Education: A Right, not a Privilege - Ways to achieve social inclusion in schools, regardless of economic background

Report of the study session held by Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions OBESSU in cooperation with the European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre Strasbourg
24th-30th May 2010

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

The study session “Education: A Right, not a Privilege - Ways to achieve social inclusion in schools, regardless of economic background” gathered around 20 school student activists from all over Europe to discuss about concepts such as discrimination, inclusion and exclusion, economic factors and try to develop ideas and proposals on how to improve the situation in today’s school environment.

The study session built up on the previous work of OBESSU and its members in the field: the involvement in the “All Different - All Equal” campaign through training sessions on labelling schools to promote equality in all aspects of education, a study session on inclusion and access to education in 2006 and its follow-up campaign “Too cool for school”, as well as the ongoing work on the topic through the Europe-wide campaign Light on the Rights and the promotion of the European School Student Rights Charter.¹

For one week, the participants worked together to deepen their knowledge into the topic of human rights, discrimination, inclusion and exclusion and explore the links with economical factors and education. They exchanged concerns as well as best practices to enhance inclusion in schools and reflected on their role and the role of school student organisations in the process.

Dedicated sessions provided them with practical tools and ideas to foster social inclusion in schools: in particular, they deepened and strengthened their knowledge about human rights education and campaigning.

As a concrete outcome of the study session, guidelines were drafted: those include the main results of the event and express the view of school students on ways to achieve more inclusive schools as well as more inclusive school student organisations.

¹ More information on the OBESSU website: www.obessu.org
Introduction

Aim of the study session

Following up the results of our previous work on social exclusion and access to education, the study session “Education: A Right, not a Privilege - Ways to achieve social inclusion in schools, regardless of economic background” aimed at deepening the organisation’s knowledge of the topic and planning further initiatives, providing the participants with useful tools to implement within their organisations.

Key Objectives

The main objectives pursued by this study session were:

- to raise awareness of social exclusion based on economic status
- to encourage the participants to self-reflect on what role this form of discrimination plays in their communities
- to sensitize the participants to the topic of affluence-based exclusion
- to discuss the causes of the economical influence on educational inequality
- to share methods and ideas to forward accessible education
- to act as a training area for the development of socially inclusive policies to deal with exclusion of students of low economic status in education
- to empower participants to speak up about difficulties in access to education within school structures, as well as on the national platform.

Participants’ profile

The participants were selected after opening a call for the study session and distributing it among OBESSU’s member organisations. The participants were, thus, all active in school student organisations at national level. Twenty-one participants from 13 organisations took part to the event. Some of them are members of the national board or international committee of their organisations, some others, instead, deal specifically with the topics addressed during the study session. The average age of participants was 18. The geographical composition of the group was very broad ranging from Iceland to Bosnia and Herzegovina, from Italy to Norway.

Programme and main issues discussed

The programme was developed around four phases:
1. Introduction to human rights and social exclusion
2. Links with school students and the work of school student unions
3. Acquiring tools
4. Developing guidelines

The first phase served to introduce the participants to the topic of the study session and enabled them to familiarize with concepts such as human rights, inclusion/exclusion, and economical background. This created the basis for a common understanding and allowed the participants to make links with their realities. They exchanged stories and best practices that they witnessed or experienced in their countries and discussed about possible ways to fight social exclusion based on economic background in schools. The participants also critically addressed their work as school student activists and explored possible solution to foster social inclusion within school student unions as well.

The third phase offered to participants the opportunity to acquire tools and develop ideas to concretely address the issue of social exclusion in schools. Parallel sessions were run and participants could choose between campaigning and human rights education and intercultural learning. During the workshop on campaigning they discussed and deepened their knowledge on how to start and run successful campaigns, what to take into consideration during the planning phase, how to attract people, communicate the main ideas and evaluate the progress. During the workshop about human rights education and intercultural learning, instead, participants became familiar with different methods and activities to implement when addressing the topic of social inclusion. The numerous manuals and training kits were presented and the participants tried out some of the activities proposed.

The last part of the study session was devoted to the development of guidelines based on the outcomes of the previous days of work. Participants divided into group and discussed their ideas on inclusive society, schools and school student unions.

The whole programme was based on non-formal education with the aim of fostering interactivity and participants’ creativity. The programme alternated plenary sessions with group works to ensure effective exchange among participants. During some of the sessions the participants worked together and created very entertaining videos, songs, pictures and dances reflecting their ideas of human rights and social inclusion.
Outcomes

The outcomes of the study session have been varied and numerous.

OBESSU and its member organisations had the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and expertise about social inclusion in the school environment. Moreover, the event helped strengthen the relation among school student unions in Europe, thus, increasing cooperation in the future.

The event has also been a very good learning space for further development and improvement of the organisation in aspects related both to logistics and content, which will be useful for future projects.

The preparatory team also learned a lot from the study session: the members further developed their training and facilitation skills, deepened their knowledge on the topics addressed, increased their ability to work in multicultural teams and to deal with intercultural issues.

As far as the participants are concerned they learned a lot for themselves and for their organisation. They lived an intercultural experience and learned from each others’ culture. By working in multicultural groups, moreover, they had to deal with different working styles and learned to adapt and compromise in order to reach common objectives. The participants also acquired new tools and ideas to implement after the event. Especially through the sessions devoted to the tools, they increased their skills as multipliers and this will also have an impact within their organisations at national level. In addition, also the other sessions fostered their creativity and provided them with different methods to approach not only social inclusion but also other topics, thus, developing their facilitators’ skills even further.

All parties involved, moreover, conducted a self-reflection on how inclusive they are both at personal and at organizational level and in which way they can improve their inclusiveness through different initiatives.

Guidelines

The OBESSU Guidelines on social inclusion have been one of the concrete outcomes of the study session. They summarise the main outcomes of the event and, after presenting definition of the main concepts, express the view of school students on socially inclusive schools and school student organisations.

