

Including *all* with the 'Youth' programme

> An inspirational booklet



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of National Agencies for the 'Youth' programme and European Commission

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet.
It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu.int>).

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

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Foreword

by Commissioner Viviane Reding

How to encourage young people to better integrate into society? How to motivate young people to acquire knowledge, skills and competencies within a multicultural setting? How to guarantee adequate resources for young people in difficulty? These are questions for all of us – political leaders, youth workers as well as the young people themselves. However, not all young people have the appropriate resources to combat exclusion in general and in many cases it is the young people themselves who are being excluded.

'Including *all*, is about giving the same opportunities to all young people, and as I see it, this is what the 'Youth' programme (2000–06) truly achieves. It gives young people within 31 countries, aged between 15 and 25 years, the same opportunities to participate in mobility and non-formal learning youth activities, whatever their background or current situation. As the 'Youth' programme provides manifold possibilities for young people, such as youth exchanges, volunteering abroad and support towards their projects, it seeks to include *all* young people, whether they are within the formal education system or not. Consequently, the 'Youth' programme differs from other European Union programmes as *all* young people have access to it.

The 'Youth' programme's priority group is young people who, for educational, cultural, social, physical, economic or geographical reasons, find it more difficult to obtain information on, and to participate in, youth activities. I want especially to encourage these young people with fewer opportunities to take the initiative. Young people well connected in an inclusive society underpin our basic values, such as equal opportunities and active citizenship in a knowledge-based and multicultural society.

The diversity of regions and youth cultures as well as the different political contexts and education systems underline the importance of having a 'Youth' programme, with its decentralised, flexible and non-formal learning character. It has become the most important and successful tool of the European Union to facilitate the access for all young people to relevant youth activities Europe-wide. I believe in the programme and its impact, and I would like to make it even better known to young people.

Therefore, the purpose of this 'inspirational booklet' is to inform about inclusion projects within the context of the 'Youth' programme and to motivate *you* by illustrating different project examples and approaches, which have had a strong impact on young people. The examples of best practices refer to *your* former and further initiative, as a contribution towards the construction of a 'Europe with and for youth'.

I am happy that more and more people active in youth work do experience the 'Youth' programme as a tool to set up transnational inclusion projects and learn from each other's best practices. It is *your* programme! Use this tool – include *all*!



Viviane Reding
*Member of the
European Commission,
responsible for Education
and Culture*

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'V. Reding'.

The 'Youth' programme and the Euro-Med 'Youth' programme



The 'Youth' programme

The 'Youth' programme (2000–06) is the European Union's mobility and non-formal learning programme targeting young people in 31 programme countries. Third countries also have access, although limited, to youth projects supported by the Community (see Glossary page 30).

The Programme offers possibilities to young people in the form of group exchanges, individual voluntary work, and youth initiatives as well as support activities. It started in 2000 but incorporates, and is based on, the experiences faced by the former Youth for Europe and European Voluntary Service programmes (1995–99).

There are National Agencies for the 'Youth' programme established in all 31 programme countries. These agencies assist with the promotion and implementation of the Programme at national level. The 'Youth' programme offers young people guidance and opportunities for mobility as well as active participation in the construction of the Europe of the third millennium. It aims to contribute to the achievement of a 'Europe of knowledge' and create a European arena for cooperation in the development of youth policy, based on non-formal learning. It encourages the concept of lifelong learning and the development of skills and competencies, which promote active citizenship.

Therefore, it strives to achieve and maintain a balance between personal development and collective activity across all sectors of society while pursuing the following objectives:

- facilitating the integration of young people into society at large and encouraging their spirit of initiative;
- helping young people to acquire knowledge, skills and competencies, and recognising the value of such experience;
- allowing young people to give free expression to their sense of solidarity in Europe and the wider world, as well as supporting the fight against racism and xenophobia;
- promoting a better understanding of the diversity of our common European culture and shared heritage as well as of our common basic values;
- helping to eliminate all forms of discrimination and promoting equality at all levels of society;
- introducing a European element into projects, which will have a positive impact on youth work at local level.



The main activities supported by the 'Youth' programme are divided into **five actions**:

Action 1 – Youth for Europe

Youth exchanges offer an opportunity for groups of young people (aged 15 to 25) from different countries to meet, typically for two to three weeks. They have a pedagogical value and a non-formal learning aim, in that the groups explore common themes and learn about each other's cultures.

Action 2 – European Voluntary Service (EVS)

People aged between 18 and 25 are able to spend up to 12 months abroad as European volunteers helping in local projects in a wide range of fields: social, ecological and environmental, arts and culture, new technologies, leisure and sports, etc.

Action 3 – Youth Initiatives

People aged between 15 and 25 can obtain support to carry out a project at local level. The intention is to give them a chance to develop as well as express their creativity and spirit of initiative. It also aims at providing former EVS volunteers with a concrete opportunity to build upon the expertise and skills acquired during their voluntary service.

Action 4 – Joint Actions

Joint actions bring together the Socrates (education), Leonardo da Vinci (vocational training) and Youth (non-formal education) programmes. This action provides support for initiatives that build on the complementary nature of these three programmes and others, such as Culture 2000.

Action 5 – Support Measures

These measures underpin and complement the other 'Youth' programme actions, so as to consolidate and enhance their benefits, to continue and develop innovative actions at Community level, and to boost the quality of youth projects, for instance through exchanges of good practices or training of project organisers.

The Euro-Med 'Youth' programme

The Euro-Med 'Youth' programme involves 35 Euro-Mediterranean partner countries – the 25 Member States of the European Union and the 10 Mediterranean partner countries (see Glossary, page 30). It is one of the 'Youth' programme's main activities. National Coordinators based in the 10 Mediterranean partner countries facilitate the implementation of the Programme.

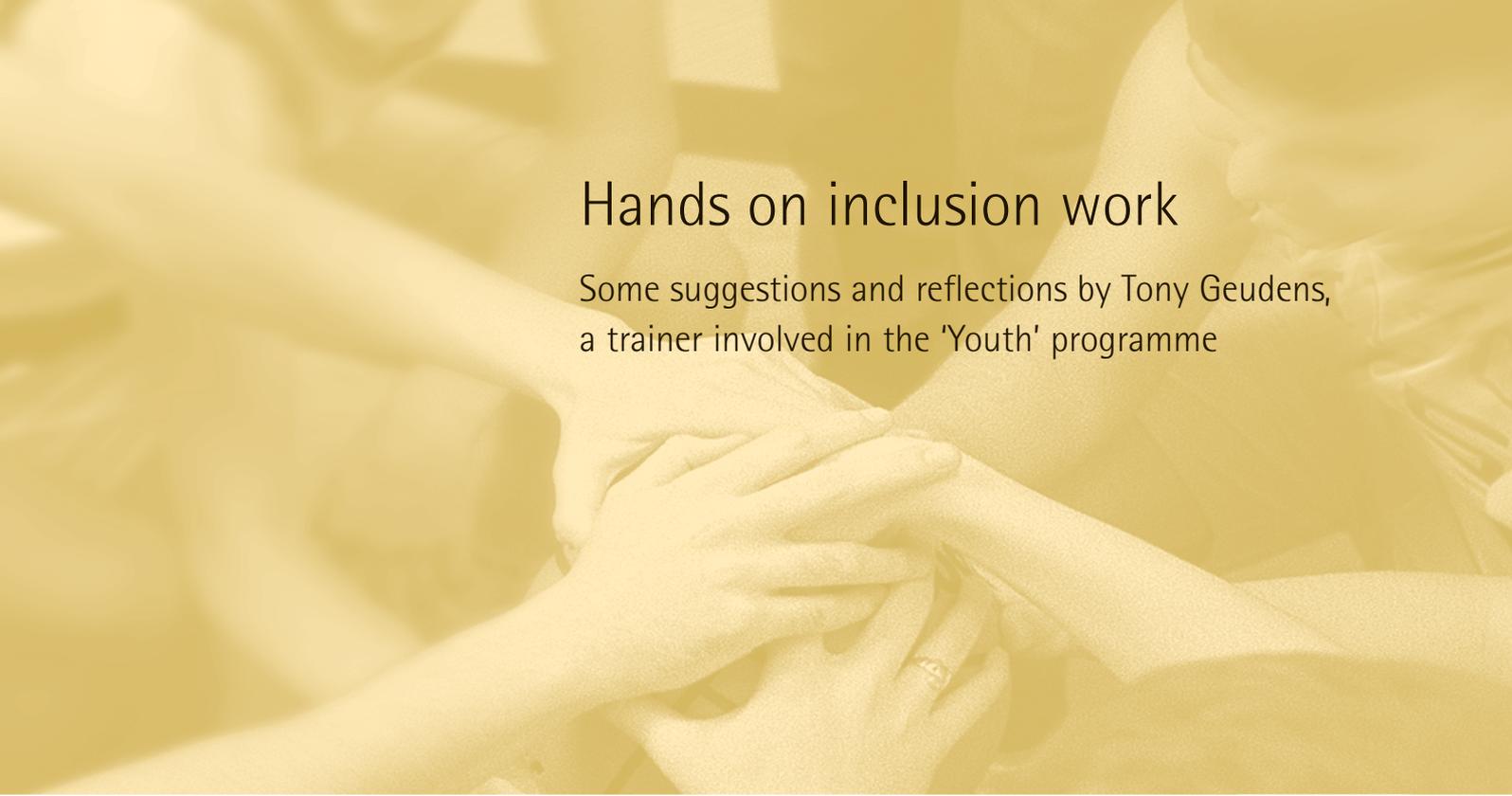
The Euro-Med 'Youth' programme addresses young people (aged between 15 and 25), youth associations and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which are legally resident in one of 27 Euro-Mediterranean partner countries. Its aim is to facilitate the integration of young people into social and working life as well as to stimulate the democratisation of the society in the Mediterranean partner countries.

