

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH MINORITY YOUTH IN EUROPE



abridged version by
Vaida Jasiukaitytė

Evaluation and impact study of the LTTC
Participation and Citizenship on empowerment
of minority youth leaders (1997-2001)

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On the basis of the full study carried out by

Andy Furlong and Vaida Jasiukaitytė

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Preface

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WHERE DIFFERENCE MATTERS

The Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport has been active in empowering, training and developing ways to increase the participation of minority youth leaders for many years. It was, however, during the European youth campaign "all different-all equal", carried out in 1995, that actions in this sense became more explicit, consistent and determined.

This was at the origin of one of the most innovative and challenging training projects undertaken by the youth sector of the Council of Europe, the long-term training course "Participation and Citizenship", on empowerment of minority youth leaders in Europe. The course was held for five years from 1997 to 2001. An evaluation and impact study was conducted in 2002, the main results and findings of which are presented in this publication.

This is not an ordinary evaluation study. This is the first time that an evaluation and impact study has been carried out on the medium and long-term impact of a European youth training programme, involving both the participants and the organisations within which they have been active. This is also the first time that such a study has been conducted on minority youth leaders and issues affecting their participation, from the local to the European level.

The study has been conducted by external evaluators but with a high level of involvement and participation of those primarily concerned: the former participants, minority youth leaders and representatives, who have therefore been active subjects of the study. One hopes that this approach will be used in other such studies, ensuring benefit in educational and motivational terms for the subjects of the evaluation.

The study is also remarkable for the high level of the results and impact noticed as a result of the courses. The investment in quality non-formal education programmes is often challenged on the grounds of the difficulty of evaluating their impact on the work of the participants. The study does not dispel all the concerns about the use of impact evaluations in non-formal education, but it does confirm that it is possible to evaluate them, even at European level. As such, it should be a comfort to all those who believe that sustaining quality in non-formal education can be better achieved by bringing together the experience of the practitioners and the expertise of social researchers.

This study is also special in terms of the quality of the results it shows, results that in many cases went far beyond the courses' participants and projects and that keep having a lasting effect on participants, organisations, minority communities and young people. In particular, it provides evidence of the long-lasting impact of educational and training activities and warns against the temptation of quick short-term results. To be sustainable, results require time for

the changes to occur and be consolidated, to become visible and meaningful. The time required for this process is usually of greater value and benefit than the vain search for the immediate and "tangible" evidence of success.

But what gives real value to this study is the training course itself: the unique combination of experiences, backgrounds, minorities, languages, religions, projects, and the personal and professional aspirations of the participants. The most important assumption of the whole project, that minority young people across all over Europe have much more in common than that which is immediately visible, has also been the most important strength of the course. This combines the acceptance of being challenged with regard to one's own stereotypes and prejudices, the acceptance of difference and otherness as part of one's own identity, and the realisation that intercultural learning can only occur between the majority and minorities together.

The belief in the equality in dignity that results from a culture of human rights, the need to present and promote social cohesion, and the inclusion of cultural diversity all remain of capital importance. They will hopefully be pursued with equal success in the envisaged follow-up measures of the project, which include a new long-term training course focusing on Diversity and Cohesion. Indeed, as the study also shows, many of the challenges that the project addressed, notably racism and discrimination, social exclusion, isolation and segregation, remain a reality for too many young people in Europe, from majorities and minorities alike. This is where difference matters and where education can make a difference.

Mário Martins
Director of Youth and Sport
2002



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introduction



The youth sector of the Council of Europe has endeavoured over many years to develop activities and programmes aimed at fighting racism and discrimination and promoting intercultural relations among young people. Such has been the sense of the activities of the “all different – all equal” European youth campaign against racism and intolerance as well as many training and education projects, including the Long-Term Training Course “Participation and Citizenship”. For five years, the course aimed to contribute effectively to the empowerment of minority youth leaders from various minorities and organisations across Europe and thereby to increase the participation and access of many young people from minorities. The “Participation and Citizenship” course was the most concrete instrument of action of the Directorate of Youth and Sport in the service of minority rights and human rights at the local level. It responded to expressed needs related to situations of exclusion, isolation, discrimination and alienation of minority young people and young people at risk across the European continent.

This report is based on the results of the evaluation and impact study of the “Participation and Citizenship” course, run annually from 1997 to 2001. It is the condensed, abridged version of the full report¹ focusing on the main issues and findings of the evaluation study. The original study focuses firstly on *inputs*: in other words, it examines patterns of demand and the profile of participants. Secondly, the study focuses on the training *process* and on the participants’ evaluation of their experience. Thirdly, the report considers the course *outputs*: the extent to which gains had been made through LTTC participation at the levels of the individual, the organisation and the community and at the national and international levels. In this abridged version, emphasis is placed on the impact (benefits and gains) of the course on the participants and their organisations and less on the process of learning. Aspects such as evaluation of the design of the course and delivery of training are not dealt with in this version. This report was prepared drawing mostly on qualitative elements supported by the quantitative data provided by the study.

This report first provides a brief overview of the LTTC, and presents the evaluation process and variety of sources of information that were used to assess the impact of the course. To show patterns of demand and to uncover the selection effects we explore the profile of applicants and participants with respect to major dimensions such as needs and previous experience, gender, and minority background. Then, by developing a short-term perspective, we try to identify the gains made by individuals, as they were perceived immediately after the course. Here we explore the skills and knowledge they gained, how the participation in the course influenced their worldviews and the development of their personalities. This brings us to a more long-term perspective where we

¹ The full study can be downloaded (in English) from the Internet site of the Directorate of Youth and Sport (<http://www.coe.int/youth> or <http://www.eycb.coe.int>)



attempt to estimate the impact of the LTTC in the contexts of individual lives and how the skills and knowledge gained through the participation in the course were used in the careers and lives of the former participants. In the two following sections, selected aspects of the learning experience, namely intercultural learning and minority/majority dimensions, are discussed by attempting to reveal how they were present in the process of personal and professional development of the participants. Since the learning process was based on project development and implementation, which at the same time was seen as a tool to bring change to local realities, we attempt to explore the nature of the projects that were implemented within the framework of the LTTC and what impact they had on participants, their organisations and their broader communities. The report also considers the impact and sustainability of the co-operation and networks, since development of these was one of the main aims of the course. Finally, the impact of the LTTC on sending organisations and actors such as partner organisations and European minority organisations is discussed. The concluding chapter summarises and synthesizes the information from these diverse perspectives and sources in an attempt to develop an explanation for the uniqueness and success of the course. The report also considers the future challenges and prospects by including the recommendations for follow-up of the Consultative Meeting on Evaluation and Impact Study of the LTTC “Participation and citizenship” that was held at the end of the evaluation process at the European Youth Centre Budapest.

Background, framework and objectives of the LTTC "Participation and Citizenship"



Following the “Vienna Declaration” of the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe member states in 1993, a European Youth Campaign against racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance, known by its slogan “all different - all equal”, was organised in order to mobilise young people as protagonists for an open and tolerant society and against racism and intolerance. The campaign was run in 1995 across all member states of the Council of Europe, and part of its programme consisted of three training courses² for minority youth leaders. These courses were organised with the aim of facilitating the involvement of minorities in the design and implementation of the campaign and, in the medium term, in the Council of Europe’s youth structures and activities. The success of the courses, and the need to follow them up on a consistent and sustainable basis, led the Committee of Ministers to call for the organisation of training courses for representatives of minorities and for the opening up the relevant Council of Europe structures to all representatives of civil society³. This decision was based a), on the success already achieved in this field, especially in projects undertaken and networks created by the courses for minority youth leaders organised within the framework of the campaign; b), on the opportunity of using European-level activities to initiate and promote changes of approach; and c), on concerns at national and local level in the context of minority rights and equal opportunities. The need for the course was also based on the following challenges concerning minority youth at that time:

- a very low level of participation of minority youth in the activities of the European Youth Centre and European Youth Foundation;
- the almost non-existence of European or international networks or organisations of minority young people, especially ethnic minorities, which made it difficult to increase participation of and consultation with minority young people;
- the poor or insufficient provision for the needs or interests of minority youth, resulting from the above;
- the need to involve minority youth organisations in the follow-up of the campaign “all different – all equal”, since the targets of acts of intolerance and racism are often minorities.

² The courses were: "Situation and perspectives of young people of immigrant or refugee background in Europe", "Situation and perspectives of young Roma and Travellers in Europe" and "Situation and perspectives of minority youth in Europe".

³ Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe Declaration on the follow-up to the European Youth Campaign Against Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Intolerance adopted on 3 May 1996, at its 98th Session



The Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe therefore proposed this training course as a means of deepening the networks and contacts with new partners established during the European Youth Campaign, and in order to contribute further to the empowerment of minority youth in Europe. The “Participation and Citizenship” course became the most concrete instrument of action of the Directorate of Youth and Sport, in the service of minority rights, minority youth participation, intercultural learning and human rights⁴.

According to the course presentation, the long-term training course “Participation and Citizenship”, which was run annually from 1997 to 2001, was aimed at *“Training and empowering minority youth leaders to develop local projects and associative strategies based on participation, intercultural education and human rights from a European perspective”*.



TO MEET THIS GENERAL AIM, THE COURSE HAD A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES. THESE WERE:

- to support/promote minority youth participation from the local to the European level;
- to reflect on the manifestations and relevance of issues such as identity, nationalism, Europe, discrimination, social exclusion and majority/minority relations and their relevance to youth projects;
- to initiate innovative local youth projects on participation and citizenship;
- to develop practical approaches and methods for translating solidarity, empathy, citizenship and human rights education into youth work practice;
- to enable participants to prepare, run and evaluate a project;
- to develop participants’ skills in the areas of human rights education, leadership and programme development, project management and intercultural learning;
- to provide information about European institutions, structures and programmes relevant to youth, minorities and human rights issues;
- to motivate and enable participants to share their acquired knowledge and experience and to act as multipliers;
- to gather contributions for the development of the Council of Europe youth policy regarding minority youth and human rights education.

The option for a long-term training course based on projects was determined by the outcome of the evaluation of the three courses for minority youth leaders held during the campaign, namely the need to support the minority youth leaders in introducing change at their local or national level while developing their own skills and competences.

⁴ For more information on the history of the course, see the report of the first LTTC for Participation and Citizenship of Minority Youth in Europe (1997): “Participation and Citizenship: training for minority youth projects in Europe”, Council of Europe, 1998.



The course was designed to allow the self-definition of minority status, i.e. the applicants themselves defined whether they belonged to a specific minority or non-minority. Although priority was given to minority youth leaders and youth workers, on each course there was an implicit quota of 20% for non-minority participants working with minority young people and organisations. This was meant, on the one hand, to acknowledge the important role of non-minority youth leaders and youth workers in promoting minority youth participation and, on the other hand, to facilitate the intercultural and group learning process in which the interaction between minorities and majorities was to play an important role. To be eligible, applicants also had to be willing and able to attend all phases of the course, be aged between 18 and 35 years old, be able to work in English, French or Russian and be supported by their organisations. Moreover, the applicants' project ideas were assessed together with the other application criteria, especially regarding their feasibility and their potential value as a learning tool. All projects had to:

- aim to empower young people from minority groups and attempt to remove barriers to their participation;
- be concrete and relevant, reflecting the situations and challenges faced by the minorities that they were addressing;
- be based on an intercultural approach;
- have clear aims and objectives;
- be run by and for young people;
- be carried out within the framework of an organisation or association;
- be started during the course.

Successful applicants were provided with board and lodging for the duration of the course and had their travel costs reimbursed. However, they had to pay an enrolment fee of 54 Euros per seminar. Some of those who were obliged to take unpaid leave in order to participate were eligible for financial compensation.

The course was designed as an open learning process based on experience and exchange. The multicultural group of participants itself was seen as a forum for intercultural learning and a framework for personal development. The course programme and contents were organised so as to allow for the maximum involvement of the group while valuing every single participant using active participatory methods. The learning process heavily relied on the practical experience provided by the project work. The participant's project was seen as both a tool for learning and also as a concrete initiative that was expected to contribute to improving the participation opportunities of minority young people at local level.

