



Education and Culture

Youth

International Evaluation Seminar

Feedback on Youth Initiatives

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Final Report

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Preface

This document presents the results of the seminar "Feedback on Youth Initiatives". Its aim is to go beyond a mere report on the activities along the five days of duration of the seminar; it has the ambition to extract conclusions, which might be useful for the decision makers implementing this Action¹ in the future.

The information contained in this document comes from the direct input of the participants. The major work of the reporter has been to place the pieces of the puzzle in a hopefully structured, yet attractive manner. If the final shape results useful, the merit corresponds to the team conceiving the programme of activities, the organisers facilitating the means and the participants contributing to a successful outcome of the event.

The report is organised in six chapters, presenting an analysis and evaluation of the targeted topics. An Introduction preceding the chapters gives an overview of the framework of the seminar: background, participants, methods, programme of activities, organisers and training team.

The structure is conceived to allow a quick overview of the key issues for those readers in need of getting just an insight into Youth Initiatives, and to offer the decision makers a more substantial approach to the reflections on each of the topics. To achieve this, each chapter is clearly delimited:

- The first chapter deals with the **basic frame** for Youth Initiatives from different perspectives, with special attention to the **reasons** why this action exists and **how it is implemented**.
- The second, third and four ones are thematic chapters. They deal with the **benefits** of Youth Initiatives, the **competences** gained by their beneficiaries and how these competences can be applied to real situations in everyday life.
- The fifth chapter presents the **trends in Youth Initiatives**. It collects feedback messages and **recommendations** from the current actors to the future ones.
- The sixth chapter goes into the **evaluation** of the seminar. It focuses on the **impact of Youth Initiatives** and the **quality improvements suggested** by the actors. It also offers a summary of the assessment of the seminar from the perspective of the participants.

In addition, each chapter includes sections of conclusions to drive the reader faster to the relevant points. To facilitate the identification of who is drawing the conclusions, they are organised according to a colour code, particularly useful for those readers accessing the electronic version of the report or a colour printed copy. The meaning of each colour is the following:

Light turquoise is used to collect direct conclusions by the participants. They are presented as they were elaborated, and the only treatment by the reporter has been the transcription into the electronic format. The reader will find this kind of conclusions mainly in the fifth chapter.

¹ Along the report the terms: the Action, Action 3, Youth Initiatives and Youth Initiatives action, will be used indistinctly in order to allow a more fluent reading. They are equivalent.

Light green is used to present the participants' conclusions that are part of broader presentations or that have been grouped, for instance, to compile statistics. They are extracted and adapted to the topic analysed, but have not been further elaborated by the reporter.

Cinnamon is used to present the reporter's conclusions based on a large sample of data, or multiple inputs on a same topic. There are synthetic conclusions aiming at gathering the most relevant elements based on the most repeated opinions, remarks, examples and recommendations of the participants.

Graphic elements like charts and pictures have been used there where the reporter considers that an image can help understanding a concept or visualising an activity, its planning or its outcome. Yet, the report does not intend to provide a visual image of the seminar. For this purpose, a video was recorded and is available at the SALTO Youth Initiative Resource Centre. Further visual material will be also available in the 4th issue of SALTO Youth in Action 3 Magazine.

The pictures in the report have been treated in order to find a balance between a reasonable quality of the images and a reasonable size of the document.

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The reporter wants to thank all those who have contributed to the realisation of the Seminar "Feedback on Youth Initiatives": Patricia, Fatima, and previously Henar, from the SALTO Youth Initiative Resource Centre, Thierry and the logistics and preparation team of the Bureau Jeunesse International, the National Agency of Belgium (FR) and the supporting National Agencies of France, Germany, Poland and the UK.

Thanks as well to Milena, Jochen, Buzzy, Sylvain and Ben, composing the team of trainers, to all the participants, and to the local partners in La Maison des Cultures, in the Association des Jeunes Marocains and in La Fonderie et le Musée Bruxellois de l'Industrie et du Travail, to the video cameraman, Voja, and to the external visitors: Rita from SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, Sarah Rooney and François-Xavier Laffeach from the European Commission, and Martine Lahaye from the Cabinet of the Minister of Youth in the French Speaking Community of Belgium.

Mario Garcia
Reporter of the Seminar "Feedback on Youth Initiatives"
Brussels, 15th September 2006

Introduction

Background

The European YOUTH Programme is coming to an end in 2006. There has been a high number of brilliant projects being carried out by young beneficiaries from the Youth Initiative action all over Europe for the past 6 years.

The seminar 'FEEDBACK on Youth Initiatives' was conceived with the main aim of **evaluating** Youth Initiatives projects and their **impacts**, in order to increase **recognition** and contribute to the **development of quality** Youth Initiatives for the new Youth in Action programme.

A number of specific objectives were identified beforehand, including:

- To **reflect on experiences** and **impacts** at individual, group and local levels
- To identify, value and celebrate **learning outcomes**
- To raise awareness of **transferability** of competences gained
- To highlight the importance of the European dimension, active participation and social inclusion
- To promote international co-operation and partnerships
- To reflect on appropriate tools and resources for effectively **supporting and coaching** Youth Initiatives
- To **explore strategies** to contribute to the **ongoing development** of Youth Initiatives

The programme of activities was designed to achieve these objectives and to support young people in identifying and valorising the skills and competences gained from their projects, in sharing experiences, in getting into close contact and working jointly with other young Europeans having developed similar projects.

Young people contributed to the future development of Youth Initiatives in a common reflection with main actors of Youth Initiatives - i.e. National Agencies' officers and coaches active in Action 3.

Essential outcomes were expected to be useful in terms of further strategy development and for other young beneficiaries at the end of the seminar. The purpose of this report is to collect and present those outcomes.

The participants

The event focused on Youth Initiative projects, therefore the majority of the participants were young ex-beneficiaries of Action 3. In order to have the most accurate picture of Youth Initiatives at the European level and be enriched by different viewpoints from actors being involved in Youth Initiatives at different levels, it was decided to reserve some places for Action 3 officers from National Agencies and some places for 'coaches' active in this action. It was the first time that these three main groups of actors worked together at the same level within the same frame.

Similarly to young beneficiaries, the National Agencies officers and the coaches were considered as participants throughout the whole programme and had the opportunity to enjoy some 'grassroot experience' and to work in cooperation with young people. The sessions were designed in a way that they could contribute and benefit the best.

Annex I contains the list of participants

Methods

The contents of the seminar were based on the principles and practice of **non-formal education**, taking into account the participants needs, motivations and experiences. It is worth to mention that an exhaustive preparation extended over six months. Two preliminary meetings were held to define first and fine tune later the programme of activities that should enable attaining the objectives of the Seminar. Different adaptations were needed, ones motivated by the discussions of the team of trainers in order to improve the outcomes, others based on the final composition of the group of participants.

Communication between participants and **mutual understanding** was encouraged in order to enable the participants to exchange their knowledge and competences and reflect upon them.

The **group was used as a resource** for the learning process, taking into account the participants' individual and group learning.

The **participants' input** was at the very heart of the seminar, since the evaluation of the Youth Initiative projects and the potential learning outcomes / benefits were solely based on the participants' experiences. This report attempts to follow that spirit and to become a vehicle to transmit those inputs.


A **diversity of working methods** was used: workshops, individual and group inputs, simulation exercises, discussions, debate and activities in interaction with the local community, among others.

Programme of Activities

The major challenge before the seminar was to interweave a balanced and interesting set of activities for the three main stakeholders of the Youth Initiatives action: Beneficiaries, Coaches and National Agencies. This was the first time where these three groups met as participants in the same event and great expectations were put on their joint contribution.

The final programme of activities is presented in the next page. Each activity was common to all the participants; yet, in many of them each of the three groups mentioned above played a different role. In the different chapters of the report, you will find some clues on what were the tasks that each group of participants carried out, and how their outcomes were complemented.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

	Saturday 24	Sunday 25	Monday 26	Tuesday 27	Wednesday 28	Thursday 29	Friday 30
							
8.00		Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	
9.00		Introduction to the context and programme of the seminar	'GARDEN' of Youth Initiatives': reflection on quality aspects	'24:00' - LIVE EVENT in Brussels : update & reflexion in teams about the activities to organise	Reflecting on to the 24:00 event: DEBRIEFING	Departure or Optional activities : visit of the city + climbing activity (...)	
		Preparation of the 'DEMONSTRATION' about Youth Initiative projects: identification of benefits	Exploring BENEFITS of the projects in the local community	24:00 MATERIAL and RESOURCE check / proof	Presentation on Recognition. Contribution to the FUTURE of Youth Initiatives (in groups)	Departure	
12.30		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch		
14.00		'Demonstration' about Youth Initiative projects and their benefits': celebration and sharing of experience	'Group TRIANGLE' : Exploring group benefits	24:00 to be continued. 'Ambassadors' meeting'. Reporter's tour.	Concrete OUTCOMES / products to be produced		
		Demonstration about Youth Initiatives: partner-finding activity	The 'CAKE of skills' : Exploring individual competences	24:00 to be continued ACTIVITIES take place in the local surrounding.	Press conference / PRESENTATION of products to institutional guests.		
			IMPACT questionnaire	'SHOW' : outcomes of the 24:00 activities to be presented LIVE!!!	EVALUATION of the seminar. Conclusions and closing		
19.00		Dinner	Dinner	20.30 Dinner in the city	Dinner		
	Getting to know each others Welcome / International evening	Free evening	Starting of the '24:00' - LIVE EVENT in Brussels: contact making, first ideas for projects, presentation of local partners	Free evening	Farewell party		

Organisers and training team

The event was organised by SALTO Youth Initiatives Resource Centre with the cooperation and strong support of the National Agencies from Belgium (FR), France, Germany, Poland and the UK.

Patricia Brulefert and Fatima Laanan from SALTO Youth Initiatives Resource Centre in Brussels, together with Thierry Dufour from Bureau International Jeunesse, organised and coordinated in practice the seminar.



Patricia opening the Seminar

The training team was composed of five European trainers highly experienced in Youth Initiatives and with evaluation expertise:

Bernard Moreau (Belgium - Fr), Buzz Bury (UK), Jochen Butt-Pośnik (Germany), Milena Butt-Pośnik (Poland), Sylvain Abrial (France).

The team was responsible for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the seminar.

The reporter of the seminar was Mario Garcia, former Action 3 project officer in the Spanish National Agency, also with expertise in evaluation.

Chapter 1. Youth Initiatives. Basic Frame

1.1. The institutional view

A quick look at the User's Guide of the YOUTH Programme, allows us to have the European Commission's motivation to support Youth Initiatives. The following bullet point indicate the specific aims of the Action (OA):

- *(OA1) The European Commission aims to support young people's initiative, creativity and active participation.*
- *(OA2) It (the Action) can give young people the chance to try out ideas through initiatives, which give them an opportunity to be directly and actively involved in planning and realising projects (OA3) in their local community.*
- *(OA4) Participation in Youth Initiatives is an important non-formal educational experience.*
- *(OA5) It (the Action) also provides young people with an opportunity to consider themselves as European citizens, as well as with (OA6) the feeling that they are contributing to the construction of Europe.*

Apart of the specific aims of the Action, Youth Initiative projects contribute to a broader frame of objectives (OG), which serve as basis for the YOUTH Programme:

- *(OG1) Facilitating the integration of young people into society at large and (OG2) encouraging the spirit of Initiative.*
- *(OG3) Helping young people acquire knowledge, skills and competencies, and (OG4) recognising the value of such experience.*
- *(OG5) Allowing young people give free expression to their sense of solidarity in Europe and the wider world, as well as (OG6) supporting fight against racism and xenophobia.*
- *(OG7) Promoting a better understanding of the diversity of our common European Culture and shared heritage as well as of our common basic values.*
- *(OG8) Helping to eliminate all forms of discrimination and promoting equality at all levels of society.*
- *(OG9) Introducing a European element into projects, which will have a positive impact on youth work at local level.*

Alongside this report we will drive some conclusions on the achievement of these aims and objectives, based on the work of the participants during the Seminar. Obviously, a full analysis of the achievement of the general objectives of the YOUTH Programme goes beyond the scope of the Seminar. However, the outputs of the different sessions allow distilling remarks on some of these broader objectives.

