

good practice in youth information

youth participation

peer-to-peer

reaching out



EUROPEAN YOUTH INFORMATION AND COUNSELLING AGENCY

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Education and Culture DG

'Youth in Action' Programme

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introduction

In 2008, ERYICA, the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency, received a grant from the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency for a new project in the framework of the action 4.5 “Call for proposals for projects supporting information activities for young people and youth workers” of the Youth in Action programme. The funded project was entitled “A Better Youth Information for New Times” and foresaw as one of its major deliverables the publication of a booklet on good practice in youth information among the ERYICA members and partners.

The publication is a collection of good practice on “youth participation”, “peer-to-peer” and “reaching out” in the field of youth information, gathered from a call for contributions among ERYICA members. The project descriptions were chosen for their quality, innovation and demonstrated successful outcomes. They thus represent the actual trends and developments in youth information practice across Europe.

This publication aims at advertising at a European level youth information practices which are of a particularly innovative nature and which can serve as an inspiration for possible future projects or collaborations. Through this publication, ERYICA therefore encourages bilateral contacts for the development of cooperation between European youth information centres.

ERYICA would like to thank all the youth centres and the youth information experts who contributed to this publication. The present booklet reflects both their commitment to youth work and their high-level professionalism.

youth participation



2.1 Background of Youth Participation

“Participation is not an aim in itself, but an approach to becoming an active citizen. Participation is a means of taking an active role both in the development of one’s own environment and in European co-operation”¹.

Since 2001 and the publication by the European Commission of the White Paper “A New impetus for European Youth”², participation and information were identified and approved by the Council of youth ministers as joint first priorities in European youth policies.

In line with this decision, the European Commission proposed in 2003 a series of common objectives to encourage young people to become more involved and better informed. One of these objectives is clearly stating the need to increase “participation by young people in youth information, for example in the preparation and dissemination of information” based on the rationale that “better information for young people is a precondition for better participation and for the development of their potential as individuals and citizens”³.

Later on, additional steps have been taken at a European level to bring forward the importance of youth participation in youth information. The European Youth Information Charter, adopted in Bratislava (Slovak Republic) on 19 November 2004 by the 15th General Assembly of the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA), reaffirms in its preamble that youth information work is a means of promoting the young people’s participation as active members of society.

This Charter, signed by 41 organisations in 29 different countries, demonstrates that the understanding of youth participation as an essential component of youth information work has trickled down to the national and organizational level, thereby showing ownership of this principle by youth information workers themselves.

At the General Assembly of the Youth Exchange held in Vienna, Austria, on 22nd April 2006, the “Rainbow Paper on Participation

in Youth Information” was issued, by which are set the standards of young people’s involvement in youth information. Among other requirements, this document focuses on the direct involvement of young people in the process of decision-making in the field of youth information, as well as on the needed organizational and political support to youth participation in youth information work⁴.

At last, the Youth Council of the European Commission, in its Resolution of 27 November 2009, on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), encourages Member States and the Commission to take initiative in their respective sphere of competences to “make an effective use of information and communication technologies to broaden and deepen the participation of young people”⁵. It is a strong signal that a consensus on the undisputed importance of participation in youth information work has been reached at a European level, and that it will be increasingly relevant in the future developments of European youth policy.

¹ CDEJ 1997:7, The Participation of Young People. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

² http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/youth/c11055_en.htm

³ Council Resolution of 25 November 2003 on common objectives for participation by and information for young people [Official Journal C 295 of 05.12.2003], <http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/youth/c11075_en.htm>

⁴ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Partners/Eryica_Rainbow_paper_en.pdf

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/youth/pdf/doc1648_en.pdf, p. 17



2.2 Introduction

BY MICK CONROY University of Wales, Newport, the United Kingdom

Go to the young people, live amongst them, start from where they are and with where they want to go and of the best leaders the young people will say “we did it ourselves”.

Anon

The following examples of good practice illustrate the message behind the statement above and demonstrate how young people can benefit from being involved in the planning, delivery, and promotion of your information work with young people. Before reading the examples it is worth exploring a context for youth participation within youth information networks. Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that ‘Children and young people have a right to participate in the decision making processes that are relevant to their lives and a right to influence the decisions made in their regard within the family, school, and community.

Many youth organisations promoting participation use the UN statement and it can be found prominent in most youth policy documents that appear across Europe and beyond. However, whilst it is important to embed participation into policies, of more importance are the intentions towards implementation of these policies into the everyday practice of youth information projects. These policies are not to be seen as ‘on the shelf’ policies so that we can ‘tick’ the participation box on our quality measurement forms. It is clearly evident from the practice examples shown in this guide that participation must go beyond the rhetoric and become a process which is continuous and progressive and not a fixed deliverable or one-off event.

So, we can see that participation has been a ‘buzz word’ for a while now and lies at the heart of youth information work practice and many events, seminars and practice guides (this one included!) have contributed many ideas and innovations around the topic. As a result of this ‘swell’ there is a danger that many youth information organisations will make ‘knee-jerk’ reactions due to pressure on them to be seen to be ‘doing participation’. At worst some of

these efforts become tokenistic and young people involved can be manipulated and showed off as trophies, decorating a local event where funders and other stakeholders are present.

Genuine participation approaches to engagement of young people within youth information work carry with them a great deal of risk of apparent failure and possible conflict. This is especially so in cases where the desired outcomes for the young people may not match those expected by the organisation or local authorities e.g. reducing teenage pregnancies or tackling crime issues may not be high on the list of priorities of young people that you engage with.

A truly participative approach?

In the United Kingdom, a celebrated message in the process of participation is in seeing young people as ‘creators not consumers’ and that with this comes the notion of possibility and a chance of the young person becoming ‘something more’ as a result of intervention of your youth information work (Smith, 1980). In this sense, we can define a truly participative approach to be what is known as ‘creative participation’. For Youth Information Work the use of this term can bring challenges in relation to allowing the young people themselves to be creators of information and involved in delivering services as we can see in other sections of this guide. e.g. peer-to-peer.

This type of peer-to-peer work is embedded in principles of participation with young people but is resource intensive and time intensive in order for it to be done in a truly participative way involving young people at all levels of the decision making process. In summary, a definition for participation of young people for us in Youth Information Work lies in determining the extent to which our organisation adopts the following values and implements them into a creative process.

Can you answer 'yes' for your organisation as to how you use participation?

- Participation is a nurturing process which develops a culture where young people 'feel' part of your organisation
- Participation is a creative process whereby young people are active stakeholders in the youth information services delivered
- Genuine participation is based on voluntary engagement of young people and not via adult manipulation or the 'smuggling in' of agendas without consent of the young people

The notion of voluntary engagement allows an element of choice for the young people involved and means that they can decide at which level they wish to engage along the continuum below



The participation Continuum

At which point does your organisation work?