OBESSU Guidelines on social inclusion

(These Guidelines are the result of the OBESSU Study session “Education: A right not a privilege - Ways to achieve social inclusion in schools regardless of economic background” held in May 2010 in cooperation with the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg)
Introduction

As the world changes, the importance of education increases. Today, educational systems all around the continents fail to support values that are crucial for the progression of the global community and its inhabitants. This creates a need for a change in views on and implementation of education and training worldwide. Besides offering the opportunity of gaining knowledge and social competence, education and training must facilitate understanding for social diversity, equality, solidarity and mutual respect. Thus, world citizenship must be a key point in education. In addition, students have the right to be supported in the search and formation of their own identity. Also, students have the right to be encouraged to think critically and to be involved in the school community and its surroundings in active participation.

School students and school student organisations are and should always be at the forefront of pushing these questions, fighting for change. As organisations that gather and represent students on national and international level, school student unions inform their members about their rights and doing so contribute to create an inclusive atmosphere in schools. School student unions need to be innovative and complement national authorities and other relevant stakeholders.

Defining...

Social exclusion is exclusion of any type on a basis of social matter. It is detaching groups and individuals from social relations and institutions and preventing them from full participation in the normatively prescribed activities of the society in which they live.

Economical background is usually measured and thought of in material wealth: the earnings and credit score of you and your closer relatives. As material wealth very much defines one’s chances, rights and duties in our society, economical background lies at the core of defining part of one's cultural belonging. It can be the reason for accepting or rejecting a person or a group of people and is a common basis for discrimination.

Discrimination is the actual behaviour towards another group. It involves excluding or restricting members of one group from opportunities that are available to other groups.
Social inclusion starts with self-reflection and self-criticism. Very often, we tend to form opinions of people on the basis of stereotypes and we often expect people around us to behave in a certain way according to these stereotypes. An inclusive attitude and behaviour demands us to overcome prejudice and break our own barriers. In a socially inclusive environment, everyone feels welcome and encouraged to express their own identity and feelings. Social inclusion makes sure that one’s opinions and experience are valued and appreciated equally with anyone else’s.

Our thoughts on...

....a socially inclusive school?

Access to education - Everyone must have equal chances to education regardless of their economical background. All school students shall have equal treatment and equal chances to take part in education and training. In order for education to be accessible for all, it has to be free of charge. That is, no tuition fees or any other costs such as food, books, study trips or accommodation can be requested.

School environment - Inclusion in schools does not only mean providing free of charge education but also creating a supportive, inclusive and non-discriminatory social environment. Inclusive schools are safe and care for the wellbeing of their students.

Teaching Methods - Teachers need to be qualitatively trained to work in and with diverse groups and support students in intercultural dialog, understanding and mutual respect. Teachers must ensure that all learning styles are accounted for when teaching, so that every student learns at the same rate as others. Being aware that students do not all learn in the same way and using pedagogical methods accordingly is a prerequisite for ensuring that students are included and encouraged to learn. This is an important way in which to prevent school drop-outs.

Evaluation - We feel that students should be able to evaluate the teaching methods in their schools. This way, the education and training is continuously adapted to the needs of the students. Thus, the school environment can grow peaceful and non discriminative. Also parents should be involved in the school community, taking part in the dialogue on social diversity and ways of inclusion.

... a socially inclusive school student union?
Social inclusion must start at home. In order to promote social inclusion we, as school student unions, have to make our own organisations inclusive. Below are some suggestions on how to make your school student union a place where everyone feels welcome regardless of their background:

- identify groups that are not involved in the school student union's work at the moment and focus resources on reaching out to them
- hold regular discussions where you tackle your own prejudices and stereotypes at your meetings, as well as the reasons for social exclusion within your organisation
- create inclusion guidelines for your school student union; these could include, e.g. using inclusive language, using accessible facilities for meetings and others events etc.
- make your events accessible to all with regards to: additional costs, membership and participation fees, disabilities of any kind, specific needs
- create a mentor “buddy” system where some of the members of the union are empowering those who have not previously been active in the union
- encourage your members (school student councils) to create their own inclusion policies
- create a specific project to build up a relationship with vulnerable groups of students that might in any way be effected by exclusion

“Thinking how I was, and if I was on that path what could happen to me, if I could have better things in life. After the first few sessions it started hitting me, I’ve got to change or I might get kicked out, or not get the job I want as a police officer. I want to show that you can choose what to be, that not everyone is the same.” - boy, age 14, from East London, identified as being ‘at risk’ and on the edge on exclusion, taking part in the project “Real talk” run by ESSA (English Secondary Students' Association).
Follow-up of the study session by OBESSU

Both the participants and OBESSU committed themselves to different follow-up activities.

Follow-up activities will include the dissemination and use of the final guidelines drafted during the study session as well as various kinds of activities as workshops, projects and seminars. During the session about the multipliers’ role, participants have discussed different ways to continue their work on social exclusion based on economical background. They made personal lists of actions to undertake once back home. The follow-up initiatives they opted for ranged from very personal actions to something that their organisation could change in order to deal with the topic or to be more inclusive itself. Some participants decided to organise a workshop using the tools acquired related to human rights education, others want to propose a new campaign to their organisations, some others got, instead, inspiration from the Young Advocates projects and want to realize something similar in their schools.

OBESSU saw this study session as the start of a deeper commitment and engagement in issues related to social exclusion in schools, in particular in relation with economical reasons. Therefore the organisation is committed to develop both its competencies in the field and its stands. As a first step we have published a magazine on social inclusion with interviews to the participants of the study session and illustrating the situation in different countries. The magazine “There to Share”, moreover, gathers all important information and sources presented during the study session, as for examples where to find the training kits and manuals. An effort will be made, moreover, to increase the political work in the field, for which the guidelines will prove to be an essential tool, as they represent the view of school students across Europe.

Considering the great success of the “My tools” sessions and the interest provoked, OBESSU has decided to devote an entire Study Session to the topic of human rights education and peer education. The study session will take place in the European Youth Centre in Budapest from 6th to 13th March 2011.

