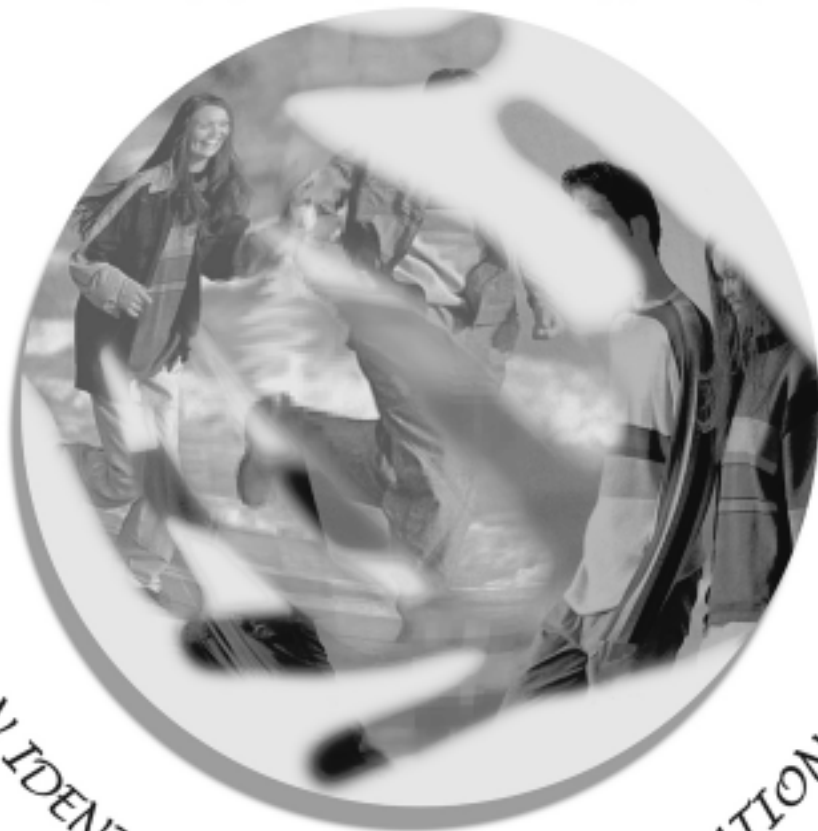


YOUTH EXCHANGES MANAGEMENT AND YOUTH INFORMATION



BALKAN IDENTITY AND YOUTH INFORMATION POLICY



Directorate-General for
Education and Culture



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Balkan Identity and Youth Information Policy - Description of the project

The integration process in South–Eastern Europe and the European integration are closely related. The recent political, economical and cultural transformations in whole Eastern Europe and especially on the Balkans have changed the European map, have broken the old links, stereotypes and visions. The whole set of significant changes and inter-influences in the Balkan region aroused the problem of the identity. The European integration of the region posted a lot of questions related to the identity preservation. The networking process of the Balkans and the establishment of strong links between this region and the other European countries could be stimulated by using the potential of youth information and youth exchanges and involving the modern media. Youth information and youth exchanges are also important instruments for promoting tolerance, understanding and intercultural approach in South–Eastern countries.

All the problematic settings of situation described above and the significant problems in organizing youth exchanges and voluntary services on Balkans have strongly motivated us to seek for tools and measures to overcome those problems and to enhance the abilities of youth organizations from South-Eastern Europe to organize youth exchanges.

Identification of the problems and needs:

1. Difficulties in organizing youth exchanges and European Voluntary Services between South - Eastern Europe and other European countries because of the broken links and significant changes in the last years;
2. The lack of knowledge of the minority groups and disadvantaged people in South–Eastern Europe in organizing youth

exchanges and EVS projects.

3. Information, cultural and political barriers between Balkans and West-European countries;
4. Disintegration in the Balkan region versa integration in Europe;
5. The lack of youth information flow between Balkan countries and between those countries and other European countries; undeveloped network of youth information centres on the Balkans;
6. The youth identity problems in South–Eastern Europe;
7. The negative youth behaviour and attitude to the surrounding reality; passive and resistance youth.

How the project met the needs?

Gave an opportunity to youth organizations from the South - Eastern Europe and from other parts of Europe (16 organizations from 12 countries) to meet and share experience about youth information policy and youth exchanges management (during the contact seminar “Balkan co-operation and European integration” and training course “Youth exchanges management and youth information”). The project enhanced the active participation of young people in the integration process and stimulate them to think about their identity and place in the modern society.

By the help of the developed information materials (CD-ROM – “Youth resources in Internet”, website and brochures) the project “Balkan identity and youth information policy” facilitated the co-operation of youth organizations on the Balkans. Additionally, by establishing the “Balkan youth information network” the project created sustainable communications and efficient contacts between youth information centers in South-Eastern Europe and in other European countries and in this way contribute to the integration process in Europe.

Last but not least, all the planned events encouraged the ability of young people from Balkans to organize youth exchanges and European Voluntary Services and thus to facilitate the networking process in Europe.

The project trained young leaders and young people how to use modern media and communications and the methods of open & distance multimedia learning in the youth work. “Balkan identity and youth information policy” also provided knowledge to disadvantaged youth how to use new media and information technologies in the youth work.



Objectives and beneficiaries

Objectives:

1. This project gave an opportunity to young people to discuss the problems of Balkan identity and to exchange ideas about the disintegration and integration process in South-Eastern Europe;
2. This project focus the attention of young people on the role of youth information and youth exchanges in the integration process;
3. This project explored youth information as a tool against violence and intolerance (comparing European experience and Balkan experience);
4. The project enhanced the ability of the youth organizations in the pre – accession countries in South - Eastern Europe to organize European Voluntary Services and Youth exchanges
5. This project explored youth information and modern media as instruments for future development of youth exchanges and European voluntary services in the pre - accession countries in South - Eastern Europe.
6. The project has encouraged the development of youth information policy in the Balkan region using the European experience.
7. The project has showed the ways of enhancing the youth participation in the society;

Beneficiaries:

1. Youth organizations and youth information centers in Europe which would like to realise common activities with partners from South-Eastern Europe;
2. Direct beneficiaries: all participants in the contact seminar “Balkan cooperation and European integration” and training

- course “Youth exchanges management and youth information” who received knowledge during the training course and who could organize follow-up activities;
3. Disadvantaged young people who would like to use modern media & information technologies in their work
 4. Youth workers and young people from youth organizations providing youth information and involving or working with disadvantaged young people in South-Eastern Europe;
 5. Youth workers and young people from youth organizations developing youth exchanges and working on international level;



Structure of international youth work

In the wake the two wars states felt the need to build institutions and set up bodies which, through dialogue, exchanges and socio-cultural developments of their members, would guarantee peace. The following information concerns the structure of international youth activities.

Youth structures

World level

Several youth organizations have a truly worldwide structure, such as the Scouts, the Girl Guides, the YMCA, political youth movements and Catholic youth organizations, which all have members all over the world. The Geneva Informal Meeting (GIM) is the forum for relations between the United Nations system and the international non-governmental youth organizations. International youth organizations are also very active in UNESCO, through its collective consultations.

Europe of the 48

Throughout the so-called “cold war” period European youth organizations made a substantial contribution to the development of East-West co-operation. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, numerous youth international organizations renewed contact and developed their activities in the broader European framework; some even opened sub-regional offices in Central and Eastern Europe.

