



DJS/Refugee (2010)

Consultative meeting

What future for the work with young refugees, IDPs and asylum seekers?

2- 4 March 2010

European Youth Centre Strasbourg

Report



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26 September 2011

Report of the Consultative meeting

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By Cosmin Corendea

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

From 2 to 4 March 2010, 18 young people gathered at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg for the consultative meeting, “What Future for the Work with Young Refugees, IDPs and Asylum Seekers?” The event was organised by the Council of Europe’s Directorate of Youth and Sport and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. All the participants invited to this reunion are actively involved in working with young refugees, internally displaced persons or asylum seekers, representing different refugee-based youth organisations, or being professionals / volunteers working with young refugees from all over Europe.

Within a defined and structured framework, the topics of refugees, IDPs and asylum seekers were amply discussed in relation to existing youth work and policies, creating a new, young and complex dialogue, which led finally to an objective exposure of the refugees’ realities and different approaches of the young people around Europe in relation to the topics. Concepts related to refugees in youth work, such as intercultural dialogue, human rights and multiculturalism, were discussed and analysed, together with policies of the UNHCR and the Council of Europe. Final comprehensive conclusions of the meeting were drawn up, and relevant follow-up and future projects were carefully planned, along with specific and substantial recommendations for future use in the field of young refugees.

For two days, the participants were able to receive both institutional and refugee life-based expressive presentations, within an on-going common learning process, from different refugee-related experiences, mainly expressed during working groups. Simultaneously, the participants were able to relate their knowledge to creating a final document relevant for the meeting, but, in particular, relevant for future steps towards the concept of the “young refugee” in Europe today.

2. Executive summary

The summary of this consultative meeting was drawn up on the last day by the general rapporteur. It represents the main topics, questions and highlights which were raised by the participants during the meeting. The summary enclosed a ‘letter from a participant’, a rhetorical, very emotional but realistic e-letter received by the rapporteur from a participant of the meeting, who today still remains anonymous.

The final recommendations are the main outcome of this consultative meeting, and they represent the result of the participants’ work during the two days they spent in Strasbourg. The process of generating these recommendations followed the logical path of events, with significant contributions from the participants. Step-by-step, the participants firstly identified the main categories which have to be addressed in the case of the young refugees, and later developed the needs of the young refugees within the three main groups. Participants expressed ideas, proposed priorities and produced the subcategories expressed in the final recommendations. These, as they are now, account for the drafts of the rapporteurs of the three main groups, all of whom worked hard during and after the event to create the best and most representative product for this meeting. We are most grateful for the work of both the rapporteurs and the participants!

2.1 Summary of the meeting

Everything starts with a story...

The present consultative meeting draws on the results of recent activities, such as the consultative meeting Social Cohesion and Inclusion of Young People, Budapest 2006, the consultative meeting on the Access of Young Migrants and Refugees to Working Life, Budapest 2007, and the seminar, Being a Young Refugee in Europe Today from Strasbourg in 2006 and 2008, in co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe and UNHCR began co-operating closely in 2006 through a common seminar, Being a Young Refugee in Europe Today, which brought together 32 young refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs.

As a result, the youth network “Voices of Young Refugees of Europa” (VYRE) was officially born two years later in Budapest through a seminar co-financed by the European Youth Foundation and UNHCR.

Today the story continues with you:

This consultative meeting:

- looked into the achievements in the field of working with young refugees
- identified the main challenges faced by young refugees in Europe, and possible responses
- consolidated the work between the DYS and UNHCR on working with young refugees
- developed possible formats of activities for future work with young refugees
- involved other European partners and stakeholders in a common reflection for the development of suitable programmes and durable solutions for young refugees.

And you've been saying that...

- young refugees have specific needs, not addressed in international documents
- the refugee definition in the 1951 Geneva Convention is too old for our contemporary challenges
- there is no sufficient protection for young refugees +/- 18
- young refugees face a lack of access to ... everything.

And you've kept on saying that...

- out there young refugees face racism, xenophobia and discrimination
- there is no social network, and there are no recreational programmes for young refugees
- there is a 1% chance of obtaining the refugee status in Greece and a 20-30% chance in France
- cultural values or sexual identity have become taboo subjects for young refugees.

Obviously, you've been asking...

- Why doesn't the UNHCR relate to *young* refugees in any matter?
- Is there any psychological assistance for traumatised refugees, such as for former child-soldiers or raped women?
- Are the refugees bringing higher tolerance to the society? Or not?
- Why can't asylum seekers work while they are waiting for a permit?

And you've been answered...

- The UNHCR does not have any statistics about young people in particular, only those aged 18-59 in general
- Take responsibility!
- The Dublin II Agreement is against the 1951 Geneva Convention
- Don't avoid people who think differently, but try to enter into a dialogue.

What is cool about this meeting!

- in a two-day consultative meeting, the participants received input from an institutional side and an activist side as well!
- in only two days, you had both statistics and a human perspective!
- you received a practical, theoretical perspective and an emotional, life-experienced perspective!

Ideally, the story would continue...

- the 1951 Geneva Convention will be modified and reviewed, and the definition will address 21st Century refugees, such as youth, environmental / climate refugees, and so on
- the international institutions will change their policy orientation vis-à-vis refugees
- the (young) refugees will have access to...everything!

In particular, you recommend:

- that the Council of Europe, European Commission, UNHCR, Advisory Council on Youth, European Youth Forum and NGOs should recognise Young Refugee 18-30-year olds as a group with specific support needs, and that these bodies undertake research around the specific needs of this group
- that the Council of Europe, European Commission, Advisory Council on Youth, and European Youth Forum should work towards enabling young refugees and asylum seekers to participate in mobility programmes within the framework of their studies, including exchange programmes, internships and research placements in European countries other than where they have been granted protection.

and you recommend more...

- that the Council of Europe, in co-operation with the UNHCR, work together with the aim of making clear and accessible legal procedures available to young refugees and asylum seekers, and should cover the following areas, amongst others:
 - adequate access to legal information through a variety of means, including the provision of specialised advice centres
 - effective and free legal representation
 - multilingual assistance throughout the legal process
 - compulsory adequate training for staff working with young refugees, including detention staff, social workers, legal representatives and judges, on the rights of refugees.

Letter from a participant:

We heard so much during this meeting about responsibility. About taking responsibility and tackling problems. When we hear stories like Abou's, when some of us are so close to young refugees in our line of work that we can even touch their wounds, when we share their hopes or we do what we believe it might help them ... then I wonder, what is there left to do?

We even found a friend; I might add a lonely friend, like the Education and Training Unit of DYS and we finally get around to thinking and looking for what else is out there for us to do for our fellow humans...

We make recommendations, declarations and all the documentations which a non-decisional structure could do, in order to ensure that there is at least another start... another start for normality and human understanding vis-à-vis these people.

However, I believe we already took responsibility in this matter. We will do more, we will not stop here. But what about a more decisional and powerful body, like the UNHCR? Or the Council of Europe?

I think it is time for them to step in and finally take responsibility. And fast. I am not personally in a hurry, but I don't think there is a refugee in this world who may say that time is an ally. They don't have time. Especially the young ones...

2.2 Summary of concluding remarks

Preparatory work:

After a very intensive and meticulous process, the final recommendations were presented to the participants and invited experts of the meeting in the final morning session. Although the recommendations represent the actual voice of the participants, due to the need of comprehensibility and concrete address features, some issues related to young refugees were not dealt with sufficiently. Considering the timeframe, the multi-diversity presented in the meeting and the great effort made by the drafting committee, however, this aspect was not necessarily considered a fault, but rather a strong signal that there is much work left to be done in the field of young refugees in Europe.

The following points were raised in the final plenary discussion, after the presentation of the drafted final recommendations:

- The need to monitor

There were two monitoring discussions: the first following the work done in Strasbourg and the eventual implementation of the recommendations of the meeting, and the second with regard to a larger aspect of monitoring the young refugees in Europe.