A team of five or six trainers organised the learning process and provided guidance for the development and evaluation of the project work. Four of them were from minority backgrounds and experienced in working with minority young people themselves. In this way, it was easier for them to empathise with participants and to understand the kind of challenges and realities that they were confronted with. In the later years, the team also included a trainer who

had been a participant in a previous year. Such provision helped to ensure that the programme was designed taking the participants as the starting point, and it helped to establish links between different courses. It also contributed to the training of new minority trainers at an international level.

Each year, the course began in the spring with a thirteen-day introductory seminar on training and project development at the European Youth Centre in Budapest. The aim of this introduction was to explore the key issues and institutional framework of the course and to develop the projects with the assistance of the trainers and the other participants. The seminar also aimed to provide basic information on European youth work and explore the concepts of participation and citizenship. A further aim was that participants should enhance their project planning and management skills and develop an understanding and skills of working with intercultural learning, identity, culture and human rights.

Following the introductory seminar, the participants returned to their own countries and spent the following eight months implementing their projects. Although this phase was largely characterised by independent work, they had the opportunity to be visited by one of the trainers to provide support and advice. Such visits were always available at the request of the trainee. They also had ongoing access to support from the other course participants.

The final phase of the course was an evaluation seminar held at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg that lasted for ten days. Its main aims were to evaluate the projects and the progress accomplished in the course and to review the key educational approaches. The seminar also aimed to complete the skills training and to further develop networks amongst participants and their organisations.



The scope of this study and research methods used



When deciding to hold the LTTC, the statutory bodies of the Council of Europe Directorate of Youth and Sport also decided to undertake a thorough evaluation of its results and impact. Considering that this was the first evaluation study specifically looking at the medium-term impact of a training programme in the experience of the Directorate of Youth and Sport, it was important that the process of the study would fully respect the course's educational principles of intercultural learning, participation and transparency.

Accordingly, the evaluation and impact study was designed to reflect these principles and concerns. External experts were recruited to carry out the study and to ensure the competence and objectivity of the evaluation. A Monitoring Group was formed out of previous participants and the trainers and strategic partners of the course. The role of this group was to inform and support the work of the researchers and to represent the diversity and different partners of the course. The first meeting of the Monitoring Group took place in September 2001 and was followed by postal questionnaire surveys addressed to different interested parties. A seminar organised in Leicester in Summer 2002 brought together former participants, trainers and evaluators. The seminar aimed to collect additional information for the evaluation of the course and provide participants with the opportunity to discuss the study with researchers.

Following the final meeting of the Monitoring Group in October 2002, where the preliminary report was presented and discussed, a Consultative Meeting was held with representatives of minority and youth organisations, and former participants and trainers of the LTTC. This meeting was designed to effectively complete the process of the evaluation, by reviewing the results of the study and analysing the existing needs of minority young people and minority youth leaders and formulating policy recommendations and proposals for the follow-up of the course.

This evaluation therefore has a number of distinct but complementary strands. In sum, it is based on:

- the analysis of all application forms submitted over the five years of the LTTC (878) to assess patterns of demand;
- the analysis of the final evaluation questionnaires, completed by 75% of participants who attended the evaluation seminar;
- the results of postal questionnaires that were sent to 135 participants; seventy questionnaires were returned, providing an achieved response rate of 65%;
- the results of postal questionnaires that were sent to the organisations from which participants were sent (a total of 135), resulting in a response rate of 33% (38);



- the results of postal questionnaires that were sent out to 246 partner organisations of the Directorate of Youth and Sport, to which 21 responded; although the response rate was weak (8%), some preliminary conclusions could be drawn from these sources;
- the results of postal questionnaires that were sent to 12 European Minority organisations or networks of which 9 responded (75%); some of these organisations were also requested during the Consultative meeting to reflect on the impact of the LTTC on their organisations;
- in-depth interviews with thirteen former participants and six focus groups conducted at the LTTC evaluation seminar, in Leicester 2002.

Additionally, trainers who worked on the LTTC courses were asked to reflect upon specific dimensions of the course. Although the contributions of the trainers are not directly considered and analysed in the text that follows, they helped the evaluators to perceive better the aims that existed behind the design of the course and certain choices that were made that would otherwise have been difficult to trace, thereby providing additional perspectives on interpreting the data. Taken together, these methods provide the means through which a robust evaluation can be made.

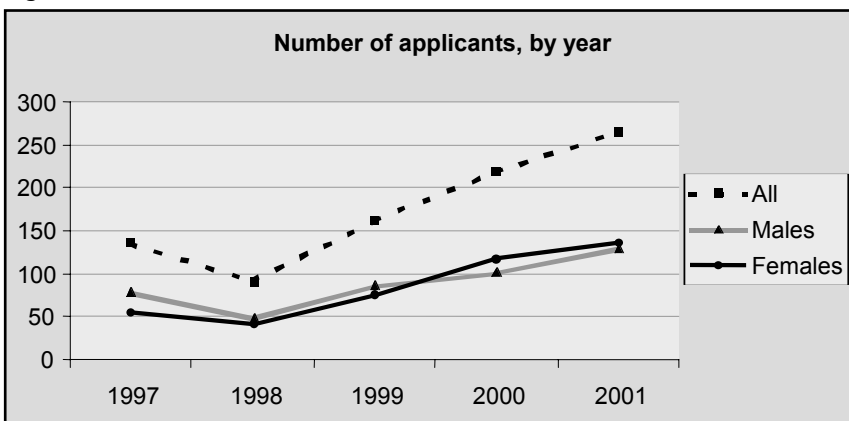
Reaching minority youth leaders across Europe: patterns of applications and demand for the course



The interest in the course and the demand for places was extremely buoyant every year. The course attracted growing numbers of quality applicants from a wide variety of minority and majority backgrounds from across Europe and beyond. The number of places available annually was clearly insufficient to meet the high level of demand for the training of future leaders working with and for minority groups. In terms of the backgrounds of participants, the course was successful in recruiting a very diverse group of people representing a rich mix of minority groups from many different countries. Members of minorities consistently formed the large majority of participants with most of these being drawn from ethnic minorities. The participants recruited onto the course corresponded well to the ideal profile in terms of meeting the overall aims and priorities of the LTTC, with regard to their socio-professional profile, experience and motivation.

During the five years of the course, all together 878 applications were received. It is clear that aside from a downturn in the number of applications in 1998, demand grew considerably. The number of applications received in 2001 (267) was almost double that recorded for 1997 (137). With applications having increased, the chances of applicants being offered a place on the course declined slightly over time as a result of increased competition for places. In 1997 21% of applicants were offered places, increasing to 30% in 1998 as a result of a downturn in applications in that year. By 1999 rates of acceptance had returned to 19% but then declined to 15% in the two subsequent years. In total 159 applicants (18%) were offered a place on the course during the five years.

Figure 1



These trends can be seen as indicative of the success of the course and of effective publicity and information about it. Considering application flows over the years, it is important to bear in mind that these are largely conditioned by the targeting strategy applied by the organisers to advertise the course. Initially there were very few European channels or umbrella organisations to reach the target group of the course directly (which was also one of the reasons why the course was initiated). Therefore, the course built on the experiences and contacts developed during the “all different - all equal” youth campaign. As result, at least in the first two years of the course, there was a direct targeting of specific minority organisations, starting with those that had been active in the campaign. From 1999 onwards there was less selective targeting because, on the one hand, the information was easily available and perhaps reachable over the Internet and, on the other hand, by then new partners had been reached and the course could start counting on the former participants and their organisations to relay the information.

Considering especially the long-term character of the course and the high level of involvement and input expected from participants in each phase, it is clear that the selection resulted in the acceptance of committed and motivated trainees. Of those who were *accepted on the course* (159), 141 (89%) *participated* in both the first and second phase (introductory seminar and project phase)⁵. 103 participants attended the evaluation seminar of the course.

Data collected from ex-participants suggests that one of the reasons for non-attendance of the evaluation seminar could be related to visa issue problems. Changes in career and life or other commitments were also clearly factors for non-attendance. For example, the LTTC's 1997 cohort provided such reasons as the possibility of not receiving unemployment benefit, having to attend university exams or being conscripted⁶. Another argument suggested by qualitative interviews with participants was related to the failure of participants to implement their projects during the second stage of the course, which could have resulted in their decision not to attend the evaluation phase.



APPLICANTS' NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

In their application forms participants indicated multiple needs for training. A large number of participants identified their need to develop their skills in project management (36%) and specifically fundraising (15%).

⁵ 'Applicants' are all individuals who filled out and submitted their application form and were considered by organisers during the selection process. 'Accepted on the course' are those applicants who were selected by organisers and consequently were invited to take part in the course. 'Participants' are those individuals who were invited by organisers to take part in the course (i.e. 'accepted') and who accepted this invitation by participating at least in the first and the second phase of the course. It is obvious that 'participants' and 'accepted on the course' are principally the same group of people. However, the distinction is important with respect to the methodological choice to work with the 'accepted on the course' rather than 'participants' in comparing the application patterns and outcomes of the selection process. This category is more suitable for revealing the proportional differences or re-distributions that resulted from the selection process and so to uncover the selection effects.

⁶ See publication "Participation and Citizenship: training for minority youth projects in Europe", Council of Europe, 1998.



Table 1

Needs of participants as indicated in their application forms	%
European experiences in relevant fields	38
Project management	36
New methods to work with minority youth	23
Human and minority rights	17
Fundraising	15
Leadership and team work	11
Contacts and networking	7
Working with governmental authorities/NGO development	4

Note: the total of percentages exceeds 100 as applicants could provide multiple needs

Over a third of the participants wanted to learn and exchange information about work and experiences of European institutions and other organisations. About a fifth expressed their interest in learning about existing human and minority issues and rights, while slightly more participants wanted to learn new methods and practical skills of working with minority youth and some specifically wanted to develop their skills in leadership and teamwork. Lower numbers of participants were interested in developing new partnerships, contacts or networks, while some participants indicated the need to learn about ways of co-operating with governmental or local authorities or developing their knowledge about NGO building.

During the interviews and focus groups, similar issues emerged. However, it should be remembered that the interview material represents a different kind of data, as the interviews were conducted after the participation in the LTTC. Accordingly, participants naturally placed relatively more emphasis on benefits of a personal nature like enhancing language skills, motivation, recognition, etc., which had received less emphasis among their needs during the application process. Besides, it became obvious that also other ‘needs’, for example networking and contact-making, received more emphasis than could be expected after analysing the initial needs indicated in the application forms. Many participants spoke about the way the LTTC helped them to understand their weaknesses and to see further directions of development. In this respect it is obvious that one of the major benefits of the LTTC was the re-definition of the initial set of needs for many participants.

‘When I applied I hoped to get to know what I need to change the world around me! I did not know my needs. During the LTTC I understood what kind of needs I have concerning the methodology, special approach to youth and minorities.’

‘I did not think then that the project work would be important to me, but I was interested in intercultural learning.’

There were numerous references to the establishing of international co-operation and networks. It is interesting that in their initial application forms participants did not often highlight this need. It can be seen as one of the needs



they rationalised and articulated during and after the course, as obviously international contacts and work was one of the most clearly perceived benefits of the LTTC.

'I wanted to be part of a youth network in Europe with all these different backgrounds, nationalities, countries.'

'I wanted to run an international project. Not only to make national projects! And it was necessary to go for that course to satisfy my need to work in a network.'

'I expected co-operation and partnership with the countries from the other side of Europe. I expected the LTTC to support this kind of initiatives of making a network that would empower our activities by enabling the sharing of experience we have as minorities.'

Participants were also interested in information about the work of European institutions as well as in the exchange of information and experience with other organisations that work in the field of minority issues.

'I wanted to receive international information, to see everything myself without any influences on your opinion! To see the European Court of Human Rights, other European institutions and take it as alternative information back home.'

'I expected to learn experiences of others, especially of those working with minorities.'

Participants spoke about their initial interest in intercultural learning. Many indicated their interest in meeting people from different cultures and countries. It was obvious that, for some of the participants, their needs reflected not only the thirst for this kind of European knowledge and experience of diversity, but also very much the issues of their identity and vision-building, such as the opportunity to 'choose to be European or not'.