In the following sections and chapters, the reader will find references in which the aims and objectives have been shortened by the code assigned to them above, in order to avoid repetitions throughout the whole report.

1.2. The participants view

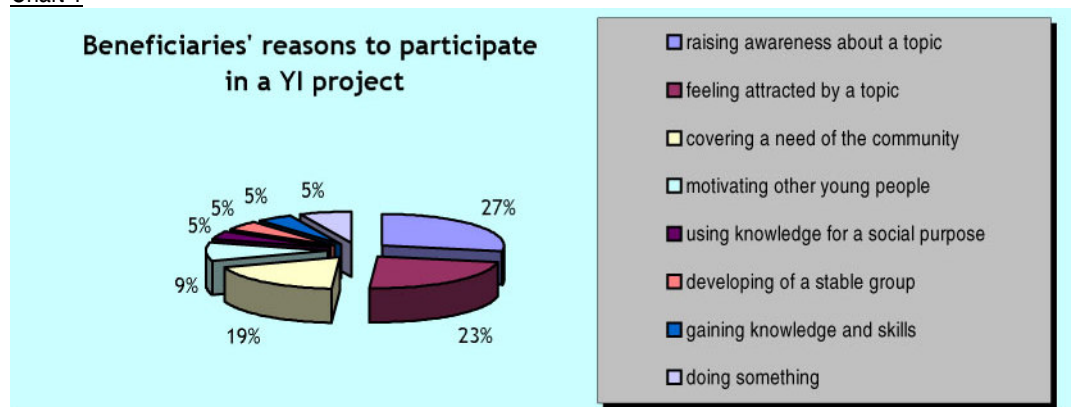
The Seminar "Feedback on Youth Initiatives" sought to get an insight into the reality of this Action. The name itself of the Seminar suggests that the opinions, remarks, recommendations, complaints and acknowledgements of the participants were the outcome pursued.

The workshop named the "Garden of Youth Initiatives" taking place on day 2 offered the participants the possibility to reflect, first at individual level and afterwards at group level, on the different elements of this kind of projects. Three different gardens were designed, one for each of the groups represented: beneficiaries, coaches and National Agencies. One of the "petals" (=key elements) of the "individual flowers" (=personal reflections) for beneficiaries and coaches would tell, "why they were involved in a Youth Initiative project". The outcome of the survey consisting of 38 opinions, in many cases including more than one argument, is presented below as an overview of the motivation leading coaches and beneficiaries to endeavour in a Youth Initiative project.

Group 1. Beneficiaries

The following chart shows the reasons in percentages, which motivated the beneficiaries to get involved in a Youth Initiative project.

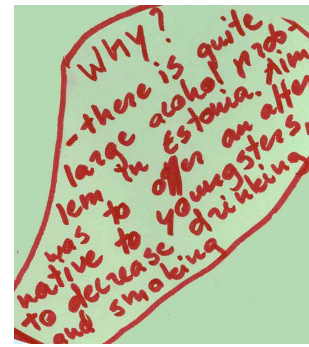
Chart 1



One can observe that the most significant one relates to **raising awareness about a topic of their interest**. Environment, arts and media were the most repeated ones in this order. Most of the projects triggered by this motivation attracted the attention of specific public and can easily be recognized a strong citizenship value.

The second one is **feeling attracted by a topic**. Arts, local heritage, situation of disadvantaged target group, were the most frequently mentioned in this order. Most of the participants so motivated indicate curiosity, discovery or exploration of the topic for which they felt attracted. They have a marked component of knowledge seeking.

The third dominant category is **to cover a need of the community**. In this case, the most common need is information for young people by young people. The rest are quite different in nature, for instance enabling the use of public lakes, helping street children or promoting cultural events for deaf people. Obviously, in this case, the most significant component is the benefit of the local community.



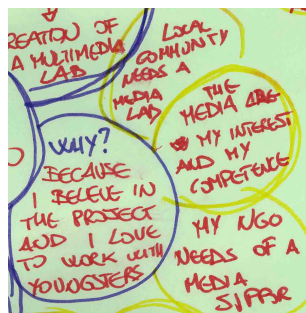
One beneficiary's motivation "petal"

The rest of the arguments relate to **motivation of young people** (youth empowerment and leadership), **use of knowledge for social purposes** (support to a disadvantaged target group), **first step to develop an association/ stable group** (entrepreneurship and capacity building), **gaining knowledge and skills** (learning in general) and finally **just to do something** (active participation in general).

Most of the values underlined correlate well with the benefits the beneficiaries obtained in carrying out their Youth Initiative project, as we will see in the next chapter.

Group 2. Coaches

The motivation of the coaches was also extracted from their "garden of Youth Initiatives". In this case, 10 coaches illustrated with their inputs why they got involved in coaching a group running a Youth Initiative project.



Detail of a coach's motivation

Convinced by the project and the youngsters: 3 coaches mentioned that the group itself, the project or both determined their participation. Without the commitment with the group or with the project, the involvement of the coaches would have not been possible.

To encourage and support young people realising their project: 3 times as well this reason is mentioned with additional arguments like facilitating the development of new skills and contributing to the beneficiaries' active citizenship.

The rest of the inputs mentioned have been gathered as follows:

Seeking personal learning experiences, including: possibilities to have trainings, new areas of knowledge, new experiences in advising and supervision, and new team working material.

Supporting the solution to a local need, including helping to the understanding of two confronted cultures living in the same community, offering disadvantaged youngsters the discovery of other realities.

Capacity building, including opening the coach's association to the youth perspective and establishing new contacts (networking).

Finally, one coach mentions **personal satisfaction** as the driven force to get involved in the Youth Initiative project.

Conclusions

- The main element driving the beneficiaries to participate in a Youth Initiative project is the topic of the project. The most popular topics among the beneficiaries are: environment, arts and media.
- The major reasons to participate relate to raising awareness about this topic or exploring the topic by means of the realisation of the project.
- The next most frequent reason to participate is to cover a need of the beneficiary's local community.
- Other reasons attracting the interest of the beneficiaries to participate in a Youth Initiative project are: motivation of other young people, use of knowledge for social purposes, first step to develop an association/ sustainable group, gaining knowledge and skills and, finally, just to do something.
- Coaches participate in Youth Initiatives normally driven by the project itself or by the group of beneficiaries.
- One of the essential reasons for coaches to get involved in Youth Initiative projects is to encourage and to support young people.
- Other individual reasons to get involved are seeking new learning experiences, supporting the solution to a local need and capacity building. Just personal satisfaction justifies sometimes their involvement.

1.3. How does it work?

Apart from the motivation of the young people to participate in Youth Initiative projects, and from the support the coaches are willing to give to the beneficiaries, structures are needed to implement the Action in the different Programme countries.

These structures, the National Agencies, *are responsible for the selection of projects according to the criteria set by the European Commission. They advise project beneficiaries and organise different kinds of training activities*².

Therefore, the ultimate reason for the participation of National Agencies in the Youth Initiatives Action is the mandate of the European Commission to do so.

The "Garden of Youth Initiatives" workshop for National Agencies focused on analysing the following four elements of Youth Initiatives: promotion, assessment, development and monitoring.

They were offered the possibility to describe individually the process, strategies, criteria, means and any other aspect they might consider important for the implementation of the Action. Likewise, they were proposed to have a deeper reflection on the obstacles they find and to indicate the solutions that were put in practice. Finally, they were invited to present a common output in terms of key recommendations by the whole group.

The outcome of the workshop offers an overview of the Youth Initiative implementation in the different Programme countries.

The decision making process

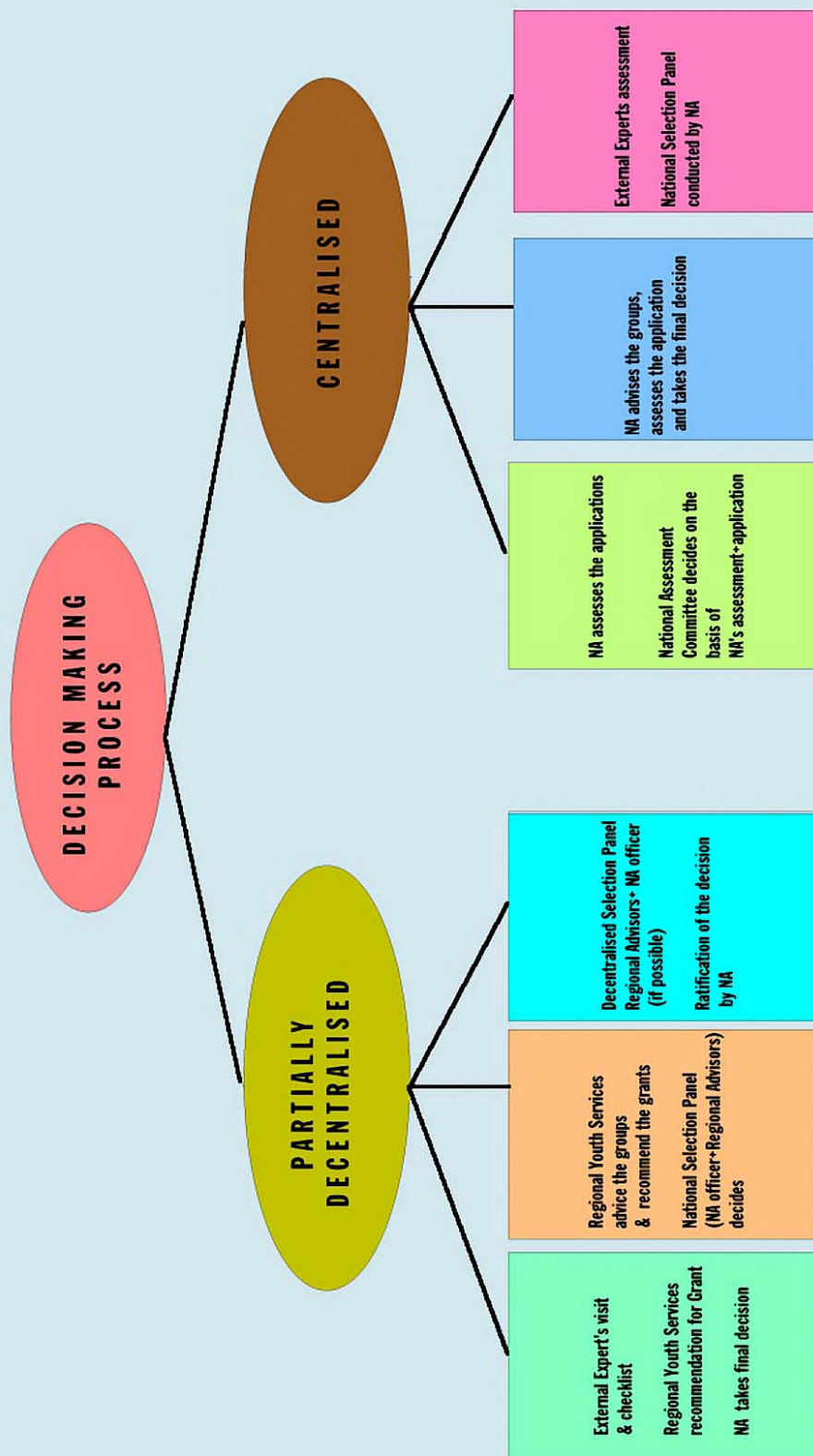
The workshop revealed, as most significant element, a variety of schemes through which the decision making process on Youth Initiatives projects take place in the different Programme countries.