Europe of the 40

The international youth organizations in Europe have members in most of the European countries. One of the symbols of Europe – the Council of Europe has set up three important institutions for young people, namely the European Youth Centres and the European Youth Foundation. The Council of Europe has also set up a

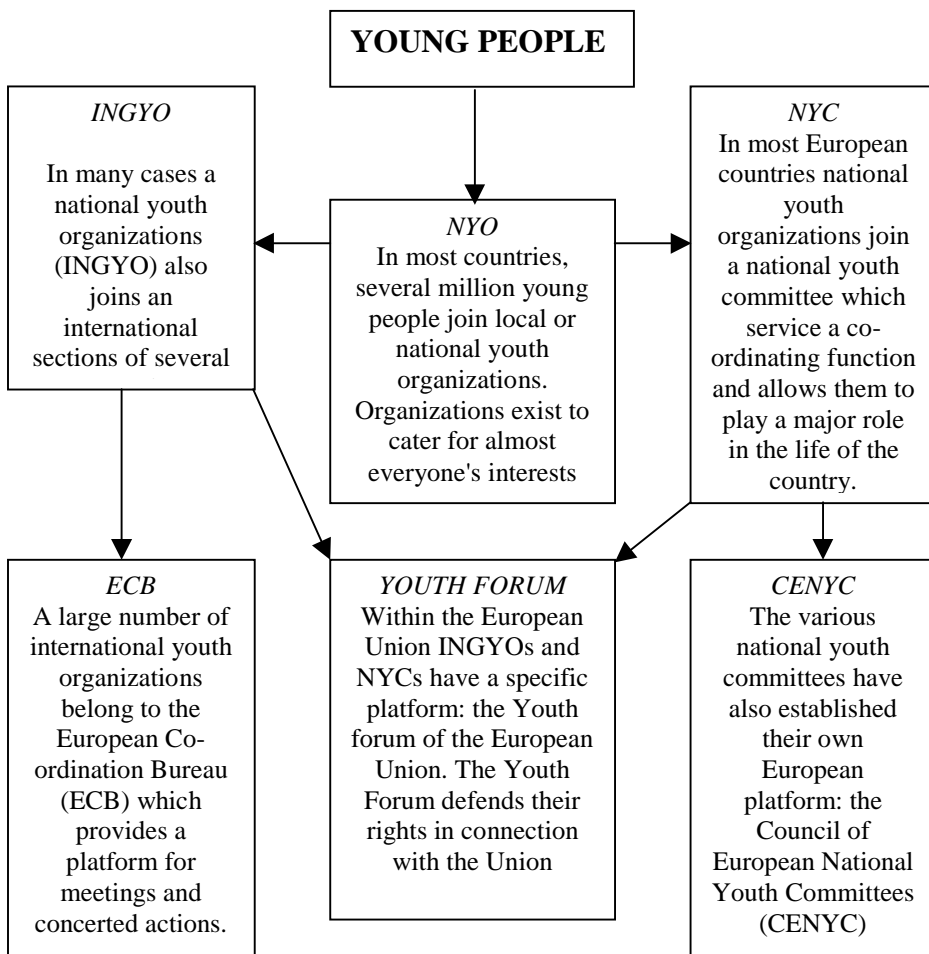
European Steering Committee for Intergovernmental Co-operation in the youth field (CDEJ).

Europe of the 15

In order to influence the policy of the Union, particularly in so far as it affects young people, national and international youth organizations set up Youth Forum of the European Union, the essential role of which is to bring pressure to bear on the Community institutions and to monitor the implementation of the numerous programmes aimed at young people. Since 1994 youth organizations at the national and international levels have been contemplating setting up a joint platform to work both with the Council of Europe and with the European Union.

As from 1995, within the Commission of the European Union, Directorate-General (DG XXII) is responsible for education training and youth matters.





Project management

Management is defined, in simple terms as the skill or practice of controlling, directing or planning something; “The act of directing, or managing for a purpose”. In other words, it is the effort of planning, organizing and mobilizing people and resources for a given purpose. In the case of project management, we are talking about the capacities and skills that make the project feasible and real.

A team nowadays manages most of the projects. Youth work projects are not anymore the hard work of an individual youth worker but a collective effort of a group composed of different people, with different capacities, expectations, experiences, backgrounds and cultures. “Teams are now seen as solutions to problems of external adaptation, responding to complexity by bringing together a diversity of perspectives while responding to dynamic changes by encouraging team to make decisions at the front line where the action is” (Schneider and Barsoux, 1997).

8 reasons why projects succeed:

1. The organizational structure is situated to the project team.
2. The project team participates in planning.
3. The project team is committed to establishing schedules.
4. The project team is committed to establishing realistic budgets.
5. The project make proper use of network planning techniques and does not let the plan become an end at itself.
6. The project team works with bureaucracy, politics and proce

dures and not against them.

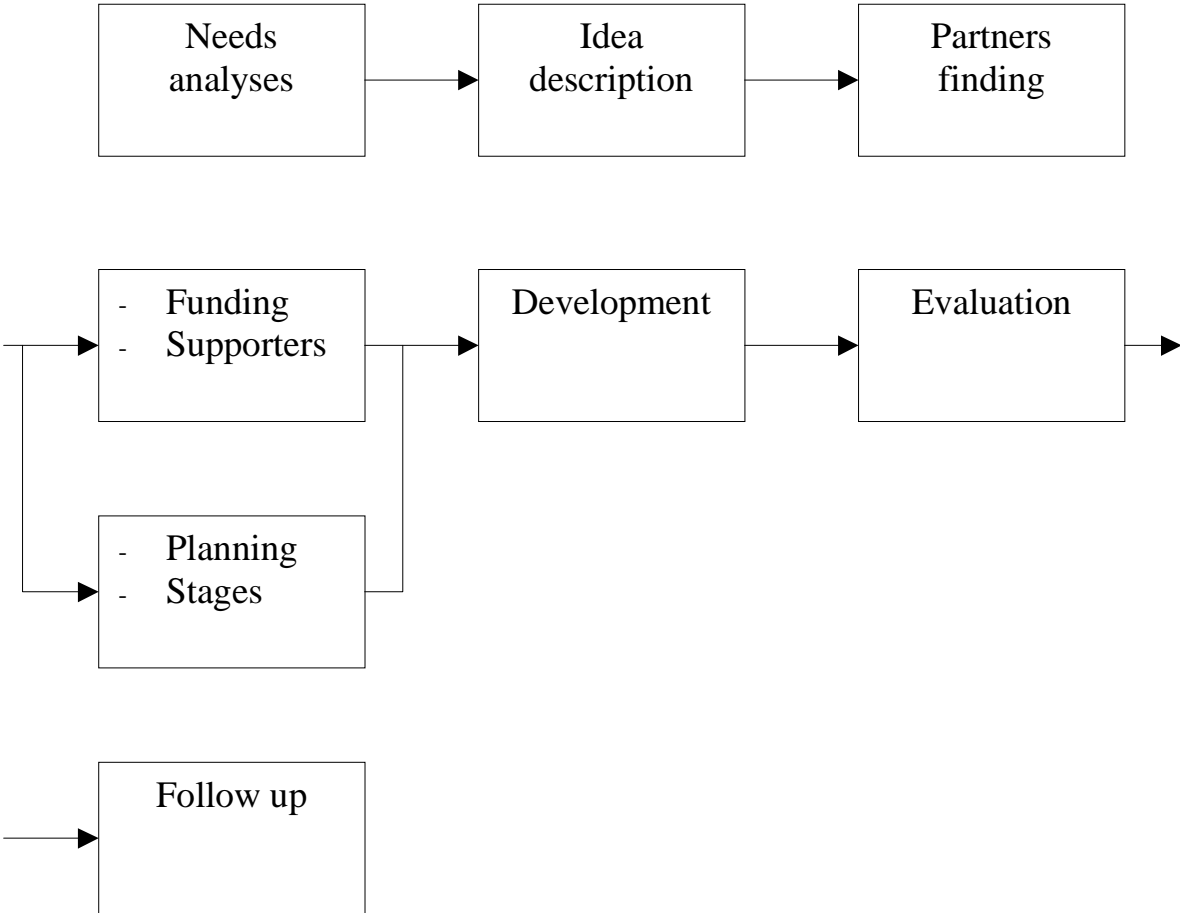
7. The project team agree on specific and realistic project goals.
8. The target public is involved from the start of the project.