The idea is that the further along the continuum your organisation works, the more genuinely participative your work will be, and young people 'know' that they are valued and listened to.

Creative participation carries the message that young people are not just citizens of the future but more importantly they are citizens of NOW and that their involvement in identifying current information needs, relevant delivery methods and individualised specific content is paramount to developing a genuinely participative youth information service⁶.

If you wish to measure the extent of participation in your organisation, a useful tool kit to measure participation has been developed by the National Youth Agency in the UK.

This tool records the most important evidence of change, which is that from the children and young people themselves. It is essential that they tell their story in their words as evidence of dialogue and evidence of change. Using this tool can prove that things have changed to show that participation has been worth it. Prove it to the organisation, the funders and most importantly to the children and young people themselves. How were their voices heard? What happened next? What has changed for them now? And you can show how these fit with policy outcomes in your service.

To download the resource called 'What's Changed?' go to www.nya.org.uk

⁶ References: SMITH, M (1980) *Creators not Consumers*. Re-discovering Social Education, NYA. UNITED NATIONS (1991) Convention on Rights of Child



2.3 Initiative Channel. E-democracy for young people

FINLAND

Organisation National Coordination and Development Centre of Youth Information and Counselling Services, Oulu
Dates 2006: first version of the service; 2007: second version. This service is now continuously developed as the Ministry of Education is supporting this service.

Number of Participants 92 municipalities in Finland, number of users 4661, situation as of 04/2010

Youth Information Tool Online service: www.aloitekanava.fi

The Finnish municipalities involved with Initiative Channel generally have existing online youth information services and Initiative Channel has been incorporated easily into the existing framework.

Description

Initiative Channel (www.aloitekanava.fi) was developed to fulfil the requirement for ways and means for young people to take part and participate in the handling of issues relating to local and regional youth work and policy as stipulated in the Youth Act. The service is part of the governmental Youth Policy Development Programme and has helped to spread online democracy to almost 100 municipalities around Finland. An initial idea has to be commented and supported by other people before it will become an initiative that is forwarded to local authorities for processing. The e-democracy tool makes it possible to track how the initiatives are processed in the municipality. A rock music choir for young people in Jyväskylä, clean beaches in Haukipudas, a skate park in Espoo are only some of the examples of concrete actions resulting from the initiatives.

All actors in the municipality (e.g. local policy-makers, organizations, youth councils) can ask questions via local Initiative Channel and young people can give their own opinion by commenting on issues. Moderating and maintaining the service is usually one of the tasks of local youth workers, youth information workers or administrative staff.

E-democracy tool Initiative Channel is elaborated by the National Coordination and Development Centre of Youth Information and Counselling Services and Ponsi Interactive Ltd. with the support of the Ministry of Education of Finland.

Evaluation

With the help of the national web-based Initiative Channel young people can easily voice their ideas about bettering surroundings in the communities of their region. If their ideas are approved by the public they will lead to concrete projects facilitated by local governments and municipalities.

The logo for aloitekanava.fi is displayed in a large, bold, orange font against a white background, which is itself centered within a green rectangular frame.



2.4 All for You

CROATIA

Organisation **Zajednica ICM**

Dates **27 November 2008 - 26 November 2009**

Number of Participants **600**

Youth Information Tool **Youth Information Knowledge Transfer**

Description

The project, financed by the EU in the framework of the PHARE 2006 programme and implemented by PRONI Centre (founder of Regional info-centre Osijek, member of Zajednica ICM), combined two themes: *Youth Participation and Education and Transfer of Knowledge in YI Work from Europe and within Croatia*. Two main objectives were set: *increasing the level of active participation and integration of youth in social and political life as well as developing the civil society of Osijek-Baranja, Vukovar-Srijem and Sisak-Moslavina county*.

The program consisted of four parts:

1. Development and implementation of the YIC in Vukovar and Sisak;
2. Development of local cross-sector advisory teams within YIC Vukovar, Sisak and Osijek;
3. Implementation of ERYICA's Training of Trainers programme "MBTC" for the Pool of Trainers in Croatia and creation and implementation of an educational module entitled "Capacity Development for YIC Leaders" for sustainable development of YIC in Croatia and up-grading the quality of YI workers and
4. Public promotion campaign of YIC Osijek, Vukovar and Sisak.

Evaluation

The following results and recommendations were provided:

- Two new YIC (in Vukovar and Sisak) were opened in February



2009, which contributes to the spreading of the YIC network in Croatia.

- By involving 16 Youth information workers and volunteers from 8 Croatian YICs, the knowledge in YI work increased, providing additional quality in daily work.
- Looking more locally, cross-sector advisory teams (formed by local stakeholders representatives) established in three YIC in Croatia (Osijek, Vukovar and Sisak), the quality of YI work is additionally raised especially on local level. By meeting regularly, discussing and sharing the information about young people enabled institutions and young people to jointly work together towards a better communication and the creation of platform for regular and accurate informing. Today, cross-sector advisory teams present an example of good practice in YI work, which became recognized outside the borders of Croatia.
- The number of visits in YICs increases every month, thus it justifies the need of the existence of such a place. In the final evaluation, young people, beneficiaries of YIC Osijek, Vukovar and Sisak, stressed the importance of YIC in their local community, giving special emphasis to informing and non-formal education.
- Therefore, a new project financed by the EU entitled "EUphoria" and developed in partnership with the organisations (co-founders of the Association of YIC in Croatia), will enable further development of YI work through the establishment of six Euro info corners within six YIC in Croatia.





2.5 Regional Public Debates about New National Programme for Youth

CROATIA

Organisation **Zajednica ICM**

Dates **1 October 2008 - 1 November 2008**

Number of Participants **600**

Youth Information Tool **Public debates**

Description

The project theme was *Youth Participation in Development of Youth Policies*. Public debates on regional level were planned in partnership with the Ministry responsible for youth (Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity) in the process of creation of a new national programme for youth.

In Split, a public debate for Youth in South Croatia region was held on October 20th 2008. There were 60 participants on the presentation of NPY who later worked in separated groups according to their interest and knowledge.

In Osijek (East of Croatia), Regional public debate was held in Regional YIC in Osijek on October 17th 2008. Representatives of youth were present, as well as representatives from local government, institutions, companies and media.