- More clarification regarding the terms ‘minors’ vs. ‘young refugees’, as minors have more protection in general, and the use of terms might be confusing

There was still confusion among the participants concerning the delimitation of age between minors and young people. Should the young refugees’ category include minors? Or should they be treated separately?

- Citizenship vs. long waiting period as a refugee (over 5 years)

‘The run for citizenship’, as it was called by the participants, has its advantages and disadvantages, from a buffer for the refugees to avoid any hard impacts with the hosting society to an over-long procedure of achieving citizenship, which affects the refugees’ right to work.

- Sustainable long-term solutions

The participants still felt the need to express their frustration considering the lack of official documentation (international agreements, etc.) and considering the receiving states’ short-term solutions vs. long-term sustainable solutions.

- The need for recommendations on non-formal education
- The accessibility of youth NGOs vs. NGOs in general
- Involving young refugees in more youth activities, not only refugee-related ones.

Both comments were focused on the need of the refugees to become more participative and active within local or regional NGOs. There is, however, a distinction between the availability of the NGOs to receive refugee members and the youth NGOs, which apparently are more open to refugees. The tendency is to involve the refugees only in refugee-related activities, which is considered to be limited and unnecessary, many of the young refugees having the potential to contribute so much more.

- The call for the training of social workers

The comment was strictly related to the social workers who are working with refugees, in refugee camps or in any other area of activity and who are not always prepared to work with such people, not having had proper training.

II. FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Consultative Meeting

What Future for the Work with Young Refugees, IDPs and Asylum Seekers?

Strasbourg, 2-4 March 2010

Final Recommendations

Preamble

We, the representatives of local, national and international, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society networks, youth organisations, scholars and practitioners committed to advancing the rights of young refugees and asylum seekers in Europe, as well as young refugees and asylum seekers themselves living across the European continent, have come together from 2 to 4 March 2010 in Strasbourg within the framework of the Consultative Meeting, What Future for the Work with Young Refugees, IDPs and Asylum Seekers?, to share experiences and identify the major challenges and needs young refugees and asylum seekers in Europe are faced with, as well as propose concrete responses leading to durable solutions.

Recalling the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its Article 14 on the right to seek and enjoy asylum as well as the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR);

Recalling the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol;

Recalling the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights and its Protocols and considering that Article 1 of the Convention requires Member States to secure to everyone within their jurisdiction the rights and freedoms defined in Section I of the Convention;

Recalling the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the obligations on Member States under instruments of international law to which they are party and which prohibit discrimination;

Recalling that every person seeking international protection has the right to have his or her application treated in a fair procedure in accordance with international law, which includes access to an effective remedy;

Recalling the Council of Europe Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at the Local Level, the European Social Charter, safeguarding the right of refugees to participate in the social, economic, civic and political life of their countries of residence;

Drawing on the results of previous activities initiated by the Council of Europe Directorate for Youth and Sport (DYS), in particular: the consultative meeting, Social Cohesion and Inclusion of Young People, Budapest, October 2006; the consultative meeting, Access of Young Migrants and Refugees to Working Life, Budapest, October 2007 and the seminars Being a Young Refugee in Europe Today,

held in Strasbourg in December 2006 and October 2008, in co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR);

Commending the choice of the Member States of the Council of Europe to adopt local integration as the preferred solution as opposed to assistantship;

Aware that different policies, differing levels of policy implementation and service provision exist across Member States of the Council of Europe;

Recognising the particular vulnerability of young refugees and asylum seekers as a social group, often at risk from discrimination, trafficking, slavery, prostitution, poverty, homelessness, racial violence and crime, labour exploitation, sexual exploitation and abuse;

Conscious that young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection aged 18 – 30 years are a diverse group, with specific and particular needs;

Having regard to the lack of availability of services to young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection, whose needs are often overlooked by institutions as, once they reach the age of 18, they no longer fall under specific protection mechanisms;

Convinced that young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection aged 18 – 30 years old have the potential to make an outstanding contribution to their host countries and should be perceived not as “burdens” to society but as resourceful youths determined to rebuild their lives and wishing to make a contribution to the social, economic, civil, political and cultural life of their host communities;

Concerned by the widespread instances of racism, discrimination and xenophobia and their increasingly violent manifestation in Europe;

Considering the values and principles of equality, solidarity, democracy and inclusion;

Honouring the common humanity we all share regardless of our respective origins;

Strongly supporting the role of non-formal education in promoting the values and principles of equality, solidarity, democracy and inclusion and its power to bring about change as well as its contribution to ensuring these values and principles are embodied by our societies;

Having shared in the framework of the Consultative Meeting a wealth of lessons learned and good practices, as well as concerns related to young refugees and asylum seekers in Europe and the daily challenges they face;

We adopt the following recommendations with a view to protecting young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection, and advancing their local integration in the Member States of the Council of Europe.

Recommendations on Social Inclusion

On promoting the social inclusion of young people in need of protection in Europe

We recommend that the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Advisory Council on Youth, the European Youth Forum and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

- Recognise young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection aged 18 – 30 years old as a group with specific needs within European society
- Encourage accessibility to youth associations, NGOs and movements for young asylum seekers and refugees, whose legal status or the type of documentation they hold often prevents them from participating in such organisations
- Assess the research that has been carried out on this particular group
- Undertake relevant and in-depth research on this group's experiences and circumstances with particular attention to their needs, concerns and expectations, as well as the attributes and skills they have to offer to their host countries
- Share and disseminate the outcome of any research undertaken.

We recommend that the Council of Europe, its Directorate of Youth and Sport (DYS) and its Directorate of Social Cohesion

- Provide resources, training and non-formal education opportunities to young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection, as well as to youth workers, educators and other civil society members working with this group of youths, to promote skills training, capacity building, knowledge sharing and youth participation. These resources, the training and non-formal education opportunities should focus on approaches to promote social inclusion and active participation in the host society.

We recommend that the United Nations Programme on Youth, in co-operation with the UNHCR and its national and local implementing partners,

- Take advantage of the United Nations International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding to support youth-based activities promoting the social inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers and other youths aged 18 – 30 in need of humanitarian protection in Europe.

We recommend that the Council of Europe and its Directorate for Youth and Sport, the European Commission, the UNHCR, the Advisory Council on Youth, the European Youth Forum and NGOs

- Include young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection, in any consultation on youth issues
- Lead by example and promote volunteer programmes and employment access to young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection within their own organisations.

Recommendations on Education

On targeting the factors limiting and impeding access to education opportunities for young refugees and asylum seekers

We recommend that the UNHCR and the Council of Europe

- Encourage Member States of the Council of Europe to establish training courses for education staff of secondary, tertiary institutions and non-formal education institutions, as well as for educators, social workers and youth workers, to equip them with knowledge about refugee rights, intercultural communications and human rights education, which can help them relate to and support young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection.

We recommend that the Council of Europe Member States

- Create language support opportunities for young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection, accessing the formal education system at secondary and tertiary levels
- Establish assessments of the educational level of young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection to identify specific support needs in relation to their access to the formal education system at secondary and tertiary levels.

We recommend that the Council of Europe and NGOs

- Encourage Member States to make relevant and accessible information on the education system and educational opportunities available to young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection.

We recommend that the Council of Europe, the Advisory Council on Youth and the European Youth Forum

- Examine the issue of recognition of prior qualifications of young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection as well as find solutions for those among them who are unable to produce proof of their previous studies as a result of circumstances directly related to their displacement, including but not limited to documents lost, destroyed during flight or withheld by authorities in the country of origin.

We recommend that the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the Advisory Council on Youth and the European Youth Forum

- Work towards enabling young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection, to participate in mobility programmes, including exchange programmes, internships and research placements in European countries other than where they have been granted protection.

We recommend that the Advisory Council on Youth and the European Youth Forum

- Advocate for inclusion of young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection in student representative structures.