All pictures of the Study Session are available here: http://www.flickr.com/photos/38091338@N06/sets/72157624201980050/
Report from the preparatory meeting

Day 1 - 12th March, 2010

The preparatory meeting started with a short presentation of all the members of the team, as not all of the team members knew each other from before. Before proceeding with presentations of OBESSU and the Council of Europe, the team agreed on the agenda of the meeting.

After the presentations of OBESSU and the Council of Europe, tasks, roles and expectations of the Educational Advisor, Course director and prep-team members were discussed and defined.

Then it was time to start with the aims and the objectives of the study session. The Educational Advisor, Dariusz Grzemny, provided a background to the concept of study sessions, and also clarified their general aims. Afterwards Aleksandra Malziski, the Course Director, explained why OBESSU had applied for a study session on this particular topic and how this event fitted within OBESSU’s political priorities and activities. Afterwards, the preparatory team brainstormed about the aims and objectives of the study session. The application that OBESSU had submitted months before worked as the basis to start the discussions. Nevertheless, the team felt it was important to revise it and agree on a common vision of the aims and together work with the objectives.

The brainstorming was fruitful and brought up topics such as exploring the concept of economical background, poverty, social exclusion, social inclusion, discrimination, human rights, diversity, school environment, something concrete to bring home, and many more. The team tried to narrow down the different concepts and find a clear focus of the event on which to concentrate. It was also clear from the beginning that many of the participants of the study session would have little to none previous experience with the above mentioned topics and they will also have a different interpretation of economical background: all those elements needed to be taken into account when planning the contents. Eventually the team agreed on the following aim: “to sensitize the participants to the topic of affluence-based exclusion and to encourage them to self-reflect on what role said discrimination plays in their communities, as well as to act as a training area for the development of socially inclusive policies to deal with exclusion of students of low economic status in education.”

Having agreed on the overall aim of the study session, the team had a clear picture of where to head and the objectives, as well as the flow of the programme, followed quite naturally. The programme consisted of three main blocks; exploring, developing and implementing, with which the team wanted to give the participants the opportunity to explore the key concepts and develop their competences in the field of social inclusion as well as to create guidelines for future work of school student unions on this topic.
Day 2 - 13th March 2010

The second meeting day was devoted to the development of the programme of the study session. The team discussed the flow of the programme and agreed on an approximate focus of all the different sessions. A main responsible and a support team member were assigned to each session and the in-depth planning of the sessions would be done by the different sub-teams. As a way of supporting the process, the team agreed to use ‘session outlines’, where aims and objectives of each session were defined, as well as the detailed program, the methodology used and the materials needed. Having outlined the programme, a discussion on the expected outcomes of the event took place. The team was eager to make sure that the participants had something to bring home with them and as one of the objectives was to create guidelines, the process of their creation was thoroughly discussed.

Before continuing with the actual division of tasks, the team discussed preferences regarding tasks and responsibilities. Besides the task division, the team also agreed on a timetable with set deadlines for finalising session outlines and provide feedback on them.

The last item on the agenda of the first preparatory meeting addressed practical issues, such as administrative arrangements and reimbursements. Having done that, the team moved on to an evaluation of the preparatory meeting itself that, on the whole, was very positive. The team members seemed to have confidence in each other and in the session, and the Course Director and Educational Advisor shared this feeling, as well.
Day-by-day report of the study session

Day 0 - 24\textsuperscript{th} May 2010

Most of the participants of the study session arrived during the day on 24\textsuperscript{th} May. The first evening is very important to create the feeling of the group and to set the basis for fruitful cooperation. Most of the participants met for the first time and we tried to create a good social climate, where everybody feels comfortable with each other. After dinner the preparatory team gathered all the participants in the meeting room, presented itself and shortly introduced the programme of the study session in general. This was followed by different ice-breaking activities and name games that were used to get to know all the names, countries, organisations, as well as some other information about the participants.

After this session, the participants were invited to stay and enjoy some drinks and snacks. In that way the group building continued in an even more informal setting, giving the participants the chance to get to know each other more personally.

Day 1 - 25\textsuperscript{th} May 2010

Morning

Since some of the participants were not able to take part in the activities on the arrival day, the first part of the morning was devoted to getting to know each other.

Three games were organised:

- „alphabetical chairs“: participants needed to order themselves following the alphabetical order without speaking;
- „key game“: the game Twister done with keys to remember the name of participants;
- „pictures game“: participants were asked to bring a picture from their childhood, the pictures were randomly distributed and one had to find the corresponding person and find three things about him/her. Those pictures created the participants’ « profiles » and were hung on the wall and made available for posting messages throughout the whole week.

After the ice-breaking games that ensured everyone knowing each other’s names and creating a good atmosphere, the educational advisor Dariusz Grzemny welcomed the participants on behalf of the Council of Europe and explained what a study session is. In addition he shortly illustrated the difference between the European Union and the Council of Europe.

The presentation of the history of the Council of Europe, its aims, key bodies, and activities, was done in form of a quiz, increasing interactivity
and participation. Various topics were tackled: the European flag, the year of foundation of the Council of Europe, the values it stands for, membership, information about different CoE documents (e.g. the Cultural Convention, the North-South agreements, etc).

After the coffee break, OBESSU board member Emma Hovi delivered a short presentation about the history and structure, aims and objectives of OBESSU, how it works, its activities, its relationships with the European Union, the Council of Europe and other educational stakeholders (European Youth Forum - YFJ, European Trade Union Committee for Education - ETUCE, European Students’ Union - ESU, etc), OBESSU events and campaigns. A special focus was dedicated to the Light on the Right campaign and the work of OBESSU for school student rights.

Then it was time to start focusing on the study session. The team member Ivica Alpeza explained how the study session fits in the broader work of OBESSU and the relation with previous projects. Aims, objectives and methodology were illustrated. This presentation aimed at creating a common understanding of the expected outcomes within the group. The programme and the flow of the week were presented.

Afternoon

The afternoon started with a session exploring participants’ hopes, fears and expectations. The team member Lara Widmer facilitated the activity which consisted in drawing a hand where each finger corresponded to a different aspect:

1. what I want to learn
2. what I want to experience
3. how I want to contribute
4. what I want to avoid
5. free expectation

This reflection was very important for the study session team to understand what the group expected from the study session and to take those considerations into account while delivering the session and/or in case adjustments to the programme were needed.

