

SALTO-YOUTH
EUROMED
RESOURCE CENTRE



Education and Culture



AGENZIA NAZIONALE PER I GIOVANI



DG Istruzione e Cultura

DEMOCRACY WITHIN EUROMED CONTEXT: ILLUSION OR REALITY?

Venice, 20 April 2008 - 27 April 2008

REPORT

Introduction

The training session was co-organised by the SALTO-YOUTH EuroMed Resource Centre in conjunction with the Youth National Agency of Italy from 20th to 27th April 2008. The working languages were English and French.

During the training course, the participants had experimented the meaning of Democracy. In fact, during all course, they choose their own structure and their own “parliament.

The discussion about Democracy and its meaning started with a reflection on the “Serenissima” (Democracy in Venice in the Past) and with a Role play realized inside Palazzo Ducale.

Later, the participants have presented their own Political Systems with a focus and reflection about the Democracy.

Also, two of the trainers did a similar presentation about their own country (Israel and Egypt).

All these elements are important in order to better understand and to better develop concrete projects in the various countries. In order to develop this aspect, some activities has been proposed to better understand the skills and the competences to put in action projects with a “democratic” approach.

The course has provided time and space for building new partnerships and projects in the field of Youth in Action.

The team of the training course:
Demicheli Federica: coordinator,
Abrignani Bernard, trainer,
Leibovitch Adva, trainer,
Brakel Kristian, trainer,
Fouad Ahmed, trainer,
Boaria Marco, rapourter,
Stefania Toriello, logistic support,
Stefania Ziglio, logistic support.

Giuseppe Gualtieri and Luca Pignocco: Italian National Agency.

Background

Democracy (literally "rule by the people", from the Greek demos, "people," and kratos, "rule") is a form of government.

A demos - a group which makes political decisions by some form of collective procedure - must exist. Non-members of the demos do not participate. In modern democracies the demos is the adult portion of the nation, and adult citizenship is usually equivalent to membership¹.

Democracy is therefore a large and controversial concept: not only it is a form of government, but it also represents a way to conceive the political and social life inside the community.

The concept of Democracy is not the same for all the countries: for example, there are many democratic systems with different level of participation. The idea of democracy is not identical, not only between the two sides of Mediterranean sea, but also among countries of the same geographical area.

The purpose of the training "Democracy within the EuroMed context: illusion or reality?" is to share and reflect on the concept of Democracy, in particular within the EuroMed context, and on the qualitative impact of "Youth in Action" and "EuroMed Youth" Programmes on such a relevant theme: active participation of young people is one of the main characteristic of democratic processes that both Programmes can support.

Aim and Objectives

The course is aimed at analyzing the scenery of Democracy within the EuroMed context and at promoting a better understanding of the roots of democratic processes through the history and their links with the implementation of Euro-Mediterranean projects.

The following concrete objectives were set based on the afore-mentioned goal:

- to reflect on the concept of Democracy and its different understandings (from the political and social points of view in the different European and Mediterranean countries);
- to become acquainted with the different sceneries of Democracy in the EuroMed context and the historical interdependences they had upon each other;
- to acquire competencies to devise and implement youth projects in the EuroMed context, taking in account the frame of the democracy and youth.

Participants

¹ www.wikipedia.org

The course was designed as a complementary training session for youth workers and leaders who:

- already have some experience of the (EuroMed) YOUTH Programme;
- did the upstream preparatory research required and any additional research requested by the team once accepted on the course;
- had the backing of their organizations and the green light for a EuroMed YOUTH project;
- were motivated by the training course and free to attend the entire session;
- could communicate and work in at least one of the two working languages (English and French);
- were resident in a European Union Member State or in a Mediterranean country that had signed the Declaration of Barcelona.

The participant has been 27 coming from Meda and European Countries.

Methodology

The venue choose for ruling the TC about “Democracy” has been Venice.

Why?

The TC has as main aim to explore the meaning and understanding of Democracy among the participants within Euromed.

Venue is very important in residence training, because it is the frame in which during 6 or 7 days the activities will take place.

