"Welcome to the 5th edition of the training course "Eastern Express"! - This phrase has opened the course on the 4th of May in 2010 and we hope this report will let you catch the feeling and the content, which was back there in Svetlogorsk, Russia on the marvellous beach of Baltic Sea.

You will find the whole pile of methods used at the course as well as valuable outcomes of each training session, which might help you in implementing youth exchange or running similar course. However we are aware that experiencing once is much better than reading 100 times. May this report be a good reminder of what has happened to former participants and good inspiration for those who would like to attend "Eastern Express" in the future!

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Introduction to the "Eastern Express"

Background info
The fifth edition of the Eastern Express was co-organized by the SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre together with Lithuanian and Polish National Agencies of Youth in Action Programme as part of SALTO EECA priority activities to promote capacity and partnership development in youth exchanges between youth organizations from Programme Countries and Eastern Europe and Caucasus.

Aim and objectives of the "Eastern Express"
"Eastern Express" Training course aims at rising quality of Youth Exchanges within action 3.1 of Youth in Action (YiA) programme, especially in cooperation between Programme and Eastern Europe and Caucasus (EECA) region.
Objectives
- To create opportunities for building partnerships (through creating trustworthy relations)
- To increase knowledge about essentials of Youth in Action and 3.1 in particular (aims, priorities and formal criteria)
- To increase understanding of quality demands of the youth exchanges with special attention to active youth participation:
    o Equal partnership and preparation (co-creation of the idea and co-ownership of the project)
    o Quality of project design as a core (youth exchange project management).
    o Quality of content and methodology: non-formal learning; intercultural learning; European dimension; active participation.
    o Quality of project reach (visibility of the programme and the project; dissemination and exploitation of results; follow-up).

Methodology
The training course was based on few essential methodological principles
   ℴ Obtaining knowledge by getting inputs from: a) peers-trainees; b) trainers, resource people; c) yourself (internal insights)
   ℴ Developing skills and attitudes by using obtained knowledge in project development groups (practice!), various workshops, plenary discussions
   ℴ Creating space to learn both during the programme (based on non-formal learning) and in breaks or free time (informal learning)
   ℴ Paying attention to learning process and outcomes: there were periodical reflection meetings for individual reflection and group conversations for assessing each training day. People got daily reflection tickets with reminded

about the main training sessions of the day, reflection questions and information the Youthpass.

- ୯ଞ The programme was built on the essential quality demands of Youth in Action with possibility for participants each day to integrate what they learn in project development group work.

The team and the participants

First name	Last name	Country	Organisation
Participants from Programme Countries			
Wolfgang	Sieberth	Austria	Akzente Salzburg
Lasse	Stentoft	Denmark	SILBA - Support Initiative for Liberty and Democracy
Anne-Ly	Suvi	Estonia	Association of Estonian Youth Workers
Lina	Nybjörk	Finland	Finnish Swedish 4H (Finlands svenska 4H)
Valentina Teréz	Kovács	Finland	AFAES
Agnes	Vass	Hungary	Hungarian UN Modell Association
John	Coughlan	Ireland	Bonnybrook Youthreach
Natalja	Volkova	Latvia	"ARS", Youth Club of the Latvian Society of Russian Culture
Lina	Trebiene	Lithuania	Jaunuoliu dienos centras (Youth Day care Centre)
Indre	Urbonaviciute	Lithuania	Lithuanian Red Cross, Refugee day centre
Lina	Zukauskaite	Lithuania	EurogemsLt Association for Social Initiatives
Tomasz	Kotarski	Poland	Association POLITES
Milosz	Hodun	Poland	Association "Project: Polska"
Marek	Zyska	Poland	Youth Development and Integration Association (STRIM)
Ami	Stålstierna	Sweden	Stockholm Youth District AB
Hakan	Mutaf	Turkey	Kula Education and Youth Association
Participants from Eastern Europe and Caucasus			
Sargis	Sargsyan	Armenia	Goris Youth Union NGO
Elmari	Mamishov	Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan Young Lawyers Union
Aliaksey	Burnosenka	Belarus	Open Air Medieval Theatre "DiGrease's Buffoon Theatre", Extracurricular center "Contact"
Natalia	Yaskevich	Belarus	League of Youth Voluntary Service
Sanda-Daniela	Alexeiciuc	Moldova	Philanthropic Association "IRFF ONLUS"
Inna	Popova	Russian Federation	Russian Union of Youth
Anna	Varfolomeeva	Russian Federation	Youth Human Rights Group of Karelia
Michael	Ushakov	Russian Federation	NGO Youth Theatre "LIGHT"
Milana	Furman	Russian Federation	All-Russian Youth Non-profit Charity Organisation "Young Europe"
Shoghik	Frankyan	Ukraine	Armenian Cultural Centre
Nataliya	Pustelnyk	Ukraine	NGO "Institute of Ukrainian Studies"
Team Members			
Lilit	Simonyan	Armenia	Trainer, Stepanavan Youth Centre
Laimonas	Ragauskas	Lithuania	Trainer, Association of Youth Non-Formal Education in Lithuania
Andriy	Pavlovych	Poland	SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre
Dominika	Jagiello	Poland	Action 3.1 officer, Polish National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme
Giedre	Kniukstaite	Lithuania	Action 3.1 officer, Lithuanian National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme

Programme of the "Eastern Express"

	04.05	1st Day, 05.05	2nd Day, 06.05	3rd Day, 07.05	4th Day, 08.05	5th Day, 09.05	10.05
08:00		*Breakfast*					
09:30		Getting to know each other: names, personal background	Essentials of Youth in Action & Youth exchanges	Youth Exchange – space for intercultural learning	Preparation phase, Advance Planning Visit (APV) Balancing the programme	Equal partnership SALTO resource presentation	
11:00-11:30		*International coffee break*					
11:30		Introduction to the course Personal learning interests Support for learning	Quality demands Non-formal learning in youth exchanges	European dimension in youth exchange projects	Work on projects in groups	Finalizing work in groups	
13:00-15:00		*Lunch*					
15:00	ARRIVAL	Personal – professional pathways to this course	Generating ideas/themes for youth exchange project	Project cycle Working in project groups (defining overall aim and objectives + some possible activities)	Gallery - presentation of group work Active participation of young people	LSD (Learning Space Dynamics)	DEPARTURE
16:30-17:00		*International coffee break*					
17:00		Personal youth work realities I Screening of short videos	Idea presentation Finding partners Project group work	Free time!	Project reach: Visibility, Dissemination and Exploitation of results, Follow-up	Evaluation of the course Learning outcomes Feedback to organizers	
18:30			Reflection of the day		Reflection of the day		
19:00	*Dinner*	*Dinner*	*Dinner*	Dinner Out	*Dinner*	*Dinner*	
20:30	Welcome!	Personal Youth Work Realities II	Q&A's about A3.1 Sauna	Rainy trip!	Free evening	Farewell!	

Welcome evening

After the welcome dinner most of the travellers of „Eastern express" already arrived and started gathering in the working room, gingerly looking at each other, searching for organizers or someone who will announce the beginning of the training...and then it happened!

Short "welcome", music starts playing, people start moving in the room. At first looking around the room, searching for interesting object or cosy corner, then the first small challenge is announced "give a wink to at least 5 people" and in 30 seconds another task – say "hello" in your own language, greet each other and say the name to each other.

The music becomes faster, louder, people move like atoms chaotically in the room. At first they move as far as possible from each other, then as close as possible, but without touching each other, then a criteria is announced: - please stand in molecules (groups of people) according to the favourite mean of transport and then interview each other how did they travel to "Eastern Express" and one more time tell the name to each. Then "the molecules" split into atoms and move in the space further until the next criteria are announced: - to stand in molecules according to: favourite way to spend weekends; according to favourite music; etc.

After a bit of ice-breaking and warming-up people stand in the circle and they should say to the neighbour on the left side what is their occupation and name. Then each person presents a person on the right by saying her/his name and occupation.

Afterwards we played few name games: <zip-zap> and <paparazzi> (more details could be found at www.salto-youth.net toolbox)

As far as most travellers of "Eastern Express 2010" travelled all the day, then continuation of the evening was optional, people could play some board games, table tennis, etc. and just socialize together.