This activity was followed by some technical information regarding the badges, the use of mugs in an environmental friendly way, times of the meals, punctuality, reimbursements, etc.

The team had organised another team-building activity for the afternoon session: the Mission Impossible. This activity allowed participants to get to know each other better while starting working on the topic of the study session. Mission impossible, in fact, consists in dividing the participants in different groups and assigning them a list of tasks to complete together. The
tasks varied from taking a group picture in from of the European Parliament, to draw what human rights are or translate into a song the topic of the study session. The activity represented the first approach into the topic of the study session and offered the opportunity to express ideas in a creative way, enhancing team-building. When the time to fulfil the tasks was over, the different teams presented their creations and results in plenary.

After the Mission impossible, the group agreed on a common “Code of Conduct” for the study session, in order to keep the debates fluid and ensure everyone could express their ideas without being interrupted:

- We speak in English only
- We look out for each other
- We respect each other
- When someone speaks the others stay silent and listen
- We raise hands to speak
- No internet during the sessions
- Be always on time
- When necessary freely leave the room during the sessions without interrupting
- Be fresh and awake during sessions, no sleeping
- Party and drink responsibly

The team member Ivica Alpeza held then a presentation on facts and figures on social inclusion in general with a special focus on education, in particular access to education. Different statistics were presented showing e.g. poverty rate by age and gender, numbers of students by levels of education in Europe, percentage of young people not in education or training etc. As part of the presentation various educational videos were shown:

- “Inclusion is belonging”: the video presents a list of what inclusion is, e.g., it is a right, an attitude, being part of a community and being valued and respected, accepting differences. At the end it focuses on children with disabilities and concludes that universally inclusion means belonging.  
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9-XX9227ek&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9-XX9227ek&feature=related)

- “Inclusive education”: the video explores the features that an ideal inclusive education should have. Inclusion education is caring, involving, sharing, negotiating, etc.
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N105TGmMKLk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N105TGmMKLk)

- “Education for all: Class of 2015”: this is one of the videos within the campaign “Education for All”. It drives the attention on the 75 million children who are still out of school, and the millions more who struggle to stay in school. The video presents what it is needed to
fight those issues and underlines the importance of political will. 
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jieco-43WNl

- “Help end poverty with Education”: through strong images of poor 
  areas of the world, the video stresses the links between education 
  and poverty, underlining that also how some behaviours of citizens 
  from more developed countries negatively affect the situation. 
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cV5189K7ic&feature=related

- “Stand up for your rights”: presenting as examples Martin Luther 
  King, Gandhi, the feminist movement and others, the video 
  encourage school students to stand up for their rights and for what 
  they believe in, in order to bring social change through activism. 
  http://www.cs-tv.tv/?channel=wbd

The presentation served as a starting point for the discussion about the 
definition of social inclusion, identified as a right and as the sense of 
belonging to their community. Inclusion in education was then described as 
one aspect of inclusion in society and supported by a video trying to show 
the different aspects which can lead to an inclusive education. The 
presentation also addressed the theme of poverty and concluded with 
suggestions about the actions that can be undertaken to enhance inclusion 
in education.

The presentation was followed by an activity aiming at making participants 
reflect about possible discrimination they experienced or witnessed in their 
life. The exercise allowed them to think thoroughly about the topic and 
relate the previous presentation with life situations. Four corners 
representing different situations were created:

a. when you faced discrimination
b. when you discriminated someone
c. when you witnessed discrimination and did nothing
d. when you witnessed discrimination and reacted

Participants were given pieces of paper with the task to write in the four 
corners about their own experience in the different situations. They then 
discussed their answers in pairs. The floor was then open to a plenary 
discussion starting from a brainstorming on the definition of discrimination 
and on the personal perception of what discrimination is. Participants 
discussed about the difficulties to identify when they have been 
discriminated depending on their subjective perception. They also 
recognised the existence of different levels of discrimination depending on 
whether is an individual, a group or an institution carrying out the 
discriminative behaviour.

The participants engaged in very lively and interesting discussions on 
whether there is discrimination in case the behaviours of others does not 
actually creates an impediment to do something or there is no violation of
any right. They also discussed the fact that discrimination is the only thing addressed by law that regards feelings.

Before dinner, the evaluation groups (e-groups) were introduced, and all the participants were divided into groups with their responsible team member. Every preparatory team member had a group of participants, with whom they met for about half an hour every day before dinner. The groups discussed the programme of the day, and how the participants were doing in general. This gave the participants an opportunity to give the team immediate feedback, but also a second chance to debrief the happenings of the day in smaller groups than the plenary. The team gathered every evening after the e-groups to discuss the possibilities of modifying the programme of the next day according to the evaluation, if necessary and possible.

Evening

The evening saw a traditional intercultural evening, where all the participants presented their countries. They had been asked to bring something that is typical for their country, such as food, drinks and/or music, in order to present their country in an entertaining way. The evening was much appreciated by the participants and offered once more the opportunity to get to know each other in an even more informal environment. Both the team and the participants enjoyed the evening very much.

Day 2 - 26th May 2010

Morning

The morning of the second day started with defining the key terms related to the topic of the study session. Four terms were put at the centre of the discussion: discrimination, social inclusion, social exclusion, economical background. Firstly, the participants were asked to write their own definitions and to then discuss them in groups. After that, the prep-team presented some definitions from related documents such as International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Social Exclusion and the European Union’s Social Inclusion Agenda by World Bank, European Commission’s 2004 Joint Report on Social Inclusion etc.

The participants were then divided again into groups: they were given real-life examples as case studies with the task to discuss them on the basis of the definitions they came up with and the definitions heard from the presentation. They then gathered in plenary again and discussed the different examples together. Quite a lot of attention has been put on defining and distinguishing direct from indirect discrimination:
- **Direct discrimination** occurs where one person is treated less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on grounds of racial or ethnic origin or any other cause.

