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Euro-Arab youth co-operation

Training of Trainers for Democratic Youth Participation

Tunis, 8-16 December 2012

A training for youth trainers and multipliers from European and Arab countries to support democratic youth participation and intercultural dialogue



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Executive Summary

A – Background of the training

The Euro-Arab youth cooperation in the field of youth between the Council of Europe (COE), the League of Arab States (LAS) was initiated more than 15 years ago. Since 2005 cooperation on South-Mediterranean cooperation on youth policy was pushed in partnership also with the European Union. This cooperation aims at developing a common understanding and exchange of ideas on specific issues of concern for youth policy in Europe and South Mediterranean region.

Since 2006, other national and international stakeholders of youth policy in European and South Mediterranean countries have become involved and extended the framework of this informal cooperation. The activities undertaken under this partnership brought together youth researchers, governmental institutions responsible for youth policy and non-governmental youth organisations in European and South Mediterranean countries.

The cooperation has supported the process of the Euro-Arab Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (EACMYO), created possibilities for direct exchanges between South Mediterranean and European youth leaders through relevant Euro-Arab youth fora, and provided opportunities for capacity-building of civil society youth organisations.

The process of changes brought about by the “Arab Spring” in various countries provides the context and drives the need for re-visiting the Euro-Arab cooperation so as to respond to all stakeholders' expectations and to ensure a long-term perspective.

The Council of Europe, the League of Arab States and other partners involved in the process of Euro-Arab and Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, joined efforts to empower & strengthen youth democratic participation, develop their capacity and support them in playing a key role in influencing public policies.

This cooperation builds on the successful experiences of the recent years, which have included training courses in human rights education, a long-term training course on non-formal education and youth projects and a series of activities on youth policy cooperation. This experience has been supported by the Arabic version of Compass¹ – the manual for human rights education with young people and, in the near future, of the Arabic version of Mosaic – the Training Kit for Euro-Mediterranean youth work² as tools for introducing human rights and democracy in youth work and non-formal education activities.

Therefore, the present course came as a first in a series of activities aimed at identifying Euro-Arab young leaders with training and facilitation skills to act as trainers or multipliers in organising inclusive and comprehensive democratic

¹ Online versions available at www.coe.int/compass

² Produced in the framework of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth. See English version at http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/T_kits

youth participation activities in their communities, based on a human rights and intercultural dialogue approach.

Organizing the training in Tunisia, the country which marked the beginning of the Arab Spring is no mere coincidence. The Tunisian government in the August 2012 Euro-Arab conference on Arab Spring and youth participation held in Tunis has committed to create the Mediterranean University for youth and development, involving both Arab and European participants and stakeholders. The timing of the training was also significant as it coincided with the second Anniversary of the Tunisian revolution.

Rui Gomes, Head of the Education and Training Unit of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe emphasized at the opening of the training on the importance of associating young people in the process of democratisation. "No one is born democrat, you need to learn and acquire skills on democratic participation and practices," he said, adding that trainings on the subject matter go in line with what the Council of Europe plans to do in the future at the level of the different activities in the broader Arab and southern Mediterranean regions.

For his part, Dr Khalid Louhichi, Head of the Department of Population and Migration Policies at the League of Arab States, said that "the training contextualizes the different realities related to human rights education and democracy as practiced in different countries and should provide participants with necessary tools to understand the processes related to democratization and participation." He added that "the training came as a direct and concrete follow up of the meetings held in Malta and Tunis in 2012 on youth empowerment and a contribution to turn commitments into action."

B-Aims and objectives

The training course aims to train youth trainers and multipliers from European and Arab countries to develop and support projects and activities for enhancing and developing democratic youth participation.

Objectives

- To develop participants understanding of the concept and practices of democratic youth participation
- To reflect upon, and provide tools for reflection about democracy, human rights and democratic citizenship and their relevance for young people in European and Arab societies
- To share experiences of democratic youth participation projects and criteria for successful projects in this area
- To develop participants' awareness and practical skills about the role of participation in educational processes, particularly non.-formal learning processes
- To familiarise participants with the educational approaches underlying Compass and the T-Kit Mosaic
- To support processes of reform and revitalisation of democratic participation in youth organisations and projects
- To foster Euro-Arab cooperation and exchange between youth organisations and youth leaders.

C- Participants Profile

The League of Arab States and the Council of Europe have each invited 15 youth trainers and leaders (30 in total) aged between 18 and 30 with experience in youth organisations or youth movements. In the selection gender balance (15 Male, 15 female) and spread of the regional representation was respected as much as possible leading to participants coming from North Africa (Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Egypt) and Europe (Spain, Turkey, France, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Romania, Ireland, United Kingdom, Italy, Croatia, Hungary).

Most Arab participants are taking part for the first time in a Euro-Arab activity. The majority is politically involved; some have actually taken an active role in a series of Arab-Spring protests calling for dignity, freedom, social justice and a halt to corruption and dictatorship. They look into playing an active role in the democratisation process in their respective countries; they seek to be part of the decision making process; and contribute to designing and evaluating public policies that affect them mostly. Many are members of Human Rights organisations or NGOs working on youth civic and democratic participation.

As to the European participants, almost all of them belong to or at least have an experience with Human Rights organisations. Many belong to NGOs dealing with peace building, development and humanitarian action, youth participation, and human rights such as rights of migrants and refugees. Most are looking into acquiring practical experience in the field of Human Rights and Democratic participation, especially when it comes to challenging situations. The majority expressed interest in learning more about current changes in Arab-Spring affected transitional countries, most importantly those who saw the rise of Islamic leadership.

Both Arab and European participants are motivated and very keen to act as multipliers and trainers and put into practice their competences in projects of their organisations and, occasionally, other projects by the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States and their respective partners.

As to their role as trainers, some have experienced confusion about their role and their personal learning plans : they are shown to be more into running projects as young leaders or activists ; while others were deeply into the trainers' role. The trainers' team reflected, at the end of the course, nonetheless that nearly one third has good potentials to be trainers, facilitators or speakers in follow up activities.

D-Course methodology & Content

The course aimed to enhance the participants' competences in Democratic Youth Participation through the exploration of three main concepts:

- Human Rights
- Democracy
- Participation and Citizenship

While working on these three main concepts, intercultural dialogue was meant to be a transversal element resurfacing in the programme throughout the week in different activities due to the nature of the participants group and course. Throughout the training, there was a combination of methodological approaches used including lectures, plenary discussions, experiential learning activities, workshops and reflection groups. In addition, the social and cultural environment of Tunisia allowed the connection of the learning process with some of the realities of young people and youth work today and their understanding of the democratic process that followed the revolution.

Plenary inputs were provided by speakers from the Council of Europe and League of Arab States as well as some activists in the field of Human Rights.

The Non formal learning approach was ensured by using different pedagogical tools and activities from the last edition of the Council of Europe's 'Compass, Manual for Human Rights Education with young people'³ have been used. Also activities and models were used from the 'Have your Say, Manual on the Revised European Charter on the participation of young people in local and Regional Life'.⁴ Using the activities from the manuals aimed to ensure a participatory and experiential approach in the learning process of the participants allowing participants to reflect on the outcomes of the activities and link them to the realities they work in as trainers and youth leaders. Using the activities of the manuals however also aimed to let participants experience such activities and explore how the activity could be used as an educational tool in their work and projects they organise.

e-Course outcomes and recommendations:

In order to outline the major training course outcomes and recommendations, feedback was constantly collected through daily reflection groups, end of training working group evaluations and an evaluation questionnaire.

Overall, the majority of participants think that the aim of the training was mostly achieved and met their expectations. Participants also expressed their satisfaction of their contributions, that of the group and the trainers to the training course and learning. The level of satisfaction according to the evaluations ranges between 4 and 5 on a scale of 1 – 6 (1 = not achieved at all, 6 = fully achieved). Below is a summary of the major outcomes and recommendations of the training.

³ Compass, Manual for Human Rights Education with young people' 2012 edition. www.coe.int/compass

⁴ 'Have Your Say', Manual on the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life. Printed at the Council of Europe. February 2008. <http://book.coe.int> downloadable at this link http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Publications/Have_your_say_en.pdf

1-Course outcomes:

The training outcomes are as follows:

- Space for exchanging experiences between Euro-Arab participants enabled
- Overall satisfaction of learning objectives achieved
- Skills and concepts related to democratic youth participation and Human Rights transmitted to participants
- Potential facilitators and trainers for upcoming projects identified
- Important recommendations for follow-ups provided.

