works with young people and provides youth information and counselling as an implicit part of this activity |
| is more confronted with young people's "difficulties" and challenges during growing up | accompanies young people during a certain period                                                            |
| provides information, offers counselling                                               | is asked for information and advice                                                                         |
| focuses on one particular person at a time                                             | often works with groups of people                                                                           |
| "piece work", short cycle                                                              | sees the development of a young person                                                                      |
| has several tools (materials, web, techniques...)                                      | refers to the youth information centre                                                                      |
| youth information is the core activity                                                 | youth information is a tool for youth work                                                                  |

These two groups are the main professional providers of youth information and counselling. As our recent experience shows, the co-operation between them is interesting for both parties involved and most importantly, benefits young people.

In its relatively short history, youth information and counselling work has already undergone a fundamental change. Instead of youth information centres being a "storeroom" of information, giving ultimate answers to those who request it, youth information workers now help young people find their way in the information jungle and provide face-to-face counselling which is unique in the field. And most probably, changes for youth information workers will be faster than ever – because this is the case for their target group.

To succeed in this, undergraduates are prepared by the former Welsh punk, once a regular and admittedly problematic visitor of a youth centre, who now teaches future youth workers at the University of Birmingham. This is what youth information and counselling is all about: not only a change of careers but a change of life.







# How do the regional SALTOs see youth information?

by Andriy Pavlovych, Bernard Abrignani, Federica Demicheli and Sonja Mitter. Compiled by Mark E. Taylor

*Within the Youth in Action programme, the regional SALTO resource centres have a crucial role to play in informing all actors about the opportunities available to them. Ranging from South-East Europe to the Meda region and Eastern Europe and Caucasus. Coyote asked them to consider what was specific in their different approaches to youth information. Here are their answers.*

## SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus (EECA)

Andriy Pavlovych

**1) What does your SALTO youth information strategy consist of? How did you develop it? Is it different from the other Regional SALTOs? How does it foresee interaction with stakeholders in the region?**

SALTO EECA's youth information strategy is based on three pillars: Internet resources (a website, e-Newsletter, Facebook, etc.), printed materials (leaflets, booklets, *Youth in 7* magazine, educational reports, etc.) and people-to-people contacts (presentations, consulting, sharing good practices, etc.).

SALTO EECA is the youngest regional resource centre (established in October 2003), therefore we were in a more comfortable situation as we could learn from the experience of our colleagues of the SALTO EuroMed and SALTO SEE. First we started to develop Internet resources and at that time it was in English only. We also started to work on printed materials and in this case, we tried to do our best to be as multilingual as possible. The EECA region is the most multilingual EU Neighbouring Partner region: seven countries, seven languages, four alphabets and four totally different linguistic families. Russian is still the most popular language in the EECA region (due to the common post-Soviet heritage), on the other hand a lot of young people in Caucasus countries do not speak Russian fluently anymore; they prefer to speak English. This is why a common solution is to have bilingual English/Russian publications.

The most ambitious task was to prepare the ambassadors – we call them multipliers – who will be ready to inform and to promote the opportunities for international youth co-operation within the EU's youth programme. The network of multipliers was established in the beginning of 2005 and is now the main structure we use for implementation of the SALTO EECA's youth information strategy in the region.<sup>1</sup>



Multipliers are our experts from the region who know how to inform and how to promote the EU's youth programme according to the reality in their countries and regions. They represent the NGOs where they have implemented activities within the EU's youth programme, so they have the proper insight. The multipliers sometimes introduce themselves as "information representatives of the YiA Programme" (because it sounds more official, in Russian the term "multipliers" has a strong association to a cartoon maker 😊) and they involve national and local youth policy stakeholders in their co-operation. We have many examples where, thanks to our multipliers, the SALTO EECA developed co-operation with national governmental institutions on youth affairs. Also, we have implemented together various educational and promotional activities (study visits, conferences, etc.) to involve more national and local stakeholders in international and pan-European co-operation.

**2) What do you consider the major challenges in your region in being a provider of youth information about the Youth in Action programme? What have been your solutions to those challenges?**

The major challenges:

**Multilingualism** and how to avoid linguistic barriers. I answered this question above. I would just like to emphasise that the best way is to organise workshops on sharing good practices when people meet other people from their countries who have already experienced international youth co-operation. It helps a lot to understand that, "Yes! We can!" 😊

**Target group.** How to identify the target groups? For example, young people from rural and deprived urban areas (the priority groups for the eastern partnership "Youth Window"). We have organised a few international educational activities for these specific target groups, but it was very difficult to approach and to recruit people from these areas. So, we decided to organise some local activities in their national languages, which we believe will prove to be more user friendly.

**Political situation of the country.** For example, Belarus, which is not even a Council of Europe member state. How do you promote European

values in such a country? Our solution was to avoid calling them European! In general, it is better to focus on social inclusion than on youth participation. The main conclusion is that the specific youth information strategy has to be decided on with the local youth policy/youth sector actors. Also, we have to remember the safety of our local partners who are involved in information and promotion activities.

**3) What have you learnt – if anything – from your colleagues' and regional stakeholders' experience in youth information from the other regional SALTOs?**

As I mentioned, we are the youngest SALTO, so we learnt a lot! First of all, we have analysed the SALTO EuroMed and SALTO SEE Internet resources and printed materials. The European Commission also organised the meeting of the regional SALTO RCs in 2005 where we had the opportunity to discuss the similarities and differences in our information strategies. From that time we started to co-operate more closely. We also learnt a lot from the local structures developed by SALTO SEE (such as contact points) and by the SALTO EuroMed (such as multipliers).

