



Youth as spokesmen of a new inclusive Europe. Building a Europe based on solidarity and social inclusion

Report of the study session held by
INTERNATIONAL UNION OF SOCIALIST YOUTH
in co-operation with the
European Youth Centre Budapest
of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre Budapest
May 21-28 2006



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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Solidarity is one of the basic principles in the work of IUSY. Our vision is based on solidarity, equality and freedom. We believe it to be one of the main principles that active citizenship is based on. We are convinced that by promoting solidarity as one of the fundamental values that are shaping the society we can reach a global society for the benefit of all citizens.

IUSY is proud to report the results of our Study Session held in cooperation with the EYCB for our member organisations. The study session offered a week dedicated to education on solidarity and the role of youth in promoting and implementing this principle. The aspect of solidarity is one of the main pillars in maintaining social cohesion and we strongly believe that participation of youth on all levels in the society is a way to introduce and follow this principle. The following activity represents one way in our continuing efforts and activities directed towards promotion and implementation of solidarity and active citizenship.

Throughout the years, IUSY has carried out numerous activities in all parts of the world with Solidarity as the theme, and with many important political outcomes. However, by holding a study session on solidarity, IUSY was given the opportunity to address the themes in new ways, which gave outcomes that might not have been achieved at a regular IUSY activity. That is, by constructing the study session in the way that participants got the possibility to analyze the themes addressed, to get expert inputs, and to approach the topic through different working methods, we saw that the participants gained better capacity to understand the content and meaning of solidarity. The results of the study session clearly show how important it is for an international youth organization to seek new angles and methods in our continuing fight for international solidarity.

One of our main aims was to define the concept and contents of the principle of solidarity. By carrying out the programme with daily themes linked to our definition of solidarity and the content of the word, we could easily measure the results of the previous mentioned aim.

At the study session, we dedicated each day to different themes related to our understanding of the content of international solidarity. One day was dedicated to social

inclusion, one to minorities, one to decent work, one to intercultural learning, and finally one day to international solidarity, as a sum of the themes addressed throughout the week. We wanted to have a comprehensive approach to the theme, and it was therefore important to the team to offer the participants a wide range of topics. The opportunity to explore the topic from different aspects enabled a holistic approach that gave the group a clear view as different aspects and parts of the programme took their place in the final image.

The training course followed the “non formal education approach”. A number of different creative and interactive methods were used by the training team designed based upon the themes for each day. We believe that the non-formal interactive educational methods can assure the best results in an activity that involves a group of multi cultural, multi national structure that is exploring one topic from different angles and with different approaches. This advantage was taken into consideration by the prep team while designing the fairly ambitious and complex programme for this study session.

IUSY would like to thank European Youth Centre in Budapest and the Council of Europe for the great support given prior, during and after the study session, which was crucial for the outcome of the IUSY study session of 2006. As we have already stated in the application for this study session, the facilities offered by the EYCB add up to the well preparation and realisation of the activity for they assure a highly inspirational working environment, including a stage for interaction and group bonding that is highly appreciated by the participants and additionally strengthens their high contribution.

INTRODUCTION

AIMS

1. Define the concept of solidarity and the contents of the word
2. Define our role in conveying solidarity. Different levels of solidarity (social, national, regional, international)
3. Explore ways to assure and implement social inclusion and youth participation and define the role of youth in fulfilling this goal.
4. Discuss the socialist way of implementing solidarity within the labour market in order to accomplish decent work and welfare for all and define the youth aspect on this issue.
5. Study ways to assure respect of equality at all levels. Gender equality, people with disabilities, LGBT people, migrants, minorities, etc.
6. Discuss the social democratic ways for fighting against all sorts of discrimination and poverty.
7. Investigate the principle of international solidarity and the role of youth in its promotion and implementation. The concept of international solidarity.
8. Raise awareness about solidarity among the IUSY member organisations through the participants

OBJECTIVES

1. Explore the difference that solidarity brings. What do we understand as solidarity? Do we have to own or dispose of material goods in order to express solidarity? (If solidarity equals sharing does this implement that sharing equals distributing material goods?)
2. Explore the forms that solidarity can take. The ways to express our solidarity. Music and different forms of art and culture as an expression of solidarity. Boycott as a way of expressing solidarity.