- **Indirect discrimination** is the result of the effect of a policy or measure. It occurs when an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice puts *de facto* a person or a group at a disadvantage compared with others.

The group also discussed the values on which the perception of discrimination is based upon. Participants came to a conclusion that the definitions and interpretations are based on certain values and those different perceptions do not allow to have a universal definition of certain terms.

The other part of the morning was devoted to the exploration of national situations when it comes to the topic of the study session. The participants had been asked in advance to investigate on the situation of affluence-based exclusion in education in their home countries based on relevant researches or on the experience of their students’ organisation. After working in smaller groups the participants gathered to present the different national situations where they see there is discrimination in schools. Some of the main issues pointed out were:

- tuition fees
- rural/urban differences
- fewer possibilities to continue education which leads to a higher rate of school drop-outs
- differences in the access to or the amount of scholarships
- “hidden costs” of education: books, meals, transportation

**Afternoon**

The first part of the afternoon saw the participants involved in the COMPASS activity “Take a step forward”², which, in the form of a role play, aims at showing how social inequality causes discrimination and exclusion. The roles were adapted by the prep-team to match the topic of the study session.

All participants were given a role that included a brief explanation of the person they will be during the activity. They time to reflect on the character and create in their mind a picture of their new self and live. The participants were then asked to line up. The facilitator started reading a series of statements describing different life situations and choices and hence representing the different opportunities people have in life: all the people who, thinking as their character, would say yes had to take one step forward. The difference between the positions of the various characters was

clear already after a few statements and at the end of the activity the gap between people in front and on the back was extremely evident.

The activity was followed by a thorough debriefing, during which the participants were asked to share feelings and thoughts on the activity as well as related to the bigger picture and the realities in their home countries. The majority of the participants was very positive about the activity: stepping into someone else’s shoes offered them a powerful experience of inequalities in the society, through which they could draw parallels to their own lives and realities at times provoking also strong emotions. Many participants, moreover, pointed out how the way the characters were randomly distributed in many ways symbolised the actual unequal and unfair distribution of opportunities in real life. People who advanced only very little during the activity said that, already after a few statements, started to feel that their situation was hopeless and that there was not worth trying. People who took steps for most statements, instead, underlined how scary it was to see how easy it was to just continue moving forward and by doing that not even realising how far behind others were. The debriefing of the activity ended with a long discussion on possible measures to take in order to change structures, mainly within the field of education, in order to improve the situation of whom is left behind and striving towards a more equal society.

The rest of the afternoon was used for deepening the topic through the activity “Garden of Social Exclusion” which aimed at getting participants to realise that there are so many different causes of social exclusion and what the consequences of them are.

The task for the participants was to create a garden placing the causes of Social Exclusion at the roots of the tree and the effects on the branches of the trees. After the trees were completed the participant “took a walk” in the garden where debriefing of the activity took place. The discussion led to the conclusion that the trees could also be turned upside down and that the effects of exclusion could also be the cause of it.

Evening

The preparatory team had organised a movie night that all participants attended. The team had chosen the film *Slumdog Millionaire*, as it addresses and explores themes like race, ethnicity and social exclusion based on economical background. The film has been very popular and was much appreciated also by the participants. It also both supported and built on the topics that were dealt with during the week and gave the participants many things to reflect on and discuss with each other.
Day 3 - 27\textsuperscript{th} May 2010

Morning

The morning of the third day was dedicated to the topic of human rights, in order to allow participants to gain a wider frame in which social exclusion and discrimination fall into.

A short introduction about the European Convention of Human Rights and other human rights documents and protection mechanisms was presented. The participants were then asked to brainstorm about a definition of human rights. The conclusion was reached that there is no definition of human rights: one simply knows what they are. Then, Dariusz Grzemny held a presentation about human rights related to social issues, in this way participants could see the link between human rights and social exclusion/inclusion.

Various issues afflicting today’s society, as for example the economic crisis, neo-liberalism, globalisation, war on terror, etc., were used as examples to show which the effects on social rights are. On a positive note, it was underlined how civil society development is quite flourishing in Europe although there are countries trying to restrict such development (e.g. Russia, Azerbaijan).

Those considerations were followed by some facts and figures illustrating social exclusion in Europe, although it was underlined how difficult it is to find specific figures about the topic, in particular related to schools. Dariusz, moreover, used various quotations to explain different aspects related to human rights. For example Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights shows the source of human rights and dignity. Through Léopold Senghor’s statement “Human rights start with breakfast” was explained how human rights start with consciousness and that one recognizes the existence of human rights only when they are violated, otherwise they are not one of our daily concerns.

“All human being are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in the spirit of brotherhood” (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 1)

“Human rights are what no one can take away from you” (René Cassin)

“Human rights start with breakfast” (Léopold Senghor)

In addition it was underlined how human rights are both legal provisions laid down in different national and international documents and values such as solidarity, equality, dignity, freedom, tolerance, justice, non-discrimination.
Participants also learnt the characteristic of human rights laid down in the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights (1993): human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and inalienable. In addition we may identify also the threefold human aspect of human rights: they belong by human beings, they were created by human beings, and they can be violated by human beings only.

Dariusz also illustrated the three generations of human rights: civil and political rights (1st generation); social, economic and cultural rights (2nd generation); collective rights, emerging rights (3rd generation). Nevertheless, he underlined how those categorisations are sometimes blurred since some rights spread over different generations and even moved from one generation to another over the years. Participants were then presented different human rights and asked to identify the appropriate category.

Afterwards, the floor was opened to questions and participants discussed various cases and which role the power of the different countries plays in the adoption of the Court’s decisions, taking therefore into consideration national perspectives. In addition, the participants also discussed different present issues possibly related to human rights: headscarves ban, abortion, smoking bans, homophobic laws.

“A social inclusive society is defined a one where all people feel values, their differences are respected ad their basic needs are met so they can live in dignity. Social exclusion is the process of being shut out from social, economic, political and cultural systems which contribute to the integration of a person into the community” (Cappo 2002)


Afternoon

The afternoon session started with the COMPASS activity “Where do you stand”3: controversial statements were read and participants were asked to take positions and then explain their reasons.