We recommend that the UNHCR, the Council of Europe, the Advisory Council on Youth and the European Youth Forum

- Gradually work towards ensuring the opportunity for young asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection to access any level of education across Member States of the Council of Europe
- Advocate for young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection to be allowed to compete on an equal basis with citizens for financial aid opportunities at tertiary education level
- Encourage Council of Europe Member States to provide orientation sessions on admission to tertiary education for prospective young refugee, asylum seeker students and other youths in need of humanitarian protection.

We recommend that the UNHCR, the Advisory Council on Youth, the European Youth Forum and NGOs

- Encourage NGOs working with refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection, and having education within their mandate, to widen their focus to include access to tertiary education programmes.

We recommend that the UNHCR

- Increase budget allocation for young refugees to access tertiary education degree programmes
- Consider including young asylum seekers in the bursaries it grants through the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative Fund (DAFI).

On policy development on education access for young refugees and asylum seekers

We recommend that the Council of Europe and the UNHCR

- Initiate the necessary steps for the formulation and implementation of a common education policy on young refugees and asylum seekers at secondary and tertiary education levels.

We recommend that the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the UNHCR, the Advisory Council on Youth, the European Youth Forum and NGOs

- Work to ensure that equal treatment in access to educational opportunities is given to European citizens and young refugees and asylum seekers granted protection in Europe.

On guaranteeing safe learning environments

We recommend that the Advisory Council on Youth, the European Youth Forum and NGOs

- Implement measures to ensure that Member States of the Council of Europe work to create safe learning environments by guaranteeing the physical integrity of all and working towards promoting human rights and social inclusion, with a view to preventing xenophobia.

Recommendations in the Legal Sphere

On guaranteeing full access to justice

We recommend that the Council of Europe, in co-operation with the UNHCR,

- Work together to formulate a recommendation of the Council of Ministers aimed at making clear and accessible legal procedures available to young refugees, asylum-seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection. This recommendation should cover the following areas, amongst others:
 - Adequate access to legal information, including that obtainable through the provision of specialised legal advice centres
 - Effective legal representation, free of charge
 - Fair processes which give asylum seekers' applications full and proper consideration
 - Respect of the principle of *non-refoulement* by Member States in accordance with their international obligations, ensuring that “no-one, regardless of their status or residence, shall be returned in any manner whatsoever to any country where their life or freedom would be at risk or where they might be subjected to torture or inhuman treatment”
 - Protection of the right of an asylum seeker arrested and/or detained to take judicial proceedings to determine the lawfulness of that detention
 - Efficient processes for providing asylum seekers with documentation that certifies his or her status as an asylum seeker and his or her right to remain in the territory while his or her application is pending
 - Multilingual assistance throughout the legal process
 - Compulsory and adequate training for staff working with young refugees and asylum seekers, including detention staff, social workers, legal representatives and judges, on the rights of refugees and the confidentiality principle
 - Clear and accessible complaints procedures for asylum seekers in case of ill-treatment, leading to an effective and independent investigation.

We recommend that Council of Europe Member States

- Desist from using accelerated procedures for asylum applications which risk violating the principle of *non-refoulement*, and work to ensure procedures are fair as well as efficient.

On protecting the human dignity of all young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection

We recommend that Council of Europe Member States

- Set and respect minimum standards for the reception of young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection which ensure them a dignified standard of living, specifically designed for their special needs as young people
- Ensure that young refugees have access to social assistance, health care and education under the same eligibility conditions as nationals of the Member State
- End the externalisation of asylum, whereby they arrange for third countries outside Europe to detain asylum seekers, often in highly unsuitable and undignified conditions.

We recommend that the Council of Europe

- Encourage Member States to initiate steps to maintain the right to family unity and reunification beyond the age of 18
- Advocate that asylum seeker minors and youths should never be placed into detention centres, and for more humane alternatives to be sought.

On promoting the right to full participation in civic and public life

We recommend that the Council of Europe

- Formulate proposals to extend the right to access to education for young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection beyond the age of compulsory education in each Member State.

We recommend that the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport and the European Youth Foundation

- Work to overcome legal obstacles to the mobility of young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection when participating in international youth meetings and activities, and work to mainstream their participation in all relevant international youth activities.

Conclusions

We commit to disseminating the recommendations among all relevant international, national, regional and local bodies and we sincerely hope that all bodies concerned will contribute to the implementation of these recommendations, based on their respective mandates and commitment to the dignity and equality of all human beings.

We further commit to monitoring the implementation of the recommendations by relevant bodies and to meeting again no less than once every two years to evaluate the outcomes and implementation of the recommendations.

We hope that this commitment will mark a turning point in advancing the protection of young refugees, asylum seekers and other youths in need of humanitarian protection in Europe.

III. DOCUMENTATION OF THE MEETING

1. Background

Young refugees and asylum seekers are amongst those facing the biggest challenges to full participation in society. Structural inequality in economic and social policies mitigate against equality of opportunity and outcome for young people. It can be said that one of the major aims of youth work is to provide opportunities for young people to shape their own futures. Consequently, youth policy should provide access to all young people to the opportunities society has to offer them. Youth policy measures, including the provision of different forms of municipal youth services, have to deal with unemployment, educational failure, marginalisation and social exclusion. The transformation of welfare systems in Europe, together with consequences of the globalisation of the labour market, have made this mission even more important.

However, youth work and youth policy are only two of the many fields when it comes to the development and implementation of policies and practical measures to facilitate the access of young people to working life and to social rights.

Therefore, the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe actively co-operates with other Council of Europe structures and interested international organisations, non-governmental organisations and governmental services to concentrate energies and enhance interdisciplinary communication and complementary action.

One of the work priorities of the Directorate of Youth and Sport 2010-2012 is “Social Cohesion and Inclusion of Young people”. Agenda 2020, the policy document adopted by the 8th Ministers’ Conference on Youth in October 2009, defines social cohesion and inclusion as, amongst other as:

- Supporting the integration of excluded young people
- Ensuring young people’s access to education, training and a working life, particularly through the promotion and recognition of non-formal education / learning
- Supporting young people’s transition from education to the labour market, for example by strengthening possibilities to reconcile private and working life
- Supporting young people’s autonomy and well-being as well as their access to decent living conditions
- Ensuring young people’s equal access to cultural, sporting and creative activities.

The present consultative meeting draws on the results of recent activities with the participation of numerous stakeholders, and in particular:

- the consultative meeting Social Cohesion and Inclusion of Young People, Budapest, October 2006
- the consultative meeting on the Access of Young Migrants and Refugees to Working Life, Budapest, October 2007
- the seminar Being a young refugee in Europe today, Strasbourg, December 2006 and October 2008, in co-operation with the UNHCR.

The DYS and UNHCR began a close co-operation in 2006 through a common seminar, Being a Young Refugee in Europe Today, which brought together 32 young refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs. As a result of this, the participants of this seminar decided to continue their common work and to create their own international youth network, VYRE (Voices of Young Refugees in Europe) which was born officially in Budapest in 2008 through a seminar co-financed by the European Youth Foundation and the UNHCR. In 2008, the seminar was organised a second time in the EYCS with 30

new participants. Finally, in 2009, VYRE ran their first self-organised study session on youth participation as a way towards inclusion.

Taking these steps into account, both the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe and UNHCR are aware of the importance of pursuing the work started with young refugees at European level and wish to support their social inclusion at all levels. This consultative meeting aimed to look into the achievements in the field of working with young refugees, and to help the DYS to define a new strategy and concrete format of activities for future work in that area. In this context, the importance of the very successful co-operation between the DYS and the Representation of the UNHCR in Strasbourg should be emphasised and used in future planning as an example of good practice.

2. Aim and objectives of the consultative meeting

Aim of the meeting

To develop possible strategies and plans on how to integrate the work with young refugees into the wider DYS programme and propose durable solutions to their problems.

Objectives

- To look into past experiences of working with young refugees in the DYS
- To identify the main challenges faced by young refugees in Europe and identify possible responses
- To consolidate the work between the DYS and UNHCR on working with young refugees
- To develop possible formats of activities for future work with young refugees
- To involve other European partners and stakeholders in common reflection for the development of suitable programmes and durable solutions for young refugees.

