Project: Capacity building for youth centres staff and teachers within the "Care for Youth and Children at Risk" programme

Long-term training course for youth workers and Roma mediators

April 2014 - December 2015

TRAINING COURSE REPORT

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Background to the project

The Council of Europe was partner to the EEA and Norway Grants Financial Mechanism "Children and Youth at Risk Programme" in Bulgaria with main aim to contribute to the improvement of the well-being of children and youth at risk. The programme in Bulgaria focused on the main risk factors facing young people in Bulgaria, such as the early drop-out of the education system, high unemployment, unhealthy way of life, youth criminality and lack of access to childcare and youth services. Roma children and youth were the special focus of the programme as they are among the most vulnerable groups and therefore are more prone to social exclusion and poverty.

The content of the project was also directly related to the tasks included in the "*National Roma Integration Strategy"* of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020) adopted by the government in December 2011 in relation to the European Framework provided by the European Commission. The strategy specifies under the operational objective for education: "Enrolling and retaining in the educational system all Roma children and students, ensuring for them high quality education in a multicultural environment..."

The programme was composed of three components:
- *Component 1 - 'Care for Youth at Risk - Establishing of Youth Centres with the Council of Europe Quality Label'*: focused on creating new youth centres, following the criteria developed by the Council of Europe for its project "Quality Label for Youth Centres";
- *Component 2 - 'Care for Children at Risk – Open Call for Kindergartens'*: aimed at widening the coverage of children aged 3-6 years old from underprivileged backgrounds, for example Roma, and including training of the pedagogical specialists and management staff in kindergartens to provide early multicultural education, and
- *Component 3 - 'Pre-defined Project 1 "Capacity Building for the programme Children and Youth at Risk"'*: whose objective was to build the capacity of the youth centres and kindergartens involved in the projects selected under the first two components of the programme, by delivering trainings and providing educational materials to youth workers, staff of kindergartens and mediators.

The long-term training course (LTTC) of youth workers and Roma mediators was part of 'Component 3' and was designed to support and enhance the activity of the youth centres established trough 'Component 1'. It included the delivery of pedagogical materials in Bulgarian and Romani, together with a series of training sessions for youth workers and Roma mediators (staff of the youth centres of the four selected projects in Dobrich, Plovdiv, Stara Zagora and Vratsa). The Youth Department of the Council of Europe provided the professional expertise and the trainers for the training sessions. The Council of Europe and the Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Student Ethnic Minorities (COIDUEM) were the organisers of the training programmes.

It is important to mention that the involvement of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe was directly linked to the _Roma Youth Action Plan,_ which is a response of the Council of Europe to challenges faced by Roma young people in Europe, particularly in relation to their empowerment, participation in policy decision-making processes and structures at European level, and multiple realities of discrimination. The Action Plan was based on the outcomes of the Roma Youth Conference 2011, and complemented the Council of Europe Strasbourg Declaration on Roma by associating Roma youth to its implementation. The Roma Youth Action Plan gave priority to human

rights and intercultural dialogue as responses to discrimination and antigypsyism, together with the development and capacity building of Roma youth organisations and movements.

An international team of four trainers (László Milutinovits, Nik Paddison, Alexandra Raykova and Laura de Witte) and a project consultant (Maria Koutatzi) were selected according to the standards of the Council of Europe to implement the training project for youth workers and Roma mediators in March 2014 under the supervision of Youth Department of the Council of Europe (Mara Georgescu, educational advisor).

The participants of the long-term training course, i.e. youth workers and Roma mediators, were also hired at the beginning of the training project (March-May 2014), and for almost the full length of the training course, participants were operating in temporary municipal premises (Dobrich, Plovdiv and Stara Zagora) while the youth centres were being constructed or in limited space in a youth centre under renovation (Vratsa). Young people or youth groups, targeted by the programme, had to be identified by youth workers and Roma mediators, in some cases, in partnership with local associations. Nevertheless, all youth centres were operating on a strict youth centre activity plan, as adopted in Component 1, with specific targets to reach.

Introduction to the report

By Mara Georgescu, educational advisor, Youth Department

The Council of Europe's Youth Department has commissioned a report and a strategic reflection about this LTTC to the project consultant, in order to document and learn from this unique LTTC, that has, in many ways, taken the work of the Youth Department forward in the process of promotion of youth work and human rights education with young people.

The LTTC was unique, as it "translated" the principles and practices of youth work and human rights education to the local level, in a country – Bulgaria – where youth work is a sector in development. It was also unique because it brought these principles and practices to the reality of Roma and non-Roma communities, which is often a complex reality, a mix of discrimination and social exclusion.

For these reasons and many others also that have to do with advancing the practices of training of youth workers, the Youth Department has elaborated this reports which aims at providing

- an overview of the different stages and components of the LTTC,

- a summary of the training course's content/curriculum, and

- some evaluative reflections and results.

The report does not intend to be an evaluation report of the course, but rather to explain the course process and its main contents, while also identifying important elements from participants' and trainers' evaluations.

Mainly due to an excessive documentation produced during this training course, this report is not to be considered alone as a detailed record of the LTTC. Neither can this report be considered alone as a full evaluation of the project, as this was not its primary aim.

The structure of the report follows the chronological order of the different activities of the long-term training course and each chapter is developed following the aims of the report.

The Youth Department considers this report a source of learning in view of future projects on the national and local levels.

We would like to acknowledge the work of all those involved in the LTTC and thank them to their direct or indirect contribution to this report: participants in the course and their colleagues from the youth centres, trainers, project partners and the project consultant, Maria Koutatzi, who, over more than 12 months, has collected and reorganised the main content of the course in order to give it this form and has made significant efforts to catch the essence of the course.

Executive Summary

The long-term training course (LTTC) of youth workers and Roma mediators (referred also in the text as 'youth centre teams') of the four selected youth centre projects (Dobrich, Plovdiv, Stara Zagora and Dobrich), under the predefined project (PDP) "Capacity building for the programme 'Children and youth at risk'" in Bulgaria, was implemented from April 2014-December 2015, by an international team of trainers' selected by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe.

Aims and objectives

The long-term training course aimed to improve and develop the competences – skills, knowledge and attitudes - of the youth workers and Roma mediators of the Youth Centres of Dobrich, Plovdiv, Stara Zagora and Vratsa, in carrying out youth work interventions for young people in general and Roma young people specifically, working for the defence of their rights, their inclusion and participation.

The course objectives were:

1. To enable participants to improve their competences about the main specificities, values and principles of youth work in general, with a special focus on intercultural youth work and youth work with Roma young people

2. To enable participants to improve their competences about learning in general and about the main specificities, values and principles of non-formal education and human rights education, focusing on its application with Roma young people

3. To enable participants to improve their competences about the main principles and models of active youth participation, the principal instruments promoting youth participation, focusing on the active participation of Roma young people.

4. To support participants in defining youth work strategies/interventions/actions – project methodology - adapted to the needs and specificities of the target groups and communities with whom they are working,

5. To provide participants an opportunity to debate and question openly, to reflect and discuss about their practices, to share about their experiences and knowledge, increasing their self-confidence, motivation, capacity of self-assessment and critical thinking,

6. To motivate participants to promote conflict transformation and intercultural dialogue with their target groups and communities increasing their open minding, sense of tolerance, and mutual understanding.

Programme overview

The LTTC for youth workers and Roma mediators of youth centres was composed of several stages and various training support measures. The main components are described briefly in the following table:

Preparatory phase May-September 2014	Community mapping planned, organised and implemented by youth workers and Roma mediators in the 4 youth centres: Dobrich, Plovdiv, Stara Zagora, Vratsa.

1st residential seminar 25-30 September 2014	Introduction and training on the main concepts and tools for youth work
Youth work **competence assessment** September 2014 - September 2015	A process of self and group competence assessment using the *Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio* as a tool. A simplified version was developed and finally used.
Trainers' visits **to youth centres in Bulgaria** January; April; October 2015	Three 2-day visits by the trainers at youth centres for closer, more specialised and one-to-one support.
Online Modules February 2015 - September 2015	Module 1: Youth work and non-formal learning/education Module 2: Strategic planning and project development and planning Module 3: Dealing with challenging behaviours and intercultural dialogue Module 4: Preparatory tasks 2nd training seminar
Study Visit to Budapest April 2015	Study visit at the European Youth Centre in Budapest (EYCB): understand and experience operations of a European youth centre with the Council of Europe quality label.
Study Visit to Strasbourg 2 - 4 June 2015	Study visit at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg (EYCS): human rights and human rights' education; Council of Europe; presenting the project at the Council of Europe
2nd residential seminar 21 - 25 September 2015	Advanced training on youth work competences; Evaluation
Evaluation seminar 24-26 November 2015	Evaluation of the LTTC; training on evaluation; LTTC follow-up

It is obvious, from the above table, that a variety of support measures were planned and implemented to better serve the aim and objectives of the LTTC, taking into account the different learning styles, but also the different individual and collective (per youth centre) special training and development needs. Apart from the two residential seminars, training sessions were always included in all other meetings (trainers' visits to the youth centres, visits to the European youth centres, and evaluation seminar). Mentoring during and in between seminars was provided by the international team of trainers both in planned and structured manner (questionnaires, reports, etc.) and on *ad hoc* basis. The Youth Department's e-learning platform was used for the online learning modules and immediate access to relevant bibliography as well as a "closed-group" in Facebook, mostly used as a forum of ideas, questions, information and news sharing.

Results

The main result of the LTTC is a trained team of youth workers (including Roma mediators in this terminology) with the basic youth work competences, and youth work as defined by the Council of Europe, i.e. "as a tool for personal development, social integration and active citizenship of young

people" and including a variety of non-formal education activities (educational, social, political, etc.) with main objective to "create opportunities for young people to shape their own future" (Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio, http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth-portfolio/youth-work-essentials). It is, of course, up to the municipalities concerned (employers of those youth workers), as well as the Ministry of Education in Bulgaria, to create a long-term policy/strategy plan as far as the professional recognition and development of youth work is concerned.

Next to a team of trained youth workers comes a new culture of youth work, which is not limited to leisure-time activities and/or interest / hobby / talent clubs. A culture of youth work that puts the young person in the centre of its purpose, its aims, its strategy, its policy and its activity. Youth work that is designed for, with and by the young people and looks at the young person as a whole. This shift in understanding youth work (in and beyond the youth centres) may not see immediate implementation, but by the end of the LTTC, participants could experience some first changes (one small example: flexible working hours for the youth workers and Roma mediators, including opening hours of the youth centres, to better match the availability of young people, as well as the increasing amount of working hours in effective work with young people by reducing administrative tasks).

Another important outcome is the recognition of the lack of authentic and non-biased knowledge of the situation of Roma population in the country (especially the situation of Roma youth) and the need to address the Roma community issues in a more organised and targeted way with the necessary political and social recognition. During the LTTC, while often confronted with a suspicious mentality and behaviour, most participants realised their own prejudices and admitted a personal transformative experience getting to know and understand better Roma youth, Roma culture, etc. Roma mediators, in this case, were the catalysts of this transformation through their presence and cooperation in the youth centres' teams and the LTTC, but also the hands-on experience working with Roma youth in the youth centres and/or the Roma neighbourhoods in the respective cities.

The LTTC has produced a complete pre-packaged youth work long-term training course, with some excellent activities – both online and offline, that could serve in youth workers' training future projects at national and European level. Although the majority of the material is not new, the compilation of the curriculum and the structure of the training can be the basis for similar ventures in the future. What also added to the success was the variety of activities and support measures included in the LTTC (seminars, e-learning, bibliography, study visits, mentoring, etc.).

The Council of Europe contribution to this youth work training is the emphasis on human rights as a framework for understanding and doing youth work. Participants realised during the course that human rights is not just another topic/theme that a youth worker can include in the programme but it can also be the purpose of their work, the framework within which they analyse needs, design programmes, run activities, evaluate results.

While the LTTC aimed to increase the self-confidence of youth workers and Roma mediators through capacity building, it also insisted in instilling the understanding of ongoing learning as an inherent quality and need to a professional youth worker, with regular assessment being one of the ways to continue improving and further developing youth work competences.