The Euro-Med 'Youth' programme II focuses on the three main actions of the 'Youth' programme: Youth Exchanges, European Voluntary Service and Support Measures (Actions 1, 2 and 5).

The 'Youth' programme also supports projects with other regions such as south-east Europe, the eastern Europe and Caucasus and Latin America (see Glossary page 30).

The Strategy for Inclusion – A strategy for including *all*

Young people with fewer opportunities are a priority target of the 'Youth' programme. In order to facilitate their access to the Programme, the 'Strategy for Inclusion' was set up in 2001, and it is being implemented successfully (see Strategy for inclusion, page 13). The share of inclusion projects is steadily growing, especially in Youth Exchanges and Youth Initiatives. The 'Youth' programme demonstrates a considerable flexibility in order to accommodate the need for intensive preparatory and follow-up work as well as for the personal support of the target group during the projects. It is the intention of the European Commission to continue the implementation of the Strategy for Inclusion until the end of the current 'Youth' programme in 2006.



Hands on inclusion work

Some suggestions and reflections by Tony Geudens, a trainer involved in the 'Youth' programme

Tony Geudens is an experienced trainer as well as the project coordinator of the SALTO-'Youth' Resource Centre on Inclusion. It is one of the eight SALTO-Youth resource centres, each having its specific area of work, that have been created by the European Commission. SALTO-'Youth' stands for 'Support and Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities' within the 'Youth' programme (see Practical tools, page 22).

The European 'Youth' programme offers young people opportunities for non-formal learning through international experiences. One could argue that any young person would like to discover different parts of Europe and gain skills and competencies while having fun. Still, the 'Youth' programme does not reach all young people, especially not the ones, who are for one reason or another disadvantaged in society and who would greatly benefit from these opportunities.

Some young people have limited access to opportunities, such as the ones offered by the 'Youth' programme. There are various reasons for this: they are often marginalised by society because they are different (different colour, ability, culture, sexuality, religion etc.) or because they are in a vulnerable situation (lacking family support, poverty, limited qualifications, criminality and abuse, unemployment, limited access to information). It is especially for these young people that the 'Youth' programme is a chance for self-development and reintegration into society.

However, a single youth project is not the 'magical potion' to change people's lives completely (even though it sometimes does change people's prospects). But it could be a step in the longer-term pathway of young people towards their inclusion in society and access to a better life. The biggest obstacle for using the opportunities that the 'Youth' programme offers, is not being aware of its existence and that it is possible to use it for your situation. That is why this 'inspirational booklet' wants to encourage persons working with 'young people with fewer opportunities' (see Defining an area of work, page 11) in a variety of contexts and show them the many possible uses of the different actions of the 'Youth' programme. Often, young people, that for various reasons have limited access to opportunities in life, find it difficult to believe that there are good possibilities for setting up international projects. We hope that professionals or volunteers, working with this target group, will convey this message to these young people in order to help them create realistic hopes.

How to include – how to work with the target group

The difference between a mainstream youth project and an 'inclusion project' targeting young people from less-privileged backgrounds, is the support. The result of the project could be the same – inclusion is about giving the same chances. However, it is the learning process of the youth project, which is important. Preparations before, support during and follow up after, need to be increased.

Each person and each group is different, so it is very important to *adapt* the project to the target group and to establish the Programme *with* the target group. The young people should be the centre of the whole project, from the start to the end. In order to optimise personal achievement and growth, the so-called 3 Cs could guide us: *challenge*, *capacity* and *connection* (Jans and De Backer).

- The aims you want to reach should be *challenging* for the particular participants, in order to stimulate their sense of achievement (the 'we did it' feeling afterwards). However, aims that are too ambitious might scare the participants. A set of sequential smaller aims are more digestible.
- The project should be adapted to the *capacity* and skills of the young people. Small consecutive achievements and successes boost self-confidence and increase skills as you progress through the different stages of the project.
- The theme of the project should be *connected* to the participants' world, it should be relevant and it should be fun. The feeling of ownership ('our project') is a motor for motivation and commitment.

These points underline the importance of 'tailor-made' projects adapted to the individual and to the group. This is only possible, if the support person (1) knows the young people well and is in regular contact with them.

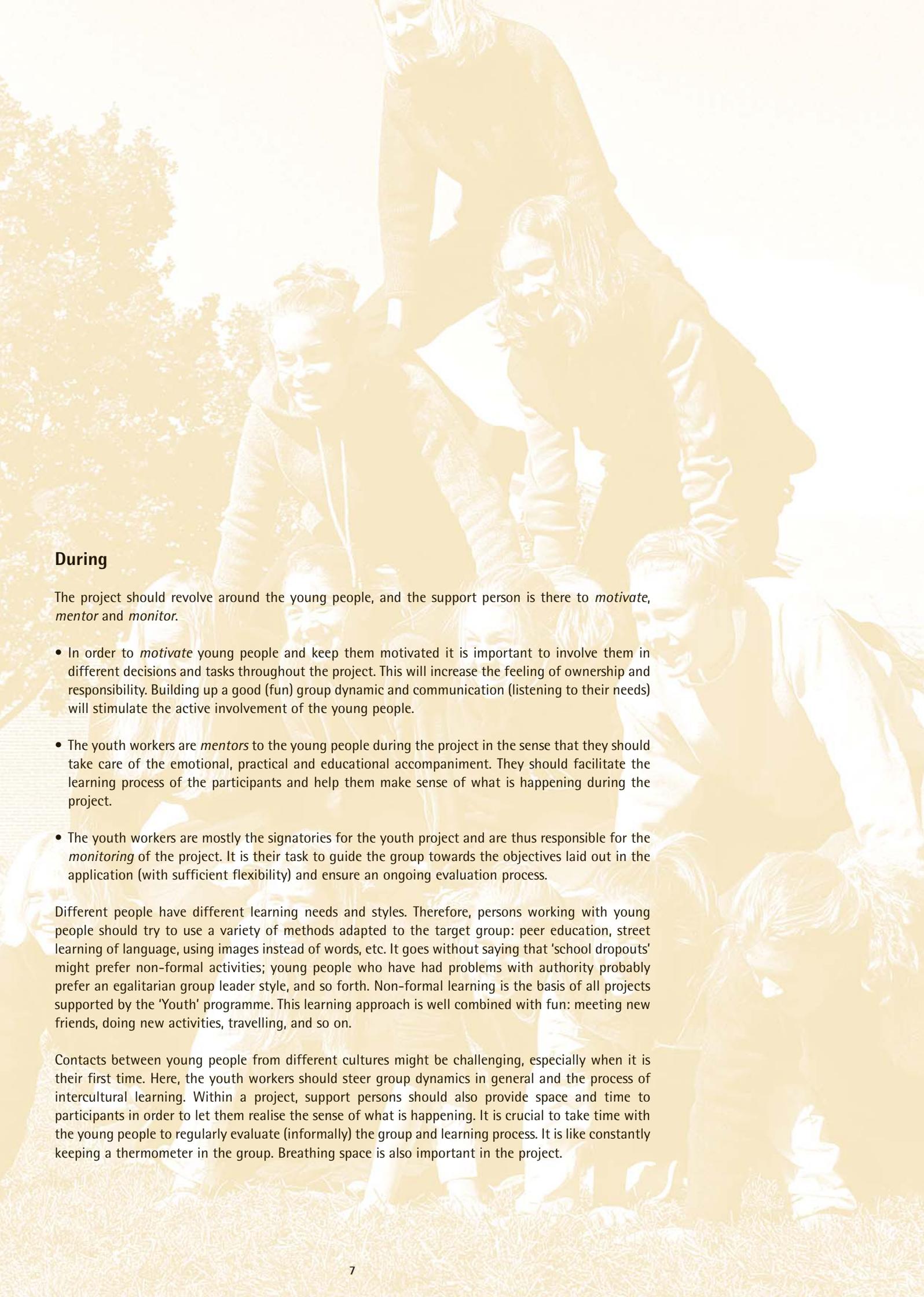
Before

Especially when working with young people with fewer opportunities, the role of the 'support person' already becomes crucial within the preparation period. If the young people are not experienced in identifying an interesting topic to work on themselves, the 'support person' is important in facilitating the process of finding a theme and in adapting it to the participants in an interesting, motivating way. The 'support person' also needs to expand possibilities to young people so that they can better receive information about and access to projects supported by the 'Youth' programme.

Young people with fewer opportunities do not live on an island. They are in contact with different people and different institutions, and these links might be all the more important because of the vulnerable situation of the young persons. Thus, before starting this adventure of an international 'Youth' project, it would be wise to include the people and institutions around the persons targeted in your work.