Main questions addressed by the consultative meeting

- **What** is the difference between a young refugee and a refugee in general? Is there a difference? Should there be a difference in policies? Should this concept be distinctive?
- **When** will the UNHCR consider that the reality faced by the young refugees in Europe is different? At this time, the UNHCR does not have current statistics for young refugees (18 to 30). When are they going to make the difference and adapt to today's realities, challenges and needs?
- **Who** is responsible for the increasing number of refugees in Europe? And who is responsible for the failure of young refugees? The hosting countries, the problem of cultural adaptation, the refugees or the Refugee Agency?
- **Where** are the best practices in the perspective of young refugees? Where is the US in Europe for refugees?
- **How** can the detention of immigrants be avoided? How can families of refugees stay united? How can the cultural impact be avoided?

3. Profile of Participants

As seen by the Directorate of Youth and Sport and UNHCR, the consultative meeting brought together:

- Institutional representatives from international institutions actively involved in work with refugees and young refugees where possible
- Representatives of local, national and international youth NGOs working with and for young refugees
- Young refugees who were involved in previous activities of the DYS and could contribute with their expertise
- Young people working with people forced to move
- Youth researchers with expertise on the situation of young refugees in Europe
- Youth policy makers involved in policy on young refugees

Team of trainers and support staff

The team consisted of:

1. Matteo Fornaca - trainer
2. Carine Rustom - UNHCR
3. Nadine Lyamouri-Bajja - educational adviser Directorate of Youth and Sport
4. Cosmin Corendea - rapporteur

The work of the team was supported by the administrative and technical staff of the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. Special thanks go to Vincenza Quattrone and Nina Kapoor, as well as to the team of interpreters.

Experts and guests:

1. Olivier Beer - UNHCR Representative to the European Institutions in Strasbourg
2. Ralf-René Weingärtner - Director of Youth and Sport
3. Julien Attuil-Kayser - Adviser to the Commissioner for Human Rights
4. Carl Ekstrom - Deputy Secretary of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, Parliamentary Assembly
5. Anne-Lorraine - Trainee, Migration and Roma Division, Directorate of Social Cohesion
6. Penelope Denu - Secretary of the Committee on Youth, Parliamentary Assembly

The experts and guests were invited to join the entire programme of the meeting and to contribute by offering keynote speeches, running specific related presentations and/or being available for consultations with the participants.

4. Programme and working methods of the meeting

The working methods of the consultative meeting were based on, or facilitated the exchange of knowledge, skills, attitudes and best practices, and provided training for the development of new competences. The projects and experiences of the participants served as a basis for reflection and discussion of good practice.

Contributions by participants and invited experts also provided a closer look at existing theories, initiatives, projects and approaches to human rights in general, and social inclusion, specifically in relation to young refugees in Europe.

Input and discussions in plenary sessions, thematic working groups, the exchange of experiences and competency-building workshops provided further understanding of the issues.

Particular emphasis was placed on exchanging non-formal educational practices and establishing links between refugees and other social actors, such as institutions, social workers, educators, and so on.

This consultative meeting, in collaboration with the UNHCR, represented a very efficient and constructive means of co-operating. It successfully combined the experience which the Directorate of Youth and Sport has in the European youth sector with the experience of the main institution in the field of refugees, worldwide; there was also a relaxed and open approach, with comprehensive input sessions, and strong participatory outcomes by the end of the meeting. The volume of information disseminated during the consultative meeting was high, compressed into two days of motivating presentations and the hard work of participants, in producing the recommendations of the meeting. The event included institutional standpoints as well as activists' perspectives, life stories of young refugees in Europe alongside statistical input from the UNHCR, and shared experiences of those working with the refugees as well as those who are the refugees.

The programme was designed to create a true learning experience in a relatively short period of time. It had to reflect and achieve the objectives of the consultative meeting, while also considering:

- The need to give visibility to discrimination, prejudices and stereotypes in relation to refugees and how they affect young people today
- Concrete and diverse examples of good work practice in addressing refugee-related issues and dealing with challenges posed for social inclusion on a regular basis.

The programme relied on the experiences of the participants, to be shared and discussed in thematic working groups. Plenary sessions served to communicate results and feedback from the groups, as well as to present guest speakers' reflections and proposals, especially on the institutional perspective, refugees' experience and social impact.

5. Expectations of the participants

In order to assure the success of the meeting, the training team initiated an exercise called "Wash wire", which offered the participants the chance to express their expectations in regard to this event: in the first part of the first day the participants were asked to hang, on a string, pieces of paper with their expectations (what they wanted to take back home), as well as their fears and potential contributions to this meeting. At the end of the meeting, the participants were asked to retract the pieces of paper with the expectations which had been fulfilled and the fears which proved to be irrelevant. In this way, the participants and the team had the opportunity to observe the main concerns of the participants, the volume and the variety of expertise presented at this conference, as well as the scale of success and efficiency of the consultative meeting.

Here are some of the main issues:

Expectations:

- To have a productive meeting and eventually good results
- To learn more about young refugees in Europe
- To meet interesting people and create competent networking
- To share my experience and learn from others' experiences
- To be able to go back home with new information
- To become involved in future projects with young refugees
- To discuss interesting topics and engage in dynamic discussions.

Fears:

- Wasting my time!
- Not sufficient time to visit Strasbourg
- Boring presentations
- Boring people
- Same tasteless food at the Centre
- A meeting which is too short for such important topics
- Insufficient time and space to express personal opinions.

IV. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

1. Presentations and Input sessions

1.1 Opening statement by Mr. Ralf-René Weingärtner, Director of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe

Dear Participants,

It is a pleasure for me to open this consultative meeting on the future work with young refugees, which has a strategic meaning for us in defining our future work.

It is also my pleasure to sit here with Mr. Beer, my colleague from the UNHCR office in Strasbourg, as the co-operation between our two institutions has proven to be fruitful and successful in the past.

The role of the Directorate of Youth and Sports is “to provide young people, i.e. girls and boys, young women and young men, with equal opportunities and experience which enable them to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies to play a full part in all aspects of society.”¹

In order to do so, we work at all levels of society, including young people at grassroots level, but also multipliers, youth NGOs, youth leaders and youth workers. We strongly believe that the success of our work lies in combining what we like to call the “magic triangle”: youth work, research and youth policy. We are pleased to see that all three angles of this triangle are represented amongst you here today.

Whereas a strong part of our work lies in capacity building, training and education of young people, we also work on youth policy development in member states.

Agenda 2020, the final declaration of the Conference of Ministers responsible for youth, defined main priorities of work for the Directorate of Youth and Sport’s youth policy and action:

- Human Rights and Democracy
- Living together in diverse societies
- Social inclusion of young people

Although we believe that working with young refugees somehow responds to all three priorities, “supporting youth work with young refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons” is clearly mentioned as a priority within “Living together in diverse societies”. This means that the importance of our work in this field is recognised and emphasised on the youth policy level.

Young people in general are to be considered a vulnerable group. Whereas a lot of work is done for children and unaccompanied minors, young refugees often stay aside, considered just as adults, but with no guidance or specific support. They have often faced displacement and traumatic experiences and have been separated from their families, roots and homes. They need additional guidance in their transitions from childhood to adulthood, from education to the labour market, from their home country to the host country. They face challenges in relation to social inclusion, to the recognition of their rights. They are often not given the space to participate fully in society and to be recognised as equals.