The single-end role of implementing the Action attributed to the National Agencies in the User's Guide is performed in practice according to the system that best suits the national reality of each country. These systems have an influence in the four elements subject of study.

The sample on which the classification is based consists of the inputs by 12 National Agencies officers; 9 of them described how the decision-making process takes place in their countries. The following chart summarises the six different schemes found as the result of the workshop.

² Cf. User's Guide of the YOUTH Programme. English version page 10.

Chart 2



© Mario Garcia

It is difficult to extract categorical conclusions of the previous chart. The three partially decentralised schemes belong to countries, which are big in extension and have a long tradition in the implementation of European Programmes for young people. This does not mean, however, that every country with either of these features, or both, has a partially decentralised system in place. On the opposite side, countries with smaller territory or with more recent participation in the implementation of European Programmes have normally centralised systems, but in some cases decentralised elements are in place (external experts and local youth representatives, for instance).

In any case, this multiplicity of schemes determines, at the same time, a multiplicity of situations regarding the Action from the perspective of National Agencies.

Here is the analysis of the four basic topics of study reflection proposed to National Agencies and the conclusions.

a) Promotion

Promotion of Youth Initiatives is implemented by means of **informative sessions, trainings, promotional materials (brochures, magazines, CD ROMs) and consultation by phone or email**. 7 out of the 10 testimonies on this aspect with specific details indicate these as the regular means. 5 out of the 7 National Agencies officers mention that part of these services are subcontracted to a third party or carried out by the Regional Youth Services.

3 National Agencies pay **visits** to or **welcome groups** in their office, which are interested in the action, as a method of promotion and support.

b) Assessment

New stakeholders appear in the decision making process, whether in partially decentralised systems (Regional Youth Services, External Experts, Decentralised Selection Committees) or centralised ones (External Experts, National Selection panels, National Authorities).

The level of autonomy of the National Agency to take decisions varies also from country to country. Most of the project officers have the most determining say in the final decision on the Youth Initiatives grant applications. However, in the most decentralised cases the National Agency only ratifies (or not) the pre-decision of regional committees and in some of the centralised cases, a national committee takes the assessment of the National Agency only as another (not necessarily bonding) element more for the final decision.

Most of the National Agencies refer in their testimonies to the criteria for assessment (9 out of 12). Both formal and quality criteria are taken into consideration in the assessments. In 3 cases, the comments are general, i.e. "we apply all the criteria for selection".

In 6 cases, the National Agencies mention specific criteria. **The impact at local level and the active participation of young people in the project** are the most frequently quoted specific criteria (5 times). For 3 National Agencies, the impact at local level is a national priority for the Action.

Among the comments on specific criteria, the **European dimension** is mentioned by 4 National Agencies. 2 of them made the remark that this criterion is difficult to assess.



Detail of assessment process applied by a National Agency

Finally, 3 National Agencies indicated the **inclusion nature of the project**, as a quite important criterion for the final decision. In 2 cases, inclusion Youth Initiative projects are a marked national priority.

Half of the National Agencies officers underline that they deal only with applications to elaborate the assessment, and they hardly meet the groups carrying out the projects before the selection panel.

c) Development

The development strategy of National Agencies for the Action has a main axis: **training**. In all the 10 testimonies regarding development, training at different levels appears as the most used tool. Training is mostly offered to potential beneficiaries, but also to coaches, external experts and regional youth services.

In the second place, mentioned by 4 National Agencies, **evaluation seminars** are considered very useful to get access to new ideas, apart from the main monitoring purpose. The **support for and from coaches** is found in 4 testimonies too. Coaches play an advisory role and benefit from some of the activities organised by National Agencies.

Other instruments of development are "**Get in Net**" to facilitate the access to networking projects, in **cooperation with the SALTO Youth Initiatives Resource Centre** and **cooperation agreements with local, regional or national institutions**, in particular to stimulate inclusion projects. These instruments of development are mentioned only once or twice.

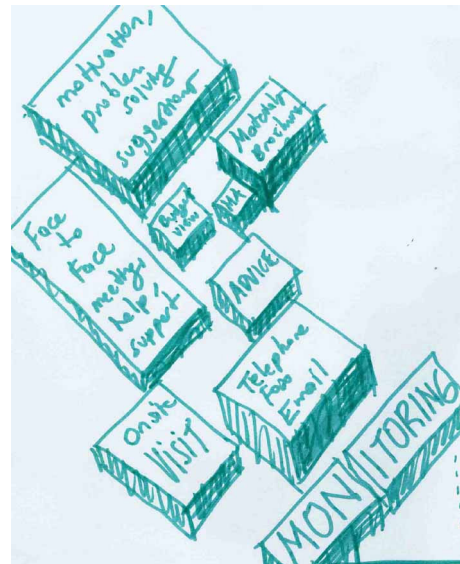
d) Monitoring

10 out of the 12 National Agencies officers mentioned specific means of monitoring. The other 2 officers indicated that monitoring is decentralised to regional Youth Services and are not explicit about the applied means.

A majority of the National Agencies have **on-site visits** as the main instrument of monitoring. Half of the 8 officers indicating this fact mentioned that the visits are outsourced to experts, coaches or local/ regional youth services, in a similar way as for the promotion.

The second tool for monitoring is **evaluation**. Mid-term evaluation for running projects, or periodic evaluations of projects already finished take place in different countries. A number of 5 project officers indicated this fact.

Finally, 4 National Agencies indicate the **final report and the products** of the Youth Initiative projects as a complementary element of the monitoring strategy.



Detail of the monitoring strategy of a National Agency

Apart from these three main means of monitoring, a few National Agencies mentioned regular **contacts by phone or e-mail**, **meetings focusing on specific target groups** (i.e. for inclusion projects), **follow-up of projects assessed with high quality or with a broader dimension** (i.e. networking projects) as part of their monitoring strategy.

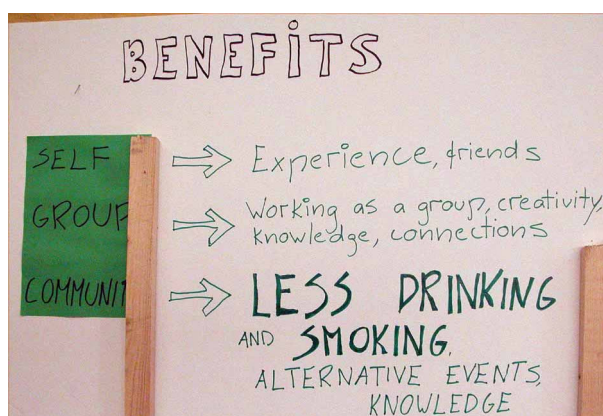
Conclusions

- The implementation of the Action in the different Programme countries is quite heterogeneous.
- The decision-making process is adapted to each national reality.
- The level of autonomy of the National Agency to take decisions is normally high. In systems with a marked level of decentralisation or centralisation, regional committees for the first ones and national committees for the last ones have a determining influence.
- The National Agency plays the main role in the management and implementation of the Action. However, more than half of them outsource part of the promotion, development and monitoring to third parties.
- The main criteria applied at national level to assess positively a Youth Initiative grant application are: **local impact** and **involvement of the young people** in the management and activities of the project. The **European dimension** is considered also as very important.
- Criteria are generally assessed with basis on the text of the application. In many cases, this is the only source for the assessment. Some of them are more difficult to assess than others, in particular the European dimension.
- **Informative sessions, trainings, promotional materials** and **consultation** by phone or email are the main shared methods of promotion.
- **Training** is the main tool for developing the action. In some cases, **evaluation seminars** and the **advice of coaches** are also valuable sources for development.
- Monitoring is implemented mainly by **on-site visits**, in many cases outsourced to regional services, experts and trained coaches. Other office-based methods, like phone contacts and the analysis of the final report are also used for this purpose.

Chapter 2. Benefits of Youth Initiatives

The first thematic chapter of this report is devoted to the benefits of Youth Initiatives. By the self-evaluation of the beneficiaries, we will know more in depth how successful they consider the Action. The sample of the survey includes 24 testimonies. The material used to collect the data originated in the activity called "Protest march to celebrate Action 3", in which the beneficiaries and coaches were requested to create a mock demonstration to valorise the Youth Initiative Action. Coaches were requested to look at it from the perspective of the beneficiaries, based on their contacts with the groups they have coached. The role of the National Agencies for this activity was to interview the "protesters" and get to know which were the reasons motivating coaches and beneficiaries to promote and defend the Action. Part of the analysed testimonies was taken from these interviews.

Three different categories of benefits were analysed through this activity: the self-benefits for the beneficiaries, the benefits for the group running the Youth Initiative project, and the benefits for the community. Due to the specific relevance of the benefits for the local community -one of the main objectives of the seminar- an additional specific workshop devoted to it was designed (see section 2.3). The analysis of the benefits for the local community is based on both activities.



Detail of the benefits quoted by one beneficiary

2.1. Self-benefits for the beneficiaries

Two main benefits arise from the testimonies of the beneficiaries and coaches, which are mentioned by more than half of them:

- B1. Gaining self-confidence.**
- B2. Acquiring new skills.**

These two qualities evidence the adequacy of the Action to the general objectives (see section 1.1. in Chapter 1) of the YOUTH Programme (OG1 and OG3) and the achievement of one of the main aims of the action (OA4), i.e. to provide a non-formal education experience through the realisation of a Youth Initiative project.

Also significant, and mentioned in more than one third of the testimonies are:

- B3. Broadening the personal perspectives and horizons.**
- B4. Having a new experience and getting to know new friends.**

Both these qualities have a clear social dimension. Many of the individual testimonies relate not only to perspectives, experiences and friends beyond the local reality, but specifically to European and International level, thus contributing to the achievement of OA5 and OA6, i.e. the consideration of themselves as European citizens and being aware of a European reality.

In the third category of relevance, we have three benefits quite different one from each other:

B5. Networking.

B6. Sense of responsibility.

B7. Having fun in carrying out the project.

These benefits are found in one of every four testimonies. Again objectives OA6: awareness of a European reality -for benefit B5- and OA4, experiencing a non-formal education experience -for benefit B6- are somehow present.

Finally, at a more pragmatic level, two more benefits are mentioned:

B8. Finding the activity I want to devote my efforts in the future.

B9. Finding a source to co-fund my personal project.