8 reasons why some projects fail:

1. Inadequate authority.
2. Lack of project team participation and planning.
3. Lack of project team participation in problem solving.
4. Inadequate communication skills.
5. Inadequate technical skills.
6. Inadequate administrative skills.
7. Unrealistic project schedules.
8. Unclear project goals.

In the table below you could see the main project steps (on the next pages you will find detailed description).

Main project steps



The first step in the youth project/exchange management is so called Needs analysis.

The main question here is WHY?

- Why is the project necessary?
- Why is it relevant?
- Why should everybody be interested in it?

And the main things here very briefly are:

DO NOT:

- Start your project against influential people in the community (you may be sabotaged).
- Think that you know everything!
- Do it for young people, do it with them!
- Do it only because it is fashionable!
- Get stuck in passivity, fatalism, pessimism!

DO:

- Ask the opinion of those involved in the project!
- Ask several peoples opinion including potential partners, sponsors, or simply whose support you may need (at least you will not have them against you)!
- Think about the social dynamics the project could kick off (negative and positive)!
- Look for results of similar projects elsewhere!
- Remember that there is no objective analysis.

- Do it when it needs to be done!
- Dare to go against the tide!

WHAT YOU COULD DO JUST PRACTICALLY:

- To go out to where young people meet and listen to what they say about it;
- To organize an informal meeting to discuss that with the young people;
- To talk with the school staff and the local police;
- To have a meeting with other local (youth) associations.

Next important step is objective defining:

The question here is What?

A project is defined in the first place by the time (project beginning and end) and by the objectives: by what is set to be achieved or done through the project in that time frame.

What you have to DO?:

- Negotiate/discuss your objectives with those concerned (target group, partners, colleagues).
- Get second opinions about the way they are formulated and defined.
- Ask yourself if they can ever be evaluated, how and when.
- Consider that if they are not clear for you they will not be to the other either.

- Write things down and use the objectives in your communication and presentations (it is not only fund-raising exercise).

DO NOT:

- Hesitate to review your objectives if you can justify it.
- Confuse the objectives with the activities.
- Define objectives that you do not plan to achieve.
- Define only ideal, un-measurable objectives.
- Become a slave of project formalism. A project should live, and ultimately die. So, you may and even must introduce changes (make sure you are aware of it!).

Next step – Strategy and methodology.

Yes, but ...HOW are we going to do that?

The methodology is the social, organizational and educational process through which the objectives will be pursued in a coherent manner; the way in which the different activities will build up on each other to reach the objectives.

What you have to DO?:

- Consider alternatives to the plan and process of the activities proposed.
- Try to anticipate side effects or reactions to the sequence of events.
- Think if your participants or target group understand the process you propose them.

- Think about the approaches and values that should be visible in the way the project is planned and organized.

DON'T:

- Just put activities together hoping that they will build on each other by accident.
- Get confused if it seems too complicated. But make sure that your plan makes sense and that you can explain it.
- Confuse methodology and methods. Some people use the terms alternatively, but that should not be the case if you know what is meant with them.

Next step – Planning of activity.

All that has been mentioned above in the project must now be practically put together in a plan, with a calendar, assignment of activities to place, etc.

DO:

- Check what may already be planned in the community for the same period.
- Consider what public and private institutions may be eager to fund or support.
- Do not put all the activities together in one calendar or plan and check if it is realistic.
- Consider time for planning, preparation, implementation and evaluation! And for writing the reports, too!
- Think of time for regular evaluations and check-points.
- Do a complete work timetable for yourself, even if the public

will need to see the activities timetable only.

- A checklist of objectives vs. activities. You may need to review one or another.

DON'T:

- Make your project depend on one single activity.
- Overestimate time! Most likely you will miss it!
- Put too many activities in one single period!
- Overestimate your capacities. You also need energy and periods to recover!
- Stay forever at the level of planning! You also need to start organizing and implementing.
- Forget the perfect plan does not exist.

Next step – implementing the project

The project is more than a simple idea that aspires to become true. The project is an idea that has been transformed and made feasible by a careful planning process and that will be implemented. After the planning it is time to start working on it.

“No major project is ever completed in time, within the budget and with the same people that started it. Yours will not be the first.”

Time planning:

Here are some realistic thoughts of time:

- Time cannot be saved
- Time cannot be exchanged
- Time cannot be bought

- Time cannot be sold
 - Time can only be used.

So, to manage your time more effectively you should:

- Act, rather than react.
- Avoid floundering in every direction or doing nothing.
- Plan your activities.
- Vary your activities through your time table.
- Find a balance between work and pleasure.

Financial resources

Every project must have a budget. A budget is calculated estimation of the value or price of the project and is always composed of the expenses – the cost of the project – and the income – the resources brought into the project to cover the expenses.

Here is a brief example for planning the budget:

Expenditure

- Event costs
- accommodation
 - travel
 - rent of halls
 - rent of equipment
 - translator
 - etc.

Income

- DONATORS
- OWN CONTRIBUTION
- PARTICIPANTS CONTRIBUTION

Administration costs

- coordinator

- accountant
- etc.

Publishing materials

- processing
- printing
- etc.

Keep in mind that:

DO:

- Keep the contacts with the sponsor, even if you did not get funding.
- Ask for directions if you intend or need to use the money for other activities than those asked for.
- Say thank you to sponsors.
- Invite them to be involved in the project (somehow).
- Value each contribution.
- Introduce changes if they make sense and secure the feasibility of the rest

DON'T:

- Be discouraged by a no.
- Do it if you don't have the money.
- Assume you have natural right to funding!
- Expect the funders to know the importance of your project if

you don't tell them.

- Underestimate the value of a contribution, no matter how small!
- Do it all by yourself. Accountants, treasurers and experts can also be of help.

Fundraising

It is often difficult to raise the finance necessary to carry out a project. Sadly, there is no formula whereby the necessary funds can be collected in a few days, and yet money remains the key concern in bringing a project to fruition. Many are the projects, which have been impossible to carry out for want of funds.

Here are some practical advises:

TO BE AVOID:

- Do not systematically send an identical project presentations to a large number of foundations, institutions or companies.
- Where there is a person responsible for dealing with applications, do not write direct to the programme/foundation director.
- Do not send a copy of your application.
- Do not request unreasonable amounts.
- Do not send your application after the closing date.
- Do not assume that the funding organization is familiar with the circumstances in which your project will be run or the needs, which it is designed to meet.
- Do not request funding for operational costs or the purchase of material for your organization.

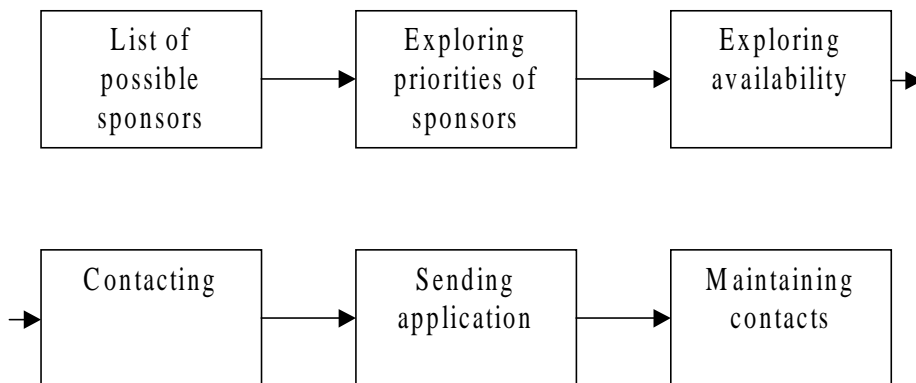
- Do not beg.