Getting to know each other

The next morning started with some activities aimed to allow the participants to know each other better and remember the names. After an energizer, the participants were asked to take out their personal wagons or quickly prepare one. The template of a wagon was sent to participants prior to the course and it included some basic information about the participant: name, country, interests, passion, spheres of activities of the organizations and a portrait photo. Some of the participants took the task really creatively, nicely decorating their wagons. Then they split into smaller groups with people, whom they were speaking the least. Then they share information from wagons with each other. Afterwards the wagons are put on the wall in a line like a train and people are asked to share some interesting things they found about each other.

The next activity was human bingo. The participants were given papers with 15 questions related to personal interests, experience in YiA or in YE, target groups, hobbies, etc. The participants were given time to go around the group and ask for names of people who correspond to the given question. Names could be repeated in the list. The first 5 people who finished first got some souvenirs.

With the aim to remember the names better and learn about origins of the names and reasons why this particular name is given to the person, the participants had the Story of my name activity. There was a large paper on the floor, the participants were asked to shortly tell the story of their name (what it means, why it was given to him/her) and write their name on the big paper in their native language. The person was passing the marker to someone else in the group, till everyone answered.

The activities of first morning allowed knowing more about each other on more personalized level, learning about the experience of each other in "Youth in Action", about organizations and remember better the names of the other participants.

Personal learning interests, Support for learning

The objective of this session – to provide opportunity for participants to enter the learning process, share personal expectations and get to know what educational support will be available at this course.

It all started with a lot of various objects in the middle of the room and participants were asked to select one which would help them describe their expectations from training in terms of learning needs and interests. Participants shared their expectations in triples and connected it with their personal learning expectations and objectives this training course.

The participants were asked individually to think of the expectations they had from the team and other participants and what they were ready to contribute themselves for own learning and learning of others. After everyone put post-its on the corresponding flip charts, 5 minutes was given to the group to go around and read the outcomes on the posters.

The stress was put on the support available before, during and after TC for learning. They had a chance to reflect and share their learning interests and needs and connect it with expectations from the team and other participants.

Expectations from other participants
- Willingness to share information
- To share experience within youth work and good practices
- Interest for future cooperation
- Interest to initiate and be involved in environmental projects
- To discuss new ideas
- Develop joint projects
- Share their stories and realities
- Support (as I do not have experience in youth exchanges)
- Similar interests, similar target groups
- To help me to be oriented in the messy project writing stuff
- To be actively involved, be tolerant, open and respectful
- Respect the time
- Tell about their countries/cultures/organizations
- Good atmosphere
- To teach some basic words in their languages

My learning needs and interests

- How to involve "disadvantaged" young people?
- Exchange of experience of work with teenagers
- To put all the information and knowledge together, get a clearer picture
- How to ensure participation in the youth exchanges and an integrated group?
- How to implement rules and standards into reality?
- Hope to learn some history during the parade in Kaliningrad
- Knowledge, connections, ideas, quality of YE, new information, best practices, sharing working environment, get contacts
- How can the quality of a youth exchange be measured?
- How to tackle difficulties as language barriers (cultural differences) during a YE?
- Reliable and trustworthy partnership building
- How to create team from separate units?
- Define my role and my place in this process and plan my future actions
- Learn more about APV
- Learning process during a YE
- To get ideas for future projects
- To get theoretical and practical experience and competence in organizing a YE
- How to be a good group leader during youth exchanges?

My contribution

- Sweets for coffee breaks
- Smile, good mood, enthusiasm, open mindedness, patience, energy, honesty, motivation, creativity, good listening skills
- Active participation, ideas and questions
- Experience of own organization and experience in YiA program/YE
- Possible challenges, lessons learnt from past youth exchanges
- Exchange of experience in organizing art projects/work with teenagers

Expectations to the team of trainers and organisers

- Motivate participants, ensure active participation from everyone
- Working together in friendly and good atmosphere
- Feedback to the ideas we have
- Give space for leaflets and posters from organizations
- Practical knowledge about youth exchanges and theoretical input
- Willingness to share knowledge and experience
- Help understanding things better from practical point of view
- Help in developing our ideas
- Leadership and clear instructions
- Some methods and techniques
- 9th of May is an interesting topic for intercultural exchange, let's have time for discussion and reflection about it
- Be with us not only during the day sessions, but also during evening activities
- Sense of humour

My personal/professional pathway to this course

The objective of the session was to provide space for participants to share their personal stories of becoming a youth worker and start creating links among each other. Group split in sub-groups of 4-5 people. Then they draw their professional pathway to the Course with chalks and crayons in the yard by the venue. People draw important moments, key persons, events, that made them somehow connected to the (international) youth work and finally to this training course.

The session was very appreciated by participants: it was outside, it had easy going reflective pace, people mentioned they rediscovered some details about themselves and found out how others became involved in the youth work, international projects and in this particular training course.

The conversation in the whole group was meant to explore more details about each other, but actually people shared some interesting insights, that most of participants had very different stories of how they got involved in the youth work; that people have different interesting passions, fields of work, target groups…Finally Aliaksey asked that youth work often does not allow seeing the change immediately and then other participants shared few short inspiring stories.

Personal youth work realities

Participants were asked before the TC to prepare short videos about young people they work with on a daily basis in order to explain the work people do in their organisations. The screening was done in the following way: three videos in a row and then comments and questions from the audience.

11 people brought videos and one person brought a power point presentation. Instead of some videos having rather promotional material, then stressing on the young people involved in the organization, the participants considered the visual

presentation being useful and giving good sense of the target group and youth involved. Some participants stated of developing their digital competences through this experience.

After the screenings participants discussed what was impressive and memorable, whether they felt connection with some of the movies with their realities and target groups, whether they found similarities and differences with the approaches, projects and target group and whether the videos gave some ideas for new approaches, projects. John mentioned seeing his own young people in Ami's movie; "It could be someone from our center saying the same words". Some participants saw another approach of using the same method – Aleksey and Misha both use theatre as a tool, but differently. New idea came up to Aleksey – organizing theatre performances in schools to reach to larger audience. Some elements of movies gave ideas for replication in other countries, e.g. for securing co-funding for projects using local branches of companies such as Coca-Cola, or exchange tobacco for sweets campaign.

The participants who did not prepare videos in advance where given a chance to choose any method they want to represent their organizations. The second session started after dinner with 3 videos, on-screen presentations and two posters. A table was set up for participants to share their publications and information.

Essentials of Youth in action and Youth Exchanges

After the 1st day, which was dedicated to group building, warming up relationships and getting to know better each other realities of youth work, the time has came for gaining some new knowledge!
The essential information was sent to participants before the course for personal preparation and therefore we tried to avoid boring presentation about all peculiarities of Youth in action programme and Youth exchanges. The group split in 5 smaller teams, which consisted of participants with various experience youth exchanges:

some people never heard of it before, others – already had experience in organising such types of projects.

There were 12 questions prepared but due to the time lack only 8 questions were presented with possible answers. When groups were ready with answer, it was collected and then explanation of the correct answer was presented with possibility to ask some questions, clarify details, etc. Quiz covered various aspects: overall priorities of Youth in Action, quality demands for youth exchanges, formal criteria (duration of the project, requirements for the applicant), activities, which are not considered as youth exchange.

One of the evenings an optional session on Action 3.1 was offered to the participants to allow them find answers to any questions they might have. Additionally, a board for questions was posted on the wall and the participants could pose any question there and have it answered by other participants or team members.

Answers to those questions and much more can be found in the programme guide of Youth in Action, which could be downloaded from here:
http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc443_en.htm

Non-formal learning in the youth exchange

What can you teach, what could you learn?

International youth exchange should be as a tool for non-formal learning for young people. So the project aiming at high quality should provide possibility for young people to learn throughout different phases of the youth exchange. Young person as a learner is in the centre of this process and he/she is the one shaping the content and the way of learning and taking responsibility for achieving learning results. However we can't expect young people be excellent at managing their own learning if they never did it before in non-formal learning settings. Youth worker being as a group leader should play an important role in supporting learning of their youth group:

- To support participants to set up their own learning objectives
- To increase awareness of participants about their learning process
- To ensure learning-friendly settings: safe environment to experiment and learn
- To help participants reflect on their experience, track the learning process and self-assess learning outcomes
- To support participants in the process of filling their Youthpass

The session started with invitation to participants to propose a 30 minutes practical workshop where other people could learn something new and usefull. There were few proposals made in just a couple of minutes:

1. Waltz lessons
2. Yoga
3. Ice-breaking games
4. Joking

Then people could choose which workshop they would like to attend. After 30 minutes the group was back and the reflection took place according to the following questions;
What did I learn/gained from the workshop…
- about the main theme/subject of the workshop?
- about myself?
- about others in the group?
The positive vibes and huge engagement was there, people had enormous amount of impressions and learning outcomes. It all happened just in 30 minutes!