Regional YIC Rijeka organized three debates in three counties (Istarska, Ličko-senjska, Primorsko-goranska) with the respective local partners. The first one was held in Pazin, with the support of NGO ZUM and the City of Pazin. The Gospić debate followed, organized with NGO Pokretač and Ličko-senjska county, and the third one was held in Rijeka, organized with City of Rijeka. The concept aimed at reaching out to local communities in the region and empowering local partners by actively participating in this project and taking main role in organizing the debate in their local community.

All suggestions and conclusions were sent to the youth policy representatives at the national level.

Evaluation

This project's transparent procedures gained trust with youth, institutions and local government, which led to further appointing Regional YICs in coordination and dissemination of public issues for youth (e.g. Regional YIC in Rijeka was appointed main coordinator for the process for City of Rijeka youth programme development).



2.6 New Leaders of Youth Exchange

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Organisation Youth Information Centre of Saint Petersburg

Dates 1 September 2008 - 30 September 2008

Number of Participants 50

Youth Information Tool Seminars and trainings for young people

Description

The goal of the project was to raise the level of youth participation in society. The core activity of the project was to form a group of young people for training, which provided them with the knowledge and skills needed to conduct youth exchanges on the themes of tolerance, citizenship, and human rights.

A two day seminar was organized. The program included: exchange of experiences in the field of youth exchanges, a discussion of the value of youth work (human rights, intercultural education, etc.), demands to the leaders and organizers of youth exchanges, project management, sources of financing, risk management, evaluation and follow-up.

Evaluation

50 young people were trained and started to act as multipliers on a peer-to-peer level by promoting the values of participation and active citizenship.

5 youth exchanges were organized as a follow-up of this project.





2.7 Jugend & Politik - FrageRaum Politik

AUSTRIA

Organisation **aha – Tipps & Infos für junge Leute**

Dates **29 May 2009 - 26 June 2009**

Number of Participants **210**

Youth Information Tool **Workshops**

Description

The project “Jugend & Politik – Youth & Politics” consists of a series of workshops, events and activities for young voters. It aims to increase information literacy among young people, to help them to make knowledge-based decisions and to motivate them to actively participate in society. The main target group are young people from 14 to 16 year-olds.

Politics at first hand or “FrageRaum Politik” was one of the events in the framework of this project. Young people had the opportunity to meet politicians and to get to know them personally in direct contact.

Aims

- Young people get in contact with politicians in a lively, youth oriented atmosphere, get informed and raise the topics relevant to them in the exchange with the politicians.
- Politics can be experienced in practice.
- Promotion of information literacy and communication.

Programme

After a brief introduction to the topic „Politics“, the young participants were divided into four groups. Together with the adult facilitators they elaborated questions for the politicians. In each of the four “FrageRäume – Question Rooms” the young people met a politician of one of the four parties in the regional parliament of the province of Vorarlberg. In the “Question Rooms”, they asked the questions they had prepared. After 20 minutes the politicians changed the “Question Rooms”. That way the young people got



an impression of the different party positions and the politicians’ personalities.

At the end, the young participants and the politicians met in the plenary. The so called “GegenFragen – Counter Questions” part allowed the participants to ask the politicians private questions as well. The politicians could also ask questions.

It was the young people themselves that had come up with the idea for this event. They wanted to take a close look at political parties and their programmes on the one hand and to get to know politicians in quite a “private” environment on the other hand.

Participation of Young People

The inputs and the participation of young people are the basis of the project “Youth & Politics”. In the preparation phase a young facilitator team was created. They facilitated both events. Media and the press were not allowed at the events. Young people themselves reported on the events. One of the main aims was to focus on youth participation and to organise the event with as little help from adults as possible.

Evaluation

- The young people felt appreciated and taken seriously by the politicians. The event had an after effect, for it inspired lively discussions.
- Political topics relevant to the life of young people were discussed, hence politics became concrete.
- At the “GegenFragen” part personal topics predominated, it was a relaxed chill out.

The evaluation among the participating youngsters showed that 95% of them liked the event very much, 90% would recommend their friends to participate in similar events.



2.8 Youth Exchange *Johnny on the spot*

SERBIA

Organisation *Omladinska Nevladina Organizacija ONO*
Dates *14 February 2008 - 21 February 2008*
Number of Participants *49 + 7 youth information workers*
Youth Information Tool *Youth Exchange*

Description

The project “Johnny on the spot”⁷ gathered 42 young people from 6 European countries (Macedonia, Germany, Bulgaria, Serbia, Albania and Turkey) on an 8-day youth exchange in Novi Sad - Sremski Karlovci, Serbia. Project activities consisted of various creative and interesting workshops. The aim was to inform both the young participants and their environment on youth rights. Our wish was to discover the way young people perceive their rights.

Additional objectives were: to raise the participants’ awareness about various cultures and living styles of European youth, to create a common feeling of European citizenship based on mutual youth rights and to raise young people’s tolerance by having them meet ‘differences’ in a safe and supporting environment. All activities in the exchange were filmed and as a result, we have a movie. Also, a photo workshop resulted in post cards on youth rights. All partners got a task to present results of the exchange in their countries and to contribute in raising awareness about youth rights issues in their environments.

The workshops done during the youth exchange were:

- Discrimination & Prejudice workshop – outcome: development of participants, raising awareness about human rights
- UN Model Simulation workshop - UN model in relation to youth rights and youth participation, role play
- Photo workshops – outcome: photos / post cards on the topic of youth rights and human rights in general, following of International Declaration of Human rights
- Video workshops – outcome: a movie that will be used to promote youth rights in a wider environment

- Music workshops – outcome: a performance and an international song (which will include multicultural approach)
- Newspaper workshops – outcome: a newspaper/ brochure about youth exchange and youth rights, learning by doing

All workshops had youth rights as the main theme. It was worked on using different methods such as individual and group work, work in small groups, simulation, role play, lectures, brainstorming, presentation, visual aids etc.

Achievements

The main expected impact on participants was to become aware of and willing to assert and implement youth rights.

All of the participants had the opportunity to challenge their attitudes towards people from different cultures, and to gain new points of view.

We promoted this youth exchange through our mailing lists and electronic newsletters and by stickers and booklets that were made of materials created during exchange. Most important is the brochure, which includes not only an impression of youth exchange but also important information about human and youth rights.

⁷ A ‘Johnny on the spot’ is a man or youth who may be relied upon to be at a certain stated place when wanted and on whose assured appearance confident expectation may be based. It is not sufficient that an alert and trustworthy individual, to be thought deserving of the name ‘Johnny on the spot,’ should restrict his beneficent activity to the matter of being at a certain place when needed. He must, in addition, render such service and attend to such business when there as the occasion may require, and such a ‘Johnny’ must be on the spot not merely to attend to the business of others, but also to look after his own. Hence an individual who is prompt and farseeing, alive to his own interests and keenly sensible of means for promoting his own advantage is a Johnny on the spot.