Some participants turned to the LTTC as the way to become empowered themselves outside their traditional contexts. They made references to oppressive cultural patterns and traditions in their communities and countries, and saw the LTTC as a chance to become empowered to change this reality.

'The reason was due to the level of discrimination at the level of gender and age in my culture. No one would believe me that I could do something without an adult. I wanted to get enough knowledge so I could prove I can do it.'

There were numerous references to developing project management skills and working methods. Many pointed out that they had no any experience in project management work at all. More experienced participants listed specific topics they were interested in.



'I worked as a volunteer in a youth organisation and I needed to build my capacity on how to run, implement and evaluate the project. And all this was in the LTTC and this is why I applied.'

In questionnaires sent out to ex-participants, respondents were asked how likely it would be that they would have applied for the LTTC if a number of changes had been made to the levels of financial support and to the length of the course. The majority of former participants said that it was unlikely that they would have applied if they had had to pay their own travel expenses or their own accommodation and subsistence. Just over half said that they would have applied if the course had extended over two years. A quarter of ex-participants said that they had considered applying for other courses, although only a few had ever come across a course that met similar needs to the LTTC. Of those who had identified similar courses, ex-participants tended to apply to the LTTC as it met their needs more closely or because of the perceived strength of the programme.

In qualitative interviews and focus groups many participants considered the LTTC to be an exceptional course. They emphasised the diversity and long-term design of the course.

'I never found the equivalent for the course. I never saw something like that – the structure, content - ever again. And that specific relationship with participants! I do not think that my needs could be met better by any other course.'

'What makes the LTTC special? It is this network of people. This possibility to learn about the situation in other countries, intercultural work, as well as communication, opportunity to work together, to meet, to learn and to share with each other ... This makes the LTTC special!'

Participants often made references to their local or national contexts and emphasised that there are no other courses that would follow an approach similar to the LTTC's. However, several participants mentioned their attempts or ideas for developing courses of a similar design in their countries.



GENDER AND AGE PATTERNS

The difference between applications by males and females in 1997 was significant, with 59 percent of applicants being male and 41 percent female. However, over the course of the five years, the level of applications became similar for males and females (figure 1). The applicants offered a place on the course reflect a similar distribution: 51 percent of accepted applicants were males and 49 percent were females.

The age of the applicants ranged from 15 to 64 with the vast majority of them (96%) falling into the 18-35 age group. With the age profile of applicants falling



slightly between 1997 and 2001, it is clear that the course appealed to increasing numbers of younger people. The majority of selected applicants (98%) were between 18 and 35 years old. This is not surprising, since the eligibility criteria specified the age of prospective participants to be between 18 and 35.

The average age of applicants offered a place on the course was 26.1 years, compared with the average age of all applicants, which was 25.5. The tendency to select senior applicants could be related to their possession of qualities such as previous work or training experience, since the course was in principle addressed to youth workers or youth leaders already active in the field.



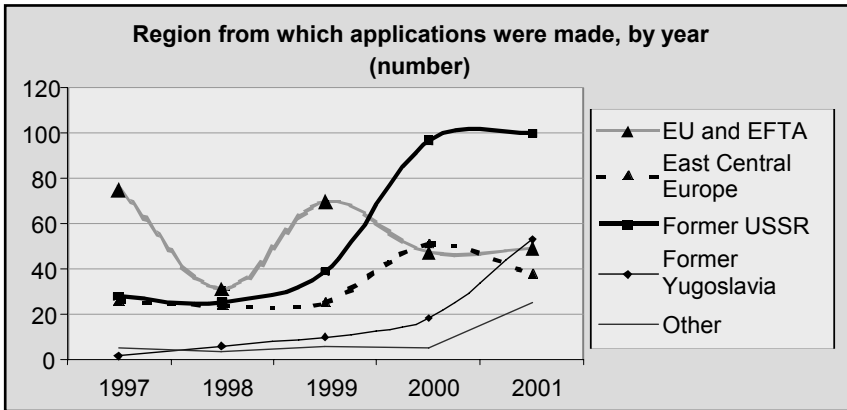
ANALYSIS OF APPLICATIONS ACCORDING TO COUNTRIES AND REGIONS

Applications were made from a total of 53 countries. Accepted applicants represented 38 different countries. Figure 2 shows the number of applicants from each region in each of the years⁷. Here it is clear that the number of applicants from the former USSR republics and the former Yugoslavia increased steadily. The number of applications from the EU and EFTA countries and Eastern and Central Europe were more uneven. EU and EFTA countries are characterised by peaks in the first and third years of the course. The countries of the former USSR and East Central Europe experienced a peak in the fourth year of the course and, finally, former Yugoslav countries and other countries reached their peak in the last year of the course.

⁷ For the purpose of the study, the countries were grouped into five regions. While acknowledging the space for controversy and the limitations of such a grouping, it is important to emphasise that it was developed and used as an instrument for discovering and discussing certain trends. This would have been difficult from an analysis of the individual countries because of the relatively low numbers of applicants and participants. The grouping of countries is as follows: EU and EFTA covers all of the current 15 members of the European Union, plus EFTA countries; Eastern and Central Europe covers all of the former communist countries, except the former USSR and the former People's Republic of Yugoslavia; Former USSR includes Russia and all of the countries formerly incorporated in the USSR, including the Baltic States; Former Yugoslavia covers all of the countries formerly part of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia; Others refers to countries that do not fit in any of the above categories, notably Turkey, Cyprus and non-European countries. The logic behind this grouping, on the one hand, takes into account the specific treatment of nationality issues in the framework of communist ideology and appropriate policy implications. The collapse of the communist bloc, especially where the breakdown of federal states resulted in a complex social structure, is also seen as an important basis for such a grouping. On the other hand, this typology also takes into account the bloc of Western European democracies and the history of economic and political integration it represents.



Figure 2



Although these peaks and declines are created by increased flows of applications from the majority of countries in each region, the patterns of application are irregular among the individual countries.

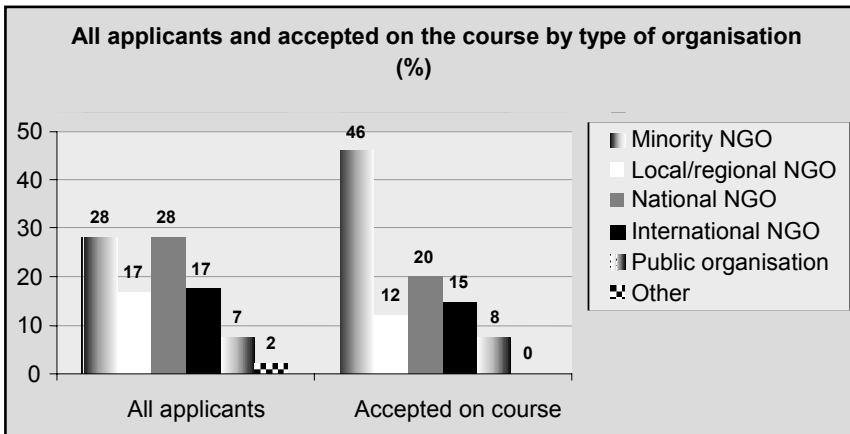
The exceptionally high level of applications in the first year of the course from EU and EFTA countries can largely be explained by the promotional strategy of the course applied specifically in that year and by the influence of the contacts developed during the “all different – all equal” youth campaign. Considering the relatively recent entrance of most of the former communist countries to the international fora, the gradual emergence of the civil sector as well as the “freshness” of minority work, especially where the breakdown of federal countries resulted in a complex social structure of newly emerging states, it is not surprising that they were underrepresented in the first year. It could be assumed that the needs for training and learning in the expanding civil society sector in the former communist countries, as well as the interest of these new actors in establishing international co-operation, was one of the reasons for the development of such a rapidly growing application pattern. It is also very likely that this pattern of applications from the former communist countries was encouraged by the availability of course information in Russian and the provision of Russian language translators from 1998 onwards.



PROFILE OF SENDING ORGANISATIONS

The majority of applications were made from various non-governmental organisations, and only 7% of applicants were related to local, regional or national public organisations or authorities⁸. Almost half of the applicants offered a place on the course (46%) worked in minority or minority rights associations, while this group constituted a much lower proportion among all applicants (28%). This is clearly related to the fact that the development of minority organisations was one of the main aims of the course.

Figure 3



Initially, the course received a high level of interest among minority organisations and almost half of all applicants were associated with these organisations in 1997. The subsequent years were followed by a drop in the number of applicants from minority organisations, while applications from other organisations, especially international, national and local/regional grew steadily in numbers. Although applications from minority organisations started to grow in number again during the last years of the course, proportionally they were outstripped by applications made from other types of organisations. In EU and EFTA countries the applications for the LTTC were more or less equally distributed among all these types of organisations: similar proportions of applications were made with national organisations slightly dominating the field (25% of applications). However, the application flow from the former USSR was dominated by the national and regional/local organisations. For example, in 2001, 65% of applications from these

⁸ The application form asked participants to identify the type of their sending organisation. Based on this information, five types of organisations are dealt with in this text. A minority non-governmental organisation (NGO) is an organisation representing or dealing with one or several minority community issues, whether specifically youth or not, including local, national and European minority organisations. The other types are not specifically minority organisations and are as follows: a local or regional NGO is a local or regional organisation addressing a general public or target group; a national NGO is the same as above but at the national level, including national youth councils; an international NGO most of the time is an international youth organisation; a public organisation most of the time is a public youth service or institution (such as a youth information centre or a training centre for teachers, sometimes a local or national authority).



countries were related to these types of organisations, whereas specifically minority organisations accounted for 15% of applications. In Eastern and Central Europe, it was the national and minority organisations that dominated the application flow. For example, more than one third (34%) of applications in 2001 were made from minority organisations and 29% from national NGOs. The sudden growth of applications from countries of the former Yugoslavia in 2001 was characterised by the interest of minority organisations in the course: about one third of applications were made from minority organisations in comparison with the previous years' dominant sector of international organisations. Altogether, it can be observed that minority organisations gradually lost their "dominant" role in the application flow as a result of the growth of applications from other types of organisations (in other words, the number of applications from minority organisations also increased over time but more slowly). While the data available is not sufficient to explain the broader reasons behind the increasing interest of non-minority organisations in the course, it could be seen as indicative of the increasing sensitivity and concern about minority-related issues among these organisations.

The LTTC reached growing numbers of different organisations each year: altogether 878 applications were received from 670 organisations. However, most of these contacts have not developed into the co-operation of a "long-term" character with organisers: organisations from Eastern and Central Europe showed more sustained interest in the course compared with the countries of the former USSR and the EU and EFTA region. 12% of organisations (cf.: 7% in EU and EFTA and in the former USSR) sent their applicants more than once during 5 years of the course; the vast majority of these organisations nominated their applicants 2 times. From this overview, it is clear that the LTTC successfully managed to reach the growing numbers of different organisations across all the regions, while the development of what was termed the "long-term link" with the course and multiple applications from the same organisation in a year could be related to such factors as the existing needs for human resource development within the sending organisation itself.

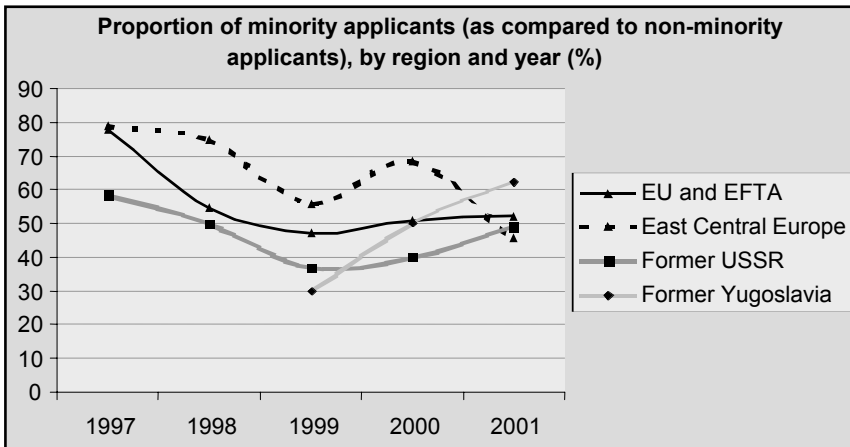


MINORITY STATUS AND BACKGROUND

In terms of the backgrounds of participants, the course was successful in recruiting a very diverse group of people representing a rich mix of minority groups from many different countries. Members of minorities have consistently formed the large majority of participants with most of these being drawn from ethnic minorities.