ಆ Participants mentioned that non-formal learning process depends a lot on attitude/stance of the group leader in the educational process:

ಆ Challenging - involving - motivating - where should be the balance between challenging people in order to motive and involve them and actually creating safe space to try and learn from this without judging?

ಆ Flexible – strict: to which extent group leader should flexible in order to create self-directed learning opportunities for young people and how much he/she should be sticking to the initial educational objectives of the project?

ಆ Should a group leader be process or result oriented? What is the result in terms of learning?

Fish the idea!

The participants were given hints in the morning about the idea development, in order to give some time for them to think of some ideas they would like to propose for the simulation activity on project development. It was stressed on importance of having young people's involvement in idea development, rather than imposed to them by adults. So suggestion for any of the projects to be organized later after the TC, was to consult with young people after the TC and incorporate their ideas and suggestions in the project. Some of the participants came to the TC with concrete ideas or topics in mind. In order to arouse their curiosity and help them come up with ideas for the project, various words, photos and symbols were put on the floor.

They were asked to use their imagination, photos and words to individually think of a youth exchange idea and be ready to present it in the "fish market". Fish form papers were provided for writing the topic/title of the project and short description. The participants posted their fish and introduced the ideas to the larger group. 24 project ideas were presented by the participants with diverse range of topics: environment, art, discrimination, citizenship, etc.

Similar to any experience in a market, participants were given money - a personalized "coin" "to buy a fish" they were interested in. It could be either their fish or another one. They were given time to walk around and ask questions. They were also allowed to promote their project idea approaching other participants. Participants are allowed to combine their fish to form groups as well.

6 project groups were formed from 3 to 6 members in each. The newly formed groups had 40 minutes time to go into groups and develop some details of their ideas. To facilitate the process they were given handouts with 6W questions (Why? Who? Where? What? When? How?). For a few participants the process of forming a group was stressful and even frustrating, as they were somewhat pushed to choose an idea and in a few cases this was not exactly the idea they were interested in or the idea they imagined differently than the rest of the group. Next morning there was still a chance given to them to change their groups, or form a new group, however, only one or two participants changed their initial group.

As some of the participants had concrete ideas in mind while coming to the TC and aimed to find partners or develop the ideas further, a space was provided to them in form of a flip chart, where they marked the ideas and those interested could make comments, notes or approach them.

The 6 projects ideas were:
Group 1: All different, all equal – cultural diversity, discrimination, tolerance
Group 2: Environmental project, raising awareness, campaigns
Group 3: Intercultural dialogue, values, stereotypes, tolerance
Group 4: Photography, art, diversity
Group 5: European identity, citizenship, human rights, discrimination
Group 6: Disadvantaged youth, active participation

Reflection Process

Group reflection and feedback was organized on 2nd, 4th and 5th days of the TC in small groups facilitated by one of the team members. The feedbacks were generally very positive and constructive.

Additionally, the participants were provided individual daily Eastern Express "boarding passes" which gave space for reflecting on own learning process, taking notes on some ideas and learning outcomes. On the reverse side of those "boarding passes" there was information about Youthpass (see Annex 3). Those reflection cards were introduced at the end of the second day of the TC. The participants welcomed the idea and asked for the cards to be given each day in the morning, which would allow them to immediately take notes as the ideas emerged or learning happened.

Intercultural Dimension in Youth Exchanges

The day 4 started with another quality dimension: intercultural learning in youth exchanges. The participants were challenged with 5 quotes and extracts about culture.

"Culturally literate means being able to deal with the complexities of migrations and the challenges of globalization in a mature and tolerant way. It is a way of building peace, not peace as opposition of war, but a guided discovery of one's identity in the only possible way: through confrontation with differences"
An extract from "What do we mean by Intercultural Learning?" by Roberto Ruffino

Though it may be unessential to the imagination, travel is necessary to an understanding of men. Only with long experience and the opening of his wares on many a beach where his language is not spoken, will the merchant come to know the worth of what he carries, and what is parochial and what is universal in his choice.
An extract from "Perseus in the Wind, by Freya Stark

Such delicate goods as justice, love and honour, courtesy, and indeed all the things we care for, are valid everywhere; but they are variously moulded and often differently handled, and sometimes nearly unrecognisable if you meet them in a foreign land; and the art of learning fundamental common values is perhaps the greatest gain to those who wish to live at ease among their fellows.
An extract from "Perseus in the Wind, by Freya Stark

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Culture is a complex matter. Although we often think of it in terms of beliefs and values, it is actually more than that. Culture comprises what we feel; what we learn; what we do; who we spend our time with; memories of and preferences for smells, tastes, sounds, and feelings; images and stories we cherish. It is the resource we all draw on when we problem solve, interpret information, plan for the future, assess ourselves and others, and locate ourselves within time and space.
An extract from Overcoming Barriers to Intercultural Relationships
by Osher, D. & Mejia, B.

Every age, every culture, every custom and tradition has its own character, its own weakness and its own strength, its beauties and cruelties; it accepts certain sufferings as matters of course, puts up patiently with certain evils. Human life is reduced to real suffering, to hell, only when two ages, two cultures and religions overlap.
Hermann Hesse, Swiss Novelist and Poet

The participants went around the room reading those quotes under a slow music and stopped next to the one which they liked the most. The formed groups were given time to share why they choose the particular quote and to make a poster about intercultural learning to present to the larger group. The participants were passionately engaged in the discussions, bringing various perspectives and approaches to the simple and yet complicated understanding of CULTURE and intercultural learning. All groups had interesting approaches to it and made the picture more complete all together.

One of the groups presented a poster with drawings of all the group members about what they consider to be culture for them. Some of the pictures on the poster were a church, a mosque, mountain Ararat, dancing, books, cooking, music, Olympics, sword, airlines, behaviour, etc. The emphasis was on culture being a concept understood

and accepted very differently by each individual, thus none of the definitions of the culture being complete as such.

Another group started discussion about the quote and why they choose it found everyone choosing it for a different reason. The main thing everyone agreed upon was peace, so it became the centre of the quadrate, where 4 sides were
1) importance of being "culturally literate",
2) "confrontation with differences" as being important for intercultural experience and intercultural learning
3) the courage to appreciate "good sides"- by our perception of another culture without rejecting the whole culture
4) deal with the complexities of migration and the challenges of globalization

The third group considered two aspects of the intercultural learning – learning about one's culture and learning about other cultures. In both, the emphasis was on experiencing it through all senses (tasting, listening, touching, smelling, etc.) and through discovery of own culture through other cultures.

The gallery of heritage was presented by another group where a few colourful drawings were presented as being each unique, yet having some common colours, and the intercultural learning was introduced as an ability to understand and appreciate the uniqueness of each picture and ability to take of the glasses of our own culture to notice the real brightness of colours of each picture.

Lilit presented the Iceberg model of the culture, connecting it with posters and comments of the participants. Stating that for own culture one sees from the bottom of the iceberg up, while for another culture is it from up to bottom, which is in addition challenged by own perceptions and influence of own culture.
The participants were asked to share one "important" intercultural experience they had with one of their peers. The engaging discussions of all groups during the short time provided as well as during the coffee break later stated on the importance of intercultural experiences for self-understanding, personal development and open mindedness towards other people and cultures.

The discussions and ideas on intercultural learning were directed towards Youth in Action programme and particularly youth exchanges.

Intercultural Dimension in Youth Exchanges (according to programme guide):
- To increase young people's positive awareness of other cultures,
- To support dialogue and intercultural encounters with other young people from different backgrounds and cultures,
- help to prevent and combat prejudice, racism and all attitudes leading to exclusion,
- To develop sense of tolerance and understanding of diversity.

The main questions discussed were:
How to ensure that intercultural learning would happen during the YE? How to move from multicultural group into intercultural one?
How can we help the participants of the YEs to develop their intercultural competences? What specific activities we can do?

