

EUROMED TRAINING SEMINAR – INTERCULTURAL LEARNING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION (MAY 2005)

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

This was a unique training the trainers project which sought to break away from traditional thinking around the training and education of young people (that “adults” are the experts and are best equipped to educate young people) in that the young people themselves were the “educators”.

Research shows that young people are more likely to listen to, and be more willing to learn from, other young people. This training course was underpinned by the principle that young people are the experts in their own lives and therefore aimed to offer young people the opportunity to gain the skills and knowledge necessary to engage their peers, at local, national and international level, in learning experiences relevant to their needs and preferences in relation to conflict resolution and intercultural learning.

This project enabled young people from East and West to work together to create learning programmes that would enable them to work with their peers at local, national and international level, in the areas of conflict resolution and intercultural learning. With support from the Peer 2 Peer 4 You Europe co-ordinator Peer Education Training was facilitated, utilising tools and techniques from **TELLING IT LIKE IT IS**®, by young people (**Peer Educators**), from three of the participating countries who have already undergone peer education training, thus enabling them to share their skills and knowledge with their peers at international level. In addition all other participating countries had responsibility for a specific necessary role within the programme thus ensuring that all participants contributed to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the programme.

Working methods included, study visits, workshops, open space and intercultural activities and events. Each participating country had responsibility for one key aspect of the training course, these responsibilities were agreed and distributed (along with a “general” information pack which included brief organisational profiles) in advance, to enable participants to prepare for their designated tasks.

We used a number of monitoring and evaluation tools and techniques during and at the end of the project these included: Mood Meters, Daily Diaries, Daily Evaluation Meetings and a final evaluation Questionnaire.

We would like to thank Scottish National Heritage for supporting the project by waiving entry fees to Arbroath Abbey and Angus Council Cultural Services Department for giving us use of The Pictavia Centre as a training venue for one day at no cost.

OUTCOMES

The following outlines **1)** participants views in terms of their personal learning and development, the content, context and innovative character of the working methods vis a vis **ALL** participants contributed to the efficiency and effectiveness of the project and **2)** the future proposed projects discussed and agreed, in principle, during the course of the project:

1)

"My personal learning and development has increased 90%.... It was a great experience to gain more skills and learn about peer education"

"My levels of understanding have increased 75%... This project was a good chance to clarify many terms considering peer education.... From my point of view, and I have many previous experiences, I think these methods helped us to build a good group. Consequently, I will take this experience back home and apply it in the projects which we will hold in the future".

"I learnt a lot about the other cultures".

"I learnt that the Middle Eastern countries people are very strong willed.... I had many exciting and interesting discussions with them".

"I now have more respect and understanding for other cultures... every person has a story to tell".

"I think that I will use these skills in our coming projects and with members of our organisation".

"I learnt that not all Arabic countries are Muslim countries".

"It did not change my view on how people learn but it changed my view on how I learn. I've realised things I did not know before....".

"I understand more about people's behaviours. Now I have a better understanding of conflict resolution"

"I learnt a lot about Arabic countries.... And that people from Mediterranean countries are never on time!!!".

"This project was a good learning experience because of the mixture of western and Arabic countries".

"I realised how lucky I am as a western person to have my freedom, in other countries people don't have that".

"The implementation of projects in the community will now be easier. I liked the way that the hosts acted as peers so that all countries were sharing the education and training. This course was even better than previous training I have attended".

"I really appreciate the co-ordinators team for this high quality project". There is no doubt that this project enriched my life and character experiences.... also I learned enough new things here to enhance my skills".

"I am always a trainer or co-ordinator, it was a different feeling being a participant, it really enriched my experience and I have learned to be more "coooooo" when I am a trainer".

"Every time I attend such trainings I believe more how effective peer education is, this training gave me a lot of new ideas to spread back in my country".

2)

ARAB 48 (ISRAEL)

Arab 48 proposed a workcamp in the training course delegate's hometown. This would involve working with young people from area to make environmental improvements. Key outcomes, in addition to the obvious environmental improvements, would be creating better tolerance and understanding between east and west and involving adults and young people alike in the process.