2.9 Commissioned For Action

SCOTLAND, THE UNITED KINGDOM

Organisation **Young Scot**

Dates **2009**

Number of Participants **16**

Description

Sixteen young people have recently presented 38 detailed recommendations to the Scottish Government to suggest how to change Scotland's relationship with alcohol. Young Scot were asked by the Minister for Public Health and Sport to deliver this ground-breaking, innovative approach to young people influencing decisions about major social problems.

Commissions are usually made up of experts, heads of business, voluntary organisation leaders and other policy-makers. The Scottish Youth Commission on Alcohol is made up of 14-22 year olds from a wide range of social backgrounds and from across the country.

This bold move by the Scottish Government is a serious attempt to address the wider problems of alcohol abuse. The World Health Organisation reports that worldwide alcohol contributes to approximately 3% of deaths, yet in Scotland this figure is 5%. While estimates vary, the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland reported to Youth Commissioners that alcohol costs the Scottish economy £2.48 to £4.64 billion per year.

Over 40 young people applied to be on the commission from an open call publicised in the press and through Young Scot's networks. Anyone could apply – you didn't need any special skills or qualifications – simply a desire to do something about the situation.

Following a selection event, the Youth Commissioners got down to work. All the commissioners are volunteers and they have put in a huge amount of time and effort to take evidence from experts and investigate issues related to alcohol. The investigation covered the following issues:

- Accessibility and availability of alcohol
- Leisure and lifestyle choices
- Education
- Impact of passive drinking on young people and the need for emotional support
- Personal safety
- Marketing and promotion of alcohol and how that is regulated
- Social marketing
- Treatment services



2.10 Further references

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<http://www.thecommonwealth.org/Document/152816/154211/162033/youth_participation_toolkits/>

peer-to-peer



3.1 Background of Peer-to-Peer

Peer-to-peer in youth information involves young people in disseminating information to their peers. While a medium of youth participation, it is also a complementary method to an adult informer. Peer-to-peer informers have clear credibility advantages when it comes to certain issues. Generally, young people are more trusting and comfortable with their peers when informed about sensitive issues like sexuality or drugs.

During the 1990s, peer education has become an increasingly popular means of information work with young people. Labelled as “peer education”, “peer intervention” or “peer-to-peer”, it originated from the USA as a part of school curriculum and was spread out later to Europe, mainly in the UK and in Scandinavia. It started in schools as a mentoring program and was later developed as an information means, mostly used in health promotion.

On a number of occasions, the value of the peer-to-peer approach in the field of youth information work has been recognized at an international level, in key documents and pilot projects from European institutions.

The 1996 landmark campaign of the Council of Europe against racism and intolerance, entitled “All Different/all equal”, provided resources and educational material for peer education on issues related to exclusion. The D’Omino manual whose objective is “to use peer group education as a means to fight racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance” is one of the major outputs of this campaign and is a compilation of theoretical background on peer group education, project descriptions and stories from young people, aiming at giving assistance to people planning to work on peer education⁸.

The 2001 “White Paper on Youth” from the European Commission made public the proposals from the consultations on the involvement of young which repeatedly mentioned peer group information and counselling as a recommended method in the field of health and drug prevention⁹ and sex education¹⁰.

Moving further towards the recognition of peer education as a fundamental practice in youth work, the Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) recommended “mutual learning” as an implementation instrument in the youth field. Peer learning activities were thereby suggested as one of the means to carry out mutual learning in the different Member States. This document also encourages the European countries to use peer-learning activities in the framework of their cooperation.

⁸ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Publications/D’Omino_en.pdf

⁹ “White Paper on Youth”, p51

¹⁰ “White Paper on Youth”, p47

3.2 Introduction

Adapted from a presentation BY JOHAN BERTELS, In Petto, Belgium

The place of peer-to-peer in youth work

The involvement of peers in youth projects implies the deployment of young people for young people, mostly in the field of sex education, counselling or project design. The use of peers in youth work has yielded the most significant results in three specific areas of youth work that are peer counselling, peer projects and peer education.

- Peer-counselling programmes are generally characterised by person-to-person advice on particular subjects. Peer-counsellors can help advice-seekers in some form of difficulty, such as pregnancy, drug problems, etc.
- Peer projects are initiated for specific campaigns and always strongly related to the campaign. The contents of the projects are geared to the needs of young people. They can take many forms, ranging from the performance of a play to the setting-up and organisation of a sex-education stand at a school.
- “Peer education in the health sphere means teaching or sharing information, values and forms of behaviour by members of the same age or status group” (Siaca, 1987).

The potential and challenges of peer involvement in youth work, and especially in youth information, were made obvious from a number of evaluation studies¹¹ which have shown that the goal of acquisition of knowledge by the target-group is indeed attained, even if changes in attitude and behaviour are far more difficult to achieve and demonstrate.

Despite the difficulty to show evidence-based results, there exist strong arguments in favour of peer education. Firstly, young people give advice and support their peers, inform them about youth-specific questions and problems, and are active as multipliers for their age-group. Who does speak the language of young people, who is familiar with their values and norms, if not the young people

themselves?

Secondly, health-promotion programmes are well received by the young people if those who deliver the message are accepted by the target-group. For children and young people, it has been shown that the deployment of peers is “of particular importance for acceptability”.

Many academic researchers recommend that health promotion be a component of personal development not only in the cognitive, but also in the emotional and social sphere. As such, the use of peer educators in health promotion achieves to add these dimensions through closer inter-personal contacts. Particularly during the adolescence, life-styles and behaviour are strongly influenced by the peer-group which contributes to the formation of personality. Teenager peer educators impart possibilities of identification, familiarize other young people with life-styles and allow the “rehearsal” of self-presentation.

Basic principles of peer-to-peer programmes

A peer education programme requires a high level of organisation and support to the young people which are essential to the durability and successful outcomes of the programme. Some basic principles should be followed when working with young people and training them to become peer educators.

- **Young peer educators need support!**

Organisations setting-up peer programmes should pay attention to some elements to support the young peer educators. Trainings must be organised for peer educators and shall include not only accurate information on the subject(s) of the programme, training elements on communication and social skills, but also aspects that are less linked to non-formal education, such as self-experience, a reflection on values, norms and standards in roles and behaviours, and finally some didactics methods.

The goals of the programme must be clear to the young educators. The question of the organisation's expectation from the programme in terms of impact must be raised and well-considered given the difficulty to assess clear changes in attitudes and behaviours among the young people advised by a peer educator.