3. Explore the pitfalls / possibilities for misuse of the word and the concept. Can solidarity be mistaken for charity? Patronising and paternal / subordinate relationship models.
4. Explore the political concept of solidarity, levels of decision making and obstacles of social inclusion and participation of young people in Europe
5. Explore obstacles to social inclusion and participation and ways to overcome them
6. Investigate who we can cooperate with in order to overcome the obstacles and assure social inclusion (community level, institutional level, etc.)
7. Define obstacles to obtaining equality for each of the defined groups and areas – gender, lgbt population, people with disabilities, ethnic/national/religious minorities, migrants, and age groups
8. Find solutions and recommendations for the same groups and areas
9. Actions we can take at different levels in order to assure equality as an expression of solidarity (personal, close environment, organisational, national, international level)
10. Investigate levels of solidarity and the areas in which it can be expressed
11. Define our responsibility in promoting and implementing the concept of international solidarity. Why do we have the responsibility?
12. Define possible actions that we can take on different levels in order to promote and implement the concept of international solidarity (personal, environment, organisational, national, international, institutional level). Define the ways of expressing our solidarity as youth.
13. Explore the ways to contribute to the strengthening of the new social movements and how to work together with all social partnership such as NGOs, trade unions.

14. Produce material for distribution at the IUSY Festival and in a broader campaign.
15. Produce a special edition of the IUSY Newsletter on the subject of the power of international solidarity
16. Contribute to the programme of activities at the IUSY Festival 2006 – organise and lead an activity during the Solidarity march in Alicante.

PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

The participants were young activists from the IUSY member organizations. The team decided as a main priority in the selection of participants grassroots members with a shorter organizational experience. Furthermore, the selection was based on experience and interest in the topics addressed.

Another important criterion for the selection was a motivation letter the applicants were asked to send in with their application. In the questionnaire, the applicants were asked to write some lines about why they think it is important and interesting to take parting the study session. Furthermore, the team decided to select young participants, as we wanted to avoid having older and more experienced participants. This agreement was made on the basis of our understanding of the study session as a training of political activists, with the aim of gaining more knowledge and experience, and broadens the views on the themes addressed at the study session.

The profile of the participants was the following:

- Age 18-26 years old
- Gender balance
- Previous experience is not necessary
- Grassroot members without any high position in their organization
- Motivation letter for participation
- Interests in carrying out a similar project in their respective organizations
- Geographical balance within Europe

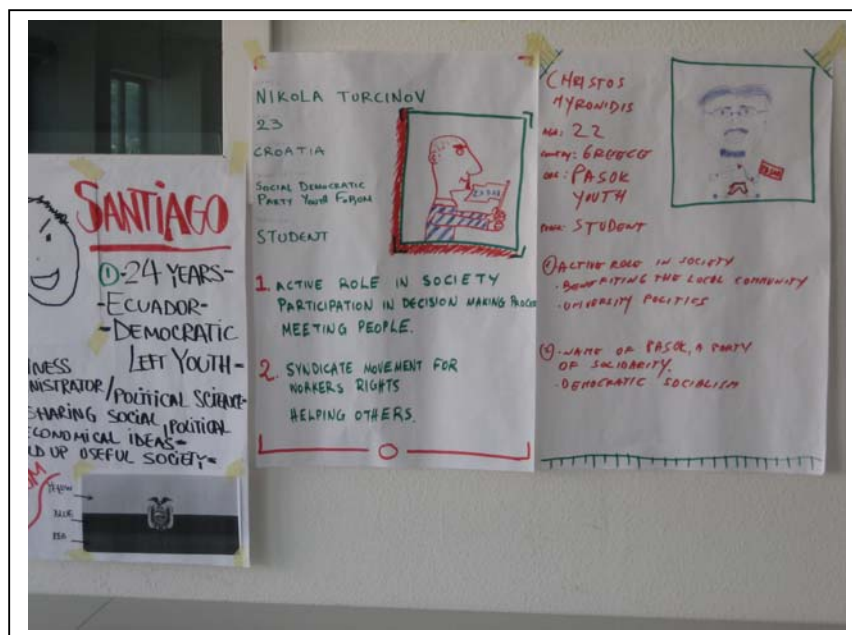
Due to some last minute cancellations, the geographical balance was not completely respected. Luckily, the cancellations did not affect the gender balance at the study

session, and neither the average age. The participants were mainly grassroots members from their organizations, which made the priorities made of the team fulfilled to a sufficient extent.