I would like to provide you with an overall picture of our work with young refugees so far and why this meeting is taking place now:

¹ Final declaration of the 8th Conference of Ministers responsible for youth, Kiev (2008)

- In 2006: All Different - All Equal campaign – the importance of working for diversity, Human Rights and participation. The need to include minorities and disadvantaged young people was underlined.
- In December 2006 we organised our first training seminar together with the UNHCR, Being a Young Refugee in Europe today. The 32 participants who got together were young refugees, asylum seeker and IDPs from all corners of the world. What we had planned as a seminar became a first impetus for a long-term process which, we believe, will go on in the future. Participants developed concrete recommendations (which you can find in the publication included in your folders).
- The participants of this seminar decided to continue working together and to get organised in order to support young refugees in capacity building and in defending their rights. The network Voices of Young Refugees in Europe (VYRE) was officially created in 2008 with the support of the European Youth Foundation.
- Since, VYRE has become an independent network which stays very close to our Directorate; they ran their first study session last year in the centre in Strasbourg and pursue their work at all levels. I am glad to see that the network is also represented here by a few participants.

This meeting is now an occasion for common reflection between the UNHCR and the DYS, together with other main actors involved in the work with young refugees at local, national and international level, to identify their main challenges and concrete needs.

I understand that participants of this meeting will work on concrete recommendations addressed to various stakeholders. We would like to see clear guidelines on how we, the DYS, together with the UNHCR, could further support young refugees in the future, through our continued training activities as well as at policy level.

I am also happy to see that the Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly on Youth and on Refugees will both be present at some moments in this meeting. This shows indeed the importance given by the Council of Europe to the work with young refugees and to the urgent need of protecting and supporting them further.

I wish you a fruitful meeting and look forward to receiving your results, to which we will pay special attention and which we will transmit to our statutory bodies.

1.2 Opening statement by Mr. Olivier Beer, UNHCR Representative to the European Institutions in Strasbourg

Introduction

Mr. Olivier Beer welcomed the audience and expressed his pleasure at working together with the Directorate of Youth and Sport (DYS) of the Council of Europe for the third time on young refugee issues in Europe.

Mr. Olivier Beer introduced the UNHCR, which was created in 1950, and stressed that, under its mandate and according to the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the agency leads and co-ordinates international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country. He further underlined the UNHCR's action against the forced return of refugees to countries where they might be persecuted.

UNHCR's Representation to the European Institutions in Strasbourg and its activities

The Representative introduced the UNHCR's office in Strasbourg and explained its activities:

- Established in 1996 as a liaison office between the UNHCR and the European institutions in Strasbourg, the Representation aims to ensure that the standard-setting instruments of major Council of Europe institutions reflect, promote and complement the UNHCR's mandate, policies and operations in Europe and worldwide, and works to maintain an effective liaison between the European institutions and regional and field offices in Europe.
- The Office further works to guarantee that Council of Europe human rights monitoring mechanisms address concrete situations or issues of concern to the UNHCR in Europe at both general and individual case levels, such as the access to asylum and to fair asylum procedures, the fight against trafficking in human beings, and various matters regarding reception procedures and the protection of IDPs and stateless people.
- The Office closely monitors the European Court of Human Rights' jurisprudence and submits third party interventions to the Court.
- Joint partnerships and solid co-operation have been established together with Council of Europe institutions, namely, the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (CHR), the Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs (DG-HL), the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), and the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR).

The UNHCR-DYS collaboration

Mr. Olivier Beer presented the joint collaboration with the Council of Europe's DYS, which began in 2006 with a common seminar, Being a Young Refugee in Europe Today, which brought together 32 young refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs. A seminar creating an international network of young refugees, Voices of Young Refugees in Europe (VYRE), and a study session on youth participation as a way to inclusion, were organised respectively in 2008 and 2009.

Mr. Beer underlined that these events reinforced the two organisations' interest in pursuing the work started with young refugees at European level, and supported their social inclusion at all levels.

He underlined that this consultative meeting aimed at examining the achievements in the field of working with young refugees and at developing common strategies guaranteeing an effective protection of refugees' rights in their host country. Indeed, finding durable solutions for refugees is one of the UNHCR's main goals.

Local integration as a durable solution

The durable solutions advocated for and applied by the UNHCR are voluntary repatriation to the country of origin, local integration in the host country and resettlement to a third country.

Mr. Olivier Beer focused on the second solution, the integration of refugees in their host country. The UNHCR defines local integration as a "legal process whereby rights and prerogatives are progressively given to the refugees by the State, similar to those guaranteed to its citizens". Local integration is mentioned as well in the 1951 Geneva Convention, which provides that, "States shall as far as possible facilitate the integration of refugees and their access to citizenship" (article 34).

He reiterated that under the 1951 Geneva Convention, refugees are people that are outside the country of their nationality owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, and that are unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country (article 1§2).

However, he stressed that refugees have special needs due to past experiences of persecution, violence, and exploitation, flight and exile. Upon arrival in the host country they face particular challenges confronting legal, financial, cultural and linguistic matters. Moreover, refugees might be the target of stereotypes, xenophobia, racism and intolerance, as seen in the Ukraine, Italy, Greece or Germany. It is, however, of eminent importance that those refugees feel safe in their host country. Separated from their family, young refugees are most vulnerable.

Social rights enshrined in the 1951 Geneva Convention

Mr. Olivier Beer underlined that the refugees' integration depends on public policies and that it is important to guarantee the respect of social and economic rights as provided by the 1951 Geneva Convention: the right to have access to property (article 13), the right to have access to the labour market (articles 17-19), the rights to have access to housing and education (articles 21 and 22), and the right to protection of health and to benefit from social welfare services and unemployment benefits (articles 23-24).

Challenges and strategies

The integration in the host country is a very complex solution. Legal, economic, social and cultural measures to assist refugees are limited or non-existent. Furthermore, gaps remain between these legal policies and the way in which they are put into practice. In order to achieve local integration, and considering that each young refugee is different and has his/her individual needs, the UNHCR calls for the adoption of an AGDM (Age Gender Diversity Mainstreaming) Strategy in which age, gender and diversity factors are taken into account in every local integration process.

Ten points involving the participation of various partners, their collaboration, funding, monitoring and evaluation of these partnerships, should be considered:

1. Strengthening partnerships with key stakeholders (state institutions, local communities, civil society and refugees themselves)
2. Needs-based assessments and targeted integration measures mainstreamed within integration policies and programmes
3. Fostering participation and building bridges with local communities
4. Acknowledging the links between the reception and integration phases
5. Providing a secure legal status and equal access to rights
6. Providing access to safe, secure and affordable housing
7. Ensuring active participation in the economic life of the host country
8. Ensuring participation through education
9. Ensuring the learning of the local language to strengthen their self-reliance
10. Monitoring and evaluation of integration policies and programmes

Conclusion

Mr. Olivier Beer expressed his confidence with regards to the outcome of the meeting and encouraged the participants to support the optimism of the young refugees by finding durable solutions to their problems, that is, their social inclusion, their economic independence and the possibility to accede to their naturalisation in the host country.

He thanked the audience for their attention and wished the participants fruitful discussions.

1.3 Challenges of young refugees in Europe, by Yasuko Shimizu, UNHCR Geneva

In the first presentation of the meeting, Ms. Yasuko Shimizu offered the participants a very informative and succinct description of the refugees in Europe, focusing on local integration efforts in Europe.

Starting by presenting the situation of young refugees in the world and continuing with the European experiences faced by the UNHCR, Ms. Shimizu considered that an investment made for young refugees today represents, in fact, an investment for the future.

However, it is widely recognised that the 'young refugees', as a separate entity, have a tendency to be forgotten by the specific local and international institutions, as they are considered to represent a population without exceptional problems and not necessarily a concern (such as with minors or elderly people). Yet the UNHCR does not produce and cover statistics for young refugees in particular.

Surrounded by field stories of refugees or successful experiences with refugees in Europe, the presentation referred in general to refugees in Europe aged between 18 and 59, and provided some relevant facts, for example:

- 50% of the world's refugees are between 18 and 59
- 40% of the refugees in Europe are between 18 and 59
- the number of older people (over 60 years old) is higher in Europe than in other continents.