**4) If you had one thing which you could implement to improve things in the future, what would it be? (Always bearing in mind that we don't know exactly what the structure of Erasmus+ will be!)**

We should pay more attention to the development of multilingual e-tools for partnership building in the field of youth. It seems that e-materials get to a wider target group and printed materials might disappear soon.

**5) Anything else you would like to add?**

The youth information strategy has to be relevant to the capacity of the region and at the same time it should be in accordance with the capacity of the EU's programmes in the youth field for the Neighbouring Partner regions.

1. More information about this structure is available at [www.saltoyouth.net/rc/eeca/eeคามultipliers/](http://www.saltoyouth.net/rc/eeca/eeคามultipliers/)



## How do the regional SALTOs see youth information?

### SALTO EuroMed

Bernard Abrignani and  
Federica Demicheli

**1) What does your SALTO youth information strategy consist of? How did you develop it? Is it different from the other regional SALTOs? How does it foresee interaction with stakeholders in the region?**

The information strategy is based on general and common activities with the other SALTOs such as:  
📧 newsletters (EuroMed and Tools for Learning)  
📖 magazines (*Meet In EuroMed* and *Tools for Learning*)  
🌐 website

I don't know if it is specific but apart from our Facebook page and Twitter we have a Facebook page for each activity, usually managed by our participants, and we use them to inform our former participants.

We have also one specific video for each of our activities uploaded on Vimeo and on the Facebook page of each activity, for example on YouTube.

In our specific case, there is intense work done with the stakeholders in the region based on one-to-one meetings and the development of ad hoc projects on very important topics for the region (government level, national information sessions, EU Directorate Generals DEVCO and EAC, the Youth Partnership, UNESCO, etc.)

Each publication is sent to different people, mainly stakeholders, and according to the topic and language. Not all of them are sent to same people.

The fact that we publish mainly in English, French and Arabic is part of our strategy to avoid any kind of exclusion!

We have also started new training courses for the multipliers in Meda countries through RCBS but that will bring added value to the SALTO EuroMed network; approximately 30 people (youth leaders, youth workers) in already four of the eight countries.

In each of our activities we introduce the SALTO network and the Youth in Action programme, and recently the new Erasmus+ programme.



**2) What do you consider the major challenges in your region in being a provider of youth information about the Youth in Action programme? What have been your solutions to those challenges?**

The major challenges are:

- 1) an unstable political situation that does not allow for the development of an information strategy and which brings more fragility;
- 2) the turnover of people working in the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Unit or in some reference NGOs.

The idea of creating a national multipliers group is part of the new strategy based more on NGOs than on stakeholders.

One important matter also is to help participants from Meda countries by selecting them and paying their travel costs, in many cases we do this with national agencies.

**3) What have you learnt – if anything – from your colleagues' and regional stakeholders' experience in youth information from the other regional SALTOs?**

The idea and methodology of EVS accreditation, but we will need to adapt to the cultural and political situation in the region and in each country!

**4) If you had one thing which you could implement to improve things in the future, what would it be? (Always bearing in mind that we don't know exactly what the structure of Erasmus+ will be!)**

EVS strategy including accreditation for hosting, sending and training of mentors as a way to create qualitative and sustainable co-operation between NGOs from both sides; never forget that our slogan is "bringing both sides together"!

**5) Anything else you would like to add?**

Never forget that social media networks played a role in the recent Arab Spring; they were used as channel for information and a forum for exchange.

That's why we have to adapt our information strategy to the different target groups we have and to use the existing tools that are used especially by young people.



## How do the regional SALTOs see youth information?

### South-East Europe Sonja Mitter

(Please note: Sonja wanted to tackle the last question first – for reasons which will become obvious as you read on...)

#### 5) Anything else you would like to add?

Before talking about strategy and challenges, maybe it's worth saying this.

Generally speaking, we can be proud of what has been reached throughout the past years. For a couple of years already, many good applications for Youth in Action projects have been submitted by and with partners from South-Eastern Europe; the budget is sufficient only for granting about one third of them, and there are continuously new organisations from this region using the possibilities offered by the programme. Information has found its way through the world of youth work in this part of Europe.

Our youth information strategy in SEE, built by local stakeholders, has been an essential part of promoting and supporting the Youth in Action programme in this region. While SALTO SEE manages to reach annually some 100-150 participants by directly involving them in European support activities where they can learn more about the programme and how to use it, via its local stakeholders an additional 300-600 young people, youth leaders or other interested people are directly participating in local information and training activities. An additional, higher number receives information from national information

providers via the Internet or promotional activities of a more general nature. It might be hard to define concrete outcomes, but without a doubt, SALTO SEE could not have done it alone, without an information strategy based on local/national stakeholders.

If I had one more thing to add, it would be an example of good practice. The Youth in Action information strategy has been working most successfully in Serbia, where several interlinked developments and conditions have contributed to its success. The work of the contact points (see point 1 below) has been carried out reliably for many years, with great commitment, competence and efficiency. It has been embedded in a strong and politically active youth work scene and has been able to rely on a co-ordinated and strong network of trainers and multipliers. Importantly, the process has benefitted from stable and quite substantial financial and political support from the Serbian Ministry of Youth and Sport, which has taken on board interests from the non-governmental youth sector in the formulation and implementation of national youth policy and has integrated the promotion of the Youth in Action programme into its policy. This shows that a strategy of providing information and support relies strongly on the competences and capacities of the information providers but also on the framework in which they can operate, namely interaction with other local stakeholders and social and political recognition of their work.