(1)
The 'support person' is the person taking responsibility for the process (involving the young people) and for the product (reaching aims) during the project. This can be a youth worker, teacher, educator, social worker, etc.

When preparing for youth projects and especially for inclusion projects, it is important to carry out a risk assessment. Find out where the problems or challenges for your project or participants could lie, and have a brainstorm to find solutions together with your international partners and the young people in question. This way 'unforeseen circumstances' could become foreseen.



During

The project should revolve around the young people, and the support person is there to *motivate, mentor and monitor*.

- In order to *motivate* young people and keep them motivated it is important to involve them in different decisions and tasks throughout the project. This will increase the feeling of ownership and responsibility. Building up a good (fun) group dynamic and communication (listening to their needs) will stimulate the active involvement of the young people.
- The youth workers are *mentors* to the young people during the project in the sense that they should take care of the emotional, practical and educational accompaniment. They should facilitate the learning process of the participants and help them make sense of what is happening during the project.
- The youth workers are mostly the signatories for the youth project and are thus responsible for the *monitoring* of the project. It is their task to guide the group towards the objectives laid out in the application (with sufficient flexibility) and ensure an ongoing evaluation process.

Different people have different learning needs and styles. Therefore, persons working with young people should try to use a variety of methods adapted to the target group: peer education, street learning of language, using images instead of words, etc. It goes without saying that 'school dropouts' might prefer non-formal activities; young people who have had problems with authority probably prefer an egalitarian group leader style, and so forth. Non-formal learning is the basis of all projects supported by the 'Youth' programme. This learning approach is well combined with fun: meeting new friends, doing new activities, travelling, and so on.

Contacts between young people from different cultures might be challenging, especially when it is their first time. Here, the youth workers should steer group dynamics in general and the process of intercultural learning. Within a project, support persons should also provide space and time to participants in order to let them realise the sense of what is happening. It is crucial to take time with the young people to regularly evaluate (informally) the group and learning process. It is like constantly keeping a thermometer in the group. Breathing space is also important in the project.

After

When having gone through many experiences and changes, it is important to realise that other people, who were not involved in the project, did not go through this process. Therefore, it is necessary that the youth worker does prepare the young people mentally for going back. Work should be done on how to integrate the achievements from the projects into their day-to-day lives in order to prevent the young people from lapsing back into their old routine.

A youth project does not stop when it finishes, but, as we said above, it should be planned as a step in the longer-term development of the young people towards a better life. At the end of a project the support person should continue his efforts and availability towards the young people. He should support them in their continuing development and make the results of this youth project last and lead onto something new: maybe another more challenging youth project in which they take on more responsibility, maybe further education in the topic of the exchange, for example.

Challenges

Most of the principles in the previous parts could be true for most 'Youth' projects. Still, there are some extra challenges when dealing with young people with fewer opportunities.

- The target group that we are talking about generally has a less stable life-style. Things can change more quickly for young people with fewer opportunities because of the risks that they are exposed to. Long-term planning might not be very realistic. This implies that the persons wanting to set up these projects could be confronted with lots of changes in wants and needs of the young people targeted or that some of them even drop out. Therefore, a lot of flexibility and persistence are required from the young people themselves.
- But even though support persons play an important role in making a 'Youth' project reality, one of the big challenges of working with this target group is not to take over. The project should still be planned and carried out *with, for* and *by* the young people. A big risk is that youth workers may lose their patience and quickly organise the project themselves, without the involvement of young people, who will then just consume the finished product. The challenge is to empower young people and give them enough support so that they are participating actively throughout the project. As they say: 'A good leader is the one who makes himself not needed anymore'.

These reflections and suggestions sketch some needs and challenges you might be faced with when setting up an international 'Youth' project. Hopefully, this can serve as a vaccination against some of the complications that could be experienced in 'Youth' projects. Most of all we hope it can encourage you to work with young people with fewer opportunities. But there is a lot more space to learn from your own practice. If you want to – *go* for it!

Examples of good projects

→ Including *all* through promoting social integration

- **Marking a track — making his way**
DEFINING AN AREA OF WORK
EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE — THE ROLE OF ACTION 2 FOR INCLUDING *ALL*
- **Saturday night — will be all right!**
THE 'YOUTH' PROGRAMME AND ITS STRATEGY FOR INCLUSION
- **Sweet solidarity**

→ Including *all* through supporting non-formal learning

- **Building a bridge**
YOUTH FOR EUROPE — THE ROLE OF ACTION 1 FOR INCLUDING *ALL*
NON-FORMAL LEARNING
- **Me and I**

→ Including *all* through enabling volunteering

- **What it meant to me — Alessandro**
- **What it meant to me — Liselotte**
- **Zoom in ... open up!**
- **What it meant to us — The Somerset experience**
YOUTH INITIATIVES — THE ROLE OF ACTION 3 FOR INCLUDING *ALL*
PRACTICAL TOOLS

→ Including *all* through expressing creativity

- **A common stage — a common play**
- **Music in my life, music is my life**
WORKING ON THEMATIC PRIORITIES

→ Including *all* through encouraging intercultural dialogue

- **Where is Africa?**
- **Preparing the grounds for cooperation**
SUPPORT MEASURES — THE ROLE OF ACTION 5 FOR INCLUDING *ALL*



Marking a track — making his way

Project type:

Action 2
European Voluntary Service

Project dates:

September to October 2001
(one month)

Contact:

National Agency
for the 'Youth' programme,
Sweden

Anton is a young person who has been lacking inspiration and self-confidence in his life. The volunteer comes from a rural suburb area in northern Sweden, where international experience among young people is quite rare and unemployment is high. After a teenaged period with drugs, criminality and the borstal institution, Anton managed to finish compulsory school and had since then been working on and off in a pizza restaurant while many of his friends ended up in prison. The European Voluntary Service project was a chance for him to get out of his usual environment and see something different.

The target group for this project was mainly young people in socially difficult circumstances. During the first week the volunteer took part in outdoor training where team-building was used to make the volunteers focus on personal development, strengths and weaknesses. The aim was to slowly build up their self-confidence and make them function as a group.

From the beginning of September, Anton lived for a month in the small mountain village of Kryoneri on Peloponnesos, a couple of hours by car from Athens. Together with other volunteers from Italy, France, Poland and Portugal he was clearing old tracks and marking hiking tracks in a nature area outside the village. The most valuable experience part was not the work itself, but the people Anton met and the culture he saw. It is an opportunity he recommends every young person to take.

Anton's sending organisation, Urkraft, will hopefully start hosting volunteers soon, as a way to continue and inspire young people in the local community to get international experience and a different perspective on life. 'It's so incredibly valuable to have an international experience, whether it's one week in a youth exchange or one year as a volunteer', says Susanne Marklund, one of Anton's mentors in Sweden. Urkraft is working in line with the intentions of the EU: shorter stays abroad such as youth exchanges or a short-term voluntary service should make young people want to leave for longer adventures.

One could say that Anton did not only mark hiking tracks, he is also marking his own life track. His time in Greece made him want more and he wants to go out again. Primarily he wants to try to get a job abroad. But if that does not work out, he would love to go as a volunteer for six months. Since he has already been a short-term volunteer he has priority for a new position. 'It would have been harder to leave if I hadn't already been away once. You get more confident after having been there', he states afterwards.

The 'Youth' programme is implemented through National Agencies in 31 different European countries and is also open to certain other countries in the world. It would be impossible to find an exhaustive definition of the inclusion target group, which would be shared by all and which reflects the different national realities properly. However, it was found that the term 'disadvantaged' was too stigmatising and not sufficiently pointing at the obstacles that prevent many young Europeans from participating in transnational mobility and active citizenship. That is why the term 'young people with fewer opportunities' was introduced to define the target group of the inclusion efforts of the 'Youth' programme.

Within the 'Youth programme one has to make sure that this common definition is respected, because once there is an inclusion project, it has a priority to receive additional funding to cover exceptional costs. At the same time, the European Commission is far from trying to 'harmonise' the understanding of obstacles in the different countries. Socioeconomic obstacles in Romania would be different from what is understood as socioeconomic obstacles in France because the national, regional and local contexts are different. Therefore, the Commission did not want to set up indicators to measure these obstacles, but rather to monitor the understanding of the different obstacles and intervene once there is a risk of incoherence with the legal basis, the Programme and the Inclusion Strategy. In addition, guidelines for the implementation of the Strategy for Inclusion have been set up.

Young people with fewer opportunities could for example be:
 young persons who have been unemployed for a long time, ex-criminal offenders, people in a precarious personal or family situation, early school leavers, mentally or physically disabled people, youngsters from problematic or isolated rural or urban zones, young immigrants or persons from an ethnic or national minority, and so on.

When submitting a project application, the applicant (organisation or young person) is requested to provide information about why the project could be considered as an inclusion project with young people with fewer opportunities and which kind of special needs would justify greater flexibility and a higher grant amount.

For detailed information on the interpretation of the above educational, socioeconomic, geographic, physical, mental or cultural obstacles please contact your National Agency.

EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE – THE ROLE OF ACTION 2 FOR INCLUDING ALL

Short-term or long-term voluntary service, individual or group voluntary service – the European Voluntary Service (EVS) offers a broad range of possibilities to young people with fewer opportunities.