The resources to be allocated to this programme should not be neglected as peer educators need time and support, which has an impact on an organisation's budget. A resource person for the young educator, such as a peer educator trainer, should also be available.

One initial training is not enough: the referent person among the organisation's staff must keep contact with young educators even in-between events, through social networks or through any other means especially by mobile phone when they are in a situation when they need immediate support. Young advisors are involved with you as much as you are involved with them. It is therefore very important to create and maintain a link and a continuous support.

- **Being a peer educator: an attitude**

Young educators should be seen as partners; as such they must be taken seriously and not be used as "window dressing". When it comes to the pedagogy of the peer education programme, it is worth keeping in mind that there is neither "right" message to spread nor "right" way to act. The idea of a peer education programme is not about spreading messages formulated by adults by using the young advisors as "tools". The young educators should be granted the freedom to decide how to deal with a piece of information or a situation. Young advisors are not provided with "messages" to give but they are asked to give feedback on the situations they encountered and how they manage to convey information. In addition, by taking the young educators seriously and not as the instrument of the adults' messages, the young advisors will feel this difference and act upon it differently.

Similarly, the idea of ownership is very important in the training of young advisers. The professional staff does not teach them many new things but make them realize what they already know and support their ideas. In other words, you do not make young advisers, they already are, in the sense that they are already helping friends and that it is already a part of their personality to be opened to questions. The training is there to make them aware about their knowledge and to give them more self confidence and tools to support other people even better.

The essential quality of peer-to-peer work is an informal and spontaneous attitude. Being a young advisor is an attitude, which states that you must inform yourself before you take a decision. It also implies that you should know what your limits are, what you are like and do not like. It means also that you have a reactive attitude that tells you what to do when a situation goes wrong.

- **The question of responsibility**

In line with the limits of young educators, the question of responsibility must also be clearly addressed. As an essential principle of peer education is that young educators should stay themselves and decide according to their knowledge and the awareness of their limitations, who is responsible towards the general target group of a peer education programme? The limits of what can be expected from young educators must be clearly defined within the organisation but also in discussion with the young people themselves. When confronted to a difficult situation, one must keep in mind that collective thinking on solutions is important. A good way would be gather all young advisors with professional staff and brainstorm a solution to a problem. It is important to search together for solutions because in peer education, there is very seldom a "right way" to behave. The young advisors should not be made to feel responsible: they have the right to make mistakes.

- Recruiting and keeping young educators active

While there is no definite age limit, the recruitment of young advisors can start early in teenage years even if some criticism object that a too young age can be detrimental to both educators and target group of the information programme. However, it appears that most of the youngsters who commit themselves in peer-to-peer work had their own experience of going and asking peers before.

The biggest challenge is to keep young educators active and involved along the programme when no salary is given to them and material rewards are low. Thinking of how to reward peer educators is therefore crucial. The idea of a certification of peer-to-peer educators is often mentioned as a retribution for committed young people. While this certification can prove to be very attractive, especially for young people with low qualification, the certification process is in many ways contradictory to the essential quality of peer-to-peer work, which consists in informal and spontaneous attitude. This subject of certification should thus be open to discussion on a case-by-case basis in each organisation.

At last, two important elements to keep your peer educators involved are that mutual trust should lay at the foundation of the whole programme, as well as a great deal of fun for the young people. The way they are being treated by the staff of your organization as well as the support available for them, either from professional individuals or from the group, also play a considerable role in making sure that the young educators are still motivated to take part in the programme.

Peer work makes particular sense in youth information work as it requires empowering the young people and recognizing their positive qualities. This way, youth information builds itself on the knowledge and capacities of the young people while their participation to a well-structured peer education programme also supports their self confidence and self-esteem.

¹¹ School and training materials of all kinds (Allen, 1976); Smoking and alcohol (Perry, 1989); Drug use (Marklund, 1988); HIV/AIDS prevention (Fazekas & Scheipel, 1993; Houlioux & Piette, 1993); Prevention of unwanted pregnancies (Phelps et al., 1994); Prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (Hillman et al., 1991); Nutrition and eating disorders (Kirkley et al., 1988)



3.3 Info-Peers

AUSTRIA

Organisation **aha – Tipps & Infos für junge Leute**
Dates **Since 2005**

Description

In 2005 the youth information centre of the Austrian province of Vorarlberg, aha – Tipps & Infos für junge Leute, worked out a concept which includes young people in the information activities – the Info-Peers. The basic idea is that young people inform young people. A new information channel, also for not so widespread topics, was created and it raises curiosity and interest among young people. The Info-Peers serve as an “antenna” to get feedback from young people on the existing activities and on their wishes and interests as well as on trends.

Info-Peers are upper secondary school pupils between 15 and 18 who during a school year (September to June) inform their fellow pupils on topics covered by the youth information centre. Once a month the Info-Peers come to the youth information centre to collect new information material and to give feedback about their experience. In the year 2009/2010 21 Info-Peers are “in action” at 10 schools in Vorarlberg.

In a start workshop the Info-Peers are trained to “reach out” and to do “market research” among the target groups of the youth information centre. They are also trained in communication and presentation techniques.

The Info-Peers are an invaluable source of input which have led and will lead the youth information centre to offer new services and create new information products with the aim to better adapt the centre’s activities to the needs of the target group.

Fact box

- Young people prefer to receive information by young people and like the different way young people use to provide the information
- Feedback helps with market research, i.e. we can offer products and services relevant to young people and rapidly react to trends
- Participation/Involvement creates responsibility





3.4 Youth to Youth Phone

SLOVENIA

Organisation **MISSS**

Mladinsko Informativno Svetovalno Središče Slovenije

Dates **The project is implemented since 1993**

Number of Participants **353 (2008), 450 (2009)**

+ 14 peer counsellors + 3 mentors

Youth Information Tool **Phone, e-mail, chat counselling**

Description

The Youth to Youth Phone includes activities such as peer-to-peer phone counselling, counselling via e-mail and chat. Peer counsellors have also created a Facebook group which they use to inform young people about their activities.

The aim of the project is to motivate young people to participate in peer-to-peer activities and improve their social and communication skills.

Young people are involved in every phase of the project - planning, executing, promoting and evaluating. They have created leaflets, a logo and research on peer-to-peer counselling.

Our future plan is to create a youth to youth web site.

Evaluation

The following results were noted: recognition of the project among young people, use of new technology and social networks popular with young people, new logo, research on peer-to-peer counselling.





