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Social Cohesion and Inclusion of Young People

Access to Social Rights for Young People from Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods

A two-year project of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe aimed at developing youth work and youth policy responses to exclusion, discrimination and violence affecting young people in multicultural disadvantaged neighbourhoods

LONG TERM TRAINING COURSE

July 2009 – March 2011

**Introduction Seminar
20 – 30 September 2009
European Youth Centre Strasbourg**

Course description

Call for participants

With the support of the Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs

Background for the project

Migration flows and urban concentration in Europe have very often resulted in a growing number of multicultural communities and neighbourhoods. In and around many cities, the social and economic imbalances associated with migrant and minority communities have led to the development of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, where diversity is also accompanied by poverty and often with marginalisation or exclusion. This is sometimes accompanied by different forms and levels of de facto social segregation, discrimination and violence.

At times of economic and social crisis, the feelings of powerlessness and anxiety about the future perspectives risk deepening local tensions and underlying conflicts. Realities are very different from country to country and from city to city; diverse also are the responses of local and national authorities. Rarely, however, are the root causes addressed; at best, policy responses seem to address epiphenomena (e.g. youth violence or delinquency) at times of critical events or media focus.

The situation of young people in these areas often serves as a barometer of the integration and cohesion within the community and with society at large. Growing up lacking faith in their own future, often feared by the institutions and adults, many young people seem doomed to confirm the assumption that for some people bad luck appears to be hereditary. The problems are often multi-dimensional and so the responses need to be inter-sectorial. This complexity, however, can not justify lack of action or response. On the contrary, it should stimulate cooperation, creativity and determination in order to prevent escalation of conflicts and, essentially, make sure that the social (human) rights of the young people concerned are not denied or violated.

Youth policy and youth work are of course directly concerned by these situations. Youth workers and youth organisations are often at the forefront of projects designed to ease tensions, provide alternative non-formal education or leisure time activities, counter discrimination and exclusion and, generally promote participation and citizenship. Often, however, these responses are insufficient in number and sustainability. At European level, few possibilities exist to share experiences and learn from each other.

The youth policy of the Council of Europe aims at providing young people – girls and boys, young women and young men – with equal opportunities and experiences which enable them to develop the knowledge, skills and competences to play a full part in society.

In this respect, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe reaffirmed, in November 2008, the importance of human rights and social cohesion as pillars for the youth policy of the organisation, including

- “- Ensuring young people’s full enjoyment of human rights and human dignity, and encourage their commitment in this regard”; (...)
- Supporting young people’s autonomy and well being, as well as their access to decent living conditions (...)”¹

Youth work and youth policy responses: a two-year project for youth workers

In this context, the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe is initiating a two-year project to share experiences and develop innovative and effective youth work and youth

¹ Resolution CM/Res (2008)23 on the youth policy of the Council of Europe

policy responses to exclusion, discrimination and violence affecting young people in multicultural disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

The project objectives are:

- To address situations of conflict and exclusion of young people living in multicultural environments through non-formal education and youth work projects;
- To develop conceptual and practical means of translating intercultural dialogue into the realities of youth work;
- To explore and identify means for innovative youth work projects with young people at risk of exclusion and violence;
- To initiate, support and evaluate thirty-five innovative pilot projects with a high multiplier effect across Europe;
- To address situations of exclusion, conflict and violence affecting young people through partnerships between youth work, youth policy and local authorities;
- To consolidate results of the “all different – all equal” European youth campaign in relation to diversity, participation and human rights.

The project will be based on training youth workers/leaders working in disadvantaged neighbourhoods with young people who face difficulties in exercising their social human rights. The course will develop their skills and competences in setting up projects for integration and in sharing them with colleagues across Europe.

Each participant in the course is expected to develop a concrete project with young people, based on active participation, intercultural learning and human rights education. An internet site and e-learning platform will allow for communication between the project leaders and young people during the project implementation and evaluation.

The projects of the participants should serve as a basis for a policy recommendation on the access of young people to social rights.

The course will be developed in partnership with local authorities. The local authorities concerned will be those where the projects of the participants are based and should therefore be involved from an early stage of the long term project.

Aims and objectives of the course

In this context, the long term training course aims at:

To develop the competences of youth workers/youth leaders to contribute to combating the social exclusion of young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods through the development of concrete projects.