ADVICE:

- Target and select institutions/foundations/companies, which are likely to provide funding for your project or organization because their aims are similar.
- Make sure your projects are believable (unrealistic applications could damage your organization's chances in the future).
- Do not forget to include your organization's full name and the name of the contact person.
- Believe in your project.
- Adapt your project to the priorities of the funding organization.
- Use personal contacts.
- If you give the names of any experts consulted in connection with the project, remember to inform the people concerned.
- Draw up a detailed, realistic budget, which is balanced and accurate.
- Make your project presentation clear and concise.
- Avoid abbreviations.
- Keep records of all actions taken. An activity report will be requested (so keep newspaper articles, records of input by participants, etc.), as will final accounts (keep all invoices).
- Try to develop a long-term partnership with backers, especially those, whose aims are similar to those of your organization.

- Do not forget to thank backers for their support.

In the scheme below you could see the funding steps:



Finally, you get money and the event has been done. But do not forget for the last important steps - **ongoing monitoring and evaluation**.

“When things are going well, something will go wrong. When things can’t get any worse, they will. When things appear to be going better, you have overlooked something...Murphy was an optimist!”

WHAT IS GOOD TO BE DONE:

- Allow time for results to show.
- Adopt an honest approach to reality.
- Also value results that were not foreseen.
- Take into account the financial management of the project.

- Value young people's opinion and contribution to the evaluation.
- Seek allies in your monitoring team for improving things.

DON'T:

- Be afraid of resistance.
- Postpone inevitable decisions
- Act as if you were the only owner of the project.
- Let others dictate what you ought to do.
- Underestimate the risk for financial problems.
- Let yourself fall into pessimism!

Towards the end of the plan of activities the project is becoming complete. But before formally "closing it", a final evaluation is necessary.

SO, DO:

- Involve different people in the evaluation and take them seriously.
- Look at the results of similar projects. Are there any trends or things that can be compared?
- Recall the original needs analysis, aims and objectives.
- Remember that there is no such thing as an "objective" evaluation. But you may limit the level of subjectivity (by diversifying sources and methods).
- Run through the results and impact of the project with the young

people. This way you will help them understanding the change in item.

- Think about the evaluation while planning and running the project (not only towards the end!).
- Show possible discrepancies or differences of opinion in matters where there is no clear conclusion or data.
- Expect to be misunderstood!

DON'T:

- Get stuck in the negativity of some evaluations. Do bear in mind that many people still believe that evaluating is stating what did not work or what went wrong. Honesty does not mean not highlighting the positive aspects (especially to sponsors).
- Use the evaluation as a way to sort out the conflicts (although it can be a starting point...)
- Feel attacked if some things did not go exactly as you planned or felt. Respect the other people's evaluation.
- Keep the results for yourself!
- Focus on what can not be changed, focus on areas where change is possible.
- Run an evaluation without planning it first.



How to organize youth exchanges?

If you want to organize an exchange, but you do not know how to begin, than first you have **to clear up the idea!**

How can you do that?

-) Contact the national agency office “Youth for Europe” - from here you can obtain information what kind of projects could be supported and other possible financial resources.
-) Contact with youth organizations that organize exchanges or have taken part in an exchange.
-) Discuss how much time, energy, enthusiasm and money you will need to realize the project - and if you are still interested we can talk over **why do you want to organize an exchange?**

Which are the topics and problems that you are interested in?

Examples:

- Ø What does it means to be a European
- Ø Human relationships
- Ø New generation challenges
- Ø Environment problems

Is it some special manner of work that you prefer?

- Ø To discuss

- ∅ To use video or other media
- ∅ To write or play some game

Remember! You have to work very much and just to be sure worth while you need to clear up: **Why** do you want to organize an exchange? What do you want to achieve with it? - set up enough time to determine the aims - thereby you will be pleased of your work!

You already know what is necessary for an exchange. You want to organize it and you know why. The next step - **you must find a partner.**

SEARCH OF A PARTNER How to do that?

Clear up among you which country do want for a partner and why. After that:

- ① Contact “Youth for Europe” program office, which hold out opportunities in finding partners.
- ① If your organization is a part of the international net, use that.
- ① Talk with some members of your organization who have been recently on a study visit, course or other international meeting. Examine if they could help you.
- ① Is your town closely related with some other town? If it is true, talk with some one of the committee, responsible for that.
- ① You could try to talk with foreigners who live in your region.

- ① Remember that finding a partner could take some time, so continue with the **creating of the exchange group**.

THE GROUP How to do that?

-) Popularize the exchange plans in an appropriate manner.
-) Organize meeting and represent all aspects of the exchange.
-) Select the participants - demand application for participation or accept them because of their interest.
-) Specify criteria and select the participants - on this stage you need to select group leaders.

Getting know with the partner

It is very essential to **get know with your partner** promptly, to alive the idea and to have enough time for planning.

How to do that?

Begin with the fundamental:

-) Aims - do you think in a same direction?
-) The topic of the project - are you sure you are talking for a same thing?
-) Who will be the firs host and when?
-) How much participants and leaders you will have, what will be the age limit and correlation between sexes?

Essential relations - their creation and making them sustainable will help you for the future success of the exchange:

“ The Group

Your group

-) Creating of group identity and achieving a consent
-) Creating of a powerful leader team
-) Creating of good relations among leaders and participants

The group and the local community

Your group and the local community

-) Its popularization in the local community

Some ideas:

- Ø Spreading the information by press release
- Ø Interview for the local radio station
- Ø Publishing of a brochure for the exchange
- Ø Making posters, postcards, T-shirts, etc.
- § Establishing good interrelations with influential people or local organizations

.. **The team and the partner group**

You and your partner group

-) Exchange of basic information
-) Creating contact teams with each partner group that can
-) communicate easy in common language
-) Exchange of information and opinions about

Examples:

- Ø The aims and tasks
- Ø The history and peculiarities of the group
- Ø The preparation work
- Ø The group “contracts”
- Ø The program and accommodation
- Ø The travelling agreements and the visit
-) Planning of the preparatory meeting
-) Creating of good working attitudes between the group leaders
-) Creating contacts between the participants of the both groups

It is time to begin work

Here is an exemple for youth exchange, developed by one of the working groups during the Training course “Youth exchanges management and youth information”. Keep in mind that the organization is different for the different kind of projects.

The idea:

1. Context

-Youth exchange-

- Ø Partner countries: 4
- Ø Number of participants: 30
- Ø Theme: Act against barriers

2. Aims of the project

- Ø Better understanding for a better future
- Ø New approach
- Ø Personal development
- Ø Promotion of tolerance
- Ø Local impact /audience/

Ø Promotion of the European diversity and identity

3. **Target group**

Ø **Age of the participants:** 15 - 25

Ø **Profession:** non

Ø **Membership:** not necessary to be part of the organization

4. **Main activities**

Ø Workshops for theatre and music for 10 days

Ø 4 presentations and 1 at the end

5. **Ways of support**

Ø “Youth” program

Ø Local municipality

Ø Donation, sponsors, advertisement

Ø Participation fee

Tips & Tricks

If you are going to organize /or to participate in/ some youth events and already have developed project idea it could be good to have in mind the following information. It could save you a big amount of money.

On the following page we will give you more information about:

- *The Partial Agreement between Council of Europe and European Conference on Youth Cards / European Youth Card Association (EYCA);*
- *Youth Card – a service card at the service of culture;*
- *Mobility Fund for disadvantaged young people and*
- *Inter Rail Card.*

Partial Agreement on the Youth Card

The Partial Agreement set up between the Council of Europe and the European Conference on Youth Cards / European Youth Card Association (EYCA) is aimed at developing the system of Youth Cards, particularly at European level, in best interests of young people under 26 years of age, with a view to facilitating their mobility and their access to various goods and services necessary for their personal and cultural development.

With a view to co-operation and co-ordination, the Committee of Ministers, on the basis of proposal from the European Conference on Youth Cards and the Board of Co-ordination adopts the programme and budget.