In the first two years of the course, the majority of applicants were from members of minority groups⁹ (72% in 1997 and 64% in 1998). However, the proportion of non-minority applicants increased over time and remained at around the 50% mark from 1999 to 2001. Similar trends in the proportion of minority applicants can be observed across the different regions, with the exception of former Yugoslavia. Eastern and Central Europe sustained a higher level of minority applicants over the years, although this proportion dropped to the level of EU and EFTA and the former USSR in the last year of the course (figure 4).

Figure 4



The selection process was designed to ensure the formation of course groups that would proportionally contain 80% of applicants from minority backgrounds and 20% of applicants from a majority background. While 26% of minority applicants were offered a place on the course, only 9% of non-minority applicants were offered this opportunity as result of this quota.

⁹ It is important to emphasise that the design of the course respected the applicants' choice by providing a framework for self-definition of minority status and especially background. In this way, at least formally, the influence of any imposed definition of minority status was eliminated, so providing open access to the course for diverse groups of applicants while respecting their identities. Based on information provided by applicants in their application forms the applicants were grouped either as having minority status (those applicants who defined themselves as belonging to minority) or as having a non-minority status (those applicants who defined themselves as not having minority status). In this sense, those having minority status represented the majority dimension of the course.



Of minority applicants¹⁰, the majority in each year were ethnic minorities and, although this group of applicants remained at a similar level of about 88% of all applicants between 1997 and 2000, it declined to 64% in 2001. However, the direction of this decline cannot be explained in more detail, since the numbers of social minorities and religious minorities remained at their previously low level while, instead, the proportion of applicants who chose not to specify their minority status increased.

Among applicants accepted on the course from a minority background, 70% belonged to ethnic minorities. The proportion of social minorities also slightly increased (compared with the proportion of all applicants with this background) and made up 6%. Among accepted applicants only 2% came from a religious minority background. The accepted applicants who did not specify their minority background accounted for 22%.

However, considering that both the minority status and background were self-defined by applicants, several points about the problematic interpretation of this data should be made. First of all, it is possible that one individual could represent multiple minority backgrounds, which are hidden under their primary self-definition. Secondly, it is also very likely that applicants with relatively similar backgrounds would identify themselves as from different minority backgrounds, depending on different social contexts across the countries and even within the same country. In particular, the latter self-definition overlap could be expected between the ethnic and religious minorities (this becomes obvious looking at individual cases across the data). Therefore, the distribution of applicants or participants by minority background developed in the framework of this text should be seen as a simplified representation of a very complex issue; but at the same time, it should be seen as presenting certain interesting trends and especially as indicative of primary identity definitions among the applicants.



APPLICANTS' PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

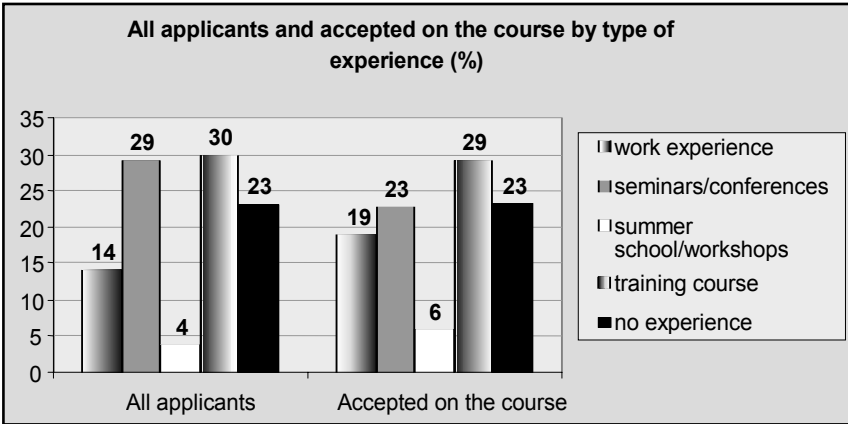
On average, 77% of applicants had some previous relevant training or work experience. This fluctuated from year to year and was particularly high in 2001 when nine out of ten applicants had previous training or work experience. In this respect it can be argued that the number of qualified applicants increased

¹⁰ Applicants who defined themselves as from a minority were asked to specify their minority background. (Details from 1999 are unavailable, as applicants in that year were not asked for details of their minority status). Based on these self-definitions the four types were developed. Young people from refugee or immigrant background (first, second or third generation), national minorities (territorial), Roma, etc. were considered as ethnic minorities. Since applicants identified only their ethnic background, information provided tends not to be strong enough to make further distinctions of this large category (67% of all minority applicants). For example, an accurate separation between members of national minorities and immigrants is impossible. The category of social minorities includes disabled and sexual minorities. Applicants who indicated their belonging to these types of minorities were very few and so they were grouped together. Out of 17 applicants, 7 defined themselves in relation to disability and 10 as from a sexual minority. Religious minorities are young people that defined themselves as from a minority in relation to their religious background. Finally, under the category unspecified are applicants who identified their minority status, but decided not to specify the background.



between 1997 and 2001. There was a small difference in the level of training between minority and non-minority groups with non-minority applicants being slightly more likely to report previous training or work experience (overall around 25% of minority applicants had no previous training or work experience compared to 20% of non-minority applicants).

Figure 5



The selection process resulted in a higher proportion of individuals with previous work experience being invited to take part in the course. It can be assumed that this standard was determined by the need to have participants with a minimum of practical experience upon which the training could be based; at the same time this increased the possibility of a greater impact of the course (through the course itself and through the participants' role as multipliers).

The change within:

the short-term effect of the course on participants' competences

In this section of the report we explore the impact of the LTTC as it was perceived from a short-term perspective, i.e. immediately after the course. Here, by looking at personal and professional changes in participants, we try to identify to what extent the participation in the course enhanced their motivation and commitment towards their role as multipliers and towards a more sustained process of personal and professional development. Analysis of final evaluation forms provides strong evidence that the LTTC boosted the personal and professional competence of participants, equipped them with the knowledge and practical skills and tools of how to work and how to initiate their further development and change in their environment. Many of them left the course with ideas and practical plans about their future projects and activities. The LTTC increased their self-confidence and commitment to continue and develop the work they do, and to multiply the knowledge they gained. It also helped them to realise their responsibilities and opportunities. Participants developed their own attitudes and social skills, such as an increase in tolerance and respect for differences, and an ability to enjoy diversity, and a sensitivity towards and consideration of others' interests and needs.



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS PARTICIPATION

In personal terms, the participants emphasised new ways of thinking and 'expanding horizons', a feeling of being less isolated and better integrated in Europe, growth in self-confidence, motivation and acknowledgement of responsibility. Many emphasised the new qualities they had developed or managed to see in themselves during the course and stressed the importance of the self-expression that was provided by this opportunity for open exchange, mutual respect and understanding. In this regard, there was a strong feeling of personal empowerment among the participants and of a desire to act and to transfer their personal advantages to improve their organisations and communities.

'In emotional terms I gained greater distance and objectivity with regard to my anger, discontent. I am less touchy. I have a feeling of being less isolated and that the issues to which I am firmly committed may be shared understood and defended. I feel of being symbolically recognised and considered, heard and listened to.'

'The participation in the course provided me with more opportunities for self-expression and I became braver in my opinions and more open for co-operation.'



Participants were asked to reflect on where they felt the major change in themselves and in their perceptions had occurred as a result of their participation. The major changes were associated with new knowledge on issues of participation and human rights (39%) or minority issues (30%). Equally large proportions of participants felt they were empowered to put their own views forward (33%) or were motivated to participate more actively (33%). 25% observed that they became more respected as a result of their participation and most probably of the project they had implemented within the framework of the LTTC.

Participants emphasised the new issues and problems that they had started to consider or perceive differently as a result of their participation in the course, especially those issues the course programme had targeted, such as participation and citizenship, social exclusion, minority/majority relations, etc.

'I gained the sense of understanding of other minorities. Not only national minorities, but also other kind of minorities (immigrants, those with different sexual orientation, those with special needs) that I earlier did not have any relation to.'

'I understood how important is youth work in addressing the youth social exclusion in multicultural environment in Europe. I am more attentive to people around me and understood the importance of tolerance and breaking down the stereotypes.'

'I understood that youth in my community should be activated more by different programmes and activities. I gained self-confidence to act actively for youth independence and against any kinds of exclusion.'

'I became more sensitive to any form of discrimination and now I feel I can recognise it in the forms which before were hidden for me to see them.'

Participants often made references to the favourable and enriching environment of the course that significantly supported the process of their development, especially those opportunities provided by a diverse group of people who were open to sharing and learning.

'I realised how much we can learn from each other and how easy it is to love some people that are coming from different parts of Europe and the world.'

'I have challenged my own prejudices and I enjoyed multicultural environment, learning from others. I felt strong emotional support here and in that open environment we explored our feelings, problems we face and opportunities and responsibilities we have. It raised my self-esteem.'

Participation in the course boosted their self-confidence and motivation: many of them emphasised that after the course they not only felt more recognised in

the contexts of their work, but also shared the desire and ambition to assume responsibilities, expressing reliance on themselves to undertake new initiatives.

'I feel more confident in introducing new points of view and methods. I feel more prepared to introduce the change in my organisation and community. I feel confident to take a role as multiplier.'

This growth in self-confidence was accompanied by a strengthening of feeling of responsibility. Many participants emphasised that the course had helped them to understand their role and the responsibility that they had to assume to contribute to combating social exclusion and discrimination and promoting human rights.

'I feel more motivated and enriched. I learnt how to understand and analyse, discuss, and find the solutions. Above all I feel I am more professional than before. I believe that I have to/must be more interested, more concentrated, more active and responsible in my life. I feel more responsibility to my community and organisation.'

'I realised how important activist work is and how important it is to participate. I am more confident that I am on the right direction and that I can support my community with what I learnt here. I learnt that we all should gather all our friends to fight social exclusion with all means and that every minority has a right for self-determination.'

'I got much more information about the youth work and realised the importance of and responsibility to participate actively to change something.'



PROFESSIONAL AND LIFE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Participants identified diverse and multiple benefits with regard to professional skills and knowledge they had gained through their participation in the course.

'I have learned how to plan and write up a project and also methods for activities. I can better organise my plans of action and introduce new methods. The participation has also given me an understanding of different youth policies and the structure of Council of Europe. I got the idea how links with Europe could be fruitful for my work. I feel now I have the confidence to apply the things I have learnt in my work.'

'I have learnt how to create multinational and multiethnic projects involving people from minority and majority communities. Now I can confidently create, develop and evaluate a project. I can confidently approach European structures with a request for project funding. I studied here intercultural learning methodology and learnt how to use certain methods. I learnt how to motivate my colleagues to take part in the projects.'



'I have acquired very good teaching and operational game skills for making young people participate and think, and better understanding of interaction between individuals. I gained distance and strong relativism with regard to differences. I have less closed, more flexible approach to culture. I realised the difference between person and culture. I acquired working methods and understood the importance of evaluation.'

To summarise, the main benefits among the participants were associated with such effects as learning new information about European structures and organisations (85%) and gaining project management skills (71%). About a third of participants (32%) specifically emphasised the activity evaluation skills that they had developed on the LTTC. About half of the participants (45%) also felt that they had improved and developed their methodological approaches. About a third of participants (35%) profited in developing leadership and communication skills and a similar proportion (33%) indicated their becoming more open and tolerant of diversity and differences. Many participants shared the opinion that the LTTC helped them to realise their strengths and weaknesses and stimulated their desire for further education and development. At the same time, many of them tended to acknowledge that the information and knowledge and skills that they had gained through the participation in the course provided them with an opportunity to improve further.