Specific objectives

- To develop participants' competences in developing and running a youth project for social inclusion based on intercultural learning, human rights education and participation;
- To familiarise participants with European youth programmes and policies (Council of Europe and European Commission) and the values, mission, structure and ways of working of the Council of Europe and in particular the Directorate of Youth and Sport;
- To concretely address situations of conflict and exclusion of young people living in multicultural disadvantaged neighbourhoods through non-formal education and youth work projects by the course participants;

- To explore and develop conceptual and practical means of translating intercultural dialogue into the realities of youth work;
- To identify and try out criteria for innovative youth work projects with young people at risk of exclusion and violence;
- To initiate, support and evaluate up to thirty five innovative pilot projects with a high multiplier effect across Europe;
- To share knowledge and experiences on challenges to human and social rights faced by young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Europe;
- To support the implementation of cross-sectorial and interdisciplinary youth work and youth policy by associating local authorities, youth research and youth policy development to youth work;
- To contribute to the recognition of youth work and non-formal education at local and national levels;
- To support the implementation of the objectives of the Agenda 2020 of the Council of Europe in relation to the social inclusion of young people.

Competences to be developed:

The course will develop the participants' skills and competences in setting up projects for integration and in sharing them with colleagues across Europe. In view of this, the participants/youth workers will receive training on:

- a thorough understanding of social rights as human rights and of the main European mechanisms and instruments for their protection and promotion at international and European level, including the European Social Charter;
- knowledge about the relevant programmes and instruments of the Council of Europe and other international organisations;
- knowledge about recent research results and the ongoing research projects in relation to access to social rights and young people;
- critical thinking skills and the ability to create multiple perspectives on contemporary human rights issues and dilemmas related to young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods or exposed to conflict and violence;
- Needs-based youth policy approaches and its relevance in youth projects;
- Intercultural learning and its applicability in local youth work;
- Management of cultural diversity with youth groups;
- Integrated policy approaches to local youth projects, in particular in relation to the development of partnerships with various institutions and partners concerned by youth policy and youth work at local and regional level;
- Non-formal learning and its role in promoting the autonomy and social integration of young people;
- Conflict transformation with young people;
- Developing democratic and participatory approaches with young people;
- Project planning and project management cycles;
- Communication and presentation skills;
- Networking and negotiation skills;
- Fund-raising and financial management;
- an understanding of key concepts related to the youth work and their role in transformative learning approaches;
- European youth programmes and policies (Council of Europe and European Commission).

Expected results/outcomes

For the course participants, their organisations and local authorities involved in the projects:

- Improvement in the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights and new approaches to conflict transformation and violence prevention;
- Increased possibilities for development of new projects with young people and their efficacy and sustainability;
- Enlarged possibilities for networking with other projects and local authorities across Europe;
- Support to and recognition of the role of partnerships between youth work institutions, local authorities and youth researchers;
- Greater visibility for their projects;
- Institutional recognition and support for the local projects and initiatives by the Council of Europe;
- Increased competences for using European youth programmes and policies by local youth projects.

For the Council of Europe and its partners in youth policy, it is expected that the course will result in:

- Thirty-five youth workers trained in non-formal education, intercultural dialogue, conflict transformation and human rights education;
- Thirty-five pilot projects set up at local level reaching and involving potentially more than 1.000 young people;
- Quality criteria for future similar projects identified in view of the multiplying function of the project;
- Prevention of conflict, violence and exclusion in suburban neighbourhoods across Europe;
- Increased experience and expertise in fighting social exclusion and addressing conflict situations in multi-cultural environments;
- Further recognition and understanding of the role of non-formal education and youth work for social inclusion of young people;
- A publication with results and examples of successful practice by the participants;
- Enlarged networks of youth workers and trainers across Europe;
- Youth policy guidelines and recommendations on the social inclusion of young people in multicultural environments.

Methodology and calendar of the course

The course will include two residential trainings, first in September 2009 and second, on the evaluation of projects, in November 2010. In between these seminars the participants are expected to develop and start a project based on the needs of young people with fewer opportunities addressing the problems in access to social rights.

This methodological approach will allow for a good balance between theory and practice, between learning and practical implementation, and understanding training as a process that is necessarily longer than the duration of a training seminar. A diversity of working methods will be used, the starting point of the course being participants' experiences. Interventions from experts will help set the theoretical framework for the course.

The preparation of the course by the participants may include tools for self-evaluation and personal preparation which will be used by the trainers when finalising and designing the programme of the course. Internet-based tools may also be proposed to this end.

The course consists of four phases stretching over a period of one and half years, including face-to-face and distance learning elements (mostly through e-learning), in which each phase and learning feature is equally important.

Phase 1 – Introduction and preparation - the Internet

July 2009 – September 2009

This phase will serve to create a common ground for communication and develop a learning culture for the course. Based on an e-learning platform, this phase will include:

- getting to know each other
- building up a learning community
- learning how to work with the e-learning technology
- self-perception and self-assessment of competences and preparation for the seminar
- tools for analysis and understanding the social situation and conflicts of the young people concerned by the participants' projects.