Networking among participants and among the youth centres was one of the final outcomes and especially highlighted towards the end of the LTTC as one of the key ongoing support measures. A false sense of competition that appeared in the beginning of the LTTC was transformed, to a certain extent, in a sense of solidarity and the need to create a community of practice for the

trained participants, to ensure further development and recognition as well as ongoing learning. This was supported, on the one hand, by the fact that the certification of the LTTC was not aimed at ranging or classifying participants by level of competence but rather in ensuring for all participants a minimum level in all competences. And, on the other hand, by understanding that the process for the youth centres to acquire the Council of Europe Quality Label (Component 1) was independent for each youth centre.

Another result of the LTTC is the commitment of all 4 youth centres to the Council of Europe "No Hate Speech Movement" campaign by organising several activities in their cities and by being getting institutionally involved in the national campaign committee.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the soft skills that were developed during the course, specifically flexibility, adaptability and team work.

Challenges

Some challenges in this LTTC have hindered in having even more spectacular results considering the total investment of resources and human energy made. Other challenges have produced unexpected opportunities for positive results in transforming behaviour and attitudes to needed youth work qualities.

Timing: Participants were employed as youth workers or Roma mediators to implement a project (2-year youth centre project plan as approved in Component 1) as professional youth workers in March-May 2014, while being trained to become youth workers. They were not involved in the youth centre planning and most of the planning and targets could not change because of the institutional commitments. During the LTTC this also meant often double tasks for the youth centre teams, or conflicting deadlines and in some cases conflicting working priorities. Overall this was well-managed, despite the tension, by opening new channels of communication within the municipal and youth centre decision-making bodies and the mentoring process with the international team of trainers. Timing proved also a challenge for the international team of trainers, especially the lack of available time for proper planning and preparation both of the entire LTTC and its separate stages.

LTTC structure: The main stages and the core curriculum (as defined by the LTTC objectives) remained unchanged. A special emphasis was given to non-formal education as inherent part of youth work and to human rights as a framework for youth work interventions that aim to empower active young citizens, promoting non-discrimination, inclusion and active youth participation. A balance, therefore, needed to be found between solely youth worker training and other theoretical and practical training also judged essential. The curriculum needed also to be developed, revised and enriched along the way to better respond to participants' learning needs, because it was originally planned for youth workers with already some level of training and experience.

Communication: First of all, language was a challenge. Even though English was the language of the LTTC (one of the criterion in the international team of trainers), not all participants could work in English and translation was not available for all stages of the LTTC. This may have jeopardised participation, process and results, but again some participants' and trainers' zeal in translating documents, tasks, meetings, etc., made it possible for all to participate. Secondly, communication from the beginning until the end of the LTTC remained difficult among the different partners in the programme. Another challenge was the constant change of staff at the 'Centre for Educational Integration of children and the young people from the Minorities' responsible for organising all seminars and supporting logistics for all aspects of LTTC. Also the multi-partner communication

was a constant challenge, especially in defining priorities but also in following-up on decisions differently interpreted by the various stakeholders.

Despite those difficulties, the training course has succeeded in developing youth workers for Bulgaria, who are aware of the need to address the needs of youth at risk, especially Roma youth and their inclusion.

Preparatory phase of the course

Youth workers and Roma mediators were asked, as youth centre teams, to plan and implement a community mapping exercise as part of their action plan and homework / preparation for the 1st training seminar between May and September 2014.

> *Community mapping is a process of visual and relational data-gathering that can help to develop a deeper understanding of the community one works with and/or for. Community maps create a comprehensive picture of the area we live in through the eyes of those who inhabit the space.*

The aims of community mapping were:

− use a number of research methods to help understand the local community and the key issues of the community in which you are working;

− build an understanding of youth work, as well as the roles of the youth worker, the Roma mediator and the youth centre in the life of the community;

− build an understanding of the issues and needs of young people in the community;

− build an understanding of the specific needs and issues concerning youth at risk and young Roma in the community (relations between young Roma and non-Roma; their access to services, institutions, rights, legal support, etc.; their current level of participation in society; the levels of poverty and or wealth experienced by young Roma; resources they have access to).

The Community Mapping exercise had 4 stages:

       Stage 1 – 23 May to 6 June 2014 – Planning of research

       Stage 2 – 6 June to 20 June 2014 – Field Work 1: Identifying the community

       Stage 3 – 20 June to 15 August 2014 – Field Work 2: Research

       Stage 4 – 15 August to 15 September 2014 – Reporting

At the end of each stage, the 4 youth centres' teams submitted their reports and received feedback from trainers. It is important to highlight the timeliness of all reports despite sometimes significant difficulties (e.g. floods). The final reports of the community mapping were presented on the first day of the 1st training seminar and included very detailed descriptions and some conclusions of the process.

All the teams found this exercise very useful, even if "*the findings did not come as a surprise*" to some of them as mentioned in their reports, especially as far as the situation of Roma and Roma youth is concerned (high levels of unemployment, of early school drop-out, poor housing conditions, etc.). Teams were able, with this exercise, to develop and experience their own "*clear vision of the subgroups of community*". Important outcomes of the process were:

− Hands-on knowledge of the social, economic and cultural factors that affect young people;

− Better understanding of sub-groups within the youth population, especially Roma youth;

- Establishing contacts with various government and non-governmental actors;

- Creation of youth-related contact lists and list of resources;

- In-depth knowledge of "our" city.

The results of this process were primarily meant to make youth centres' programme more adapted, appropriate and efficient within the framework of possible changes in the original action plans as submitted to the Ministry. The community mapping had to be a team-effort to be achieved, and this helped also in team-building within the teams (youth workers and Roma mediators) of each youth centre, since these teams were only formed less than a month before the beginning of these tasks. An additional outcome of the community mapping, in some cases, was increasing the youth workers and Roma mediators' enthusiasm for youth work.

Findings regarding youth at risk and Roma youth

What follows is a summary of the findings of each youth centre team as presented in their full community mapping reports.

Dobrich

Dobrich is a city situated very close to the sea; the biggest resorts on the north coast are within a radius of about 50 km. Therefore, during the summer season the young people are leaving the city and many of them are employed seasonally in tourism. Roma young people interviewed during the "community mapping" had great difficulties with finding a job. Among them there was an absence of a clear vision for the future. Most of them claimed that they are obliged to undertake unskilled labour and they are not motivated to acquire new knowledge and new skills. Following the interviews, the results show that most people are satisfied with the condition of their neighbourhood because it has good lighting and accessible public services nearby. On the other hand, a large percentage of people are not happy with sewage and water-supply infrastructure because it is old or in poor condition. In terms of where young people are, without a doubt, the answer is: abroad or in other cities looking for job opportunities.

The main problems of the residents are related to unemployment, health condition, maintenance of landscaping and difficulties in meeting their survival basic needs. At the same time, the things they would like to improve in their lives most often are: more job opportunities, secure and stable future and higher income.

Plovdiv

The youth centre team decided to concentrate on one specific area of the city for their community mapping, the neighbourhood of Stolipinovo. Stolipinovo has approximately 40 000 inhabitants and "*is one of the biggest Roma ghettos in Southeastern Europe*", as described in the documentary film of Hermann Peseckas (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zL0pJjMg3mg), and used in the community mapping as a resource. Some of the main problems identified in the community mapping:

- Poor and/or lack of infrastructure and large poverty: 90% of construction is illegal with no landscaping; one house close to the other; 10-12 people living in 1-2 room dwelling with some

rare exceptions of huge mansions; poor or no sewage infrastructure; half-finished constructions, etc.

– Unemployment, low qualifications and temporary jobs: most Roma do not have 'steady' jobs and work mainly periodically in construction and house-cleaning. Both low qualifications and a certain level of discrimination towards Roma limit their access to jobs.

– High crime rates: mainly due to precarious life conditions and lack of security.

– Poor or lack of education: high rates of early school drop-outs and lack of proper education. Because of extreme poverty, young boys are forced to start working at young age and most girls to stop school between the age of 12 and 14. Education is not valued and not considered necessary for change.

– Discrimination: inside the community based on gender (leading often to illiteracy, denial of social participation and early marriages for girls), and outside the community based on ethnic background. Often there is segregation at schools in the area and social discrimination.

– Preserving the environment and high level of garbage: in Stolipinovo, housing has not always followed a city plan and appropriate landscaping, leading to narrow streets (public waste collection not possible), lack of trees, where garbage can be seen everywhere.

– Early marriages and strict restrictions regarding social activities of girls and (young) women: leading to a vicious circle of early marriages -> lack of education -> lack of competitive power in labour market -> an illiterate generation. Family and family reputation is an extremely important value which explains limited (mostly only with relatives) social interaction of Roma young women and early marriages that often mean early school drop-out.

Stara Zagora

Most Roma live in segregated neighbourhoods on the territory of the town. The majority of the Roma community lives in relatively decent living conditions, with accessible public infrastructure and good utilities (including Internet access). The degree, though, of integration of the Roma community is much higher in the neighbourhoods where various organisations are active in the social sphere. In the segregated neighbourhoods (e.g. in "K. Ganchev" neighbourhood), the living conditions are very bad, with no infrastructure and dangerous health/hygiene conditions. In these neighbourhoods, one can observe some rare cases of 'closed' marriages (within or inter-family marriages) that result in a number of birth defects and malformations in children. The main income for over 80% of the inhabitants in these neighbourhoods is from temporary employment in agriculture.
In the Roma community there is a strong presence of patriarchal norms and consequently there is a tendency to maintain high levels of early marriages and early birth-giving (young women between 14-20 years old), which would be typical for example for the neighbourhood in the "K. Ganchev" area.
The Roma community has the highest unemployment rate among the inhabitants of the town of Stara Zagora. The percentage of the representatives of the community with secondary or lower education reduces significantly even though they recognise the need and advantages of education. Due to high levels of unemployment and low income, access of the Roma community to health services is limited. A high percentage of Roma live without health insurance, and this seems to have a strong relationship with shorter life expectancy.

The general poor social and economic situation of the Roma community seems to be one of the causes for the following illegal activities: theft, sale of illegal tobacco products and alcoholic beverages, drug dealing, prostitution, begging, etc.

Despite the poor living and social economic conditions, the tendency among the older people of the Roma ethnic group is to encourage young people from the community to develop professionally, to work and to study. They are aware of the importance of education as an instrument to offer more opportunities for accomplishment.

Vratsa

Youth workers and Roma mediators in Vratsa did most of their community mapping having in mind only those dimensions of young people's and Roma young people's life situations that they could change or influence. The main issues young people mentioned, and which could be addressed by the youth centre programme, were: lack of entertainment possibilities; lack of places for popular alternative sports; and lack of places where youth can receive support, help, advice or assistance (other than those operating at the institutional level because young people do not trust those institutions and their effectiveness). The main problem identified by the interviewed young people was the uncertainty and fear for their future, due to the poor economic situation of the region and unemployment.

A goal that the youth centre team has set after studying the results of their research, was the right to equality and non-discrimination in all its forms, especially towards the Roma young, considering that Roma is the second-largest ethnic group in Vratsa (6.18%).

1st Training Seminar

The first residential seminar of the training course for youth workers and Roma mediators was organised in Sofia, 25-30 September 2014, with the presence of 19 youth workers, 8 Roma mediators and a team of 4 trainers and a project consultant. The organisers of the LTTC, representatives of the Council of Europe and the Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Student Ethnic Minorities, were also present.

The programme of the seminar focussed on 3 levels:

a. knowledge transfer on the following topics: youth work, active youth participation, non-formal education, human rights and human rights education, youth work with Roma youth;

b. getting to know each other and building trust among the participants;

c. self-assessment and development plan of youth work competences.

Methodology

The seminar was developed on the basis of non-formal education principles. The programme included a methodology designed to ensure active participation, holistic learning and intercultural learning. In terms of methods, participants engaged in different activity types, as group work, group (experiential) activities, presentations, workshops, guest speakers and personal/group assignments. The programme also provided space to share experience and know-how among participants. A variety of methods was used in order to address different learning styles as well as meeting basic methodological principles of non-formal education ensuring the direct interaction among the group, participants individually and the topic. An important element throughout the programme was the daily end-of-the-day self and group assessment and development of a learning plan.