There have been positive developments in all other countries of the region (which I will not mention at this point), albeit to different degrees. The situation is not equally successful in all countries and there is still a lot left to be done.

#### 1) What does your SALTO youth information strategy consist of? How did you develop it? Is it different from the other regional SALTOs? How does it foresee interaction with stakeholders in the region?

Our youth information strategy in SEE is based on several **basic assumptions**:

1. Any strategy regarding information about Youth in Action in SEE aims to reach potential project organisers and enable them to use the programme. It needs to include promotion (creating a need for information), information (general + target-specific), advice/counselling and training.
2. There is a lack of existing youth information structures that can be used for the purpose of providing information about YiA.
3. Information should be provided by locals who have a good understanding of the local (youth work) reality, speak the local language and are close to the target group.
4. Information providers should be structures (organisations) rather than individuals, in order to ensure higher sustainability. However, the experience of individuals in charge of providing the information is essential.

Our **information strategy** is based on organisations that are nominated by SALTO SEE as "Contact Points for the Youth in Action programme" (since 2005) in (if possible) every country of SEE, which are partially supported by the national governments (Serbia). In addition, in the field of EVS there are accreditors (information to EVS sending and host organisations, since 2006) and trainers of EVS volunteers (information to volunteers, since 2007); SALTO SEE has

also been directly co-ordinating and organising support activities in SEE countries (based on perceived needs and interests) as well as co-organised European support activities (partially targeted, partially general according to requests). Since 2010, SALTO has organised annual working meetings with national ministries in charge of youth issues from SEE, recognising the important role they play in supporting and giving recognition to YiA information strategy and information providers in their countries. While accreditors come from SEE countries and other European countries to ensure a European dimension in the accreditation process, trainers and contact points are, with some exceptions, from SEE countries.

Exchange of information between the different pools and actors and development of jointly agreed principles and standards have been found to be essential. There are regular (annual or bi-annual) working meetings of pools of contact points, accreditors and trainers, separately as well as all multipliers together. Meetings serve to share information, experiences, challenges and realities, and to review aims and objectives for further information and support in the region. Regular public calls serve to renew pools and assess interest in the region. Integration of new members into the pools and training of new multipliers on the job aim to develop multipliers and information providers based in all countries of SEE.

The information strategy was developed taking into account demands made by the programme, and needs and possibilities perceived in the region (what worked, what didn't, trial and error method); it was based originally on a formal needs assessment process in 2004 and 2005 (contact points), since then there has been constant discussion with stakeholders. Roles and activities provided should reflect stability and continuity as well as development and change.



## How do the regional SALTOS see youth information?

### 2) What do you consider the major challenges in your region in being a provider of youth information about the Youth in Action programme? What have been your solutions to those challenges?

#### Challenges NOT in order of priority:

- 👉 lack of existing youth information structures that could take up this role, at least partially;
- 👉 lack of capacities and/or competences of potential information providers in this specific field;
- 👉 the situation is becoming increasingly different in every country, thus demanding a specific approach;
- 👉 lack of motivation of organisations to take up this demanding role, very limited financial support; (need for additional financial support from other/national sources, mostly missing), sustainability of contact point role/work is a challenge;
- 👉 spirit of competition over resources, sharing of information within established informal (politically influenced) networks rather than via official structures;
- 👉 lack of social and political recognition of youth work and non-formal learning.

#### Some attempted solutions:

- 👉 adapting the role and tasks of contact points over time, defining specific tasks of an organisation rather than an overall role to fulfil;
- 👉 efforts to reach out to national authorities in charge of youth to increase recognition;
- 👉 defining more flexible approaches where needed (organising additional activities involving other actors, especially in countries where developed strategies meet the most challenges);
- 👉 using resources from one country to support youth information strategy in another, using examples of good practice;
- 👉 we are still searching for the perfect solution!



### 3) What have you learnt – if anything – from your colleagues' and regional stakeholders' experience in youth information from the other regional SALTOS?

There are different realities that are not immediately comparable in regard to the recognition of the Youth in Action programme and SALTO in the region, youth work and youth policy, existing youth information structures, etc. Different realities demand different solutions.

Approaches taken by each SALTO are quite different but have some similarities. Sustainability of efforts is a challenge for all SALTOS in their region. There are differences within each region which demand specific approaches.

### 4) If you had one thing which you could implement to improve things in the future, what would it be? (Always bearing in mind that we don't know exactly what the structure of Erasmus+ will be!)

At this point we do not know yet if we will be free to select our Youth in Action information strategy in the future European youth programme. Possibly, all information about the different programmes will be dealt with jointly via existing (or to be created??) EU structures in the partner regions. If we had one wish, it would be to keep the possibility to define our approach, using specific multipliers/information providers and the developed capacities and competences. Ideally, they could be linked to, or co-operating with, established EU offices in the region.

Our key words in any future youth information strategy should be **SUSTAINABILITY** and **FLEXIBILITY** (to respond to different and changing needs in a changing region). Last but not least, we need to use the existing resources that we have in the region even better, across the different countries.



