

15 years SALTO Inclusion

15 lessons to boost inclusion

Inclusion in the European youth programmes

The Youth for Europe programme (YfE), a long time ago, started off as an alternative mobility programme for young people who did not have the possibility to go on Erasmus or Leonardo projects. The idea was to create European opportunities for ALL young people, not only those in higher education or vocational training.

1 the European youth programmes strived for inclusion from the start.

However, it soon became clear that the YfE, and the youth programmes after that, did attract the same relatively well-off students (to be). This was not really the situation that was hoped for, not only because the same people benefited from multiple programmes, but mainly because the young people who could benefit most, did not find their way into international mobility.

2 a programme needs to set clear priorities to reach its goals.

A central structure to push the inclusion agenda

When the SALTO-YOUTH network was created in 2000, there was a drive to make the YOUTH programme more accessible for what were then called 'disadvantaged young people'. The European Commission asked the SALTO Resource Centre in Belgium-Flanders to organise training courses *on Inclusion*. But a general course on the mechanisms of inclusion was most likely not going to bring more disadvantaged young people into the programme. That's why we organised our first courses around specific actions (e.g. EVS, youth initiatives) – to make the courses more practical and results oriented.

3 projects working towards tangible outcomes have the biggest impact.

But even though these first courses had a lot of impact on the personal and professional lives of the participants, the number of projects coming out of a course was limited. Logical, because different types of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds', as we called them by then, do not have a lot in common. It proved complicated to promote projects between e.g. young people with a disability, LGBT, ex-offenders and rural youth.

4 inclusion is not about mixing all disadvantaged groups together.

Common actions to address shared needs

To raise the likelihood that course participants found common interests and set up projects together, SALTO Inclusion started organising training courses for specific target groups. The courses addressed the special needs or requirements of the different types of 'young people with fewer opportunities', the latest politically correct term at that time.

5 the most effective inclusion projects are built up around common needs.

Our target group specific approach showed clearly that some project formats were not suitable for certain young people or the organisations working with them. Thanks to the feedback from the inclusion field, the European Commission created the possibility to do short-term EVS, after piloting it with the work camp organisations. After a French try-out, also the extra work of the inclusion professionals was rewarded with extra funds for 'reinforced mentorship'.

6 European programmes do adapt to inclusion needs if the field shouts loud enough.



Working towards a common frame

Already back in 2001, the European Commission convened a working group on inclusion. It made an inventory of approaches implemented by the National Agencies to include young people with fewer opportunities in the YOUTH programme. The working group developed a European Strategy on Inclusion, which was launched in Warsaw in June 2001. This was the first time there was a common frame to work on inclusion and an explicit invitation to NAs and SALTO to take action for inclusion. In 2003 the Programme Committee prolonged the strategy to cover the whole duration of the YOUTH programme (till 2006).

7 if all noses point in the same direction, you will more likely come to results.

The Programme Committee had some criticism though. The inclusion strategy did not contain a definition of the target group. Intentionally so: We had originally not wanted to establish a definition, because the more you describe a group, the more people you exclude from it. So, we came up with 7 categories of obstacles (or exclusion factors as we call them nowadays) that young people are facing. Besides being less stigmatising, the suspension marks [...] at the end of the descriptions clearly indicates that the lists of examples is not exhaustive.

8 it is important to know what you are talking about, without being exclusive.

Support for inclusion

SALTO started off as a training centre, but soon our activities diversified. SALTO Inclusion realised that the impact of a few training courses at the European level remained limited. That's why we started to develop practical youth work manuals⁶ based on the content of the courses. This meant that besides the 1800 participants at our courses and conferences, we also reached 25,000 additional inclusion workers with our paper publications and a further 275,000 downloaded our booklets (2000-2014). There are currently 22 translations of our publications which make our expertise even more widely accessible. Because not everybody speaks English.

9 we need to use modern technology to reach as many as possible.