2-Recommendations

Both participants and trainers provided input and recommendations on how to improve the training in the context of Euro-Arab Cooperation. They have recommended the following:

- **Cooperation:** Ensure more involvement of Arab partners in the design and delivery of the program.
- **Preparation:** Assign clear roles for trainers and ensure having a residential preparation meeting three months before the training; allow trainers to read all the participants expectations and make sure the program corresponds to their needs.
- **Logistics:** Improve logistics as they can impact participants and trainers' concentration during the training: Ensure coordination and pay attention to accommodation, transportation and medical attention; avoid heavy agenda and grant some free time for participants to rest.
- **Content & Methods:** Develop more workshops dealing with practical and real situations; avoid having too much energizing exercises and oriented discussions. Also, schedule more focused trainings (divide beginners from advanced participants on different topics), and provide more guidance and feedback during the training.
- **Language:** Equally develop the training in Arabic and English and train more Arabic speakers to deliver Arabic courses, and maintain simultaneous translation with an advanced preparation of conceptual jargon.
- **Opportunity to practice:** Engage participants in future activities by integrating them in the trainers' team, and providing them with support and guidance when needed.
- **More Focused Trainings:** Develop an Advanced Training of Trainers focused on practical cases of "democratic youth participation" and include the soft skills that were not possible to cover during the present training (e.g. debriefing, facilitation, adapting activities, session outlining, intercultural teams, etc.). Also, it is highly important to train more trainers with the aim of creating a mix of Euro-Arab pool of trainers.
- **Projects support:** Encourage both the League of Arab States and the Council of Europe to follow up with participants projects they developed during the training course. These include the organization of shadow visits,

- seminars, and trainings by providing technical assistance and financial resources.
- **Exchange:** Create spaces for exchange between youth of the two sides of the Mediterranean and support the development of alumni.
 - **Expand:** Invite more young people from Middle East (not only from north Africa)
 - **Dialogue:** Create opportunities for Euro Arab participants to dialogue with decision makers in their countries and provide them with the opportunity to make Euro-Arab summer schools
 - **Identify Impact:** Make an evaluation of the impact of the present training on the participants and establish key indicators for evaluation.

Euro-Arab youth co-operation

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I - Background and Context

a- Introduction

Euro-Arab youth cooperation was initiated more than 15 years ago in the Council of Europe with a series of activities in the area of Euro-Arab Dialogue. Nonetheless, the most important area of cooperation in the recent years has been in the Euro-Mediterranean region, in particular through the human rights education and intercultural dialogue of the partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of youth. Such cooperation has been particularly articulated around the issues of intercultural dialogue, youth policy cooperation and human rights education.

The South-Mediterranean youth policy cooperation of the partnership between the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe (COE) in the field of youth, the League of Arab States (LAS) and other actors started in 2005. The cooperation aims at developing a common understanding and exchange of ideas on specific issues of concern for youth policy in Europe and South Mediterranean region.

Since 2006, other national and international stakeholders of youth policy in European and South Mediterranean countries have become involved and extended the framework of this informal cooperation. The activities undertaken under this partnership brought together youth researchers, governmental institutions responsible for youth policy and non-governmental youth organisations in European and South Mediterranean countries.

The cooperation has supported the process of the Euro-Arab Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (EACMYO), created possibilities for direct exchanges between South Mediterranean and European youth leaders through relevant youth fora, and provided opportunities for capacity-building of civil society youth organisations through training courses on human rights education, intercultural dialogue and youth participation.

These activities have also greatly contributed to the objectives of intercultural dialogue and exchange among its different partners and stakeholders.

b- The uprising & Euro-Arab Institutional framework

The winds of the Arab Spring swept through the Middle East and North Africa. Citizens, especially youth, took to the streets calling for the collapse of

dictatorship regimes, and demanding more social justice, political and economic reforms, preservation of civil liberties, more inclusion in decision-making processes and more transparent and democratic institutions responding efficiently to citizen's needs, especially youth.

The Arab spring brought down autocrats (in Tunisia and Egypt), led to the adoption of new constitutions (such as in Morocco) and to political transitions towards more democratic elections in a number of countries.

Parallel to that, Europe has witnessed the birth of movements such as the 'Indignados' as a result of somewhat similar factors in the Arab World, such as corruption, lack of job opportunities, the economic crisis and increased instability and lack of participatory democracy and space for active citizenship.

The events in a number of countries in the Arab region have imposed a new perception of young people's capacities and aspirations. It has contributed to the emergence of a new culture of political activism in which youth are not only part of the political scene, but leading it. In both European and the Arab regions, young people seemed to have realised that their future depends on their own ability to claim their rights and shape their lives.

This process of changes brought about by the "Arab Spring" in various countries provides the context and drives the need for re-visiting the Euro-Arab cooperation so as to respond to all stakeholders' expectations and to ensure a long-term perspective.

The European Union, the Council of Europe and the League of Arab States, held then several Euro-Arab coordination dialogue meetings to listen to youth-led organizations and key stakeholders in the field of policy-making with the aim of evaluating the emerging needs and demands expressed by youth on both sides of the Mediterranean and rethinking how to move this cooperation forward through concrete proposals.

At a seminar about "Spring" revolutions held in Malta in March in 2012⁵, the participants noted that many young people, one year later, were disappointed at the outcomes of the 'process for change' feeling the process has not been completed. A similar feeling of frustration can be noted among young people involved in the "indignados" and "occupy" movements in Europe: their indignation has not gone away, but the results of their actions seem invisible as if the political systems were unable – indifferent – to respond to their concerns.

The effects of the financial, economic and social crisis that affect many European societies have also a potentially negative impact in the quality of democracy. Growing social exclusion and economic insecurity is not only a threat to social stability and cohesion: it is also a risk for democracy, not only because of disillusion with the political systems but also because it creates a breeding ground for political extremism and aggressive nationalism. This applies as well as to many Arab societies, even those seemingly unaffected by political revolutions.

⁵ http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/Euromed/YouthPolicy/Executive_Summary_final.pdf

Despite the deep differences of the demographic and economic realities between European and Arab societies, the challenges posed to the democratic participation of young people have many similar features. They are reinforced by the commonality of means of communication and new forms of participation provided by new media, which tend to amplify the paradox of inclusion and togetherness growing in parallel with exclusion and separation. It is possible to meet on social networks, it is possible to participate and express ourselves online, it is possible to like each other online. But it is not possible to travel, getting a visa is very difficult, it is dangerous to express publicly our thoughts, and perhaps we are actually afraid of meeting each other in real life.

In this context, Democracy and democratic citizenship can be seen as empty concepts with little meaningfulness to young people. Hence, the latter should be associated with the processes of Democratization and democratic citizenship in their respective societies. As no one is born a citizen or a democrat, Education can play a key role: Democracy and human rights need to be learnt and citizenship needs to be practiced. Youth work and youth organisations are of course traditional spaces of practicing democracy and exercising citizenship. But, and regardless of their accessibility and representation, youth organisations, and youth leaders, also need support in learning and practicing democratic participation.

The Council of Europe's youth sector is committed to cooperating and working together with partners in the Southern Mediterranean and Arab regions, chiefly with the League of Arab States, in order to promote intercultural dialogue and the development of youth policy and youth work based on democratic participation of young people.

This cooperation builds on the successful experiences of the recent years, which have included training courses in human rights education, a long-term training course on non-formal education and youth projects and a series of activities on youth policy cooperation. This experience has been supported by the Arabic version of Compass⁶ – the manual for human rights education with young people and, in the near future, of the Arabic version of Mosaic – the Training Kit for Euro-Mediterranean youth work⁷ as tools for introducing human rights and democracy in youth work and non-formal education activities.

The recently-held symposium in Tunis, *Arab spring: Youth participation for the promotion of peace, human rights and fundamental freedoms* confirmed the commitment of intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental partners active in youth cooperation to reinforce this process which, among others, will include:

- The establishment of a Mediterranean University for Youth and Development in Tunisia, which corresponds to the concept of a summer-university and would complete the range of already existing universities on youth and development organised by the Council of Europe's North-South Centre

⁶ Online versions available at www.coe.int/compass

⁷ Produced in the framework of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth. See English version at http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/T_kits

- The creation of an Arab or Maghreb Youth Centre for Training and Development (League of Arab States)
- The development of a regional Euro-Arab online youth platform (League of Arab States)
- The creation of a Network of European and Arab youth researchers.

Furthermore, the Council of Europe, in the framework of its Neighbourhood Co-operation policy and through joint projects with the European Commission is taking an increasingly important role in supporting the consolidation of democratic developments in the South Mediterranean region.

II - About the training course

a- Introduction

The Council of Europe, the League of Arab States and other partners involved in the process of Euro-Arab and Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, joined efforts to empower & strengthen youth democratic participation, develop their capacity and support them in playing a key role in influencing public policies. Therefore, the present course (*see annexes program pages 38-39*) came as a first in a series of activities aimed at identifying Euro-Arab young leaders with training and facilitation skills to act as trainers or multipliers in organising inclusive and comprehensive youth participation activities in their communities, based on a human rights and intercultural dialogue approach.

Rui Gomes, Head of the Education and Training Unit of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe emphasized at the opening of the training on the importance of associating young people in the process of democratisation. "No one is born democrat, you need to learn and acquire skills on democratic participation and practices," he said, adding that trainings on the subject matter go in line with what the council of Europe plans to do in the future at the level of the different activities in the broader Arab and southern Mediterranean regions.