In the EVS there should always be a balance of service and learning, meaning that the young volunteers do not only offer their service and creativity to local communities and organisations, but that they also learn something from their voluntary service project. A structured training and support framework therefore accompanies every EVS project. Accommodation and food, insurance and travel costs are provided for. For young people with fewer opportunities it is particularly important that sending and hosting organisations provide a tailor-made support for the volunteer before, during and after the project. Especially short-term EVS projects between three weeks and six months facilitate the access of this target group to this action.

The age range in the EVS is normally 18 to 25 years old, but this is handled in a flexible way for young people with fewer opportunities: also those who are over 25 (but still 'young') can become a volunteer. Exceptional costs are granted for the special needs of the volunteers with fewer opportunities. The nature of the special needs should be explained in detail in the application form. Every volunteer is entitled to receive a certificate after completion of the EVS project. An Internet database provides an overview of several thousands of potential host projects at www.sosforevs.org or <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/Youth.html>.

For further information on the EVS please contact your National Agency or the SOS volunteer helpdesk at volunteers@socleoYouth.be or tel. (32-2) 233 02 99.



le p'tit car du samedi soir



Saturday night — will be all right!

Project type:
Action 3
Group Initiative

Project dates:
January to April 2003

Contact:
National Agency
for the 'Youth' programme,
France

Mathilde, Amélie, Mathieu, Olivier, Alexandre and Etienne did not want to sit around and wait for things to happen where they live – they wanted to do something themselves. They are part of the 'Association Jeunesse Rurale pour la Vie sur la Terre', an association working for the interests of youth in rural areas and they are all people between 18 and 21 years. Already in 2000, they had organised a forum to make young people aware of the danger of traffic as a result of speeding, drinking and driving and so on in their area of Brittany in France.

A meeting was held with the mayors of the three communes concerned (Saint Sauveur, Saint Hilaire and Romagné) to get their support, as well as with the parents of young people in the area. Finally, 11 activities were organised for the youngsters in the region. They were invited to go to see theatre plays and other performances, to go on astronomy outings, to watch laser shows, go skating and much more. As all the practical preparations were foreseen, the young people only had to sign up in order to participate – hoping that 'Saturday night will be all right'.

'We wanted to do something that was linked to the previous project – but this time by focusing on the access to spare time activities of young people in the region', they say.

Having access to varied and interesting activities is not always obvious for 16 year olds that are living in a rural area. At the same time they might have specific interests when it comes to what they want to do. Therefore, the six youngsters organising the project, carried out an inquiry to find out about the wishes and expectations of 150 young people concerning spare time activities. From the answers they received, they were able to list the activities that were seen as interesting by the youngsters – and also how much money they would be willing to spend in order to do an activity.



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THE YOUTH PROGRAMME AND ITS STRATEGY FOR INCLUSION

To give young people with fewer opportunities access to mobility activities in the field of non-formal learning is a main goal for the European Commission. The 'Inclusion strategy for young people with fewer opportunities into the 'Youth' programme' (Strategy for Inclusion) was set up and adopted in 2001 in order to reach this goal. The general aim of this strategy is to establish a common approach and commitment among all National Agencies. The Strategy identifies the following areas for action:

1. to raise awareness and motivation among all relevant actors about the possibilities available within the 'Youth' programme and to establish networks of resource people and experts as a pre-condition for the successful implementation of the strategy;
2. to identify action-related activities aimed at increasing the quality of exchange projects, voluntary service projects and youth initiatives involving young people with fewer opportunities;
3. to develop further the existing training possibilities for youth and social workers;
4. to identify efficient ways to inform about the programme;
5. to improve monitoring and evaluation of inclusion-related activities with a focus on quality and statistics;
6. to establish ways of distribution of good practices.

Social inclusion is guaranteed:

1. when people can fully participate in economic, social and civil life;
2. when people's access to income and other resources (personal, family and cultural) is sufficient to enable them to enjoy a standard of living and quality of life that is regarded as acceptable by the society in which they live;
3. when they fully access their fundamental rights.

The European Commission is carefully monitoring the implementation of the Inclusion Strategy. It reviews the achievements and challenges of the Strategy, and makes the necessary adaptations to ensure a maximum of accessibility for all young people.

Particularly successful in terms of reaching out to young people with fewer opportunities were Youth Exchange projects and so-called Youth Initiatives. The inclusion share in these project types varies between 25 and 70 % of all projects, depending on the country. Last but not least, it is worthwhile mentioning the very important role of the personnel working in the National Agencies for the 'Youth' programme. Without their efforts in providing information, guidance and support to applicants, 'inclusion into the 'Youth' programme' would have remained an empty phrase.



Sweet solidarity

Project type:
Action 3
Group Initiative

Project dates:
1 April 2001 to 30 March 2002

Contact:
National Agency
for the 'Youth' programme,
Spain

Mabel, Aquilino, Ivan, Nela and Isidro were amongst several homeless and unemployed people that had experienced many difficulties in life. The young people wanted to replace their feeling of exclusion and emptiness, with a meaningful experience. Their aim was to learn how to make traditional sweets and pastries. Through this project the young people learned a profession, and at the same time they discovered the traditions and the history of their own region, Huelva in Spain.

Before carrying out the actual production of sweets, a lot of preparation had to be done. They had to repair the house to work in, and then hygiene restrictions and other working conditions had to be checked and approved. The group learned what was necessary to know concerning the treatment of food and what precautions had to be taken when working with it.

The young people interviewed a retired baker and in this way they learned about the profession and also they got the recipes that they needed. In historical archives they found background material, important dates and they discovered the mentioning of the 'sweet specialities' in old tales, songs and poems. 'After all this research we became more and more sure of the importance of this project', the participants say. However, the pastries could not be made without having the right tools and machines, tools that no longer exist. Therefore, the young people had to overcome one more obstacle – by making the tools that were needed themselves. With helpful assistance from Antonio and José, useful support persons, they managed to get everything ready to start production.

In the surrounding area, expectations were becoming higher and higher. People that were visiting, made sure to taste cookies at the same time; cookies that everybody thought were gone for ever. At last everybody was able to taste the delicious sweets at a series of fairs where the 'Sweet solidarity' products were presented to the public. Here, the group were able to prove the results of months of hard work and learning.

The evaluation says that the work was done in a 'family-like' atmosphere and the relationships among the young people became closer and stronger during the work. The project taught them a lot about getting by giving. 'This project was much more enriching than we had ever expected – not only because of the activities that were generated but just as much for the personal relations that were built', they say. They could feel how local society gradually opened up more and more towards their group and their project. They discovered that they were able to solve problems and overcome obstacles. 'We had faced so many difficulties earlier in our lives that discouraged us and our view of life. Therefore, this project became a kind of therapy to us. We have worked a lot and learned a profession – and our surroundings have accepted us.'

Building a bridge

Märt from Estonia was on probation supervision, Erik from Denmark had some behavioural problems and Janez from Slovenia did not have any special problems at all. The three of them met through a 'Youth' project to learn from each other. The groups that they were members of met in Falken in Denmark. Each group had internally members with similar problems, and mixing groups of different abilities, backgrounds and cultures created especially good potential for learning.

The aim of the project was to increase the participants' inner resources like creativity, self-competence, responsibility and so on. The symbol of the exchange – a bridge – represented the idea that building the bridge between people starts with individuals.

All groups prepared themselves thoroughly before the exchange. The preparation phase for the project was very important, and a learning process in itself. The Estonian group worked together to gain teamwork skills, and through e-mailing with groups from other countries they practised their language skills. The language skills they had gained were also mentioned in the evaluation as one of the things they had learned from the project – alongside organisational skills, ability to cooperate and being able to identify inner resources like independence and creativity.

None of the youngsters involved in the project has committed new crimes after the youth exchange. The project results have been spread widely in the fields of probation and social work in Estonia. It is one good example that shows that young people that have little hope and trust among people, are interested and able to run qualitative international youth projects and use these very valuable experiences to stimulate further positive development.

Project type:

Action 1
Youth Exchange

Project dates:

23 July to 1 August 2001

Partner countries involved:

Estonia, Denmark and Slovenia

Contact:

National Agency
for the 'Youth' programme,
Estonia



Dear Abbie,
Feeling tired after a well kept youth exchange
had the chance to meet a lot of new people,
and at the same time to experience
that differences are many,
that they should be respected, but also that
it is ok to choose after your own well being.
Hope to have built a bridge strong enough,
but unfortunately the differences
between some will be too big.

Denmark

YOUTH FOR EUROPE – THE ROLE OF ACTION 1 FOR INCLUDING ALL

Inside and outside the European Union, Youth for Europe provides possibilities where groups of young people from different cultural backgrounds can come together. The young people taking part in the exchange are normally 15 to 25 years old.

Exchanges between Programme countries can be bilateral, trilateral or multilateral. Bilateral exchanges are intended for young people with special needs and fewer opportunities.

Parameters for these target groups are, for example, social, economic, geographical or cultural aspects. Other parameters are physical or mental disability. Taking part in this type of project enables them to experience other social and cultural situations, to establish contacts and make friends and to get an idea of what intercultural learning means. This has an impact on the young people themselves, their associations' activities and the local communities, as it introduces them to new perspectives on familiar issues (histories, perceptions of identities, etc.). These projects are done in cooperation with 'Street Workers' organisations, youth club federations and associations involving immigrant or disabled youth.