Thanks to the co-ordination of work carried out in the different member states and the harmonization of advantages, the Board of Co-ordination promotes the expansion of new services which can be offered to young people.

By early 1995, twenty-three countries had already pooled their efforts to help young people. Eighteen national organizations in twelve countries have publications targeting a readership totaling some 1 200 000.

Hundreds of thousands of young Europeans, students or youth workers, in possession of Euro<26 cards, keep a sharp lookout for reductions offered to card-holders. These are posted on the windows of thousands of places of entertainment, museums, theatres, sport centres and shops. Reductions and services may vary from one country to another, but they are always suited to the needs of those under 26 years of age.

What is the specific about Youth Card is that it first of all offers young people facilitate in their own locality, then provides them with opportunities for travel.

Youth Card equals mobility

There are three strands of the Youth Card scheme: transport, accommodation and protection for the young traveller.

Transport

The European Conference's concern is to help young people to travel. In order to do this, national agreement with international youth travel companies (USIT, SSTS, STA, etc.) have been concluded and, as a direct result, holders of the Euro<26 are eligible for concessionary airline fares.

Euro<26 holders can obtain Student Air Travel Association (SATA) tickets and thus travel economically thanks to the advantageous travel conditions they offer.

Many agreements with rail and bus companies also provide similar facilities.

Accommodation

Youth Cards, in addition to the concept of reciprocal advantages, provide in each country concerned access to accommodation for young travellers in possession of Euro<26.

Protection

Today the majority of Youth Card holders are automatically insured worldwide for medical care and repatriation. Even though some national organizations have not yet been able to include this directly in the price of the Card, either this soon will be the case or special terms will be offered.

Youth Card – a service card at the service of culture

There are many different services offered in each country, depending on the national situation. Efforts have been made to achieve the social integration of young people: free legal services, youth cards with which bank withdrawals can be made (even abroad), provision of information on cultural events, etc.

In the long term, the Youth Card should allow every young person to travel both within Europe as a whole and in the context of the multiple facets of European culture.

By its very nature, Euro<26 has induced each national organization to seek concessions and synergies with cultural institutions. Hundreds of museums, theatres, cinemas and shows offer reductions to holders of a youth card.

Mobility Fund for disadvantaged young people

The Council of Europe and International Union of Railways (IUR) have joined forces to set up a fund for the mobility of disadvantaged young people. From each Inter Rail Card bought, one EURO

will be donated to the funding of Europe's young and least well off, enabling them to travel to attend international activities, taking them on journeys of cross-cultural contact and discovery.

The fund caters solely for young people from underprivileged backgrounds or economically underdeveloped areas and is intended to cover the rail travel of participants attending international educational activities. It does not assist tourist travel. To qualify for assistance, projects must involve at least two countries and a minimum of ten people.

Inter Rail Card

For over twenty years Inter Rail has symbolized the continental rail networks' desire to develop contacts between young Europeans. A passport to imaginative travel, Inter Rail gives many young people from all over the world the opportunity to meet, share experience and discover the wealth of each other's cultures.

Inter Rail's twenty-seven participating countries are grouped geographically in to seven zones chosen on the basis of a survey of young people's preferences.

A card valid for second-class rail travel in either one, two or three zones or a fortnightly or a monthly card allowing virtually unrestricted travel in all seven zones.

Funding sources

After you clear up the idea for exchange you need to know the possible funding sources:

European programs:

- Youth:
 - Action 1 – Youth exchanges
 - Action 2 – European Voluntary Service (EVS)
 - Action 3 – Youth initiatives
 - Action 4 – Joint projects
 - Action 5 – Support measures
- Socrates,
- Leonardo da Vinci
- School exchange programme
- Culture 2000
- Phare:
 - Lien
 - Partnership
- other
- National institutions:
 - Ministries
 - Agencies
- Local authorities
- Foundations:
 - Open society foundation
 - European Youth Foundation of Council of Europe
 - International Youth Foundation
 - European Cultural Foundation
 - other
- Companies
- Clubs
- Own activities

YOUTH Programme

The biggest fund not only for youth exchanges but for different kind of youth projects is the so called Youth Programme of European Union.

Why have a YOUTH programme ?

Above all, the YOUTH programme offers young people opportunities for mobility and to take an active part in the construction of the Europe of the third millennium. It aims to contribute to the achievement of a 'Europe of knowledge' and create a European arena for co-operation in the development of youth policy, based on informal education. It encourages the concept of lifelong learning and the development of aptitudes and competencies, which promote active citizenship. The following objectives of the programme strive to achieve and maintain a balance between personal development and collective activity across all sectors of society:

- Assist young people to acquire knowledge, skills and competencies, and recognize the value of these experiences;
- Facilitate the integration of young people into society at large and encourage their spirit of initiative;
- Open up greater access, in particular, to young people living in difficult circumstances or young people with disabilities, whilst helping to eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote equality at all levels of society;
- Permit young people to give free expression to their sense of solidarity in Europe and the wider world and support the fight against racism and xenophobia;
- Ensure that young people can play an active role in the construction of Europe;
- Introduce a European element into projects, which will have a positive impact on youth work at local level;

- Promote a better understanding of the diversity of our common European culture and shared heritage;
- Maintain and develop a quality framework for informal educational activities within the scope of the YOUTH programme.

How is the YOUTH programme structured?

Building on the experience of both the Youth for Europe and the European voluntary service programmes, the YOUTH programme is the first to integrate all the on-going co-operation activities in this field at Community level. This integration is intended to consolidate and enhance what has already been achieved so far and to facilitate the access of young people to a wide range of support, for activities carried out by young people themselves. The programme will cater for the needs of young people and youth workers not only by offering financial support to their projects but also by providing information, training and opportunities to develop new partnerships across Europe. In brief, the five main actions are:

Action 1: Youth for Europe exchanges

The Youth for Europe action offers a unique opportunity for groups of young people to meet. The exchanges have a pedagogical, informal learning aim and value and the groups explore common themes and learn about each other's cultures. Exchanges can take place between countries participating fully in the programme and with certain other countries. Exchanges can involve youth groups from two or more countries.

Action 2: European Voluntary Service

Under this action, young people are able to spend up to 12 months abroad as a European volunteer to help in a local project in a wide range of fields: social, ecological and environmental projects, arts and cultural and new technological developments, leisure and

sports, etc.

Action 3: Youth initiatives

Through this action, young people can get support to carry out a project at local level that allow them to get in touch with common questions and problems relating to topical youth issues in Europe. This is meant to give them a chance to develop and express their creativity and initiative. This action also aims at providing European volunteers with a concrete opportunity to build upon the expertise and skills gained during voluntary service.

Action 4: Joint actions

This action brings together the education (SOCRATES), vocational training (LEONARDO DA VINCI) and YOUTH programmes. It will provide support for initiatives that build on the complementary nature of the three programmes, which involve organizations in the fields of education, training and youth. Furthermore it will support co-operation to facilitate moving from formal to informal education.

Action 5: Support measures

The support measures underpin and complement the YOUTH programme's actions. They are aimed at consolidating and enhancing the benefits, at continuing and developing innovative actions at Community level, and at boosting quality, particularly by means of exchanges of good practices and training of organizers in what the European dimension represents. They are also the most ideal of instruments to support co-operation initiatives that contribute to achieving the general objectives of the programme, strengthening European youth policies whilst encouraging wider co-operation with third countries in the youth field. Because of its integrated approach, the YOUTH programme will facilitate a greater synergy between actions so that best practices developed in one activity may be transferred

to other activities supported by the programme. As an example, methods developed by young volunteers during their voluntary service to raise awareness of discriminatory behaviour against disabled people could become a training module for youngsters at local level under a youth initiative.

ACTION 1 YOUTH FOR EUROPE EXCHANGES

Why have youth exchanges?