Some of the comments were about importance of good preparation for intercultural experience within each group, challenges of working in intercultural teams, clarification of expectations among the team members and defining ground rules for common work, some activities to be done prior and during the YE to facilitate the intercultural learning of participants.
The perception of time as one of the raised topics was discussed extensively where participants had the opportunity to hear Scandinavian approach to time (Ami mentioned about 5 minutes being late as taking 5 minutes calculative from each person present) as well as some practical advice how to address the perception of time as a challenge during the YEs.

Other ideas on activities for the intercultural learning of participants during the YE were energizers, songs or dictionary of languages of participants; exchanging clothes; exploring urban or rural realities through activities – coffee in the town or tasks in a public area such as a market; mixing participants in international rooms or rather have them in national rooms; how to ensure intercultural learning during the intercultural evenings.

European dimension in Youth Exchanges

It has started with brief introduction, taken from the programme guide of Youth in Action. It says that European dimension should be explored by:
- Providing opportunity to identify common values with other young people from different countries
- To reflect on the essential characteristics of European society
- To help young people become aware of the fact that they (could) play a role in the construction of the current and future Europe.

The next part was actually the demonstration of how it is possible to explore European dimension in practice – Milana was doing interviews with other participants whether European, Western and Easter values exists? What are those? What makes them to be European or non-European values?

Then the practical question "how do we do it in practice, in the youth exchange" was given

People took just ten minutes in small groups and came up with simple, but interesting proposals:
- To adapt energisers to European topics + discussion with the group afterwards
- Quiz about history of Europe, maps, etc. + discussion
- European cafe (based on the idea of the World cafe. More could be found at www.theworldcafe.org)
- Reflection on the process when group decides on common rules for the entire youth exchange: what is important for different people? Are there differences in values or in perception?
- Theatre performance with stereotypes of each country
- Game "Red and white candle"
- First introduction in the project aims and objectives, making links with European issues
- Building village – Europe together
- Moving debate (statements à agree – disagree)
- Workshop "who are we in 10 year?"
- Workshop "who is your neighbour?"
- Camping: cooking, sporting
- To make posters/collage about Europe + discuss the images used
- To present countries of participants by other participants

T-kit on Project management (no.3) provides a checklist to assess the European dimension of the project according the eight criteria (page 101). The following part is partly based on this on this checklist plus you will find some recommendations or questions for reflection on how to make European dimension more present in the youth exchange:

1. **European citizenship**. What could been done at the youth exchange to foster young people' sense of their European citizenship? This criterion is one of the essential priorities of Youth in Action programme and you should explore at the very beginning of the project how young people could do some positive actions to the local community and which would address issues important to whole Europe too.

2. **Partnerships**. Your project for sure is built on partnership from few European countries. It means there will be encounter of young Europeans and the project will have impact on several communities in Europe. Explore with young people what is the value of having European partnership? What are the benefits of having international partnership comparing to just local activity?

3. **European theme**. As mentioned above, you may encourage young people to reflect on what European themes are and what the links with the theme and activities of your project are. If young people will explore important European themes, then they could contribute to the ongoing discussions or processes on European level through the dissemination activities: broadcasting some messages through video channels, blogs, websites, etc.

4. **Intercultural learning**. It has been on agendas of European institutions for decades and youth exchange is an excellent tool for intercultural learning bringing youth from various countries and providing space to get to know each other cultures, to challenge some personal perceptions of ones own identity as well as breaking existing stereotypes and creating solidarity among youth from different cultures. Chapters on Intercultural learning tells more how to ensure intercultural dimension in the youth exchange.

5. **European values and principles**. You may have a discussion within the youth group at the preparation phase and within the international group at the youth exchange on the main principles and values your project is based on. Do you consider those values to be somewhat special for this partnership only? Maybe these values are recognised and practice on wider European scope? European institutions declare their work is based on democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the

rule of law. What do those words mean for young people? Are any of those principles present in their group and the project? Why? Why not?

6. Involvement of young Europeans. This is easy – indeed, your project does involve young Europeans! But you might suggest young people to explore what does it mean for them to be European? Are all young people involved in the youth exchange having the same rights and freedoms in Europe? How far or how close they feel Europe is to them? What they as young Europeans have to say for other people, communities, politicians?

Continuation of the project group work and Project Cycle

After the presentation of two other quality aspects – intercultural and European dimensions in the youth exchanges, the participants were given space to continue work in their project groups.

Additionally, there were given a task to put in right order the various steps in the project cycle of the youth exchanges (Idea→Application form →Decision on funding from NA and Contract →Project official start →Advance Planning Visit→Activity: Youth Exchange →Final evaluation →Report→Follow up). Each group received a letter with instructions and an envelope with various aspects of project cycle. They were asked to put them in the correct order and think of the tasks and actions that should be done in each stage for a youth exchange. The trainers helped the groups with feedback and clarifications.

It was expected that the groups would already have clearly defined aims and objectives and some possible activities of their projects at the end of their work time. However, there were some groups who still were debating about topic, some groups started from drafting the daily program and some groups already had clear aims and objectives. And the program slowed down the next day to provide more space to groups to work on details of their projects before continuing to other quality criteria and dimensions of the youth exchanges.

Preparation of the youth exchange and APV

The morning started with an activity targeted to show visually the project cycle of a youth exchange. The line on the floor was made with phases of the project cycle: idea → preparation of application → signing contract (if answer from NA is positive) → official preparation phase: local/international preparation; advanced planning visit (APV) → youth exchange → report and follow up.

The stress was put on the preparation phase and links made with other elements of a project cycle. The time limits and regulations were discussed (e.g. 3 months from application date to official start of the project, etc.). Detailed guidelines were provided for the preparation actions and APV.

Getting ready for the youth exchange:
- Group preparations (visa, travel, insurance, etc.)
- Group explores the topic (local and international levels, non-formal methods to work on it)
- Prepare group for the intercultural experience
- Possible local actions and activities preceding the youth exchange
- Platform for groups to get to know each other before the youth exchange
- E-platform for participants for learning and exchange prior to youth exchange (if applicable)
- Host organization: logistics, practical arrangements, info letter, invitation letter, etc.
- Discuss Partner Agreement, Finances

Advance planning visit:
- Program: aims, objectives, methods, learning process, quality aspects, etc.
- Evaluation and reporting (share tasks and responsibilities, discuss details)
- Participant profiles, special needs, emergency, age, etc.
- Division of tasks/responsibilities among partners and groups
- Plan the activities to take place before the youth exchange
- Logistics (venue, facilities, pick up, visa, etc.)
- Safety of participants
- Cultural aspects to be taken into account
- Finances/agreement

More detailed could be found at the handout about advanced planning visit: see ANNEX 2.

The session brought up the points still unclear in the exchange cycle for the participants, they had a chance to give specific questions and get answers from trainers, SALTO and NA representatives, as well as from each other straight away.

Balancing the programme of the youth exchange

Some tensions appear when trying to balance the programme

←――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――→

Taking away from home	*Coming back home*
Educating	*Learning*
Process	*Result*
Expectations	*Results*
Working time	*Leisure time*
Fixe frame	*Flexible*
Intercultural learning (methods)	*Intercultural learning (real situations)*
Leaders decide	*Participants decide*
European community	*Local community*
Other…	

Please note, that balancing does not mean the principle of 50/50. You are the one to make decisions together with partners how much time or what methods you will use. Now let's review those aspects closer.

Group dynamics
Taking away from home ←→ Coming back home

You will take a group of young people away from their homes, away from the known and safe environment to a new place and new group. If

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you want young people to be participative and in full presence within the group, there should be activities helping young people to connect to each other and to the new temporary home. You should plan at least one day for young people to get to know each other, "to break the ice" among people, to open-up the atmosphere for informal communication and supportive relations. As far as you make efforts to build the group and link people with their temporary home and "family", you should allocate time in the programme for helping people disconnect and leave a group in gentle way. There should be methods, which would allow young people to express their feelings, appreciations, feedback to each other. There should be some facilitated moment for the group to decide do they want to cooperate in the future, how they would like to communicate further, what follow-up they would like to make for this project.

Non-formal learning methodology
Educating ←→ Learning

One of the important aspects is to balance the methodology of the youth exchange project where people could be thought or trained by someone else, but also they can just learn from daily activities without specially prepared training sessions. If you were using some training methods in the preparation phase, it is not necessary to do it at the youth exchange. People can explore many things by spending time together informally or in some structured discussions or creative workshops, where people are expressing certain themes through various forms of arts.

