



**Report from the Risk'n'Roll TC**  
**2-7.10.2011,**  
**Konstancin-Jeziorna, Poland**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document is prepared with the purpose of **giving a comprehensive overview** of the international training course "Risk'n'Roll - Risk Management in International Youth Projects", that was organised by the Polish and Irish National Agencies of the Youth in Action Programme.

Training course **took place** from 2nd to 7th October in Konstancin-Jeziorna (Poland) and brought together 21 participants from 13 different countries - residents of the Youth in Action Programme Countries and SEE and EECA regions.

**The start** of the report focuses on the context of the training course, describing main aims and objectives and expected learning outcomes after the course. **The main part** of the report includes description of the methodology that was used during the course and the programme timetable. The report then gives a brief evaluation of process after the training course and an outline of the main outcomes of the course. **The concluding part** of this document includes some recommendations that the trainers have compiled for future actions.

## 2. BACKGROUND

According to the European Commission the **protection and safety** of young people involved in Youth in Action projects are important principles of the Programme. All young people participating in the Programme deserve the opportunity to achieve their full potential in terms of social, emotional and spiritual development. This can only be assured in a safe environment which respects and protects the rights of young persons and safeguards and promotes their welfare.

At the launch of the Youth in Action Programme many National Agencies and organisations **expressed their need and motivation** to work together in order to improve the subject of risk and child protection. Irish and Polish National Agency have been from the very beginning a part of the European group working in that field. A lot has been done **during past years**:

- **A seminar in Ireland** with participation of experienced Youth workers from many different countries. A series of guideline checklists for child protection in international youth work were drawn up there and adopted by the European Commission. The guidelines were translated into twenty Community languages.
- **A working group of National Agencies** and the **European Commission** on training in Risk and Young Person Protection in International Youth Exchange was established. Its main aim is to reduce risk for young people on Youth Exchanges. There were a few seminars of the group in different European countries (Ireland, France etc.)
- **Two Trainings of Trainers in Risk Awareness** were organised. The aims of these training courses are to introduce trainers to adaptable tools related to risk awareness for usage in the training of youth workers and to achieve awareness, raising the quality of the experience for young people in international youth exchanges.

- **Other** international and national events on protection and safety of young people took place in different countries across Europe.

Still there is **a lot to be done** especially that (on the basis of Seminar in 2007):

- risk management is often dealt with on national level, there's no jurisprudence on European level;
- national-level legislation is constantly evolving;
- partners do not necessarily interpret the legislation in the same way;
- risk assessment has a cultural dimension (perception of risk is influenced by one's cultural environment).

Considering this as well as the lack of knowledge and understanding of protection and safety in projects among promoters and participants, **we believe international trainings on risk assessment and management are needed**. We also believe that they should consider not only youth exchanges but other projects of international and intercultural character implemented in frame of the Youth in Action Programme.

### 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

**The aim** of the training course is:

- To increase the quality of international projects in the Youth in Action Programme through the development of participants' competence in risk assessment and risk management.

#### **Objectives:**

- To work towards developing a common understanding of risk
- To reflect on individual perception of risk
- To reflect on the influence of culture on risk perception
- To reflect on and be able to identify the factors of vulnerability of young people
- To be able to identify risk in international environment
- To understand and be able to do a risk assessment for Youth in Action projects (before and during implementation)
- To understand and be able to identify risks in different phases of project implementation
- To reflect on and get to know how to involve young people in the process of identification and reduction of risk in projects
- To get to know and be able to use crisis management
- To reflect on educational dimension of risk
- To experience various tools and methods that can facilitate risk management
- To exchange good practice in risk management used in different European organisations

#### 4. PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

There were **21 participants** from **13 different countries**.

The group was composed from youth workers and youth leaders who:

- work directly with young people;
- have experience in international project management (at least one project that s/he coordinated);
- value the subject of risk management and have an interest in discovering it;
- are motivated to work on the topic in their youth projects afterwards;
- are from an organisation that is in a position to implement future youth projects or has their projects approved by the National Agency (we will work together to improve the quality of future projects);
- are committed to attend for the full duration of the course;
- are 18 years old or older;
- are residents of the Youth in Action Programme Countries (27 EU countries + Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Turkey and Croatia), SEE and EECA regions (there were three or four places for participants from SEE and EECA countries).