Organisation **Forum MNE**
Dates **1 November 2008 - 30 November 2008**
Number of Participants **30**
Youth Information Tool **Role plays and simulation game**

Description

The project involved 30 high school students in simulating the work of the EU institutions in the building of the Montenegrin Parliament. This was the first time that the project had taken place in Montenegro and that it was run solely by young people. IFA (German Institute for foreign cultural cooperation), Studio DEUTSCH, and Centre for civic education MNE cooperated.

Evaluation

The simulation process was successfully finished. 30 young people could get insight into how decision making processes in the EU are run by discussing EU enlargement issues, for example. The President of the national parliament, the German ambassador and a representative of the Ministry for European Integration gave speeches and offered dialogue to participants. Ten best participants got awarded with the possibility to participate in the regional EU Plan Spiele. For some young people this was the first time to publicly participate which greatly affected their self esteem and self confidence.



3.6 Forums on School violence

MONTENEGRO

Organisation [Forum MNE](#)

Dates [1 November 2008 - 31 December 2008](#)

Followed up by a similar project in [2009](#)

Number of Participants [76](#)

Youth Information Tool [School forums](#)

Description

Young people, as well as a wider public, discussed the issue of *School Violence* during the year, which resulted in forums on this topic, organised in 3 secondary schools in Podgorica, Montenegro. The forums were organised with students, teachers, and parents. The aim of the project was to raise awareness of causes and consequences of violence on different levels (peer-to-peer, teacher-student/teacher, etc.), and to come to concrete proposals for action which would lead to combating the problem.

The project was followed up with another one on the same topic, which involved another 4 schools in Podgorica in 2009. It consisted of forums (in schools and on internet) and public competition in creative works on the topic of violence. The results of this project, in which 598 young people participated, were presented at the final conference.

Evaluation

This project and its follow up directly involved a significant number of young people and confirmed the existence of powerful creativity and contemplation among young population, especially in schools. Cooperation with the partners in the community ensured the long term effects and open space for new ideas.





3.7 Peer-to-peer project education *Passa dels mals rotllos*

SPAIN

Organisation Infojove - Balearic Islands

Dates Initial project in 2008; 2nd version of the project in 2010; a third project in foreseen in 2011.

Number of Participants 80 + 6 trainers + 8 peers

Youth Information Tool Role plays and simulation game

Description

Infojove-Balearic Islands has developed a sexual education program called "Peer-to-Peer" located in high schools. It was implemented in two stages: first health professionals trained 8 older students (16-17 years old while they are in 3rd class of secondary school) during 10 hours about sexuality, contraception, pregnancy, Sexual Transmitted Diseases etc; and then the older students taught for 4 hours the younger students on what they had learned. Next year, when the students are in 4th class of secondary school, they will teach younger students (13-14, 2nd class) about these items during 4h.

Evaluation

Health professionals interviewed older students at the end of the project to get their input about their training and about the way the peer educators taught the younger students. Younger students are also tested about their health knowledge to assess their increase of competencies in this area. They were also asked to report on the experience of being trained by other students and not by adults. The overall feedback from evaluation was that younger students receive well the information when older students are seen as referent.



Evaluación cuantitativa:

Se pasaron 74 cuestionarios antes de la intervención y 78 después. La valoración de los conocimientos se puntuó de 0 a 10. Las diferencias fueron estadísticamente significativas ($p < 0,05$).

Valoración de los conocimientos pre y post intervención





3.8 Not Faster than life

MONTENEGRO

Organisation **Forum MNE**

Dates **1 March 2008 - 30 June 2008**

Number of Participants **400**

Youth Information Tool **Open call for artwork, public discussion**

Description

The previous year, many young people were victims of traffic accidents caused by fast driving. Therefore Forum MNE, in cooperation with relevant institutions, launched the traffic safety project called Not Faster than Life. It aimed to raise awareness of the problem, while, at the same time, promoting preventive steps.

The campaign consisted of an open call aimed at young people (12 - 25) to send an essay, a painting, a graffiti and a comic strip on the topic 'Not Faster than Life', and of Forums – public discussions on the subject of youth safety in the traffic. The results of the campaign were presented during the Youth Festival organised by Forum MNE in May 2008. During the event, awards were announced and given to young authors; the best works were exhibited; and traffic safety facts were presented.

Evaluation

400 young people participated, 19 schools supported the campaign, and the campaign coordinator was invited to be a member of a work group for creating LFA for a national traffic safety strategy. In 2009, another campaign was launched.



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reaching out



4.1 Background of Reaching out¹²

Outreach work with young people has its origins in the activities of nineteenth century philanthropic organisations which attempted to draw young people into a particular service or activity, to deliver a particular message to them, or to exert influence upon them. This work was concerned with the health and moral development of lower class children and young people and also with 'child rescue'. Detached youth work endeavours to provide a broad-based 'social education', normally at the behest of, and largely in a form determined by, young people on their own territory.

"Outreach work is normally related to services which are available elsewhere and is generally aimed at feeding young people in to those services.

Whilst it can and does take place on young people's own territory, it can also include work in existing youth facilities, educational institutions or in festivals and commercial settings.

It is characterised by purposeful interaction between youth workers and young people and involves contact, information giving, and the invitation to join existing or proposed youth programmes and other services designed with them in mind"¹³.

Outreaching can display very innovative ways to get in contact with young people, should it be through traditional means such as posters and flyer or through more recent, Internet-based such as social networks or other websites.

At a European level, outreach activities have long been identified as an approach to achieve widespread impact among the youth, mostly in the field of drug prevention.

The Council of Europe first released a manual in 1996 on "Outreach work with drug user: principles and practices", where outreach is advocated for as a useful tool within a broader health promotion strategy. In 2001, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) published a manual establishing a set

of guidelines for the evaluation of outreach work¹⁴. Later, in 2003, the Pompidou Group, an intergovernmental body located within the Council of Europe and working to fight against drug misuse and drug trafficking, released a manual on "Outreach work with young people, young drug users and young people at risk"¹⁵.

These successive projects are a good indication that outreach work has proven to be a successful tool but also that it requires resources and commitment to obtain significant results.

¹² Adapted from a contribution from Mick Conroy, during the 2009 ERYICA Seminar in Rotterdam on Youth Information.

¹³ <http://www.youthlink.co.uk/webs/245/documents/2DetachedDefinitions.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/manuals/outreach>

¹⁵ <https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?index=no&command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=867631&SecMode=1&DocId=1266534&Usage=2>

4.2 Introduction

BY MARC BOES, Vereniging van JIP's and ERYICA President

Public services in our societies are not organised in a reaching out way. If you need something you go to some building which is open at set times and you get it. Logical thought behind this is the fact that you, as a citizen, have the profit because you need something and the service can provide it. This makes it only naturally that you are the one who has to do the action. To organize it like this is efficient. When you need surgery, you are going to the hospital instead of having the surgeon, his crew and all their equipment move to your house: it is obviously the way to do it.