Basically this aspect tell about the balance between a) the inputs of group leaders or some resource people, experts and time and b) space for participants to experience, reflect and discover new things on them own.

Process ←→ Result

People come together to the project usually for some common goal and they go through a specific process of communication, management and cooperation. Most of youth exchanges plan to create some kind of "final product": performance, musical,

movie or exhibition. There are few questions to consider when planning implementing the programme of the exchange:

- What is the main foreseen result of the youth exchange?
- What is more important – the process of creation or the result of it?

Furthermore, we would recommend each project promoter to remember the overall aim of each youth exchange, which is personal development, tolerance and solidarity among young people from different cultures. Such goal could be reached if youth group can openly communicate and cooperate together, which is actually the process of the youth exchange. Nevertheless certain final product which group is working on, consolidates and motivates people to focus and work together during the entire project. Thus recommendation is to focus both on *how* youth exchange group can accomplish their objectives and keep the group aware why they came together and *what* they want to achieve at the end of the course.

Sharing expectations ←→ Evaluating results

When preparing daily schedule, you should plan some time at the beginning of the programme for participants to share their expectations:

- to themselves - what do I want to experience, to gain, to share?
- to each other - how do I want other to behave, to be?
- to the programme - what do I want the programme would be about?
- to the process - how things should happen? What are the things I would not like to happen?

This process could be started already at the preparation phase: participants could write, draw, or act-out their expectations. Sharing expectations in the international group creates a common sense of what the entire group expects and what efforts should be made in order to meet those expectations

If you spend some time for sharing expectations, then allocate some time for coming back to expectations and checking where people are, by asking:

- Are things going on as they expected?
- Or maybe new goals or expectations appeared?
- What people are doing in order to meet their expectations

- How do they help others?

Again, it is up to you to decide how often you would do such conversations with participants – every day or twice in a week.

Working time ←→ Leisure time

Can there be any free time in the programme? If yes how much of it should be? Partners might be used to different ways of perceiving the balance of working time and leisure time. For some people lunch break of one hour is just enough, while others would complain that two hours break is too short. There is quite widely known phrase that people learn as much during the free informal time as during the working time or maybe even more. Maybe it's not proved by scientific researches, but there are few quite evident things: young people usually spend time together even if it's a break or so-called free time. If they spend time together, then they probably speak; they get to know each other; they build relationships and understand each other better. Finally it's one of the aims of the youth exchange. By the way, guided excursion is not a free time if people can't choose where to go and what to do. Be open and transparent with participants: if you plan guided tour and everyone should be on the boat, you should inform people like this. Free time is when people can choose what they want to do - whether to stay at the youth exchange venue and wash their socks or take a trip to nearest sightseeing places or meet other friends from that country.

Fixed frame ←→ Flexible

You are asked to provide detailed programme of the youth exchange already with the application form. The programme is your frame within the youth exchange is going on. It is a frame, which helps both group leaders and participants to understand the sequence of programme elements, the methodology and the relevance to the objectives of the project. However the youth exchange should be based on principles of non-formal education and therefore should be participant/learner-centred. In

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simple words it means that participants are the main people defining the content of the youth exchange programme. It might be that some participants will change in the period between the submitting application form and the beginning of the youth exchange. It might be that participants will discover new expectations and needs when they actually are at the exchange and has a specific group process and some new personal discoveries. Due to those reasons you should have freedom to make changes within the frame and sometimes let some improvisation happen in terms of activities or methods. This aspect is about finding the balance between being fixed on what is planned and being flexible in order to react to the unexpected.

Intercultural learning
From methods ←→ From real situations and activities

There are plenty of role plays, simulation games and other kind of methods for intercultural learning. It might be that you will decide using these kinds of methods at the youth exchange too in order to enforce intercultural learning process. However you should note that simulation games or role plays are often used when you don't have real diversity within the group, so you basically need to simulate intercultural situations. At the youth exchange you have real cultural diversity and in most of cases you don't need to simulate that, but provide opportunity for young people to experience diversity within the group and reflect on that.

Common experience makes people friends, creates the feeling of acceptance and empathy to each other. In order to develop intercultural competence you could make people aware about their experience of working in culturally diverse groups by reflecting on it:
- What were the differences and similarities in people's behaviour?
- What did you understand about yourself in relation to others?
- What new things did you find out about culture of yours and others?
- What are the benefits of working in culturally diverse group?
- other…

Finding the balance between those two aspects mean designing the programme of the youth exchange in the way that young people could gain authentic intercultural experience within the international group and learn from that as much as possible.

Active participation
Leaders decide ←→ participants decide

It would be difficult to measure it by percentage or any other quantitative measure, but this aspect should follow the principle of giving young people opportunity to make decisions and implement them by themselves as much as possible. You may follow the rule: *if young people can do something by themselves, they should do it*. If they cannot, you can help them acquire necessary skills to do it. Of course group leaders usually take more responsibilities than young people in terms of safety, educational processing or evaluation and they do necessary decisions during the exchange. Group leaders can set up the frame for the programme, but young people can and should decide about the exact content of activities. In this way they will more engaged in the programme and responsible to implement it. It is important to agree with young people about roles in the group from the very beginning of the youth exchange.

European dimension
European community ←→ Local community

You are asked to ensure that young people would become more aware of the European context while doing the youth exchange. You should reflect which parts of the programme will contribute to this quality demand. However Europe does not exist in vacuum. Usually the European dimension starts from the better awareness of each persons' local community.
Create some space and time within the programme for young people to share about their local reality in relation to the theme of the project. Make sure that people could share their achievements and impressions from local communities. Such activity would let people compare different realities they live and understand on one hand how diverse Europe is and on another hand what are the similarities or links between different communities.

Projects for the future!

After the sessions on the preparation phase of YE and balancing the program, the participants were eager to get back to their groups and continue work on their projects. The groups were more enthusiastic during this session to develop further their projects as they already had clear shared vision on the general matters. During the morning session, the group encouraged the trainers to give space for sharing their products allowing peer education and learning from each other in the afternoon. So the task of each group was to finalize as much as possible considering all the information provided already: quality aspects, preparation phase, balancing the program. They prepared posters to share with other participants in a gallery. The interactive project gallery was an effective tool for groups to see the work of each other, learning space and possibility to get new ideas and skills to develop their projects further.

GROUP 1 - All Different, All equal
Aim: to explore cultural diversity and raise equality issues y examining the roots and causes of discrimination in order to harness a new attitude of tolerance and understanding
Objectives:
- to identify forms of discrimination and explore its existence
- to share real life situations of each country
- to share the learning on the local community
- to increase awareness of global societal problems

Methods: non-formal education methods, forum theatre, role play, drama, photography, event in community (youth day)
Countries: Ireland, Finland, Lithuania, Ukraine, Moldova +?? Belarus or Russia
Target group: 15-20 years old
When: spring 2011
Where: Ukraine or Moldova

GROUP 2 - Returning to roots (under construction...)
Topic/objective: awareness raising about lifestyles concerning environmental questions
Activities:
1. Getting to know and team building games
2. Presentations of environmental situation in different countries

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3. Camp/hotel (3+ 5 days): comparison of resource consumption
4. Actions, e.g. planting trees, making bag from reused materials, making papyrus
5. Presentation of concepts, e.g. ecological footprint
6. Excursions, e.g. problem areas and solutions
7. Making a "Green Constitutions

Date: May 2011
Place: Izmir, Turkey
Duration: 9 days
Partners: Turkey, Austria, Finland, Belarus, Russia and Azerbaijan
Hakan, Gulnara, Wolfgang, Lina

GROUP 3
Who 18-25 years old
Countries: Poland, Armenia, Russia and Turkey
Aim: build positive perception and mutual understanding among participants from different countries
Objectives: To involve youngsters in intercultural dialogue; Find interests and values that unite us; Experience different points of view on problematic issues between countries involved; Involve local community.
Activities: Combination of outdoor activities, photography, simulation games, movie making, etc.
Sargis, Shoghik, Milana, Anna, Tomasz

GROUP 4
More than a thousand words? Foto and Art project
Objectives: To connect young people over national borders; To emphasize similarities through diversity
Age 16-22
Sweden, Latvia, Belarus
Size 6+1
Duration 6 days
Photo themes: love, family, fun, city life, etc
Dissemination: final exhibition, and local exhibitions in the countries

GROUP 5
Topics: European Identity, European Citizenship, Human Rights
European Banana – Denmark, Hungary, Poland, Georgia, Azerbaijan

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Hosted in Azerbaijan
Spring 2011
18-25 years old
Program details: Arrival; Getting to know each other, intro to the program; Quiz game, intro to YiZ, finishing WS, tea house; Workshop, European Café, national night Meeting , workshop, free, national evening; Excursion, national evening; School visit, meeting, Baku at night; Refugee camp visit, RCV, dinner out; Summary, evaluation

Active youth participation

It was the main topic for the youth exchange and participants already reflected quite a lot when they applied for this training course. Here you can find some quotes from participants, maybe it will inspire for further exploration.