Both these benefits have a more individual value. They were mentioned 3 and 4 times respectively. In all cases, the activity has continued or is planned to be continued in the future, giving the added value of sustainability to the Youth Initiative project. In two cases, the initial project has become a job, thus contributing to the employability of the beneficiaries concerned. They can be directly associated to the general objective OG1 of the YOUTH Programme, i.e. facilitating the integration of young people in the society.

Conclusions

The Youth Initiative projects have contributed significantly:

- To provide the young beneficiaries with a non-formal education experience.
- To help beneficiaries acquire competencies: knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- To make young people aware of a reality beyond their local environment, in some cases contributing to the feeling of being European citizens.
- To facilitate the integration of young beneficiaries in the society.

2.2. Benefits for the group

Beneficiaries and coaches mentioned a lower number of benefits for the group than for the individuals. One category stands over the rest and it is mentioned in more than half of the testimonies:

BG1. Acquiring common knowledge

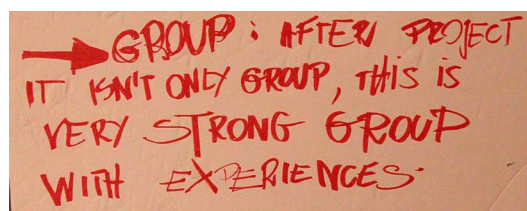
Again, we observe that at the level of the group the non-formal educational content is the benefit mostly appraised, corresponding with OA4.

The second category most frequently mentioned (present in more than one third of the testimonies) is:

BG2. Team work experience

This social and organisational competence will be analysed further in the detail in the next chapter of this report.

In the next level we found different benefits with the same weight given by the beneficiaries and coaches:



Benefits for the group (Detail of one testimony)

BG3. Consolidation of the group.

BG4. Obtaining a common achievement.

BG5. Exchange of opinions and common discussions.

BG6. Taking responsibilities as a group.

BG7. Discovering new opportunities.

Benefit BG3 is directly linked to the sustainability of the activities.

BG4 has a direct correlation with B2. It contributes to the self-confidence of the members of the group, thus facilitating their integration in the society (OG1). It shares as well an element of recognition (OG4).

BG5 points at gaining communication skills and BG6 to management skills. These skills will be analysed more in depth in the next chapter. Both benefits correspond to OG3, helping young people acquire new skills and competences.

BG7 meets a specific objective of the action, OA2, giving the chance to try new ideas.

Finally, two additional categories were found in the testimonies. Each one was mentioned 4 times:

BG8. Networking.

BG9. Learning democratic values.

Benefit BG8 was found also as an individual benefit in some of the testimonies. In the case of the group, the benefit relates to establishing contacts with other national or international groups, but also getting access to institutions, journalists, politicians, etc.; this connects to the OA5 objective, contributing to the construction of Europe as European citizens, being active and interacting with new actors and stakeholders. Benefit BG9 has a marked citizenship component.

Both BG8 and BG9 clearly fall under the first specific aim of the action, OA1, active participation in society.

Conclusions

The Youth Initiative projects have contributed significantly:

- To provide groups of young people with common knowledge.
- To provide young beneficiaries with social and organisational competences, like teamwork, communication skills and management skills.
- To recognise youth work through the achievement of concrete group results.
- To consolidate active groups of young people.
- To develop citizenship values.

2.3. Benefits for the local community (local impact)

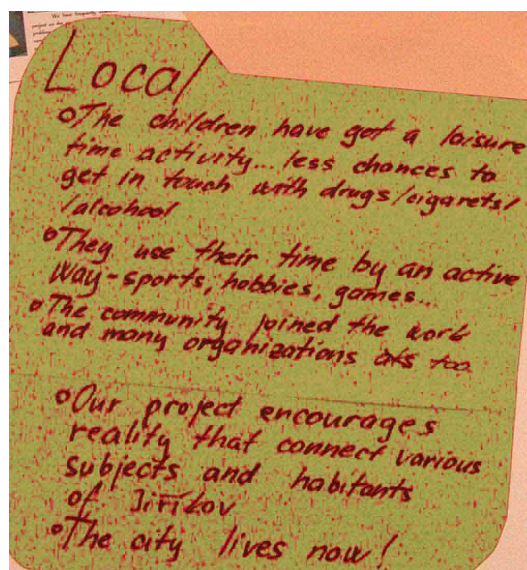
Due to the fact that this element is key for the Action, a priority assessment criterion as we have seen in the previous chapter, two different activities focused on it: the one named "Protest march to celebrate Action 3", which was described in the previous sections, and the one named "Exploring benefits for the local community". This workshop aimed at the reflection on the changes experienced by the local communities where the Youth Initiative projects took place. It indicated as well the means used in the projects, which facilitated the changes.

The results of both activities collected in a number of benefits are presented in this section.

BC1. More well-being conditions in the community

Most of the testimonies, around half of the total, tells that the Youth Initiative projects influenced positively on the well-being conditions in the beneficiaries' communities.

Examples quoted by the beneficiaries are: the creation of a youth information media for young people by young people enabling a new channel of communication and an alternative leisure time activity for prevention of habits like drug and alcohol abuse.



Benefit for local community (a participant's testimony)

In the second place, two benefits had also a major impact on some communities where the projects took place. These are:

BC2. Promotion of a non-existing or underdeveloped activity of general interest.

Many of these activities are of cultural or social character. A couple of quoted examples are: the promotion of cultural services for deaf people and the launching of a cinema festival attracting people to the town.

BC3. Model and good practise for other youngsters

Some collected examples are the triggering of other Youth Initiative projects in the community and the joining of young people to the activities created by a Youth Initiative project.

Two other benefits mentioned by a similar number of beneficiaries were considered of high impact:

BC4. Support for a specific target group (in many cases disadvantaged)

Some examples extracted from the testimonies are: young unemployed people receiving advice and support, young offenders being befriended and a project supporting street children.

BC5. Benchmark for the local community

A number of testimonies point at the first youth initiative project taking place in their local community and having a significant repercussion. One of the beneficiaries was recently granted a Youth Award for her Youth Initiative project, which had an important impact on her hometown.

Finally, a few participants quote the following benefit:

BC6. Local development

This benefit corresponds mainly to local heritage projects promoting the discovery of the region concerned and youth empowerment projects enhancing the human potential of the town.

Conclusions

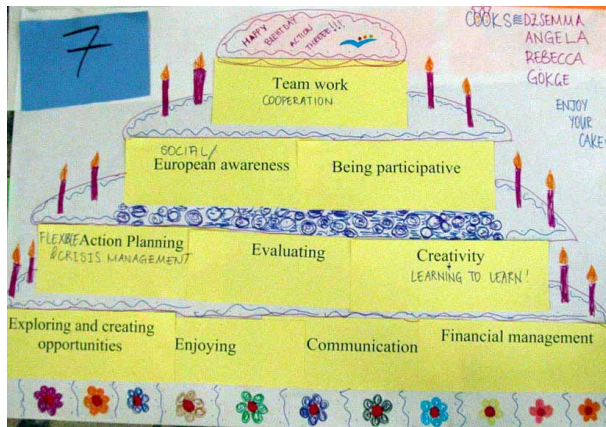
Youth Initiatives:

- Have a major local impact by providing well-being for the local community.
- Promote at local level inexistent or underdeveloped activities of general interest.
- Provide support activities for target groups with fewer opportunities.
- Serve as a model and good practice for other youngsters in the community.
- Contribute to promote the image of the local community at regional, national and European level.
- Are used as an instrument to encourage local development.

Chapter 3. Competences

The individual competences acquired by the beneficiaries during the realisation of Youth Initiative projects were analysed in the workshop called "Cake of Skills".

The three categories of participants, beneficiaries, coaches and National Agencies were invited to elaborate a cake made of different "ingredients", which in reality were a number of individualised skills and abilities. Beneficiaries should reflect on the competences they acquired in their projects. Coaches and National Agencies, from the perspective of their experience, should reflect on the competences gained by the beneficiaries.



Cake of skills by group 7, with 2 additional ingredients

Seven groups were created with the target to elaborate a cake in four layers. The participants were given freedom to prepare the cake with a maximum of 10 skills, 4 in the bottom layer, 3 in the second layer, 2 in the third layer and finally 1 in the top layer. The top layer intended to be the most appreciated one, like the "cherry" giving the final touch to a real cake. Participants could add other skills not included in the set offered by the organisers.

30 skills were present in the cakes prepared by the participants. The frequency of each skill in the set of cakes was measured, i.e. the number of times each skill appeared in the cakes. The value of the frequency gives an idea of what skills are often acquired when participating in a Youth Initiative project, without any other qualitative differentiation.

The groups attached to the established rules of the workshop, and they organised the cake in the proposed four layers with the pre-given skills and additional ones they deemed relevant³.

Most of the participants interpreted the lower layers as the fundamental learnt skills to carry out the project successfully; and the upper ones as the most advanced skills learnt, giving an extra quality and added value to the project.

Based on the participants' reported learnt skills and on the dominant interpretation of the workshop, the reporter has applied a quantitative method to measure the inputs of the participants.

The following table summarises this method to facilitate the presentation:



Group 2 presenting their cake of skills. The most appreciated ability: Enjoying 2gether.

³ One of the groups decided to organise the cake just differentiating between essential ingredients (=essential gained skills) and special flavours (specific gained skills based on each individual project).

Layer	Place	Allowed number of skills	Essential value score	Added-value score
1	Bottom	4	4	1
2	Middle-down	3	3	2
3	Middle-up	2	2	3
4	Top	1	1	4

This score system implies a lineal grading between the position of the skills in the layers and its correspondence to an "essential value" and to an "added value". It intends only to give main trends in order to draw overall conclusions. The correlation of the results for all the groups is quite remarkable and consistent with the measure of the frequency of the skills in the "cakes". We will see that only 2 skills, out of the 30 skills mentioned at least once, would fall outside the regular pattern. A specific comment on them is provided at the end of the section.

Table collecting the competences and their values according to the numeric method used

Competences	Essential value	Added-value	Nr. of times mentioned
Financial management	19	6	5
Action planning	17	8	5
Creativity	14	11	5
Flexibility	13	12	5
Team work and cooperation	9	16	5
Working including others	12	8	4
Enjoying	8	12	4
Self-confidence	8	12	4
Communication	12	3	3
Evaluating	11	4	3
Public relation	11	4	3
Empathy	8	7	3
Exploring opportunities	8	2	2
Recognising strengths and weaknesses	8	2	2
European awareness	7	3	2
Citizenship competence	6	2	2
Learning to learn	5	5	2
Ability to lead	4	1	1
Coping with uncertainty	4	1	1
Project management	4	1	1
Taking and managing risks	4	1	1
Crisis management	3	2	1
Decision making	3	2	1
Negotiation	3	2	1
To be active	3	2	1
Innovative thinking	2	3	1
Participation	2	3	1
Problem solving	2	3	1
Responsibility	2	3	1
Social awareness	2	3	1

The outcome of the analysis is presented in the following sections.