The surroundings are the condition to create the learning setting needed for working not only at the cognitive level, but also at emotional one.

The right setting is the base in Non Formal Learning for allowing participants' learning.

Venice had tested a peculiar political system during the time of Serenissima. The political organization of Serenissima, based on certain form of participation of a large part of population and based on the voting system, was a pertinent example to be explored and discussed.

The model of Serenissima seemed the right one for discussing about the Democracy's definition, the perceptions of participants regarding their own experiences and understanding.

The Serenissima Republic of Venice was an Italian state originating from the city of Venice It existed from the 8th century until the 18th century (1797).

In 1223, the aristocratic families of Rialto drastically diminished the powers of the Doge by the establishment of an advisory body that would later be called the Quarantia and a supreme tribunal which would later be called the Signoria. They also created two bodies called sapientes which later grew into six bodies. The combination of sapientes and certain other groups was called a collegio, a kind of ministry to carry out the functions of government. A senate, called the Consiglio dei Pregadi was organized in 1229 with sixty members elected by the Major Council.

During this period the Doge had little real power left, and actual authority was exercised by the Great Council, an extremely limited parliament-like body in which only members of the great aristocratic families of the republic were allowed to participate. Venice claimed that its government was a 'classical republic' because it was a fusion of the three basic forms present in a mixed government: with the regal power in the Doge, the aristocratic in the senate, and the democratic in the Great Council.

In 1335, a "Council of Ten" was established and became so powerful and secretive that by 1600 its powers had to be delimited] Its powers varied over time, from subordination to the Great Council to dominance over it. A law of 1539 instituted the State Inquisitors, later known as the Supreme Tribunal. There were three Inquisitors, one known popularly as Il Rosso, "the red one", who was chosen from the Dogal Councillors, who wore scarlet robes, and two from the Council of Ten, known as I negri, "the black ones". They began as a security body at the difficult time when Venice felt herself encircled by the Habsburgs and gradually assumed some of the powers of the Council of Ten. By means of espionage, counterespionage and internal surveillance, they made use of a network of informers and "confidants".

In 1556, the provveditori ai beni inculti were also created for the improvement of agriculture by increasing the acreage under cultivation and encouraging private investment in agricultural improvement. The consistent rise in the price of grain during the 16th century encouraged the transfer of capital from trade to the land.

NON FORMAL LEARNING AND DEMOCRACY

As mentioned before, Non Formal Learning is focus not only on the cognitive learning, but also emotional one. In this approach, the "complete" learning is the one that develop both. In the background of this training course, so, was the idea to provide participants the space and situations not only for discussing about Democracy, but for experiment what can be or not be a democratic process. We wanted to help them in testing the efforts needed to be "democratic": comprehension and acceptance of the other's ideas and behaviors, negotiation of personals attitudes and point of view toward an issue...

The training course tried to work on these two dimension of Democracy:

- 1) the political system: concept, definition and historical background,
- 2) the personal and professional skills: behaviors, aptitudes and tools.

In order to develop these two dimensions, the trainers proposed two activities as red line during the week:

- 1) Parliament Structure.
- 2) Role play in Palazzo Ducale.

These two training prososals were the basement for the whole course.

Some activities....

DEMOCRACY FOR ME

The training course, starting from the most common definitions of democracy, foresaw a session focused on “what democracy is for me”, analyzing participants’ perception and understanding.

Methodology

Objective: to debate and share "what democracy is for me"

Description: subdivision into 5 groups (5 minutes); in groups, participants are asked to share "what is Democracy for me", facilitated by the questionnaire that they have to fill-in, and then find a creative way (i.e. singing, painting, playing, acting or whatever else) to present in plenary the main outcomes of the discussion, no matter in they agree or not (35 minutes).

Finally, groups are asked to show their presentations (25 minutes).

Hints for debriefing (minimum 20 minutes):

- Was there a common definition in the groups?
- What were the similarities and what were the differences?

Tools: this is the questionnaire employed to facilitate participants in the definition of what democracy is for them.