The challenges faced by refugees were also discussed, focusing on psycho-social traumas (specific for the older population or former young soldiers), the cultural issue (the perception of the host communities by young refugees or the language barrier), the educational challenges (e.g. although the legal framework exists, it is hard for refugees to enter universities), opportunities (lack of access to information), employment (the lack of proof of previous working experience / specialisation) or housing (no planning for vulnerable population or refugees and no assistance in this matter).

Although the refugees are considered to be an asset for the community in general, for bringing cultural diversity, new ideas, skills or human resources, there are still several concerns, for example,

- (young) refugees represent strong competition in the labour market
- they are considered a threat to national security
- environmental issues: cutting trees to make more space for refugee camps or settlement centres brings some additional problems to the community.

The presentation continued by focusing on local integration as one of the three durable solutions for refugees (besides voluntary repatriation and resettlement), at different dimensions (legal, economic or social-cultural), with 41 European countries out of 42 (asked by the UNHCR) affirming that they offer integration opportunities to refugees, and with 13 European countries having an integration policy for refugees (out of 40 reviewed).

Under the regional approach segment of the presentation, Ms. Shimizu presented good practices in Europe from three countries, the Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, underlining the fact that if the socio (political) will is present (e.g. 2008: Action Plan; 2009: Local Integration Projects supported by the European Union), then there are many good things to be done for refugees in Europe.

In conclusion, for better integration of the refugees in the new hosting communities, governments should ensure legal status and rights for refugees for creating opportunities for the newcomers, the host community should welcome refugees as they can contribute and have more to offer to the area, and the refugees should adapt better, by learning about the local culture and values.

In the ‘Questions and Answers’ part of the meeting which followed Ms. Shimizu’s presentation, many issues were raised, in relation to the new shared information and the role of the UNHCR in a wider sense. Here are some points raised by the audience:

- It is our responsibility to make authorities respond to refugees’ problems.
- Refugees do not bring higher tolerance to the society; people behave differently but in accordance with their values and interests.
- Nevertheless, tolerance in the long run appears when there is diversity in a society.
- Country-to-country experiences differ: asylum seekers still work in some countries, although there is no policy / legal framework guaranteed by the governments.
- Some governments tolerate refugees’ activities even if they do not have local integration policies.

1.4. The needs of young refugees in Europe, by Aboubakar Soumahoro, Migrammum, VYRE

Mr. Soumahoro excited the audience with a very passionate and reality-orientated presentation. The key element was to bring to life figures and numbers offered by the UNHCR’s representative a day earlier, trying to convince people to make use of these numbers, and ensure they were not forgotten in ‘some drawers’.

Himself once a young refugee in Europe and with a extensive experience in Italy (his ‘host country’), Mr. Soumahoro shared with participants his experience as a refugee, his current work in the field and what actually happens to refugees today in Europe. The main common elements are, unfortunately, massive human rights violations, vulnerable people in misery, and death becoming a daily fact. Apparently, the reasoning behind the refugee definition is lost and people in need are badly mistreated, without any defence when facing any forms of racism, discrimination and/or xenophobia.

The presentation identified some of the main reasons behind the decisions of refugees to leave their own countries:

- War
- LGBT
- Environmental
- Political

Finally, it was motivating to hear that all refugees have their own reasons in the end, and they do leave with the strong belief that they head to a promised land, and they will ultimately reach more economic, political, and/or environmental stability. Meanwhile, however, tragedies still happen, for example the Mediterranean Sea becoming a cemetery from the South-to-North migration.

The examples of Dublin II, EURODAC, Malta or the bilateral France-Italy agreement were brought up, as bad policies, theories and conventions applied to a completely different reality of how ‘to secure’ Europe against refugees. The lack of implementing the European Convention on Human Rights, forcing people (refugees) to live in misery or ignoring the motivations of each individual European country, towards unrealistic and international regulations such as the examples above, represent the main *raison d’être* behind the unsatisfactory situation of today’s refugees in Europe.

The discussion continued with identifying the needs of young refugees in Europe, some of them already elaborated on earlier in the meeting. Hence, active participation, becoming part of European institutions, equal employment opportunities, formal and informal education or stronger collaboration

among different actors in the field of refugees do represent various alternative steps which may be followed for ‘a severe correction’ of today’s reality in the field of refugees.

In conclusion, Mr. Soumahoro referred to racism and exclusion policies that are regrettably continuing to cause great harm to refugees in Europe, and that the so called “multiculturalism” Europe is so proud of, was sadly reduced to a plate of kebab, *soyons* (Fr.) actors and music.

Here are some comments and questions raised by the participants in the ‘questions and answers’ session after the presentations:

- The Dublin II Regulation has detrimental results (e.g. Chechens who were given asylum in Poland, but not in France)
- Dublin II has the ‘merit’ of separating families (examples of mother/child separations in cases of refugees)
- Dublin II is totally against the 1951 Geneva Convention
- Due to so many gaps and separations, although institutions are working together, their work is in vain with no perspective (Council of Europe’s experience)
- Bringing people together (such as for this meeting) who do not necessarily speak about refugees, but listen to refugees, is very important
- Do not avoid people who think differently, but try to enter into a dialogue with them
- We need to assure that authorities take note of refugees’ needs
- In relation to NGOs, it is hard to find a balance between the work in the field and policy making, as working in the field resolves immediate needs (in camps, for example), while policy making tries to create a structure, with no direct impact on refugees.

2. Thematic Working Groups

2.1 Sharing realities on challenges faced by young refugees

In order to achieve a concrete conclusion and ultimately future steps in the direction of young refugees, the participants were requested to start this process by **identifying the main challenges** they face in their field of activity related to young refugees. Based on their expertise, work and social experience in the field of refugees, the participants were divided into four groups, which tackled the topic from different angles, the outcomes of these working groups clearly expressing many of the issues the young refugees are facing today in Europe. However, several topics appeared to be common for different countries, and more urgent or more achievable in participants’ perceptions.

Here are some of the main ideas from the groups created:

Group 1 (4 participants)

- Recognition of the ‘young refugees 18 - 30’ as a group with specific support needs. Undertake research around the specific needs of this group. Directed to the UNHCR. Experts at consultation to take back to local areas.
- The Directorate of Youth and Sport to provide resources and training to youth workers and young refugees to promote skill sharing and capacity building, focusing on methods of social inclusion.
- In this UN ‘year of youth’, organisations should commit to supporting activities through a youth-focused initiative at a local level. The purpose of activities should be to promote social inclusion.
- Leading institutions / NGOs should promote / encourage / commit to volunteer programmes and the employment of young refugees within their organisations. To lead by example.
- UNHCR should support initiatives financially!

Group 2 (6 participants)

- We asked ourselves which category we should treat, what we mean by the terms, for example, "young refugees" and "asylum seekers". In Italy, there is no distinction between refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants. These people have no access to the asylum procedure (see outsourcing in Libya, detention camp at Lampedusa).
- Access to the asylum application is important. The situation depends on national circumstances. It is an illusory goal of European states and there is a significant gap between state goals, and the ambitions and realities of migration. How are asylum seekers in Europe reported and classified?
- There is a lack of access to information, and a lack of benchmarks. Institutionalised children are seeking asylum in schools before considering their application for asylum. There is no access to education because they lack the status of refugees, and access to education may be less problematic (despite the language barrier) in parts of Europe; access to healthcare, or even a degree of preventive medical services, however, is more problematic.
- Access to the labour market is difficult as it relates to administrative status.
- Access to the territory – or not getting the chance to do so – is a problem of implementation. The 1951 Geneva Convention was drafted ages ago. The Convention doesn't cover all the current situations, Example: the environment. The situation has changed since the Convention, which covered rather elemental points (wars, floods) and non-gradual degradation (desertification, etc.). There is no regular inclusion of climate in any legal framework. There is a reference to residence permits issued as a humanitarian response to punctual events. Climate refugees are the result of delayed effects of Environmental Policy and Economic Policy. We must look at the link between environment and migration.
- The problematic issue of young adults: this group is scientifically and politically marginalised and is not targeted by specific policies, yet this group is vulnerable. There is a need to create awareness about the issues known by this group. There is no specific policy in Finland for this age group. There is no entertainment provided for young migrants.
- There is a need to connect the legal status of refugees to daily discrimination. We must link the fight against discrimination and the rights and obligations of asylum seekers and refugees. It is necessary to improve the status of refugees in the society of origin.
- There is a need for a policy focused on young people but also addressing cross-cutting sectors. We must raise the issue relating to this age group, and the process of migration within this framework.
- It is better to define terms. There is a need to protect the rights specifically for young adults who are the same as the non-migrants. We must develop a transversal approach.