For further information on youth exchanges, please contact your National Agency and have a look at the web site under:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/Youth.html>

The 'Youth' programme provides 'non-formal learning opportunities'. What does this mean?

Non-formal learning refers to a specific educational concept. It provides a different way of learning from the traditional formal learning method, which is still delivered in most schools and vocational training sites. However, they use more and more non-formal learning approaches. Non-formal learning is a learning method which is centred on the learner as opposed to the subject or course books. It uses many interactive methods where the learner can actively participate in building up his knowledge and skills as opposed to passively receiving information. The learner learns by doing and experimenting which brings the learning closer to his reality, as opposed to hearing and reading.

The European Commission defines non-formal learning as follows:

Non-formal learning is learning that is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. It is, however, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning supports). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective.

The persons planning the learning process provide stimulating situations from which the learner can acquire new insights and knowledge. They also facilitate and optimise the learning through questioning. Non-formal learning focuses not only on the product, the outcome of a learning process. It is an open learning process, where the relationship between learner and facilitator is one of equality. The learner has the right to make mistakes and the way the learning happens is more important than its results. In a non-formal learning situation between adults and young persons as well as in peer teaching, the young learners should receive the opportunity to help steer the learning according to their needs.

Usually, non-formal learning is situated in the free-time or leisure sphere. This gives it a non-compulsory character, and the young people participate more voluntarily. There is no preset curriculum, which at the end needs to be tested to obtain a diploma; however, non-formal learning should be planned. Personal and skills development can also be measured, documented and recognised.

Me and I

Information technology is important in today's society, and it is often taken for granted that all people have equal and good access to these tools. Reality is not always like this; many people do not have access to information technology. The project 'Moi-Je' ('Me-I') wanted to fight this inequality and unbalanced access. Through different tools and an original approach, 52 young people were given the opportunity to work with the Internet. The young people were mostly immigrants coming from less-privileged areas of Brussels, and being part of programmes for social and professional integration.

The youngsters were using web-designing tools to make their own portrait in the shape of a mini-web site that was put on a bigger web site. The youth workers that were responsible for the project were assisted by experts in informatics in order to use these tools in a creative and pedagogic way. To help both the young people and the youth workers to have an open mind to the activities that were foreseen in this project, a pedagogical scenario was developed. Likewise, special software making web design easier, more accessible and more fun was available.

The concrete result of the project was the creation of a site called 'Moi-Je', the production of a CD as well as a film lasting 15 minutes, which can be downloaded from the site. When being asked whether friends or/and family had seen their site, the young people all said 'yes'. They also said that the ones having visited their site found it good. 'Friends of mine have even visited the site regularly in order to see the last updates – just like they log on to any other web site', says one of the participants.

At the end of the project a sense of ownership of the project had been developed among the participants and the scepticism shown at the beginning had disappeared. The young people and the partners in this project felt empowered through personal growth, increased self-confidence and new competencies. They therefore decided to make other European groups benefit from their experiences. A project was started in June 2002 to last for a year, involving networking between Polish, Romanian, French and Belgian youngsters. This shows that through a youth project local action can contribute to the European dimension and reality.

Project type:

Action 3
Group Initiative

Project dates:

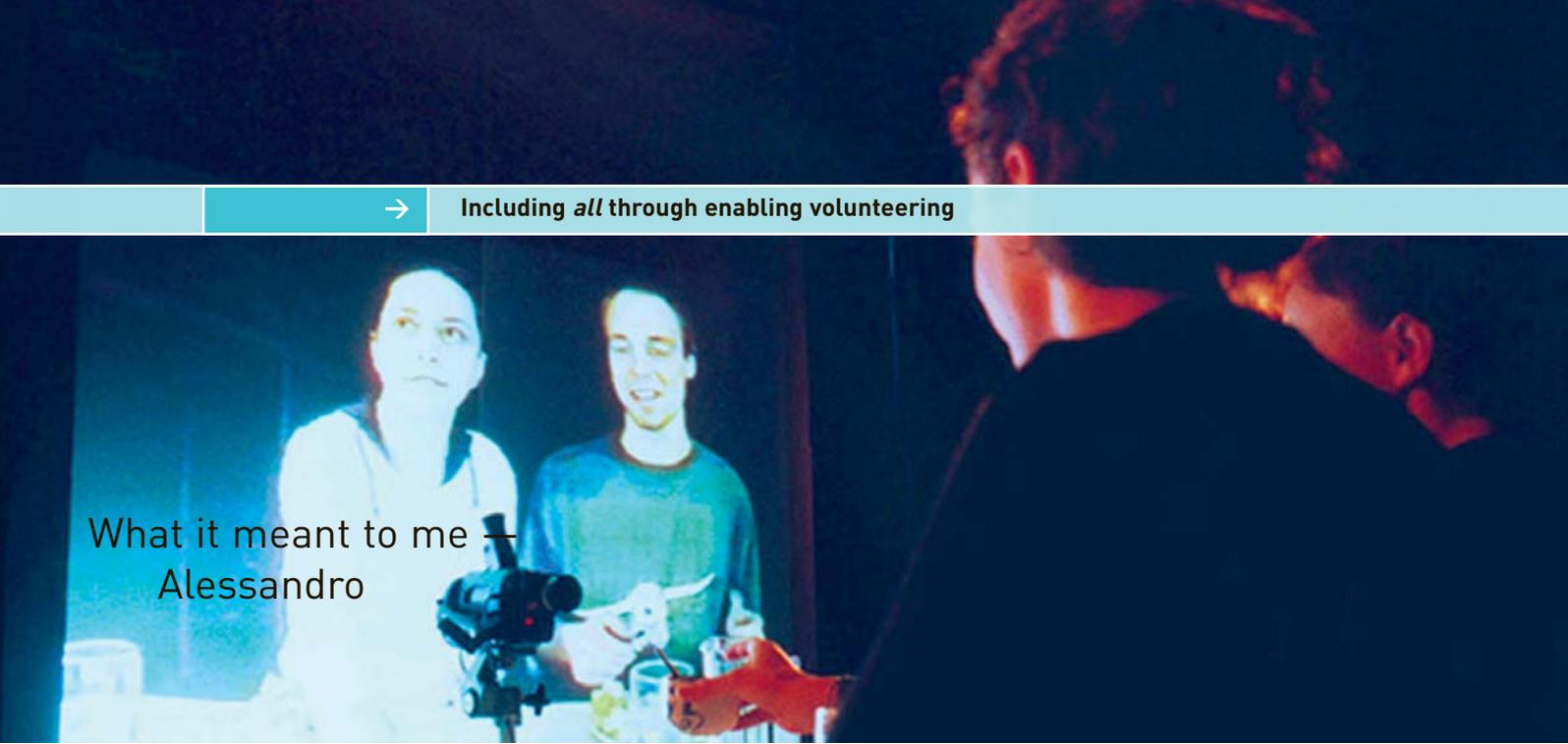
1 July 2001 to 30 June 2002

Contact:

BIJ – National Agency
for the 'Youth' programme,
Belgium

Project web site:

<http://www.moi-je.be>



What it meant to me — Alessandro

Project type:

Action 2
European Voluntary Service

Project:

Artist's experiences

Project dates:

February to July 2000

Sending organisation:

Pépinières européennes
pour jeunes artistes
9/11, rue Paul Leplat
BP 13
F-78164 Marly-le-Roi Cedex

Tel. (33) 139 17 11 00

Fax (33) 139 17 11 09

E-mail: info@art4eu.net

Website: www.art4eu.net

Alessandro, a young artist from Italy — using video as artistic expression — went to work within the Terra Nova Cultural Centre in Copenhagen. Through his project he worked with the people living in this neighbourhood — for a great part immigrants, isolated people and homeless people.

He says: 'Everything in my experience was very positive. Looking back I realise that I have become surer of myself, more confident and more open to other people. I have learned to accept other realities through the exchange of ideas — which was the basis of my work. This experience has influenced my prospects.'

While being a volunteer, the social perspective became more and more obvious and visible. In sum, I think that it is important to 'leave home', to go to another country to know different ways of working and different working worlds. This way, I have realised that I very much like to work with people that are very different from myself. I also think that being confronted with others is necessary in order to develop new ideas. This is the source of inspiration for a project like mine — 'Terra Nova — Artists in context — Artists against exclusion.'

Alessandro's project

Alessandro was seeing a lot of solitude around him and therefore the theme of the project was the table — a symbol of meetings and exchange. Alessandro would each time invite two unknown persons that he had met in the street to enjoy a meal that he had prepared for them. While enjoying the meal they would 'virtually meet' two others through a film being shown opposite to them. The persons on the screen had some hours before enjoyed a meal prepared by Alessandro while being filmed. The two guests would discuss the meal they were enjoying, but just as much they would be interested in hearing the reactions of the couple on the screen in front of them, trying to see what they had been served. They tried to make an impossible dialogue with the former guests. Two hundred people were invited to meals like this. This way a net was woven between people in the neighbourhood, they would recognise each other in the street and sometimes follow up on the conversations they had heard and seen through Alessandro's chain of video meetings.

'Les Pépinières européennes pour jeunes artistes' started the project 'Artists in context — Artists against exclusion' already in 1998 within the frame of the EVS at that time. Since then, around 40 young project creators have made arts projects with a strong link to a less privileged social and human context. Young generations of artists are accompanied and promoted to create new ways of expressing themselves in reinventing the place of the artist in his relation to others.