In a perfect democracy...	Yes	No
... everybody should have the same right to vote and to be voted for regardless of their gender		
... everybody should have the same right to vote and to be voted for regardless of their religion		
... everybody should have the same right to vote and to be voted for regardless of their ethnicity		
... everybody should have the same right to vote and to be voted for regardless of their political opinion		
... everybody should have the same rights		
... torture should under no circumstances be performed		
... religion should not be part of the political process		
... the majority should have the right to make the decisions		
... women should be represented in the decision making bodies equal to men		
... minorities should be represented in the decision making bodies equal to the majority		
... no decision should be allowed to be taken without the consent of the people		
... no one should be excluded from a decision		
... every decision should be taken by unanimous vote		
... all conflicts should be solved by the law		
... no one should be above the law		
... no one should have the right to decide for others		

Main clues of the discussion:

- one of the most important aspect of democracy related to its decision making process: it is therefore of the utmost importance to share the different existing methods
- it is difficult to compare democracy in Europe and in the Middle East due to their specific characteristics
- usually. When democracy is in crisis, it means that it is not residing in citizens hands at that moment
- lack of awareness and understanding about the real sense of democracy
- democracy is not an objective term, it is a subjective one
- understanding of democracy may be a problem especially when people are not ready to take responsibilities
- is there an alternative to the democratic system based on voting and delegating power to the majority?
- differences in “theoretical” and “practical” democracy (perfect democracy on paper is not sufficient)
- the idea of democracy is not existing: maybe we need to invent it?

The main clues of the debate among participants may be considered as a sort of “guidelines” to stimulate and favour a debate on the addressed topics.

During the training course, a session on participants’ definition of their Parliament was foreseen, in order to make them experience a real decision making process based on a bottom-up approach.

PARLIAMENT STRUCTURE

Methodology

Part A

Aim: to establish a common ground about what democracy is and how it is implemented in the training.

Objectives:

- to share participants’ perception of the concept of Democracy
- to choose their decision making process
- to define the democratic structure (Parliament) of the training course

Materials: A4 papers, flipchart papers, art-lines, paints, laptop and video-projector

Time: 3.5 hours

Description: as in any state, a structure of governing should be chosen. As the training deals with democracy, participants were proposed to adopt a democratic structure based on the principles of the Venetian structure:

- all the participants, divided in small committees composed of 5 or 6 members, represented the General Assembly;
- 1 representative for each committee forming the Great Assembly
- 3 members of the Great Assembly representing the Senate, playing the following roles:
 - Head of state
 - Vice Head of State
 - Book keeper

In ancient Venice, in order to avoid corruption, to maintain equal opportunities, and to keep everybody involved, the governing positions were rotated in a short period of time so that everyone had the chance to act in more than one position. The proposed structure of the Parliament of the training course, believing in the same principles, foresaw the rotation as well. This is the structure proposed to participants, to whom the possibility to suggest a different structure was offered on the first day of the training course during the first meeting of the General Assembly.

Participants, split in different small groups, were thus asked:

- to decide on the methods and rules of the decision making process;
- to draft the constitution, including the chosen structure for implementing the democratic decisions and the tasks of each body (i.e. committees, senate, the great assembly, etc.);
- to get everyone involved, since a democracy cannot exist without active participation of it's demos (people, citizens): every participant should have at least one position to fulfil.

Participants were given the following hints for guiding their discussion:

- how do you think the decision making process of the training course community should be?
- who is the training course community?
- what are the rules community members are expected/obliged to follow?
- what are the responsibilities of each body (committee, senate, etc)?
- please, add any other relevant issues to define and create the democratic society of the training course and its constitution.

Part B

Title: Proposal for building our own Parliament – part II

Time: 2 hours (for aims, objectives and materials see Part A)

Setting: a room organized in a formal manner of sitting, like a real Parliamentary session

Description: starting from the consideration that non formal education approach promotes an experiential learning, participants are informed that they will function as in a democratic structure during the whole week of the training. All participants gather in plenary in order to decide, starting from the reflections of the working groups (see Part A), the structure of their Parliament and to elect the members of the different bodies.