POLAND

Poland proposed action training on Raising Awareness of Human Rights. Work would be undertaken by Peer 2 Peer Euromed partner organisations with local youth. The proposal is in three parts: 1. Theoretical: partners prepare workshops, 2. Practical: partners facilitate workshops in local schools, 3. Evaluation: partners prepare scenario on how to provide workshops in Human Rights in schools. 10 days action training for partner organisations in Poland would precede project, local youth would also be invited to attend.

SWEDEN

Sweden proposed intercultural learning through music workshops. The project would take place in Sweden during the summer months -not a good idea to go to Sweden in the winter unless you like below zero temperatures and lots of snow!!

TURKEY

Turkey proposed an exchange that would work towards destroying prejudices. This would take place in Istanbul (a place where cultures meet) and involve workshops on peer education, conflict resolution and intercultural learning. A camping experience where each country would have responsibility for cooking a meal from their country would be included in the experience.

HOLLAND

Holland proposed a partner organisation/project website. This would enable partners to share information not only with each other but also with the rest of the world via the Internet. Holland already has funding in place for this project under action 3 of the YOUTH programme in response to the Peer 2 Peer 4 You project. Each partner would have their own homepage that they would be responsible for updating on a regular basis.

Holland also proposed that existing peer educators (partners in Peer 2 Peer 4 You and partners in Peer 2 Peer Euromed) come together in one of the Euromed partner countries and travel to areas/young people which would not normally benefit from international experiences and undertake peer education training there.

LEBANON

Lebanon proposed a Human Rights promotion based on PEER 2 PEER education among university students from different cultures, religions and ethnicities, as a means to decreasing stereotypes and conflicts. The event would be held in a "neutral town". The project would involve three phases: Recruitment of peer educators, training of peer educators, and recruitment of peer group to facilitate the Human Rights promotion.

JORDAN

Jordan proposed an exchange on the theme of Intercultural Learning based on Peer Education. The exchange would aim to enhance and promote cultural diversity in a globalised context using peer education skills. Each partner country would spend a day presenting their culture, beliefs, lifestyles and traditions both from the past and the present with the aim of promoting the view that we are all different but all equal.

ORGANISATION PROFILES

SCOTLAND

Article 12 in Scotland is a youth led Human Rights NGO that works to promote youth rights, as set out in the European White Paper on Youth and other international Human Rights Charters, through the medium of peer education.

HOLLAND

Raster works in the fields of social welfare and integration in the community of Maassluis. Our overall aim is to offer inspiring, stimulating and empowering advice and support to citizens and organisations that want to make positive contributions to society and improve the quality of life for the citizens of the area.

POLAND

European Youth Club in Olsztynek is an organisation that works with young people from rural areas. We work to empower them to make their own life choices. We are members of Peer 2 Peer 4 You Europe and the European Network of Animation and are active in all actions of the YOUTH Programme.

SWEDEN

Youth Service Centre in Eksjo is responsible for developments projects with young people from a variety of social, cultural and educational backgrounds. Our overall aims are to build cross-cultural bridges, to work towards peace and democracy and to promote respect for human rights and to contribute to international environmental knowledge based on Local Agenda 21.

ARAB 48 (ISRAEL)

Baladna Association for Arab Youth is a developmental and capacity building agency for Arab-Palestinian youth in Israel. Baladna is comprised of young, educated Arab-Palestinians who reject their marginalisation by governing institutions. Baladna directly mobilises young people through educational programmes and cultural activities.

LEBANON

Nouveaux Droits de l'Homme (New Human Rights) is a volunteer led NGO whose goals are the defence and the extension of human rights. Since 1995 the organisation has monitored the human rights situation in Lebanon. Our actions are divided into three different programmes: Research and Publications, Education and Training and Assistance and Intervention.

TURKEY

Anatolia Scout Association is a non-political volunteer led NGO that works to create scouting and voluntary activities for young people. We are currently involved in establishing National Youth Council for Turkey. Our members come from a variety of social, cultural and educational backgrounds.