For his part, Dr Khalid Louhichi, Head of the Department of Population and Migration Policies at the League of Arab States, said that "the training contextualizes the different realities related to human rights education and democracy as practiced in different countries and should provide participants with necessary tools to understand the processes related to democratization and participation." He added that "the training came as a direct and concrete follow up of the meetings held in Malta and Tunis in 2012 on youth empowerment and a contribution to turn commitments into action."

Organizing the training in Tunisia, the country which marked the beginning of the Arab Spring is no mere coincidence. The Tunisian government in the August Euro-Arab conference on Arab Spring and youth participation held in Tunis has committed to create the Mediterranean University for youth and development. The timing of the training was also significant as it coincided with the second Anniversary of the Tunisian revolution.

Mohammed Youssef, from the Tunisian national observatory for youth, said that "the dialogue being created between European and Arab youth through this

university will only reinforce participation and intercultural learning.” He added that “the revolution showed that young Tunisians know what they want, but needed more capacity building and sharing experiences with other youth across the two sides of the Mediterranean in order for them to play their active role in influencing the country’s policies”.

b- Aims and objectives

The training course aims to train youth trainers and multipliers from European and Arab countries to develop and support projects and activities for enhancing and developing democratic youth participation.

Objectives

- To develop participants understanding of the concept and practices of democratic youth participation
- To reflect upon, and provide tools for reflection about democracy, human rights and democratic citizenship and their relevance for young people in European and Arab societies
- To share experiences of democratic youth participation projects and criteria for successful projects in this area
- To develop participants’ awareness and practical skills about the role of participation in educational processes, particularly non.-formal learning processes
- To familiarise participants with the educational approaches underlying Compass and the T-Kit Mosaic
- To support processes of reform and revitalisation of democratic participation in youth organisations and projects
- To foster Euro-Arab cooperation and exchange between youth organisations and youth leaders.

c- Participants Profile

1- Participants Background

The League of Arab States and the Council of Europe have each invited 15 youth trainers and leaders (30 in total) aged between 18 and 30 with experience in youth organisations or youth movements. In the selection gender balance (15 Male, 15 female) and spread of the regional representation was respected as much as possible leading to participants coming from North Africa (Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Egypt) and Europe (Spain, Turkey, France, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Romania, Ireland, United Kingdom, Italy, Croatia, Hungary). ***(See participants list, annexes pages 40-43)***

Most Arab participants are taking part for the first time in a Euro-Arab activity. The majority is politically involved; some have actually taken an active role in a series of Arab-Spring protests calling for dignity, freedom, social justice and a halt to corruption and dictatorship. They look into playing an active role in the democratisation process in their respective countries; they seek to be part of the decision making process; and contribute to designing and evaluating public

policies that affect them mostly. Many are members of Human Rights organisations or NGOs working on youth civic and democratic participation.

As to the European participants, almost all of them belong to or at least have an experience with Human Rights organisations. Many belong to NGOs dealing with peace building, development and humanitarian action, youth participation, and human rights such as rights of migrants and refugees. Most are looking into acquiring practical experience in the field of Human Rights and Democratic participation, especially when it comes to challenging situations. The majority expressed interest in learning more about current changes in Arab-Spring affected transitional countries, most importantly those who saw the rise of Islamic leadership.

Both Arab and European participants are motivated and very keen to act as multipliers and trainers and put into practice their competences in projects of their organisations and, occasionally, other projects by the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States and their respective partners.

According to their self-assessments, participants have different learning needs and expectations. Some already had a conceptual knowledge of human rights and democratic participation and therefore were more interested in the practicality of those concepts. Others lacked basic knowledge of the subject matter and needed more time to learn. This has been clearly felt throughout the training as some workshop sessions were more relevant to one half of the participants while other sessions were well received by the other half, depending on the participants' knowledge and level of interest.

Participants active involvement in the course also varied, some were very active in plenary session while others found it easier to engage during working groups. According to the participants' evaluation, the majority felt more engaged in small groups as they believed they had more time and chance to voice their opinions and share experiences with their peers.

Language was a stumbling block especially for Arab participants as the course was mainly run in English. Despite their advanced knowledge in English and the availability of simultaneous translations, some participants couldn't engage efficiently into the course. Yet, Arab participation in group discussions increased when the training team decided to include some sessions in Arabic. Nevertheless, translation remained an issue throughout the whole course for both Arab and European participants.

As to their role as trainers, some have experienced confusion about their role and their personal learning plans : they are shown to be more into running projects or as young leaders or activists ; while others were deeply into the trainers' role. The trainers' team reflected, at the end of the course, nonetheless that nearly one third has good potentials to be trainers, facilitators or speakers in follow up activities.

2- Participants expectations & Learning needs

Participants had high expectations of the Training for Trainers at 4 different levels: Knowledge and awareness, skills development, contextualization and experience sharing, and develop follow up projects and new partnerships after

the training. They formulated the following through the self-assessments and learning plans:

Knowledge and Awareness

- 1- To familiarize oneself with the technical jargon and the concepts related to human rights and democratic participation
- 2- To develop participants' awareness about the role of participation in educational processes, particularly non.-formal learning processes

Skills Development

- 1- Learn about training methodology in human rights education and democratic participation
- 2- Develop skills on how to deal with negative attitudes of people reluctant to democratic participation and with challenging situations in general
- 3- Develop facilitation skills related to TOT in human rights education and & democratic participation
- 4- Getting familiarized with learning approaches (formal and non-formal) in human rights education and democratic participation
- 5- Learn about safe learning environment and group dynamics and team building
- 6- Learning about participatory budgeting capacity building and learning approaches for CSO's and youth led organizations
- 7- Getting soft skills in advocacy and conflict management.

Contextualisation & Experience sharing

- 1- Learn more about concrete examples of youth participation
- 2- Share best practices and lessons learned related to human rights education and democracy and mostly those related to training practices
- 3- Understand the practices of democracy and human rights in different contexts, especially in post Arab Spring countries where religion is prevalent

Post training follow up and partnerships

- 1- Promote solid networking between the participants for future partnership and joint Euro-Arab projects
- 2- Eliminate language barrier and consider an Arabic content training tool in Human Rights and Democratic participation for future trainings

3- Participants project ideas

In the weeks before the training course and during the actual meeting, participants developed different project ideas. Some focused on training or Training of Trainers projects; others' focused on advocacy, empowerment and raising awareness projects. The diversity in project ideas reflects the diversity of participants' background and their interests of the role of a trainer or a young leader or a mix of the two.

Several participants suggested developing training at national or local level on human rights and democratic participation for university students, activists, multicultural and diverse marginalized groups and minorities; motivating youth to use public spaces for participation; and creating Euro-Arab training on media diversity, incorporating human rights education and democracy in reporting.

Other project ideas included organizing a citizenship & human rights caravan, empowering women in monitoring elections, training youth on how to solve social challenges linked to human rights dimensions, or using Music as a learning tool for children and young people to increase collaboration around democracy and human rights projects.

III - Course methodology & Content

The course aimed to enhance the participants' competences in Democratic Youth Participation through the exploration of three main concepts:

- Human Rights
- Democracy
- Participation and Citizenship

While working on these three main concepts, intercultural dialogue was meant to be a transversal element resurfacing in the programme throughout the week in different activities due to the nature of the participants group and course.

1- Before the Residential seminar

The training course started before the residential seminar with an online phase. The participants were given access to the course via the Council of Europe e-learning platform.

Basic information related to the course was uploaded on the e-learning platform. Participants were provided with an introduction to the program of the training

course on the e-platform and asked to fill in a self-assessment. on the e-learning

The self-assessment form addressed topics that reflect the program of the

training course, making it an integrated part of the learning process of the participants.

Although the trainers' team lacked sufficient time to evaluate the learning needs of the participants from the self-assessments, the latter formed the starting point for participants to develop a learning plan for the training week. Several elements of the questionnaire were addressed throughout the residential training in Tunisia via small group reflections held at the end of each training day.

2- At the training

Throughout the training, there was a combination of methodological approaches used including lectures, plenary discussions, experiential learning activities, workshops and reflection groups. In addition, the social and cultural environment of Tunisia allowed the connection of the learning process with some of the realities of young people and youth work today and their understanding of the democratic process that followed the revolution.

Plenary inputs were provided by speakers from the Council of Europe and League of Arab States as well as some activists in the field of Human Rights.

Mr Abdelbasset Hassan, director of the Tunisian-based Arab Institute for Human Rights first discussed the role of Human Rights Institutions before the revolution. He said that the main objective of the Institute was to "strengthen youth activists working in the field of Human Rights field, conduct investigations on Human Rights violations and establish networks to protect the abused, especially women, children, immigrants and refugees."

After the revolution, the director explained, the institute has shifted focus and has contributed to settle a new breath in Human Rights work by preparing the new pact of Tunisia for Human Rights, signed by 15 Tunisian political parties, 56 deputies, and 150,000 citizens as well as several international organizations. The pact stressed on the fact that there is and there should be no contradiction between universality of Human Rights and cultural specificities, in addition Human Rights are a collective responsibility and a pillar of any democratic process.

Space was given during the presentations for debates, questions and discussions as the participants were invited to comment and share their reactions on the lecture with the rest of the attendees.

The Non formal learning approach was ensured by using different pedagogical tools and activities from the last edition of the Council of Europe's 'Compass, Manual for Human Rights Education with young people'⁸ have been used. Also activities and models were used from the 'Have your Say, Manual on the Revised European Charter on the participation of young people in local and Regional Life'.⁹ Using the activities from the manuals aimed to ensure a participatory and experiential approach in the learning process of the participants allowing

⁸ Compass, Manual for Human Rights Education with young people' 2012 edition. www.coe.int/compass

⁹ 'Have Your Say', Manual on the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life. Printed at the Council of Europe. February 2008. <http://book.coe.int> downloadable at this link http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Publications/Have_your_say_en.pdf

participants to reflect on the outcomes of the activities and link them to the realities they work in as trainers and youth leaders. Using the activities of the manuals however also aimed to let participants experience such activities and explore how the activity could be used as a educational tool in their work and projects they organise.

3- Course Content:

The trainers' team tried to address several competences related to Human rights education and participation. The content included introductions and practical case studies related to the main thematic areas of the course. They have also learnt to identify their own learning styles and plans, how to effectively work in teams within an intercultural safe and democratic environment, and how to reflect on and evaluate their own learning outcomes.

a- Team building & Safe Environment

Participants were prepared through several workshops to work in groups and learn about group dynamics, its challenges, issues and strengths. Since participants were from European and Arabic countries, they were given skills and tools in general how to collaborate in a multicultural group, though in many times, the cooperation came spontaneously.

Throughout the week, participants have learnt to learn and be responsible for their own learning and how they want to work together as a Euro-Arab group.

Participants identified themselves what a safe environment means for them. For them it is an adequate place for learning, where participants from different cultures can dialogue with one another in full respect without prejudices or interruptions of someone's ideas ; a space where they can learn and voice their opinion freely with clear concepts and roles. A safe environment is also providing necessary time for learning and providing reflection space to share opinion, experiences and evaluate their learning.

b-Identifying Participants learning styles

Participants were asked to respond to a learning styles test designed to assess training and learning suitability and effectiveness. A number of personal learning and behavioral questions were answered and scored by participants. According to the test, eight learning styles were identified. These included : 1 - linguistic (learning by words and languages) ; 2 - Logical (numbers and logic) ; 3 - Spatial-visuals (images, pictures and shapes) ; 4 - Kinesthetic (physical experience - touch and feel) ; 5 - Musical (Music, sound and rhythm) ; 6 - Interpersonal (human contact, team work) ; 7 - Intrapersonal (self-reflection and discovery) ; 8 - Naturalistic (observation and data recording).

The results showed that most participants were reported to learn through human contact, communication, cooperation team work, self-reflection and discovery and by observation. Few are reported to learn through words and language; others through images, numbers and musical sounds.

Importance was also given to some diagrams taken from education manuals, such as « experimental learning cycle », « learning zone » (comfort, stretching

and panic zones), the « CAP » (RMSOS approach based on 5 keywords: right, means, space, opportunities and support).

c-Daily reflection groups

Through daily reflection groups, which were facilitated by one of the trainers, participants were provided space to identify their learning outcomes and needs. It also allowed a development of critical reflection on the processes of a training course. Different methods were used to facilitate the reflection groups, allowing participants to facilitate, observe, formulate and give feedback on the daily activities. It was a good evaluation mechanism for the trainers' team to learn about what worked and what needs to be improved for the coming day.

d- Competences addressed.

In order to implement an effective Human Rights Education and democratic participation strategy and translating ideals into realities, the trainers' team tried to incorporate three major competences areas in the training:

1. **Values:** Recognizing one's own biases – accepting differences – taking responsibility for defending the rights of others ...
2. **Knowledge:** Identifying the main international treaties establishing the bases of human rights – Understanding key human rights instruments and mechanisms of protection – Being aware of the main international, regional and local human rights concerns, and identifying different forms of youth democratic participation through the introduction of Hart's Ladder of Participation.
3. **Skills:** Fostering and enhancing participants' soft skills in the subject matter, mainly advocacy skills, conflict management and facilitation skills, and dealing with challenging situations.

e- Thematic content

Three major thematic areas were addressed. These include Human Rights education, democracy and participation.

1- Human Rights

Background:

Human rights are commonly understood as "inalienable fundamental rights to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is a human being.¹⁰" Human rights are thus conceived as universal (applicable everywhere) and egalitarian (the same for everyone). These rights may exist as natural

¹⁰ Sepúlveda, Magdalena; van Banning, Theo; Gudmundsdóttir, Guðrún; Chamoun, Christine; van Genugten, Willem J.M. (2004). Human rights reference handbook (3rd ed. rev. ed.). Ciudad Colon, Costa Rica: University of Peace.

rights or as legal rights, in both national and international law.¹¹ The doctrine of human rights in international practice, within international law, global and regional institutions, in the policies of states and in the activities of non-governmental organizations, has been a cornerstone of public policy around the world. *The idea of human rights*¹² states "if the public discourse of peacetime global society can be said to have a common moral language, it is that of human rights." Despite this, the strong claims made by the doctrine of human rights continue to provoke considerable skepticism and debates about the content, nature and justifications of human rights to this day. Indeed, the question of what is meant by a "right" is itself controversial and the subject of continued philosophical debate.¹³

Indeed, Human Rights considerations must, certainly, take primacy over other factors.

The purpose of the training was not only to improve knowledge about Human Rights (almost all participants have an some knowledge on the topic) but also to establish and to share a common Human Rights culture beyond specificities, cultural realities and political context. Human Rights principles such as dignity, freedom, equality are universal rights which cannot be violated or compromised under any reason. While Human Rights are common needs to every human being, priorities are different. Therefore, constructive dialogue on contextual practices of Human Rights should be maintained.

Five major points were tackled in the training course in relation to Human Rights

1. Whether Human Rights are Rights/duties or an obligation?
2. Whether the origin of Human Rights is a European or shared heritage between several communities?
3. The duality of HR in one state: foreign powers are they able or allowed to interfere to protect HR in other states (beyond international principle of nonintervention of national issues of one state)
4. The role of International organizations and NGO's to protect and enforce HR: role of Council of Europe: European convention of HR as an example
5. Are International and regional instruments of HR efficient, and if there is any evolution?

Methodology:

The challenge was to find a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical exercises inspired from reality which aimed to train participants how to deal with a real situation. On the other hand, balancing between physical activities (energizing) and providing knowledge was also a challenge as the content was at times highly technical.

The theoretical side was provided mainly by the three lectures of Mr Rui Gomes, Head of Education and Training Unit of Youth Department of the Council of Europe, Dr Khalid Louhichi, Head of the Department of Population and Migration

11 Nickel, James (2010). "Human Rights". The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2010 ed.).

12 Beitz, Charles R. (2009). *The idea of human rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

13 Shaw, Malcom (2008). *International Law* (6th ed. ed.). Leiden: Cambridge University Press.

Policies at the League of Arab States, and Mr Abdelbasset Hassan, director of the Tunisian-based Arab Institute for Human Rights.

Besides this; there were few presentations and exercises which exposed participants to international and regional instruments of HR, international institutions, treaties, and Bills of rights.

Open debates, simulation exercises on HR in groups were highly successful. Exchanging their experiences, participants learnt from each other and managed to deepen their knowledge (talk about everyone's experience, and challenges to Human Rights with through a project). The debate on HR situation in participants' countries before and after Arab spring and in transitional countries was one of the favorite sessions for almost all the participants.

2- **Democracy**

Background

Democracy and governance were one of the major topics of the training. Democracy matches to a concept which is frequently used but hard to be defined. Literally, democracy is "the rule of the people" from the Greek *demos*, "people", and *kratos*, "rule. From ancient Greek city-states to the present-day globalised world, the meaning of democracy as a form of Government (and even governance) has changed, taking different forms such as: representative democracy, direct democracy, participatory democracy, liberal democracy, social democracy and deliberative democracy.¹⁴

In terms of its implementation, 'democracy' has three basic contemporary usages¹⁵:

- 1- A form of government in which the right to make political decisions is exercised directly by the whole body of citizens, acting under procedures of the majority rule, usually known as direct democracy;
- 2- A form of government in which the citizens exercise the same right not in person but through representatives chosen by and responsible to them, known as representative democracy;
- 3- A form of government, usually a representative democracy, in which the powers of the majority are exercised within a framework of constitutional restraints designed to guarantee all citizens the enjoyment of certain individual or collective rights, such as freedom of speech and religion, known as liberal, or constitutional, democracy

The Council of Europe's approach broadens the classical definition of democracy and makes an essential link between democracy and participation: "Democracy is a form of living together in a community. Within a democracy, it is very important to be able to choose between different solutions when issues or problems arise and to be able to have the freedom to do so."

¹⁴ T-Kit No. 11 – MOSAIC – The training kit for Euro-Mediterranean youth work. Page 101. Council of Europe Publication. February 2010.

¹⁵ T-Kit No. 11 – MOSAIC – Idem. Page 102

Democracy is not only the character of a political system, but it can also be considered a way of behavior, opinion building and decision making in daily life (family, school, university, neighbourhood, youth centers), hence a way of living together. From a youth perspective, the challenge for democracy can be considered to be organising decisions and actions in a way that offers a maximum of participation for all young people and takes into account and responds as much possible to their different needs and values.¹⁶

During the training course, the most important issue that was debated through exercises is to learn whether there is a unique model for democracy and whether democratic values are innate or something that should be acquired and learnt through education?

Methodology

Several exercises were used to improve participants' knowledge and develop their skills about the concept of democracy.

Some exercises focused on the concept of democracy itself, inviting participants to come up with their own definitions, clarifying concepts and their perceptions about democratic practices as well as exchanging their experiences with others. Definitions were given not only by words; participants were divided in 4 groups and used different tools such as collage, photos, and role play to express their opinions about what democracy means to them

Group 1: Draw images of former and new leader to mark the transition and change. They used photos to illustrate the right to choose one's leader through free and transparent elections and the right to criticize referring to freedom of speech. They have also used photos of minority groups, communicating by it the necessity to defend and respect minority groups' rights.

Group 2: Illustrated images from the street revolutions, highlighting the right to demonstrate, to strike, to opposition and the role of CSO's in democracy. They also emphasized that the state should respect people's will and reinforce the rule of law. They have also tackled the issue of tolerance, diversity and respecting minority groups. Needless to mention that their biggest D for democracy is transparency and accountability.

Group 3: They have chosen a role-play. All participants were holding hands and are sitting on the ground in a flat way but holding their bodies little bit up from the ground. As most participants of that group were from Scandinavian countries, they have introduced the concept of "flat democracy". In some other countries like Morocco, they call it "participatory democracy". The main message of this role play is that distance between decision makers and the grassroots should be minimized. According to participants, decision makers should access ordinary citizens. This role-play was followed by an interesting debate, concluding that there is no model for democracy, and that Arab countries, which have witnessed transitional change post Arab Spring, have the opportunity to

¹⁶ T-Kit No. 11 – MOSAIC – Idem. Page 102

create their own democracies.

Group 4: They reminded participants about the origin of democracy being born in Greece. They also talked through their photos about the right to protest, to free belief and religion, about civic participation, about respecting minorities. Yet, they have emphasized that democracy is a culture, a learning process, involving citizens' participation in an environment characterised by dialogue and respect of free opinion. They also stress on the importance of respecting countries specificities to choose and create their own democracies without compromising international agreed upon values and standards.

3- **Youth Participation**

Background

The World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond recognizes that the active engagement of young people themselves is central to its successful implementation and, accordingly, affirms the full and effective participation of youth in society and decision-making as one of its 10 priority areas for action. Implicit in this commitment is an acknowledgement that young people are part of the solution to the difficulties they face, not merely a problem to be resolved by others.¹⁷

Participation promotes the well-being and development of young people. It is by questioning; expressing their views and having their opinions taken seriously that young people develop skills, build competencies, acquire confidence and form aspirations. It is a virtuous circle. The more opportunities a young person has for meaningful participation, the more experienced and competent he or she becomes. This allows more effective participation, which in turn enhances development.¹⁸ Yet in order for youth to play a greater and more effective role in political processes, information of relevance to youth must be widely disseminated and made more accessible and user-friendly¹⁹

There is no doubt that having youth policies and national bodies representing youth is highly important but not enough. While consultations can be of some value, young people are increasingly demanding that they also be involved in decision-making processes at all levels. They want recognition as partners and as significant contributors to public policy. They want their own organizations and networks through which to articulate their concerns. The active involvement of young people must be embedded in political processes at the local, national, regional and global levels so that they may become the subjects, not objects, of policies that affect their lives.²⁰

¹⁷ Youth Participation in Decision-making UN World YOUTH Report, 2003 Chapter 10. Page 271

¹⁸ R. Rajani, "Discussion paper for partners on promoting strategic adolescent participation" (New York, UNICEF, 2000).

¹⁹ Youth Participation in Decision-making UN World YOUTH Report, 2003 Chapter 10. Page 282

²⁰ European Commission, European Commission White Paper: A New Impetus for European Youth (Brussels, 21 November 2001) (COM [2001]681 final).

Therefore, helping participants understand participation in their current contexts, they were introduced throughout the training course to Hart's Ladder of participation. Sociologist Roger describes²¹ eight levels of youth participation. The three first where youth are manipulated, regarded as decoration or tokenized, are characterized by no participation. The five remaining (youth assigned and informed, youth consulted and informed, adult-initiated shared decisions with you, youth lead and initiate actions, and youth and adults share decision making) describe different levels of youth participation.

Participants were asked to identify where they see youth participation in their own countries. The results were quite varied in both European and Arab countries. It is worth to mention that the results are related to participants' perceptions and not to official countries' statistics or any scientific study about participation.

In European countries such as Croatia, youth are not informed; in Hungary, youth are tokenized. In Finland, adult initiated and shared decision with youth; they are tokenized at national level with low participation at local level. European participants involved in this exercise think that youth has power to influence the socio-economic level but not the political level. They also emphasized on the importance of teaching democratic youth participation, getting young people involved in decision making, and giving more visibility for NGOs' projects.

In Arab countries, such as Morocco, participation is qualified at level seven where youth lead and initiate actions. In Tunisia, youth are somewhat manipulated but Tunisian participants qualified participation between level six (Adults-Initiated, shared decisions with youth) and the levels described above. In Egypt, it also ranges between level five (youth consulted and informed) and level six and seven. Yet, in Libya, youth feel they are manipulated or as a decoration and have an illusion of participation.

Moroccan participants stated that participatory democracy is key, where citizens are consulted and have the opportunity to take part and influence public policies. They also emphasized on the importance of having Direct Dialogue between CSO and decision makers, developing youth capacities and communicating on participation through ICT and social media. For Egyptians, grassroots participation and boosting trust among youth and authorities is a top priority. Libyan participants saw that networking and building coalitions are crucial for ensuring youth and CSO's participation. And for Tunisians, there is no real participation without equality of chances and access to information. Through other exercises, participants learnt how to defend their position while for example meeting as an NGO representative with local authorities, how their contributions can make a difference in the democratization process and how they can spread Human Rights principles as a popular culture and not only as a specific field reserved to professionals.

Methodology

²¹ "Children's participation : the Theory and Practice of involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care for UNICEF IN 1997", by Roger Hart.

The participation training activities were based mostly on practical exercises and invited participants to reflect upon their different realities and how to advance cooperation between European and Arab youth in youth participation field.

Two study cases were given related to training Democratic Youth Participation. The first was a Moroccan case study where participants are facing a diverse group of literate and illiterate youth in rural area of Morocco. The second was an Egyptian case where the group to be trained is divided between youth who participate in the Tahrir Square revolution and the rest of boycotted elections.

Participants were divided into 4 groups and were asked to study the case and prepare training on facilitation to participants divided into three groups to let them apply knowledge and new methods acquired during the training into the cases inspired from reality. It was a close to a real situation exercise where participants had to deal with challenging situations and put into practice their trainers' and facilitation skills. Several lessons learnt were identified in the debriefing of this particular exercise. These included but not limited to:

- Prior preparation is needed before any training session
- Time management issues might arise and the "trainer/facilitator" need to know how to handle it
- Sessions should have a clear objective and outcome
- Participants acknowledge Learning from mistakes made during the simulation
- Group dynamics is important to the success of the session (boost energy & encourage participation)
- Better have practical and real case studies
- Prepare realistic session plan with Plan A and B (alternatives)
- Better identification of target group needs
- Learning how to deal with the specificity of the case
- Careful in using jargon (how to translate abstract concepts into tangible and meaningful words)
- Trainer should be objective
- Challenge to divide roles in time
- Equality in role distribution

IV- Evaluation Results

1- Introduction

With the aim of identifying successes and lessons learned from the present course as well as improving the upcoming trainings, an evaluation form was prepared and distributed at the end of the training to both participants and trainers. Due to some health emergencies and early departure of some participants, only 20 out of 30 filled in the evaluation questionnaire. There was a specific evaluation form for the trainers.

Overall, almost the majority agreed that the training have met their expectations (1 strongly agrees, 12 agree – 5 Neutral, 2 disagree). The overall rating of this training from participants is good (13 ranked good, 6 average and only 1 ranked poor). As far as the trainers' satisfaction is concerned, it ranges between level 3 and 4 on a scale of 1 – 6 (1 = not achieved at all, 6 = fully achieved)

2- Aims and Objectives

A – Aims

The overall aim of the training course is to train youth trainers and multipliers from European and Arab countries to develop and support projects and activities for enhancing democratic youth participation

Participants think that the aim of the training was mostly achieved (The majority ranked the level of achievement at level 4 with some at level 5. Only few were dissatisfied and ranked the achievement between level 1 and 2. Regardless of the overall positive satisfaction and due to participants' different levels of knowledge, some felt that there was no clear academic content or practical skills transmitted. While others felt there was not enough space for participation and that there was a more European influence dominating the training.

For trainers, some felt there was a lot of time spent in energizers than the main content and skills which needed to be deepened for some participants. There was also a lack of the practicality of the training tools for some trainers. According to their judgments, Democratic Youth Participation wasn't emphasized enough at the project development phase. Three trainers think the main aim was not sufficiently fulfilled and ranked the achievement at 3. Two ranked 4 and 5

A- Objectives

Objective 1: To familiarize participants with the educational approach underlying compass and the kit mosaic

1.1 - Participants ranked the achievement of this objective at level 4 by majority with few at level 5. They think that some compass tools were used but not mosaic ones. Others think they just got the manual and nothing more.

1.2 – Trainers stated that they didn't really use many activities from the "Compass" or "Have your Say" and none from the "Mosaic". They added that the participants were familiarized with the educational approach but not in depth. Trainers also outlined that some participants are already trainers in their respective fields. Much more practical exercises on educational tools should have been provided and would have met participants' expectations. Most trainers ranked the satisfaction level of this objective at level 4.

Objective 2: To reflect upon, and provide tools of reflection about democracy, human rights and democratic citizenship and their relevance for young people in European and Arab societies

2.1 - Participants ranked their level of satisfaction almost in an equal basis between level 4 and 5 and equally between 3 and 2. Some participants didn't think the training reflected on those concepts. "We were only told the position of the Council of Europe," said one participant. But the few tools presented were relevant," he added. Many felt the concepts of democracy were covered insufficiently. Participants would have liked more tools and mechanisms to be provided. Also, the size of the group and some of the methods used didn't allow a deep reflection about these themes.

2.2 – Trainers think there was a lack of tools of reflection and that more time should have been devoted to tackle the training relevance to participants' needs. With more than one theme, trainers weren't able to go much in depth in the concepts. Two trainers ranked the level of satisfaction of this objective at 5, and two others ranked at 3.

Objective 3: To foster Euro Arab cooperation and exchange between youth organizations and youth leaders

3.1 - Participants have shown a mixed feeling for this objective. Yet, the majority expressed their satisfaction level between 4 and 5. Others ranked level 2. Participants felt there was an exchange between Euro-Arab participants but they were not trained on those topics. "We were not given direction or initiatives to engage in partnerships. We didn't finish the Training of Trainers with clear future cooperation. It was done mostly outside of the training room", one participant said.

3.2 – Trainers feel the exchange was really successful and enriching for participants from both Euro and Arab regions. They think the participants were already eager to cooperate and to learn from each other. Quoting one of the trainers, "the meeting space, gathering youth leaders from both regions, was a great opportunity for participants to exchange, and plan for further cooperation." Trainers think that everything was made possible for the cultural exchange to happen (e.g. translation services). Two ranked level 5, and two 6.

Objective 4: To develop participants' awareness and practical skills about the role of participation in educational processes, particularly non formal learning processes

4.1 – Participants: The majority ranked their satisfaction at level 4 for the achievement of this objective with no further comment.

4.2 – Trainers think the process of non-formal learning was not clear for many participants due to lack of background knowledge of the field. Therefore, they did not have the time to digest many of the concepts. Trainers also think that many participants were taking part at the course on their capacity as project managers and it was difficult for them to feel at ease with the learning concepts. Three trainers ranked their satisfaction level at 4, and one at 2.

Objective 5: To support process of reform and revitalization of democratic participation in youth organizations and project

5.1 – Participants: The majority ranked their satisfaction at level 4 for the achievements of this objective with the rest ranging between 5 and 3

5.2 – Trainers admitted there was a lack of concrete exercises in connection with the reality or context of participants. The democratic youth participation as concept and practice was really lacking in the training according to the trainers. Two of them ranked their satisfaction level of this objective at 2, and two ranked 5

Objective 6: To share experiences of youth democratic participation projects and criteria for successful projects in this area

6.1 – Participants showed mixed feelings of satisfaction and discontent for this objective. Eight ranked level 4 while 6 ranked level 2. Whereas three ranked 5 and three ranked 3

6.2 – Trainers: some think that there was an unbalance of experiences shared between European and Arab participants. "Arab youth were more engaged in sharing their experience due to the current political context of the Arab spring," said one trainer. Other trainers think that this objective was not really a highlight of this training as no clear outcomes were produced. Two trainers ranked satisfaction at level 4, and two at level 2. "After the participants demand, we find the space to invite them to share their experiences but they asked for more," said another trainer.

3- Training course preparation & methodology:

This section includes both feedback from participants and trainers on the course methodology and content

A- For Participants feedback on course methodology and learning

3.1-Feedback on course and methodology

Several participants think that the training had a chaotic start due to several reasons, among which are logistical issues, but has improved throughout the week. Though acknowledging that it's difficult to meet everyone's expectations, participants think that the program was hectic and that there was no equal attention to democracy concepts as to the one given to Human Rights' (they learnt more about HR than democracy and participation). Also, participants noted there were many levels of trainings (participants, trainers, Training of Trainers), which was a bit confusing for some.

The majority of participants agreed that more tools and time were needed for exchange between participants. Also, most participants expressed that working in small groups allows for deep interaction and knowledge sharing. They also wished that more opportunities should have been provided to participants to take facilitation and trainers' role to allow them practice the skills they acquired throughout the training course. Most participants claimed they want further skills on how to deal with difficult and challenging situations (working with those opposing to Human Rights, cultural relativism, and break religious barriers).

As participants have different background and knowledge about Human Rights and participation, they have hoped the organizers would do a better job in selecting participants according to their levels of knowledge on the topic, and dividing them in beginner, intermediate or advanced level groups. They also preferred to have more sessions that include case studies relevant to their context realities. Since language has been an issue throughout the training, participants hoped more directions would have been given to ensure there are no language barriers.

Participants recommended making ground rules about mobiles and lap tops as it was a big distraction during the course. They also recommended having a more interactive agenda and audio-visual aids, and avoiding long presentations or speeches as they are neither interactive nor engaging.

For future trainings, participants would like to have pre-training reading materials or exercises to prepare them for the course and ensure that they have basic understanding of Participation and Human Rights concepts. They also would like to see better cooperation between trainers in terms of content; more room for feedback and discussion, better quality of skills delivered & knowledge transmitted; more openness in receiving criticism of different analysis, and more peer to peer learning.

Overall, the participants were satisfied of their contributions, that of the group and the trainers to the training course and learning. The level of satisfaction according to the evaluation ranges between 4 and 5.

3.2-Participants' feedback on sessions

In any training course, participants feel some sessions are more relevant than others. According to their evaluation, working in groups, practical cases and soft skills were the most valuable sessions according to the majority. They have identified the following as the most relevant sessions in the course:

- The workshops and reflection groups as it provided space for interaction, feedback and exchange.
- Egypt/Morocco case studies as participants learnt something concrete that they can apply and got relevant feedback and very useful tips from the trainers.
- Human Rights sessions due to the importance and relevance of its content
- Soft skills workshops were valuable as they were more dynamic and tailored to participants' needs
- Non-formal education methods and tools as well as the ladder of participation because they are practical to be used
- Country summary as it provided useful information on the subject matter in context
- Providing the participants with the opportunity to act as a trainer observed by a trainer
- The debate on youth and changes as participants started sharing stories related to participation, democratic and Human Rights practices in their respective countries.
- Working with target groups trying both theory and practice
- The practical case study in which participants were asked to design a training
- Sessions on projects and NGO market

Participants have also identified **least valuable sessions** that could be improved or reconsidered in future trainings. These include:

- The fish bowl²² designed to provide participants with situation analysis of participation post Arab spring, was interesting for many. Yet, several participants viewed it as a monologue. "There was more interaction from Arab participants about what's going on in their countries than from European participants, and this was supposed to be an exchange," said one participant. Other participants, who hoped the Fish Bowl would have been organized differently, said that there were more controversial issues that could have been addressed in this Euro-Arab dialogue, leading to more learning and exchange.
- Project development session for some participants was not well organized and was scheduled when everyone was tired. Participants think it should have been a priority.
- Several participants felt there was a lack of tools on how to deal with problematic and challenging situations
- Human rights presentations lacked guidance for some, too abstract and not interactive for others
- Follow up projects was a bit misleading for some. Some participants claimed there was more focus on personal projects than on collaboration or partnership projects within Euro-Arab cooperation
- Participants also think the methods of learning the course objectives and the debriefings should be improved as they were illusive with no real substance or logic.

²² A **fishbowl** conversation is a form of dialogue that can be used when discussing topics within large groups. Fishbowl conversations are usually used in participatory events like Open Space Technology. The advantage of Fishbowl is that it allows the entire group to participate in a conversation. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fishbowl_\(Conversation\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fishbowl_(Conversation))

- Some think the Washing line was not very useful²³
- Participants think guest speakers speeches were too long and made participants loose attention

3.3-Participants' intercultural learning process

The overall perception of the intercultural atmosphere was enriching and warm with participants' willingness to cooperate and work together. For many of them, cultural difference didn't hinder the learning process and exchange. Yet, many found that the greater intercultural exchange mostly happened outside the sessions during informal time. Some sessions, according to participants lacked dynamics with minor miscommunications. Others think that some interesting dialogue was missed as some participants were avoiding conflict.

3.4-Participants outlined several ways in which they would transfer what they have learnt here to their organisations and/or their reality. These include

- Making use of non-formal methods & tools and pushing on different ways to get youth participation in the higher steps of the ladder of participation
- Working on a local training project, using the manuals they were provided by the Council of Europe such as "*the Compass*".
- Organizing a training on the subject of HRE and democracy for youth organizations and activists
- Advocating for the inclusion of Human Rights Education in the curriculum at schools and universities as a long term objective

B-Trainers reflections on course preparation and team composition

Trainers claimed that there was no physical prep-meeting to allow them respond to the participants needs. Only two Skype meetings took place one week before the training and were not attended by the whole team. Due to the unavailability of one of the trainers, there was a late recruitment of a new member with a double function, a trainer and rapporteur. This double function was a source of confusion for the team. According to some trainers, this has put some extra work to the other members of the team.

Since the trainers hadn't worked together before, it was a challenge for the team to agree on several concepts. This has negatively affected the quality of content delivery and the teamwork dynamics. Due to the lack of preparations, the trainers spent lot of time, even late night hours preparing for the daily sessions, which were seen as unproductive by some trainers. The latter also claimed that there should be a balance between Arab and European trainers. They recommended the inclusion of more sessions in Arabic and the involvement of Arab partners in the design of the sessions and the course.

Also, preparing an already defined program was an issue and in many cases trainers did not feel ownership of it. Some felt that the methodology was not always in line with what was expected from the program. Combing between

²³ Washing line exercise is designed to identify levels of understanding according to different topics. You cut a page of a newspaper in the shape of a hat, gloves, trousers, etc. Then, use a washing line and clothes pegs, participants hang their projects or level of understanding on the washing line.

conceptual understanding of the concepts of participation and Human Rights and soft skills was a dilemma for several trainers. Nevertheless, the team showed flexibility for program adaptation during the training.

As to the intercultural learning process of the course, the trainers think that the participants benefited from the existence of simultaneous translation, thus creating the possibility for sharing with minimum language barriers. Despite these efforts to minimize intercultural misunderstandings, translation remained an issue and posed some challenges related to the definition of certain concepts. The trainers also think that the course didn't focus much on the intercultural learning process as most exchanges were done in informal meetings.

Trainers recommended increasing the use of open spaces for learning and structured exchange and dialogue, as well as the creation of more sessions where participants could get practical hand-on experience on each other's realities.

Like participants, trainers see the preparation of participants prior to the course highly important in order to meet their expectations. They also recommended dividing participants according to their level of knowledge and experience and giving them the opportunity to prepare sessions and get feedback.

Dealing with challenging situations during the training entails certain behavior to be maintained. Therefore some trainers suggested some tips and corrective measures related to the role of a trainer to be taken into account in the future trainings. The tips include the following: The trainer should address behavior not person and avoid personising the situation and deal with the way ideas are expressed and not the person disturbing the session (e.g. asking out of topic questions); consider confronting behavior privately and not publically (e.g. during breaks); the trainer should not contradict another trainer while delivering session to participants (use remarks in paper or in breaks); be flexible in your training design to address unexpected questions (ability to address issue not in the agenda, rearrange); build time for unexpected discussions (create parking lot for additional questions); maintain positive attitude; stay focused and objective, answer questions and move, no personal involvement in group conflicts; use ground rules where participants have intergroup conflicts (expectations and rules), and finally use diverse training techniques to engage with different levels (experienced can become bored and less experienced might need more time to understand).

4- Summary of major issues, outcomes and recommendations:

In order to outline the major training course issues, outcomes and recommendations, feedback was constantly collected through daily reflection groups, end of training working group evaluations and an evaluation questionnaire. Below is a summary of the major issues, outcomes and recommendations of the training.

4.1 – Issues documented during the course:

Course Preparation:

- There was no preparation meeting for the course, which negatively impacted the quality of the training delivery
- The late recruitment of a trainer in the team with double function (trainer and rapporteur) was a source of confusion for the training team
- There was an unbalanced level of expertise of the trainers with limited coordination on content and flow of the course.

Logistics:

- The course was part of the Mediterranean University for youth, which included other simultaneous programs with no clear coordinator. Lack of coordination has negatively impacted the training, as the training agenda witnessed several last-minute changes to fit shared programs.
- There was no clear coordinator for logistics. Trainers had to play this role more often, which consumed much of their time and energy.
- The training room wasn't adequate with air-conditioning problems. There was also lack of basic training materials (paper, flipcharts, pens ...etc.). Materials arrived the third day of the training and were insufficient.
- The accommodation conditions were terrible: there were not enough rooms for all, and they lacked essential needs such as warm water, towels...etc.
- The airport transfer was badly organized: many participants had to wait long hours at the airport, some were lost looking for pick-ups as no clear signs for the training was shown at the airport. This was not the best start for training for all.
- Though simultaneous translation was offered, it remained a big issue throughout the week

Content:

- Disconnect between the conceptual content and the contextual practicality of the course
- More emphasis on course content and less focus on transferring contextual facilitation/trainers skills to participants
- Clear course objectives and outcomes as well as sessions debriefings were not well managed and communicated to participants
- Trainers were not able to transfer skills and knowledge on how participants could deal in challenging situations
- Lack of sufficient space for interaction, intercultural dialogue and feedback
- Cooperation projects between participants from Europe and Arab countries was difficult to achieve (no clear outcomes – more focus on individual projects rather than common projects within the Euro Arab Context.

4.2-Course outcomes

The training outcomes are as follows:

- Space for exchanging experiences between Euro-Arab participants enabled
- Overall satisfaction of learning objectives achieved
- Skills and concepts related to democratic youth participation and Human Rights transmitted to participants
- Potential facilitators and trainers for upcoming projects identified
- Important recommendations for follow-ups provided.

4.3-Recommendations

Both participants and trainers provided input and recommendations on how to improve the training in the context of Euro-Arab Cooperation. They have recommended the following:

- **Cooperation:** Ensure more involvement of Arab partners in the design and delivery of the program.
- **Preparation:** Assign clear roles for trainers and ensure having a residential preparation meeting three months before the training; allow trainers to read all the participants expectations and make sure the program corresponds to their needs.
- **Logistics:** Improve logistics as they can impact participants and trainers' concentration during the training: Ensure coordination and pay attention to accommodation, transportation and medical attention; avoid heavy agenda and grant some free time for participants to rest.
- **Content & Methods:** Develop more workshops dealing with practical and real situations; avoid having too much energizing exercises and oriented discussions. Also, schedule more focused trainings (divide beginners from advanced participants on different topics), and provide more guidance and feedback during the training.
- **Language:** Equally develop the training in Arabic and English and train more Arabic speakers to deliver Arabic courses, and maintain simultaneous translation with an advanced preparation of conceptual jargon.
- **Opportunity to practice:** Engage participants in future activities by integrating them in the trainers' team, and providing them with support and guidance when needed.
- **More Focused Trainings:** Develop an Advanced Training of Trainers focused on practical cases of "democratic youth participation" and include the soft skills that were not possible to cover during the present training (e.g. debriefing, facilitation, adapting activities, session outlining, intercultural teams, etc.). Also, it is highly important to train more trainers with the aim of creating a mix of Euro-Arab pool of trainers.
- **Projects support:** Encourage both the League of Arab States and the Council of Europe to follow up with participants projects they developed during the training course. These include the organization of shadow visits,

- seminars, and trainings by providing technical assistance and financial resources.
- **Exchange:** Create spaces for exchange between youth of the two sides of the Mediterranean and support the development of alumni.
 - **Expand:** Invite more young people from Middle East (not only from north Africa)
 - **Dialogue:** Create opportunities for Euro Arab participants to dialogue with decision makers in their countries and provide them with the opportunity to make Euro-Arab summer schools
 - **Identify Impact:** Make an evaluation of the impact of the present training on the participants and establish key indicators for evaluation.