PROGRAMME

DAY ONE - SOLIDARITY

The day started with introduction activities in order to get to know each other, the programme, and the Youth centre of Budapest. The participants were asked to make a short presentation of them selves. After this, the participants were split in pairs, and were asked to make posters to present each other, with focus on their political belonging and their first association with the word solidarity. The posters were presented to the group. With this method, the participants got to know each other and their respective member organizations slightly better, and also it functioned as a good starting point for the further work on the topic of solidarity.



Following, the programme of the week was introduced and explained. Here, the team also presented the aims and objectives for the week, and IUSY's reasons to hold a study session on solidarity. The Educational Advisor

also gave an introduction on Council of Europe and the European Youth Centre of Budapest.

The day continued with a focus on the contributions, expectations and fears as an interactive introductory session. The method showed that the political expectations of the study session were high.



The afternoon session opened with a group activity where the participants were asked to discuss the impact and level of solidarity in four different scenarios, in relation to the aim “Define the concept of solidarity and the contents of the word”. All groups discussed thoroughly the scenarios, which also opened for a discussion on the distinction between solidarity and charity. Following, the four groups all met to discuss their outcome and definition on the impact of solidarity in their given scenario. The session was closed with a short input from the team on the difference between solidarity and charity. The

team focused also on the socialist ways of conveying solidarity, as an introductory session for the following days.



The evening consisted of evaluation groups and preparation for the opening of the first part of the exhibition. The participants were asked to bring something to the exhibition that expressed their understanding of solidarity. Each participant gave a short introduction to their exhibition contribution.

DAY 2 – SOCIAL INCLUSION

The second day was dedicated to workshops on the topic of social inclusion in relation to the aim “Define our role in conveying solidarity. Different levels of solidarity (social,

national, regional, international)”. In this session, the participants explored what social inclusion means to them, and who is affected by social exclusion. Following, the participants were divided in working groups that explored which measures that can be made at the personal/individual, national and international level in the struggle for social inclusion. All the groups developed strategies in terms of concrete proposals (actions, political ideas or proposals, and campaigns) that were presented in different ways in the plenary.

In the afternoon session, ECOSY President Giacomo Filibeck gave an expert input, where he focused on social inclusion and Youth participation. His input was an important contribution to the content of the day, which both the team and the participants warmly welcomed. However, due to lack of time, the participants were not given much time for a discussion following his lecture.

The day closed with a brief account on social inclusion and the role of youth in conveying social inclusion on the personal/individual, national and international level.



As evening activity, the participants were invited to watch the film “Land and Freedom”, a film about the Spanish Civil War, with a clear content of international solidarity.

DAY 3 – DECENT WORK

The main focus for the day was “decent work”, with the two aims “Discuss the socialist way of implementing solidarity within the labour market in order to accomplish decent work and welfare for all and define the youth aspect on this issue” and “Discuss the social democratic ways for fighting against all sorts of discrimination and poverty”.

The day was opened with an expert lecture given from Kristian Weise from ICFTU, which gave a brief introduction to the theme of Decent Work and solidarity within the labor market. Already during his input, the participants had interventions and questions, which made the following discussion very fruitful and interesting. During the following session, the focus was on the youth aspects in employment, with the supervision of Kristian Weise.

In the afternoon session, the participants were again divided into working groups which focused on trade unions. The groups were given different case studies from four different countries (Uganda, Ukraine, the Netherlands and Ecuador), and were asked to make a leaflet that could inspire youth to join the trade union in their country.

Following, the participants had a long discussion on decent work. Throughout the whole day, the participants showed strong interests in working on this theme, the participation was high, as well as the learning level.



The social activity of the day was a national/organisational evening, where the participants presented their respective country and organization, as part of our focus on intercultural learning.



DAY 4 - MINORITIES

The aim of the day was “Study ways to assure respect of equality at all levels. Gender equality, people with disabilities, lgbt people, migrants, minorities, etc.” The original programme for the day was to visit organizations in Budapest that has a special focus on minorities living in Hungary, but due to some technical problems in the planning of this, the team unfortunately had to cancel this and reorganize the programme of the day. In relation to the topic of minorities, the day was then dedicated to intercultural learning.