#### 5. TEAM OF TRAINERS

The trainer's team was composed of experts from the field of risk management in youth projects and with experience and excellent knowledge of the Youth in Action programme.

In the team were:

- **Anna Szlęk:** cross-cultural psychologist and trainer working for the Trainers' Pool of the Polish National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme. Anna organises and conducts national and international workshops and training courses for young people and adults. Topics in which she specialises include: Youth in Action Programme, project management, active participation of young people, supporting young people through coaching and counselling, non-formal education philosophy and methodology, building leadership competences, risk management, intercultural learning and education, supporting youth organisations in their development.
- **Daragh Kennedy:** Daragh has been working with young people since 2001 and manages a youth service developing opportunities with young people to get involved in their community. He has been involved in managing youth exchanges for young people with fewer opportunities. He is a trainer on the Irish National Agency's network of trainers and has worked on various national and international training projects i.e. EVS On Arrival and Midway Training, Risk Management for EVS Mentors, Child Protection Training and Adult Protection Training. He also works as a Child Protection Officer for a national organisation. Daragh has a passion for seeing the ideas and concepts that are explored in the training room brought into reality.
- **Magdalena Malinowska:** from the Polish National Agency of Youth in Action Programme.

## 6. PROGRAMME

The programme (see in Annex 1) is designed to **support participants** in recognizing the way they perceive risk and to apply the learning into their work with young people in their organisations. The participants were coming from various levels of understanding of what risk is so the programme was designed to ensure that from an early stage the participants would have a common understanding of what risk is. **The programme focused** on the relationship between culture and risk and the various elements that shape people's reaction to risk i.e. laws, customs, attitudes, life experience, reactions to new environments, the use of power and how abuse is defined in different cultures.

Once the foundation was set in terms of people's **understanding of risk** and how they think about risk it was time to build ways to manage risks when they appear. Risk management 1&2 brought the participants into **the Youth in Action Programme** and challenged them to manage the risks that they could be faced during all the stages of an international youth project i.e. planning, partner finding, application, implementation, final report and follow up. Once the risks were identified the process for assessing the risks was introduced so that the controls could be put in place to manage the risks ensuring that they were reduced where possible.

Despite all the planning things can go wrong when working with young people so the programme focused on managing **crises situations** in international youth projects by using **real life scenarios** asking the participants to agree how they would react and manage this situation that was presented to them.

The next part of the programme focused on **developing ways of including young people** in managing risks. Many times there are opportunities missed by organisations to involve young people in controlling risks so this is an ideal opportunity to explore the learning of new competencies and skills at a young age.

The final part of the programme enabled the participants to **process their own learning** during the training course and to focus on the **educational dimension of risk**. They were asked to reflect on what they learned and to record practical steps that they can take to improve their practice in their work ensuring that risks can be identified and controlled. There was an input on **Youthpass** and participants were facilitated to start the process of recording the competencies they gained during the training course.

The programmes included **daily reflection groups** where the participants discussed aspects of the day's learning and a representative from each group reported the main issues arising to the trainers ensuring a flow of information throughout the programme. **The final evaluation** consisted of a form and interactive methods capturing the mood and atmosphere of the participants. The final feedback was taken in terms of their perception of risk and if it has changed as a result of the training course. The majority said that they now have a greater appreciation of what risk is and how to manage it in their work.

## 7. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The course was based on the principles and practice of **non-formal education** taking into account participants' needs, motivations and experiences. We planned a variety of methods to allow involvement of participants with different learning styles and to ensure a balance between theory and practice. **We used:** workshops, simulation exercises, inputs, presentations, discussions, debates etc.

Communication between participants and mutual understanding was encouraged in order to enable 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 individual and group learning. The inputs from the trainers were timed in such a way as to compliment the stage of the learning process so that the contributions from the participants were reinforced or clarified by accurate summaries and observations. Room was given for **regular feedback, reflection and evaluations** and the trainers ensured that the programme was adjusted according to the needs of the group and the issues identified from the reflection groups.