'I acquired many new skills and I hope I will use them in my future work. And I have realised how much it is still to be learnt; but I feel I know the paths how and where I can find the knowledge I need.'

'I have clarified my role as a youth worker, even though I know that I still need to learn many things about the youth work in Europe and in my country.'

It was obvious that the course helped people to consider their further directions of work and life choices. Many emphasised that as result of their participation in the course they could see more clearly the aims and targets of their work, they had defined new directions and priorities, and had clarified their roles and responsibilities.

'I realized my own mission as a leader and a part of national minority and a citizen of my country and Europe.'

'The LTTC had a huge impact on me. I changed my perceptions in many issues. I gained additional skills and experience in working with minorities. I am more realistic about everything I am doing. Here I could define my priorities and my future role.'

'My approach has changed. I became more objective concerning my role. I try now to work on being a better team member and on sharing responsibilities and roles within the organisation.'



The LTTC helped participants to discover their talents and capacities. As one participant put it:

‘Now I think that I will be capable of leading a group of young people. Within the framework of the LTTC I felt leadership qualities within myself.’

Many shared their ideas and goals and concrete plans for future projects and activities and emphasised how the LTTC had motivated and empowered them.

→ Knowledgeable, competent and motivated leaders and multipliers: the long-term impact of the course

In this section of the report we try to explore the gains made by individuals as a consequence of their participation from a long-term perspective. Here we look at the LTTC in the broader framework of individual lives and the experiences that the participants had before or after they took part in the LTTC. The long-term perspective developed in this section provides us with an opportunity to identify the role this course played in the lives and careers of participants and to see how participants in practice applied in their further work the skills and attitudes of citizenship and participation they gained from the course. In this regard, it becomes clear that not only immediately after the course, but also from a more long-term perspective (after a timespan of one to five years), former participants felt that their participation in the course had brought many gains and changes in them and had often had an important impact on their lives. The LTTC produced knowledgeable, networked workers who felt confident about starting new projects and passing on their knowledge and experience. The LTTC had a strong impact on the careers of former participants and a huge multiplier effect. Virtually all former participants felt that they were able to influence local policies, although fewer participants felt they were able to influence national and European policy towards minority young people.

→ **MULTIPLE BENEFITS AND RECIPROCITY**

During the evaluation and impact survey, former participants were provided with the opportunity to reflect upon and write about the main things they gained from participation in the LTTC. The majority of participants cited an increased knowledge of minority issues, learning new methods of working and the development of their skills as youth workers as being the main thing that they gained from the course. Fewer mentioned building on their experience, developing in self-confidence, gaining new contacts and becoming more tolerant of others.



Table 2

What were the main things you gained from participation?	(%)
Increased knowledge of minority issues	75
Learnt new methods of working	62
Developed stronger skills as a youth worker	43
Built upon experiences	17
Developed more self-confidence	15
Developed new networks/contacts	15
Became more tolerant of others	15
Was empowered to do new things	12
Learnt to set clear objectives	9
Note: the total of percentages exceeds 100 as respondents could provide multiple responses	

Further information on the benefits of the course was collected through qualitative interviews and focus groups. Many participants spoke about the empowerment effect of the LTTC they saw on their colleagues on the course. They emphasised the change they observed in people between the different stages of the LTTC as well as years after the course. The LTTC was clearly seen by many as an opportunity for change in people's lives.

'After 5 years you see people – they have developed, they are self-confident. They were shy, and now they are strong, they have vision, know what they want ... Maybe the LTTC does not have a direct impact on your career, but it helps in vision of your work. In the end you see that there are so many people and you can see they changed because of the LTTC, of the knowledge they received here.'

'You see how these people are changing. Before the LTTC they were different ... Now they are active at national and international levels. They multiply and activate their environment. They have responsibility and do things. This is very much because of an opportunity such as the LTTC.'

Participants also emphasised the range of varying impacts and benefits of the course on their own development. For some of them it was a beneficial course which was seen as one of the major learning experiences in their lives, similar to things such as work, studies and/or other courses, while others saw it as a decisive phase and opportunity in their lives which opened their world views, gave them practical tools to initiate their further development and helped them to establish their direction of work, or even 'changed their lives'.

'It also changed my life! <...> My level of living was changed as I am active and have a lot to do. I think my life has changed after the LTTC. It is strange that one training and after there is this impact. The LTTC is important as it gives the first input, but it has to be developed further, otherwise it does not change anything.'



'All those things I experienced - it was like a snowball effect from the LTTC. This is the skills the LTTC and the other stuff I did after gave me. If I had not been selected to the LTTC ... I know, I would not be the person I am now, I would not have all those chances.'

'For me it started with the LTTC: I got motivation. <...> I really got motivated. Before I was like a bird going there and here, but now I had skills and methodology. And after the LTTC I became really involved, I felt like I could change all the city - I had so much energy.'

From the interviews it was obvious that many participants had not even believed in the possibility of being accepted, despite the fact that they had applied. There was clearly a perception that being accepted represented a chance in their life, and these participants felt a degree of gratitude to the organisers of the course.

'Why did those people succeed? I believe that everybody in the world is able to have a success, but everybody needs someone to believe in him or her. I think, somebody gave us this chance. And somebody gave us the possibility to trust ourselves, to say "you are important, you can be proud of yourself".'

Simply being selected had boosted their confidence, as being "acknowledged" by the Council of Europe had raised their self-esteem. For many, this acknowledgement was of crucial importance as it often paved the way for recognition by their organisations, or national or local authorities.

There was obviously the feeling of reciprocity that many of the interviewees had expressed. They felt the need to show their achievements to organisers and other participants.

'I think for me it is very important to see that people from the Council of Europe trust me and work with me. They trust that what they gave me was not lost. I like it. Then you try to do your best ... They give you something and you have to give something back, not only to receive.'

'I said "wow, I will see all these people again and I can show to the team that I was successful". For me it is important to show the team what I did, so they were not disappointed in me.'

Participants spoke about the commitment to their work. It was obvious that awareness of being given a chance to benefit from the LTTC was a strong driving force behind their work. They felt that they had to multiply the impact of the course.

'And sometimes I feel uncomfortable that I was selected for the LTTC. As I got so many things ... Sometimes I wonder if anybody else profited from it. Is my LTTC benefit someone else's benefit? But now I am sure - all my support for the others is because of the LTTC. I really think I have the multiplier effect.'





IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS' CAREERS

Most former participants had senior positions and were involved in the training and supervision of others at the time of survey. 43% were working as project coordinators or directors of organisations. Just 14% of former participants had no supervisory responsibilities. Many were responsible for supervising large numbers of workers: on average, each supervisor was responsible for 29 staff (ranging from 1 to 250). 18% of females and 4% of males supervised more than fifty other workers. In all, just 9% of former participants were not involved in any relevant type of work at the time of the survey. Many had a number of roles and were involved with work with a number of different types of groups and spheres (table 3). Referring to low levels of experience and involvement emphasised by so many former participants, these developments in career and involvement in just a few years are impressive.

Table 3

are currently involved with ...	%
...general youth work	68
...minority youth work	77
...minority rights	66
...human rights education	66
...other youth or community work	17

Note: the total of percentages exceeds 100 as respondents could provide multiple responses

The true impact of participation in the course on such developments in the careers of former participants was further explored in the qualitative interviews and focus groups. The former participants clearly and frequently associated their participation in the LTTC with a very significant impact on their careers. Some identified direct impacts such as promotion or getting a desirable job. However, this impact was more often associated with the process of more targeted self-development and work, and subsequently achievement, that was initiated by the LTTC. Quite often former participants tended to emphasise that they created their current job places themselves. This employment in several cases was related to new organisations that they had established as a result of the LTTC project.

'After the LTTC my career went up like a rocket. Sometimes I think it went too fast and sometimes I felt that I didn't have enough knowledge. But on the other hand, I was given a chance and responsibility and people believed in me.'

'I have to say that the LTTC project did create my way of working, thinking, motivation and so on... And I would say it created my career, as after that things changed in my career.'



‘Overall I think that the LTTC had a big empowerment effect in my life. I know I would not have a job and do things I do right now if I hadn’t participated in the LTTC.’



TRAINING MULTIPLIERS

Given that the LTTC was unable to meet the huge demand for training in minority youth work, the key to widespread impact was through multiplier effects whereby ex-participants helped train other workers in their local community or in broader contexts. Since completing the LTTC, 77% had gone on to train other people who work with minorities. 40% of those who were involved in training were involved only at the local level with a further 31% involved in national level training. A further 29% had some involvement in European or international training. Here three out of four said that the LTTC had provided them with very good preparation for this role.

The number of people trained was extremely high (some participants worked in dedicated training roles in which there was a large throughput of trainees). The overall average number of people trained by a participant was 127 (ranging from 2 to 700) and the range was extensive with almost half the participants (49%) having trained over 100 people. If that level of involvement extends across all participants (those who failed to respond as well as those who responded), it can be argued that former participants of the LTTC have been involved with the training of in the region of 17,000 people.

It was clear that the LTTC helped many participants to initiate their development as trainers in their organisations, in the broader community or in international training. The principles of forming the LTTC training teams also provided some participants with the opportunity to be involved as a trainer in the following years of the LTTC. In addition to this, participants were also informed about the opportunities to work on other courses of the Council of Europe or projects of other organisations, where they were invited to work as trainers after their participation in the LTTC.

‘And then X called me and informed that there will be this study session. He said “they really want you to be in their team”. And he said that some of the LTTC trainers are in the group. I said “wow, how can I be in a group with my trainers!” So I went to be a part of that session. That was really my first experience as a team member, and it was fantastic as I was on the same floor with the trainers from the LTTC.’

‘I also see that one of the results of the LTTC was that I was involved in a training group as trainer.’

Many participants were acutely aware of the extent to which the LTTC prepared them for a training role. They frequently displayed high levels of enthusiasm for training others and drew directly on the knowledge they had gained or the contacts they had formed to address specific problems.



'I felt like a pioneer, opening the door to other minority groups to develop and learn from my experience.'

'Our project started working with young refugees, developing educational programmes and helping them solve various problems. The culture to me was so different, but I was able to draw on the knowledge gained on the LTTC. I was also able to contact the LTTC trainers and got various manuals and training materials from them that I was able to use with the refugees.'

The qualitative material demonstrates the ways in which the influencing of the LTTC was far-reaching. Many of the former participants went on to train the other groups and co-operated with different organisations.

'Later after the LTTC we worked as professional trainers. A lot of NGOs as well as governmental structures were inviting us as consultants. And we worked not only in relation to youth affairs, but in general especially in the field of ethnic minorities.'

Participants widely applied the methodology of the LTTC in their work. The methods learnt during the LTTC created a starting base for their work and future development. In some of the cases it was pointed out that the LTTC helped to create a common basis and understanding between participants and in this way it became one of the factors for the success of their international co-operation projects. It seems that methods learnt became useful beyond the sector of non-formal education. For example, one participant emphasised the importance of the non-formal approaches to education he had gained during the LTTC for his teaching job within the system of formal education.

'When I did my first intercultural project on migration, I used the methodology from the LTTC in that project.'

'The LTTC developed my methodology. We collected a lot of materials. We really had a concrete example of how to work, but also learnt how to use this methodology, to be flexible, to adapt those exercises to our own realities... Now I am so involved at local level, and I can help young people as I was trained. There are certain things I need to develop still, but I think I have a common base to start and I feel I have started!'

'For me the LTTC was a starting point to start my career as a trainer. I quite often use the examples, methods, simulation games, exercises, topics of discussion, also other experience I got during the LTTC.'



EMPOWERING PEOPLE FOR POLICY CHANGES

Another important indicator for the impact of the LTTC is whether as a result of their participation participants were more willing and able to influence local, national and international policies and agendas. More than 60% strongly



agreed that they had become more willing to put their own views forward as a result of their participation in the LTTC. Confidence in their ability to influence national policies was less strong.