# Vox Pop

## Tell me how it works there and I'll see how it can work here

by Matina Magkou

Images by Marlies Pöschl



*When you bring together people working in the same field, it is unavoidable: plenary presentations, workshops, corridor conversations are about models, ideas, projects that are implemented in a certain location of the European geography. All this with the aim of learning from each other, right? Now, to what extent does something that is happening in another country/region / city becomes a source of inspiration for our work? Do events, like the "Symposium on the role of information and counselling in fostering young people's social inclusion and access to their rights", actually help people get new ideas by listening to what is happening elsewhere? And would they actually try to "copy-paste" or adapt these ideas to their own realities?*

*Matina Magkou talked to different participants at the symposium to get some answers and understand what has been an inspiring "coming-from-elsewhere" moment for them either throughout their involvement in youth information and counselling services so far, or during this event.*



**1. Jelena Miljanic**  
currently working at the UN Co-ordination Office in Montenegro, at the time working in the Forum Montenegro NGO as co-ordinator of the youth information and resource centre

Our colleagues from Slovenia (MISSS (Youth information counselling centre)) opened the doors for youth information and counselling development in Montenegro by hosting a study visit to their organisation and other youth information services in Slovenia. This fostered our partnership with EYRICA which introduced a network of professionals and organisations that has accompanied our efforts. Seeing and experiencing youth information in practice helped us plan and implement our work. Back at that time, Slovenia was the closest Balkan country with developed youth information systems and these similar realities helped by sharing experiences that could be implemented in our country.

**2. Nela Sladojevic**  
Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport of the Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina (nela.sladojevic@gmail.com)

I have seen that several youth centres in Belgium have workers to reach out to people on the street. This is an important approach because the majority of young people would not come to the youth centre themselves and it is important to reach non-organised youth, especially those that are most in need. In my country only 7% of young people are members of youth organisations or are using services of youth organisations. Also, in Belgium, they have invested in rural youth information services, which are needed in my country although not yet recognised by local governments as a priority. We are currently developing quality standards for youth centres in the Republic of Srpska, and my international experience and exposure are helping me in this work.



**3. Manana Kavtaradze**  
Head of the International Relations Division, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia (mancho.pietila@oujka.fi)

A conversation with Jorge Orlando Queirós from the Portuguese Youth Institute has been an inspiration for me. The way they reached young people in rural areas using info buses full of information related to youth (sexual education, scholarships, mobility opportunities, etc.) was an idea that we are trying to implement in Georgia right now. In Georgia there are many rural areas where young people don't have access even to the Internet. With music, fireworks and promotional material we try to attract them and address their needs. We are still looking for creative ideas. If Coyote readers have suggestions, write to me!





## » Vox Pop – Tell me how it works there and I'll see how it can work here



### 4. Antonio Saccone CEO of the International Institute for Sustainable Development Policy and Diplomacy of Sport in Slovenia ([antonio.saccone@spolint.org](mailto:antonio.saccone@spolint.org))

I work in an association dealing with sports and social change. After coming to this symposium and listening to colleagues from other countries, I am convinced that our activity makes sense and sports and outdoor games can actually contribute to the counselling of young people. Listening to the experiences from other countries and sectors I realised that a coach or a co-ordinator of a sports club has a social and educational role and he or she has to be trained in that. I came here without a lot of awareness and now I think that our mission is compatible with youth information. It has been a learning experience and a motivation that we are on the right track!

### 5. Albion Zeka researcher at University of Pristina and youth expert, Kosovo ([albionzeka@gmail.com](mailto:albionzeka@gmail.com))

I come from Kosovo where youth information is at level 0: there is no structure, no infrastructure, no funding. Coming to this symposium was inspiring for me to see that there are networks that help you start things and people that are offering to help. This symposium helped me to find out which people I could seek advice from. And it also raised a question: how can we ensure that we are giving the right to information to all young people and at the same time have personalised information services? At least I know the question now – the million dollar answer will come afterwards. But now I know colleagues from around Europe that I can ask!



### 6. Claudia Reis National Co-ordinator, Youth Information and Counselling Centres, Portuguese Sport and Youth Institute ([claudia.reis@ipdj.pt](mailto:claudia.reis@ipdj.pt))

Evaldas from Lithuania shared with us a dynamic and empowering Youth in Action project called "I know it all". This initiative promotes information on youth mobility and European opportunities through journalism. Through this project, a young person becomes a journalist in a foreign country, gathers information and resources and reports on his or her experience. This activity also enhances social inclusion because it gives access to knowledge about the society and the cultural reality that otherwise would be difficult to get. Thank you, Evaldas! I will see how we can do this in Portugal as well!



### 7. Ibai Guirles France Bénévolat. International projects co-ordinator ([l.guirles@francebenevolat.org](mailto:l.guirles@francebenevolat.org))

Even though I am active around Europe participating in a number of youth projects, I was impressed to see how young people were involved, engaged and supported in a *Jugend Hausen* in a small rural area in Germany (Bühl, Tübingen) a few years ago. It showed me that this structure was responding to the needs of the local population and the municipality. The young people that were there had the opportunity to share; there were moments where a youth worker was with them but also moments when they were alone to take decisions and express themselves in their own way. I use this experience in different moments in assessments I do for municipalities and stakeholders regarding youth information and counselling.

### 8. Pepe Moreno Youth Information Network, Directorate General for Employment and Youth in Castilla La Mancha, Spain ([jmoreno@spolint.org](mailto:jmoreno@spolint.org))

Considering the framework in which I work, a local government in a country that has very high unemployment rates, I was impressed by the project presented by Estonia. The information they were giving, the experiences that they had, showed me how much can be achieved through a local centre and that can be transported to a youth centre. In the formal education system all this cannot be achieved; that's why we need to find ways of collaboration to help young people in their professional development.