Outcomes

The seminar allowed for clarifying the framework and structure of the LTTC: participants recognised the importance of knowing and understanding the "whole picture" in order to better understand their roles and functions within the project, and, at the same time, to identify the different stakeholders in the larger "Children and youth at risk" programme and their links and relationships. This may have contributed to a stronger ownership of the project as well.

Youth workers and Roma mediators were introduced to youth work and to the main concepts and principles that are important to youth workers. If these concepts are to be the basis of all youth work interventions, they need to be well explained but also shared and accepted. Most of the programme focused exactly on explaining and analysing why these concepts are fundamental to youth work and youth work interventions. Once the theoretical framework was agreed, it was easier to move forward in developing the appropriate competences. Some highlights of participants' learning outcomes, in this area, can be summarised as follows:

- o (Better) understanding of the role and functions of youth work and youth workers;
- o Non-formal education and human rights education as a framework for designing and implementing the programme of the youth centres;

o Importance of intercultural learning and specificities in working with Roma youth;

o Active youth participation as a principle in youth work, i.e. empowering young people to be integrated in all stages of a youth centre's strategy and programme.

An important result of this seminar was the beginning for creating a network of learning, sharing information and practice among youth centres' teams, between trainers and youth workers and Roma mediators, between youth workers and Roma mediators, among all stakeholders in the project (the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, the Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Student Ethnic Minorities, the management of the youth centres, the Ministry of Education, etc.) As several participants mentioned in their evaluations, building relationships with other youth workers and/or youth centres are important towards creating a community of practice for sharing problems and solutions, questions and answers.

Finally, participants were given the opportunity to develop an action plan (one per youth centre) and the possibility to discuss and agree on future steps together in the training process. Although the youth workers' and Roma mediators' plan of action was already defined in the framework agreement for their youth centre, participants and trainers were able to plan and agree on next steps at two levels: on the one hand, personal and group (youth centre team) youth worker competence development and, on the other hand, by revising (to a limited extent) and implementing their youth centre's action plan. Trainers and, if needed, other experts from the Council of Europe, could support both levels.

Evaluation

Participants gave a very positive overall evaluation (84% rating achieved and fully achieved aims). Despite complaints and discomfort with some logistics (e.g. small plenary room; food, etc.), participants were able to learn a lot and see ways to apply the knowledge gained in their everyday work at the youth centre, as well as recognise the need for further training and youth worker's competence development.

One particular change of the original project plan, considered essential after all youth workers were employed, was to invite to the meeting also the Roma mediators of the youth centres. This meant consequently changes in the curriculum and the programme of the seminar, on the one hand, and an added level of ownership and team building for the youth centres, on the other hand, which was appreciated by participants.

According to both participants' and trainers' mid-term evaluation, it seems that not all participants were familiar with some of the concepts/main themes of the seminar (e.g. non-formal education, human rights education), which actually led to a revised programme, adding in extra sessions on these themes. This also had a serious consequence on not exploring enough (or at all) other themes originally foreseen, namely types of youth work, conflict transformation and intercultural learning. Those were taken into consideration later on and integrated in the next steps of the LTTC.

Finally, it is important to mention that logistics did not always support the educational process and too much energy was spent in dealing and solving problems that could have been avoided. A detailed list was created and distributed, in order to make future meetings more efficient, which unfortunately was not followed-up and this remained one of the challenges throughout the LTTC.

Programme of the 1st training seminar

The seminar programme (in Appendices) started by defining and clarifying the framework, actors and stakeholders of the project "Capacity building for youth centres staff and teachers" within the "Care for Youth and Children at Risk" programme, and the objectives and expectations at various levels: individual (participants), institutional (EEA and Norway Grants, Bulgarian government-Ministry of Education, Municipality and youth centres' management, Council of Europe, COIDUEM), and training.

Once the whole picture was drawn, one-by-one, major concepts that form the theoretical framework for understanding and practising youth work, were analysed and discussed. The programme then continued into specific aspects of youth work that youth workers/Roma mediators were to perform, including specific examples.

Finally, through the whole programme, participants analysed their own youth work competences (as individuals and as youth centre teams) in order to create a learning development plan.

Introductions and Presentations

The first day of the seminar was dedicated in clarifying the framework of Component 3 (Capacity Building), presenting the main actors and stakeholders/partners of the broader programme and sharing all possible relevant information that contributes to the project. It was clear from the group discussions that this part was absolutely necessary because the level of knowledge of the "whole picture" was very different among participants.

The session was built on the following objectives:

- introduce the participants and team and build group cohesion;

- introduce the organisers and stakeholders of the training (presentations COIDEM, EEA-Bulgaria project and the role of the Council of Europe);

- introduce the course (aim, objectives, daily programme, schedule) and its methodology, specifically the concept/principles of non-formal education;

- present the youth centres and youth centres' teams and the results of the preparatory work with the community mapping.

Each of the groups was able to present something of their situation and their reality. On the one hand, there was a good understanding of each of the youth centres. On the other hand, there was a limited understanding of the situations of each of the communities. This was a useful exercise on two fronts: it confirmed the importance of the mapping work undertaken by the teams in the preceding months and gave them an opportunity to share about their youth centre situation. The second area was the information it gave to the trainers regarding the youth centres and their mapping.

Youth Work

Youth work was the first concept to be analysed and understood, on the basis of the following objectives:

- develop an understanding of the basic values and principles of youth work;

- understand the nature of adolescence in order to better understand young people;

- explore the different approaches youth work can have and analyse the different aspects of the youth worker;

- explore the specificities of working with young people from Roma and non-Roma communities.

Presenting the Council of Europe Youth Department's overall programme and the Roma Youth Action Plan gave a good and strong level of understanding to participants. This part was useful because participants could complete the "whole picture" of the programme.

Areas of the Roma Youth Action Plan

➢ *Roma youth identity*

➢ *multiple discrimination*

➢ *stronger Roma youth movement*

➢ *Roma youth organisations participate in policy making*

➢ *human rights and human rights education*

➢ *combating discrimination and antigypsyism*

The **principles of youth work** *(a) commitment to preparing young people for participation, (b) testing values and beliefs and (c) the promotion of acceptance and understanding of others*, and **values** *(a) equity, (b) diversity and (c) interdependence*, were thoroughly explored and a good level of understanding was achieved. It was a useful activity for developing a basic understanding of the concept of youth work, although some of the elements were a little more difficult to grasp than others.

Youth Work consists of (10 key points)[1]:

1. Focus on young people and their needs

2. Voluntary participation

3. Developing relationships

4. Non-formal learning processes

5. Welfare of young people (personal, social and professional development)

6. Participation of young people in the development of the curriculum built from their lived experience, personal beliefs and aspirations

7. Enabling young people to understand themselves, their community and the world

8. Proactively bringing about positive changes

9. Space and opportunity for young people to shape their own futures

10. Large scope of activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature

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[1] *Adapted from*: *Smith, M. K. (2013) 'What is youth work? Exploring the history, theory and practice of youth work', the encyclopedia of informal education, www.infed.org/mobi/what-is-youth-work-exploring-the-history-theoryand-practice-of-work-with-young-people/ Retrieved: September 2014.*

The (youth work) **competencies** activity (i.e. competence elements that a youth work needs or should be working towards: a. knowledge, b. skills, c. attitudes) supported participants to understand the overall process and the different elements relevant for them and their work. There was a good introduction and explanation of knowledge, skills and attitudes. The group explored the different concepts and fulfilled the activity. At the same time, the activity brought to light that many participants had a limited understanding and experience of youth work. A very good addition to this process, that got them to think of the overall competences for youth work, was whether one needs any different/additional competences to work with young Roma.

The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio (http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth-portfolio/youth-work-competence) describes as *functions of youth work* all things which *youth work usually or most commonly does*:

Function 1. Address the needs and aspirations of young people

Function 2. Provide learning opportunities for young people

Function 3. Support and empower young people in making sense of the society they live in and in engaging with it

Function 4. Support young people in actively and constructively addressing intercultural relations

Function 5. Actively practise evaluation to improve the quality of the youth work conducted

Function 6. Support collective learning in teams

Function 7. Contribute to the development of their organisation and to making policies / programmes work better for young people

Function 8. Develop, conduct and evaluate projects

Detached and outreach youth work

A workshop was offered on two specific types of youth work, which seemed to be less known and at the same time highly needed based on the community mapping results. Additional documentation was provided to participants regarding all types of youth work and this area was identified as one of the areas to support in the coming period after the seminar.

Participants received the relevant information and were guided to a basic understanding of detached and outreach youth work.

Detached youth work[2]

Detached youth work needs to work in cooperation with centre based colleagues to offer a broad range of provision to attempt to meet young people's needs in the neighbourhood. (…)

It, essentially, describes workers who are 'detached' from a centre or building, in other words, they start by working on the street. The young people with whom they seek to work are those who hang around the street and are in some way 'detached' from conventional youth work services

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[2] *Adapted from: Centre for Intercultural Dialogue, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Street Based (Detached) Youth Team, Operating Policy 2012*

either because they reject these services, are excluded from them or are unaware of them. (…)

Outreach youth work

Outreach work is based much on the same principles as detached work, but is linked with a building or project based provision, and seeks to inform young people and encourage them to use it.

The issues of 'recording' and 'safety' as a prerequisite in detached youth work were discussed at length. As part of the workshop, participants had to experience a glimpse of this type of youth work, going out of the building and meeting local young people. It gave the form-filling on detached and outreach youth work a solid foundation.

Stages in Detached Youth Work[3]

Stage 1 – Mapping and reconnaissance

Street based youth workers must take time to get to know the patch:

(a) identifying and liaising with others who are working in the area;

(b) identifying potential target groups of young people; and

(c) looking at other aspects of the local community which will impact on young people's lives

Stage 2 – Engage

Stage 3 – Develop relationships and identify needs/issues

Stage 4 – Review and clarify

Stage 5 – Examine and action plan

Stage 6 – Take action

Stage 7– Review and evaluate

Non-formal education

As mentioned earlier, the whole programme and methodology of the seminar was based on a non-formal education approach. It was however necessary to work on this, first of all to clarify concepts/terms and differences of *formal*, *informal* and *non-formal education*, and the methodological bases. Participants became more aware of methodology during the whole seminar and more vigilant to the learning benefits of such an approach in youth work. Presenting Kolb's learning cycle (*David Kolb's experiential learning model consists of (a) concrete experience, (b) reflective observation, (c) abstract conceptualisation, and (d) active experimentation)* was central to explaining one of the underlying theories in non-formal education.

Informal education refers to the lifelong process, whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from the educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from daily experience...

> **Formal education** refers to the structured education system that runs from primary school (and in some countries from nursery) to university, and includes specialised programmes for technical and professional training…
>
> **Non-formal education** refers to any planned programme of personal and social education for young people designed to improve a range of skills and competencies, outside the formal educational curriculum…
>
> Formal, non-formal and informal education are complementary and mutually reinforcing elements of a lifelong learning process.[3]

Human rights and active youth participation

Presenting and explaining human rights and human rights education as the framework for youth work was one of the objectives of the seminar.

> **Human rights education is…**
>
> "education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower learners to contribute to the building and defence of a universal culture of human rights in society, with a view to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms."
>
> (Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship, 2010)

In the first place, participants shared their knowledge and experience with human rights, to conclude that human rights are not (only) laws. They are also about feelings, emotions...about what we are: humans... Then the three principles of human rights of *indivisibility, universality, inalienability*, were introduced and debated, since those principles do not seem to be fully understood and shared in the society at large. Finally, the discussion focused on duties and responsibilities, both from a citizen and a youth worker point of view. Human rights were then linked to *participation* as a transversal right, present in different articles (e.g. Articles 19, 20, 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). It was highlighted that without participation, some human rights are not possible. Furthermore, in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, participation is one of the three key areas (the 3 Ps, Provision, Protection, and Participation).