What it meant to me — Liselotte

The impact cannot be measured immediately after an EVS project. It is a process, but there is no doubt, many volunteers have been given the opportunity to make a new start in their life. Here is the story of a young Danish woman, Liselotte, who volunteered six months in a social project ('Maison du Citoyen') in Lyons, France in 2000.

'On 1 May 2000, I took a decisive step into the unknown. Life in Denmark had developed into a 'one step forward and two steps back' project. After a long period of unemployment I heard about Kulturgyngen. Here, I started as a bartender. That led me to further jobs at other cafés and restaurants. Because of unsatisfactory working conditions, I more than once returned to Kulturgyngen where I, due to an exchange student, got the courage to participate in the ENVOL project.

On 1 May 2000, I stand on foreign ground, more likely the 'House of Citizens' in Villeurbanne, Lyons. Here, the holidays are being celebrated and that gives time to get to know the city and for a nice welcome in the new group of friends. First day of work closes up and everyday life begins: French classes, working at the 'Maison du Citoyen' and experiences in the new group of friends, hard and overwhelming, but good. The great turnaround and the many demands, where finding the bus on my own is a challenge, touch an unknown energy and strength in me. The feeling becomes a daily fight for 'survival'. I discover myself as very initiating according to my own needs and demands. I accomplish to shape my own everyday life in a foreign world.

Life in Denmark, which earlier led to feelings of defeat and where little things led to worrying, now became, in a new connection, challenges, which had to be resolved — and so they were. I did have the 'excuse' towards others and myself that if things weren't going like a warm knife through butter, it was because I was 'handicapped' by the circumstances. It gave me the feeling of freedom — a starting point to let the energies and myself loose. The unknown power has now today given me a strong backbone and led me to take a school exam, with a desire of an education as a chemist's assistant... maybe with a work placement in France. And by looking in the journal from the time in Villeurbanne I must say: Well, I guess I was kind of happy...'

The project ENVOL Plus

ENVOL is a network of partners supporting young people with a less-privileged background (e.g. homeless people, early school leavers, the unemployed, migrants, etc.) in the European Voluntary Service. Network partners can be local, regional and national organisations. Envol aims at the personal development of young individuals who need additional support and have little or no access to mobility programmes. Envol began in 1996 as a pilot flagship project of the European Commission. Between 1997 and 2003, Envol sent about 180 young people for an average of six months. The project ENVOL Plus started in July 2001 for two years, involving 16 local partners from seven countries (Denmark, Germany, France, Ireland, Italy, Norway and the United Kingdom).

Project type:

Action 2
European Voluntary Service

Project dates:

2001-02

Contact:

ENVOL — www.envol.de
or the Youth Unit,
European Commission



Including *all* through enabling volunteering



Zoom in...open up!

Project type:
Action 2
European Voluntary Service

Project dates:
7 to 21 January 2003

Contact:
National Agency
for the 'Youth' programme,
Luxembourg

Khadija, Zara, Paulo, Mickael and Johan come from different social and cultural backgrounds, but had in common that they were unemployed and between 19 and 20 years old. During January 2003, they travelled from France to be volunteers in Luxembourg, where they participated in the making of a video on intercultural understanding.

The host organisation of the project was the youth house of Pétange, whose aim is to work with and for young people. The video that the five young people were making should especially target the youngsters that are using this house and its services. The hope was that people involved in the project could open up to new horizons and other young people.

When the future film-makers came together they started a training course on how to work on videos. This training included the different parts of such a creative process, the creation of a video project, the filming itself and also the cutting of the film. Training was also given on intercultural living and learning. After this, the team of five were ready to go ahead with the making of their film. Together they decided that the main theme of the film should be racism, and with this in mind they collected their material. The result became a film containing interviews and sketches that all together illustrate racism and the need for intercultural understanding.

Even though the making of the video itself was the main task, an important part was also to show the result. The video was finally shown in the youth house, and the young video producers, the youth house youngsters and the board of the youth house of Pétange were present. In addition to this, the Minister for Family, Social Solidarity and Youth Affairs came to see the film, alongside other representatives of local and national authorities responsible for youth affairs.

The results of the project went further than this, as the project was also presented in the media. In a radio interview the project participants expressed that amongst the things that made the strongest impression on them, was the intercultural day. This day was part of the project and it was organised in cooperation with the intercultural centre in Metz. The young people also said that during this day they realised that every individual has their own vision and is looking through their own 'glasses'. 'It is important to remember this, and take it into account in what we do', they said.

Participating in a project can make a difference. One of the project participants has now started to follow a training course in video production, having been inspired by what he learned during this experience.

What it meant to us — The Somerset experience

It is not only the young project participants who are gaining from the projects that are being organised. Here is an example of the experiences of a host organisation who received young volunteers.

'Somerset County Council Social Services Department has been receiving European volunteers since September 1997 and we have been accepting volunteers who need additional support right from the start. Our initial experience was with volunteers who are socially excluded. Since June 2000, we have developed our EVS hosting programme so that we can accept an equal number of long-term volunteers who come to us for six months as short-term volunteers who come on individual projects for between one and six months. Most long-term volunteers are more confident and are expected to work alongside paid staff to help to support short-term volunteers, who tend to be less confident. Short-term volunteers that we receive are all young people with fewer opportunities, which means that they are either socially excluded or disabled, or both. A small minority of the short-term volunteers have subsequently progressed on to long-term placements.

We have four different locations in Somerset, each of them accept a mixture of long-term and short-term volunteers. Yeovil is one of these locations, and there we have a mixed group of EVS volunteers living in shared accommodation, including short-term volunteers who are socially excluded, as well as those who have physical disabilities or impairments. To date we have hosted volunteers who come from ethnic minorities, who come from areas of rural isolation and/or high unemployment, have had mental health problems, have visual impairments or have problems with mobility, though the accommoda-

tion in Yeovil is not equipped for volunteers who are wheelchair users. These volunteers have lived alongside others who are more privileged or who do not have disabilities. This has worked very much to their mutual advantage since volunteers from widely differing backgrounds have been able to compare notes and develop a better understanding of each other's attitudes and cultures. Volunteers who are less confident have been able to derive a great deal of support from the more confident ones.

It has been very helpful for us, as a social services department, to have young adults who are socially excluded or who have disabilities working alongside our paid staff as volunteers. It has helped our staff to develop a much more positive attitude towards the rest of Europe, as well as encouraging them to introduce young adults with similar problems from the local community to the EVS. All in all there has been a great deal of positive integration, which must be very much in tune with EU policy.'



Project type:

Action 2
European Voluntary Service

Contact:

Nigel Engert
Latymer House
Hill Close
Wincanton
Somerset
BA9 9NF
United Kingdom
Tel. (44) 1963 32991
E-mail: nigelengert@hotmail.com

PRACTICAL TOOLS

YOUTH INITIATIVES — THE ROLE OF ACTION 3 FOR INCLUDING *ALL*

Youth Initiatives are projects created and run by a group of people aged between 15 and 25. It is their initiative and creativity that counts.

Here, young people can try out their ideas through their initiatives, which gives them the chance to be directly and actively involved in planning and realising projects in their local community.

Group Initiatives foster active participation of young people with fewer opportunities.

They receive opportunities to form their local environment as it is their daily reality.

Groups of at least four individuals who are legally resident in one of the programme countries can apply for it.

Future Capital projects enable ex-volunteers to pass on the experience and skills acquired during their European voluntary service to the local community and other young people.

As it has to be created and implemented by the volunteer personally it offers a good opportunity to young people with fewer opportunities to continue their personal development.

You will find further information on youth initiatives under

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/Youth.html>, or you can consult your National Agency.

Training kit on social inclusion (T-kit)

Why not make a joint effort instead of doing things separately? This is the idea behind the partnership on training and youth between the European Commission and the Council of Europe. The partnership develops training courses and training kits on different priority topics for the two European institutions, such as citizenship and training for trainers. recently a T-kit was developed on social inclusion, to provide a manual for youth workers and trainers wishing to take on this topic.

The T-kit contains the following:

- the political frame of inclusion within the European institutions;
- a closer look at socially excluded young people;
- inclusive youth work in practice;
- lots of training methods to use when working on inclusion.

You can download the T-kit at the partnership web site: www.training-youth.net

SALTO resources for inclusion

SALTO stands for Support for Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the 'Youth' programme. Eight SALTO resource centres have been created by the European Commission to support the National Agencies and 'Youth' project organisers in their work on European themes, such as social inclusion. The SALTO resource centre in Flanders, Belgium is working on social inclusion and organises several training courses each year to give youth workers the knowledge and skills needed to implement quality inclusion projects within the 'Youth' programme.

SALTO offers the following information

All the inclusion courses from SALTO and from National Agencies are documented in the SALTO toolbox. This online database allows you to look for specific methods, reports, background texts and presentations on the topic of inclusion:

www.salto-youth.net/toolsinclusion/

In the Trainers Online for Youth (TOY) database you can find suggestions of experienced trainers. This can be a valuable resource for setting up your projects:

www.salto-youth.net/inclusiontrainers/.