## 8. OUTCOMES

**The feedback** that the trainers received from the reflection groups were mainly positive with many of the participants being challenged to think about issues and ways that they work in a different way. **The level of engagement** from the participants during the training was very good and proved that they were there to learn and that the content was meeting many of their needs. Some of the main outcomes listed below have been taken from the final evaluation sheets and from the trainer's observations during the course:

- The methods that were used seemed to suit the learning styles of most of the participants which enabled them to learn at a pace that they were comfortable with.
- The training course was the first time that one of the participants was outside of her own country on her own. This was a very big risk for her and a great outcome for her to achieve.
- Participants' quotes regarding their learning experiences;
  - "Risk can be everywhere and we should be careful to manage it in our projects"
  - "That risk can be interesting and a tool to learn from"
  - "Different countries – different laws"
  - "How to measure risk in practice"
  - "An experience where I changed my opinion which I had for many years (moving debate)"
  - "Be calm during Risk Assessment and Crisis Management"
  - "Every tool or knowledge was important because I was not good in perceiving certain situations"
  - "Risk assessment was a learning curve for me. The exercise around the hotel looking for risky situations shocked me"
- Many of the participants said that they learned a lot from the methods that were used and that they will take them and use them in their own work with their colleagues and young people.

- The trainers planned a training programme that would bring the participants on a journey of learning that would build in intensity and flow so that all the participants would arrive at a common place together at the end. From the evaluation and the feedback sessions we are confident that all the participants learned a lot and have come away from the training with fresh perspectives on risk and how to manage them in international contexts. Some quotes as follows:
  - I will take knowledge and abilities, which are helpful when you work with others (with youth but not only at work). I can share with other members of the organisation.
  - "For sure this made me stronger in how to deal with youth since I had learned to think in a simple different way to things."
  - "The information about the importance of risk. I will teach it to the people of my organisation and apply it in all the projects."
  - "Everything is going to be implemented in my risk assessment and manage for future projects."
  - "Different games, experiences of other people, creative exercises etc. I'll try to apply them in my organisation for seminars with young people that I work."
  - "The "light bulb" moment especially with the petal (flower) exercise. It was great to work as small groups for this and everyone got a turn in each station so you got a good idea of the steps involved to carry out the full process."

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been identified by the trainers and have been influenced by the experience of the training course, personal work experiences and feedback from the participants.

- Risk management is an important issue in the context of international youth projects and it should receive **priority** consideration in future plans **within the Youth in Action Programme**.
- There should be a **coordinated strategy** developed and implemented to ensure that risk management training is part of each national context.
- Due to the various levels of understanding of risk across the 13 countries represented the trainers would recommend that **basic awareness of risk management** training courses are developed in each national context and delivered in the native tongue of that nation ensuring the maximum impact of learning and understanding is achieved.
- **Training of Trainers in risk management** is continued to be rolled out to appropriate trainers that are qualified to plan and deliver international and/or national risk management training programmes.
- **Future risk management training** programmes should be promoted to youth workers and leaders who are involved in developing international youth projects under the Youth in Action Programme.
- Risk management training courses **should be developed** to meet the specific needs of each action within the Youth in Action Programme.
- Risk'n'Roll participants who apply for Youth in Action projects should be **encouraged** to produce evidence of how they are managing the risks in their project and that this information is fed back to the working group so that future training can be developed to ensure the standards are improved and kept to a high level.



Time	Sunday 2.10.2011	Monday 3.10.2011	Tuesday 4.10.2011	Wednesday 5.10.2011	Thursday 6.10.2011	Friday 7.10.2011
8:00 – 9.30	Arrival	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
9.30 – 11.30		Integration session  Group agreement/contract	Culture and Risk	Risk management Part I	Involvement of young people in risk management	Departure
11.30 – 12:00		Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	
12.00 – 13.30		Context of training Program presentation Expectations and contributions	Factors of Vulnerability & Definitions of Abuse	Risk management Part II	Educational dimension of risk	
13:30 – 15.30		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
15:30 – 16.30		Perception of risk Part I	Risk in international environment	Crisis management Tools in Risk Management	Youthpass	
16:30 – 17:00		Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	
17.00 – 18.00		Perception of risk Part II	Risk assessment	Final Reflection group	Evaluation of TC	
18.00 – 19.00		Reflection groups	Reflection groups	18:00 Trip to Warsaw		
19.00		18.30 Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner in Warsaw	
20:30	Getting to know each other	Intercultural evening	Tools/ideas to manage risk - good practice sharing		Farewell party	