Steps:

- a. the decision making process (15 minutes): brain storming on the way to vote (secret or public? Others? Who counts the votes?). This session is facilitated by trainers.
- b. election/nomination of the facilitator (10 minutes): who will be facilitating the discussions and counting the votes? Short explanation of the role by trainers.
- c. the structure of the Democratic community (45 min): debate and vote of the structure to be adopted: what will be the responsibilities of the participants? Which parts of the programme (intercultural night, open space, project session, farewell party, free time, daily evaluations...) will be decided by the Parliament? Who is the person in charge to be in contact with the training team?
- d. defining responsibilities of positions/offices and the agenda of the meetings of the different bodies (10 minutes)
- e. Approving (10 minutes): voting for the positions

Conclusion (20 minutes): congratulations for the beginning of the journey as a democratic community.

CONSPIRACY OF VENICE

Participants had the opportunity to directly experience how the Serenissima democracy was functioning: a role-play entitled “The conspiracy of Venice” was organized in Palazzo Ducale, the building which has been the major witness of how the Serenissima was born, grown-up, developed, reached the top of its success and finally collapsed.

Methodology

Title: The Conspiracy of Venice (role-play)

Objectives:

- to make participants reflect about their own democratic or undemocratic behaviour
- to make them aware about the fact that democracy is not only realized by the legal regulations and institutions but also – and especially – by each single citizen
- to promote knowledge and understanding of the elements at the basis of the historical Venetian political system

Background

The story circles around a conspiracy set in the Dogan Venice of the 14th century. It is on the eve of the annual meeting of the senate and set in the frame of the historical events of 1310, when the nobles tried to overthrow the Doge and in the aftermath managed to establish a stronger power base for the noble families in the Republic. As a part of this power shift the Council of Ten was created, an event that will take place during the role play. Intertwined in these events are other storylines following the different families and offices participating in the meeting. The most important of all is the attempt of the Catholic Venetian church to seize power through putting a proxy on the Doges throne.

The old Doge has reached the end of his term and now it is up to the Venetians noble families to decide upon a new person to take up this office. However all parties involved have different aspirations for their own causes which might in the result lead to the downfall of the Republic of Venice.

The story is pushed further when certain events go on, that put the groups under time pressure and the risk of having their plots revealed.

Method

The players have the task of electing a new Doge at the end of the game in the senate (if the senate still holds the power). However each player also follows individual goals.

Loyalty card: a loyalty card presents symbolically the vote that each player holds in the game. Each card is marked with the name of the player’s character.

Most of the players have one card. The assassins have two cards each but only one of them may be used in a vote.

The Doge has one card that counts two voices. The Archbishop has one card that counts two voices. The Jews do not have a card at the start of the game but can gain one later in the game by popular vote. Players can loose their cards when the Council of Three decides so.

A vote is made by putting the cards in a “yes or no” ballot box. Whichever holds more cards wins the vote. In case of both boxes holding the same amount of cards, the decision means that no change will be made to the situation prior to the vote.

In general the card holder may give his card to whomever he or she wants and receives it back after a vote if she asks for it. The person who receives the card may use this vote how he/she wishes and is not necessarily bound to honour prior agreements.

Players may decide to add more rules or even change the way of voting by adding more complex aspects than just “yes or no”. However they will have to set up the system to do so and Game Masters will not interfere in this process.

Votes: votes in general are possible whenever the players wish for. However, at the beginning of the game not every player has the right to suggest a vote. This may change by public decision during the game. At the beginning, only the heads of the houses have the right to suggest a vote. The Doge is never able to suggest a vote but needs a head of a house to suggest for him. The Bishop is never able to suggest a vote but can do so by proxy.

Killing: it can only be done by the assassins. Each assassin receives two “You are dead-cards” which can only be used once. Whenever this card is powered by at least two loyalty cards he may kill the person the card is presented to.