Below the statements with the highlights of the discussions they provoked.

Creating special schools for students with disabilities is segregation not inclusion.

Participants took different positions. Some people affirmed that there is a need to distinguish between mental and physical disability and that solutions depend on which sort of disability school students have. Some participants proposed to have the same school but different classes: in this

way students would have the possibility to confront with different people. Other participants raised the issue of the freedom of choice: people should have the possibility to choose if to go to separate schools or mainstream schools. Thus, this first statement widely divided the group which long discussed whether separate schools bring more benefits (for instance, special facilities and support) or disadvantages (for example no interaction with other students, no specific support) to students with disabilities. During the discussion, participants contributed with examples from their national experiences, which also offered the opportunity to acquire an overview of the different practices throughout Europe.

*School student councils can all be called inclusive only if they represent all the minorities present at school*

Again the group’s opinion was not homogeneous. One participant did not agree with the statement since, in her opinion, school student councils should give the possibility to all to take part but this does not mean that, just because they represent a minority, people should be included in the student council. Only if the minority feels the need to be active, then, they should have the possibility to do so through the school student councils. After this thought some people changed the side they were standing. Other participants, on the contrary, still believed that there should be a positive discrimination towards minorities. Yet, still supporting the idea that minorities should have the opportunity to take part in the councils and that their participation should be particularly fostered, positive discrimination was not seen as the best practice by some others. Despite the divergence in opinions, everybody agreed that school student councils have to represent all students even if minorities are not directly represented in it.

*Student and teachers who commit discrimination in school should be dismissed*

Participants looked at this statement from different perspective: some underlined the fact that students always have right to education so they should not be dismissed; others did not consider dismissing as educational, while instead students should be explained what discrimination is; one participant saw expulsion as a form of discrimination itself; some other participants, instead, underlined the importance of preventive measures to promote mutual understanding and appreciation of diversity. On this statement all participants agreed that dismissal is not the solution.

*To create equal chances for all in schools, students coming from rich families should pay extra money to allow poorer students to fully participate in education*

This statement divided the group again. Sometimes participants had the same arguments but occupied different positions in the room because they interpreted the statement differently. Some responses that arose were that it is not fair to let people pay more even if they have more possibilities and that such money should come from the government and not directly from
the families. On the contrary, other participants stressed the aspect of solidarity.

*Roma children do not go to school because of their cultural traditions*

Most participants did not take a straightforward position on the statement and stayed in the middle. Only 3 participants moved to the “agree” side and 6-7 disagreed. Participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina presented their own reality where education is free and there are government projects to include Roma but they usually don’t go to school anyway. A participant from Romania explains how for many Roma families education is not seen as a priority and for them it is better if the children go to beg money on the street. Many participants agreed that their lifestyle and traditions are different from mainstream society in Europe. One participant strongly disagreed and also remarked that participants should pay attention to the language they use since some participants are using words which are not inclusive. The discussion on this statement did not last long since some participants did not have an opinion on it.

*Real inclusion in schools will never be possible*

Almost all participants disagreed. Participants underlined the importance to have the will to change things. The ones who disagreed stressed the facts that it is not possible to change all schools of the world into being inclusive.

Since the time for the activity was over, the last statement were read and participants was asked only to move to the “agree” or “disagree” side of the room without supporting it with explanations. The last statements were:

*Love can solve any problem*. Participants were divided on this statement

*Patriotism and religion should be not taught at school*. Participants were divided on this statement

*Quota system in education is the best way to ensure everyone has the full right to participate*. Some participants did not take a position since they did not fully understood the statement

*Human rights education should be obligatory in schools*. Everyone agreed

After the coffee break, participants gather again in plenary and the debriefing of the activity took place. The participants liked to have the opportunity to exchange views on different subjects and also the visual aspect of the activity was much appreciated since it made participants realise the distance between people’s perspectives. Some participants stated that they found hard to decide where to stand then after hearing the first comments it was easier to take a stand. On some statements they felt there was a lack of background information and choosing what was “right” or “wrong” was very hard. For them it was interesting to see the different national and cultural views and discover how things work in other countries.
For some of the statements participants were surprised about other’s opinions (i.e. about special schools). Also when discussing Roma issues, the clashes emerged and the group itself realised that a lot of stereotypes were present. Anyway, the group concluded that, despite the different opinions, when it comes to decision-making actions a common position should be found.

The rest of the afternoon was filled with a simulation game that aimed at exploring wealth distribution and economic background in real life situations.

Participants were divided into 4 groups: each group represented a family which had a budget of 10,000 “obessus” (OBESSU currency) for the next month and they had to decide how to spend that amount of money based on a list with activities/goods and their price they received. After they had discussed their purchases within the “family”, the groups gathered in plenary and discussed how they came to final decisions. They expressed the difficulties in deciding since much information was missing (for example, they did not know whether they owned a house or needed to pay the rent). Reaching compromises was easy for the basic needs but on other issues opinion diverged but eventually trade offs were made. Afterwards the families compared the different purchase lists they had compiled and the differences in reasoning behind the choices were analysed.

The participants felt this activity as a realistic situation of life. This simulation game aimed at making them think about resources.

The question was asked: “why poverty happens?” Some participants simply referred to bad luck, while others addressed the issue of inequality. Participants discussed the possibility to have equal income for everyone but not all agreed that this solution is fair. The discussion then moved to consumption and to today’s necessity to own always more and more things. The participants underlined how, especially in the school environment, this consumer aspect very often leads to exclusion (the right brand, the coolest technological equipment, etc.)

Evening

The team organised a pyjama party and games night. The evening was very enjoyable and allowed participants to get to know each other better in a very informal environment.
Day 4 - 28th May 2010

Morning

The day started with the “Young advocates” session facilitated by Jessie Seal, the representative of ESSA (English Secondary Students’ Association) together with one member of the preparatory team.

“Young advocates” is a project run by ESSA aiming at supporting students to speak out about education and other issues that affect them. The facilitators of the session introduced the participants to this project and shared their experience.