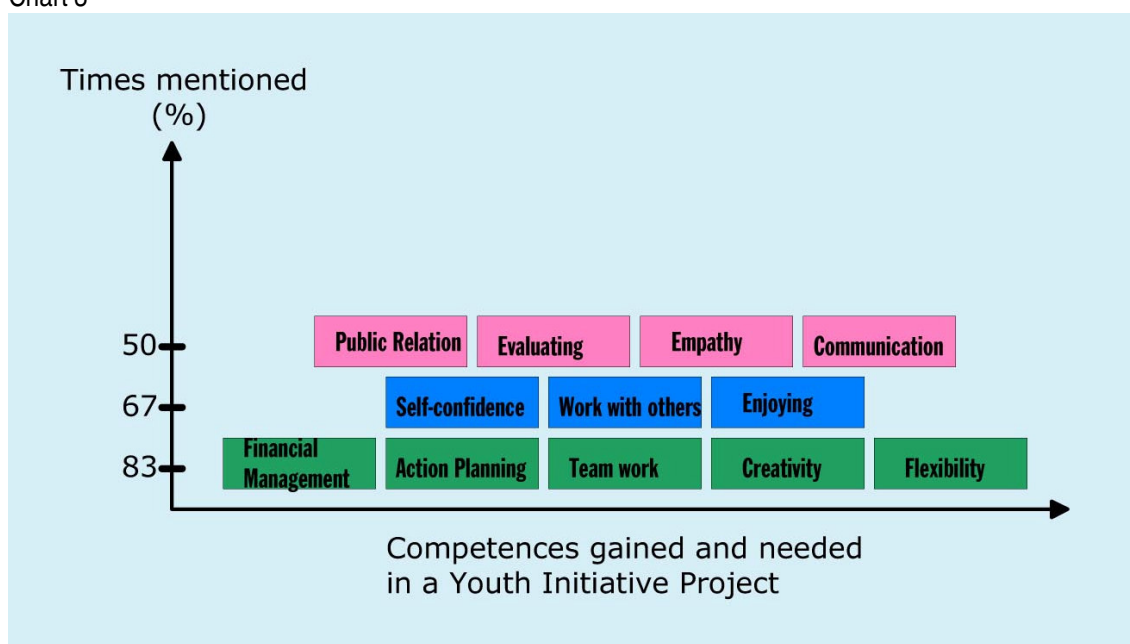
3.1. Most commonly gained skills in a Youth Initiative project

Financial management, action planning, teamwork and cooperation, creativity, and flexibility appear as the skills most frequently gained in a Youth Initiative project. These five skills appear in 5 out of the 6 standard cakes.

Self-confidence, working including others and enjoying the experience occupy the next position. They are found in 4 out of the 6 standard cakes.

Finally, **public relation skills, evaluating ability, empathy and communication skills** are found in half of the standard 6 cakes.

Chart 3



3.2. Gained skills with an essential value

The most essential skill would be **financial management** with a calculated score of 19.

The next one would be **action planning**, which obtains a score of 17, as an essential skill.

Creativity and **flexibility** appear also as essential with a similar value, 14 and 13 points respectively.

Working including others, communication skills, evaluating ability and public relation complete the competences exceeding 10 points.

These 8 competences would make up the layers 1 and 2 of the most typical Youth Initiative cake. All of them are included in section 5.1. and therefore all of them are found among the most commonly gained skills when carrying out a Youth Initiative project.

3.3. Gained skills providing an important added value

Teamwork and cooperation is the participants' gained competence providing the best added value for a Youth Initiative project. It would be no doubt the cherry of the cake and therefore the most wanted and appreciated skill.

Flexibility, enjoying the experience, self-confidence and creativity have a similar weight and complete the skills exceeding a score of 10.

Again in this case, they correlate perfectly with the data of the most frequently found skills. All of them are present in the group mentioned in section 5.1. and therefore, they are commonly gained when carrying out a Youth Initiative project.

3.4. Creativity and Flexibility

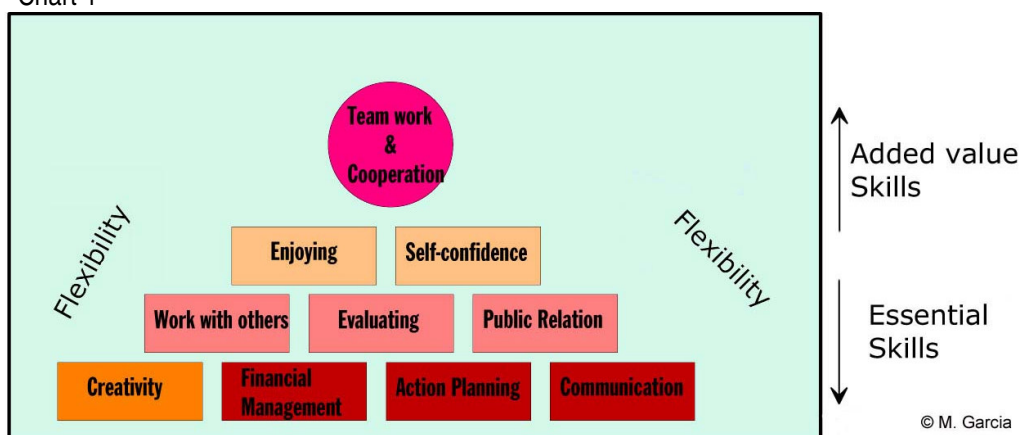
Two of the skills: **creativity** and **flexibility**, are found both as essential and added-value skills in a Youth Initiative project. They are also in the list of most commonly gained skills when carrying out a Youth Initiative project.

We should locate them both in the upper layers and in the lower layers of the typical cake of skills. Looking closely at them, we discover that:

- **Creativity** is normally found in the middle layers, except for one group that considered it in the essential bottom line. The conclusion to be drawn is that most of the participants consider it as an essential skill to be used and developed while carrying out the initiative and some of them would see it like an added value to other essential gained competences. We would place it in between the bottom and the middle down layer.
- **Flexibility** brings a high level of dispersion in the method used. It is found 5 times in total and in all the 4 layers, meaning that for some of the groups is one of the essential gained skills, whereas for others would be in addition a wanted (or even the most wanted) skill. In this case, it is much more difficult to find for it a defined place in the typical cake skills, i.e. to attribute another quality to it other than the fact that it is nearly always present. One could imagine it as the sweet syrup soaking the cake.

Using the results of this analysis, the following chart would show the most frequent skills and competences acquired in a Youth Initiative project and an approximate typical image of what would be their qualitative values, based on the inputs and interpretations of the participants.

Chart 4



The most typical cake of skills.

Conclusions

- Participants identify a high number of competences gained by getting involved in a Youth Initiative project (up to 30).
- The most frequently gained competences in a Youth Initiative project are: **financial management, action planning, teamwork and cooperation, creativity, and flexibility.**
- The most essential gained competences, needed to succeed in a Youth Initiative project are: **financial management** and **action planning.**
- The most appreciated gained competence is: **teamwork and cooperation.**
- **Creativity** and **flexibility** are gained competences considered essential and, besides, the participants particularly appreciate them.
- Other important skills gained in the development of a Youth Initiative project are: **working including others, communication skills, evaluating ability** and **public relation.**
- The ability to **enjoy the experience** and to grow in **self-confidence** are competences very appreciated by the participants.

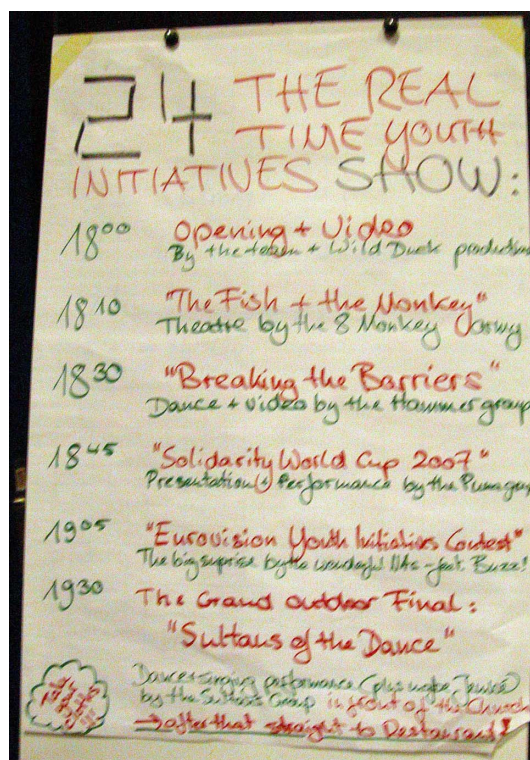
Chapter 4. Active participation. Competences in real time

The aim of the Feedback Seminar on Youth Initiatives was to collect useful information from the key actors, which could be transferred to future projects and used for the further development of the Action. The organising team thought that extending the scope of activities beyond the theoretical reflections and usual workshops would show a more comprehensible evidence of the key elements.

It is often heard that many of the essential concepts of a Youth Initiative project: European dimension, local impact, learning skills, and in general the different aims and objectives mentioned in chapter 1, do not find a clear common understanding among the actors, let alone among the general public not familiarised with the Action and the YOUTH Programme. An active practical experience was considered as an appropriate tool to facilitate common understanding around the mentioned topics.

The organising team proposed the beneficiaries a quite open activity to be carried out in the limited time of 24 hours. The aim was to put in practise those competences gained during the realisation of their own local Youth Initiatives and transfer them to a different local reality and within an international group. Six mini-projects were carried out around a number of possibilities offered by the organisers. These possibilities were room, materials and preliminary contacts with three local organisations: la Maison des Cultures, La Fonderie et le Musée Bruxellois de l'Industrie et du Travail and the Association des Jeunes Marocains.

The first task for the beneficiaries was to find a minimum of 4 people per team and to agree on a common activity. Up to their choice was left the goal of the mini-project and the final format. The only condition was to show some conclusions in front of the rest of participants in a creative manner, with the "tick-tack" of the 24 TV-series discounting seconds until the completion of the activity.



Programme of the 24 hours show

Coaches were offered the possibility to act as such for the group of their choice, or to act as another active member of the group.

National Agencies officers were given the possibility to meet and discuss common business among them and invited to join actively the presentations showing a portrait of themselves as a group towards the rest of the actors.

The style of this chapter intends to catch a glimpse of this dynamic activity and to show the reader what was achieved in terms of transferability of skills and competences.

The information has been collected from the debriefing of the activity, in particular the recorded summary prepared by each group and shared in plenary. Additional material produced by some of the groups has also been used. At the end of the chapter, a set of conclusions based on the feedback of the groups is presented in a similar format to the one used along the report.

4.1. Wild Duck Production Group

This group decided to use the facilities of the Youth Hostel, the technical means available, the expertise of the professional video cameraman filming the whole Seminar, and the support of a coach acquainted with video techniques to film a short clip inspired by the living experience of the seminar.

The messages by the participants of this group collected in the summary of the activity presented in plenary are the following:

- We realised that it is possible to produce something in only one day within an international group recently created.
- We experienced many heterogeneous feelings: we were challenged, focused, confused and excited.
- We needed the active involvement of a coach. He was very useful to sort out our ideas and drive us through the technicalities of video production.
- We did not experience local contact in our activity.
- We gained technical skills and got familiarised with technical terms.
- We felt atmosphere of respect within the group.
- We would have enjoyed more the activity, if we had counted with more time.
- We realised that much effort was put in for a small output. The process was the important part

4.2. The 8 Monkey Theatre group

This group performed the theatre play "The Fish and the Monkey" based on the visit made to the Musée Bruxellois de l'Industrie et du Travail.

The performance took elements of the history of Brussels, and in particular of the neighbourhood visited. It developed into a creative play about environment and sustainable development. The group managed to integrate a topic of their shared interest with the local environment surrounding the local neighbourhood. The play finished with the motto: "small actions create big outcomes", which was acclaimed by the audience.