### 9. Evaldas Rupkus Lithuanian Youth Council (LiJOT) ([evaldas@eurodesk.it](mailto:evaldas@eurodesk.it))

Listening to the keynote speech of Fiona McIntyre from Scotland, I was inspired by the co-design approach in information and counselling services. This means that youngsters should not only be the recipients of information and counselling services, but they have a big role to play in the planning and evaluation stages and should be fully integrated. I also think that Jan from Bosnia and Herzegovina made a good point: the role of Eurodesk in the South-Eastern Europe region should be further explored to provide more information opportunities to young people from the region. Why start all over again if we already have a lot to build on?





## »» Vox Pop – Tell me how it works there and I'll see how it can work here



**10. Lana Gorianzky**  
BREZA youth NGO, Croatia  
([lane.gorianzky@gmail.com](mailto:lane.gorianzky@gmail.com))

I liked the project BYSTRÖM that was put in place in Finland and it is a good example of how institutions should be connected. I hope that one day we'll have something similar in Croatia because it is a very useful and needed system for youth.

The European youth portal ([http://europa.eu/youth/EU\\_en](http://europa.eu/youth/EU_en)) got my attention because I think that most young people in Croatia don't know about it and it has excellent information that is very useful. I hope my opinion helped you and I want to congratulate you for being so wonderful in this symposium. You were so open and everybody could talk to you and find out all the information they needed. Well done! Keep up the good work!

**11. Andres Lokk**  
Youth Work Centre, Estonia  
([andres.lokk@entk.ee](mailto:andres.lokk@entk.ee))

Every time I travel to a meeting or to visit colleagues in other countries, this works as a time for "reflection" for me. I see what other people are doing, what the realities are in the different countries and I feel proud that in Estonia we have good structures and good support from the government side. Still the issue that arises when we discuss with colleagues is that we still have a lot of work to do in order to achieve social inclusion of all young people through information and counselling. I like the Finnish idea that in the same space young people can find different services for what they need.



**12. Margarita Kotenko**  
Projects co-ordinator in the  
National Youth Council of Moldova  
([margarita.kotenko@cntm.md](mailto:margarita.kotenko@cntm.md))

I remember some years ago, when I started to be active in the youth field, many participants at the seminars, workshops and training courses were bragging about how many international activities they had attended.

During this symposium I was glad to observe that many youth NGOs and services are focusing on the "hard-to-reach" youngsters. The idea of involving the vulnerable groups is in the air and hopefully with combined efforts we will succeed in empowering the isolated and include the excluded youngsters.



**13. Ivona Separovic**  
ZAMISLI association for promoting  
quality education for youth with disabilities

In Austria, they have a fabulous system and as a young person with disabilities you can get all the information that you need. In Croatia, when you want to ask something which is connected to health conditions or education or something else, you cannot get the right answers easily. Awareness is the key point: if you know what you need to know, then you can ask it! This should also be the role of information and counselling services, because if you don't know how to express your needs, then you are stuck in a box.



**14. Robiu Salisu**  
Clic Online, Wales Youth Ambassador  
([chatwithrobinson@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:chatwithrobinson@hotmail.co.uk))

One of this things I've learnt at this symposium is about the two projects currently taking place in Estonia. The projects are called "switch on" and "getting started" and their aim is to get young people back into employment. I look forward to sharing this idea with my organisation and seeing if there is a way we can use a similar method to face youth unemployment in Wales.





# Working one to one with young people

What can youth support workers learn from their therapeutic counselling colleagues?

by Jane Westergaard



## Introduction

The current state of the global economy means that many young people are facing particularly challenging times. The difficulties inherent in navigating a safe course through the turbulence of adolescence and making sense of their own physical, emotional, social and psychological development, are exacerbated in an environment where the landscape relating to education, employment and training opportunities appears to be increasingly bleak. At times like these, “youth support workers” (a generic term encompassing a range of roles involved in supporting young people; youth workers, counsellors, mentors, tutors and so on) who engage with young people on a one-to-one basis, aim to build relationships of trust with their clients. In a climate of openness and transparency, youth support practitioners work alongside young people to encourage them to reflect on their lives, identify the barriers and challenges they face and consider ways in which these can be managed and overcome. In other words, youth support workers assist their clients to move towards change and achieve positive outcomes. This work involves more than simply providing relevant information to young people (although this, of course, is helpful where necessary and appropriate). Rather it requires an understanding of approaches to engaging young people and the development of skills to build and sustain meaningful professional relationships with clients.

This article focuses on the importance of the one-to-one relationship, based on the premise that, like their therapeutic counselling colleagues, youth support workers use counselling skills in their practice with young people. It introduces a research project which examines the central features of effective therapeutic counselling practice with young people from the counsellor’s perspective. The research asks five qualified and experienced therapeutic counsellors who work in a voluntary youth counselling agency to reflect on “what works” in their counselling practice. It is hoped that the participants’ responses, outlined below, might inform and contribute to youth support practice – in particular to one-to-one work with young people.



## Findings

Four key shared themes relating to the question “what works” in one-to-one counselling practice with young people, emerged. They were: the need for safety for clients in therapeutic counselling, the quality of the client–counsellor relationship, flexibility in theoretical orientation and the use of creative methods.

### OFFERING A SAFE SPACE

Participants in this study referred to the environment and the importance of providing a warm, comfortable, confidential and private space to clients. In addition, each participant referred to the psychological dimension of “safety” alongside the physical factors. The significance of safety in the counselling relationship is well documented and the provision of a “safe space” implies paying attention to two elements: the physical environment and the counselling process.