In its work ESSA has recognised that it is often only the most outspoken young people that get a chance to have their voices heard and to advocate on behalf of young people. They are therefore working with young people aged 16-25 who have a range of communication challenges - from learning difficulties to those with hearing impediments or who have been excluded from education. The “Young advocate” project provides additional support (such as sign language interpreters) and specialist training to enable these young people to gain the skills and confidence they need to get their voices heard. They are working with students on skills such as confidence in speaking, listening, body language, leadership.

They then provide the opportunities and support to become proactive role models and advocates for young people: this might mean standing for election as an ESSA council member, speaking at or attending national conferences, or delivering training sessions to their peers. Throughout these activities, the advocate would be supported on all levels by ESSA staff.

After being introduced to the idea of advocates the aim of the morning was to encourage participants to think about advocacy and what it is needed to be an advocate. Their task was to create their ‘prefect advocate’ in groups by discussing about what makes a good advocate and how you can train a young person to become one. In addition, another aim of the session was to make the participants aware of what they and their organisations can do to be more inclusive and involve more people in their activities.

The facilitators of the session concluded that ‘advocate’ is a stepping stone: being an advocate gives people a voice but also, most importantly, the confidence to speak for themselves in the future.

The feedback of the session was really positive. Participants thought about possible ways to be advocates in their national environment and also how they can improve the involvement of young people who are not in school but should be represented by school student unions anyway.

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ESSA is OBESSU’s member organisation from England (UK). It is a student-run organisation for students aged 11 to 19 years old. It aims at supporting young people's voice on issues which affect their lives. ESSA provides training, guidance and advice to support students and allow them to get actively involved in the decision-making processes. For more information: [http://www.studentvoice.co.uk/](http://www.studentvoice.co.uk/)

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The rest of the morning was dedicated to the visit to Council of Europe’s Palais de l’Europe. The participants received a presentation on the work of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers and they very much appreciated that the presentation was given in the Parliamentary Assembly plenary room.

Afternoon

The afternoon of the forth day was free, so the participants had a chance to take a walk in the city and to experience Strasbourg.

Evening

After the free afternoon in Strasbourg the whole group met for dinner in the city centre. The participants got the chance to enjoy some typical food from the region and afterwards those who wanted were invited to join an evening out.

Day 5 - 29th May 2010

Morning

The entire morning of the 5th day was aimed at providing the participants with the concrete tools they can use in their school student union’s work. The participants had the choice between two workshops:

- Human rights education & Intercultural learning
- Campaigning

**Human rights education & Intercultural learning**

The team decided to present the participants with the tools for human rights education and Intercultural learning by actually doing different activities with them in order to develop both their knowledge and skills on the topic and to straight away introduce concrete tools they can later on use in their work.

The group kicked off with playing a game of “Dominoes” where the dominoes are actually participants’ bodies. The aim is to raise awareness that in a group there are differences between individuals as well as things in common. One person in the group starts by thinking of two personal characteristics which they then announce to the group, such as: “On my left side I am a girl, on my right side I speak French”. Then someone else in the group who shares one of those characteristics is suppose to hold the first person’s right or left hand (according to the characteristic they have in common) and then add a characteristic of their own on their free side. For example: “On my right I am a girl, on my left I play the guitar” and so on. Dominoes is a good game for participants to feel closer to each other but

5 [http://www.eycz.coe.int/edupack/28.html](http://www.eycz.coe.int/edupack/28.html)
also to show that when we first meet people we often make judgements about them based on what we can see.

After “warming up” with Dominoes we proceeded with Cultionary, an activity dealing with images, stereotypes and prejudice. The goal of the activity was to explore participants’ stereotypes and prejudices about other people and to make them understand how these function.

*What is your first image of somebody from another country? How do you translate it into a drawing? If you like Pictionary you will love “Cultionary”*

The group was divided into two teams which had the task of guessing the word their fellow team members was drawing. The words were given by the facilitators and those were e.g. racism, refugee, a peasant, poverty etc. At the end of the game we put up all the pictures so that the different interpretations and images of the words could be compared and discussed.

During the discussion the group reflected on where we get our images from and which risks stereotypes include. They concluded that we all have stereotypes but it is important to realise that they are just assumptions we make that are not based on reality. Being aware of this is the best way to prevent prejudice that leads to discrimination.

Here we also had a debriefing on different terms and their meaning such as: "prejudice", "stereotypes", "ethnocentrism", "discrimination", "xenophobia", "intolerance", "racism", "multicultural society", "intercultural society".

At the end of the session the facilitators presented the participants with different tool kits they can use in their work on these topics. School Student Unions can organise various workshops dealing with human rights in general or a particular segment of human rights education just like we did for this study session. It may seem like providing human rights education is a big challenge that requires specific skills and great expertise on the topic. However, members of school student unions can facilitate different interactive workshops on human rights and thus be providers of human rights education through peer education and with the help of many different manuals and tool kits designed precisely for that. These useful tools contain various practical activities and methods for human rights education with young people together with detailed instructions, tips for facilitators and suggestions for follow-up.

One of the most used manuals of the kind is COMPASS - A manual on human rights education with young people, designed by the Council of Europe and available online at [www.coe.int/compass](http://www.coe.int/compass). Together with COMPASS there are many other tools available, such as: Education pack - Ideas, resources, methods and activities for informal intercultural learning with young people and adults ([www.eycb.coe.int/edupack](http://www.eycb.coe.int/edupack)), Domino - A manual for peer education as a means to fight racism, xenophobia and intolerance.
Many more training kits were produced within the Youth Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union. The training kits, for examples, are thematic publications easy-to-use written by experienced youth trainers: each kit addresses a different topic such as “Social inclusion” and “Intercultural learning”, “Training essentials”, etc. They are all available online at http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/T_kits.

Campaigning

The workshop about campaigning tried to answer the question: What needs to be taken into consideration when it comes to campaigning?

The educational advisor had prepared a presentation about campaigning including examples of successful and less successful campaigns organised by different organisations and institutions in the past. The reasons behind the success of campaigns were also explored and this gave the incipit to a very lively discussion among participants.