The 8 Monkey group performing

The summary presented in plenary included the following feedback:

- We came across the idea before and had the opportunity to start rehearsing while waiting for the visit in the museum.
- The visit was very inspiring and we did not find difficulties to include a local element in the story. The topic is universal.
- We had an excellent exchange with the guide of the museum.
- We adapted to the circumstances. We planned to perform in front of the channel, but we realised that it was complicated.

4.3. The Hammer Group

This group performed “Breaking the Barriers” an interactive body percussion dance show based on a workshop held in the local organisation La Maison des Cultures. It was preceded by a short video-clip showing the preparation of the performance (basically the cleaning and washing of around 100 empty bottles!).

During the “24 hours” activity, the group participated in the workshop on body percussion together with a group of local kids.



First contact with the kids of La Maison des Cultures.

The workshop was inscribed in a set of multidisciplinary workshops organised by this institution for the local population. The aim of the workshops is to encourage the creativity of the participants. The association promotes intercultural learning and social cohesion.

The local kids participating in the workshop were invited to the evening performance and joined it.

The plenary presentation included the following reflections:

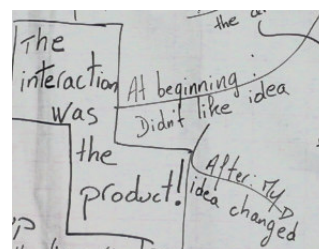
- We have experienced in practice international team building.
- The activity required a good deal of motivation and energy. We had to find it, moreover in the context of the whole seminar.
- We discovered elements of intercultural learning between the kids and us. Language was a small barrier, but the interaction through the body language broke it.
- Most of us had a leading role in the local youth initiatives we organised in our countries. This experience had a less significant leading role and a much relevant teamwork component.
- The performance (and its preparation) was challenging, but at the same time efficient, because we realised we managed well the outcome expected.
- We had to adapt to the circumstances, especially for the preparation of the performance. We worked under pressure.

4.4. The Puma group

This group performed "Solidarity Worldcup 2007", a dance show based on a hip-hop workshop taking place also in the local organisation La Maison des Cultures. It was preceded by a photo presentation describing the activity.

The workshop belonged as well to the multidisciplinary workshops of this local institution, encouraging the creativity of the participants. In this case, the participants in the seminar teamed up with a group of local youngsters.

The group prepared an exhaustive reflection on their experience in the day subsequent to the activity. The material of the debriefing session has been very useful to discover the feelings, the modifications of the plans, the self-evaluation of the group on what went well and not so well, what they learned and which kind of competences they used to succeed.



Analysis of the Puma group in the debriefing (detail)

The elements presented below are a summary of the materials collected in the debriefing activity and shared in plenary:

- We acknowledged the use of our communication skills. We did not find language barriers, just small misunderstandings.
- We did not find intercultural barriers with the local partner group.
- We did a very good use of the body language and learned how to move it (our body) better.
- We did not give much opportunity to the local partner group to discover whom we are and what are we doing here. We should have thought about it and show more empathy.
- The interaction was the product of our activity.

4.5. The Wonderful NAs group

As explained in the intro session to this chapter, the National Agencies officers were given the time and space to reflect and discuss in common about their local realities and the development of the Action in their different countries. Apart from benefiting from this time for internal businesses, they were invited to present in a creative way the role they play towards Youth Initiatives beneficiaries.

In this sense, the National Agencies officers conducted the Eurovision Youth Initiatives Contest, a mock Eurovision competition performance judging the outcome of the mini-projects organised in the 24 hours. The National Agencies officers acted this time in front of an expecting audience and their group accepted the challenge and coped with the creative task assigned by the 24 hours activity with the playful help of Buzz from the team of trainers.



National Agencies starting the performance.

The plenary session included the following comments about this performance:

- We were reflecting during the 24 hours about our role as partners in this Seminar and actors of the Action.
- We decided to play the role we assume we are given by beneficiaries, that is, judging their projects.
- The idea was not so much to assess the mini-projects (we awarded them the same score), but rather to participate in the activity, as they have done, and dramatize our role.

The second output of their work was some suggestions and recommendations regarding Youth Initiatives with the aim to be incorporated in the Guide of the future Youth in Action Programme. For further information on this issue, please contact the SALTO Youth Initiative Resource Centre.

4.6. The Sultans Group

In the conception of the 24 hours activity, the team of trainers spent long time evaluating the unexpected results that might arise. They included the lack of outcomes, the impossibility to meet the needs of some groups, mismatching with the local groups, and some others. Fortunately, the unexpected results turned to be much more positive. The Sultans Group came with a larger local scope proposal. They planned to perform the show "The Sultans of Dance" live in one of the squares of the close neighbourhood and they did it.

The Sultans Group decided to visit the local organisation Association des Jeunes Marocains. They discussed what they could do as performance in one of the rooms of the organisation and afterwards participated in a Djambe workshop with local kids. The workshop was very successful and negotiations to have a joint performance in a square of the neighbourhood happened quickly. The group managed also to convince the organisers of the Seminar.



Sultans group team members practising djembe with members of the local group



Final live performance of 24 hours

The live performance attended by all the participants in the seminar closed the 24 hours activity. It provided a close interaction with the local citizens. Ones and the others joined and enjoyed the performance, after the initial moments of surprise and mutual observation. It was an excellent end to this innovative activity, which obtained the best appraisal in the final evaluation.

These are the comments collected in the plenary session:

- We needed to work hard to have the performance.
- We found a lot of empathy with the local group.
- Body language overcame any language barrier.
- No support from the coaches was needed. Coaches took part as any other member of the group. And they enjoyed it.
- We discovered a lot of skills we had gained before in our local Youth Initiatives.
- There was a high dose of self-confidence in arranging the performance. We were not afraid to communicate with local people.
- A high level of teamwork was needed and put in practice.
- Impact in the local community was clear and visible. We attracted the attention and local people joined us.
- We faced a risky situation, we are aware of it. The local youth worker and local players joined and we realised they facilitated our integration. This is how international cooperation works.

Based on the outcomes of the 24 hours activity and the testimonies of the participants in the debriefing of the activity, the following chart presents some conclusions.

Conclusions

- Youth Initiative actors have a **participative spirit and self-confidence**. All the groups took active part in the activity and managed to achieve the goal to perform in front of the rest of participants.
- The most repeatedly mentioned skill, needed and used, is **teamwork**. It finds the perfect correlation with the most wanted and appreciated skill in a Youth Initiative, as we saw in chapter 3.
- Youth Initiative participants put in practise their **action planning skills**. Most of the groups defined quickly what they wanted to do and how to do it, due to the major time constraints of the activity.
- Youth Initiatives participants **adapt to the real circumstances** and **valorise the fact** that they do adapt. They evidenced their **flexibility**. Most of the groups outlined this skill, in perfect correlation with the conclusions of chapter 3.
- Youth Initiative participants are **excellent communicators**. No big language and cultural barriers were found in the activities taking place in contact with the local population. Body language facilitated the communication in many cases.
- All the Youth Initiative actors showed a **high degree of creativity**. In 24 hours, they created six artistic products. For some, however, the product was the **interaction and the process** itself.

Chapter 5. Current and future trends in Youth Initiatives

In the last day of the Feedback Seminar, the participants were invited to deliver explicit and useful messages about the Action to other actors. The aim was to help the development of Youth Initiatives based on the experiences of each of the three categories of participants: beneficiaries, coaches and National Agencies, and on the reflections made during the seminar.

This chapter presents those messages. Some of them were collected during the Seminar, others were still worked out further as follow-up of the event. The messages are shown as delivered by the groups. A brief introduction on the topic worked out by each group accompanies each section.

5.1. Peer-to-peer tips from beneficiaries to other young people

In this group, the aim was to reflect on the most useful tips that beneficiaries of a Youth Initiative could offer to those young people, who would like to start a similar project.

The output of the workshop is conceived as peer-to-peer advice from previous beneficiaries to new beneficiaries. The final form was a catalogue of tips, which is transcribed in the following chart.

TIPS FOR YOU

✓ **Find a good team.**

Try to find people who really want to work in the project. Be open to other people. Find out the strengths and weaknesses of the group.

✓ **Be creative.**

Use your imagination and creativity to explore activities and opportunities for your project. Don't be afraid of doing original things.

✓ **Get knowledge about target group and their needs.**

To make an efficient project, you have to be aware about your target group and their needs, because it is important to cooperate with them.

✓ **Set the working rules and respect them.**

At the beginning of your project, set the working rules with your team members and try to respect them in order to have an efficient project.

✓ **Be responsible with the time.**

Don't forget the deadlines and respect your NA's time. Keep on your project schedule.

✓ **Make sure that you know what you want.**

Be clear about your purposes from the beginning and concentrate on your project's tasks and aims.

✓ **Be prepared for the surprises.**

There will be always those times, when you don't know what to do; try to be flexible.

✓ **Prevent motivation gap.**

Have a great time with your group members and don't forget it. Do some interesting activities and be close to each other.

✓ **Find local partners to work in cooperation.**

You are not alone in the Initiatives! Don't forget your local organizations and cooperate with them.

✓ **Share tasks and responsibilities.**

Make sure that everyone in the group has something to do and do not leave everything for the last minute.

✓ **Make as precise financial planning as possible.**

Plan everything through what you need and try to find the cheapest things you can get.

✓ **Take care of good communication.**

Make sure you understand each other, because otherwise the project will not succeed.

✓ **Be aware of the "Dark Night of the Project."**

Almost every project has its low point and a phase, where it is losing its energy, then don't quit your project and stick together.

✓ **Respect the others and they will respect you too!**

Helena, Tuba, Gokce, Mary, Gediminas; Rafal and Jochen.

5.2. Recommendations for future coaches

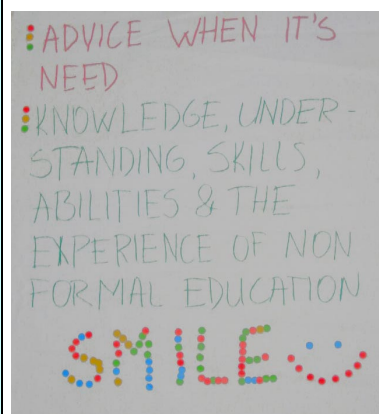
In this group, the aim was to reflect on the most useful recommendations for future coaches. The group consisted not only of coaches, but also of beneficiaries who wanted to transmit what kind of coaching they would like to have received and what would they do if they became coaches in the future.

The outcome of the workshop was an extended panel with different pieces of advice and recommendations for coaches. They focused not only on their skills and how to apply them, but also on other behavioural aspects.

In the next chart, the information of the panel is presented and it is accompanied by a detail of the real panel.

Recommendations for coaches

- Only "can", not "must".
- Be like a guide. You must know the needs of the group.
- Motivate and support the group, and when it is needed look for assistance.
- Be a friend and try to get the respect of the group.
- Advice when it is needed.
- Knowledge, understanding, skills, abilities and the experience of non-formal education.
- Smile.



Recommendations for coaches (detail)

5.3. Strategy of recognition for Youth Initiatives

One of the groups devoted its time to discuss on the recognition and value of the skills and competences gained through the management and participation in a Youth Initiative project.