Table 4

Do you think that participation in the LTTC made you... (%)	Very	Somewhat	Unsure	A little	Not at all
...more able to influence local policies?	42	29	16	7	6
...more able to influence national policies?	28	40	12	7	13
...more willing to speak out and put your own views forward?	68	27	4	0	0

Nearly all participants (79%) had become more active in local minority networks or politics since completing the course, although fewer had become more active at a national (61%) or international (53%) level. Overall, the majority remained or became more involved in policies at some level. On the other hand, when asked to assess the impact of their involvement on national and European policies for minority youth, 40% said that they had had no impact on national policies and 62% felt that they had had no impact on European policy. At a local level though, virtually all participants thought they had had an impact on minorities in their local communities. The passage from the level of direct impact on the community through practice to the policy level is especially difficult, but the causes might also be found on the side of the policy-makers. This was also promoted by the work and results of the projects, as they were meant to be based on existing local needs.

Differing proportions of the participants suggested that the new activities (47%) and new working methods (30%) that they had introduced had had a positive impact on local minorities. They highlighted the benefits of their increased skills and knowledge (19%) and their ability to provide better advice to members of local minorities (17%). Around 40% of participants mentioned the beneficial aspects of their skills in conflict resolution (23%) and their ability to establish greater levels of trust (26%) among local minorities.

At a national level, around a third of participants said that, since the course, they had become more involved in national programmes, consultations and conferences (35%). Others were working directly with national authorities (29%), were more involved with national level training (29%) or had a greater involvement with youth councils (12%).



Intercultural Learning: the power of diversity



In this section we discuss how the diversity of backgrounds and experiences represented by the participants and trainers of the course supported and facilitated the personal development of the participants. The interviews provided strong evidence of the ways in which participants gained in terms of personal development and the ways in which they learnt more about their own strengths and weaknesses. The participants had matured as leaders during the LTTC and many tended to think about themselves and their colleagues as ‘changed people’.

‘For me it was my starting point in my changing. After the evaluation meeting I realised that during this one year I made changes in myself and this was through participation in the LTTC. I started to be more tolerant, to listen to, to be open for new ideas. For me it was quite an emotional process.’

Many saw the diverse backgrounds of participants and trainers as an advantage, but it was recognised that this diversity could bring additional challenges. The diverse backgrounds and previous experiences of participants were essential in contributing to the process of intercultural learning and personal development. Without diversity, to look at things in different ways would not have been possible.

‘It was a social laboratory. With people from different places it was real intercultural learning. It was not easy, we did not speak the same language, and even when we did, our competencies were very different. Everyone dealt with things in different ways, conceptualised things differently and behaved in different ways. It was my chance to deepen my ideas of what it means to be a member of a minority’.

‘For me diversity is very important. For me it is important to meet other people ... We have something to discuss together even if we do not have the same background. For me it was a good idea to mix us.’

‘This is important to have diverse group. I learnt so much not only from trainers, but directly from people speaking with them, sharing the experience’

Intercultural exchange was seen as important insofar as it ‘opened your mind to new ways of doing things’. In exchanges with their course colleagues, participants learned from one another about the realities of work and life in different countries. The mix of participants also facilitated a more basic awareness of methods of working commonly used in different countries.

‘I think that the opportunity to exchange the ways of doing things differently is important. To know the strategies, ideas on different projects ... It is so good to open your mind, the way of thinking – I think this is really important.’



'Minorities in Western Europe do not have an idea about minorities in Eastern Europe and vice versa. In this respect the LTTC helped us to learn about situation of one another, to understand that our realities are different and also that we have different issues and situation.'

The language barrier was seen as an impediment and some felt that, at times, people were 'talking past' each other and that a full common understanding did not always exist. Here we need to recognise that intercultural learning experiences necessitate having to confront 'otherness' and that this discomfort can sometimes be rationalised in terms of language.

There was also a recognition that some participants were less experienced while others had many years' relevant work experience and strong previous training. This was seen by some as being beneficial to team-based learning.

'It is very important that the people selected represent different countries, levels of experience. There should be people who just start to work and those who already work for many years. As it also empowers all participants: all of us need to develop our skills. It helped me widen my experience and to change, learn work methods.'

However, different levels of knowledge and experience also created learning and exchange problems at an individual level.

'In the course I was the less experienced. Others had really something to argue and something to exchange ... And sometimes I felt excluded. But it was also good for me as my mind was empty, I did not know anything, so I could put in everything!'

Besides helping to develop their personal capacities, the LTTC also helped participants integrate into their communities. It helped them to define their role in the societies of their residence and enriched their vision of Europe.

'It helped me after only half a year of living in the country to feel more important and to multiply this in my community. I gained so much more confidence to do this type of work.'

'My perception of Europe has changed. Europe has become closer to me.'

'I discovered and gained deeper knowledge of the European dimension.'

The LTTC also supported the development of a European identity among participants and encouraged them to multiply this identity in their living environments. At the same time, many participants emphasised not only the importance of being able to share, and inform 'Europe' about their countries and localities but also the ability they were empowered with to bring 'Europe' closer to their communities back home.

‘The Council of Europe wanted to remind me I am in Europe and I have to educate the others that we are ‘Europe’. They did one thing that contributed to my view of the world and myself and played a big role in my background – they invited me to the centre of Europe and showed me, gave me a choice to choose my own way. So I could choose to be European or not.’



New perspectives on minority/majority relations

The design of the LTTC provided a space for a special group climate as most of the participants identified themselves with minority groups or at least as working with minorities. Such an arrangement itself facilitated the ‘diversity of minorities’ discourse and helped to reduce the feeling of exclusion the participants of minority background could feel in majority-dominated settings. However, it does not necessarily imply that it was a comfortable and easy process, as for many minority youth leaders this was a challenging experience.

The course was an empowering process at an individual level, providing participants with the opportunity to address their own prejudices and stereotypes. In the interviews there were numerous examples of these experiences. One participant, for example, spoke of the ways in which his initial hostility towards gays and lesbians was overcome during the course. Others spoke of the ways in which they addressed historical conflicts and re-thought national stereotypes.

‘I had this crazy strange thing with German people. I had a lot against them, all this history, the holocaust. Then you speak with them and you can see that the person had nothing to do with what happened. So you fight it. Now I’m a liberal person. I have had discussions with gays and lesbians on the LTTC and I found that they are normal, very normal. So it changed me!’

‘When I came to the LTTC, I was expecting to find only ethnic minorities. But I met such a range of minorities, including sexual minorities, people I had never met and I didn’t know their realities.’

Interviews provided evidence that the LTTC had a strong impact on participants in terms of building a better understanding and relationship between majorities and minorities. Both minority and majority participants spoke about the great influence the LTTC had on their perceptions of the ‘other’. This exchange not only widened the world views of the participants, but also created a space of learning and benefiting from one another in clearer visions and approaches on how to address their goals and target groups.

‘Important was to see that so many people who belong to the majority work for minorities. Not only minorities work for minorities. Here I understood that I can’t work just for minorities, but with both the majorities and minorities.’

‘And I saw then that they, other people from the majority are interested and are committed to your life, to develop your situation together with you. It helped me to see restrictions as we are basically the same and also helped me to develop a way of approaching majority people while working.’



'As a minority, you always have the feeling that the majority wants to take advantage of everything. And you do not understand why they want to help you. There is always a kind of suspicion! I personally had it! Then you meet majority in the LTTC and you understand that they want to help you! You ask people not to discriminate against you, so why do you want to discriminate majority? They also can feel offended - they are people. So the most important is the common goal!'

'I saw it as a chance to meet different people who belong to different minorities and to find someone to help me in my work with minorities being targeted by my organisation. Here I met X from Kosovo and Y from Spain and they actually helped me find a good way of working with these people, to understand them better and to come a lot closer to their community in my country. The LTTC was a good chance for me to exchange experience and to see, spend some time with people, who really belong to minority.'

On the other hand it was also clear that the arrangement aimed specifically at minorities served as a strong empowerment factor. It created a feeling of safety and comfort, and a better understanding between the participants as well as building relationships of trust.

'They bring us together, we trust each other ... I have to admit I do trust more minority as I feel in the same way they do!'

'As a child, I was ashamed to belong to a minority. People were always calling me names. I went to a big city and things started to get better, but every single day I had to justify my existence. One day my boyfriend was really upset and he told me that his friend had told him he was dating someone from a lower race. Then I went on the LTTC and it was like a drama. For the first time people were explaining my roots and for the first time in my life I began to be proud that I belong to a minority. I was proud of my ethnicity. Here we were given a chance to trust ourselves and to say, "wow, you are important".'

The diversity of minorities itself, unexpected to some of them, helped the participants to broaden their perceptions of minorities and broke down their stereotypes. It helped them to see more clearly, and assess and reflect on their own life situations.

'Before the LTTC I was so focused on discrimination against immigrants, nothing more. I can't say I did not know anything about sexual discrimination, etc., but I was not as much aware. It is different to know and to be aware. I remember, I had a long chat with a gay participant of the LTTC. And I realised that people of course they are looking at you and see you are different. But there are non-visible minorities; they are not expected by people to be a minority. I think I feel their situation since. That was after the LTTC - widening your perspectives and then you see things with different eyes or interest maybe ... You are more aware, especially when you want to be aware.'





The impact of the course on the context through the projects

In this chapter we examine the sustainability and the impact of the participants' course projects. Working on the project was a strong empowerment factor, and a source of motivation and new ideas. Although projects failed or expected results were not fully achieved, participants were still able to learn a lot and use this later. The sustainability of the LTTC projects is very high - about half of the projects initiated and developed during the LTTC were still running at the time of the survey.

Over the five years, the participants of the LTTC initiated 141 projects. The majority of participants managed to complete or started their projects during the course. Only 16 percent of projects were not implemented.

Table 5

	Fully implemented projects	Partly implemented projects ¹¹	Non-implemented projects	Total
1997	15	9	5	29
1998	18	6	4	28
1999	12	11	4	27
2000	14	8	4	26
2001	18	7	6	31
Total	77	41	23	141

The diversity of life contexts and realities of participants resulted in a range of projects varying in their scope and content. The projects ranged from seminars dealing with a variety of citizenship and participation issues, language and culture courses, international youth exchanges, radio programmes or newsletters. More ambitious and longer-term projects included establishing a community centre, building national minority networks, developing and changing minority-related policy structures or agendas or improving legislation.

- The diversity of projects makes any attempt to classify them nearly impossible. Accordingly, to provide a flavour of the LTTC projects, we present a sample of projects from different years (in the way they were developed by participants after the introductory phase of the LTTC).
- A seminar on health education for minorities (1997) brought together minority women, health workers and representatives of the health authorities in Torino, Italy to discuss the health education needs of minorities.

¹¹ Projects that were started during the course but had not been concluded by the time of the evaluation seminar. Presumably, most of them were concluded successfully.



- A participant from Estonia (1997) organised a seminar on youth participation. The seminar aimed to deal with isolation, social apathy, low self-esteem and a lack of activity and awareness among young people. During the seminar the interests of young people in local youth work and policy were discussed and relevant information for young people of both minority and majority backgrounds was provided.
- A participant from Portugal (1998) organised a national competition of antiracist comic scripts, the publication of the comic book and a meeting of the young artists that collaborated in the project.
- A participant from Slovakia (1998) set up a centre and a meeting place for gay, lesbian and bisexual young people in Bratislava. The centre provides cultural activities, training, and information and works in the field of AIDS prevention.
- A participant from Greece (1999) established an information and training centre on employment of African migrant young people. The centre provides training in Greek and computer skills, and it prepares regular reports for Greek authorities on social conditions and progress of migrant young people, particularly in relation to employment issues.
- A participant from Turkey (1999) organised a project that provides social and psychological support for women that are forced to undergo virginity tests. The project also includes raising women's awareness and self-esteem.
- A participant from Armenia (1999) created and established a centre for young people disabled by the Nagorno-Karabagh war. The centre provides psychological support and care for young disabled people and organises educational activities and opportunities for them to meet with young able-bodied people.
- A participant from Ukraine (2000) organised a social and psychological support project for young gay people. Since then, gatherings of gay and lesbian young people have been taking place on a regular weekly basis, the first gay/lesbian disco in Ukraine has been established, movie nights have been organised and a telephone hotline has been established. A report regarding the situation of gay men and lesbians in Ukraine and two textbooks have been developed within the framework of this project.
- A participant from Sweden (2001), through monthly meetings of and with young people, aimed to give young Muslims belonging to two or more cultural backgrounds the opportunity to affirm and develop their own culture and identity.
- A participant from Bosnia and Herzegovina (2001) worked with Roma youth leaders to enable them to train individuals, groups and communities, building and improving their skills for resolving conflicts and establishing co-operative relationships.