"It is the young people being involved in the planning, development and carrying out of activities so that a feeling of ownership and responsibility is instilled in them. Individual levels of participation will always vary but with careful facilitation and coaching by the youth worker, I think full and active Youth participation can be achieved."

"(It is about) giving young people opportunity to take responsibility for improving society and creating possibilities."

"According to the ladder of participation defined by Roger Hart, the highest level of youth participation includes youth initiative in developing projects or programmes and then sharing decision-making with adults. I agree with this definition but would add some more criteria. It is not necessary to have leader competences in order to participate in youth work, as it is possible to be active in different ways. What is necessary then? To know your rights, duties and needs; to be aware of what is going on around you and to be open to new (people, situations, worldviews…)."

At the training course we explored this topic by using the exercise "Where do you stand?" The aim was to see different points of view to active youth participation, to explore diverse ways that youth participation is perceived in various regions and countries. The statements are provocative and do not represent the point of view of trainers or organisers of this course. However these statements were suppose to serve for involving people actively in the discussion about some essential aspects of youth participation:

1. *Active youth participation is just a EU political brainwash. My local authority doesn't need people who will make trouble and criticise their work.*

Most of people stand on the "NO" side, but few (mainly from Russia and Belarus) remained on "YES". People standing on the "NO" side mentioned, that actually local authorities appreciate input of local people, but in some cases they are against critics, even the constructive ones from the local citizens. People standing on the "YES" side (still not on the complete YES) mentioned that indeed authorities don't like the idea of active citizenship because it means higher control of their actions and less possibilities to be non-transparent and defend closed interest groups.

However there was a common agreement that participation should lead to higher awareness of young people and confidence to be active in local community and cooperate constructively with local authorities.

2. *The best way to ensure active participation is to make the open call for participants and select the most motivated ones.*

People spread in the whole range from complete YES to complete NO. Those, standing on the YES side put the arguments, that it is important to have motivated people, because then they will be more involved in the activities and we should look how to get the right people for the right activity.

The ones on the NO side, actually said the opposite, that we have to work with people who are not that motivated and maybe need inspiration and additional attention and support from youth workers. Another strong point was made by Giedre from National

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Agency, that open call as such should not be at all in the youth exchange, because such project should be created by young people with support of youth workers. Meaning young people are organisers and participants of the entire youth exchange and having open call for participants might mean, that someone else prepared a project without involvement of youth in it.

Another argument from participants was that it is ok to have a call for participants to create the idea for the project, but not after the project is created.

3. The programme of the youth exchange will be interesting only if it is created by young people, who will participate in it.

Majority of the group stand on NO side and few on the YES. The ones on YES, strongly expressed that active participation will be ensured only if young people will be mainly responsible for creating the programme. Furthermore it will be then interesting for themselves because it is created by them.

Participants on the NO side also had strong points, that actually not only young people can create and interesting programme. There could be contribution of youth workers or some community members, who could propose interesting things for young people. However the general agreement was that young people should be definitely involved in the programme creation, but they could use knowledge, creativity and expertise of other people as well.

Project reach

Participants entered multiple learning spaces with 5 tables:
1. Visibility
2. Exploitation of results
3. Dissemination and follow-up
4. Evaluation of the project
5. Balancing programme of the youth exchange and other issues

People could choose which topic is most interesting for them and also move from table to another according to their needs. The session was very much appreciated due it's flexibility and free choice of topics.

"**Visibility** is a term that is closely related to the discussion of 'doing more' with your international youth project. Throughout your project, you can show off the work you are doing. You can use your project to get your organisation into the spotlights, you can highlight the possibilities the Youth in Action programme has to offer other people, you can raise your profit by showing in a coherent way what great activities you are doing… Doing a project is a valid reason in itself to communicate about your activities, about your organisation and about the Youth in Action programme to the outside world"

Source: booklet "Making Waves", www.salto-youth.net/MakingWaves, p.7

Dissemination and exploitation of results

Exploitation is an occasion to develop the capacities of organisation involved into the project, to build up recognition of their activities and to exploit different possible partners/local actors, which could be useful for this and for the future activities. Exploitation develops organisations and increases their role in the local communities. Local partnership building is based on the mutual exploitation of the different actors.

Each project organiser should put in place measures to disseminate and exploit the results of the Youth Exchange. Standard dissemination and exploitation measures may have the same format as visibility measures indicated in the section above; the main difference is that dissemination and exploitation measures focus on a project's results, rather than its Activity and objectives. For this reason, dissemination and exploitation measures occur mainly after the Youth Exchange has taken place.

Additional dissemination and exploitation of results
As well as the standard dissemination and exploitation measures, promoters could set up additional measures to spread and highlight the value of their project's results. The Youth in Action Programme offers a further financial incentive for such measures Examples of additional dissemination and exploitation measures are organising public events (presentations, conferences, workshops…); creating audio-visual products (CD-Rom, DVD…); setting up long-term collaboration with media (series of radio/TV/press contributions, interviews, participation in different radio/TV programmes…); developing information material (newsletters, brochures, booklets, best practice manuals…); creating an Internet portal, etc.2
Source: Programme guide of Youth in Action programme

What's the difference between Visibility, Dissemination and Exploitation?

- ➲ Disseminating your project results also raises the visibility and the positive image of your project and organisation.
- ➲ If you disseminate your project results to people that effectively need your product, it will be more likely that they will also 'exploit' these.
- ➲ When you involve many people in your project to raise your project's visibility, all these on-lookers will also be interested in the results, so you should disseminate your results to them.
- ➲ Because they will feel some sense of ownership, they will most likely also exploit the results.
- ➲ The type of activities you do to raise the visibility of your project and to disseminate its results are largely similar *(e.g. promotion, meetings, mailings, press contacts,…)*

It is clear that these three concepts are interconnected and overlap. However for the sake of clarity and understanding, we have split up these different needs, with cross-references where appropriate.
Source: booklet "Making Waves", www.salto-youth.net/MakingWaves, p. 9

Equal partnership

The key issue in international project is to ensure equal involvement of all partners of the project in order to have all partners equally feeling ownership of the project and fully committed to implement the project together.

Some key questions for reflection when creating new partnership:

- How do you share tasks with your partners?
- How much space you give for partners to contribute?
- How the decisions are taken by partners?
- How do you develop trust among partners?
- How do you ensure transparency in partnership? Are there any issues, which you don't feel comfortable to speak about?

Here are few conclusions from youth workers active in Youth in Action from programme and partner countries after the training course "Make it better!"[1]. You make take it in the consideration or discuss your own important aspects of the partnership.

- Make the deadlines with time reserve! "Respecting the deadline" can mean different things - from being ready long time in advance to completing something the night before the deadline or even being 1 or 2 days late.
- Projects need maximum planning, minimum risk. Discuss and agree even on the smallest things, then you will save a lot of energy and anxiety afterwards!
- Regular or even constant communication can be time consuming, but it is essential part of future success. Use all possible ways of spreading information and communicating with partners;
- Agree on priorities together! What is more important for you, can be less important for your partner. Don't think that anything is self-evident, you might be very disappointed afterwards;

Presentation of the SALTO resources

The participants were introduced the network of SALTO resource centres and the support measures, activities and tools provided by SALTO EECA.

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[1] O. Buzinova, R. Kalivod, L. Ragauskas, article "Make it better!", "Youth in 7" magazine no. 2, 2007, SALTO-YOUTH EECA RC

Evaluation of work in the international project teams

The groups were working periodically on the last three days of the training course. They were offered with the following model on effective team work and revises the questions, helped to evaluate the effectiveness of their teamwork. This evaluation has two levels:

1. Personal level, when you can reflect about YOUR OWN role and participation in the team work
2. Group level, when you can give constructive, but positive feedback to other team members in a form of suggestions for improvement.