Through the activity ["Take a step forward"](#) (in this activity participants experience what it is like to be someone else in the society, addressing issues of social inequality, inequality of opportunities, minorities, etc.) participants experienced limitations and obstacles in human rights being fully respected for all. It was recognised that there are situations in participants' communities where participation is not taken for granted and there are systemic obstacles, which they, as youth workers and Roma mediators, are called to know well in order to be able to provide appropriate services. At this point, participants could easily identify the issues discussed with specific young people with whom they have worked or who have been involved somehow in the community mapping.

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[3] Council of Europe, Compass: manual for human rights education with young people (revised edition), Strasbourg, 2012, pp. 30-31

An interesting finding in the discussion on human rights obstacles was the specific example of when participants recognised human rights limitations within their own work. It was mentioned that in the last stage of the community mapping, when the youth centres' teams had to write their final reports, it happened that the teams were obliged to produce two versions of the same report: an "official" version and a "real" version, because some findings may have harmed the "good" image. This initiated a vivid discussion of similar situations in the different cities, and made participants reflect on their future reaction to similar situations.

One of the indirect outcomes of the session on human rights and human rights education was the special interest of participants to further explore and use training material of the Council of Europe and in particular Compass: manual for human rights education with young people (http://www.coe.int/en/web/compass) and Compasito: manual for human rights education for children (http://www.eycb.coe.int/compasito/).

Active youth participation (as defined in the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People) is fundamental to youth work. It was important to develop a common understanding of youth participation as a right of young people. A particular emphasis was given to Roma youth by discussing (their) specific obstacles to participation.

> "Participation in the democratic life of any community is about more than voting or standing for election, although these are important elements. **Participation** and **active citizenship** is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engaging in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society." *(From the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life,* Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, May 2003.)

A workshop on youth participation was offered with the aim to explore further the concept of youth participation in youth work and the role of the youth worker. Starting from the needs and exploring different aspects of this was useful for the group to establish a stronger understanding of and reasons for participation. The addition of the "But Why Method" (developed by David Werner in 1982)[4], which believes that only if we find the root cause then we are in a position to resolve with the community the issues the community is facing, in turn reinforced this. The end of the session explored the need for participation in youth work itself based on the "progressive model of young people's involvement" (John Huskins, 1982) empowering and including young people in their work with the young people. A strong emphasis was placed on understanding that participation in youth work is a process and one that does not always achieve the perfect end, but that any movement towards participation is good youth work.

> **7 Steps for Active Participation**
>
> Step 1: Contact
>
> Youth and Youth worker met once and talked
>
> Step 2: Meet Again
>
> Youth and Youth worker met several times and information was exchanged
>
> Step 3: Socialise
>
> Youth and Youth worker regularly talk and share information

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[4] Adapted by Nik Paddison from Werner, D. (1982), *Training for Transformation: Book 1,* pp 78,79,97

Step 4: Take Part

 Youth takes part in activities organized by youth worker

Step 5: Be Involved

 Youth gave idea and was involve - youth worker organized the activity

Step 6: Organise

 Youth gave idea and organized the activity - youth worker supported when needed

Step 7: Lead

Youth introduced a new topic, gave idea and involved the youth worker so he/she can be included in this new topic

Adapted by Nik Paddison, from *A progressive model of young people's involvement* John Huskins, 1995 (adapted), Mark Smith (1980)

Youth Work with Roma young people

This workshop provided basic understanding to participants about Roma youth ("what is important to know about young Roma") and how to work with them in activities of the youth centre. It also gave space for participants to clarify / answer questions about Roma youth work and, at the same time, a space for sharing experiences. Participants discussed tips to involve young Roma and organise activities with them.

List of issues specific to Roma youth work

1. Young Roma are also young;

2. Shorter period of "youth";

3. The perception of the Roma community: we/the others;

4. Diversity of Roma;

5. Organisation of the community: family/kin/community;

6. The Roma community is patriarchal;

7. To work with both sides: with Roma and with the majority;

8. The traditions are not what they were before;

9. Roma policies should include youth and youth policies should include Roma;

10. Consider real needs and interests;

11. Motivation through the implementation of concrete ideas in within short time;

12. Start with short activities;

13. Everything is possible!

Following the workshop, representatives of two Bulgarian NGOs were invited to share their experience in implementing projects by and/or with and/or for Roma youth.

Ms. Radostina Chaprazova presented projects and examples of activities implemented by Areté Youth Foundation (AYF) Bulgaria, whose vision is to support high-potential (Roma) youth who are limited by social and economic barriers in Bulgaria and in the Balkans. One of the ongoing projects

of AYF since 2005 is the youth camp "Zaedno Napred" (Forward Together), which began as a way for motivated Roma youth from Bulgaria to build leadership skills and self-esteem, and to find ways to overcome the extreme cases of discrimination that they face in their communities. The purpose of these camps was to help motivate, inform and improve the lives of participants by encouraging them to complete their education and take a more active role in their communities. The goals of this initiative continue to be relevant today. Some new projects are being developed inspired by the Roma youth involved in the work of the organisation like the Roma professional network or the Roma girls' camp.

Mr Vladislav Petkov presented a project called "Youth without Borders" of C.E.G.A. organisation (Start Effective Civil Alternatives), as a good practice example. The project target group includes persons who are directly or indirectly involved in the management of youth centres and activities of these entities in relation to social integration of youth at risk. The objective of the project presented is to support the social integration of youth at risk through: (1)study and analysis of the Italian best practices in the management of youth centres with the active participation of NGOs; (2) social experimentation - testing practices to attract young people at risk in the activities of youth centres based on the Italian experience; (3) the promotion of social innovation in the social integration of youth at risk by and in their involvement in the activities of youth centres.

Daily evaluation and self-assessment

A red thread of the seminar was a process of daily self- and group-assessment, which was meant to better support the larger objective of competence development. Specifically the aim was to provide participants with a safe space in order to enable them to discuss their role as youth workers and their competences to do youth work; to help them to make a clear continuous link with their local realities; and to reflect and evaluate the educational process both on individual and group level. Different tools were used: a questionnaire on self-assessment of youth work competences; the 'companion book' (a notebook-diary); a learning plan; daily visual evaluation (creating a garden by drawing); reflection groups; individual reflection; and consultations with other members of the team and/or trainers.

For the majority of the participants the seminar was the first experience in non-formal education, where some of them felt obliged to participate as part of their job. Time was necessary to build confidence and trust between trainers and participants and among youth centre teams but it was successful at the end of the seminar. This was essential because the seminar was only part of a long learning relationship and trust needed to be established to better help and support participants in their learning process.

The reflection groups, individual reflection and companion book were useful tools and participants were committed and serious in their reflection and sharing. Unlike the "garden of seeds", which remained too abstract to a large number of participants.

Follow up – Next Steps

During this session, participants were presented with all planned support measures (described earlier in this report) within the LTTC, as well as other opportunities for training through activities within the Roma Youth Action Plan (RYAP) and the programme of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. Participants were also offered a list of relevant bibliography and training manuals.

Study visits to the youth centres

Study visits were one of the support training measures of the Council of Europe in the project. Each trainer was assigned to a specific youth centre (Laura DeWitte - Plovdiv, Laszlo Milutinovits - Stara Zagora, Nik Paddison - Vratsa, Alexandra Raykova – Dobrich) in order to support one team of youth workers and Roma mediators. Trainers assisted the youth centre teams as far as professional development in the field of youth work is concerned and in the areas covered by the LTTC. The project consultant also participated in the first visit to Plovdiv, the second visit to Dobrich and the third visit to Stara Zagora, meeting with youth workers, Roma mediators and with the management of the youth centres and the management of the projects in the respective municipalities.

The main objectives of the study visits were to:

- support participants to identify what they are good at and what they need to improve
- support participants in the development of their work with young people, particularly when addressing the specific situation of Roma youth
- give participants feedback on their reports, activities, etc.
- support participants with advice in the development and implementation of their action plan
- help participants stay connected to the course.

Before each visit (3 rounds of visits were finally organised to each youth centre every 3-4 months), the trainers would agree with their respective youth centre team the programme of the visit. The programme of a study visit for the trainers included in most cases:

- work with the team: define the detailed learning/training process; agree on follow-up and next steps; specific training, etc.
- visit of the youth centre and meeting with the staff of the youth centre (especially the director and project manager); visit and/or meeting with municipality administration involved in the project.
- visit / participation in some of the youth centre activities and meet with some of the users of the youth centre (young people).
- visit / participation in youth centre actions in the Roma neighbourhood.

Evaluation

Generally, the study visits were highly appreciated and participants noted that the efficiency and efficacy of the study visits increased from the first to the last one, since the relationship between youth centre teams and trainers had evolved and the content of the study visits became more specific in scope and programme.

The one-to-one (one youth worker or one Roma mediator or one youth centre team with one trainer) possibility to discuss and address specific issues, difficulties, problems was very important and sometimes crucial. Some examples follow: during the second study visit participants discussed with the trainer a difficulty in the online learning module, which helped clarify their task which they could properly finish in order to complete the module, and, on another occasion, a youth worker asked the trainer to address conflicts in the team and ways to deal with conflict in a constructive way. During the first visit one trainer discovers a certain level of censorship of the reports prepared by the youth workers and Roma mediators for the LTTC. Finally, the project consultant explained

to administration the reasons for revising the policy regarding youth centre opening hours and accordingly revisiting youth workers and Roma mediators' timetables.

The presence of the trainer as an international expert and representing the work of the Council of Europe helped in connecting the aims of the LTTC to the municipality's youth centre plan and sometimes to initiate or intensify discussions in the area of local youth policy and/or Roma policy.

Finally, another indirect result of the study visits was dealing with relationships (especially lack of them or relationships in conflict) among the youth workers and Roma mediators, but also between the youth centre team and other stakeholders.

E-learning - online learning modules

Four e-learning modules were developed within the LTTC between March and September 2015. The modules offered the possibility to youth workers and Roma mediators to continue their learning on topics already introduced in the earlier stages of the LTTC, or to be introduced to new subjects relevant to their work. The modules designed over a period of 1-1.5 month organised in one week's topics, included theoretical input, reading tasks, bibliography, and usually a task/homework that would help the learners to practice or exemplify what was learnt.

The four e-learning modules were organised as following:

Module 1: Youth work and non-formal learning/education (March to mid-April 2015)

Module 2: Strategic planning and project development and planning (mid-April to June 2015)

Module 3: Dealing with challenging behaviours and intercultural dialogue (June to September 2015)

Module 4: Preparatory tasks for the 2nd training seminar (September 2015).

Evaluation

The online learning received very positive evaluations ranging from 75% to 90% satisfaction. Youth workers and Roma mediators appreciated all modules, because all chosen themes were relevant.

A lot of the tasks / activities or "homework" that learners were asked to do to better understand the theories they were presented with, became actually integral part of the youth centres' plans and work. Even though theoretically some of the information was not new to the learners, it was only through this process that they realised as teams that they needed to use the information to improve their work, their relationships, their work environment, their product, themselves.

The few "negative" comments were more in the direction of the participants' own ability to fully use this opportunity offered in the LTTC and it is worth to mention some of those difficulties:

Language: most of the readings and communication were in English and this was a challenge for some of the participants.

Timing and deadlines were challenging in different moments for different teams, because their youth centre programme continued as foreseen and learners could not just "pause" their activities to fully participate in the online learning. Although exceptions were made, especially in extending deadlines for assignments when requested, in general, participants had to juggle with their different online and offline youth work activities!

Group or team assignments often created moments of disagreement and conflict within the teams, especially in Module 3 (dealing with conflict and challenging behaviours), but this (as some participants specifically commented in their evaluations) was also needed, because it helped mostly in bringing out under-the-surface issues.

Module 1 – Youth work and non-formal education/learning

The aims of the module were:

- re-engage the participants with the concept and basis of youth work;
- develop an understanding of youth work;

- develop a deeper understanding of non-formal learning/education;

- understand where and how non-formal learning/education is a part of youth work.