The focus on offering a respectful and nurturing environment in which clients can feel secure is, perhaps, particularly important for young people, many of whom do not feel safe in their

surroundings: as homes, classrooms, clubs, the streets, can all pose threats. The counselling room too, may be approached with trepidation, anxiety or even fear. Pope (2002) makes the case for “youth-friendly” counselling services, recognising the specific needs of this client group and the challenges they may face in accessing support.

The physical space alone does not provide the “safety” alluded to by participants in this study. The concept of safety in the process of counselling refers to the boundaries of the relationship, containment and the adherence to a code of ethics and the law, which includes recognition of the limits of confidentiality in the relationship. Without explicit boundaries in place – behavioural, ethical and legal – the safety that is crucial to building a meaningful relationship may be compromised. In a recent study (Lynass et al. 2012) young people spoke about valuing the confidential and private nature of the counselling process. There appears to be agreement here between what counsellors think works and what young people themselves identify as helpful. This finding is likely to resonate with many youth support practitioners who will also be aware of the need to provide a safe and confidential space to their clients.



## Working one to one with young people

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

All participants in the study stressed the need to build a trusting, respectful relationship with young people. Without this, they explained, young people would be less likely to engage in the counselling process. The concept of the relationship or therapeutic alliance in counselling is both revered and contested. There are research findings that support the centrality of the therapeutic alliance and there are those that question its significance. But what is clear is that, for many young people, relationships of trust with adults in their lives may be in short supply. Times where they can simply “be” with an adult without having to meet expectations, risk feeling judged, criticised or ignored may be rare.

In order for young people to talk to adults openly and honestly, a relationship based on trust is likely to have developed. Lynass et al. (2012) found that young people in counselling valued the opportunity to talk or “get things out”, in particular they cited feeling listened to and understood by the counsellor as important. That is not to suggest that creating a positive counselling relationship with young people is straightforward. This is supported by counsellors in the study who each stressed the importance of taking time to build the relationship, welcoming the opportunity offered by their counselling agency to work with clients for up to 52 sessions.

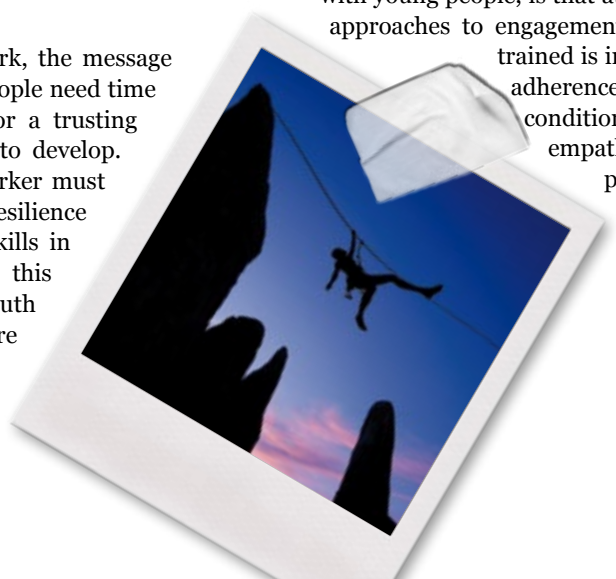
For youth support work, the message here is clear; young people need time and space in order for a trusting and safe relationship to develop. The youth support worker must develop patience, resilience and key counselling skills in order to ensure that this can happen. Some youth support workers are

constrained by external factors such as the need to meet targets or a restriction on the number of times they can meet and engage with their clients. In some cases there is a risk that this can be detrimental to the quality of the work undertaken with young people.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF FLEXIBILITY IN APPROACH

One of the most interesting, and perhaps contentious, findings from the research was the openness each counsellor expressed to being flexible in their therapeutic approach. In particular, counsellors, regardless of their specific counselling training, described their adherence to the core conditions of person-centred practice (Rogers 1951; Prever 2010). By taking an empathic approach, adopting a non-judgmental response through unconditional positive regard and demonstrating self-awareness and congruence in the work, each participant felt that a relationship developed whereby his or her young clients were encouraged to tell their stories and share their thoughts and feelings with the counsellor.

Interestingly, there is little evidence to suggest that young people themselves identify any single counselling orientation as more or less helpful. The learning here perhaps, for youth support practitioners who engage in one-to-one work with young people, is that attention to the specific approaches to engagement in which they were trained is important, and it is the adherence to person-centred conditions of congruence, empathy and unconditional positive regard that young people value most of all.



### THE USE OF CREATIVITY IN THE WORK

The participants in the study also made the link between working flexibly, as discussed above and working creatively with young people in counselling. Geldard and Geldard (2009) make the link between flexibility and creativity in counselling, explaining that young people may become restless or bored with the counselling process and that the counsellor should be able to respond spontaneously where this is the case.

The use of creative methods is not widely explored in counselling training and therefore it relies on each counsellor's willingness to engage with creative activities and learn more about their applicability. The use of creativity in counselling also raises the issue of resources. The participants in the study had excellent resources to draw on (toys, figures, sand trays, beads, building blocks and so on), but at a time of financial restrictions to public and voluntary sector budgets, there may be less inclination to invest in creative activities for therapeutic counsellors (and youth support practitioners) to use. Those working in the broad remit of youth support may find that they have access to a range of resources and creative methods with which they can engage and support their clients; finding alternative ways to reflect on issues, consider strategies and plan for change in the future. Like their therapeutic counselling colleagues, youth support practitioners should take an informed approach to using creative methods; being clear about what they are doing, why they are doing it and what they are hoping to achieve.