For more resources on inclusion, you can subscribe to the SALTO Inclusion newsletter www.salto-youth.net/newsletterinclusion/ and SALTO provides a list with links to different sites related to inclusion: www.salto-youth.net/linksinclusion/

For specific questions and requests regarding inclusion, please contact the SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre at inclusion@salto-Youth.net or check www.salto-youth.net/inclusion

A common stage — a common play

The 'My theatre' group consists of 10 young people. All of them work for the Social Welfare Home in Krakow, Poland, helping mentally and physically disabled teenagers. This project aimed at integration of the disabled residents with their non-disabled peers.

Mentally disabled teenagers living in closed institutions have little contact with the outside world, and this creates lack of knowledge and therefore lack of tolerance for people with a disability. The aim of the project was to show that the disabled, both mentally and physically, are not as different as many people think, and that they can and should be active citizens. The second objective was to show the non-disabled teenagers how people with a disability live and to teach them tolerance, acceptance and sensibility to other people.

There were 20 participants in the project. Ten disabled participants were recruited from a social welfare home; the 10 non-disabled participants came from high schools located in the Krakow-Pogorze district. They all participated in theatre workshops conducted twice a week by members of the 'My theatre' group and a professional choreographer. The idea for the theatre workshop came from the disabled residents of the social welfare house themselves, who always showed a considerable interest in therapeutic sessions based on theatre techniques.

The project also included a one-day outing and a one-week trip combined with intensive workshops for the acquaintance and integration of the project participants. The participants prepared a theatre performance based on the book *The Little Prince*, and the workshops were adapted to the mental and physical abilities of each participant. After four months of rehearsals the play was in three professional Krakow theatres. The spectators were people from the neighbourhood and inhabitants of the city of Krakow.

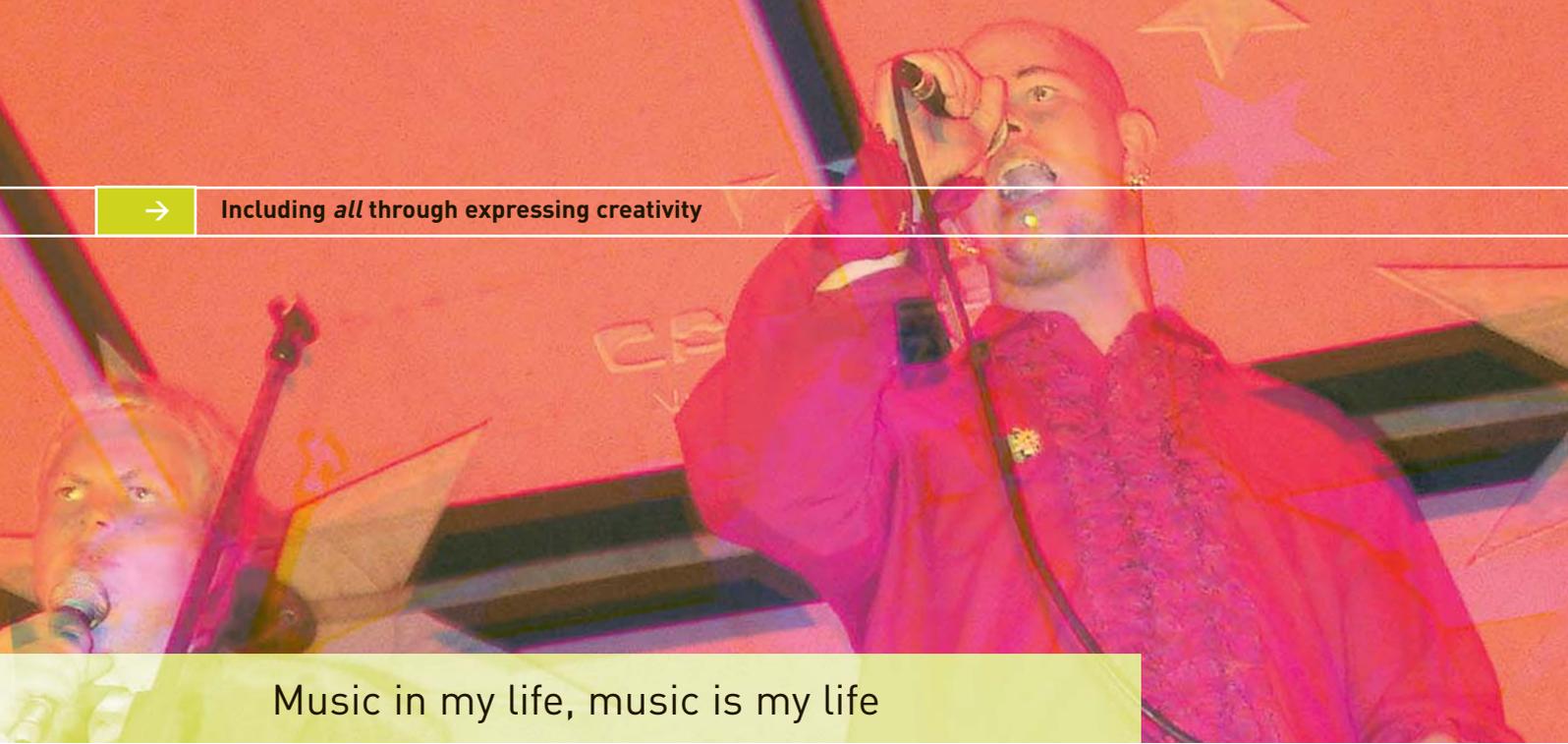
During the six-month-long project, the disabled participants received an opportunity to observe and to have contact with their non-disabled peers in natural situations, which is something they do not normally have a chance to do. The social welfare home workers said that their residents always eagerly awaited the contacts with their peers and appreciated every moment of time they spent together. In the evaluation questionnaire all disabled participants stated that they liked the performance they participated in, and the part they played. Each of them would be happy to take part in a similar event in the future.



Project type:
Action 3
Group Initiative

Project dates:
1 February to 31 July 2002

Contact:
National Agency
for the 'Youth' programme,
Poland



Music in my life, music is my life

Project type:
Action 1
Youth Exchange

Project dates:
11 to 25 July 2002

Contact:
National Agency
for the 'Youth' programme,
Iceland

Music is a language without borders – this has been proved by two bands, where the group members are all physically and mentally handicapped. The bands that all in all had 36 members aged 15 to 25 first met in summer 2001. The Icelandic band, Blikandi stjörnur (Twinkling Stars) went to Germany to meet their partner group, The Rockers. During their stay a CD was recorded and they also played together in public. The youngsters were very interested in the situation of handicapped young people in Europe and they visited work places for handicapped people.

In summer 2002, it was time for the second phase of the project, and now The Rockers visited Iceland. The theme of the project in Iceland was 'Art and culture and European awareness'. The idea was to work further together focusing on the main interest of the two groups... music. The project title was 'Music in my life, music is my life', and it describes well the theme of the project. In Iceland, the youngsters were making a video to go with one of the songs from the CD that they had made together earlier.

They did not only make a video. A big concert, where both The Rockers and Blikandi stjörnur played, was also organised. To discover the Icelandic reality, they visited work places for handicapped people in Reykjavik. This was followed by discussions about the differences between the situation and rights of handicapped people in Iceland and Germany. The youngsters had the opportunity of meeting the mayor of Reykjavik, the president of Iceland and the German ambassador.

The youngsters benefited a great deal from the project and it was a boost for their self-esteem. They became more confident about their skills. 'Now I can do most anything', said one of the participants. The project also gave the youngsters the opportunity to develop their communication skills. Even though nobody was fluent in English, communication was not a problem. This was seen as a challenge, which everybody coped with very well. The project was a great success and the youngsters left with improved self-esteem and great memories of good friends.



Keeping one's eyes open for new possibilities for cooperation and networking is important in many areas, as it is when working on inclusion. Identifying other events and actions focusing on the same themes could open doors for joint forces, new projects and sometimes even added funding.

'2004 – The Year of Education through Sports' having the motto 'Move your body, stretch your mind' is an example of a European Year to take note of for possible projects on inclusion. Especially for young people, sport might be an attractive non-formal learning method to include in activities of the 'Youth' programme. Within the Year of Education through Sports a contribution of the European Commission is foreseen as European volunteers will support major European sports events. For further information: <http://www.eyes-2004.info/> and <http://europa.eu.int/comm/sport/>

The 'European Year of People with Disabilities' in 2003 also showed how a European year could be linked to the 'Youth' programme. This linkage was done in various ways, amongst other things by giving high priority to projects involving young people with disabilities within the different actions of the 'Youth' programme. Another example is the 11th Special Olympic World Games, that was held in Ireland, 20-29 June 2003. During this event 200 young European volunteers, supported by the European Commission, assisted in organising the competition, accompanying the disabled athletes. You can read more about this event on: <http://www.2003specialolympics.com>

For your inspiration, further information about different activities that took place around this theme can be found at the official web page of the European Year of People with Disabilities: www.eypd2003.org.

In this context it is also worth mentioning that :

- The European Commission through the 'Youth' programme, is reinforcing the support to Collective European Voluntary Service projects at the occasion of major events.
- The training and support measures provided by the 'Youth' programme through the SALTO-Centres will at all times be linked to the thematic priorities on a European level, including the European thematic years.



MOVE YOUR BODY
STRETCH YOUR MIND



Where is Africa?