Young people, by being brought into contact with other cultures and the day-to-day realities of others, can learn a lot from each other, and through the theme of their exchange, are able to discover and explore similarities and differences between their cultures. Such an experience can help to combat negative prejudices and stereotypes. Moreover, the effect of a youth exchange on the local population can raise a more positive awareness of other cultures and have an impact not only on the young people themselves, but also on the local communities.

What is a youth exchange?

A youth exchange brings together groups of young people from different backgrounds from two, or several countries, providing them with an opportunity to meet, discuss and confront various themes, whilst learning about each other's countries and cultures. Projects where groups of young people from more than two countries, (multilateral projects), come together are especially encouraged since the European added value and intercultural experience for the young people involved in such exchanges is greater. Projects between two countries are called one-to-one projects. They are intended, primarily, for those who have not organized, nor participated in, youth exchanges before, or, projects which involve young people from less privileged backgrounds or young people with disabilities.

Who can participate?

Groups of young people who are legally resident in a country eligible to participate in the programme and are, in principle, aged between 15 and 25 years.

Who are the partners in a youth exchange?

Each youth exchange has a *host group* and one or a number of *sending groups*. The exchange can involve two countries (one-to-one), or more than two countries (multilateral) as explained below. At least one of the groups must come from a European Union Member State. The first step is to form a group, which will discuss the project idea and agree on how to go about it. The second step is to identify a partner(s) for the future exchange. The National Agencies can assist in the partner finding process. Please contact the relevant National Agency well in advance for assistance (please see the annexes for contact details). European youth organizations, which have a seat in one of the programme countries and member branches in at least 8 programme countries, can participate in the YOUTH programme through multilateral youth exchanges. The participation of the national branches is encouraged.

What are the general project criteria?

Participant As mentioned above, the exchanges are aimed at groups of young people who reside in a country eligible to participate and are, in principle, aged between 15- 25 years. The YOUTH programme specially encourages the involvement of young people from less privileged cultural, geographical or socio-economic backgrounds and young people with disabilities. In exceptional cases, participants younger than 15 years or older than 25 years may be included, if the reasons are well justified and their number is limited.

For youth exchanges involving young people from third countries

please also read the third country specific section on page 18. In principle, the recommended eligible size for an exchange is a minimum of 16 and not more than 60 participants). National groups must be balanced in terms of numbers of participants.

Duration

In principle, the duration of the exchange activity itself is from 6 to 21 days, excluding travel. Exchanges shorter than 6 days are not recommended, as these may not guarantee that the inter-cultural learning experience will have the desired impact; neither are they likely to be cost effective.

Project content

Learning experience

The project should contribute to the educational process of young people and make them aware of the European context in which they live. The exchange should have clear and achievable learning objectives for the participants.

Objectives and theme

The starting point should always be the interest expressed by the young participants themselves. The exchange should have a thematic concept, which the groups wish to explore together. Examples of themes are anti-racism, fighting drug abuse, arts or music, environment, information technology, local heritage etc.

Programme and working methods

In planning an exchange, it is essential that a clear and structured programme of the daily activities be established. The working methods and the programme should reflect the maximum involvement possible of the participants and allow the learning process to evolve. The methods could include eg. working in groups, field

visits, role playing games, round table discussions, practical work, cultural excursions, simulation games, presentations, playing theatre or doing sports together. All activities, however, should be linked to the main theme and the overall objective of the exchange. Employing diverse intercultural working methods can not only provide the participants with an opportunity to explore subjects, cultures, identities (their own and others') but can also ensure equal participation of all young people, regardless of their language abilities, or other skills. For more information on methods and training courses etc. please contact the relevant National Agency.

European dimension

When young people from various regions and countries coming together, the result can be to stimulate their awareness of other cultures and introduce them to new perspectives on familiar subjects (history, news, perceptions of identities, etc.). However, the impact of a youth exchange should not only be limited to the participants involved in the activity but, should also bring the concept of "Europe" to the local community and raise and promote a more positive awareness of other cultures. Applicants should carefully describe how they intend to incorporate a strong European dimension in their exchange.

Preparation and follow-up

The preparatory phase of an exchange is important for the success of the project. During this phase the participants should come together to discuss the aims and objectives of the planned exchange. The exchange partners should agree a programme of activities together; they should organise the practicalities and agree common strategies to get to know each other etc. If the application is approved, the partners may choose to get together in the hosting country for an **advance planning visit**. The partners should think about the follow up of an exchange project from the beginning: will the exchange be reciprocal, will a new partner be in-

cluded in the next project, etc. The partners should include an element which deals with follow up during evaluation sessions with participants i.e. before, during and after the exchange. The groups should reflect upon the exchange, think about future co-operation and how to pass on the gained experiences to other groups, the local community etc.

Group leaders

Each group should have one responsible person. The representatives of the host and sending groups will form the leadership team, which is responsible for monitoring the project, and facilitate the active involvement of all participants. European youth organizations Multilateral youth exchanges presented by European youth organizations should be of an innovative or, experimental character and have a clearly defined European added value.

Take note - what an exchange is not!

Statutory meetings of organizations, holiday travel, language courses, school class exchanges, study tours, performance tours, festivals and exchange activities which aim to make financial profit, are not eligible for grants under the YOUTH programme.

What types of activities are eligible?

Exchanges:

- **A one-to-one exchange** involves a sending and a host partner and brings together groups of young people from **two** programme countries. The exchange must take place in one of the countries involved in the project.
- **A multilateral exchange** involves groups of young people from three or more programme countries. The exchange must take place in one of the countries involved in the project.
- **Itinerant multilateral exchanges**, i.e. the entire exchange group

moves during the activity from one country to another. An itinerant exchange must involve groups of young people from at least 3 programme countries

Exchanges do not necessarily imply reciprocity i.e. the sending group becomes the host group in a second phase of the project, although this is often the case. A separate application needs to be presented for the return activity.

- **Youth exchanges with third countries** involve groups of young people from the European Union and third countries. Please see also the general section on youth co-operation with third countries. Third country exchanges should give the participants a better understanding of their respective situations and cultures, and help them to explore their regional identities. These exchanges can also promote young people's active participation and allow them to explore the principles of democracy in practice. Third country exchanges should also contribute to the development of associative life in the partner countries and pay special attention to the needs of the third country partners in developing youth exchange co-operation with the European Union Member States and at regional level. Youth exchange activities with third countries must always be multilateral and involve at least two European Union Member States (or one EU Member State and either Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway) and at least two third countries. The exchange may take place in any of the countries involved in the project.).

Special events

Some activities, called special events, are considered on a case-by-case basis. These activities should respect the criteria for youth exchanges and must involve minimum six programme countries of which at least one is a European Union Member State. Exceptions can be made regarding the duration of the activity that might be shorter than for normal exchanges and/or the number of participants, which might be higher than for normal exchanges, but in

principle not more than 300. The national groups need to be balanced. The activities must bring an added promotional value to the YOUTH programme. The funding for the special events varies according to the type of project.

ACTION 2 EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE

What is a European Voluntary Service project?

An EVS project allows a young person to be a volunteer in another country for a specified period, normally between 6-12 months. The voluntary service activities can be, for example, in the field of environment, arts and culture, activities with children, young people or the elderly, heritage or sports and leisure activities. Each project has three partners, a volunteer, a sending organization and a host organization. The volunteers will participate in activities that conform to the following general principles.

The activities:

- Take place in a country other than where the volunteers lives;
- Are non-profit-making and unpaid;
- Bring an added value to the local community;
- Do not involve job substitution or job replacement;
- Last for a limited period (maximum 12 months).

ACTION 3 YOUTH INITIATIVES

Group initiative

What is a group initiative?

A group initiative is a project created and run by a group of young people. These projects can represent innovative examples of the contribution that young people want to give, and can give, to society surrounding them, and according to their interests and needs.