Before the work of the group, a presentation was led by Rita Bergstein, from the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre. She explained the work already done concerning recognition on non-formal learning in the context of the YOUTH Programme and the current situation about this topic. She emphasized the interest of the Resource Centre in the recognition of competences gained through the participation in Youth Initiative projects. A validation instrument focused on this action is indeed about to be developed, including the creation of a qualified certificate.



Detail of Rita's presentation

The participants welcomed the initiative and some of them joined the working group on this issue.

In the following chart, the output of the workshop on recognition for Youth Initiatives is presented, in particular focusing on the Youth Initiatives certificate. This output has been provided by Rita as a result of the follow-up on the working group carried out in the Feedback Seminar. See Annex I for contact details, if interested in having additional information on recognition in the context of the YOUTH Programme.

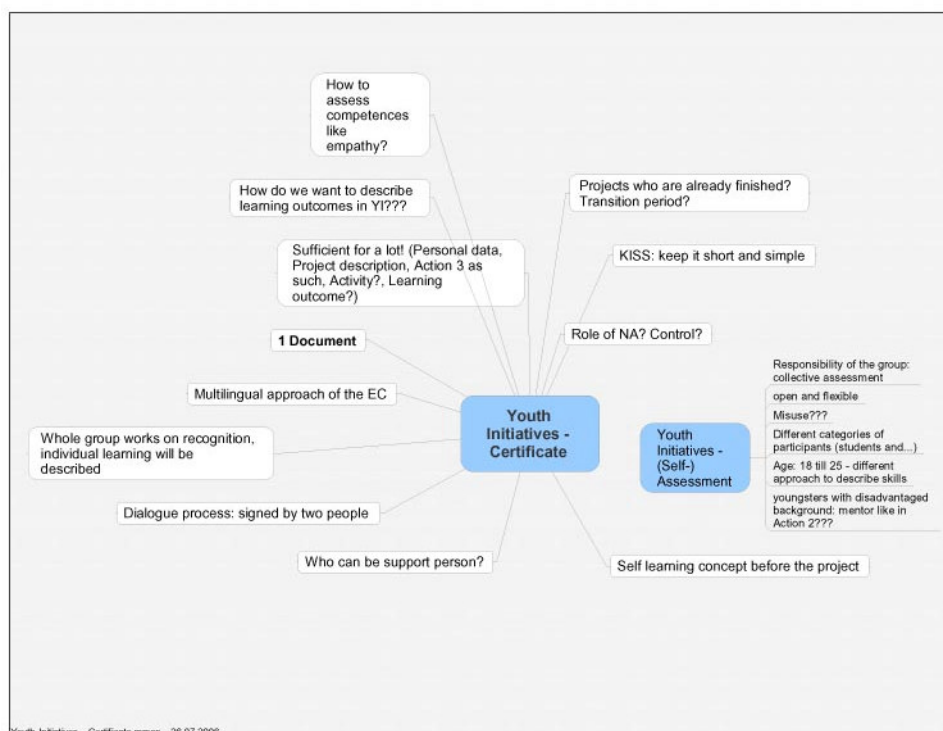


Chart 5. Schematic outcome of the working group on recognition. Source SALTO Training and Cooperation.

5.4. The National Agencies group

This group was conceived with the idea that the National Agencies representatives could work on the minimum support standards for Youth Initiatives.

It turned to become a workshop with reflections on the European dimension and the local impact of Youth Initiatives, with a mixed composition of participants. The conclusions of the group as gathered by Peter, the reporter of the workshop, are presented as follows:

Workshop European dimension & local impact

Wednesday 28.06.2006

Participants: Yasar, Dila, Solene, Irene, Pawinne, Edina, Pavel, Pontos, Carme, Tomas, Dzsemma, Peter (report)

In this workshop, we discussed our local youth initiatives and the European dimension of it in concrete. We searched together for European dimensions in these projects and discussed about it. We also checked the different view of the NA's of France and The Netherlands, and discussed about it. Aim was to make clear what European dimension could be in any project. By doing it together, it was a nice way to search and find out about it.

In general, the participants did not find it very difficult to fill in this question, although some participants said that they've had a lot of problems with it in the beginning.

The group was well motivated to talk about this subject for two hours, and was very willing to hear about each other's projects and to discuss the European part of it critical and constructive.

Afterwards trainer Milena asked me if this group could be a group to contact in the (near) future for further information. I think most of them are willing to do so, but they still must be asked.

The outcomes:

1. the project:

As a Spanish girl, I did a Youth initiative in France near the Spanish border; we had contacts on both sides of the border to work together.

Our European dimension:

- two European countries involved
- we had a European theme: environment
- we collected tools from different countries

2. the project:

Local newspaper invited Swedish youngsters in Europe to write articles about everything. The newspaper was distributed in Malmo.

Our European dimension:

- European info given to local people in Malmo
- world info into Europe
- different European themes

Suggestion: to make a networking project of it

3. the project:

Giving info about study after secondary school to youngsters who are socially excluded (people are passive, do not know what to do with their live, no work for them). We made brochures and gave workshops about voluntary jobs, finding jobs)

Our European dimension:

- European theme: to make higher your education level
- European theme: to be more active
- to talk about the European YOUTH Programme

4. the project:

We made a film about overconsumption and gave workshops to youngsters (15-19) to make them aware that they can do something: small action – big results

Our European dimension:

- European theme
- we asked info from youngsters from other EU countries and used this in the film
- promotion of action 3

5. the project:

Computer education and socialisation (youngsters not used to go to a cinema, to parties) for children living in the street.

Our European dimension:

- Bring Europe closer to the youngsters and teach about the European system
- to give them opportunities to carry out their ideas

6. the project:

Intercultural group organises information and cultural events for Hungarian youngsters (15-25), exchange of cultures (exhibition).

Our European dimension:

- to become more familiar with European culture and traditions
- to promote the YOUTH Programme

7. the project:

We interviewed foreigners about their life stories. We made a dance performance of it. We presented it in a theatre and on festivals that are working with the themes like immigration. Sometimes we had debates afterwards.

Our European dimension:

- collecting stories from non-Italian people
- an art contribution to the work of other associations who are working with these thematics.
- part of European history; to make this visible

8. the project:

Organising culture activities for children (5-18) and hobby clubs in a small village where there was nothing to do. The follow up will be to invite also German people living around our area.

Our European dimension:

- want to create a community life, making people feel home in their own region, and in Europe (the village was till World War 2 German, afterwards Czech)
- poor region and a lot of gypsies; we want to give them a change to have leisure time activities

In general we concluded: maybe the European dimension is clear to me; problem is: who will read it and with which criteria in mind?

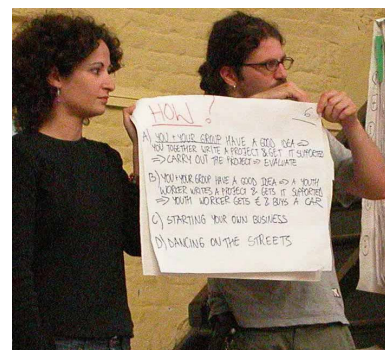
The Polish NA has a special guide for this?

The dialogue between the project and the NA is very important before decision of being granted or rejected

5.5. Promotion of the Youth Initiative Action towards the institutionals

The former idea planned for this working group was to perform live a presentation towards the representatives of the institutions (European Commission and local authorities), with the aim of introducing the key aspects of the Action with a promotional message.

The group opted to present it in the form of a quiz with questions to the audience on the different aspects analysed in the course of the seminar.



Detail of the promotional presentation

This is the transcription of their presentation:

1. What are Youth Initiatives?
 - a. New shoe company targeting youngsters.
 - b. A region full of young people in Alaska.
 - c. *An action that will make your dreams come true. ✓*
2. For whom?
 - a. Pensioners
 - b. Day dreamers aged 23-30
 - c. *Young people aged 15-25 (NGO or group, at least 4 people) ✓*
3. Why?
 - a. *New friends. ✓*
 - b. *Opportunity to develop your ideas. ✓*
 - c. *Discover your skills and talents. ✓*
 - d. *Have fun. ✓*
 - e. *Learn to take responsibilities. ✓*
4. Where?
 - a. All over the world.
 - b. Big countries (population higher 25 million)
 - c. *European countries. ✓*
 - d. Paradise.
5. What?
 - a. *Taking part in the process of dealing with problems in your local community. ✓*
 - b. *Informing your community about different possibilities within Europe. ✓*
 - c. *Cooperation in a single project with youngsters from different countries. ✓*
 - d. Shopping.
6. How?
 - a. *You + your group have a good idea ⇒ you together write a project and get it supported ⇒ carry out the project ⇒ evaluate. ✓*
 - b. *You + your group have a good idea ⇒ a youth worker writes a project and gets it supported ⇒ Youth worker gets the money and buy a car.*
 - c. *Starting your own business.*
 - d. *Dancing on the streets.*
7. For how long?
 - a. 2 years.
 - b. 2 weeks.
 - c. *3-12 months. ✓*

To this presentation attended Sarah Rooney and François-Xavier Laffeach from the European Commission and Martine Lahaye from the Cabinet of the Minister of Youth in the French Speaking Community of Belgium.

It seemed important for the group to differentiate among the things that are a possible and not possible, i.e. to clarify the formal eligibility criteria.

Questions 3 ("why") and 5 ("what") are especially relevant. The group emphasizes the benefits to be obtained from Youth Initiatives (in close correspondence with the results of chapter 2) and the type of possible outcomes, including the impact on the local community and the open door to international cooperation.

The method to follow in the management of a Youth Initiative gives also clues on their understanding of the Youth Initiative project. It goes beyond the mere carrying out of the activities; it includes the active role of the beneficiaries in the conceptualisation of the activities, as well as in the evaluation of the whole process.

Finally, the opportunity that Youth Initiatives provide to achieve a personal and collective goal, or dream, seems to be the appealing force to promote this Action.

Chapter 6. Evaluation of the Evaluation

This chapter is devoted to the evaluation of the Seminar "Feedback on Youth Initiatives". In previous chapters we have analysed how the different actors of the Youth Initiative action perceived its benefits, reflected on the gained competences, and applied in a real situation skills and abilities related to past experiences in their local projects. We have also collected the recommendations of the actors in chapter 5. In this chapter, we will analyse the participants' final assessment of the overall evaluating process.

We will focus mainly on two content-related aspects in full detail: the **impact of the Action** and the **elements of improvement**. The general aspects of the evaluation will be described in section 6.2.

6.1. The method of evaluation

The analysis presented in this chapter is based on the written forms delivered by the participants on day 2 ("impact of Youth Initiatives") and day 4 ("final evaluation"). The method of evaluation, though, included many other "non-formal" tools.

The daily *temperature* of the group mood was measured with the so-called "weather forecast", a panel where the participants were invited to express their feelings with analogous symbols to those used in the real weather forecast charts. As complementary information, throughout the development of the seminar, they were invited to write on the symbol some indications on why they were feeling that way, which was very useful for the organising team to adequate improvements and provide further explanations on some of the raised issues. This tool proved to work, and a number of participants shifted from a neutral position at the beginning of the seminar to a progressively optimistic *sunnier* one.



Weather forecast on the first day



Weather forecast on the last day

The final evaluation was accompanied as well with other active evaluating games, in particular games offering the participants the possibility to speak out. Some of the participants made use of this opportunity and the game turned to bring forth the participation of the whole group.