Module 1 was generally highly appreciated for providing new information and improving learners' understanding. The topics with the highest score were team work and non-formal education because knowledge could immediately be tested and practised. Some further learning was requested and was taken into account in the design of training sessions of the LTTC or included in the study visits to the youth centres.

Youth work and relationships in youth work

The first activity engaged participants in research on various definitions of youth work at local, national and international level. Trainers reminded important elements of youth work definition (see 1st training seminar – Youth work).

The second activity highlighted the importance of relationships in youth work: "the essence of the work of youth work is to build relationships with young people". Each youth centre team shared their conclusions regarding this statement. The following references were offered for further reading:

1. *Building Relationships through Effective Interpersonal Engagement: A Training Model for Youth Workers*[5] - Pat Henry, Susan Morgan and Mark Hammond

'The role of the youth worker is to create relationships of trust and respect with young people and work with them in ways that combine enjoyment, challenge and learning. Successful outcomes will largely be dependent on the relationship between the youth worker and the young people.' (Department of Education for Northern Ireland, 2005:13)

2. *What is youth work: exploring the history, theory and practice of work with young people*[6] - www.infed.org

"We also know that the relationships that workers form with young people – because they are born out of spending time together, a willingness to have fun as well as educate, and of involvement in local community life – can be incredibly powerful (Jeffs and Smith 2010). Indeed, the research shows that they are much more powerful than many other mentoring relationships (see, for example Hirsch 2005)."

3. *The glue that holds our work together* - Helen Rodd & Heather Stewart (2009)[7]

Other professionals will normally form a client/professional relationship in order to deliver a service (counselling, education, or an outdoors experience). In contrast, a youth worker will see the relationship as a primary goal, and use the service they provide as a context within which that relationship can be developed … The key difference is that counsellors or teachers will develop a relationship in order to help them do their job. For youth workers, the relationship is their job. (Martin 2003, p.116)

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[5] Henry P., Morgan S., Hammond M., 2010, "Building Relationships through Effective Interpersonal Engagement: A Training Model for Youth Workers", *Youth Studies Ireland,* Vol. 5, No 2, pp. 25-38.

[6] Smith, M. K. (2013) *'What is youth work? Exploring the history, theory and practice of youth work'*, the encyclopaedia of informal education, www.infed.org/mobi/what-is-youth-work-exploring-the-history-theory-and-practice-of-work-with-young-people/. Retrieved: March 2015.

[7] Rodd H., Stewart H., 2009, "The glue that holds our work together", *Youth Studies Australia*, Vol. 28, No 4, pp. 4-10.

Team work

Team work was presented on the basis of a theory titled, 'The Art of Non-Co-Working for Teams'[8]. It is a theory on how easily we don't work together very well and that team work, whether in pairs or as a whole youth centre team, needs time and work.

Co-working models

- *Working in parallel*
- *Working in conflict*
- *Working in competition*
- *Working at cross purposes*
- *Working in shadow*
- *Working as a rescuer*
- *Working with a wanderer*
- *Working politely!*
- *Working with a lightning bolt*
- *Working with a sleeper*
- *Working together*

Participants were asked at a first stage, as youth centre teams, to reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of their work as a team. For the second stage, a questionnaire was provided to help participants to learn about themselves and each other and enable them to enter into a fruitful and effective working partnership. Answering those questions was meant to help participants to become more aware of their own assumptions, preferences and ways of being in a work context and, at the same time, provide a tool to discuss the issue in the teams.

The role of a youth worker

Through a case study titled 'The Ice Skating Trip'[9], participants were asked to explore the different roles of being a youth worker and understand specifically the role of being an educator. As youth centre teams, they continued by analysing their own practice in order to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Role of the youth worker

Product and Process Role: Processes are the way we use the different resources (or inputs) at our disposal and products are the concrete events or things we create.

Education Role: assessment, setting objectives, Learning/doing, evaluation.

Practical Role: breaking down events, opportunism; learning by experience or learning by doing; being participative- telling, selling, participating, spectating;

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[8] Created and developed by Paddison N., 2009, *Co-Working Models.*

[9] Smith M., 1982, *Creators not consumers: rediscovering social education*, NAYC publications, 2nd ed.

Developmental Role: the need for love and security; the need for new experiences; the need for praise and recognition; the need for responsibility.

Values Role: problems should be defined by the person who "owns" them; seeing the good in everyone; honesty ; consistency; flexibility; common sense; freedom of choice; equality; confidentiality.

Education and non-formal education

Starting from an RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) animated video of a speech entitled: "changing education paradigms"[10], participants discussed the definition and role of education. Having a common understanding on the values of education and its limitations/limits was important to better define non-formal education as youth workers.

The Compendium of non-formal education (Council of Europe) offered different definitions and concepts of non-formal education but also some reflections about some challenges such as: non-formal education recognition.

The main principles of non-formal education were presented as:

- o voluntary;
- o accessible to everyone;
- o an organised process with educational objectives;
- o participatory and learner-centred;
- o about learning life-skills and preparing for active citizenship;
- o based on involving both individual and group learning with a collective approach;
- o holistic and process-oriented;
- o based on experience and action, and starts from learners' needs.

Non-formal education guidelines

Having the following guidelines in mind, participants were asked to plan and implement a non-formal education activity:

Non-formal education is serious, it's organised and has educational objectives. Non-formal education is an organised process, with clear aim and objectives. Educators, through their experiences and specific trainings, should have the competences to run this educational process by organising different activities. The activities are steps in this process and should be part of a long term strategy. One non-formal education activity alone, not included in a global plan/strategy, will not be useful. Non-formal education, as education in general, is a long process and takes time.

Non-formal education is about experiences, but not only. Learning is related not just to experience, but to what we do with that experience. It needs to be translated into a learning experience and its value distilled in different ways. The learning cycle moves from doing (experience), to reflecting on what has happened, to generalising and conceptualising the experience and applying the new knowledge to doing once more (development of new competences).

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[10] Robinson K. *changing education paradigms,* available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U, accessed in March 2015

Non-formal education takes care of different ways of learning. It is obvious that we learn in different ways, at different times, depending on situations, consequences, and stimulus. We also learn different things, depending on our interaction with our environment. And it follows from this that we learn according to different motivations, from the conscious need to pass exams, to the almost unconscious socialisation of learning traffic signals. Learning, then, is a differentiated and complex process, responsible for equipping us with knowledge and skills, developing our capabilities, and allowing us to know our own attitudes, values and emotions. This is often described as a *holistic* approach: Hands (skills – learn to do) – Head (knowledge – learn to know) – Heart (attitudes – learn to be).

Non-formal education is about a variety of methods and tools. Non-formal education, in comparison to formal education, is known for its variety and diversity of methods and tools. But methods and tools are developed for a specific reason, in a specific context, for a specific group of people and a specific purpose. One method can be useful for one group and not work for another one. Methods alone, tools just for tools, are useless.

Non-formal education is fun, but not necessarily. One common idea about non-formal education is that it's all about fun, games and pleasure. In part this is true because playing is about learning and if people wish to learn and participate they are motivated and have pleasure to learn. But playing also doesn't mean necessarily always having fun: playing is a serious activity (children are very serious and concentrate when they play) and also has rules and requires self-discipline. Non-formal education is about change, so learning can be hard and not always fun. The activities and games used are not "neutral" and can touch key issues relevant for your target groups – and they are not always comfortable and easy.

Non-formal education is based on voluntary participation. Because human beings learn better when they are motivated and not obliged to do it, we believe that non-formal education should be done on voluntary basis.

Non-formal education is not about teaching. Trainers, youth leaders, educators, facilitator.... full of words to define different roles and competences but all can use and work with non-formal education methods. "Facilitators" are the people who prepare, present and co-ordinate the non-formal education activities. A facilitator is someone who "makes something happen", who supports and motivates, and who encourages others to learn and develop their own potential. By facilitating, you create a safe environment in which people learn through experimentation, exploration, giving and taking. It is not a question of one person, a leader, who is an "expert", giving knowledge to others. Everyone should grow through the sharing of experience, participants and facilitators alike. It means for example that young people can express their opinions freely and to not to be judged for the opinions they have.

Module 2 – Strategic planning and project management

The second module touched on topics that had not been included in earlier components of the LTTC and this is one of the reasons for which more than 80% of participants found it very useful, especially since they had the possibility to develop a vision and mission for the youth centres (in some cases revising existing vision) and the process proposed for developing projects. Some participants proposed expanding the module including risk management and financial management.

Strategic Planning

"Strategic planning is a systematic process through which an organisation agrees on – and builds commitment among key stakeholders to – priorities which are essential to its mission and responsive to the operating environment".

Strategic planning competence is important to youth workers who wish and will be asked to better plan the future of their youth centres. Participants were asked to develop the vision and mission of their respective youth centre, as well as the work priorities for the 2 coming years, by using the information in tool-kit "Organisational management" (Council of Europe-European Commission).

Essential steps of the strategic planning process are:

1. Setting the basis for strategic planning

    – who is going to be involved?

    – how is it to be done?

    – what do we need?

2. Vision and mission: development or review

    – Agree on a vision for the organisation

    – Writing (or reviewing) a mission statement

3. Assessing the environment

    – Study strengths and weaknesses

    – Study opportunities and threats

4. Establishing strategic issues

    – Decide on priorities

    – Write goals and objectives

    – Prepare a budget

5. Write goals and objectives

6. Writing the strategic plan

7. Implementing the plan

    – Define, write and implement operational plans

8. Evaluation

Project development

The project development chapter, through a simulation of a grant application, aimed at:

- encouraging youth workers and Roma mediators to develop own (innovative) ideas for projects;

- supporting the youth centre teams to analyse the feasibility of these ideas and turn them into a real project-application.

Through the first activity, a variety of project ideas were proposed from raising-awareness campaigns to training seminars, from theatre performances to folk festivals, from sports activities to

fishing and camping mainly in the areas of combatting antigypsyism, intercultural learning, motivation for continuing education /professional development.

Project management

Participants were given first a reading task to fully understand a project and all its dimensions, to be able to manage it better from the "T-kit 3: Project management" (Council of Europe and European Commission) and then they were asked to propose solutions to manage projects that were at risk of collapsing in 2 case studies.

CASE STUDY 1

You are running a mini-project on bringing closer young people from different communities through sports. The first activity -a football game- was prepared and the two teams are at the playground. They are young Bulgarian students from one of the high schools in the city and young Roma from the settlement from the teams.

Just before the start of the game, one of the Bulgarian students says that their team should not play with "these dirty Gypsies" and another one supports him by adding that "the city should be cleaned from these animals".

After hearing the comments, the Roma team does not want to start playing and they threaten to beat the Bulgarians if they see them near by the settlement.

The activity/game is cancelled. Furthermore, the young Roma invited to take part in the mini-project are refusing to take part in the project as they do not want to interact with "racists".

Your mini-project is going to fail as you are losing your participants and you are not able to implement the activities planned.

1. What are you going to do to bring the young people to take part in the activities?

2. What are you going to do to ensure that the project takes place and that the aim of the project is achieved?

CASE STUDY 2

You are running a mini-project on improving the participation of young people and you are planning to bring young people from the villages surrounding your town to take part in an activity which takes place in your youth centre. The project is targeting young people at risk and, as such, the young people do not have resources to pay for their transport costs even if they are interested to participate. Your project manager says that there is no funding available to cover the transport costs and that you should find the way to motivate the young people to come to the activity.

You are afraid that the young people will not come to the activity and that the project is at risk of not taking place without the participation of these young people.

1. What are you going to do to bring the young people to take part in the activity?

2. What are you going to do to ensure that the project takes place and that the aim of the project is achieved?

Finally, information about the "European Youth Foundation" and "Erasmus+" was offered.

Module 3 – Intercultural dialogue/learning & conflict and challenging behaviours
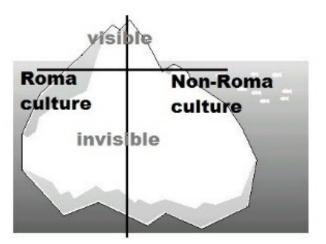
The aim of this module was:

- explore how as different individuals, communities and ethnicities we can live and work together despite our differences and similarities, and

- analyse and understand conflict and challenging behaviours in youth work.