Group 3 (5 participants)

- One of the biggest concerns when it comes to refugees who have just arrived into the host societies is the issue of detention. Although the detention centres mostly have conditions appropriate for accommodating minors and very young adults, minors should never be placed in detention centres. This should not be the first option in our societies; it should be the last option for refugees, especially minors, and the option that we use only when all other options are exhausted.
- In relation to detention (or any other issue related to refugees) the states should not put pressure on civil society organisations; for example, in France, NGOs are allowed to enter detention centres only if they agree not to publish their reports about the conditions they see there!
- One major problem is an issue of family separation; for example, when a refugee turns 18 in a host country he/she can immediately be sent back to the country of origin of his/her parents even though he/she might have never been there. This person's right to having a family is not respected in this case. Therefore, families should never be separated.

- There is a problem with defining ‘youth’ because there are many specific definitions, policies and programmes about those under 18, and those above 18, but nothing that would differentiate those in the age range 19-59; they are all in the same category.
- Another issue concerns access to proper information: a lack of information about their rights means an inability to fight for them.
- When a young person turns 18 it is often discovered that the person has never been through the asylum procedure; the minor had relatively good protection until 18 and suddenly he/she does not have that protection and has never been through any other procedure. This is a gap in the protection of minors who will eventually become young adults.
- One huge problem is access to documents: the procedures for getting status and personal documents are very often too long and prevent refugees from having a “real life”.
- Education is a basis for achieving social inclusion and better access to rights. Therefore, it has to be more accessible, and include universities. Sometimes young people are not formally educated at a very young age and they cannot catch up later, which is also a major problem for many.

Group 4 (4 participants)

- Education, access to appropriate language courses.
- Lack of training / education / awareness (about entitlements / policy / legislation) of frontline workers in services, for example, relating health, education, or the police; this results in barriers to access, and means key legislation is not implemented on the ground.
- Refugees not knowing about the host country’s systems and traditions.
- Refugees not being able to meet other local young people.
- Services / local authorities not communicating / taking responsibility for young refugees’ welfare.
- The general public not being aware of refugee issues.

2.2 What responses are needed from institutions to support young refugees?

In the second session of working groups of the consultative meeting, the participants were asked to focus on three main categories, which represented the main areas of discussions identified as a result of the first session of working groups. Thus, there was a transfer from challenges and problems acknowledged by the participants to addressing the specific needs of the young refugees in Europe. The main categories identified as being most important are: **education, social inclusion and legal issues**. This was a major step towards formulating a set of recommendations in the above-mentioned areas, as concrete and specific as possible. The participants were also required to identify the institutions (bodies) to whom they wanted to address the recommendations, starting from local and national authorities and ending with the Council of Europe and UNHCR. All the participants had experience in at least one of the three main categories; therefore the exercise proved to be very productive and creative. However, the vast number of issues in each group needed to be minimised in order to ensure a more efficient and successful set of recommendations.

Procedurally, the participants were asked to pick their group based on 4 questions:

1. What does this category mean to me?
2. Transferring from challenges and problems to concrete needs
3. Identifying the body to whom you want to address the recommendations
4. Formulating the recommendations in specific forms and terms.

After dividing the participants into three working groups, a volunteer rapporteur was selected by the group to represent their category in the final drafting of the recommendations. The outcome of these

groups' collaborations is, thanks to the hard work of the drafting committee, entirely reflected in the final recommendations of this consultative meeting.

2.3. Future steps: where do we go from here?

To ensure the results of the consultative meeting would be carried forward, the participants in the working groups of the consultative meeting were given a final assignment. They were asked to list suggestions for future steps to bring the drafted recommendations to the attention of relevant stakeholders. The participants came with a range of concrete suggestions:

- bring the recommendations to the UNHCR headquarters and local offices
- act at local level in the local community to raise awareness of the issue and ensure implementation of the recommendations
- encourage a representative of this meeting to present the recommendations at the April committee meeting, as suggested by the committee of refugees of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- ensure international institutions become aware of this meeting's requests
- establish new networks, and immediately work further on these recommendations
- encourage migrants and refugees to work together
- encourage everyone to get on board!

IV. APPENDICES

1. Challenges of young refugees in Europe, a presentation by Yasuko Shimizu, UNHCR Geneva

Local Integration Efforts in Europe

Consultative Meeting on the work with Young Refugees and Asylum Seekers

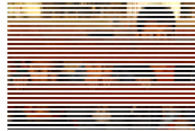
Strasbourg, 2 March 2010
Yasuko Shimizu, UNHCR, OSTS/DPSM

Outline of the presentation

- Young refugees in the world
- Refugees – asset for communities
- Local Integration
- European experiences
- Conclusion
- Questions

Young refugees - Statistics

- Statistics for “young” refugees ?
- World
- Europe



Young refugees - Challenges



- Psycho-social Trauma
- Culture
- Education
- Opportunity
- Employment
- Housing

Refugees – asset for the community



- Refugee as burden – Prevailing view?

Refugees – asset for the community



- Refugees bring:
 - Cultural diversity
 - New ideas
 - New skills
 - Human resources
- Refugees create societies that
 - Respect for people with different values
 - Accept people with different backgrounds

Local Integration



- One of three durable solutions for refugees
 - Voluntary Repatriation
 - Resettlement
 - Local Integration

Local Integration

- Legal dimension
- Economic dimension
- Socio-cultural dimension



Local Integration – global overview and Europe



- Europe
- Latin America
- Africa (West Africa)

Local Integration – Regional Approach



- West Africa – ECOWAS
- Europe – EU
- L. America



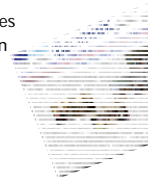
Experiences from Europe

- Montenegro
- Macedonia
- Russia
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Georgia
- BiH



European experience – Case from Ukraine/Moldova/Belarus

- Sub-regional approach
- 2007/8 – study on local integration of the three countries
- 2008 – Action plan/prioritization
- 2009- – Local Integration Projects supported by EU



European experience – Case from Ukraine/Moldova/Belarus

- Local Integration Projects include:
 - Employment activities
 - Housing
 - Social counseling
 - Language training/education
 - Public awareness/tolerance building
 - Capacity building

Vocational Training - Ukraine



Language training - Ukraine



Social entrepreneurship - Belarus

- Project on community development and self-reliance (since 2003)
 - Register formal community organization
 - Launch social enterprises
 - Provide legal income
- Achievements
 - 5 refugee community-based organizations



Education - Belarus

- Consultation classes at the secondary schools
- Catch-up classes
- Russian language training
- Policy discussion with MoE

Legal assistance/psycho-social assistance - Moldova

- Inform refugees/asylum seekers of the procedure of acquiring the citizenship
- Other legal assistance on housing, employment litigation, travel documents
- Psychotherapeutic assistance, psychological counseling



Community Development - Moldova

- Support for vulnerable refugees
 - Community building/self-sufficiency
 - Cultural orientation
 - Children's room
 - Lessons on drawing, painting, ceramics and languages
 - Cinema, handicraft, sports,
 - World Refugee Day,

Experiences from Europe - Serbia

- Local integration of refugees from Croatia and BiH
 - More than 200,000 people naturalized
 - Housing programme
 - Vocational training for refugees and internally displaced persons
 - Removal of obstacles for those wishing to repatriate



Conclusion

- Local Integration – Two-way approach
 - Gov't to provide opportunities, ensure legal status/right
 - Host community to welcome refugees
 - Refugees to understand the local culture/value
- Local Integration – Social networking
 - Self-help within refugee communities
 - Linking the needs/resources of refugees with local systems

Thank you!