Project type:
Action 1
Youth Exchange

Project time:
3 to 11 August 2002

Partners:
Germany, Belgium

Contact:
National Agency
for the 'Youth' programme,
Germany

People with different backgrounds live next door to each other in most European countries today. In this project an international workshop was organised by a group of young people originally coming from Rwanda, Senegal and Guinea, and now living in Belgium and Germany. The goal with their project was to contribute to the fight against racism and xenophobia through a workshop on tolerance for different cultures.

Many of the participants came to Europe after having gone through difficult and traumatic experiences like war and genocide in their home country. Many of them had to become refugees, but when arriving in an unknown country in Europe, new difficulties such as racism and discrimination were waiting.



Given the multiple backgrounds of the participants, there were numerous learning possibilities and opportunities for intercultural dialogue. They used various interactive methods like role-plays, theatre and sports in their work. On the agenda were themes like prejudices and intercultural communication, colonisation and globalisation as well as the cultural specificity of the two African regions that some of the participants in the project represented.

'We feel empowered after this project. We have reflected on our attitudes and our own behaviour within politics, intercultural dialogue, racism, identity and human rights. We don't want to stop here', the participants say. They are now building on their first project, in preparing a project called 'Young people for a tolerant society – against racism and xenophobia'. The project will take place in several towns in Germany. The goal is to share the experiences that they have gained through their project with other young people.

Preparing the grounds for cooperation

A good preparation of a project is a way to re-assure that the projects that are being planned have a certain quality and success. Such preparatory work can also be financed through the 'Youth' programme. A group of people representing an international association, which promotes the improvement of the quality of life of persons with epilepsy, went to Santiago de Chile in Chile. All together there were seven participants from five countries that participated in the visit.

A youth exchange for young people with epilepsy was planned for some months later and the aim of the visit was to identify requirements for this youth exchange, taking into account their special needs. Therefore, the group visited organisations and institutions dealing with epilepsy and related issues. As it is possible to do exchanges also with Latin America they wanted to identify the countries and youth workers who will participate in the future exchange they were planning.

As the preparatory visit took place at the same time as the first Youth Meeting of Young People with Epilepsy in Chile, the participants had the chance to meet both international and national organisations working in their area of interest. Representatives of the WHO and Unesco (see Glossary, page 30) were also attending this event and therefore it was easier to get in contact with these organisations. Formal meetings were organised, during which participants exchanged their experiences on the reality of epileptic youngsters in the different countries. In addition to this they met a few representatives of organisations involved in working with youngsters suffering from epilepsy.

As the participants had the opportunity to meet Chilean representatives of organisations taking care of epileptic youngsters, they could visit institutions offering courses to this target group. They managed to stay in close contact with the Chilean epileptic youngsters, in order to evaluate their needs and hopes for the future.

The preparatory visit ended with the planification of the exchange, and the participants even had the opportunity to meet one of the leaders of the future youth exchange project. Direct contact with young people in Chile allowed the participants to realise the needs of these youngsters and to evaluate their behaviour. In sum, the participants became familiar with the youngsters' way to live with their 'illness'.

This project is a very good example of the interest in gathering diverse experiences in dealing with specific target groups. Through the visit the participants could compare the situation of epileptic youngsters in their countries. The preparatory visit has strengthened the links between the partners in the project and raised everybody's awareness on the situation of epilepsy in the partner countries. The close contact that was developed during the visit made the preparation of the exchange much easier and there are new ideas for future cooperation. 'This contact will have positive consequences for the cooperation between the participating partners far beyond the planned youth exchange', the participants concluded.

Project type:

Action 5
Preparatory Visit

Activity dates:

10 to 14 January 2002

Partners:

Chile, Germany, Ireland,
Spain, Sweden,
United Kingdom

SUPPORT MEASURES — THE ROLE OF ACTION 5 FOR INCLUDING ALL

The two basic aims of Action 5 are:

- (a) to assist the development of the three major actions of the 'Youth' programme (Youth for Europe, European Voluntary Service and youth initiatives) through the support of training, cooperation and information projects; as well as*
- (b) to contribute to achieving the objectives of the Youth programme and to fostering and strengthening European youth policy.*

The focus is on projects addressing priority themes like inclusion, anti-racism and participation.

Non-profit-making organisations and public authorities experienced in the field of youth and non-formal education, as well as groups of young people who get together to set up a project, can apply under Action 5.

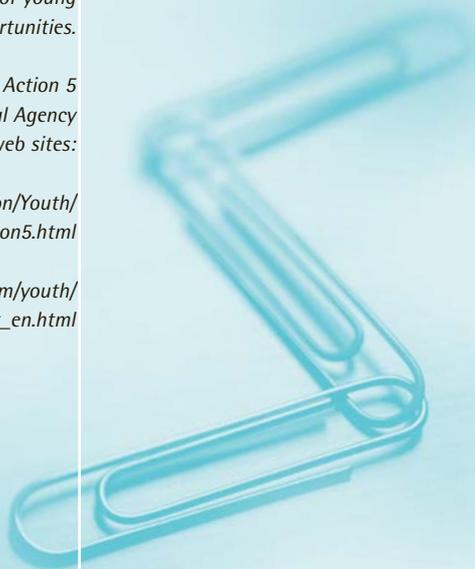
All nine Action 5 activities can refer to inclusion. Activity 9, 'Support for quality and innovation', especially aims at involving young people with fewer opportunities in the 'Youth' programme at national, regional and local levels.

The Commission also regularly publishes calls for large-scale projects which, depending on the yearly priorities, usually aim at improving the active citizenship and participation of young people with fewer opportunities.

For further information on Action 5 please consult your National Agency or have a look at the following web sites:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/Youth/program/guide/action5.html>

http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/call/index_en.html





Conclusion

The future of young people in Europe has become an important political issue in Europe, and considerable work is being done to make it even better reflected in the policy priorities of the EU and of many countries and regions.

Although the education systems in Europe start to include non-formal learning methods, more could still be done to adapt learning facilities to all young people with different backgrounds. We all need to become more sensitive to, and reflect, values, life-styles and expectations of young people.

The 'Youth' programme is an important step in this direction, as it is a part of a broader European concept of youth policy. With their flexible and non-formal learning character, the projects supported by the Programme may have a long-term impact on their participants.

What does this mean for you? Using the 'Youth' programme as a tool offers you opportunities to enlarge your skills and competencies and more than that to empower your initiative and mobility. We hope that the project examples in this brochure have given you inspiration to build on. These examples offer a variety of non-formal learning approaches and illustrate that even local 'Youth' projects can foster active European citizenship of young people. As non-formal learning has the potential to level out social inequalities based on class, region, religion and ethnicity, it becomes a 'language without borders'. In addition to this, the chosen project types can give you an idea about how non-formal and mobility activities supported by the 'Youth' programme may include all young people, especially those with fewer opportunities.

A 'Europe with and for youth' puts emphasis on long-term policy benefits and is open to young people's individualisation and autonomy as well as to specific peer-fashioned youth cultures and life-styles. The changing image of Europe today needs to consider the even more rapidly changing nature of modern youth. Influence this process – contribute with your own inclusion activities!

Glossary and contact list

Some of the terms used are specific to the 'Youth' programme or have a specific meaning in European terms. The following are some basic definitions of terminology:

EFTA/EEA countries – Three countries which are members of the European Free Trade Association and of the European Economic Area: Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway.

Euro-Med – the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Action Programme, which involves the EU Member States and Mediterranean partner countries (See Third Countries).

EVS – European Voluntary Service.

Mediterranean partner countries – the non-EU countries on or near the Mediterranean Sea that are participating in the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Action Programme – See Third countries.

Member States – The countries that are members of the European Union.

National Agencies for the 'Youth' programme – Structures established by the national authorities in each programme country in order to assist the European Commission with management and to assume responsibility for implementation of most of the 'Youth' programme.

National Coordinators – Structures established by the national authorities in each Euro-Med partner country in order to facilitate implementation of the Euro-Med Youth programme II.

Pre-accession (or associated) countries – Countries which have applied for European Union membership and participate fully in all 'Youth' actions: Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey.

Programme countries – EU Member States, EFTA/EEA countries and pre-accession countries. They can participate fully in all youth actions.

Third countries – They can participate in 'Youth' projects under Actions 1, 2 and 5 subject to specific criteria and procedures.

Unesco – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

WHO – World Health Organization, the United Nations specialised agency for health

Young people with fewer opportunities – young people from a less-privileged cultural, geographical or socio-economic background, or with disabilities; better access for them to the activities developed within the 'Youth' programme is a key priority for the European Commission.

Third countries

Mediterranean partner countries	Eastern Europe and Caucasus	South-eastern Europe (SEE)	Latin America
Algeria	Armenia	Albania	Argentina
Egypt	Azerbaijan	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bolivia
Israel	Belarus	Croatia	Brazil
Jordan	Georgia	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)	Chile
Lebanon	Moldova	Serbia and Montenegro	Colombia
Morocco	Russia		Costa Rica
Syria	Ukraine		Cuba
Tunisia			Ecuador
Turkey			Guatemala
West Bank & Gaza Strip			Honduras
			Mexico
			Nicaragua
			Panama
			Paraguay
			Peru
			El Salvador
			Uruguay
			Venezuela

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EN

European Commission

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