Phase 2 - Initial Training Seminar

20 – 30 September 2009, European Youth Centre Strasbourg, France

This seminar will address most of the knowledge-related issues described in the competences. Through input from experts, practical workshops and sharing of experiences, the participants will expand their understanding of the social rights, the underlying causes and develop needed skills.

A substantial part of the seminar will also be devoted to developing and shaping the participants' projects to be implemented during the next phases.

Phase 3 - Project development and implementation

September 2009 – November 2010 - Participants' countries and the Internet

During this phase the participants will work on the implementation of their project. They will benefit from the support and mentoring of the trainers and advice from experts and the Reference Group of the project. Project related meetings may be held, bringing together similar projects.

E-learning will play an important role in this phase, with exploration of themes and methodological issues related to the course and to the projects.

A mid-term seminar bringing together the participants and local authorities involved in the projects could be envisaged in Spring 2010 in one of the European Youth Centres. This will be confirmed at a later stage of the course planning.

Phase 4 - Evaluation seminar

November 2010 (dates to be confirmed), European Youth Centre Budapest, Hungary

The seminar will evaluate the overall relevance and achievements of the course. This should be complemented by exchanges of best practice and the consolidation of the network of expertise generated by the course. The e-learning tools will remain available after this final phase (depending on the needs and commitments of the participants).

Phase 5 – Evaluation and consolidation

A final evaluation meeting will review the results of the course and connect to the other objectives and measures of the Social Inclusion work of the Directorate of Youth and Sport. This meeting will probably be held at the beginning of 2011.

NB: The contents and methodology of each individual phase of the course may be subject to changes and adjustments during its implementation.

The participants in the long-term training course and their institutional partners will also be associated to other activities of the programme of the Directorate of Youth and Sport related to Social Inclusion, hence increasing the possibilities for further learning from the project and for a better integration between educational and policy dimensions of the project.

Profile of participants

The course is organised and planned for:

- Local youth leaders and/or youth workers active at grassroots level with disadvantaged young people and in disadvantaged neighbourhoods;
- Other educators working with young people with fewer opportunities to participate;

who are:

- experienced in working with young people with fewer opportunities from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, in particularly those faced with discrimination and violence
- interested in developing strategies and ways to improve social cohesion and access to social rights with young people
- motivated to share their experiences and to learn throughout the course in accordance with the methodology proposed
- committed to learning with others and able to attend the full duration of the course in all its phases,;
- ready and able to create a project combating the social exclusion of young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and demonstrate active ownership of their project by the disadvantaged youth concerned;
- supported by their organisation or association, or other network to ensure multiplication, dissemination of results and changes in policies;
- if possible, supported by a local or regional authority;
- able to dedicate on average 2 hours per week for e-learning and collaboration with the other course actors through the Internet;
- able to work in English or in French

Working languages

The course will be held in English and French. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided for the residential seminars. Documents for the seminars and for the e-learning phase will be made available in both languages to the extent of the possible and needed.

Financial conditions

Board and lodging for the residential seminars are provided and paid for by the Council of Europe at the European Youth Centre.

Travel expenses for the seminars are fully reimbursed according to the rules of the Council of Europe, Directorate of Youth and Sport.

An enrolment fee of 60 € is due from each participant for each residential seminar. This fee will be deducted from the amount to be reimbursed for travel expenses.

The Council of Europe will not reimburse the costs of using the Internet during the distant learning phases. Participation in these phases will not require the purchase of extra software by the participants.

Procedure for applications

All applicants must apply using an Internet based form. The form is available at <http://courses.opencontent.it>. In case of difficulties, please contact Gabriella Tisza at gabriella.tisza@coe.int .

The letters of support for the candidate should explain the need and the value for the sending organisation or authority and for the candidate to attend this course. If an organisation wishes to propose more than one candidate, the order of priority should be clearly indicated and justification for the priority list should be provided. Applicants without recommendation letter will not be accepted. The recommendation letter can either be uploaded on the website mentioned above, or sent separately by e-mail to nicoleta.dumitru@coe.int . Finally, the letter can also be faxed to +33 (0)3 88 41 27 77.

The applicants must provide also a brief outline of the project that they intend to develop and implement during the course. The project outline is important to illustrate what the applicant has in mind and the social context within which the project is placed. The possible acceptance of an applicant does not imply, for the Council of Europe, automatic support or acceptance of the project.

35 participants will be selected by the preparatory team on the basis of the profile outlined above. The team will try to respect the organisations' priorities as far as possible, but also to ensure a geographical balance, gender balance, different types of experiences, diversity of cultural and minority backgrounds, organisations, institutions or projects.

The selection of candidates will take place in the end of June 2009. Selected candidates will be informed of their selection during the first half of July 2009. A waiting list may be drawn up.

Deadline for applications

All applications must be completed and validated by **15 June 2009**.