The module received also very high scores both for the content (especially on its relevance to their work and concerns), but in this case also the creativity of the tasks they had to complete.

Intercultural dialogue – learning

This part started by defining *culture* using the "Iceberg model of culture" as explained in "T-Kit 4: Intercultural Learning" (Council of Europe and European Commission) and using an adapted version of the model to analyse understand culture in participants' respective cities:

After having reached a common understanding on culture, participants moved in defining and analysing *intercultural interaction* by watching a video "Day and Night" (created by Pixar).

Finally the youth centre teams were asked to organise an activity (using the video) with a mixed group of young people (Roma and non-Roma) to support them in discovering something about *intercultural learning and dialogue*.

"Intercultural learning" can be one tool in our efforts to understand the complexity of today's world, by understanding others and ourselves a bit better. Moreover, it can be one of the keys to open the doors into a new society. "Intercultural learning" may enable us to better face the challenges of current realities. We can understand it as empowerment not just to cope personally with current developments but to deal with the potential of change, which can have a positive and constructive impact in our societies. Our "intercultural learning capacities" are needed now more than ever.
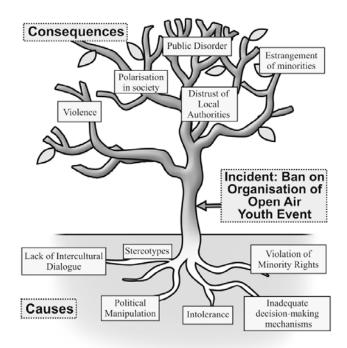
In this context, intercultural learning is a personal growing process with collective implications.

> *It always invites us to reflect why we want to deal with it, which visions we have, what we want to achieve through it. Not just taken as a personal acquisition or a luxury for a few people working in an international environment, intercultural learning is relevant for how we live together in our societies.* Council of Europe and European Commission, *T-kit 4: Intercultural learning T-kit, p. 14*

Exploring conflict

This activity started with a mapping exercise, where each youth centre team was encouraged to identify possible or existing sources of conflicts in their work life, followed by two more steps: (a) to analyse the conflicts they face and (b) to develop strategies to deal with these conflicts.

Conflict mapping: Participants were asked to use the 'Tree of Conflict' (T-Kit 12: Youth transforming conflict, Council of Europe and European Commission, p. 68) and analyse one of the conflicts they have identified in the previous activity: "can you identify the core incident ('*trunk*'), the diversity of causes ('*roots*') and the complexity of consequences ('*branches and leaves*')"?

By identifying one's own conflict style in a team can help conflict resolution. In this part, participants were invited to use the "5 animal" model proposed by Anne and Heather Dranitsaris[11] and identify the individuals' and team's conflict style:

> The Turtle (Avoiding Style)
>
> The Shark (Competing Style)
>
> The Teddy Bear (Accommodating Style)
>
> The Fox (Compromising Style)
>
> The Owl (Collaborating Style)

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[11] Dranitsaris A. and Dranitsaris H., 2013, "Conflict styles", *The leadership hub,*
http://www.theleadershiphub.com/vault/blogs/conflict-styles

Having identified the conflict styles, participants were then asked to use each of the conflict styles identified to explore:

o   How to resolve or transform the conflict according to each of the 5 positions (animal metaphors)?

o   Which (animal) position would create the best way of dealing with the conflict? Why?

Challenging behaviours

The introduction to this topic mentioned that one of the most difficult things that youth workers have to deal with, when working with groups, are the difficult or challenging behaviours that young people exhibit in a group setting. Some of these things can be obvious; a conflict between members or between a member of the group and the youth worker. Others are less obvious. Basically, a difficult behaviour in a group setting is a behaviour that disrupts, interrupts, distracts or takes attention away from what the youth worker or any member of the group is trying to do or deliver at any time.

After having read and discussed in teams the "Challenging behaviours theory" (Nik Paddison**,** 2010, 2015) and the "But why method" (David Werner 1982, **a**dapted by Nik Paddison), youth workers and Roma mediators were asked to prepare a role play, where a challenging behaviour is properly addressed and conflict is prevented/resolved**.**

Excerpt from "Challenging behaviours theory":

In the real world in which we live, each of us is an individual as are each of the young people we work with. Therefore, there is no magic formula for dealing with challenging behaviours. Each situation is different and so must be handled as an individual case. Just remember:

> o Look to yourself first - why is this behaviour annoying (me)
>
> o Avoid the teaching finger
>
> o Ask yourself why this behaviour is being enacted
>
> o Acknowledge it, the young person and what could be taken from the situation
>
> o Respond constructively to the individual
>
> o Engage with the young person
>
> o Use explanations for why some ways of working together work better than others and discuss together what certain constructive behaviours mean in practice and for the benefit of the group.

Module 4 – Preparing the seminar

The last online module served as preparation of youth workers and Roma mediators in gathering, analysing and learning information that would serve them in practising during the second training (residential) seminar. The objectives were:

- prepare the participants for the 2nd residential seminar;
- reflect and improve the understanding and knowledge regarding the different methods of a non-formal education session;
- start the process of assessment of the learning from beginning 2014 until now;

- reflect about and prepare the follow up after the end of the project.

Choosing a non-formal education method

One of the characteristics of non-formal education is the diversity and variety of methods and tools used by the facilitators. This variety and diversity also mean the need to know which one to choose when planning a non-formal education activity. Participants were asked to look at all categories of activities (Compass: a manual for human rights education with young people, Council of Europe, revised edition 2012, p. 61-68) and mention their experience with each of them as a participant and/or facilitator as well as criteria for choosing a method (Tools for learning in non-formal education, SALTO-YOUTH EuroMed Resource Centre, 2012)

List of methods/tools

➢ Group work (small groups and whole group)

➢ Brainstorming

   o Wall writing

   o Association game

➢ Discussion activities:

   o in small groups: Jigsaw (colour, numbers and symbols rounds) / Statements in a hat / Ranking / Case Studies

   o in large groups: Buzz groups / Agree, not agree / Fish bowl / Debates

➢ Drama

   o role playing

   o Simulation

   o Forum Theatre

   o Body images / sketches

➢ Audio-visual methods

   o Using pictures: photos, cartoons, drawings, collages

   o Using films, videos, radio plays

   o Taking photos, making films and videos (comics/ video letters/ interviews, reports, newspapers, radio-programmes...)

➢ Media

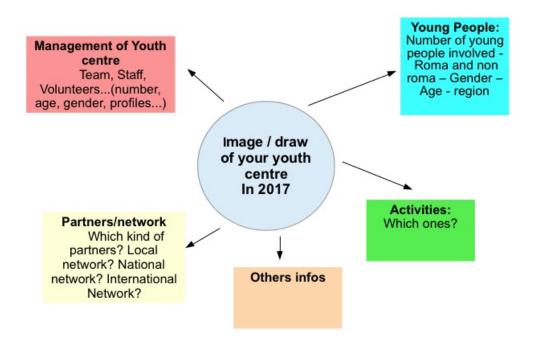   o using newspapers, magazine, radio, TV, Internet.

Assessment of the work done

Youth workers and Roma mediators were asked to answer an evaluation questionnaire per youth centre, in view of using this information during the 2nd residential seminar. Questions were directing participants to reflect on the following dimensions of their work:

a. Human rights education

b. Youth participation

c. Roma youth involvement

d. Communication at all levels

e. Council of Europe quality label of youth centres.

The youth centres after the end of the project

Using the following mind map, participants were asked to dream about the future of their youth work, on the basis of all the available elements: community mapping, strategic thinking, work priorities, areas of success/failure, local and/or national policy priorities, etc.:

Management of Youth centre
Team, Staff, Volunteers...(number, age, gender, profiles...)

Young People:
Number of young people involved - Roma and non roma – Gender – Age - region

Image / draw of your youth centre In 2017

Partners/network
Which kind of partners? Local network? National network? International Network?

Others infos

Activities:
Which ones?

Study visits to the European Youth Centre in Budapest

Two visits to the European Youth Centre Budapest were organised: the first one from 23 to 25 March 2015 for the youth centres of Plovdiv and Vratsa, and the second one from 27-29 April 2015 for the youth centres of Dobrich and Stara Zagora. The aims of the visits were to help participants learn about the practical considerations of the work in the youth centre, about educational methods and human rights activities at the European Youth Centre in Budapest and to develop their skills as youth workers.

This part of the LTTC was different in composition, because in addition to the youth workers and Roma mediators of the youth centres, other staff and/or stakeholders of the youth centres also participated. The extended youth centre teams had the opportunity to see and experience the operations of a European youth centre in their process of developing their own youth centres' operations towards reaching the standards of Council of Europe quality label.

The programme (see Appendices) included some training elements on project management and conflict management, as well as visits to local youth and community organisations working with Roma:

- Phiren Amenca Roma - Gadge dialogue through service – an international Roma and non Roma youth network, where participants learnt about international Roma youth movements in Europe; possibilities to take part in EVS and other long term voluntary activities, with special regard to the inclusion of young Roma and to the dialogue between Roma and Non-Roma young people.

- UCCU - a Roma non-formal educational foundation: non-formal education in schools and other projects with the active involvement of Roma young volunteers from the cities of Budapest and Pécs. The aim of the organisation is to enhance dialogue between the Roma and non-Roma in Hungary, and raise intercultural and cross-community understanding.

- Aurora Community Center: an example of community-based work in a form of a community initiative with social association financing. The centre is situated in a culturally diverse district of Budapest, with a considerable Roma population.

- Roma Press Center: a press agency which provides news for general press and media on Roma-related issues. The Centre's programme for the 8th April 'International Roma Day" was an inspiring example for the youth centers' teams.

Evaluation

Participants got an overview of the everyday operations and maintenance of an international youth centre (EYCB) from a very practical point of view. This was also considered the highlight of the visit almost for all participants.

The visit raised the awareness of the management and ministry level stakeholders about the project in general and also about the Roma integration aspect.

Participants gained a deeper insight into the work of the Council of Europe (youth work, human rights' education, Roma Youth Action Plan, etc.).

Participants learnt more about NGO work with Roma: international voluntary work and Roma youth movements in Europe; local community work; educational work in schools on Roma and Non-Roma dialogue; public relations and communication.

Study visit at European Youth Centre Strasbourg

The particularity of the visit was the three-dimensional aim: first of all, participants could visit the Council of Europe buildings (Palais de l' Europe, Agora and the European Youth Centre) and had the opportunity to receive information and interact with Council of Europe personnel. Secondly, they met again all together in a training seminar that completed past training. And, thirdly, participants could meet and exchange experiences with participants from the other training programmes under Component 3, namely all Roma mediators and the kindergarten teachers.

The training sessions responded to the needs that trainers identified mainly during their two study visits to the youth centres and during the e-learning modules prior to the visit.

Programme

Youth work in daily practice - Case studies

On the basis of four case studies, youth workers and Roma mediators were challenged to reflect upon issues of active participation in youth work. Despite the fact that participants had been introduced to the concepts of active youth participation, trainers noticed, especially during their study visits, a weakness in actually addressing youth participation and fully involving young people, not only as participants, but also in designing, planning, decision-making, etc.

The exercise exemplified this weakness in transforming the concept of youth participation into real examples and was finally considered as one of the strongest learning moments of the whole visit for participants.

Weekly timetables

One of the findings in all youth centres after the first 2 study visits was a lack of individual and team timetables, and clear division of tasks and responsibilities. This, in addition to a demanding need for administrative work, drained a lot of the youth workers' and Roma mediators' energy and creative working time, as well as time for actual youth work with young people.

Participants were asked to create a weekly timetable for the whole team with the objectives:

– raise understanding of co-management, participation and balanced management-educational team relations;

– reflect on current time management realities of the teams;

– analyse the situation of task distributions in the teams.

Timetables actually showed interesting results. Two of them mentioned below, need to be immediately followed up and changed:

(a) Some of the youth centres are not devoting enough time to work directly with young people. The teams pass a big number of hours in front of the computer preparing reports, activities, administration, or publicity; sometimes more time than working face-to-face with young people.