Note this is the learning process. Personal reflection and giving a feedback for other are great resources for improving yourself. Be open for the feedback and positive changes!

Model for the effective teamwork
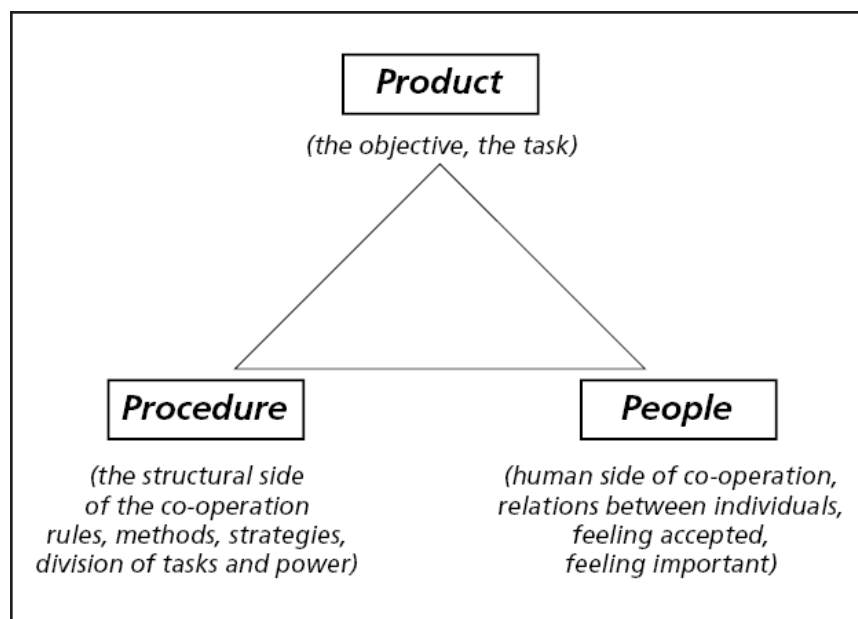
Source: T-Kit No. 3 "Project management", Council of Europe publishing, Council of Europe and European Commission, November 2000

People:

How do you feel about your own contribution to the team work? Was there enough space for every person to contribute in the team?
Was the motivation and interests of each person expressed in the team?

Procedure/Process:

Were the roles and functions in your team clear?
How do you feel about the process of cooperation and communication among team members?

Product/Result:

Did you share the personal visions about the project? Did you have an agreement on that vision? How do you feel about the results of your team work

Possible statements for giving feedback to other team members:

When working with you, I feel …
Things, I would suggest to do differently…
Things I would like to keep for the future co-operation….

"Good teamwork is as stimulating as black coffee, and just as hard to sleep afterwards"
(Adaptation of a saying by Ann Lindberg)

Learning space dynamics

We were sue that training course could not provide all the answers to every participant and therefore we organised pretty self-directed learning opportunity –the learning space dynamic.

Learning as an individual process, egocentric activity as one may ask exactly for the information he or she wants to know. You are responsible for your own learning process at the end of this course, all the unsolved expectations (concerning knowledge) might be met during this moment.

Space as everybody is obliged to stay in the same space, even when not interested or not busy. There is no cigarette break. Space also as the room is divided in different corners with different kind of activities. Participants can zap from one space to another.

Dynamics as participants are free to move from one corner to another looking for their maximum learning composition. Also the learning-opportunities are dynamic as different topics will be proposed on different moments. You have to think of a TV-guide presented with different programs on different times and on different channels (corners).
Different spaces were available…

Participants' corner:
A timetable with blocks of 10 minutes is hung in a corner. This is the space where participants can propose their topic they want to talk about. It can be a presentation, a discussion topic, …whatever they want to propose. Of course, if nobody is coming, it might mean that nobody is interested at that moment.
Resource table:
It was actually a library with relevant books, magazines, booklets and participants' materials from their organisation.
Consultancy tables:
These are tables occupied by N.A.'s and trainers on different topics. According to the knowledge present, choose between different topics:
- The timeframe for good preparation and follow-up.
- Project consultation.
- Filling-in Application form
- Where to find material on the websites

Working tables:
Several tables are just empty and are possible tables where participants can sit together to work on a topic they choose to. The name covers the content: it's a working table.

Input space:
It is a space where inputs take place from time to time. If people want to explore the topic further they switch to consultancy or working table afterwards.

There were several inputs 1. Budget calculation; 2. Visa and bank transfer issues in EECA region; 3. Other opportunities in Action 3.1 (focus on training and networking activities)
Thematic tables: 1. Specifics of EECA region in the frame of youth cooperation. 2. The ways to involve young people (sharing experiences)

Specificities of EECA region
- Political situation. It is recommended to find out more details, to check with partners what topics might be accepted;
- No visa needed for EU members: Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia
- Visa at the border: Armenia, Azerbaijan
- To check where people should make visas; extra costs should be requested in the application
- Organizations might focus on different young people:
  - Western youth in youth exchanges often can be with fewer opportunities (drop outs from education system, with some disabilities, living in poor conditions), while eastern participants can be university students, but still having fewer opportunities than the western youth.
- Finances: more clear agreements   contracts and partners, specific formulations, taxing system
- Lower knowledge EECA realities, partners should

More specific information about each country from EECA region can be found at SALTO-YOUTH EECA website www.salto-youth.net/eeca

Evaluation of the training course

The evaluation started with personal evaluation: the participants were given space to put together all 5 "boarding passes" and find an isolated space to reflect on personal learning outcomes from the training course.

They got together in the reflection groups to share the outcomes and have general feedback about the training in general. Additionally, the team members presented the 8 key competences and the next steps in getting the descriptive part of their Youthpass. The participants would send to the trainers by the end of the month their key competences and if needed ask for support and feedback in preparing them. The trainers would collect all and send to the NA representatives to prepare Youthpasses and post to participants.

The written questionnaire was passed to the participants to fill it in.

The groups gathered together in the training space to flash back to the training through a short video made with photos taken by Lina and edited by Laimonas. It was a colourful and funny presentation with pictures. Two group activities took place during the evaluation process. First one was using hand as a model, in a big paper where there is a big hand drawn, participants wrote on the fingers their feedback – Thumb symbolized something good/excellent, point finger for something important to be pointed, middle finger as something bad, fourth finger for something that one would "marry on" or take home with, and small finger is for anything else.

Here is some of the feedback:

Good or excellent points
Qualified and interesting participants
Meeting new people, new friends and new partners
Professional and open team
Organization of processes
Project development
Meeting and interacting with locals (babushka from Voronezh)
Warm atmosphere
Great venue/food/sea, international coffee breaks

Important Points
Informal learning
New tools and non-formal training methods
New information, knowledge and experience
Future equal partnerships
New project in the future and meeting future project partners
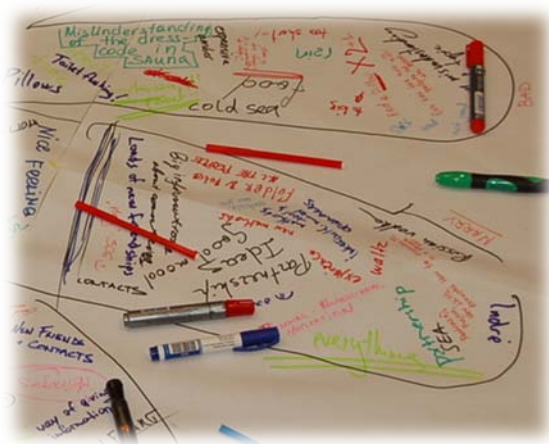Understanding, openness of people

Bad Points
Cold sea, rain, vegetarian food, bed and pillows
Short time for training

Other
Lots of new ideas, contacts, work
Kaliningrad not being a typical Russia

Something to take home
Personal/professional motivation
Networking, new friendships, contacts, cooperation, partnership
Information, new skills (e.g. how to

The second activity was summarizing the evaluation and using emotions for it. Everyone had to say one word (adjective) describing how they felt at that moment. The rope was used for passing the word to each other, meanwhile keeping the part of the rope on had in his/her hand thus creating a web. The feelings shared included satisfied, sunny, smile, energetic, motivated, etc.