The projects addressed a variety of cultural, religious, historical, legal and social issues and involved very different target groups. Even though certain minority groups were relatively underrepresented in the course, such as asylum seekers and refugees, religious, sexual minorities or disabled people, the projects were very often targeted specifically at these groups.



The projects attempted to promote the citizenship and participation and to reduce the disadvantage and exclusion of members of diverse minority groups by providing them with space for active involvement and participation in the project implementation. The projects were diverse with regard to the range of minority groups they aimed to embrace and include at the same time. There were also projects that aimed to facilitate exchange and enhance mutual understanding in families with minority backgrounds, thereby focusing on intergenerational relationships.

Some projects worked exclusively with minorities, while others addressed minority and majority communities and representatives. Many projects attempted to work with community leaders and important people such as local politicians, teachers, leaders of local and national NGOs or to disseminate the project experience and results in a form of manuals or newsletters in the broader contexts. After all, this diversity was a result of the design of the course itself: the project here was seen not only as a learning tool, but also as a concrete activity that could bring the change and improvement within the communities that they are organised for. Therefore, the course organisers aimed to ensure that projects respected the criteria developed in the framework of the LTTC¹², but the dimension and format of the projects were not limited. The participants and their organisations were free to decide on the scope, content and methodological approaches of the projects.



THE VIEWS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The experience of setting up and running a project was seen as vital. For some, the project was a steep learning curve - 'from the very beginning it was unrealistic' - but they learned to adjust the scope and develop something which was achievable. Working on the project, together with overall involvement in the LTTC, was seen as a source of motivation and the beginning of something new. Participants often emphasised that the LTTC project facilitated their becoming more active in minority work and helped to develop new ideas and perspectives.

'Well maybe people were thinking of results, but for me the project itself is very important. It helped me to develop new ideas and to make structure in my work with the other projects. It helped me to start a new project.'

'The project was good to think, to motivate, to begin other things ... It was like a motor. We looked for alternatives and that project developed into the project we are working on now.'

¹² All projects had to be aimed at empowering young people from minority groups and to attempt to remove barriers to their participation; be concrete and relevant, reflecting the situations and challenges faced by the minorities that they were addressing; be based on an intercultural approach; have clear aims and objectives; be run by and for young people; be carried out within the framework of an organisation or association; and be initiated during the course.



About half of the projects initiated and developed during the LTTC were still running at the time of the survey. During interviews and discussion groups it became obvious that some projects gradually expanded in scale and content and as such still exist today and are planned to continue.

‘The biggest output of the project was the establishment of my NGO. It has now been running for four years and around 450 people have participated in our educational programmes. Also, as a result of participating in our courses, participants have developed their own youth organisation and opened clubs in many towns – I know of 15. We provided something where there was nothing and all of these organisations work with minorities.’

‘There are 175 people involved in the centre. But this effect is multiplied because it is also their environment - their families, friends, and colleagues - that is learning to live with disability. I think there is another great result. We work with policy issues, try to influence political life and laws. We have many volunteers working with us. Many people know about us. All this institution grew out of the project that was started during the LTTC.’

The achievements of many of the LTTC projects were associated with the idea of multiplying the knowledge and learning processes of the LTTC and were primarily related to the impact they had on their participants.

‘During my project 12 young people that belong to different ethnic groups were trained and now they are working as multipliers in our community. After my project they created a new project and found international donors to support their work.’

Quite often the broader impacts of the project were emphasised, such as the impact regarding relevant national or regional/local policies. Projects also helped to develop the organisations and establish better relationships with other community actors, such as the mass media, schools or other NGOs.

‘The result was really good. The law on education in my country has changed because we wanted to change it. This is the most important result of the LTTC project.’

‘The project enabled to expand our organisation, raised awareness about human rights and helped to establish better relationship and representation of minorities in the mass-media.’

‘It was about designing and delivering training to minority young people on how to be more successful in the labour market. It received recognition and we ran a second round. The City employment office sent their representatives to understand what the training course was about. And they still have and use some materials to train youth for labour market.’

There was clearly a relation between the project and the developments in the careers of the participants. Several participants indicated their promotion had been a result of their work on the project; others created their work places themselves as a result of the project. However, it was much more obvious that the work on the project was related to an increase in recognition and respect for the participant in the sending organisation and the developments in career tended to be seen more as an overall impact of learning both in the LTTC and/or other learning environments. The work on the project helped participants to target better, to establish their direction of work or discover their interests. This could also lead them to search for new opportunities and to quit their work in the sending organisation.

‘Thanks to this project I found something that is really interesting for me that I want to stick to and that made me change my organisation.’

Although there was common agreement that participants could learn a lot by failing to implement the project, many of them stressed that there was more benefit if the project was successfully completed. Failure in implementing projects was explained in some cases by changes in motivation and competence of participants. More common factors were identified by the participants such as too ambitious a project, failure to receive funding or lack of support from the sending organisation.

It was clear that participants developed many projects after their participation in the course. 79% of participants used the experience they gained by developing the LTTC project to initiate new projects in their further work. 73% of participants initiated new projects after completion of the LTTC. Especially considering those many participants who were referring to their inexperience in project management before the LTTC, this is clearly an indicator of the learning impact and the further development that the participation in the course and the work on their first project had initiated.

‘I also believe that making one project can’t be a measure of success for the LTTC. It also should be measured by the project after that - I made 15 different projects! I think that the LTTC had a great influence on me. Even if I did not succeed with the project 4 years ago.’

One more aspect of project work in the framework of the LTTC was related to the project criteria. Interview material suggested that these criteria played a significant role in framing and directing the learning experiences of participants in the framework of the LTTC. On the other hand, quite often participants made references to the use of the project criteria developed in the framework of LTTC in their further work as trainers or in organising their own project work.





VIEWS OF SENDING ORGANISATIONS ON THE IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

In terms of assessing the wider impact of the LTTC project, the views of the organisations from which participants were drawn are important. The projects were also beneficial to the organisations. For example, the development of new contacts, networks and forms of collaboration were seen as important by nearly 38% of organisations, while new ideas, programmes and activities were seen by some (21%) as having developed through the project. A range of other benefits accruing to the organisation from the project were also highlighted, including being able to offer better support to minorities (9%), the intensification of work with minorities (9%), an increased understanding of minority issues (15%) and the enhanced experience and knowledge of the worker in question (6%).

Sending organisations also highlighted a variety of ways in which the project had had a direct beneficial impact on minority groups. These included the greater involvement of minorities (26%) and the development of new programmes and activities (26%) as well as the greater acceptance of minorities or their stronger integration within the community (19%). Organisations suggested a number of ways in which the projects had impacted upon policy agendas for youth and minorities. Some felt that new policies were reflecting a greater acceptance of minorities (25%) and that the youth agenda had been enhanced (20%). Others pointed towards the emergence of new organisations or programmes of activities (20%) or to an increased understanding of minority issues (10%) and more effective support policies for minorities (5%).





Developing European networks and co-operation

The ability to create new networks was seen as very important and was one of the key objectives of the course. As result of their participation, participants gained new contacts in Europe and were able to develop networks among them. 82% of participants had remained in contact with other course participants since completing the course and through focus groups and interviews it was clear that other participants provided an ongoing source of support and advice, as well as being partners in international co-operation. A very important impact of the LTTC on networking between the participants was related to the fact that trainees were provided with the common ground of knowledge and experience that later facilitated and helped them to establish successful partnerships and work together.

'After the LTTC I worked with the other LTTC participants in different activities. It was very important, as we were working in the same way, using the same methods. And it was easy to work with them probably because of the common experience we had.'

While the co-operation and partnership among the participants was seen as a helping force in their further development and work, it was clear that no less important was the opportunity to meet the former LTTC participants from the other years. There was not only this identity of the 'former participant of the LTTC' and the opportunity to exchange similar experiences, but also a chance to work together, especially if participants were from the same country.

The networking and exchange during the course was emphasised by many.

'And the other thing is that during the evaluation seminar we did this exercise with stripes and lines and you saw the net! I mean, the network of participants we established really worked. Everybody was in touch with everybody! It was the best thing!'

However, with respect to the sustainability of these networks after the course, the impact of the LTTC was seen as not sufficient. The main discussion among the participants was whether it was up to participants themselves or up to the organisers of the course to facilitate and support the existence of the post-LTTC network. Some former participants were convinced of the need of a kind of formalised support for the establishment and that the sustainable development of such networks from organisers could help such a network.



Sustaining structures for minority youth participation: the impact on the organisations



In this chapter we assess the impact of participation on the LTTC on sending organisations¹³. Here we analyse perspectives of both the participants and the organisations. Sending organisations identified a number of ways in which the LTTC had benefited their organisation and minority groups. They valued the increase in skills and knowledge and the introduction of new ideas into working practices. They also highlighted ways in which minority agendas had been enhanced through a greater understanding of their needs. Participants could also identify their participation in the LTTC with a range of benefits for their sending organisation. At the end of the course, many participants felt that their participation in the LTTC brought change and improvement into the work of their organisations.

'My organisation has been given strong impetus for development. This in turn will make it possible to resolve numerous problems existing in our town.'

'My organisation has reached a European level and received contacts, access to financial aid and a clear goal.'

'We have new volunteers now, new resources and opportunities.'

Participants tended to associate the impact of their participation on their organisation and community with new projects that were developed within the framework of the LTTC (26%). Similar proportions emphasised that the organisation benefited in the form of recognition in the community (23%), new methods and experiences (21%) or simply ideas and opportunities were brought into its work (13%). Some clearly saw their own development in the framework of the LTTC as a benefit to the organisation, since now it had a new leader to rely on (18%). In quite a few cases, the LTTC helped to enrich the life of organisations and communities with new perspectives on minority or minority-majority issues (16%). There were also participants who emphasised that various resources such as contacts, information, financial or human were accumulated or developed.

¹³ A sending organisation is any of the types of the organisations (i.e. minority, local/regional, national, international, public; for more detail see footnote 3) which were identified as applicants' organisations on their application forms. The eligibility criteria of the course expected participants to be active in a youth or minority organisation and a letter of support as an expression of the commitment of the organisation was requested together with other application material. During the participation process in the LTTC, these organisations were usually the base for the participant's project and were also expected to provide any possible support for the participant.



To assess the long-term impact of the participation in the LTTC on the organisation, during the evaluation study the participants were asked about the ways in which their participation in the LTTC had improved the effectiveness of their organisation. Here similar benefits were highlighted, notably former participants now tended to emphasise that their organisation was able to cater more effectively for minority groups as a direct result of their experience. This improved effectiveness was linked to new activities and projects that they initiated following the course, to new working methods and skills and to their enhanced experience. Moreover, at the time of the survey, two thirds (67%) of former participants were still working with the same organisation they had been with at the time they applied for the LTTC. On the other hand, leaving the sending organisation was perceived as a part of the natural process of the development and change both in the lives and interests of participants and in organisations themselves. However, there was emphasis on multiplying the experience and passing it on to others in the organisation before quitting it.

This evidence is supported by the data from the interviews where it is clear that the LTTC brought new dimensions and directions into the work of their organisations. The LTTC encouraged participants and their organisations to target young people in their work and helped to see more clearly the two-fold challenge of being young and belonging to a minority. In particular, the issues of intercultural learning and human rights education tended to be highlighted as the new dimensions that started to be considered in their work after participants took part in the LTTC.

'My training in intercultural learning was crucial for my organisation. Previously, it did not specialise in intercultural learning, but since I completed the course, the organisation has become a centre for intercultural learning in our city and makes courses for young people.'