In a commercial setting, this is totally different. Companies who want to sell you stuff are definitely reaching out. They are on your television, handing out leaflets on the streets, having smart viral campaigns and following you on your Facebook. That is only logical, in their case the benefit is for them. They earn money with it.

So why should youth information services do outreach activities? There are youth information centres where you can go, leaflets to be picked up and plenty of information available on the internet. It is the young person who needs the information so it is their responsibility to come into action. The answer to the above mentioned question is so simple that it can easily be overlooked. In order to be effective we need to reach all young people, not only the ones who are able to come in to action but also the ones who are lost and don't know (any more) what to do. If not than we would fall into the Filip Coussée dogma: "Unfortunately youth work seems to empower the powerful and police the vulnerable"¹⁶.

Youth information is about prevention, participation and inclusion. Prevention means that we enable young people to have the right information at the right time so they can make the right decisions. Basically it is about enabling them to function in our by the day getting, more complex society. And that is changing the profit principle. Well functioning newcomers to society are also a big interest for society itself. People who don't function cause problems and it often costs a lot of money to get them on the right track again.

Participation is not another word for "Hey, if you do it our way you

can be important too". Participation is a way to involve young people, to share responsibilities and stimulate them to take good care of our society. Or in the words of Mischa de Winter "This is our world, here you have it, you can influence it, change it a bit, but please take good care of it"¹⁷. To make this work, you need to involve more than only the happy few. This means that participation should have many faces and should always fit the interest and needs of the different target groups.

When it comes to social inclusion it goes without saying that you should reach out. To include all but only those who are willing to show up on Monday morning at 9.00 a.m., would be a contradiction in terminis. In my 25 years of experience in youth work, including the work in the underprivileged areas, I found out that one of the main causes of unwanted behaviour, is a lack of self-esteem and the feeling of being an outcast. Social inclusion of so-called "hard to reach" young people can be done more successful by using reaching out activities.

Youth information is in general innovative. It does not come as a surprise that there are many examples of youth information outreach projects. Some of them are described in this booklet. Reaching out very often means that you will go and meet youngsters in their natural environment. This can mean in schools, youth centres but also shopping malls and "the street". Recently the social environment of young people is more and more on line. The logical consequence is that youth information services are also provided through social media like Facebook, Twitter and others. Reaching out can mean gathering young people for a central activity which is complying to their interest and has a low threshold or to say it more clear, is FUN! Sometimes it can mean making existing services accessible. Make them more attractive or even physically accessible for youth with special needs.

Reaching out youth information is not a gadget. It is a service to all young people and a necessary condition to involve all. Reaching out youth information is one important way of working that makes youth information a valuable part of youth work.

¹⁶ Filip Coussée; The history of youth work in Europe; The relevance of youth work history; COE 2009

¹⁷ Mischa de Winter; Glass Palace Conference (Helsinki) 2002



4.3 QR-Codes, mobile tagging

GERMANY

Organisation IJAB - Fachstelle für Internationale Jugendarbeit der Bundesrepublik Deutschland

Dates blu3@tt@ck started in October 2008;

bar-code-reading is a new development which was tested in October 2009. In March 2010, we started to use codes which are posted on the meeting-places of youngsters.

Number of Participants Visitors of our youth information centre and youngsters in the city.

Youth Information Tool Mobile tagging, barcode reading with mobile phones.

Description

QR-Codes, which are placed on popular/typical meeting points of the youngsters, can be photographed with their mobile phones and get translated into a text. The necessary barcode-reading-program is broadcasted by a bluetooth-transmitter. Sending and using the program is for free. You can get the program in our local youth information centre via blu3@tt@ck (an information transmitted via Bluetooth technology).

Evaluation

The project is ongoing. Our first impression is that mobile phone users are excited about the technical aspects. We have the impression that the juvenile visitors of our youth information centre do not recognize flyers or posters very well but have a big interest in receiving news via their mobile phones.

For two years now, we have been using blu3@tt@ck for transmitting youth information. Our next step in this project is using QR-Codes for mobile phones. We hope that the youngsters better recognize the information by reading it on their mobile phones than seeing it on a poster.

The project definitely contributes to peer-to-peer because youngsters are creating the information for the peer group, for example details about events or information about places and the environment. The QR-Codes are spread over the whole city area.





4.4 Redes de Jóvenes

SPAIN

Organisation [Mallorca Centre de Joventut i Ocupació Ajuntament d'Andratx](#)

Dates [2006](#)

Number of Participants [399 users added in contacts list](#)

[142 Average number of daily users](#)

Youth Information Tool [Internet: Messenger, Infomobil, website, blogs, etc...](#)

Description

The project idea came from the willingness to keep young people informed of all matters concerning them at the municipality level and to receive their input. As we had at our disposal a tool with a strong impact given its widespread use among the young people, namely the Internet, we decided to use instantaneous communication means to foster exchanges with the young users and to respond to their needs for information.

The Youth Centre created its own user account in Messenger and invites young people to add themselves as its Messenger contact. Through Messenger, each young person can choose to authorize the Youth Centre to send him or her information on its services and activities. The young people are always invited to give their views, suggestions, and to ask their questions. Thereby, the Youth Centre provides continuous online support to general and specific information and the young people have a more direct means of contact and communication with the Centre.

Through Messenger and also in other “virtual spaces” such as websites and blogs, the Youth Centre can appropriately disseminate the newsletter “What?” (“Qué?”). The young people are also provided with information about various activities (workshops, outings, Youth Week, open night...). The information is selected in coordination with the professionals of the Youth Centre and of other departments in the field of youth, culture, education, sports, social services ... The young people are also invited to provide input, thereby promoting the sense of ownership and the involvement of

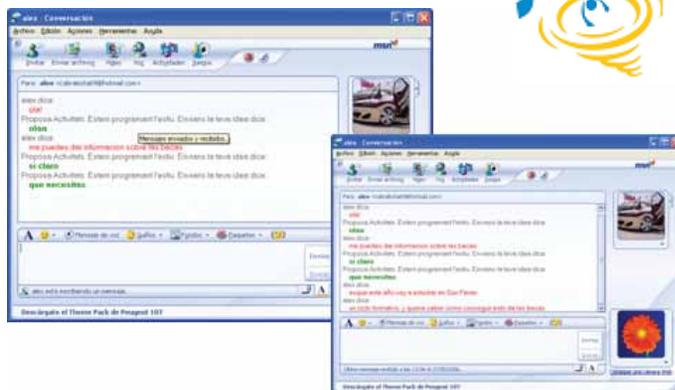
young users in the centre.