Roles:

- The Doge - Goal: to survive the game and to extend his power so his family has absolute power in Venice. At the beginning of the game he is the only person who can “blame” people and punish them. He can also reject people to be nominated for the Doge’s council. He can lose this power later in the game by vote of the Doge’s council.
- The Church - Goal (one of them aligned to da Ponte): to extend the church’s power, have religion take a greater role in politics, have Jews removed from political offices.
- Da Ponte, a Church aligned Family - Goal: goals of the church plus placing the family member as archbishop of Venice. Alternatively: winning the doges office.
- Agadi, the Doge Family - Goal: keeping the power and extending it in the way that the da Ponte family does not play a major role in politics anymore.
- Nadal, royalist/secular Family - Goal: placing at least two people in the council ducale and one in the council of three. Preventing the Da Ponte family from taking the Doges post.
- Molin - Goal: reducing the executive power of the Doge to a minimum (no decision can be made by him alone anymore).
- Di Marco - Goal: reducing the power of the bishop to a minimum (no decision making powers nor the power to reject the Doge’s decisions).
- Jewish Community of Venice - Goal: extending their power/citizen’s rights (having at least one member in the Doge’s council, receiving loyalty cards, which they do not have at the start of the game). Preventing the Da Ponte to take the Doge’s throne.
- Assassin I (it can be hired by whoever wants to) – Goal: to collect as many loyalty cards as possible till the end of the game to escape punishment. His role is not disclosed to public unless he wishes to do so.
- Assassin II (can be hired by whoever wants to) – Goal: he has the stable mission to eliminate the doge (mission is given to him at the night prior to the game by a Byzantine agent game master). The doge can only be murdered while being alone. Or if the people surrounding the doge have pledged loyalty to the party of the murderer (done by holding the same loyalty card). Sub goal: to collect as many loyalty cards as possible to avoid punishment if caught. His role is not disclosed to the public unless he wishes to do so.

Time-table

Day/phase	Brief description	Time *
Day 1 Preparation of participants		
Working groups on democracy	Working in subgroups with a grid on specific topics concerning Democracy.	60 minutes
Introduction	<p>Introduction of the role play, the time table and distribution of the roles.</p> <p>Each person can put in a suggestion what kind of role (supporting - main character, religious - non-religious, powerful - less powerful, etc.) he or she wants to play at the first day of the training course. Each character receives an envelope with his/her loyalty card and his goal and role in the play. Each family is asked to sit together and get to know each other, get into character and plan for a strategy. They can also start to meet with other families in secret to plan alliances.</p> <p>Every family gets one seat in the Doge's council. Each family decides on a person to nominate at the day prior to the game.</p> <p>Every head of a house receives the information that an assassin is available for hire and can be met at a secret spot in the city in the night.</p> <p>The Doge is met in the city by a secret envoy (Game master) who hands him a sealed parchment stating that an assassin has been hired by the Byzantines to murder him.</p> <p>The Doge's assassin is met in the city by a secret envoy (Game master) who hands him payment and a sealed parchment that he is hired to kill the Doge.</p> <p>The bishop is met in the city by the second assassin who tells him that he can be hired.</p>	90 minutes
Day 2 Role-play		
Question time	Meeting in Plenary: questions or doubts on the role play, their role, etc.	20 minutes
Start	Last minute instructions and start the role play; at the beginning of the game the great assembly takes place representing all the players. The Doge opens the meeting, announcing the goal of the upcoming senate's meeting. All players introduce themselves briefly, stating if they hold any public office.	20 minutes