6.2. General conclusions on the organisation of the seminar

The information collected from the "formal" and "non-formal" evaluating tools indicates that the seminar ran quite smoothly from the beginning to the end. The level of satisfaction was progressively increasing and resulted significantly high in the end.

The next chapter presents the parameters measured regarding the organisational aspects of the seminar expressed in percentages:

Indicators from the final evaluation concerning the organisation of the seminar

- Environment of the seminar: 85% of satisfaction.
- Time for sharing personal experience on Youth Initiatives: 85% of satisfaction.
- Learning from the others: 81% (in a 6-step range, "very much" to "not much")
- Self-participation: 85% (in a 4-step range, "all the time" to "seldom")
- Methods: 82% of adequacy.
- Future use outcomes and learning of the seminar: 85% (in a 6-step range, "very much useful" to "not much useful")
- Programme of the Seminar. Average level of satisfaction of the sessions: 80% (in a 3-step range, "unsatisfied" to "very satisfied")

Regarding the aims of objectives of the seminar, a high score is also awarded by the participants, exceeding the 75% of achievement in all of them. Here are the results of the evaluation:

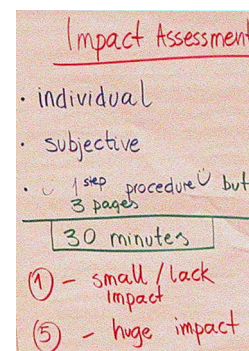
	Description	Achieved
Aim	To evaluate Youth Initiative projects and their impacts in order to increase recognition and to contribute to the development of quality of Youth Initiatives	88%
Obj1	To reflect on experiences and impacts at individual, group and local levels	89%
Obj2	To identify, value and celebrate learning outcomes	85%
Obj3	To raise awareness of transferability of competences	78%
Obj4	To highlight the importance of the European dimension, active participation and social inclusion	87%
Obj5	To promote international cooperation and partnership	85%
Obj6	To reflect on appropriate tools and resources for effectively supporting and coaching youth initiatives	77%
Obj7	To explore strategies to contribute to the ongoing development of youth initiatives	79%

Finally, it is interesting to note that the dispersion of the sample is quite reasonable. The deviation with regard to the average values indicated above falls below the 25% for all of them except for the objective number 7 (27%). This means that, in general, there is no big difference in the opinions among the participants, i.e. the individual scores do not diverge substantially. Only for the Objective number 7, many of the participants indicate that it was fully met, and a few others that it was not met at all, given the higher value of dispersion indicated above.

No distinction has made regarding the category of participants, whether National Agencies, coaches and beneficiaries. The results of the analysis are similar in all the three categories. In no case they exceed 10 percentile points, well below the dispersion of the sample. They match in half of the parameters analysed.

6.3 Impact of Youth Initiatives⁴

At the end of day 2, the participants were invited to fill in an evaluation form to indicate what degree of impact Youth Initiatives have on a number of subjects, based on their individual and subjective experience in the Action. Likewise, they were invited to illustrate with examples their opinions. The degree of impact was measured with a score system from 1 (lack/ rather small impact) to 5 (huge impact). The quantitative outcome is presented in a matrix with percent values of the score. The summary of the comments found in the forms is added to a set of conclusions.



Workshop explanation

The forms differed slightly for each category of participants (National Agencies, coaches, beneficiaries). However, to allow a better comparison for the same subjects, the results are presented in the same matrix. The sample included 9 National Agencies, 7 coaches and 28 beneficiaries. Not all of them filled in the complete set of items. Those items being not filled have not been taken into account for the calculations.

Here are the results:

Impact of Youth Initiatives on:	NAs	Beneficiaries	Coaches	Total
your personal development	85%	87%	80%	84%
the other actions of the YP	53%			53%
your group		77%	83%	80%
your organization	67%	74%	74%	72%
supporting organisation		62%	60%	61%
your target group	76%	86%	93%	85%
other young people		74%	74%	74%
young people autonomy		78%	71%	75%
local communities	76%	72%	71%	73%
local authorities	60%	58%	43%	54%
other local institutions	70%	52%	49%	57%
national non formal education sector	76%			76%
active participation of young people	87%	83%	89%	86%
Inclusion	76%			76%
national youth policy	56%	43%	51%	50%
European youth policy	60%	39%	57%	52%
recognition of non formal learning	71%		80%	76%
recognition of the youth work	73%		63%	68%
coaching development	74%		71%	73%
peer to peer education	80%			80%

The conclusions based on the results above, and the remarks and examples of the actors are included in the following chart.

⁴ The assessment of the evaluation forms was carried out by Milena Pośnik, from the team of trainers. The information in this report is based on her conclusions.

Conclusions

- The Youth Initiative actors consider that it is on the active participation element of young people where the Action has the major impact. This achieves fully the institutional objective OA1 described in section 1.1 of the first chapter.
- Other main impacts of the Action are found in the personal development of all the actors involved, on the target group of the Youth Initiative projects and on the group running the projects.
- Local communities highly benefit from the impact of Youth Initiatives. Two thirds of the participants in the seminar consider the impact very high or even huge, regardless of their role in the Action. Most of them consider that the local impact falls on other local (young) people and on concrete actions in and for the local community (in good correspondence with the conclusions of chapter 3), but not so much on local institutions and municipalities.
- National Agencies think that Youth Initiatives have a high impact on peer-to-peer education, on the national non-formal educating sector, and on the inclusion strategy. On the other hand, they consider this impact quite average on other actions of the YOUTH Programme. Yet, in their quotations, the most repeated way of impact is the use of Youth Initiatives as an entry door to the Programme.
- National Agencies deem also important the impact of Youth Initiatives on recognition of both youthwork and non-formal learning, at similar level. Coaches give much more relevance to the impact on non-formal education than on youthwork, but both impacts are also considered important for this group.
- National Agencies and coaches reckon that the development of coaching is important with regards to the impact of Youth Initiative projects. Most of National Agencies indicate that external support for the Action is needed and coaches are very valuable for this purpose. The national development of coaching varies largely from one country to the other.
- The lowest impact of Youth Initiatives falls on European and national youth policies. Beneficiaries consider this impact rather low, whereas National Agencies and coaches consider it average. In this regard, it is significant to mention that many beneficiaries did not give their opinion, and many participants belonging to the three categories indicated in their comments not to be sure of it, giving an average score.

6.4. Improvements needed in the Youth Initiatives action

The data for this section are taken from the participants' final evaluation forms.

Two specific questions were posed in this regard:

- *"What would you like to see improved in the Youth Initiatives action?"*
- *"Have you considered the possibility to share among beneficiaries, coaches and National Agencies during the Seminar useful? Why? Please comment on potential improvements."*

The answers were proposed in free format and unfortunately were not easy to analyse. Yet, concrete suggestions were made and are presented in the table below.

The analysis of the answers indicates that three quarters of all participants in the "Feedback" Seminar, whether National Agencies, beneficiaries or coaches, think that improvements are needed in the Youth Initiative action and have concrete recommendations.

The following improvements are mentioned repeatedly by participants from the three categories, and thus are considered the most relevant ones. They are sorted by the frequency they were mentioned:

Improvements needed in the Youth Initiative action by order of importance according to the three actors: National Agencies, beneficiaries and coaches

1. ***Beneficiaries of Youth Initiatives should have the possibility of and access to International Cooperation activities.*** *The mobility element should be integrated in the action. Networking Youth Initiatives should be promoted and enforced.*
2. ***A Recognition system should be developed and implemented for the Youth Initiative beneficiaries.*** *NAs consider it as an important tool to value the educational content. Beneficiaries consider it useful for their future activities.*
3. ***The share of experiences and good practises should be facilitated within the Youth Initiatives action.*** *International Seminars are considered a useful tool for it. A vast majority of the participants in the "Feedback" Seminar assessed positively the exchange of views with the rest of the stakeholders of the action.*
4. ***The Youth Initiative action should be more flexible,*** *in particular less bureaucracy should be involved in the procedure.*

The specific opinions of each category of participants are collected in the following subsections:

6.4.1. National Agencies' opinion on potential improvements

The group of National Agencies assess the seminar useful for their work at national level. They grant a mark of 85% to this aspect of the seminar. The main positive aspects quoted by National Agencies are:

- The exchange of information and experience among National Agencies, beneficiaries and coaches at the same level.
- The identification of the impact of Youth Initiatives on the youngsters.
- The identification of the role of the coaches.

The elements of improvement for Youth Initiatives quoted by National Agencies are presented below. The elements in this first set were mentioned by two or more NAs and are sorted according to the frequency with which they were mentioned:

Main Improvements suggested by National Agencies

- 1. The beneficiaries of Youth Initiatives should be facilitated the access to international cooperation. In particular, networking Youth Initiatives should be more attractive.*
- 2. Recognition should be enforced as an important tool to value the educational contents.*
- 3. More seminars should be organised at international level to allow young beneficiaries of Youth Initiatives sharing experiences.*
- 4. The Youth Initiative action should be more flexible, in particular less bureaucracy should be involved in the procedure.*

The elements in this second set were mentioned only once:

- The Youth Initiative action should be **better promoted**, in particular in terms of **visibility**.
- The beneficiaries of Youth Initiatives should be more involved in trainings at national and international level in particular to **promote the action towards newcomers**.
- The **European awareness** should be better elaborated in the Youth Initiative projects. This could be achieved by developing a tool helping to improve this element at the time of preparing the application and by organising **trainings**, in particular **at international level**.

6.4.2. Beneficiaries' and coaches' opinion on potential improvements

The group of beneficiaries and coaches assess the seminar also useful to apply its outcomes in their reality at local level. They award the same percent mark than NAs, 85%, to value this aspect.

Having the opportunity to exchange information between the three categories of participants is the dominant positive aspect indicated, regarding the participation of National Agencies, coaches and beneficiaries in the seminar. On the other side, around 10% of the beneficiaries and coaches mention that staying overnight in the same facility would have reinforced even more the sharing possibilities.

Around 25% of the beneficiaries and coaches see no need of improvements for the action, i.e. they are happy with it as it is, or they do not suggest any changes. 75% of participants and coaches suggest some improvements, which are collected in the two following sets.

The first one includes suggestions made by two or more beneficiaries and coaches, and it is sorted by the highest frequency, i.e. by the number of times the suggestion was made.

Main improvements suggested by beneficiaries and coaches

1. *More funds to support a higher number of projects.*
2. *More possibilities of networking projects, including an increase in the mobility element inside the action.*
3. *Recognition of the skills gained through the development of a Youth Initiative (via certificate or other means).*
4. *More feedback on the outcome of each Youth Initiative project. Comments on the evaluation by NAs should be accessible to beneficiaries and coaches to learn about good practises.*
5. *More coaching should be accessible to participants in all the steps of the project, including the elaboration of the application, and the different forms.*
6. *The bureaucracy of the procedure should be minimised.*
7. *Sustainability of the action. Possibilities should be opened to the beneficiaries to continue being linked to the action, whether funding second editions of their Youth Initiative projects or offering them getting involved in other related tasks.*

This second set includes elements that were mentioned only once:

- **No different categories for funding.**
- **Visibility** of the action should be improved.
- Elaboration of a **public database of granted projects** with the purpose of inspiration.
- **Coaching should be more pro-active.** The experience during this seminar shows that the concept of coaching means different things in different countries.
- **Quality** of Youth Initiatives should be improved.
- The **age range** should be open **beyond 25 years.**