### Conclusion

There is a growing body of literature that focuses on counselling young people, but there appears to be little written which examines the practice from the counsellors' perspective. This study, albeit not based on a large sample, provides some in-depth, illuminative reflections from therapeutic counsellors on four key aspects of what they feel “works” in their practice.

The evidence here can be transposed to the youth support work context where practitioners also build one-to-one relationships of trust with their clients. Youth support workers are not necessarily trained counsellors, but nevertheless, like their therapeutic counselling colleagues, they are establishing one-to-one relationships with young people with the aim of working towards greater reflection, understanding and positive change. The evidence presented here is helpful in order to inform and develop this important area of professional practice.

A full version of this paper can be found in *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research* (2013) Volume 13 (2), pp 98-106.

### References

- Geldard K. and Geldard D. (2009), *Relationship Counselling for Children Young People and Families*, Sage, London.
- Lynass R., Pykhtina O. and Cooper M. (2012), “A thematic analysis of young people's experience of counselling in five secondary schools in the UK”, *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 12 (1) 53-62.
- Pope P. (2002), “Youth-friendly counselling”, *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, February, 18-19.
- Prever M. (2010), *Counselling and Supporting Children and Young People: A Person-Centred Approach*, Sage, London.
- Rogers C.R. (1951), *Client Centred Therapy*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, MA.



# LEARN and "trous en formation"

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 more digital than in the previous edition. Normal service may resume in the next issue.



## LEARN = Customer service complaint handling?

Did you know that the acronym LEARN stands for Listen, Empathise, Apologise, React and Notify? No, neither did I – until I started writing this. It is used to help those who have to deal with customer complaints, to show how they should react in a nicely efficient way to those customers who are brave enough to face up to the capitalist Moloch.

During the process of writing a publication about one-to-one learning support my friend and colleague Monika Kėžaitė-Jakniūnienė and I were researching and comparing lots of experiences drawn from practice together with ideas, concepts and models. For instance, we included coaching models like GROW (Goal, Reality, Options Way forward) and CLEAR (Contracting, Listening, Exploring, Action, Review), plus the feedback model the Johari Window. Still, we were not able to find a simple (not simplistic!) model to describe a learning process. After periods of intense thought, meditation and walking the dog we arrived at a point of clarity when the "MonMar LEARN Model" suddenly appeared (MonMar = Monika & Mark ;o) ). After testing it with some willing victims we came to the conclusion that it could be worth sharing with others.

This admittedly basic model attempts to describe an experiential learning process from the start to finish. Learning is NOT a linear process – each level is connected with the others and it is possible to go forwards and backwards, for example, to be at A and then jump back to L. That's life.

We used the word LEARN as an acronym from which to build. What other words could you use as a basis for such a concept?

- LEARN**
- live it!
  - experience it!
  - awareness increasing!
  - record your findings!
  - name your learning!

Within discussions with a learner it can help orientate comments, feedback and questions – as the following example shows:

| Model                                                                   | Explanation                                                                                                                            | Questions/Comments                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>L</b> – live it!<br>(Note: these two parts are very strongly linked) | Stressing the importance of being in "the here and now", be focused on what is happening.                                              | What happened? Where? When? Who was involved?                                                                                                                               |
| <b>E</b> – experience it!                                               | Getting fully into the experience, try things, experiment.                                                                             | What did you do? What did you try to do? What did others do? How did they react to you and your actions?                                                                    |
| <b>A</b> – awareness increasing!                                        | Connect what is happening to sensations, feelings and more cognitive processes.                                                        | What was going on inside of you at that time? How did that feel? What was successful? What didn't work? (Maybe even: I noticed that...)                                     |
| <b>R</b> – record your findings!                                        | Write, draw, speak, film the ideas coming to mind. It is important not to forget.                                                      | Describe your conclusions. Now you have come out of the experience – what does it mean for you?                                                                             |
| <b>N</b> – name your learning!                                          | Naming the knowledge, skills and inner readiness gained is important for oneself and so that others can also understand what is meant. | What have you learned? What would you put in an email/ in a letter to your parents /on Facebook / in a CV to describe what you learned? How would the results be different? |

Monika would be very happy to hear what you think about this model.

## Trous en formation?

All over France you will find this road sign. In such a context, it means "holes in the making" so your car will not actually fall into a pit. There are just some problems which could become larger if nothing is done about them. So why do I show you this? Well, one of the words for "training" in French is "formation" and I have been wondering for quite a while whether it would be possible to make a little joke along the lines of "holes in training". Or even use it for the introduction to an evaluation session. Never even thought of making fun of participants by welcoming them as the "holes" though...

So, francophiles – a question for you! How would you use this sign?



## And finally

Thanks to those who write or give informal feedback. Next time we consider the "pataphysics of inner readiness"...  
Hey Olivier, did you find Heidegger here?