JORDAN

Friends of Culture Jordan Forum (ASHAB) believe that the young people of today are the leaders of tomorrow. Thus, young people are our main concern particularly young people who belong to NGO's, who are active and motivated in youth work and who are willing to take further advanced steps in creating, promoting and managing quality projects.





Hosting sports and cultural events

MONTROSE is hosting two international sports and cultural events over the next week.

From tomorrow the town will welcome two dozen young people from various parts of the world for a training course aimed at promoting world peace.

On Sunday golfers begin arriving in town for the start of the Carnoustie Country Classic with a welcome reception at the Links Hotel.

The tournament, which continues until Thursday, has a record international field of 160 men and lady players plus a waiting list.

Funded by the European Commission and co-ordinated by Article 12 in Scotland, a Montrose-based human rights organisation, the training course for

young people focuses on resolving international conflict and issues arising from differences in culture. It is aimed at enabling the youth of both secular and Muslim countries to work together to identify and address common issues of concern relating to cultural stereotypes and East/West conflicts.

Delegates, aged 18-29, are coming together for the course, which continues until May 21 from Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Palestine, The Netherlands, Sweden and Poland as well as Scotland.

During the week they will train as peer educators in conflict resolution and intercultural tolerance and understanding.

On returning to their home countries, using the skills and knowledge gained

at the training course, they will establish local and national peer education projects with the aim of facilitating future positive intercultural partnerships and projects.

Now in its fourth year, the Carnoustie Country Classic golf tournament is a 72-hole Stableford competition which gives players of any ability the chance to play over four courses: Monifieth Medal, Panmure, the Carnoustie Championship and Montrose Medal.

This will be the first year participants have stayed in Montrose, to be bussed to and from the various courses during the week.

Operator of the Montrose courses, Montrose Golf Links, will act as the administrative office for the tournament, and chairman

Alistair Macfarlane, is delighted at the town's prominent role and the spin-off boost it should bring to the local economy of the other Angus towns.

Montrose councillor Terry Wood said, "These two major events in the same week are a terrific boost for Montrose."

"I am sure everything will be done to ensure a warm welcome to both the players in the golf classic and the young delegates travelling to attend what should be a very worthwhile training exercise."

"Both these important international events provide an excellent opportunity to flag up the great merits of Montrose to visitors, and place the burgh clearly on the world map."

No culture clash

Multinational youth project dispelled stereotypes

MONTROSE has been playing host this week to a group of young people from eight different countries taking part in a unique cultural project.

Organised by Montrose-based youth-led network Article 12, youngsters aged 18 to 29 from Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Palestine, The Netherlands, Sweden, Poland and Scotland have come together to train as peer educators in the fields of conflict resolution and intercultural tolerance and understanding.

Article 12 national co-ordinator in Scotland Lynne Tammi said: "This course normally takes place in Edinburgh but we decided to have it in Montrose this year to give the young people the opportunity to see more of Scotland."

"The feedback has been excellent. They have said how beautiful and green the country is, because many of these people have come from places like Jordan where it is almost all desert."

The group of 24 young people have been given the opportunity to work together on a number of activities to identify and address common issues of concern relating to cultural stereotypes and East-West conflicts.

They have already visited the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh, where they met representatives from the British Council, and

today (Thursday) will take a tour of cultural sights in Angus and spend the morning working at Pictavia.

On returning home participants will then establish local and national peer education projects to promote intercultural partnerships.

Mrs Tammi said: "Given the current tensions in the world there is lack of knowledge about Islamic countries. This course is about sharing knowledge and dispelling stereotypes, which is a two-way thing. It is about finding out about different cultures and the conflicts that are facing people in Lebanon and Palestine, for example, and learning how to work with their own young people to address such conflicts."

"I see this as an ideal opportunity for young people to set aside tensions and take the time to look at how they can work together for a more tolerant world for all."

Mrs Tammi, who has lived in Montrose for the past 10 years, also established Article 12 a decade ago. Having worked for Save The Children throughout the world, she came up with the idea for Article 12.

Funded through charitable trusts, the Scottish Executive and the European Commission, it aims to give young people the opportunity to voice their own opinions as laid out in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).