(b) The opening hours of the youth centres are also sometimes not adapted to the reality of youth work or to the availability of young people – users of the youth centres.

"Portfolio is my friend"

The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio, although presented already in the first residential seminar and re-introduced in parts during the first months of the LTTC, was not well-received and participants were reluctant to actually work with it, although they did take the time to complete parts of it in teams. During this session, a shorter adapted version (see Appendices) was offered. The objectives of the session were to:

- clarify the meaning of portfolio and self-assessment;

- reconcile participants with portfolio in terms of motivation and interest;

- self-assess again competences.

The Council of Europe <u>Youth Work Portfolio</u> is an online tool that helps individuals, teams and organisations doing youth work around Europe to understand their competence and to develop it more effectively. This tool can also be used by trainers, youth work managers and policy makers and generally all those interested in the topic of quality development and recognition of youth work.

Evaluation

Most of the participants appreciated the two-day training and were positive about new things learned and satisfied to be again together. Being together and sharing facts from their daily work at the youth centres offered space for peer-learning by exchanging various ways of doing things.

The content of the training seemed to have touched really on issues with which participants were struggling to bring them to a new level of understanding. Participants appreciated being challenged because this helped them achieve deeper knowledge and enthusiasm to change attitudes on the topics discussed.

The logistics were sometimes complex and had some impact on timing and motivation. A significant drawback was losing part of the group in the middle of the training (the Roma mediators and Alexandra Raykova) because they had to attend another meeting, and which resulted in a strange group dynamic.

All the participants appreciated being in Strasbourg, visiting and getting to know the Council of Europe and the European Youth Centre work.

A highlight was the exhibition organised on the last afternoon, in the Agora building of the Council of Europe, where they could present their work, but also learn about the work of Roma mediators and kindergarten teachers in the other projects of Component 3 – Capacity building.

Second training seminar

The second residential training seminar of the LTTC was organised in Sofia, 21-26 September 2015. The seminar aimed to evaluate the learning process and work of the youth workers and Roma mediators, in carrying out youth work interventions for young people in general and Roma young people specifically, working for the defence of their rights, their inclusion and participation.

Objectives

- give participants the opportunity to debate, question, reflect and discuss about the development of their practice in the last year;
- share about experiences and knowledge and so increase self-confidence, motivation, capacity of self-assessment, and critical thinking;
- support participants in strengthening their competences as youth workers in non-formal education by planning, running and evaluating a practical session taking into consideration the specific target group - Roma young people;
- support and motivate participants in defining and preparing the follow up of their youth centre for after the end of the project
- evaluate at all levels (personal, team, group) the learning process and close the whole process (e-learning, trainings, long term support, work on field...) by certification of the competences of all (portfolio)[12].

Programme

The programme of the seminar was structured around three axes (see Appendices):

a. non-formal education practice and feedback;

b. strategic plans and follow up plans at individual and youth centre levels;

c. self-assessment and consultations on further development.

During this training, there was little additional theoretical input, since it was primarily aiming at providing the space and the appropriate framework for participants to practice, to visualise and to plan for the future.

One year action plans' review

The seminar started with the participants presenting by youth centre the implementation of their youth centre's action plan, designed in the same place a year before. To ensure comparable data, participants were asked to prepare their presentation on the following questions:

- What are your main achievements in this last year?
- Concrete example of youth participation? If not, why not and how will you achieve this in the future?
- What have been the main difficulties you experienced, what did not work, why and how did you overcome it?
- What do you need to achieve in the future?

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[12] This objective became redundant when, during the seminar, it became clear that an evaluation conference had been confirmed for November 2015.

Presentations were colourful and vivid, full of pictures, enumerating many activities that they organised for the young people and many of those being focused on Roma youth or Roma inclusion. A highlight was the actual buildings of the youth centres (construction completed or almost completed), which re-motivated participants into visualising the future. Some of the challenges identified were related to relationships in the team or between the team and the management and the lack of a long-term strategy and perspective in their activities.

Non-formal education activity

The aim of this session was for participants to design and run an activity with young people using non-formal education methodology. In the first place, in mixed groups of three-four people, participants had to develop an education/work plan on a given subject (the subjects being: Roma, refugees, LGTBI, Gender, Disability, Mobility, Emigration/Unemployment and Youth Participation) over a period of 3 months. Each group prepared a timeline of the activities, projects, engagements, etc., and then chose one of these activities to run with the larger group. While a group would run an activity, the others will simulate being the "participants" of that particular activity, while trainers will observe.

After each presentation, the group received feedback from peers and the trainers on basically two aspects: appropriateness of the method chosen; and training and facilitation skills.

Portfolio – Consultations

At this stage of the programme, participants were involved in parallel activities but all of them focusing on youth work competence assessment. While reflecting individually and in youth centre teams on the following questions, trainers were having one-to-one consultations with each participant on the basis of the "portfolio is my friend" (given during the study visit to Strasbourg. The purpose of this exercise was to give the opportunity to all participants to complete their competence assessment and design a personal development plan with the trainers' input and for teams to recognise each other's strong and weak points as far as youth work competences are concerned, in order to improve their work together.

These are the team assessments:

Dobrich

We are better in: non-formal education and working with the manuals; taking decisions as a team; organising events, activities etc.; field work - which leads to a better contact with the young people.

We need to work more on individual responsibilities, human rights education tools, and long-term planning.

We miss in the team honesty and agreement, more experience, practice and persistence.

We will improve by attending trainings, seminars, symposiums, exchanges etc., and by reading more about good practices in the field of youth work and youth participation.

Plovdiv

We feel confident enough and are getting more and more confident in regards to organising and conducting youth work related activities, including Roma young people.

We still need to work on attracting, retaining and including/engaging young people in our work, i.e. finding the right methodology and instruments of doing so. We need to empower them.

What is missing in the team? We continue to grow together; more practice; regular meetings to share good practices with the other youth centre teams.

We will improve by improving personal expertise and competences and then bringing this into the team; by visiting national and international events, seminars and trainings.

Stara Zagora

We are better in: communication with young people; adaptation; planning – organising; creativity; presentation skills; experience with intercultural exchange; improving our work with Roma community.

We need to work on team work; facilitation; task division; debriefing; self-assessment.

We miss patience; space; a seventh person (a male); a team party; flexible schedule.

We will improve through practice, learning from people with more experience, participating in trainings, conferences, exchanges, round tables, educations, non-formal meetings, reading.

Vratsa

As a team of youth workers, we are better at supporting young people to acquire intercultural competences, having good communication and partnership with institutions working with youth, at being young closer to target group's age and in being a multidisciplinary team (educators, medical professionals, artist / designer, economists).

As a team, we still need to work on improving the awareness of staff on human rights and organising more activities in this area, facilitation skills and analysis skills.

What we still miss is the building of the youth centre, sufficient experience, English language skills and cooperativeness and communication skills.

We will improve using Compass, Portfolio, keeping connected to the Council of Europe, and by ongoing training and practice.

Youth centre teams' vision

Using the work produced in e-learning module 4, participants were asked to prepare in the form of an exhibition their vision for their youth centre in the future by answering the following questions:

- What can I do as a youth worker in this team to empower young people to participate in my/our daily work?

- What can I do as a youth worker in this team to promote human rights in my/our daily work?

- What can I do as a youth worker in this team to engage more Roma young people in my/our daily work?

Participants visualised their youth centres as lively spaces where young people feel fully in charge in creating and designing their present and future and where human rights are fully respected and there is no form of discrimination.

Networking

The issue was raised by participants and trainers proposed an exercise to raise awareness about the need and ways to network. Due to time limitations, there was no time to establish some networking commitments but this was re-launched in the evaluation seminar (see next chapter).

Evaluation

The highlight of the 2nd training seminar was exactly the large amount of peer learning and personal development through sharing and exchange of practice. Participants felt satisfied and confident of their youth work competence development, at the same time recognising areas that they need to further work on.

The atmosphere was significantly different than a year before during the first training seminar. Participants felt confident and safe enough to share successes and failures, to "expose" themselves to feedback and to dare to express difficulties and challenges. They moved from defensive to constructive interaction having reached a sufficient level of trust.

Both these two elements are important also for possible future cooperation between the youth centre teams.

An underlying fear of uncertainty/insecurity due to the end-date of the project (note: at the time of the seminar the end of the project was planned for spring 2016 but since it has been prolonged for another year to spring 2017) sometimes hindered participants from freely dreaming and visualising.

Once more a lot of practical issues (accommodation, travel, logistics, etc.) were difficult but they were dealt with humour and patience and, even though most of them could have been avoided, they offered another learning opportunity for all.

Evaluation seminar

An evaluation seminar was organised in Sofia on 24 and 25 November 2015, followed by a public event organised by the Programme Operator (Ministry of Education) on 26 November. Although the seminar aimed to evaluate the entire long-term training course and all its components, a significant part of the seminar was again dedicated in training: in defining evaluation (especially in youth work) and training about evaluation and its importance.

Educational Evaluation

The following excerpts from T-kit 10: Educational Evaluation in Youth Work (Council of Europe and European Commission) were presented and discussed during the first day of the training.

"Educational evaluation is a systematic and ongoing process which includes:

- Researching and collecting information, from different sources, about the learning process, the content, the methods, the context, the outcomes of an educational activity

- The organisation and analysis of that information

- The establishment of certain criteria (evaluation criteria)

- The discernment and judgement of the analysed information (according to the set evaluation criteria and at the light of the educational objectives).

- Drawing conclusions and recommendations which allow the re-orientation and eventual improvement of the educational activity".[13]

What educational evaluation is not?

• Educational evaluation should not be a justification of shortcomings.

• Educational evaluation should not be a money making strategy.

• Educational evaluation should not become an exercise in power politics.

• Educational evaluation should not be a public relations exercise.

Why to evaluate? To learn; to motivate; to participate; to change and improve.

What to evaluate? Given the complexity of the educational process the first and most spontaneous answer to the question "What to evaluate?" would be EVERYTHING. In this line, the editorial team of this T-Kit understands educational evaluation as a total experience:

- is characterised by its global vision, its integrity and by the articulation of different approaches, methods, theory and praxis

- combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to evaluation

- looks at the whole educational process (integrally and from different points of view)

- prioritises the most valuable information, without falling into "doing everything".

Networking commitments

Participants worked more on the theme of networking and making networking commitments.

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[13] *Giovanni lafrancesco, 2001, Hacia el mejoramiento de los procesos evaluativos en relación con el aprendizaje*

1- Do we need networking and why do we network?

- exchange information, good practices, experience and resources;
- be synchronised;
- help and support each other in organising different activities;
- develop a mutual view on youth work.

2- What kinds of networking are we involved in? At which level (local, national, European)?

Local level: NGOs, Municipality / local authorities, schools, volunteers, institutions working in the field of youth policies.

National level: Facebook pages / groups (e.g. closed group 'Youth is the Key'), National Roma Educational Network, Health Mediators' network, Ministry of Education, Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Student Ethnic Minorities (COIDUEM), Ministry of Youth and Sports, Youth centres of Dobrich, Plovdiv, Stara Zagora and Vratsa, youth NGOs, foundations.

International level: e-learning platform of Council of Europe, the Council of Europe Youth Centres' information network, Facebook pages - groups about quality label, partners, training, etc., international youth centres, organisations in the field of youth work.

3- With whom are we involved in networking?

The other youth centres, local non-profit organisations, Municipality structures, trainers, partners on local and international level youth NGOs, the Council of Europe's Youth Department, international organisations, mediators at national level, non-formal groups of young people, different ethnicity groups the Ministry of Education.

4- How can we network among the 4 centres?

- regular meetings with the aim of establishing sustainable partnerships and joint activities;
- use of social networks;
- exchanges and study visits;
- create a pool of youth workers;
- non-formal meetings.
- a network of youth centres, if we can find approval on the local level.

5- What we commit to do in the next 6 months?