The External Advisor held a brief introduction on the theme. She focused her introduction on a thematic and theoretical approach to intercultural learning. As a follow up to the introduction, the group had a long discussion, with a high level of intensity.



The participants had a well deserved free afternoon this day, and ended the day with a dinner out.

DAY 5 – INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Following the themes discussed the previous days, the participants were now well prepared for further work on the concept of international solidarity. The aim for the day was both to “Investigate the principle of international solidarity and the role of

youth in its promotion and implementation: The concept of international solidarity”, and to “Discuss the social democratic ways for fighting against all sorts of discrimination and poverty”. The day started with focusing on which values the participants think is the most important for promoting and implementing international solidarity. Furthermore, the participants faced different challenges in arguing for the values chosen, both through games and through plenary discussions.

Following, the participants were given an expert input from Nina Grønvold from the Norwegian Trade Union. She gave an expert lecture on the importance of international solidarity and the socialist way of promoting and implementing international solidarity. Her introduction had also a very practical approach with examples on how youth have carried out international solidarity projects and campaigns made on the topic.

The last part of the day, the participants got to work in drafting committees. The committees worked on the following topics:

1. Making a special edition on the IUSY Newsletter
2. Proposals on actions for implementation on the IUSY campaign on Decent Work
3. Proposals for an open activity during the festival
4. Social committee



Throughout the whole afternoon, the participants worked in the drafting committees. Unfortunately, the drafting committees did not feel that they had time enough to finalize the tasks they were given. However, as we will see later, the committees contributed with many good ideas for the IUSY Festival and for the implementation on the ongoing IUSY campaign on Decent Work. The lack of time was mostly unfortunate for the newsletter drafting committee, which did not succeed in finalizing their project.

DAY 6 – OUTCOME AND EVALUATION

Following the results of the previous day, the participants started the morning session by presenting their ideas for the future work on the themes addressed during the study session. The focus was mainly on the upcoming IUSY Festival, where almost all study session participants will meet again.

The last educational session of the week was an introduction on solidarity and the socialist ideological values on the themes addresses. The session was originally meant to be a brief account on the study session. However, the participants highly appreciated this initiative, and proposed to make a similar programme at the IUSY Festival. You can read more about “the Socialist School” in the chapter *follow up*. The idea was warmly welcomed by the team, as well as by the IUSY Presidium, and by carrying out this initiative, the study session also fulfilled the aim “Raise awareness about solidarity among the IUSY member organisations through the participants”.

The study session was concluded by an oral evaluation by the participants.

GENERAL METHODS USED:

Plenary:

- Name games, ice breakers and other getting to know each other activities for the first day, energizers and introductions every day
- Inputs and interactive inputs
- Discussions
- Games and role plays



Groups:

- Focus groups
- Case studies
- The world café
- Working groups

Other methods used:

- Exhibitions
- National and organizational night
- Film evening
- Evaluation groups

EVALUATION METHODS

Each evening, the participants met in evaluation groups. The group consisted of four to five participants and two team members. The aim of the evaluation group was to open for reflection and feedback on the themes addressed the respective day, both by giving the participants an opportunity to reflect on the political content of the day and their personal reception of this, and further to give important feedback to the team on the content and implementation of the daily programme.

The team members organized the evaluation groups in different ways every day, but had an overall form on which themes to address at the evaluation groups:

1. What is your general feeling at the moment?
2. Did you learn something today?
3. How did you like the methodology and the trainers?
4. Did you feel comfortable in the group, and how was the dynamics?

The team members reported to the team about the most interesting and important issues discussed in the evaluation groups. The team evaluated the results from the evaluation groups, found solutions, and made if necessary changes in the programme for the following day, if this was requested from the participants.

The team had their own evaluation meeting each night following the evaluation groups. At these meetings, the team evaluated the work of the day including the feedback of the participants, and also planned the following day in detail. The team also made sure to give each other feedback and help the other team members planning the upcoming sessions when this was necessary.

All in all, the evaluation, both from among the team and the evaluation given from the participants, showed a successful study session with grateful and satisfied participants and team members.

MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY SESSION

ORGANISATIONAL

IUSY believe that through this study session, we have obtained strong results in our knowledge and understanding of solidarity, both organizational and in the member organizations. The recommendations for the implementation of the rights@work campaign stands as a good example on how the results of the study session affects not only the participants, but all IUSY member organizations internationally. The campaign was officially launched at the IUSY Festival held in Alicante, Spain in July 2006.

Furthermore, the idea of arranging the socialist school at the IUSY Festival also showed overwhelming results. The Socialist School lasted five whole days with seven working hours a day. The programme flow of the days was not dependent on the previous days, which made the School open for all interested participants every day.

At the IUSY Festival, the participants also cooperated in arranging the Solidarity march, a march with more that 3000 participants.

Lastly, some of the participants from the study session helped carrying out the Living Library at the IUSY Festival, also this with a convincing result and many listeners.

Trough the different activities carried out during the IUSY Festival, and also the results of the rights@work so fare clearly shows the importance for IUSY to hold a study session with such active participants, participants that made it very easy for IUSY to implement the work done at the study session in our international work with our member organizations. We can easily measure the results of the study session both through the IUSY Festival in July this year, and through reports given from our member organizations following the study session.

INDIVIDUAL

Mainly through the evaluation given during and following the study session, IUSY has a clear impression that the participants gained a high level of knowledge on the themes addressed. The knowledge was gained through different working methods, games, expert inputs and plenary sessions, which made sure that all participants were given several opportunities and ways to approach the themes. We believe that the participants gained a broader understanding of the content and meaning of solidarity, and the socialist ways of promoting and implementing this. Furthermore, through the practical work done at the study session and following at the IUSY Festival, the participants also gained knowledge and skills in how to run activities and work with political campaigns.

Furthermore, we also want to emphasize the social outcome of the study session. All participants reported that they gained many friends during the week in Budapest. We believe that this also broadened the participants understanding and knowledge on intercultural learning in practice.



FOLLOW UP

The proposal from the participants of arranging the Socialist School at the IUSY Festival was carried out with an overwhelming success. IUSY is very thankful for this idea, which we hope will be carried out also on a later stage.

Furthermore, the campaign rights@work was launched at the IUSY Festival. The IUSY Presidium has adopted a statement with the same name, connected to the campaign. The campaign will last until the end of this mandate, meaning until the end of 2007.

IUSY are waiting in excitement to see how this campaign will be implemented also on national level among our member organizations throughout the world.

Solidarity is one of the basic principles in the work of IUSY. Our vision is based on solidarity, equality and freedom. Both directly and indirectly, the outcomes of the study session will by all times be followed up by IUSY as part of our annually activities and statutory meetings. Our fight for solidarity and decent work will by all time be at the core of our work.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS

The results and outcomes of this study session shows once again how important the study session is for our organization, both in our work for knowledge raising among our member organizations, and for the political content in IUSY. IUSY have always focused our work on our principles of freedom, solidarity and equality, but this has mostly been dealt with on a political level. It was therefore a great experience to carry out a study session on solidarity, which allows us to find new approaches to the themes addressed. This was also obvious at the last IUSY study session held in cooperation with Council of Europe, that time with the title “Towards a sustainable Culture of Peace”. As an international youth organization, we can easily measure the importance of the study sessions and its educational and political results.

The outstanding support and help given by the Council of Europe was crucial for the results gained at the study session. We would especially like to thank the secretariat and staff at the European Youth Centre in Budapest, whose contribution was vital for both the team and the participants throughout the whole week in Budapest. European Youth Centre gives us a unique possibility to gather our grass root activists for a seminar for such an intensive length and form of activity. We have very good experiences in cooperating with the EYC's in the past and we hope to have a possibility to continue this tradition.

IUSY would also like to thank the Educational Advisor for her contribution to the study session. She offered all her energy and commitment in making the study session successful. Without her ideas, initiative, perspectives and endurance, the study session would not have been as successful as it was.

IUSY is always very satisfied with the help and support given from Council of Europe and the European Youth Centre. Without the outstanding help from these, the non-formal education run by IUSY would not have been at the same level as it is today. IUSY believes that our last years focus on non-formal meeting has showed great results both organizational and political. We hope we will be able to continue the cooperation with Council of Europe and European Youth Centre, as this is essential for our future work in the non-formal education.