The official program was finished with handing the certificates to participants. One person taking randomly a certificate had to describe whose certificate is that without saying the name or the country of the person and others have to guess who it is about. Then repeating until everyone got their Youthpass ceritificates.

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ANNEX 1: EASTERN EXPRESS BINGO

Instructions: Find one person in the group who agrees with the statement in a box. Ask the person to write their name in the box. Names cannot be repeated. When you fill in ALL the boxes, say loudly BINGO.

Find one person who has organized a youth exchange in their country	Find one person who traveled here longer than 8 hours	Find one person who works for NA (National Agency) or SALTO
Find someone whose name starts with "L"	Find someone who represents a local organization	Find one person who loves swimming
Find a person who can play a music instrument	Find one person whose organization works with minorities or disadvantaged youth	Find someone who made a video of young people they work with
Find a person who is first time in Kaliningrad region	Find a person who participated in a youth exchange	Find one person who is interested to be a partner in a youth exchange in Russia
Find one person who has worked with EECA (Eastern Europe and Caucasus) region before	Find a person who participates in SALTO training for the first time	Find someone who traveled to EASTERN EXPRESS by train

ANNEX 2: The checklist for ADVANCE PLANNING VISIT of a youth exchange

☐ Ensure that participants of APV will be the group leaders who will accompany the group during the youth exchange. Optionally there could be one more person from each youth group coming together with the group leader.

☐ Choose a working language for the visit

☐ Communicate by e-mail, messaging or web video software (check the best method)

☐ Formulate and circulate a provisional agenda for the APV

☐ Check visa requirements, insurance and needed support for obtaining visas (e.g. sending invitation, calling embassies, etc.)

During the APV

☐ Getting to know each other and some group building (might be informal too)

☐ Expectations of each other concerning the meeting

☐ Make decision how you should make decisions during the APV

☐ Agree who will track time and record the minutes of the meeting and agreements reached

☐ Review the agenda of the meeting

Issues to discuss

Most of the things listed here will probably be described in your application form. However it's recommended to revise what is written and make changes if appropriate.

☐ Reviewing aims and objectives of the project. Do we all understand them in the similar way?

☐ Expectations, both personal expectations of the leaders but also organisation's own and partner's expectations for the entire project.

☐ Profile of the group: participants' age, gender, background, special needs

☐ What linguistic support is needed for participants?

☐ Roles and functions of group leaders during the project

☐ Issues like, alcohol, drugs, sex, health and safety, gender issues, religion, time etc. how to tackle possible problems and how make clear definition of rules and agreements together with young people.

☐ How would we handle conflict within the group?

☐ Open discussion about the cultural habits of the hosting country: areas of cultural sensitivity, local food, holidays or important events, which might influence your activities

☐ Psychological and physical safety of participants. How do we ensure it during the project?

- ☐ Legal requirements of each participating country which could influence the project
- ☐ Programme, schedule details
- ☐ Working methods and spare time activities
- ☐ Quality check: how will we ensure non-formal learning, intercultural learning, active participation and European dimension
- ☐ How will we ensure visibility of the project?
- ☐ What still has to be done before the youth exchange by all partners?
- ☐ Evaluation and report: What and how shall we evaluate during the project? How do we document our ongoing evaluations?
- ☐ Choose contact person from each organisation for further communication
- ☐ Agree on financial issues like reimbursement of preparation and travel costs
- ☐ Prepare a financial agreement for all partners to sign
- ☐ Action plan with clear deadlines and responsibilities: who does what?

Practical things to discuss
- ☐ To get all information about hospitality arrangements, local medical facilities
- ☐ Resources available
- ☐ Accommodation
- ☐ Special Needs
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Money
- ☐ Travelling arrangements to the country
- ☐ Transport in the country
- ☐ Surroundings and possibilities for excursions
- ☐ Technical utilities
- ☐ Standard of living, prices
- ☐ Internet /phone facilities for during the project

Eastern Express BOARDING CARD:

My learning journey of the day 1

➲ What was easy/difficult for me during this day?
➲ What did I learn during this day during the sessions (non-formal learning) and outside the sessions (informal learning)?
➲ What am I able to use/apply in my practice?

Program of MAY 5th

Morning

Knowing each other

Program introduction

Personal learning interests

Afternoon

Personal/professional path to the course

Work realities of participants

Eastern Express BOARDING CARD:

My learning journey of the day 2

➲ What was easy/difficult for me during this day?
➲ What did I learn during this day during the sessions (non-formal learning) and outside the sessions (informal learning)?
➲ What am I able to use/apply in my practice?

Program of MAY 6th

Morning

Essentials of Youth in Action and youth exchanges

Quality demands

Non-formal education

Afternoon

Generating ideas, finding partners

Eastern Express BOARDING CARD:

My learning journey of the day 3

➲ What was easy/difficult for me during this day?
➲ What did I learn during this day during the sessions (nonformal learning) and outside the sessions (informal learning)?
➲ What am I able to use/apply in my practice?

Program of MAY 7th

Morning

Intercultural learning

European Dimension

Afternoon

Project cycle

Work in project groups

Free time

Eastern Express BOARDING CARD:

My learning journey of the day 4

➲ What was easy/difficult for me during this day?
➲ What did I learn during this day during the sessions (nonformal learning) and outside the sessions (informal learning)?
➲ What am I able to use/apply in my practice?

Program of MAY 8th

Morning

Youth active participation

Project reach

Afternoon

Preparation and APV

Balancing the program

Work in project groups

Eastern Express BOARDING CARD:

My learning journey of the day 5

➲ What was easy/difficult for me during this day?
➲ What did I learn during this day during the sessions (nonformal learning) and outside the sessions (informal learning)?
➲ What am I able to use/apply in my practice?

Program of MAY 9th

Morning

APV

Presentation of youth exchanges

Feedback, questions and answers

Equal partnership

Afternoon

Learning Space Dynamics

Youthpass

Youthpass is the European Strategy on the validation and recognition of non-formal learning within the context of Youth in Action

Strategic aims – everything what is developed within Youthpass should contribute to the following:

➲ The reflection upon the **personal non-formal learning** process
➲ The **social recognition** of youth work
➲ The **employability** of young people and youth workers

Youthpass

Youthpass **principles**:

➲ Every participant who participates in Youth in Action activities such as Youth Exchanges, European Voluntary Service and Training Courses has the **right** to receive the Youthpass.
➲ The organisation, which implements projects funded by Youth in Action programme is **responsible** for implementing, generating and issuing Youthpass
➲ National Agencies offer **support** in different ways (links, information, consultations, training...)
➲ SALTO-YOUTH Training and Cooperation RC is responsible to **support** the development and implementation of the Youthpass by providing the educational materials and tools (e.g. Youthpass Guide, training courses on Youthpass). For more check here: http://www.salto-youth.net/youthpass/

Eastern Express

In youth work **practice** Youthpass contributes and is based on the following elements:

➲ **Learning to learn** is about becoming aware and responsible for own learning: setting up own learning objectives, organizing and managing own learning, identifying possibilities and dealing with obstacles, looking for and using others for support
➲ **Self-assessment** creates opportunities for the learner to reflect on his/her learning experience and progress enabling to identify the achievements
➲ **Dialogue process** includes the feedback or group conversation as a mutual process of exchange about learning in a safe environment

The Youthpass **process** should start from the planning and preparation phase, should be implemented during the implementation phase and is issued in the evaluation and follow-up phase

YOUR EASTERN EXPRESS Youthpass:

Your Youthpass will consist of a certificate of participation and description of the YOUR learning points and outcomes from this particular training course. The first part will be given to you here. In order to receive the second part, you need to send the summary of your learning outcomes of the Eastern Express using the key competences framework to Laimonas (laimis001@gmail.com) and Lilit (lilit_simonyan@yahoo.com) before 25th of May.

Here are some steps to help you in this process:

Step 1: Consider the context in which you may wish to use your Youthpass (career perspective,

Youthpass

Youthpass creates links with other sectors (formal education, vocational training and qualification, employment, other) through adopting and using as a reference the model of **Key-competences.** At the end of the training course or European Voluntary service, participants describe their learning outcomes in the following areas:

- Communication in mother tongue
- Communication in foreign tongue
- Mathematical competence and basic competence in science and technology
- Digital competence

- Learning to learn
- Social and civic competence
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- Cultural awareness and expression

The boarding passes adopted from the training course "Bitrimulti". More about this course at www.salto-youth.net/btm

Your notes: