



Youth Peace Camp

Engaging young people and youth organisations
from conflict-stricken regions in dialogue
and conflict transformation

TALKING ABOUT CONFLICT WITHOUT TALKING ABOUT THE CONFLICT

Report of the Youth Peace Camp 2014

15 to 23 June 2014
European Youth Centre Strasbourg

This report gives an account of various aspects of Youth Peace Camp 2014. It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.

THE YOUTH PEACE CAMP CONCEPT

The Youth Peace Camp aims to engage with young people and leaders in youth organisations from conflict stricken regions by providing them a positive experience in living and learning together. The camp's programme develops their competences for dialogue and conflict transformation activities based on human rights education and intercultural learning and motivates them to act as multipliers for peace in their communities and organisations.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The report was prepared by the senior trainer Nik Paddison in cooperation with the secretariat of the Youth Department. The report provides an overview of various aspects of the project and the main outcomes and the evaluation for the participants, team of facilitators and trainers, and the Youth Department. In addition to the report the Youth Peace Camp 2014 the team of trainers produced a compilation of the Session Outlines detailing the run sessions during the week long programme.

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AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Aim:

To engage with young people and youth organizations from conflict stricken regions, allowing for dialogue and conflict transformation activities based on human rights education and intercultural learning to materialize during and after the project.

Objectives:

- To develop the conceptual and practical meanings of conflict, peace, and conflict transformation through dialogue.
- To share among participants their personal experiences of conflict and violence and their coping strategies in a positive atmosphere of living and learning together.
- To develop awareness and competences, (knowledge, skills and attitude) of participants in conflict transformation, intercultural learning and dialogue, including a critical understanding of personal and collective identities and their role in conflicts.
- To learn about human rights and human rights education as frameworks for conflict transformation and dialogue in participants' realities.
- To learn from existing youth work practices and experiences of young people working on dialogue and conflict transformation in their home communities.
- To motivate and support participants in their role as multipliers and peer leaders in peace building activities with young people from their organizations and communities encouraging them to implement follow-up projects.
- To increase the expertise of the Council of Europe, in particular its youth sector, in working with conflict transformation as part of its mission in relation to intercultural dialogue and address online expressions of Hate Speech, specifically by facilitating the participants contribution to the No Hate Speech Movement.

THE PROGRAMME

Sun 15	Day 1: Mon 16 June	Day 2: Tues 17 June	Day 3: Wed 18 June	Day 4: Thur 19 June	Day 5: Fri 20 June	Day 6: Sat 21 June	Day 7: Sun 22 June	Mon 23	
Arrival	Group Building	Individual Identity	Exploring Conflict	Dialogue Day Introduction	Human Rights	Follow-Up and Visibility	Follow-Up and Visibility	Departure	
	Break								
	Official Welcome Welcome Space	Collective Identity	Exploring Conflict	Dialogue Day Preparation	Human Rights	Follow-Up and Visibility	Follow-Up and Visibility		
	Lunch				Lunch				
	Challenging Our Stereotypes	Intercultural Learning	Conflict Transformation	Dialogue Presentations	Lunch at Council of Europe	Free Time	Final Reflection Groups		
	Break				No Hate Speech Movement		Evaluation		
	Challenging Our Stereotypes	Intercultural Learning	Reflection Groups						
	Reflection Groups		Free Time	National Groups Bi-National Groups	Reflection Groups		Closure		
	Dinner		Dinner in Town	Meeting Ms. Brasseur	Dinner		BBQ		
	Wel Eve	Social Night		Social Night	Dinner	Meditation	Fete De la Musique		Farewell Party

THE TEAM

TRAINERS

Nadine Lyamouri – Trainer, External Education Advisor for the Youth Department of the Council of Europe

Nik Paddison – Freelance Trainer, and Writer

FACILITATORS

Ideal Hoxha – Kosovo¹ (Albanian)

Milica Nikolic – Kosovo (Serb)

Mohammad Wari – Palestinian Authority

Uri Rosenberg – Israel

Ketevan Tsutskiridze – Georgia

Inessa Abramyan – Russian Federation

Anahit Musheghyan – Armenia

Afag Nadirli – Azerbaijan

REPORTER AND PHOTOGRAPHER

Edouard Portefaix – CEMEA, France

ROLES OF FACILITATORS AND TRAINERS

Country Facilitator Responsibilities:

- Facilitate the learning experience of the participants
- Empower all participants in the project, regardless of region/background
- Conduct sessions within the programme
- Co-ordinate and run the daily Reflection Groups
- Be responsible for the National and Bi-National group meetings
- To support /lead small working group discussions
- Help the participants to work on peace multiplying activities in their own communities following the Peace Camp week

The Senior Trainer and External Education Advisor Responsibilities:

- Supporting the facilitators in their responsibility to support the participants
- Develop conceptual parts of the programme
- Develop, implement and report on the programme of activities
- Coach and support the Facilitators in their work
- Coordinate the preparation process for the Youth Peace Camp
- Support participants in their group and individual learning processes
- The External Educational Advisor was responsible for the coordination of the educational dimension of the project and leading the team of Facilitators and Trainer.

¹ All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

THE PARTICIPANTS

Lilit Pipoyan
Argishti Zurabyan
Arevik Hayrapetyan
Lusine Poghosyan
Anatoli Chernyaev
Stepan Grigoryan
Gulara Azimzadeh
Farid Aliyev
Toghrul Taghi-zada
Sabina Aghayeva
Aygul Salehova
Rena Piriyeva
Londa Beria
Goga Pipia
Guranda Bursulaia
Salome Khvadagiani
Robert Simonyan
Lasha Tsertsvadze
Inna Jenia

Kama Tsvizhba
Alisa Akhba
Liel Geenberg
Odelya Azulay
Michael Ross
Marigona Kelmendi
Gresa Krasniqi
Manuela Petrovic
Fridon Lala
Mergime Kajtazi
Besart Ymeri
Shayma Sharif
Yasser Abdallah
Dmitrii Chelashov
Katarina Pavlovic
Vladimir Velic
Tijana Kolutac
Stefan Nikolic
Filip Rakic

SPEAKERS AND OFFICIAL COUNCIL OF EUROPE REPRESENTATIVES

Snežana Samardžić-Marković	Director General of Democracy
Anne Brasseur	President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
Tina Mulcahy	Acting Head of the Youth Department
Rui Gomes	Head of Division Education Training, Youth Department
Jean-Claude Lazaro	Head of the European Youth Foundation, Youth Department
Claudia Montevercchi	Administrative Assistant, Youth Department

TALKING ABOUT CONFLICT WITHOUT TALKING ABOUT THE CONFLICT

THE GROUP

"I learned that there is too much hate in the world, jealousy, selfish people and everyone is thinking only of themselves."

Every Youth Peace Camp is a unique and special event, not only for the team and participants but in the calendar of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe as well. This year was no exception. The Youth Peace Camp was back at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg this year.

The participants arrived excitedly on Sunday 15th June. Sadly, we were without the participation of four young people from Abkhazia and one from Gaza who, because of visa restrictions, were not allowed to participate. As with many such activities, there was a degree of nervousness and anticipation as well as excitement. Many of the group avoided having any contact with the 'other side' from their arrival through to the first full day.

One of the things that became apparent about this group was an intense desire to want to talk about the conflict. To learn about each other's conflict situations but also to be able to share about their own. This was something the group pressured onto the facilitator/trainer team throughout the week. The other recurring theme from participants that continued for the whole week was the desire for more theory. Both of these points were partially linked to the slightly more experienced group of participants than is normally recruited for the Youth Peace Camp.

Despite the many difficulties and issues – as always on the Youth Peace Camp – the group became quite strongly linked; in 2014 the word cohesive would not necessarily apply, but there was an element of unity and standing together. This was despite some open conflicts and some elements of aggression from one side to another. This sense of group has continued beyond the Youth Peace Camp itself and has manifested itself in the Facebook group and in personal meetings between participants and some of the team. This level of sensitivity and support to one another is testament to the importance of Youth Peace Camp. This year saw a potentially explosive situation arise in Mitrovica during the Youth Peace Camp. After the Camp, the situation between Israel and Gaza became extremely violent and in the world media spot light with many extreme views being expressed and shown by all sides. In the month following the Camp the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan escalated to its worst in many years. Despite all of this, the participants have continued to support each other and speak about the various situations with sensitivity.

THE LEARNING PROCESS

"It was a really great experience, at first because I feel that there are no foreigners on the earth, we are one but not the same, and it helped me to feel more familiar with others as well. This project gave me the chance to feel others conflict as mine and changed my mind to think about them as my friends."

The first half of the Youth Peace Camp is very strongly linked to the learning and personal development of the participants while the second half gives more of an emphasis towards action related to the learning. The key subjects in order of the programme were:

- Stereotypes
- Individual Identity

Collective Identity
Intercultural Learning
Exploring Conflict
Conflict Transformation
Perception
Truth
Change
Non-Listening
Debate vs Dialogue

The first few days are always busy with lots of elements to cover and explore, this year was no exception. The group of participants were strongly influenced with the subject of stereotypes, it immediately created some personal reflection for many in the group. This was especially relevant because of an incident that had started the afternoon. Some of the Kosovo Serbs were late in arriving because of the French train strike taking place at this time. When they entered the plenary room for the afternoon session they were asked to introduce themselves. They said their names and stated they were from "Mitrovica, Serbia". Immediately some of the Kosovo Albanians shouted across the plenary that it was not Serbia and that they "should say the truth, that they are from Kosovo". One of the trainers approached the three Kosovo Albanian participants at the coffee break and challenged that this was quite an aggressive action on their part. This was denied by them, reiterating that this was "the truth" so therefore it cannot be aggression.

The afternoon covered different aspects of stereotypes and explored the differences between stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. This session and the summary at the end gave a number of participants much to think about and reflect on, including those who had made the aggressive welcome at the beginning of the session.

From this subject the group went on to explore Identity both individual and collective. The Individual Identity part was very much appreciated and liked by the participants. The opportunity to explore themselves and show different aspects of themselves got many to think deeply and realise some aspects that either they were not previously aware of or had not taken notice of for some time. The Collective Identity however came across as confusing and partly because of the influence of the previous days session on Stereotypes, many found themselves focussing on stereotypes rather than the concept of collective identity.

The subject of Intercultural Learning used more or less the same approach as previous years and is proving to remain popular, understandable and successfully educational. The Bennett model and the short movie Night and Day keep the group engaged and making understanding relatively easy. The first part involved a game called Pass the Alban, the game should simulate an intercultural encounter. Some of the group could not understand the activity and even in the debrief remained confused as to what they were supposed to be doing or learning about. Others however did understand the concept and were able to explore in some depth what had happened and how intercultural encounters can often be difficult even with awareness raised.

The session on Exploring Conflict took a different route to what has been done in the past, this year there was no simulation of a conflict to experience and then explore through a debrief. The participants were asked to be in small groups to talk about a conflict that they had personally experienced. Each group was facilitated by one of the facilitator team. After this, the group was introduced to the Conflict Tree which looks at the issue as the trunk of the tree, the branches as the feelings and the roots as the needs – of themselves and the other. The participants returned to their small groups, each person being given the chance to explore their own conflict story using the tree to analyse it. This series of activities exploring conflict had a strong impact on many of the participants and the more extreme and militant views began to melt. Conflict transformation supported this process with looking at the how people approach conflict through the model of K. Thomas: Compromise, Collaboration, Competition, Avoidance and

Accommodation. Though in hindsight the statements that the participants were asked to respond to were too subtle to easily distinguish a definite reaction for some of the participants.

The next activity subjects were the final preparation for the country presentations of 'talking about the conflict without talking about the conflict'. Each activity subject from perception to truth to change to non-listening to debate vs dialogue reinforced the previous days subjects, each adding another layer on the challenge of self-reflection and to be open to the 'other side'. Each activity gave more to think about, the Perception encouraging participants to think about looking at their situation from the other perspective, the Truth subject challenging participants to think there could be more than one side to their conflict situation. The Change activity asking participants to imagine a change that could be related to their conflict situation at home, how would it look like, how would it feel, how would relationships between the sides be different... The Non-Listening then went back to the practical, what we need to be aware of in order to listen to the other and not jump to conclusions and the effort needed to truly listen, "more often we listen to respond rather than listening to understand" (unknown source). Finally, closing this series of short subjects, was a practical exercise for understanding the difference between debate and dialogue. Debate being forceful and trying to persuade the other you are right and they are wrong whereas dialogue gives the chance to explore each other's arguments.

TALKING ABOUT THE CONFLICT WITHOUT TALKING ABOUT THE CONFLICT

"I listened to the experiences of people from conflict regions and this somehow changed my attitude toward the conflict between my country and the other side, I had a chance to look at my country from the other point of view."

This is never the easiest part of a Youth Peace Camp and probably contains the most stress of the whole week, not just for the participants but for the trainers and facilitators as well. It is the part of the week that is more or less solely in the hands of the participants and has only limited influence from the facilitators.

The participants are asked to get into their country/ethnic groups and are given a question to which they will need to make a 10-15min presentation as a response to it. The question is: 'How does the conflict affect you as a young person and other young people in your community?' They are given until after the lunch break to complete the task of preparation and have the support of their country/ethnic facilitator as a support for their preparation and also to keep them on track with regards to responding to the question rather than developing a propaganda based presentation.

Below are many of the key points shared by most and often all the participants regardless of where they come from in response to the question:

'How does the conflict affect you as a young person and other young people in your community?'

Government

- Huge budget spent on military
- Government focusses on 'maintaining conflict' not on development of society
- People constantly reminded of the 'enemy'
- Education and employment secondary issues to conflict
- Bad international image

Conscription, serving in the army

- Trauma
- Young people killed

Contact with the 'other side'

Discouraged – at times strongly and even violently – from having any contact with the other side
Often young people attack other young people
Aggression, hate and anger towards the other
No trust for the other side
Segregation

Internally Displaced Person's / Refugees

Poor education
Poor living conditions
Psychological stress
Being forcibly moved multiple times
Unable to return to visit or to live – even to visit family who did not leave
Loss of houses, loss of land

Identity

Experiencing dual identity
Feel discriminated when getting new documents

Travel

Visa required for virtually all countries
Visas are denied to so many young people
Structures separating the two sides
Freedom of movement restricted

Fear

Always fear, always living in fear
Friends injured in a coffee shop that was bombed
Death could be anywhere, anytime... buses, malls, neighbourhoods
Fear about the future, security...

Personal Experience of Violence

Growing up seeing my parents humiliated by soldiers
Childhood trauma of knowing people killed
Often picked on by security and police – airports particularly

Daily Life

Water restrictions
Cultural life restricted
Private sector failing
Economic development restricted
Lack of foreign investment
Discrimination, especially in work and education
A lot of prescription drug addiction
A lot of smuggling takes place
Crime and corruption are everywhere
People do not feel safe when travelling
Lack of safety
Lack of policing in some areas
Gangs, violence and intimidation
War destroyed homes and infrastructure

Quotes from participants relating to their own lives and how they are affected:

“I knew from the age of 4 what a rocket looks like”

“Met someone once from the 'other side' we got on fine until they discovered I was from the 'other side' then they ignored me”

“When they criticise, they criticise the whole country not the Government,
it feels like an attack on me”

“I am an IDP – creates a confusion around my identity, I am from one place
but I have a different nationality”

“I am a war child, I lived in a shelter for 4 years, I have no toys or belongings
from my childhood”

“I left before the war, went to a safer place”

“My family moved because of conflict in the region I came from”

“A rocket landed next to me but did not explode”

LEARNING AND ACTION

“I learned it does not matter if your countries are in conflict, you can be
good friends with the other side.”

The second half of the week is much more oriented to taking action, though it is still routed in some important subject areas such as Human Rights and exploration of the No Hate Speech Movement. Human Rights were tackled more on an intellectual level, firstly small groups exploring different conventions and declarations and the importance of each article. There was also a chance to explore different issues and dilemmas related to different Human Rights questions through dialogue. The most important aspect of the subject was for each participant to reflect on their own situation at home and or people they know and start to recognise which Human Rights are being violated in their own lives, this in essence began the process of starting to think about the different things that could be tackled at home and potential actions that could be taken.

The work on the No Hate Speech Movement campaign was not as strong as it should have been or as it has been in previous years, the amount of time for it to be covered and for the organisation of anything by the participants was substantially reduced. This however did not stop many of the participants producing images and short movies to add to the Movement’s platform and the specific theme that was being officially covered that day – Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

The amount of time allocated for the Follow-Up sessions was also negatively impacted this year. A very strong concept had been put together but with time restrictions due to a number of extra inputs and unexpected incidents meant it could not be fully realised leaving both the facilitators and participants frustrated. Participants were able to come up with a lot of interesting ideas for their follow up projects. The participants were encouraged to mostly think on the local level but a few still wanted to explore cross border / international projects and develop partnerships with other participants. It was obvious that some of the participants are very active in non-governmental organizations in their homes and were ready to take action in future.

PARTICIPANTS EVALUATION

“There are people around me with different problems and ways of living and they need to be respected as much as me.”

LEARNING

The greatest learning that the participants recognised for themselves was based on the subject of Stereotypes. This included breaking or challenging their own stereotypes, reflection on generalising and wanting to learn about others before judging.

Conflict Transformation was had the next biggest impact. Learning identified and reflected on included actually learning about the different conflict contexts and situations of each other, especially those of the ‘other side’. In order to achieve this participants recognised the need to listen and to be open to one another. This also brought about the reflection that in many instances they are not so different from one another and that there is also a need to recognise both the similarities and differences.

“I listened to the experiences of people from conflict regions and this somehow changed my attitude toward the conflict between my country and the other side, I had a chance to look at my country from the other point of view.”

The recognition for many that they changed during the week or were in the process of changing was also an important factor for the group. One side of this was a recognition from one person that they don’t need to change the world. Another expressed understanding that they could change, or that change needs to come from the self before the others. There was recognition of a need to analyse and understand a situation before making judgements.

“I learned to talk as an individual and not as a whole population where we come from.”
“Change myself not others.”

For others the need for learning to listen was a major factor, to go from listening to dialogue avoiding the violence. To attempt to see both sides. For some this was identified as Intercultural learning, for some the identity session illuminated “a lot of things I did not know about myself”. Mentioned specifically as important were elements from the Human Rights and No Hate Speech Movement sessions.

EXPECTATIONS

With regards to expectations, the vast majority of participants felt that indeed their expectations were met and fulfilled. Specific expectations related to stereotypes for several participants; having them broken, gaining a greater understanding of the other cultures and staying open minded.

For others, their expectations were mostly fulfilled but concerns were raised regarding wanting more focus on follow-up, several mentioning the desire to know more about each other’s conflicts and a few stating that they felt the programme was not advanced enough and at times a little childish.

“I was positively surprised with the work with Albanians and other Muslim people because I had prejudices before.”

THE PROGRAMME

For most of the participants the programme met their needs and did its job. Many felt engaged, motivated, enriched and full of ideas and inspiration for the future. They also highlighted its usefulness for those from conflict regions, focussing on some of the subjects like Human Rights, Intercultural Learning and the Conflict Tree. One person stated that the programme helped them in a personal understanding, “I think I needed to understand that I am not the centre of the world.”

For some there were elements that were not so good; several of the participants already had experience in the field of peace building and conflict transformation so some elements of the programme did not meet their needs, there was a desire for a more advanced programme.

“When I filled in the application form it was really sophisticated with lots of questions demanding strong background that is why I thought that the programme would be in a more mature level.”

Quite a lot of participants wanted more direct face to face discussion about their respective conflicts, while for others what they learned about the ‘others side’ was more than enough

“There are people around me with different problems and ways of living and they need to be respected as much as me.”

FAVOURITE PROGRAMME ELEMENT

The most feedback from participants was regarding the day of dialogue and the presentations each group made regarding the impact of the conflict on their lives. The next biggest impact was from the session on stereotypes and then the identity sessions, “it helped me remind myself a lot of things I had forgotten about me”. The exploration and activities on Human Rights were also valued highly. Other specific mentions included the Conflict Tree exercise, the session on Intercultural Learning and the Follow-Up. Particular aspects that were mentioned included the experiences of working in small groups and the value of the reflection groups.

LEAST FAVOURITE PROGRAMME ELEMENT

As popular as the Dialogue day and associated presentations were, it was also the most unpopular part of the programme for some of the participants. One person felt that others were not being truthful and for another it was the national and bi-national debriefing that they had a problem with.

The No Hate Speech Movement session was also unpopular, this could be put down to how it was cut and not so much time and energy was dedicated to it. While the overall session on Identity was popular and many learned from it, the part which focussed on the collective identity was not so well received, many felt it was too confusing. The Follow-Up was singled out as being too rushed. Other elements that were highlighted were the, Human Rights discussions as being chaotic and confusing, the evaluation paper for being too long, one of the guest speakers – not stated which one, and a general dislike for games was also voiced by a few people.

No specific changes to the programme were proposed by the participants.

METHODOLOGIES

In general the methodologies used were appreciated and liked especially with regards to mixing theory and practice. Some issues were highlighted such as some approaches being too simplistic and or childish, or other elements were not based on enough theory and therefore did not go deep enough.

OBJECTIVES

All the Objectives were considered to have been achieved to a good level by the majority of participants, the most responses in almost every Objective being at 5 out of 6. Some participants felt there was not adequate time for achieving to a full extent some of the Objectives or that there could have been more examples shared in order to strengthen the achievement of an Objective, however overall the participants were satisfied that the Objectives had been achieved.

IMPACT BACK HOME

“I don't know why but I have such a feeling that I can move even mountains. If Armenians and Azerbaijanis can sit together laughing and feeling happy, I can also do everything.”

Many of the participants felt strongly that they would be able to take action once they returned home. For the majority of these this included such things as spreading ideas about the No Hate Speech Movement or preparing a local action. Several participants talked about how they were motivated and inspired and wanted to raise awareness with colleagues, friends and communities about the issues in their communities caused by the conflict. Others whose work is already connected to peace work talked about how they had new knowledge and understanding to add to their existing work.

Others wanted to explore the possibilities of working with the 'other side', or simply try to improve communications between the sides. Some even planned potential common projects.

“I feel more confident absolutely, I have learned so much and I will do my best since I know the way how and that you can help me in realising my ideas.”

TEAM EVALUATION

“People from both conflict sides can laugh at the same jokes, can be happy with the same things and can be hurt by the same things.”

TEAM REFLECTIONS ON THEMSELVES

In general the team was happy with their performance, most felt supported and encouraged by the others, especially from the two trainers and from those facilitators who had been facilitators before. There was a desire in hindsight to have been more familiar with each other's sessions, this was also not helped by a lack of clarity in the preparation meeting about who was actually doing what session. For some, the new experience of working on a Youth Peace Camp, meant that roles and responsibilities were not totally clear and the two trainers could have gone into more details in reviewing the facilitators' sessions and supporting them.

The team not being able to meet before the start of the Youth Peace Camp was a frustration shared by everyone. A concern echoed by several of the team was that despite the general surface support for each other, there was a lack of co-responsibility and cohesiveness on a deeper level. This was echoed by one of the team who felt that they had not participated as strongly as they should or could have.

The team as a whole was fairly frustrated with some of the behaviours exhibited by participants during the week. In general there was a strange and un-cohesive dynamic to the group which had an impact on the whole Camp. Some of the participants had the attitude that the starting time was an option, others often left the room and several seemed incapable of leaving their phones alone for more than a few minutes – regardless of how many times they were asked to switch them off. There were also a series of incidents in the week ranging from sexist jokes, to nationalistic comments, to racism being expressed. Some members of the team inadvertently encouraged this by not tackling in the moment and making jokes of the jokes to cover at awkward situation. The team reflected that they should have been more on top of this.

Although the group crossed the borders and friendships emerged between conflicting sides, there was still a strange dynamic right to the end. The evaluation 'Youth Peace Camp show' was offensive at certain stages and it felt uncomfortable with inappropriate humour being used by both those on stage and those in the audience.

The biggest single complaint from the team was the absence of the participants from Abkhazia.

In general most of the team wanted to apply again for next year and stated that they would either want to be involved in more sessions or that they would want to be stronger and better prepared in the ones they know. The team concluded that they left with positive feelings and that it had been a good week.

PARTICIPANTS

“To bring people together and lead them beyond their differences is the key of the programme.”

The application process was highlighted by several members of the team as being problematic – stressful to participants, encouraging the wrong profile and putting off those with little or no experience. It was noted that in some countries there are far more women than men applying, this makes it difficult to maintain a gender balance. With regards to complaints received from participants to the team about the lack of time for gaining a visa, it was pointed out that many of those who complained were the ones who delayed making their Visa applications.

The team as a whole was happy with the participants. Specific points that were highlighted include; one or two who struggled with English but made a strong effort to be fully involved. The Azerbaijan and

Armenian participants playing football together. The Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian participants developing friendships. The fact that many of the participants came from areas where the conflicts are strong or from isolated communities, and though this did not make it the easiest Youth Peace Camp to manage, it saw many of these young people having their stereotypes and prejudices challenged.

PROGRAMME

The structure of the week was against us i.e. the free afternoon splitting the follow-up..., the lunch/reimbursement at the Council of Europe bank, a taking so much more time than anticipated and the multiple 'guest' speakers. All of this created an added pressure. It should also be noted that the Youth Peace Camp was reduced to 7 days this year.

In terms of the different elements of the programme, the team reflected that the session on collective identity could have been done differently and needed to be more to the point and clearer. There was also a question mark over the approach of the Dialogue Day, it was reflected that from the participants there was a fairly even split between those who liked and those who disliked it.

It was noted quite strongly that many in the team felt that it was a mistake that they had not included the session on Violence in the programme. The session on Human Rights felt to be out of the flow and had a lack of connection to the rest of the programme, even if there were positive comments from the participants on the contents. Regarding the No Hate Speech Movement session, the team was asked to give a particular focus to this because it was the World Refugee Day that was being promoted by the campaign during the Youth Peace Camp. Unfortunately it appeared to be a bit disconnected to the Camp as no particular preparatory work was able to be done with participants. Also the team felt that the concept of 'refugee' was perceived more as international migration and not as local realities – we had several 'refugees'/IDP's in the group who did not connect themselves to the theme. Yet more work could have been done on this aspect, such as: 'What it means to me and to other young people to be an IDP?' 'How am I affected by the situation?' etc.

The Follow-Up was tough this year because the time for the session was taken with other things and the session itself was interrupted with the free afternoon. This is something that the team for next year should be aware of. There was a lot of feedback from the participants to the team regarding Reflection Groups, it was expressed that these gave many of the participants a chance to talk freely without being interrupted. Lastly, regarding the programme, the team felt that there needed to be more icebreakers and team-building activities at the beginning and that energizer may not be always be needed when the session activities are quite energetic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

"YPC is about planting seeds but it means also opening some Pandora's boxes that we may not have been able to get to or to close. We should be careful and aware of what we trigger."

Application and Preparation Process

- The application form was a deterrent for less experienced applicants, needs to be simplified; shorter, language simplified, less experience required...
- The preparation meeting would be better if it could take place after the selection of participants
- Request for at least one Skype meeting between the preparation meeting and the team arrival
- Online preparation for participants
- Facilitators should keep contact with participants before and after a Youth Peace Camp

Opening Sessions

- The welcome evening needs to be stronger, the team should be more involved in welcoming the participants

- There needs to be more ice-breaking games
- Spend more time on the 'living and learning together rules' at the beginning of the week
- To better meet participants expectations, start with some elements on conflicts, then move to identity and other topics before going back to the conflict more in depth afterwards
- Put personal and collective identities on the first day
- Less games and energizers
- Energizers should be kept but the number of games could be reduced (feedback on the childish aspect)

Proposals

- Introduce forum-theatre
- Introduce a 'Session-à-la-carte': A special session could be built around participants needs. They could choose amongst a few propositions
- Deeper debriefing are needed
- Give more time for the team reflection to include proper feedback and reflection on the day
- Bring back day 8
- Bring back session on Violence

Team Support for Participants

- Team needs to have higher awareness of participants with language issues or poor social skills and arrange groups and seating to support such participants
- Some actions must be taken in the future regarding safe sex and respect

Follow-Up

- During the follow-up project presentations, the team should be more positive and supportive with participants
- Create a 5000 EUR fund for the follow-up projects developed in the wake of the camp
- More funding opportunities (other than EYF) should be mentioned
- Facilitators to play a role in following and supporting the implementation of follow-up projects