The duration of such projects is between three months and one year.

Where can projects take place?

Group initiatives may take place in all programme countries, but they may not take place in third countries.

Who can participate?

Groups of young people in programme countries, who are, in principle, between 15 and 25 years old. A group should consist of at least four individuals, one of whom takes responsibility for submitting the application and signing the contract.

What help can you get when preparing and implementing a project?

The National Agencies, who receive the applications, have advisers who can help, or act as mediators to other contact persons or organisations able to provide assistance with Group initiative projects. A group may also be assisted by a youth worker, provided the young people themselves remain in charge of and directly responsible for the management and implementation of the project. The National Agencies may arrange training for young people wishing to set up a group initiative, which is intended to help them manage the project effectively and advise them on how to go about finding resources to supplement the Community grant. Please contact a National Agency for detailed information.

ACTION 4 JOINT ACTIONS

What is the purpose of joint actions?

The Community programmes in the fields of education (SOCRATES), vocational training (LEONARDO DA VINCI) and YOUTH are complementary instruments that aim to create European-level conditions under which learners of all ages are able to

acquire the experience, knowledge and skills they need to live, work and actively participate in society. The joint actions are included in all three programmes and give concrete form to the complementarity by supporting initiatives that extend beyond the field of a single programme. Joint actions linking the YOUTH programme with other Community programmes outside the Directorate-General for Education and Culture may also be envisaged.

How, when and where to apply?

Joint actions will be the subject of Calls for proposals published in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*. These will indicate the themes to be addressed, the types of project envisaged, the support available, the eligibility and selection criteria, and the procedure and closing date for applications.

Information can also be obtained via the National Agencies of the three programmes, Eurodesk information offices and on the Commission's website.

ACTION 5 SUPPORT MEASURES

Why have support measures?

Support measures are the instruments that are intended to help all those involved in youth activities, or interested in youth matters, to prepare and develop projects and initiatives within the YOUTH programme.

Support measures have two basic aims:

- To assist the development of the four major actions of the YOUTH programme: Youth for Europe, European voluntary service, Youth initiatives and Joint actions
- To contribute to achieving the objectives of the YOUTH programme and the fostering and strengthening of European youth policy, whilst encouraging and facilitating wider co-operation with third countries

What are support measures?

In order to have appropriate tools for achieving the above objectives, activities can be carried out in the following fields:

- Co-operation and partnerships;
- Training measures;
- Youth information.

Support measures underpin activities directly linked to the actions of the YOUTH programme and/or its objectives. All support measure activities must be non-profit making. Please, note that the Commission in addition to what is described here launches annual “calls for projects”.

Co-operation and partnerships

This category of support measures covers the whole spectrum of the YOUTH programme. It provides support for partner finding, feasibility activities for innovative projects, exchange of experience and the establishment of permanent working relations (networks). Activities may concern one or several, of the other actions of the programme, or be related to the main objectives of the programme.

Projects for ***exchange of experience or good practice*** can contribute to the development of youth activities. They can also promote youth policy by bringing relevant actors together to discuss national approaches to certain aspects of youth work, as well as issues affecting youth or relevant to youth work co-operation (drug prevention, youth work and environment, fight against racism and xenophobia, unemployment, etc.). Such projects may also be a source of innovation in that they may bring together people and organisations from different backgrounds, or dealing with a similar subject from another angle. Seminars, short study visits and jobshadowing are examples of activities.

The YOUTH programme provides support to organisations and

bodies wanting to establish *permanent working relations* in the youth field (networks). These networks should aim to exchange good practice and develop and implement transnational activities on a permanent basis.

Feasibility activities for innovation allow organisations or public bodies to conduct small-scale prospective activities that result in new multilateral exchanges, voluntary service activities or youth initiatives.

Training

The aim of youth worker training under the YOUTH programme is to empower youth workers, youth leaders and support persons (trainers, advisors, mentors, administrators, etc.) to develop high quality youth activities contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the programme. Training activities should provide those involved in youth work, at different levels, access to suitable training opportunities, on an on-going basis, which contribute to their development as a youth worker, or as a youth leader, etc. The activities could focus on any theme that is both, relevant to any activity under the YOUTH programme, or is dealt with from a practical youth work perspective. It should aim at improving the knowledge, competencies and/or skills of people involved in existing or future projects. Priority will be given to activities centring on work with young people with special needs, or in difficult circumstances.

Please note that the National Agencies in each programme country organise information and/or training activities. For people who are planning, managing or are involved in European youth projects, the National Agencies may offer training courses, short study visits, information days etc. More information on dates, content and conditions for participation can be obtained from the National Agencies.

Youth information

Information is a necessary complement to activities carried out by those involved in the field of informal education. Information activities can facilitate access, greater co-operation and the development of new activities in this field. Information is also a specific area of activity within the youth sector. Some organisations and public bodies have specialised in the provision of information to young people. Others, though not exclusively concerned with young people, have young people as their main target public. The YOUTH programme can support information activities as for example the production and dissemination of youth information material. Youth information projects can also be subject to co-operation and partnerships or training measures as described above. Organisations interested in carrying out information projects may also get support for partner finding, feasibility activities for innovative projects, exchange of experience and networking.

In addition, through regular calls for projects the European Commission supports information campaigns targeted at young people on the issues covered by the programme. Please see the relevant section at the end of this chapter.

Who can participate?

Support measures are open to youth workers, trainers, support persons, mentors, project managers, youth leaders, groups of young people and all who are involved, or interested in informal education.

European Youth Foundation(EYF) and European Youth Centres(ECF)

The European Youth Foundation is a fund established by the Council of Europe to provide financial support to national or international youth activities. It has an annual budget of approximately 16 million French francs to which the Foundation's forty members states contribute.

The EYF's Statutes that the Foundation may support such youth activities "as serve the promotion of peace, understanding and co-operation between the peoples of Europe and of the world, in a spirit of respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms".

In particular, the EYF seeks to promote voluntary associations across Europe. Since its inception, it has distributed hundreds of million French francs to support international meetings – seminars, conferences, camps – organized by international non-governmental youth organizations (INGYOs), the production of publications, information material and the administrative costs of INGYOs which have a European structure.

PARTICIPANTS

More than 250 000 young people have benefited from EYF-supported activities since 1973, in most cases nationals of Council of Europe member states. Their average is between 16 and 25 years.

CO-MANAGEMENT

One important feature of both European Youth Foundation and its sister institution, the European Youth Centre, is the openness and democratic nature of their decision-making process. Generally known as "co-management", the structures comprise representatives of member governments and INGYOs. These work together in the Governing Board, where policy decisions are taken and grants allocated.

This is one of the reason to have possibility to organize youth event, supported by EYF in one of the two European Youth Centres. But what is EYC?

The first EYC was set up by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in 1972; and the Budapest European Youth Centre was inaugurated in 1995. The Centres are places where young people can meet, work and deliberate together at international level. They are also educational establishments with residential facilities.

The Centres reflect the basic philosophy of the Council of Europe with regard to youth policy. Through the many activities organized in co-operation with international youth organizations and national youth councils, the council of Europe encourages the participation of young people in the drawing up of its youth policy. The Council has opted for work through youth organizations so as to guarantee a multiplier effect for its activities. This choice is also seen in the statutes , since the Governing Board of the EYCs and EYF, the body which decides on the annual programmes, consists of an equal number of governmental representatives of youth organizations.

With their meeting rooms equipped for simultaneous interpretation, libraries, audio-visual equipment, they have all the necessary facilities to perform their tasks as satisfactorily as possible.

The centres have a professional staff, including a team of tutors who give educational and technical assistance in the preparation and holding of courses held on their premises.

The EYCs run an annual programme of forty to fifty activities in close co-operation with different youth organizations. These organizations, some forty of which co-operate regularly with the EYCs, represent a wide diversity of interests: party political, socio-edu

cational and religious youth groups, rural youth movements, trade union youth workers' organizations, children's organizations and environmental networks.