Various kind of campaigns were illustrated: in this way participants learned the difference between a “reactive” campaign, born to respond to an unpleasant event or to prevent a situation to worsen, and a “proactive” campaign aiming at improving a certain situation. Talking about the possible themes for a new campaign, the participants discussed about the need of doing a reality check to explore the real needs of society or a group (in our case, school students). It is, in fact, important that many people have the same concerns and the same wishes since campaigning is mainly about wide support.

Yet, not all issues are suitable to be addressed through a campaign: it is, therefore, fundamental to assess the real necessity of a campaign and the outcomes that this could generate and that are not reachable through other means.

Yet, representation is not the only issue to take into consideration when organising a campaign. Campaigning is not always simple: it can be a lot of fun but very often is rather hard, frustrating and unsuccessful. It is, therefore, important to assess if a campaign is really the right mean to take action in a particular situation, or if, instead, other means could be more effective.

In campaigning one important thing is to involve people, as many people as possible. A successful campaign attracts people and motivates them to get active. During the discussion about this point, participants understood that campaigning should maximise the people’s motivation, not their knowledge. For this reason, a campaign should not provide too much information, trying to teach a lesson. A campaign consists of persuading others not just that the
aim is right but that it is so right and so important that they must take some form of action, as well. Communication is, thus, essential: it is very important to have a clear and understandable message and to eliminate any possible confusion. The K.I.S.S. (Keep It Short and Simple) rule should be kept in mind since effective motivation needs simplicity in message and purpose.

Participants identified various strategies as, for examples, to communicate only one thing at a time and be clear using the language which is familiar to the target group; and to use a simple and unambiguous 'call to action' which requires no further explanation.

The workshop also introduced the basics of the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis very useful for the preparation phase of any campaign, also to identify potential allies. In addition, a simple but effective campaign management cycle was introduced: act, observe, decide. The cycle is fundamental to be able to evaluate and improve every campaign during the process of its implementation and is an essential mechanism to keep campaigns dynamic and alive.

**Afternoon**

The afternoon was devoted to a personal reflection of participants on their role as multipliers. They drafted personal action plans and shared ideas on how to continue working within their organisations and at national level with the topics addressed during the study session.

**Day 6 - 30th May 2010**

The last day was devoted to the drafting of guidelines. The participants divided in groups dealing with four different subtopics: education, activism, school student unions. The final guidelines are divided into two parts: the first part is an introduction to the topic and defines important terms such as social exclusion, discrimination and economical background; the second part illustrates the participants' demands for socially inclusive school and school student unions. Those guidelines are useful for the work of national school student unions when tackling the topic of social inclusion in schools.
Participants’ Evaluation

At the end of the study session, a questionnaire was distributed to the participants in order to assess and evaluate the quality of the study session as regards: practical organisation, programme and content and social programme.

Participants were asked to evaluate each activity of the study session choosing from “very good” to “very poor”. As one could notice from the results, the participants positively evaluated the event and were satisfied with most of the sessions.

Attached the statistical outcomes.
Evaluation statistics

Arrival day

Welcome evening

First day

Getting to know each other & Ice breaking games

OBESSU presentation
Second day

facts & figures

Intercultural evening

Defining

Presentation of the situation in participating countries
Take a step forward

Garden of social exclusion

Movie night
Third day

Visit to the European Court on Human Rights

Human rights presentation

American debate

money to spend
Pyjama Party & Games night

Fourth Day

Visit to the Palais de l'Europe

Free afternoon
Fifth day

- **My tools I Intercultural learning**
  - Series 1

- **My tools II Human Rights Education**
  - Series 1

- **My tools I & II Campaigning**
  - Series 1

- **My role as a multiplier presentation**
  - Series 1
Sixth day

Video message

Introduction to the Guidelines

Guidelines Analysis

Guidelines Education
## AGENDA STUDY SESSION

"Education: A Right, not a Privilege - Ways to achieve social inclusion in schools, regardless of economic background"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>24/05</th>
<th>25/05</th>
<th>26/05</th>
<th>27/05</th>
<th>28/05</th>
<th>29/05</th>
<th>30/05</th>
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<td>Getting to know each other</td>
<td>• Defining</td>
<td>• Human rights I</td>
<td>• Visit to the European Court on Human Rights</td>
<td>• My tools I</td>
<td>• Developing guidelines</td>
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<td>OBESSU &amp; CoE presentation</td>
<td>Study Session presentation</td>
<td>Expectations session</td>
<td>• Presentation of the situation in participating countries</td>
<td>• Human rights II</td>
<td>• Visit to the Palais de l’Europe</td>
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<td>Group Building</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>• Making a link to OBESSU</td>
<td>• Good practice examples from other organisations</td>
<td>• My role as a multiplier</td>
<td>• Presentation of the Guidelines</td>
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<td><strong>16:30</strong></td>
<td>Facts &amp; figures</td>
<td>Garden of social exclusion</td>
<td>“Young advocates” workshop</td>
<td>• Introduction to the Guidelines</td>
<td>• Joint Evaluation</td>
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<td><strong>19:00</strong></td>
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<td><strong>20:30</strong></td>
<td>Soiree de bienvenue</td>
<td>Intercultural Evening</td>
<td>Movie night</td>
<td>Pyjama party &amp; games night</td>
<td>Free Evening in Town</td>
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<td>Vamos de copas!</td>
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## Annex II: Participants

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<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Mr./Ms</th>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>ORGANISATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>JUGOVIC</td>
<td>DAMJAN</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>12.07.92</td>
<td>ASuBiH</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>SEPP</td>
<td>DANIEL</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>29.06.93</td>
<td>ESCU</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>SEAL</td>
<td>JESSIE</td>
<td>F</td>
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<td>Mr.</td>
<td>SODERMAN</td>
<td>VALTER</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>14.02.90</td>
<td>FSS</td>
<td>Finland</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ms</td>
<td>PALIN</td>
<td>PAULA MARIA</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>04.05.93</td>
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