But not only youth workers should get trained about the potential of mobility projects for their inclusion groups. The staff in

7 reasons why people don't get their fair share in life:

- » **Disability**
- » **Health problems**
- » **Educational difficulties**
- » **Discrimination**
- » **Poverty & unemployment**
- » **Social issues**
- » **Geographic disadvantage**

Have a look at the concepts we developed in the Inclusion & Diversity Strategy for Youth www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionStrategy/

6 Find an overview of all SALTO Inclusion publications at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionForAll/.

the National Agency should be sensitive to inclusion issues too to be successful. In 2007 SALTO organised the first Staff Training on Inclusion. We supported our NA-colleagues to set up their own national inclusion strategies. The booklet 'Shaping Inclusion' was a manual for this. Currently we regularly gather inclusion officers around particular inclusion issues. These smaller groups allow the colleagues to discuss more in detail and come up with concrete actions. The reports are detailed and shared with all inclusion officers.

10 you cannot work with inclusion groups if the structures are not prepared for it.

Working strategically

Unless we are really lucky, we all have limited resources. There are only 24 hours in a day. So we need to plan well what we do with our time and money. Focussing on a few inclusion topics at a time will generate a bigger impact than spreading out your efforts thinly. Making Waves⁷ is a guide for youth workers on how you can achieve greater impact and visibility with a project, with just a little extra investment.

11 set clever priorities and make conscious choices to reach more with less.

Also SALTO Inclusion started working more strategically over longer-term periods. In 2009-2011 we focussed on employability⁸, 2012-2013 on urban solutions and 2014-2016 on NEET (those Not in Employment, Education or Training). This allowed us to make an inventory of what has been tried in the field and extract the lessons from it. These are documented in our research publications. Based on these success factors we are implementing a number of courses and seminars to share our learning and document good practices online.

7 www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/MakingWaves/

8 www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionThroughEmployability/



2 don't start from zero. There are so many practices out there to learn from.

SALTO Inclusion in a way has a pioneer role. Instead of repeating the same thing over and over, we set the ball rolling. We shocked part of Europe, for instance, by organising a much-needed course for LGBT projects within Youth in Action⁹. We were one of the first to focus on the controversial topic of 'employability'¹⁰. After planting the seeds, we trust in our partners (NAs, NGOs, ...) to keep the plants growing. We continue to support NAs that want to take initiatives in our fields of expertise.

3 have the courage to try out new things and inspire others to carry the torch.

Looking towards the future

Just like we did in 2006 at the advent of the Youth in Action programme, SALTO Inclusion took the initiative in 2014 to upgrade the existing Inclusion Strategy to the new Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme. A new programme creates new opportunities and it is important to make sure they are as adapted as possible to the needs of inclusion groups. That's why we organised, together with our SALTO Cultural Diversity colleagues, a number of consultations, to make sure the strategy is as effective as possible.

⁹ www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/OverTheRainbow/

¹⁰ www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/WorkingOnWork/

Results of 15 years SALTO Inclusion

- » **Inclusion strategies for 3 EU youth programmes**
- » **5 European stakeholder conferences**
- » **55 inclusion training courses & seminars**
- » **22 practical manuals on inclusion, translated 22 times**
- » **250,000 visits per year to inclusion webpages**
- » **15,000 inclusion newsletter subscribers**
- » **8,500 Facebook likes, 650 Twitter follower**

Discover more at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/.

4 it is important to focus on the opportunities, rather than the difficulties.

What is new this time round, is that there will be a Steering Group that will make sure the strategy comes to life. Part of the work will be to get the new Inclusion and Diversity Strategy known. But also someone should steer and monitor the necessary developments. That's where the Inclusion Steering Group comes in, to make sure things happen and that the situation for young people with fewer opportunities continues to improve, both in the Programme, as well as in society at large.

5 a strategy of good intentions is not enough, it needs a driving force.

SALTO Inclusion is ready to steer the next 15 years of inclusion efforts. Are you coming along?

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