This Internet-based channel to get in contact with young people is seen as complementary to other outreach activities performed in “physical” space, in the centre itself or in the street, in bars, in cybercafés or associations... The Messenger project is also made known to young people by physical outreach activities such as briefings in Municipal schools.

Evaluation

The participation of young people in community life is enhanced through different types of activities and events. Our project is using a communication means that is close to them, which keeps them informed and at the same time, which allows them to voice their opinions and suggest ideas. Knowing each user individually is essential to make the young people feel recognized in the project and encouraged to participate and provide input.

Messenger also makes it possible to spread information about the Youth Centre itself, making it more popular among our target population.



4.5 Building Europe Together!

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Organisation Youth Information Centre of Saint Petersburg

Dates 1 September - 1 May 2009

Number of Participants 10

Youth Information Tool [Study visits to EU countries](#)

Description

The main goal of the project was to improve the quality of Russian youth information work by integrating the approaches, principles, values and methods of the European youth work. The beneficiaries of the project were youth information workers actively involved in youth work, willing and able to prepare youth projects.

The project included the following activities: a study visit to Norway and another one to Sweden, two evaluation meetings and the publication of the report. The study visits facilitated the participants' understanding of the core directions, approaches and methods of Norwegian and Swedish youth work. Also, partnerships with local NGOs and GOs were established for implementing mutual youth projects like youth exchanges, internships, seminars, trainings, etc.

Evaluation

The main positive outcome was that we strengthened our cooperation with existing partners and found new ones.

For the hosting organizations it was a good opportunity to understand the realities of Russian youth work and policy and to check their interests in cooperation with Russia. For our Norwegian partners it was an option to find a possible hosting organization in Russia that could manage a project promoting networking.

For us it was a good opportunity to take the first steps towards the large scale of EU funded projects. We also planned some more simple steps to support our cooperation in the future (e.g. exchanging volunteers within the European Commission

programme "Youth in action" and "Our Nordic home" youth exchange). It was also a good way to discover different cultural and social realities connected to youth work.

Thereby, 10 people became more professional in the field of European youth work.





4.6 More Attention Please!

SERBIA

Organisation **Omladinska Nevladina Organizacija ONO**

Dates **19 July - 27 July 2008**

Number of Participants **24 + 9 Youth Information Workers**

Youth Information Tool **Art, sports, working with animals, activism**

Project Theme **Social inclusion, participation and equal opportunities**

Description

The Youth exchange entitled “More Attention, Please!” is a project about social inclusion, participation and equal opportunities. It gathered 33 young people with fewer opportunities, cerebral palsy and Down syndrome, but also young people without a disability, from Serbia and Slovenia. The venue of the youth exchange was in an ethno camp in Mali Idjos/ Palic (Serbia). The main aim of this project was to encourage the participation and social inclusion of young people through art, music, sport activities, work with animals, practicing different skills etc. Participants had a chance to work and spend time together, to learn about and to share each other’s culture and to break down personal and cultural barriers.

This youth exchange gathered 24 young people as participants. From each country we had 10 young people and 4 participating volunteers, who also acted as personal assistants. In each country group, 5 people had some kind of disability and the other 5 were from marginalized groups (Roma’s, young people from orphanages, young people who have problems at home – sexual abuse, violence etc.)

Main objectives

- To enable young people (especially young people with a disability) feel the positive benefits of participation and inclusion;
- To create deeper understanding of youngsters with disability among their peers and to build up their confidence in playing an active role in society;



- To establish common particularities and specific needs of the young people with disability using an intercultural approach;
- To enable young people with disability to feel able to participate more confidently in their society. For the non-disabled young people to become less judgmental of disability.

Impact

With this project, we wanted to create one of the first steps to inclusive society in our local communities. So, the impact was changing the public opinion and its attitude towards people with disability and fewer opportunities.

On the other side, the direct inclusion of people with disability and fewer opportunities was meant to increase their self-confidence, self-esteem and self-initiative. To achieve that, the young disabled people’s participation in this YE supported youth in their daily situations of facing any kind of discrimination. Also, we thought that we encouraged young people without disability to give support.

The impact on young participants is related, also, to the impact on the local communities. We are, however, expecting the positive reaction to the physical activities and sports to be one of the most important ways towards independent life.

Activities, such as art and psychological workshops, trust and teambuilding games, would encourage them after returning to their homes to promote youth exchanges and meeting of different cultures.

Evaluation

With this project, young people with disabilities were enabled to feel the benefits of participation and inclusion; they gained more confidence in their society, increased their mobility and developed their sense of citizenship and mutual understanding.



4.7 Vocational guidance for young people with disabilities

FRANCE

Organisation [CIDJ France](#)

Dates [Test phase in 2009](#);

[main project in 2010, further development in 2011](#).

Number of Participants [Disabled young people living in Ile-de-France](#)

Youth Information Tool [School forums](#)

Description

The CIDJ is a place dedicated to the provision of a welcoming environment and of a wide range of information to all young people, including those with disabilities. The requests from disabled young people for vocational information and advice are as intense and complex as those of all young people. But young people with disabilities are confronted to an additional obstacle in the search for an education: they do not know if and how "ordinary" educational institutions are equipped with facilities adapted to their disability.

To meet their demands, the CIDJ has:

- Trained youth information workers, counsellors and psychologists, who receive young people on-site, to provide suitable and welcoming conditions for disabled young people. This training programme allows these professionals to downplay the specificities of their interaction with disabled young people while being perfectly well aware and informed of the problems and constraints related to disabilities. All informants are then prepared in their usual routine to receive young people with disabilities at any time, without appointment and anonymously. As it is the case with any young person. And without stigma.
- Listed all training institutions located in Ile-de-France in the fields of banking, insurance and finance and analyzed their level of accessibility for sensory-motor disabled people. The information was retrieved through an electronic questionnaire submitted to approximately one hundred schools, and the results are published on the site www.cidj.com, on the sub-section "young people with disability".

In 2010 and 2011, this information will include all vocational education and training sectors. Staff from Regional Information Centres (CRIJ) will be trained to welcome and inform young people with disabilities in their centres.

The visibility of this service was ensured through a press conference launched on 15 December 2009, in the presence of the Secretary of State in charge of the Family and Solidarity. Specialist and generalist press coverage was important. Contacts with NGOs working in the field of disability were established.

Evaluation

2500 visitors/month on the page dedicated to disabled young people on the CIDJ website www.cidj.com.



4.8 Further references

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