1 st round	<p>The first round of the game starts, allowing everybody to roam freely and to take to whomever he/she wishes to find alliances (if participants are not used to role-plays, it could be useful to give them more instructions in this phase). Everybody has to take part in this first phase.</p> <p>There can be some facilitators aiming at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ supporting and promoting everybody's involvement and participation is in the game (supporting the ones who are more "out"); ▪ forcing people to move and to find alliances (provoking, doing suggestions, supporting strategies...) <p>Note: the start up is the most difficult phase, the game needs to be launched very well in order to reach its goals.</p>	60 minutes
2 nd round	<p>The second round starts with the assembly of the council ducale. A proposal is handed in to establish the Council of Three. The assembly decides on that.</p> <p>In the second round, messages are passed on to each family/player group stating certain rumours about the other players (such as: the bishop has hired an assassin to kill XY, the Doge is ill and will die in the next round, one of the Di Marco family has great wealth in Byzanz from the time of the 4th crusade and is therefore interested in supporting a Doge who makes peace with Byzanz etc.), giving thus new dynamics to the game. Some of the rumours are true, others not (some false rumours can be taken from what game masters hear from the players in the first round) and some might even contradict each other.</p>	60 minutes
3 rd round	<p>The third and final round is meant to forge the last alliances for electing the Doge at the end of the round. Players are again handed rumours. Also a messenger arrives and announces that the state of Byzanz has declared war against Venice. Venice can win this war only if, at the end of the game, a new Doge who can unite at least 3/4 of the population is elected.</p>	40 minutes
Conclusion	<p>At the end the Senate elects the new doge. The outcome of the game is declared. Each character is asked to tell if she/he reached her personal/family's goal or not.</p>	30 minutes
Debriefing	<p>Meeting with an expert guide for a Historical debriefing, using the same setting where the role play took place to facilitate the different connections.</p>	
	<p>Guided tour of the most significant places related to the topic of the role-play</p>	

DEMOCRACY IN MY COUNTRY....

Participants of the training course “Democracy within EuroMed Context: illusion or reality?” held in Venice in April 2008 were asked to prepare a presentation of their own country to be sent to the staff in order to be uploaded in the Electronic Learning Community (ELC) set-up for the course.

Methodology

Part A

Title: Country presentations on the state of democracy in the different countries

Key-words: democracy, elections, involvement in decision making, formation of laws and rules

Participants: all, divided in small groups

Time: 90 minutes

Aims: reflection on the current situation of the state of democracy in our countries not to evaluate the regime or compare who is better in practice

Materials: flip chart, Markers, data show, power point

Description: the group will be asked to divide into small groups of 5-6 participants, where they can have the chance to present and discuss the home prepared material about the state of democracy in their country.

Each participant will be given a questionnaire to be filled about one of the presented countries in his group to state what he understood about the state of democracy in this country.

Guidelines will be given to participants to facilitate their discussions

Hints for debriefing:

How do you feel?

Try to link the activity with the situation of democracy promotion in your home country.

Focus on the process as a way of thinking in democracy.

Discuss this concept according to “what does it mean for me?”

Discovering together different types of democracy rose by the group.

What does it mean “duties and rights” in a democratic community?

The daily programme of the activity



“Democracy within the Euromed context: illusion or reality?”

Venice, Italy, 20/04/2008-27/04/2008



	20/apr/08	21/apr/08	22/apr/08	23/apr/08	24/apr/08	25/apr/08	26/apr/08	27/apr/08
		9.00 Official Opening (Energize , Presentation, Objectives , Programme , Learning Contract Hopes and Fears)	9.00 Energizer "Serenissima and Democracy". Role play in Venice.	9.00 Energizer "Debriefing about "Serenissima and Democracy"	9.00 Energizer "Israel and Egypt" (workshops promoted by trainers)	9.00 Energizer "Open Space for workshops" (workshops run by participants)	9.00 Energizer "Multiplying democracy: Creating projects with impact"	Departure
Arrival WELCOME	14.30 Our Parliament... :	14.30 "Serenissima and Democracy." continued 16.00 : Free Time	14.30 The political system in my country: meanings, perceptions and experiences of democracy. (workshops promoted by participants)	14.30 Europe and Democracy: visions and realities in policies and strategies	14.30 Project Sessions on aspects of democracy and youth work: Flexible time for content demanded by participants	14.30 Follow up and Evaluation	Departure	
	Intercultural Night	Dinner out in the restaurant	Open Space Preparing participant led workshops on democracy	Youth in Action and Euromed		Spectacle Theatre de l'Opprimé Farewell Party		

Time table: Morning start at 9.00, we have lunch at 13.00. The afternoon we start at 14.30 and we have dinner from 19.00.
In according with the programme, the time table could be change.