On other hand each year the Youth Directorate organizes as part of the Centres' programme, several training courses for future leaders of youth organizations so as to introduce them to European youth activities, international co-operation and the methods to be used in the context of international youth work. Last but not least organized also four-week language courses run by specialized teaching teams.

Both TCs and language courses are very important for improving the skills of youth organizations members and staff.



Youth information policy and youth information services

In a society that is more and more complex, youth information and counselling play a role that is more important than ever in a young person's transition to adult life. Information and counselling can help young people to achieve their vocational and individual aspirations and can promote their participation in society as responsible citizens. Information should also widen the choices available to young people, promote the exercise of their autonomy, facilitate their mobility and help to make Europe a part of their daily life.

Respect for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms implies the right of young people to dispose of complete, understandable and reliable information on all the questions and needs that they express, giving them the widest range of choices without discrimination and free of ideological or any other kind of influence.

This right to information has been recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and in the Recommendation N° R (90) 7 of the Council of Europe concerning information and counselling for young people in Europe.

ERYICA - European youth information and counseling agency

ERYICA promotes European co-ordination between national youth information and counseling networks and represents them at European level.

Established in Madrid in April 1986, ERYICA provides a framework for European co-operation in the fields of youth information

and counseling, the Agency seeks to improve existing youth information services, promote the development of new services to meet recognized needs, and initiate programmes and services at European level.

Background

Youth information and counseling structures, which provide information for young people on a wide range of topics (studies, careers, youth rights, leisure and sport activities, social security and health matters, etc.) as well as other services, have existed in a number of European countries since the late 1960s. Often initiated at local level, they vary greatly in their functions, administrative structures and methods, as well as in their resources.

Many of them have already sought to meet the information and counseling needs of young people who are either unable to find the information they require (about youth activities, youth rights and personal problems) or are not being adequately catered for by existing specialized services (such as career advice, health, employment). As information requirements evolved, these structures adapted their services, notably in the 1970s, to provide practical information about jobs and training for young people confronted with rising unemployment.

Since the main age group served is that undergoing the transition from full-time education to work and adult responsibilities, one common focus of these structures is the importance they attach to providing their services in a non-directive way, listening and giving individual attention to all Enquirers, and offering them the widest possible choice so that they can make their own decisions. Information and advice are regarded as a means of encouraging participation in all fields and developing young people's independence. There are now more than five thousand "generalist" regional or local information and advice centres for young people;

these form part of the national networks in twenty European countries. All cater primarily for the needs of young people in their locality or region, but since young people's horizons are continually widening to Europe and beyond, these services must also develop new dimensions to meet the information needs of young people and help them to fulfil their aspirations.

Aims

ERYICA has the following aims:

- to promote European co-operation in the fields of youth information and youth counseling, as well as innovation in these fields;
- to develop services in this area which meet the needs of young people;
- to promote the development of a European dimensions in these fields.

The activities of the Agency are limited to matters related to European co-operation in the fields of youth information and youth counseling.

In order to achieve its aims, the Agency seeks to:

- a. assists its member organizations and their affiliates, by developing the European aspects of their operations, to improve their response to the needs of young people;
- b. facilitate professional contact and exchange (documentation, technology, methodology, etc.) among staff working in these fields as well as between the organizations in which they work (voluntary or official; local regional or national);
- c. improve the professional standards of staff, whether they be paid or voluntary;
- d. provide technical and material assistance to programmes and initiatives that will serve the aims of the Agency;
- e. co-operate with European institutions (such as the Council of

Europe, European Union) in these fields;

- f. undertake other initiatives in the sense of the Agency's aims which are deemed useful by its members or by its competent organs.

Member organizations

Organizations admitted into ERYICA membership are structures, governmental or non-governmental, whose primary activity is youth information or youth counseling. In most cases they are national structures.

ERYICA currently has member and partner organizations in the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, Andorra, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia and Switzerland.

Structure

The General Assembly is the main decision-making organ of the Agency. This meets each year and brings together representatives of all the member organizations and other interested bodies are invited as observers.

The executive Committee, elected by the General Assembly, is composed of one member organization per country, but its meeting can be attended by other members as observers.

The Executive Committee elects its Bureau, which has seven members: president, two vice-presidents, treasurer, two members and (ex officio) secretary general.

ERYICA has established a secretariat in Paris, which services the meetings of ERYICA organs and working groups, and assists in the co-ordination of programmes.

European Charter

ERYICA member organizations are constantly seeking to raise standards and to improve the content and delivery of services. At the fourth ERYICA General Assembly (Bratislava, December 1993), as part of this process, the European Youth Information Charter was adopted, which contains a set of principles as guidelines for the work of youth information services. Since the charter has been formally adopted by youth information bodies in more than twenty countries.

Programmes and services

ERYICA has activities and services in a number of areas. Where these coincide with the aims and priorities of the Council of Europe and European Union, ERYICA seeks to collaborate closely with these intergovernmental bodies. The agency publishes a newsletter, "Euroflash", three times per year, as well as reports of its seminars and training activities.

Information for mobility

In a programme designed to facilitate youth mobility in Europe, ERYICA has co-ordinated the collection and dissemination of practical information on services and opportunities for young people in different European countries. Initially made available in the form of "Guides for Young Visitors" booklets, the same information is now being collected in more than twenty countries for a wider distribution by means of electronic media.

Promotion of youth information

The past decade has seen an increasing recognition by youth service managers at all levels of the importance of equipping young people with the information which they need to make decisions in their lives and to play their roles as citizens and consumers. ERYICA constantly works to reinforce this recognition at the European level.

Use of new technologies

Modern technologies provide new possibilities for the stockage, management, production and delivery of information services to increasing numbers of young people. While maintaining its emphasis on the human element of the informing process, ERYICA seeks to share its members' experience in this field. The Agency in increasingly involved in the development of specialized databases and in the organized exchange of information between the partners.



European youth information charter

Adopted in Bratislava (Slovakia) on 3 December 1993 by the 4th General Assembly of the ERYICA

Preamble

In a society that is more and more complex, youth information and counseling play a role that is more important than ever in a young person's transition to adult life. Information and counseling can help young people to achieve their vocational and individual aspirations and can promote their participation in the society as responsible citizens. Information should also widen the choices available to young people, promote the exercise of their autonomy, facilitate their mobility and help to make Europe a part of their daily life.

Respect for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms implies the rights of young people to dispose of complete, understandable and reliable information on all the questions and needs that they express, giving them the widest range of choices without discrimination and free of ideological or any other kind of influence.

The right to information has been recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the convention on the Rights of the Child, in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the Recommendation No: R (90) 7 of the Council of Europe concerning information and counseling for young people in Europe.

Principles

The following principles constitute guidelines for youth information services¹, which help to guarantee the right of young people to information:

1. Youth information services shall be open to all young people without exceptions.
2. Youth information services seek to guarantee the equality of access to their information for all young people, regardless of their situation, place of residence or social category.
3. The information available shall be exclusively based on the request or need expressed by the user and is independent of any other interest or concern. It should cover all subjects which interest young people.
4. Each user is received as an individual, and the response is adapted to the request.
5. There is free access to youth information services (no appointment is required).
6. Information and counseling are given in a way that respects the user's confidences and anonymity.
7. Information is free of charge.
8. The information offered is complete, impartial, accurate, practical and up-to-date.
9. Information is provided in a professional manner by staff trained for this purpose.
10. Every effort is made to ensure the objectivity of the information provided through the pluralism of sources used.
11. The information distributed shall be independent and free of any ideological, political or commercial interest.
12. The use of sponsoring or paid advertising must respect the independence of the service and of the information provided.

¹ In this Charter, the term "Youth Information Services" includes services which combine information with counseling and/or support.

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