- a national meeting of the youth centres for the exchange of good practices in Stara Zagora;
- create together campaigns, activities and youth exchanges;
- develop an online platform for the exchange of information;
- make proposals for youth policies on national level;
- make a proposal for the standards of youth work in Bulgaria;
- push for an agreement or contract between the four municipalities for collaborative actions in the field of youth policy making and implementation.

APPENDICES

Appendix I. 1st Training Seminar

Programme
Day 1
Introductions: getting to know each other
Introducing aim, objectives and programme
Background and framework of the overall project (COIDEM, Council of Europe and their roles)
Participants' expectations
Presentation of the youth centres and the results of the Community Mapping
Self-assessment of youth worker competences

Day 2
Presentation of the Youth Department and the Roma Youth Action Plan of the Council of Europe
Youth work
Non-formal education
Self-assessment of youth worker competences

Day 3
Human rights
Participation as a right
Active youth participation
Intercultural learning
Self-assessment of youth worker competences

Day 4
Workshops:
   a. Human rights education
   b. Active youth participation / empowerment and motivation
   c. Types of youth work: detached and outreach
   d. Roma youth work
Self-assessment of youth worker competences

Day 5
Youth work competences – introducing Portfolio
Developing youth centres' action plans
Guest speakers: good practices/examples of Roma youth work in Bulgaria
Self-assessment of youth worker competences

Day 6
Presentation of action plans
Follow-up and support measures
Evaluation

Appendix III. 1st Training Seminar – Action Plans

Youth Centre Vratsa

Summary:
- Improving the conditions of equal rights for education and work
- Motivating the inclusion of children and parents of the ethnicity
- Attract the parents in the process of educational, social and labour realisation of their children and students.
- Improving the physical area where is the process of integration
- Organise events with the participation of youth people
- Change of the community point of view aiming to make the people tolerant to the young people at risk

Activities:
1. Inquiry/ Research (What do the young people need? What do they want to happen?)
2. Human rights' campaign
3. Detached work; Education and work consultations * a week schedule for our work in different groups of 2
4. Motivation for long lasting education, especially to graduate 7th grade and continue studying 8th grade; and after graduation at the secondary school – to continue studying
5. Change of the role model using the media and reflecting the community. Show positive examples – people of the Roma community
6. Excursions with young people
7. Sport tournament
8. Workshops: craft jewelleries, "decoupage" (art of making old staffs using the material of newspapers and magazines) etc.
9. Soft activities – information
10. Theatre group for organising activity together
11. Mini festival of Bulgarian and Roma folklore tradition

Youth Centre Dobrich

Summary:
The first activity planned with Project BG 06-102 "Youth Centre Dobrich – Your Tomorrow" includes all the activities that are directly related to the proper implementation, the financial management and control, the internal monitoring. The second activity is the "Construction and repair works, equipment supply". Among the Youth centre activity there will be identifying the risk groups in close cooperation with the Project partners. It is planned development and services expansion in the youth centre in order to satisfy the needs of the target groups and to involve new participants. Therefore 4 more groups will be formed additionally to the existing ones – Club "Hip-hop and dance", Club "Folklore", School of Applied Arts, Photo-video club. They will be available after the stage of "Construction and repair works, equipment supply" is over. Mini-projects will be developed and implemented by the team of youth workers and Roma mediators to contribute to the improvement of the young people's well-being, the integration of disadvantaged young people, Roma and other ethnic groups, those who are at risk of social exclusion. In implementing these mini-projects it will be stimulated the participation of the communities, NGO's and Dobrich Municipality working together. The project's plan includes also organization and implementation of motivational, educational, and cultural activities within the Youth centre. There are also planned activities for youth exchanges in Norway and Bulgaria, Audit of the project and last but not least Publicity and Information.

Activities:
1. Informational campaign about current scholarships, contests, trainings and etc., that will take place in the High schools and if needed young people will be guided through the process of submitting their applications. The main source of information will be the "Foundation for local government reform"
2. Workshop "From the children's hand with a heart" before the celebration of "Baba Marta"
3. Days of Youth Activities – 20-23 April: youth select themes and activity
4. Helping the young people that don't have a school degree due their dropping-out of school
5. "I know the history of my hometown" – QUIZ, 25 of September, 2 groups with 8 people each.
6. Sport activities
7. Information desk – all kind of information relevant to the improvement and development according to the interests of the young people will be provided. Every youth with a some sort of issue will be welcomed and will be able to get help and guidance for the ways to overcome it
8. Visits to cultural and entertainment events (theatre, cinema, concerts, exhibitions, sport events, etc.)

Youth Centre Plovdiv

Summary

Bearing in mind the community mapping results, the Plovdiv Youth Centre team has chosen to focus on the following three main areas of youth work: education, unemployment, health and social culture/skills.

Activities:
➢ 5 seminars: Discrimination, HR, Career Development, European Citizenship & Rights, No Hate Speech, Health & Social Skills
➢ No Hate Speech Campaign: becoming part of the movement
➢ Information campaign about the Youth Centre
➢ Counselling / Consultation work: career development, CV writing, jobs interview skills, etc.
➢ Prevention work: AIDS-HIV, Early marriages, School drop-offs Addictions
➢ Individual support: school drop-offs, supporting prospective universities students
➢ Board meeting / Network / Mapping
➢ Organising thematic clubs: 'hot' topics according to young people's desires
➢ Organising sports initiatives & leisure activities for young people
➢ Creating web-based database for both young people and youth work
➢ Opportunities for open doors days for Roma young mothers/women: sharing their concerns and possible consultations about their rights, early birth-giving, etc.
➢ capacity building trainings for the youth workers and Roma mediators of the youth centre
➢ 2 International youth exchanges

Youth Centre Stara Zagora

Activities

Information campaign: Promotion of activities in social networks, distribution of posters and flyers in schools and key locations in the city

Regular youth centre activities: Latino dances; Soccer / small doors; Discussions, debates, lectures; Projection of Bulgarian films

Raising the professional skills of the team: Teamwork (decision-making, project management, conflict resolution); Working with people from different ethnicities; Working with people at risk; Working with structures and institutions; Good practices through intercultural exchange; Developing creativity; Gain theoretical knowledge; Gaining and Improvement of the professional skills of team; Development of leadership and public speaking skills.

Appendix IV –Study Visit to European Youth Centre Budapest

Programme

Day 1

Opening of the meeting

Introduction to the programme and methodology of the visit

Expectations

Discovering the European Youth Centre Budapest

Introduction of the Council of Europe

Short presentation and discussions with European Youth Centre managers on: staff, mission, role, accommodation, working spaces, accessibility, staff training, educational programme, educational approaches, role of young people, financial management, budgetary aspects, type of activities, etc.

Educational workshop – working with young people in the European Youth Centre Budapest

Learning of the experiences of the EYCB on topics of non-formal education, youth participation, intercultural learning

Day 2

Principles of the Quality Label for European Youth Centres

Reflection on the quality label principles and the reality of the youth centres in Bulgaria

Local visits to local youth and community organisations in Budapest

- Phiren Amenca, International Roma and non Roma youth network

- UCCU Roma Informal Educational Foundation

- Aurora Community Center

- Roma Press Center

Day 3

Workshops on project management

Workshops in dealing with conflict in youth work

Follow-up and evaluation

Appendix V: Programme Study Visit to Strasbourg

Day 1

Guided tour to the Palais de l'Europe

Plenary meeting, room 1 at the Palais de l'Europe

Getting together, updates – What has happened since September 2014

E-learning – evaluation and the broader context of distant education

Day 2

Case Studies – Youth work in daily practice

Continuation – Youth work in daily practice

Weekly timetables – dividing tasks and responsibilities, setting timeframes within the team

Introduction to the Portfolio is my friend and learning friends

Day 3

Portfolio is my friend

Final Evaluation

Exhibition of the projects of the kindergartens and youth centres at Council of Europe Agora building

Appendix VI – Portfolio is my friend questionnaire

THE PORTFOLIO IS MY FRIEND!

These questions can help you to evaluate your competences as a youth worker / Roma mediator

Read them carefully and reflect on them. If you want you can also give a mark (from 1 – nothing at all to 6 – fully…). It's up to you!

Just remember that you are responsible for your learning and that you can "use" your learning friend to reflect on it! Good luck!

YOUTH WORK / YOUTH WORK WITH ROMA YOUNG PEOPLE

1 – How do you consider your level of knowledge and awareness on youth work issues in general?

2 – How do you consider your level of knowledge and awareness on youth work with Roma young people?

3 – How confident and comfortable do you feel to debate Youth work questions?

4 – How do you consider your level of knowledge about principles and models of youth work?

HUMAN RIGHTS / ROMA RIGHTS

5 – How do you consider your level of knowledge and awareness on human rights issues in general?

6 – How do you consider your level of knowledge and awareness on Roma rights issues in general?

NON FORMAL EDUCATION / HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

7 – How confident and comfortable do you feel of using non-formal education methodologies and approaches?

8 – How do you consider your level of knowledge in bridging theory and practice by adapting that you learnt during the course to your reality and target groups?

9 – How confident and comfortable do you feel to debate human rights questions?

10 – Are you able to define human rights education as an educational concept?

11 – How confident and comfortable do you feel regarding your coherence and consistency in your approach and actions (responsibility, ethics, values…).

PARTICIPATION / YOUTH PARTICIPATION

12 – How do you consider your level of knowledge and awareness on participation in general?

13 – How do you consider your level of knowledge and awareness on youth participation?

14 – How confident and comfortable do you feel to debate participation questions?

15 – How do you consider your level of knowledge about principles and models of participation?

16 – How do you consider your level of knowledge and skills to organize activities that promote youth participation?

OTHERS COMPETENCES

17 – How able and confident do you feel working in an intercultural and international team or /and group?

18 – And what about: Creativity? Empathy? Patience? Enthusiasm and motivation in working with young people?

19 – Do you have other competences that were not described before, that you think important for being a youth worker) for being a youth worker with Roma young people?

Appendix VII. Programme 2nd training seminar

Day 1

Introductions and programme

Coming back to the one year action plans

Daily Evaluation in groups

Day 2

Presentations by youth centres of one year action plans

Preparation and planning for non-formal education practice

Daily Evaluation- individual / learning friends

Day 3

Non-formal education practices

Daily evaluation in groups

Day 4

Personal letters – Who I am now after one year training process?

Portfolio with learning friends

Portfolio feedback from trainers to team and from trainers to individual

Daily evaluation- individual / learning friends

Day 5

What is follow up? Possible ideas of future plans by youth centres

Planning and presentation of plans by youth centres

Daily evaluation in groups

Day 6

Preparation of 3rd study visit of the trainers

Networking

Evaluation

Appendix VIII – Evaluation Seminar

Programme

Day 1

Welcome and introductions

What is evaluation?

Why we need evaluation?

How to do evaluation?

Day 2

Learning and educational evaluation

Evaluation of the long-term training course

Networking and follow-up

Council of Europe and next steps

Closing

Appendix IX – Final list of participants

Dobrich

Nikola Genchev

Salzina Georgieva

Tsvetelina Dobreva

Ivan Devetakov

Nikolay Nikolov

Bedrie Mendu Hasan

Gultenur Suleiman

Plovdiv

Vasil Vasilev

Mariya Angelova

Milena Milusheva

Nikolinka Zaykova

Sofiya Totozova

Angel Mihaylov

Tsonka Draganova-Lazarova

Stara Zagora

Emilia Koleva

Vesela Mareva

Daniel Salabashev

Neli Mineva

Plamena Ivanova

Silviq Georgieva

Monika Todorova

Vratsa

Stoyan Stoyanov

Galin Bogdanov Snezhanov

Ivaylov Dimitar Ivanov

Kalin Angelov

Galya Gencheva

Raya Andreeva

Rossen Dekov

Trainers

Alexandra Raykova	Bulgaria
Laure de Witte	Portugal
Nik Paddison	Montenegro
Laszlo Milutinovits	Hungary
Maria Koutatzi	Greece

Organisers

Council of Europe	Mara Georgescu
Council of Europe	Larissa Kireeva

COIDUEM	Lilyana Kovacheva
COIDUEM	Borislava Videnova
COIDUEM	Inna Ivanova