V- Personal Reflections

I have attended Euro-Arab cooperation meetings since 2009. Through working with both the League of Arab States and the Council of Europe, I still see an unbalanced cooperation. Regardless of all the efforts made throughout these years, I feel there is a more European influence than a Euro-Arab partnership in the programs of this cooperation. There should be a deep involvement of the League of Arab States in designing joint programs and the identification of Arab related context that would allow selected Arab participants to learn about practical cases close to their realities. Many times, Arab participants are taught theoretical concepts unrelated to their local contexts.

The league of Arab States should also invest a great deal in developing the capacity building of Arab youth CSO's and potential Arab speakers' trainers with the aim of providing hand-on relevant and focused training to Arab youth. In many trainings and conferences, attention is mostly given to the English language and Arabic is completely absent from the radar screen. If simultaneous translation is not offered, Arab youth find it difficult to express their opinions. I have seen great potential and expertise among Arab youth and they have great project ideas. Yet, language barriers are limiting their effective participation.

Also there are several training centers in Europe specialized in delivering focused trainings on many subjects to youth and CSOs. In the Arab world, there is not a single training or research center on youth and youth policies. I believe the League of Arab States needs to work on developing a regional Arab training center and put it high on its agenda.

After all assessment of the past and current changes in the environment, the Euro-Arab cooperation should move beyond closed room conferences and translate promises into concrete actions.

Euro Arab cooperation must also lead to governmental agreements for the inclusion of youth organizations in developing and formulating public policies. Youth organizations should today be regarded as a development partner, rather than just a target of institutional programs.

Arab youth organizations are facing lack of clear youth policy and government trust and support. There is no such an organized platform in the Arab World such as the European Youth Forum. Conflicts and lack of focus and coordination make CSOs work achievements useless. This confusion about the role of youth organizations leads also society to doubt sometimes about the honesty and the national agenda of the youth organizations.

Providing these organizations with capacity building on how to dialogue with decision makers and how to advocate for human rights, democracy and youth participation is crucial. Yet, although foreign funding is vital for the survival of a large number of CSOs, there is a general awareness of the associated risks and the possible negative effects of dependency on external funding. CSOs should not become a "project business", whereby they have to adapt to the requirements of a funder's calls for proposals instead of focusing on their own domestic agendas". Both the League of Arab States and the Council of Europe should listen to the new demands outlined by youth and CSOs post Arab Spring and try to readjust their strategies to meet those needs, while ensuring follow up, sustainability and programs' ownership.

There also need to be a better coordination among other international donors and governmental agencies working in this cooperation to avoid the duplication of activities or the adoption of different strategies that are not always compatible. Most public and international funding is received on a project basis, which has several consequences mainly on the sustainability of actions undertaken under this particular project.

I reiterate the importance of supporting the continuation and further development of regular Euro-Arab cooperation and dialogue through an online platform, physical meetings and annual conferences. I also recommended the creation of a multilingual e-learning platform that would contain a database of Euro-Arab youth CSOs' mapping and opportunities for the further development of sustainable youth organizations.

Giving European experience in creating national youth councils, Arab youth and CSOs' need to learn from this experience successes, best practices and lessons learned. They also need technical assistance in advocacy for the establishment of similar councils and platforms in the Arab World, while adopting it to their local and national contexts.

So capacity building is key. Stakeholders need to revise and evaluate their capacity-building programs to be able to respond to the new needs emerging in the post-Arab spring. These include inter alia, leadership, organizational and institutional structures, human rights education, youth democratic participation, outreach and advocacy for youth inclusion and participation in developing and evaluating youth public policies.

At the end, I would like to add that institutional partners need to conduct a thorough evaluation with clear indicators to evaluate the impact of the programs on youth and CSOs from both sides of the Mediterranean. It is not sufficient to indicate the number of programs, conferences, and trainings conducted during

this cooperation, but more importantly, to ensure the achievement of results and the short and long impact on participants and partners.

Daily programme

Sunday, 9th December 2012

Arrival of participants
19:00 Dinner
21:00 Welcome evening

Monday, 10th December 2012

09:15 Welcome opening with Introduction to the training,
Intro of aims, objectives and programme
11:00 Break
11:30 Team Building, working together
13:00 Lunch
14:30 Expectations & learning principles for the training
16:00 Break
16:30 Establishing a Personal Learning Plan
18:00 Reflection groups
19:00 Dinner
21:00 NGO market and contexts sharing point

Tuesday, 11th December 2012

9:15 Human Rights and Me (part I)
11:00 Lunch break
11:30 Human Rights and Me (part II)
13:00 Lunch break
14:30 Developing Democracy through training (part I)
16:00 Break
16:30 Developing Democracy through training (part II)
18:00 Reflection groups
19:00 Dinner
21:00 Free time

Wednesday, 12th December 2012

9:15 Youth Participation in action
11:00 Break
11:30 Youth Participation in action
13:00 Lunch break
14:30 Learning
16:00 Break
16:30 Human Rights Education
18:00 Reflection groups
19:00 Dinner
21:00 Open Space for Learning

Thursday, 13th December 2012

9:15 Youth Participation Revisited
11:00 Break
11:30 Youth Participation Revisited
13:00 Lunch & Free Afternoon
19:00 Dinner

Friday, 14th December 2012

9:15 Team Rebuilding
11:00 Break
11:30 Democratic Youth Participation
13:00 Lunch
14:30 Me as a trainer on Youth Democratic Participation
16:00 Break
16:30 Meeting Mosaic
18:00 Reflection groups
19:00 Dinner
21:00 Exploring Project Ideas

Saturday 15th December 2012

9:15 Own context analysis
11:00 Break
11:30 Tackling concrete Learning Needs in my community
13:00 Lunch
Free Afternoon
19:00 Dinner

Sunday 16th December 2012

09:15 Parallel workshops on trainer's skills
11:00 Break
11:30 Parallel workshops on trainer's skills
13:00 Lunch
14:30 Planning as a key for quality
16:00 Break
16:30 Learning Self-Assessment
18:00 Reflection groups
19:00 Dinner
21:00 Free time

Monday 17th December 2012

09:15 Follow-up action
11:00 Break
11:30 Follow-up action
13:00 Lunch
14:30 Closing Space
16:00 Break
16:30 Evaluation
18:00 Reflection groups
19:00 Dinner
21:00 Farewell Evening

Tuesday 18th December 2012

Departure of participants

Participants List

I. Youth Participants:

11	El-Hossein Mohamed	Egypt	Hayaty
No	Name	Country	Organisation
12	Sally Rabei	Egypt	John D. Gerhart centre philanthropy civic engagement
	Jihed Andolsi	Tunisia	RESO
1	Eines Abdel Wanies	Libya	Relais pour l'émergence d'une jeunesse sociale organisée
13	Aldrsey Mouheb Ben Garoui	Tunisia	Libyan Centre for Development & Human rights I WATCH
2	Amel Besekri	Libya	LCHD
14	Meriam Meddeb	Tunisia	Libyan Centre for Development & Human rights I WATCH
3			
4	Kamala Lerzoghiska	Spain	Cazalla Overcultural
15			
5	Fatim-Zahra Zuleta Cadenas	Morocco Spain	Centre de Jeunes Dirigeants Ye Too Ponese
16	Gago Jamal Touissi	Morocco	INJD Instance Nationale de la Jeunesse et de la démocratie
6			
17	Melina Oulda	Morocco	University Community Association
7			
18	Solene Maillet	France	Amsed
8	Abdel-Ilah Gibadaoui Pradeau	Algeria France	Yaani Network Dia de deliberaçao
19	Meziane abane	Algeria	OADH
9	Theis Dencker	Denmark	Algerian Observatory for human rights
20			
10	Farouk Petzabab	Algeria Finland	UNIMED MENAC (European Youth Press)
21			

	Nissinen		
22	Sara Sifri	Sweden	RELEARN
23	Diana Trifu	Romania	ARCA - Romanian Forum for Refugees and Migrants
24	Faris Bader	Ireland	Global Change makers - British Council
25	Emily Miller	United Kingdom	United Network of Young Peace builders
26	Lucia Spata	Italy	InformaGiovani
27	Jelena Drndic	Croatia	World Organisation of the Scout Movement
28	Luca Elek	Hungary	Utilapu Nemzetkozi Epiritabor Halozat

II. Trainers:

1	Mayssa Rekhis	Tunisia
2	Sergio Xavier	Portugal
3	Matina Magkou	Greece

III. Rapporteur:

1	Karima Rhanem	Morocco
2	Faten Guedouar	Tunisia

IV. Media Coverage:

1	Abdallah Mossad	Egypt
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V. National Youth Observatory:

1	Mohamed Youssef	Tunisia
2	Lotfi Hariz	Tunisia
3	Wisseem Sghaïer	Tunisia

VI. League of Arab States Delegation:

1	Khaled Louhichi	Tunisia
2	Shaymaa Mohamed Abdel Moneim	Egypt

VII. Council of Europe:

1	Rui Gomes	France
2	Menno Ettema	Hungary