## Sounds, words, inspirations

Daft Punk, "Face to Face"  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKJfJMMsqX4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKJfJMMsqX4)  
(accessed 18.06.2014)  
It's not hard to go the distance when you finally get involved face to face

JD Twitch featuring Killa P, "Skeng Teng" (Tapes remix) [Bucky Skank]  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=brzU2oqe14k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brzU2oqe14k)  
(accessed 18.06.2014)

Eliot Fisk & Paco Pena: Tiny Desk Concert  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDdudDaWdqY#t=106](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDdudDaWdqY#t=106)  
(accessed 18.06.2014)

Wilko and Roger Daltrey live in concert  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3oAaElKxKs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3oAaElKxKs) (accessed 18.06.2014)

Freak Power, "Tune in, turn in, cop out"  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=7\\_O6BWniZwY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_O6BWniZwY)  
(accessed 18.06.2014)

Christian Alexander (2012), L.e.a.r.n....  
Conflict resolution and guest services  
[www.slideshare.net/ChristianAlexander1/learnconflict-resolution-and-guest-services](http://www.slideshare.net/ChristianAlexander1/learnconflict-resolution-and-guest-services) (accessed 18.06.2014)





# Notes on contributors

**Bernard Abrignani** is the co-ordinator of Salto-Youth Euromed and Good Practices Resource Centre; project director for technical assistance of the EuroMed Youth Programme IV at the French National Institute for Youth and Community Education (INJEP). He is also the project director of RCBS (the technical assistance service of the EuroMed Youth programmes III and IV).

**Vedrana Biličić** has been involved in youth work since 2001, first as a volunteer, and later as one of the founders of the youth information centre in Split, “Info Zona”. She has been activity co-ordinator and a youth information worker in the youth information centre since 2009 and president of the Association of Youth Information Centres in Croatia since 2012.

**Davide Capecchi** doesn’t ever know how to answer the question “Where are you from?” He is always here and there, advocating the importance of youth information and youth work. He is working to the best of his ability to match the expectations of the members and stakeholders of ERYICA, the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency, as its director; a role he has held since 2007. Member of the *Coyote* editorial team.

**Federica Demicheli** is the project officer for Salto-Youth Euromed and Good Practices Resource Centre.

**Jaana Fedotoff** has worked as a co-ordinator at Koordinaatti since it was established, in 2006. She has a Master’s degree in community education, but has also studied a number of other subjects, such as journalism and mass communication.

**Vera Hoogsteyns** is a youth information worker with the Flemish organisation Jong & Van Zin. She works on youth participation, peer support, bullying, resiliency, open communication and feedback.

**Zoran Ilieski** is the executive director of the coalition of youth organisations SEGA and the president of Youth Council Prilep. He was directly involved in the establishment of the first youth information centre in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”.

**Jan Zlatan Kulenovic** is Executive Director of the Youth Information Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (OIA). He lives and works in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and is active in a number of networks and projects throughout the world.

**Fiona McIntyre** is a freelance writer and editor, based in Edinburgh, who works with youth agencies in Scotland, charities and voluntary organisations and the European Youth Card Association.

**Matina Magkou** is to be found in different places of the world giving training courses, facilitating meetings, writing reports, editing publications, co-ordinating projects, organising events and festivals, touring with theatre companies, consulting cultural organisations and (occasionally) working on her PhD thesis which focuses on (surprise, surprise!) mobility. A *Coyote* editorial team member.

**Ante Martić** currently works as an advisor for legal affairs at the national association of local municipalities of Croatia. He has previously worked at the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth of the Republic of Croatia and at the European Youth Forum as a policy officer.

**Ivan Medić** has been active in the NGO sector, with an emphasis on youth work, since 1999. He is one of the founders of the youth information centre, “Info Zona”, in Split and has been its president since 2008.

**Sonja Mitter Škulj** is co-ordinator of the SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre in Ljubljana. Sonja was the founding editor of *Coyote*.

**Andriy Pavlovych** is co-ordinator of SALTO Eastern Europe and the Caucasus Resource Centre in Warsaw.

**Mika Pietilä** has worked as a planning officer at Koordinaatti since September 2007. He first started working with young people in 1995. He first became involved in youth information and counselling in 1997, by establishing a youth information and counselling service in the city of Kokkola, Finland as well as a web-based service.

**Sladjana Petkovic** works as lead consultant for the Millennium Acceleration Framework (MAF) Intervention in Montenegro at UNDP Montenegro and in the past was part of the Pool of European Youth Researchers – PEYR. She is specialised in developmental youth work and social education at the Jonkoping University/Sweden.

**Marlies Pöschl** is a visual artist and film maker 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.

**Gülesin Nemutlu Unal** is a freelance trainer and consultant currently working under the label of her learning design office called tekne. She lives in Istanbul.

**Evaldas Rupkus** is known as a reanimator. He started working in the field of information for youth when he was still a 10-year-old child himself. His dream at the moment is to create a youth information and counselling system in Lithuania which would help young people to understand their potential and how to use it. You can currently find him in Vienna.

**Imre Simon** works in Luxembourg for the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) to strengthen European co-operation in the field of youth information work and services. A certified youth information trainer, Imre has been active in the human rights education and global education fields as well.

**Mark E. Taylor** works 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 contributing to what he hopes are useful educational publications. Editor of *Coyote* magazine since 2010.

**Jane Westergaard** is a senior lecturer at Canterbury Christ Church University. She teaches on a range of programmes specifically designed for students who plan to engage in youth support work. She has recently published a book, *Effective counselling with young people*, with colleague, Hazel Reid. Jane is a qualified and practising UKRC registered counsellor, working with young people and adult clients.

“*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* 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://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/>

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  
<http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/> - Tel: +33 3 88 41 30 77 or +33 3 90 21 49 16 / Fax: +33 3 88 41 27 78

The Council of Europe is the continent’s leading human rights organisation. It comprises 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](http://www.coe.int)

The European Union is a unique economic and political partnership between 27 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