2. The needs of young refugees in Europe, a presentation by Aboubakar Soumahoro, Migrammum, VYRE

PRÉSENTATION
“LES BESOINS D'UN JEUNE RÉFUGIÉ EN EUROPE”

Mr. Aboubakar Soumahoro

QUI SOMMES NOUS ?

NOUS FAISONS PARTIE DES 34, 4 MILLIONS DE PERSONNES (DES ÊTRES HUMAINS) DÉRACINÉES OU D'APATRIDES : FEMMES, HOMMES, ENFANTS, JEUNES...

LES RAISONS D'UNE FUITE:

POUR DES RAISONS LIÉES AUX GUERRES, APPARTENANCE ETHNIQUE, CULTURELLE OU POLITIQUE, GENRE (LGBT), CALAMITÉS, ENVIRONNEMENT, FAMINE.

L'ODYSSÉE ET LE CALVAIRE VERS L'EUROPE, TERRE PROMISE (?)

LES EAUX DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE (ESPAGNE, CYPRE, ITALIE, GRÈCE, MALTE, FRANCE, LIBYE, EGYPTÉ, ALGÉRIE, TUNISIE, TURQUIE...) PLUS QUE JAMAIS DEVENUE UN CIMETIÈRE À CIEL OUVERT.

TEMOIGNAGE D'UNE VIE ENTRE DROITS DÉCLARÉS, MAIS SISTÉMATIQUEMENT VIOLÉS

A) LA “NON” APPLICATION DE LA CONVENTION ONU DE GÈNEVE DE 1951:
“Les réfugiés théoriquement protégés par la convention de Genève de 1951, sont de plus en plus considérés par les États européens, comme des migrants illégaux et traités comme tels”

B) LE REGLEMENT DE DUBLIN II DE L' UNION EUROPEENNE

“Adopté le 18 février 2003, le Règlement de Dublin, dit “Dublin II”, stipule que l'État membre qui a permis à un demandeur d'asile d'entrer sur le territoire de l'UE est responsable de traiter sa demande.
Cette mesure est appuyée par le système EURODAC. Un système informatique de comparaison et de stockage des empreintes digitales des demandeurs d'asile à l'échelle de l'Union européenne a remplacée par la suite le « Règlement de Dublin ».
EURODAC a démarré ses activités le 15 janvier 2003”

C) LE CADRE DES ACCORDS BILATÉRAUX AVEC LES PAYS TIERS
“Le cas des Afghans récemment reconduits dans un pays où la guerre n'a pas cessé” **FRANCE**
Ou
“Des reconduites de réfugiés en Libye, un pays qui n'a toujours pas encore ratifié la Convention de Genève sur le droits des réfugiés” **ITALIE**

AUTRES EXEMPLES
LES CENTRES DE RÉTENTION EN LIBYE,ECC...

LES BESOINS D'AUJOUR'DHUI ET D'HIER EN EUROPE:

A) L'APPLICATION DE LA CONVENTION ONU DE GÈNEVE DE 1951 RELATIVE AU STATUT DES RÉFUGIÉS AU SEIN DE L'UE ET DES PAYS MEMBRES DU CONSEIL D'EUROPE

B) LA MISE EN PLACE D'INSTRUMENTS LEGISLATIFS, CULTURELS ET SOCIAUX, AFIN DE LUTTER CONTRE TOUTES SORTES DE DISCRIMINATIONS ET RACISMES

C) LA PARTICIPATION ACTIVE DES JEUNES RÉFUGIÉS ET MIGRANTS COMME ACTEURS DANS LES CAMPAGNES POUR LA COHESION SOCIALE/L'INCLUSION

D) LES JEUNES REFUGIÉS COMME ACTEURS
PROTAGONISTE DANS LES ACTIVITÉS DES
INSTITUTIONS EUROPÉENNES ET
INTERNATIONALES
(CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE, UNHCR, UE, ONG, ...)

E) L'ACCÈS AUX APPELS À CANDIDATURES
AUX SEINS DES INSTITUTIONS
EUROPÉENNES

EXEMPLE
LE CAS DES APPELS À CANDIDATURES
LIÉ À L'APPARTENANCE NATIONALE À L'UN
DES ÉTATS DE L'UE

F) LA COLLABORATION ENTRE LES
DIFFÉRENTS ACTEURS NATIONAUX ET
INTERNATIONAUX COMME INSTRUMENT
STRATÉGIQUE D'EXCÉLENCE POUR UNE
RÉEL APPLICATION DES NORME DE
TUTELLE DES REFUGIÉS

EXEMPLE:
"La collaboration entre la Direction de la
Jeunesse et le HCR"

G) UNE POLITIQUE DE COOPÉRATION ENTRE
LES ACTEURS PUBLIQUES ET PRIVÉS AFIN
DE FACILITER L'ACCÈS AUX EMPLOIS
POUR LES JEUNES REFUGIÉS ET
MIGRANTS

EXEMPLE
LE CONSEIL D'EUROPE, UNHCR, L'UNION
EUROPÉENNE, LES CONSEILS MUNICIPAUX,
LES ACTEURS ÉCONOMIQUES, ONG, ...

H) L'ÉDUCATION FORMELLE (l'école ou
l'université), L'ÉDUCATION INFORMELLE
(la famille, la rue et l'entourage) ET
L'ÉDUCATION NON FORMELLE COMME
INSTRUMENT CULTUREL INDISPENSABLE
POUR UNE CONSCIENCE COLLECTIVE SUR
LE RESPECT DES DROITS DES REFUGIÉS ET
MIGRANTS

CONCLUSION

"LE RACISME ET LES POLITIQUES
D'EXCLUSION CONTINUENT A FAIRE DES
VICTIMES ET LA PROMOTION DE LA
MULTICULTURALITÉ S'EST REDUITE A
L'IDÉE DE MANGER UN PLAT DE KEBAB,
SOYONS DES ACTEURS ET DU
CHANGEMENT"

Aboubakar Soumahoro

3. Programme Outline

The final programme of the training seminar was as follows:

Monday 1 March 2010

Arrival of participants

Tuesday, 2 March

09:30 Official opening of the meeting

Mr. Ralf-René Weingärtner, Director of Youth and Sport in the Council of Europe

Mr. Olivier Beer, Representative of the UNHCR Representation to the European Institutions
in Strasbourg

10:15 Introduction of participants and presentation of the objectives of the meeting

11:00 *Coffee break*

11:30 Getting to know each other

12:15 Sharing expectations

13:00 *Lunch*

14:30 Challenges of young refugees in Europe: Expert input by Ms. **Yasuko Shimizu**, UNHCR
Senior Operations Officer

16:00 *Coffee break*

16:30 Working groups (approx. 4 groups of 5 experts): Sharing realities on challenges faced by
young refugees

18:00 End of the day

19:00 *Dinner*

20:30 Networking session and organisational fair

Wednesday, 3 March

09:30 Experiencing social exclusion

11:00 *Coffee break*

11:30 The needs of young refugees in Europe: Expert input by Mr. **Aboubakar Soumahoro**,
Migrammun, VYRE

13:00 *Lunch*

- 14:30 Introduction to thematic recommendation drafting groups: what responses are needed?
- 16:00 *Coffee break*
- 16:30 Working groups continued
- 18:00 Drafting Committee meeting
- 19:30 *Dinner in town*

Thursday, 4 March

- 09:30 Drafting Committee meeting: Finalisation of the recommendations
- 10:00 Presentation of recommendations and discussion
- 11:00 *Coffee break*
- 11:30 Where do we go from here?
- 12:00 Wrap-up and conclusions by the general rapporteur of the meeting,
Mr. Cosmin Coredea
- 12:45 Evaluation
- 13:00 Official closing of the meeting

Lunch

Departure of participants

4. List of the Participants

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