Participants also emphasised the way their organisations profited from their experience gained on the LTTC, including new skills and ideas that they managed to transfer to other members. Some spoke about their innovative proposals submitted to and adopted by the decision-making levels of organisations.

'We had very limited experience in the beginning. We could not help other groups and associations, other people. After I attended the LTTC I had to report back to my organisation. I had to distribute information to everybody: I had meetings, spoke about the LTTC and answered their questions. And we started to think about if we can work with all these ideas, so we do not lose them.'

The networks and co-operation were other benefits of the LTTC. The contacts established during the LTTC were developed into international co-operation between the organisations. Some participants spoke about the benefit of developing the co-operation of their organisations from local or national to international. For example, one participant from an international organisation



pointed out that at an international level they were co-operating only with members of their organisation; therefore they had a need to enter into a broader exchange of experiences.

The opportunity for an organisation to send two or more participants on the LTTC was perceived as very beneficial. In such cases, not only was there the possibility of more targeted organisational support for the second participant, but there were also such effects as the overall development of the organisation or the formation of a consolidated team of workers on the same issue within the organisation.

'A success of our organisation was that we were given an opportunity to send more people on the LTTC. That helped to create a very strong understanding within the organisation. Besides, later it was possible to co-operate with this person and we worked as professional trainers.'

The views of sending organisations themselves were examined during the evaluation and impact survey. The overall benefits of the LTTC identified by sending organisations were manifest in a number of ways. The increased experience and knowledge of the participant was seen as an important benefit (26%), as was the development of new projects (24%) and the introduction of new ideas (18%). Organisations also identified benefits derived from the greater confidence of the worker (8%), their increased ability to support minorities (8%), the development of new contacts (7%) and their increased interest in minority issues (4%).

→ The perspective of minority networks and partner organisations

In this chapter we examine the views of European minority organisations and networks and partner organisations of the Directorate of Youth and Sport. Minority organisations tended to think that the LTTC had contributed to raising an awareness of minority issues among policy-makers and youth organisations. Most thought that it had had an impact on how minorities were perceived in the wider community. It also had a major impact on the organisations themselves. Partner organisations tended to have a lower awareness of the existence of the LTTC. They emphasised the need to pursue the objective of minority youth participation and citizenship through national and European policies.

Of the European minority youth organisations¹⁴, all had heard of the LTTC and had played some type of role in the development of the LTTC, mainly through supplying trainers or speakers or sending participants. Three of the nine thought that the LTTC had directly contributed to raising policy-makers' awareness of minority participation issues, six thought that it had raised awareness among youth organisations while almost all (7) thought that it had had an impact on the perception of minorities in the broader community.

Beyond the evaluation of the course, minority youth organisations were themselves directly affected by the LTTC in different ways. For many of them, the course represented an opportunity to involve new and trained activists in their work. Many participants became involved in the activities of the organisations (for example, the Forum of European Roma Young People, or Young Women from Minorities and Minorities of Europe), and some can be found in the leadership and boards of those organisations. This was, after all, one of the key objectives of the LTTC: to support the networks and initiatives that had emerged from the European youth campaign "all different – all equal".

Besides the impact on these existing networks, the LTTC also gave birth to other organisations operating sometimes more informally but having a great deal of success. The Nordic-Baltic Minority Youth network was founded during the course as one of the ways to follow it up by participants from Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden. Other networks operate informally, such as a network involving former LTTC participants from the former Soviet Union.

¹⁴ A European minority organisation is a type of partner organisation that specifically focuses on minority issues and works at a European level.



The visibility of the existing European minority youth organisations has somewhat improved since the beginning of the course although, as consultations have shown, they now face new and different challenges.

Just 21 partner organisations of the Directorate of Youth and Sport¹⁵ completed a questionnaire about the LTTC. With relatively few having a detailed knowledge of the LTTC, comments on the extent to which partner organisations saw the course as having met its objectives should be treated with caution. However, one third of these organisations thought that the LTTC had contributed to raising the awareness of minority participation issues among all kinds of youth organisations. Nearly half of them did not know whether or not it had had such an impact. Less than one third felt that the LTTC had an impact on the broader community's perception of minorities, although the others either did not know or felt that it did not have an impact. Similarly, two thirds did not know whether or not the LTTC had helped raise the awareness of policy-makers about minority participation issues.

Almost all partner organisations felt that issues related to the participation and representation of minority youth should be on the national and European policy agendas, although few felt that these issues were actually central to the national (5%) or European (14%) agenda.

¹⁵ A partner organisation is usually a national, European or international organisation or institution that the Council of Europe Youth and Sport Directorate co-operates with. Some organisations could also belong to the 'sending organisation' category if they sent an applicant on the LTTC.





Overview and conclusions

This report presents the main results and findings of the evaluation study on the impact of the long-term training course “Participation and Citizenship” on empowerment of minority youth leaders, which ran from 1997 to 2001. The study employed qualitative and quantitative approaches and was based on data from diverse sources. Taken together, these methods provided the means through which a robust evaluation could be made.

The study found that the number of places available on the course annually was insufficient to meet the existing needs for the training of future leaders working with and for minority groups. During the five years of the course, all together 878 applications were received. In total, 18% of applicants could be offered a place on the course. The course attracted growing numbers of quality applicants from a wide variety of minority and majority backgrounds from across Europe and beyond and successfully managed to reach a growing number of different organisations. These trends can be seen as indicative of the success of the course and of effective publicity.

Over the five years, 141 minority youth leaders and youth workers participated in the LTTC. The course was successful in recruiting a very diverse group of people representing a rich mix of minority groups from 38 different countries. Members of minorities consistently formed the large majority of participants with most of these being drawn from ethnic minorities. The diverse backgrounds and previous experience of participants were essential in contributing to the process of the intercultural learning and personal development of participants. In sum, the types of people recruited onto the course were ideal in terms of the overall aims and priorities of the LTTC both in respect of profiles and motivation.

The diversity of participants’ backgrounds and life realities constituted one of the fundamental features of the course. As a result, the course was both an empowering process at an individual level and an exercise in team-based learning, which facilitated participants’ personal development and provided them with an opportunity to address their own world views and stereotypes. There was clear evidence that the LTTC effectively produced knowledgeable and networked workers who have the ongoing support of their course colleagues and their trainers and who feel confident about starting new projects and multiplying their knowledge in their organisations and broader contexts. There was a strong feeling that participants ‘matured’ as minority workers and leaders over the duration of the course, that they became more confident and more tolerant in their views and became more aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. Participants felt that the course had made them more competent and effective minority youth workers and that they had been effectively equipped with project management skills. As a result of the course they had increased their awareness of minority issues, of processes of intercultural learning and participation, and of minority/majority relations. It was obvious



that the LTTC empowered participants to participate more actively in local, national and international minority networks or politics. Upon examination of the overall impact of the LTTC, it was clear that the LTTC frequently had a very significant impact on the careers of former participants. Former participants were often working in relatively senior positions and involvement in training was extensive. The existing data suggests that former participants might have been responsible for the training of more than 17,000 people.

Working alongside people with different levels of knowledge and experience and from different cultural backgrounds posed a challenge for some and constituted one of the fundamental features of the course. Without this, the opportunity for intercultural learning and to look at things in different ways would not have been possible. Diversity created opportunities for participants to learn from one another about the realities of work and life in different countries and was a strong empowering factor for team-based learning.

The diversity of minorities made it possible to broaden the perceptions of minorities' realities across Europe and encouraged participants to question and re-define their identities and world views. This arrangement, aimed specifically at minorities, helped to reduce the feeling of exclusion felt by minority participants in majority-dominated settings and created the feeling of safety and comfort and a better understanding among the participants. It helped people to see more clearly and reflect on their own life situations. On the other hand, the LTTC had a substantial influence on participants in terms of building a better understanding and relation between majorities and minorities. This exchange not only widened the world views of the participants, but also created a space for learning and benefiting from one another in clearer visions and approaches on how to address their goals and target groups.

During the five years of the LTTC, the participants initiated 141 projects. Working on the project enabled participants to 'learn by doing' and was a strong empowerment factor, as well as a source of motivation and new ideas. The sustainability of the LTTC projects is very high: about half of the projects initiated and developed during the LTTC were still running at the time of the survey. With regard to projects as tools of changing the local realities, the results of the LTTC projects mainly related to the idea of multiplication of the knowledge gained from the LTTC and as such were primarily described in terms of the impacts they had on their participants. Quite often the broader impacts of the project were emphasised, like impact regarding relevant national or regional/local policies. It was clear that many participants have based their further work as trainers or as organisers of their own project work on continuing to use the experience and knowledge they gained in the implementation of the LTTC project.

The ability to create new networks was seen as very important and was emphasised by many. Although former participants often referred to ongoing support and co-operation with their colleagues from the course, the impact of the LTTC was seen as insufficient with respect to the sustainability of these networks after the course.



Sending organisations were able to identify a number of ways in which the LTTC had benefited their organisation and minority groups. They valued the increase in skills and knowledge and the introduction of new ideas into working practices. They also highlighted ways in which minority agendas had been enhanced through a greater understanding of their needs.

European minority organisations tended to have a high level of awareness of the strategic role of the LTTC, with some feeling that it had contributed to raising an awareness of minority issues among policy-makers and youth organisations. Most thought that it had had an impact on how minorities are perceived by the wider community. It also had a major impact on the organisations themselves. Many participants became involved in the activities of these organisations and some can be found among their leadership. Beyond the impact on these existing networks, the LTTC also gave birth to other organisations and networks which sometimes operate more informally.

Governmental and non-governmental partner organisations tended to have a lower awareness of the existence of the LTTC. They emphasised the need to pursue the objective of minority youth participation and citizenship through the national and European policies.

From different perspectives, ranging from the benefits of participants to the organisations at the local, national and international levels, it is clear that the LTTC has made a real difference to the experiences of minorities in Europe. Several dimensions which were central to the uniqueness and success of the course should be emphasised. These include the design of the course, the level of European diversity represented in the course, the development of long-term projects and the implementation-focussed character of the course. This last is generally characteristic of this three-phase training model for training youth workers developed by the Council of Europe Directorate of Youth and Sport¹⁶ and first introduced in 1990. Although an intercultural approach and a European dimension are typical of other LTTCs run by the Directorate of Youth and Sport, the diversity of this LTTC based on intercultural, European and minority perspectives represents a qualitatively unique arrangement. Thus, by combining the diversity of geography and minority background¹⁷, the course created a complex environment for team-based learning and participants' personal development. This complexity was even increased by directly linking local and European dimensions. Although this constituted one of the fundamental features of the course, it did not necessarily mean that it was an easy process and it often posed a challenge to participants, during which participants re-defined their world views or overcame stereotypes.

¹⁶ For more, see "Methodology" in "Participation and Citizenship: training for minority youth projects in Europe". Council of Europe, 1998.

¹⁷ To ensure and respect the diversity of minorities, the design of the course was based on the participants' own self-definition of minority background.



With the majority of participants having a minority background, the design of the course itself represented a unique model that effectively empowered the learning environment by reducing the feeling of exclusion (which might be felt in other majority-dominated settings) and by establishing relationships of trust and confidence among participants and trainers. On the other hand, the relatively underrepresented majority dimension effectively contributed to the diversity of the course and facilitated re-definition of minority/majority relations. It helped to create the learning environment where participants realised the need to address both dimensions in their work and learn practical ways of approaching ‘the other’.

One more dimension, reciprocity, which could be seen as playing an important role especially with respect to the sustainability of the impact of the course, resulted from the specific participation and learning context of the course and the, obviously personal, characteristics of the participants and trainers, rather than from the design of the course as such. In this respect, the course managed to recruit motivated and committed participants who greatly appreciated the opportunity to participate. Obviously, the long-term design of the course facilitated the development of team and co-operation relationships. However, the ‘give-and-take’ perspective was primarily reflected in the references to the internal team processes, especially the trainer-participant relationship. In this respect, the trainers managed to build lasting, open and supportive relationships with participants, who in their turn perceived them as role models and felt the need not to let them down. This reinforced the participants’ commitment to multiply the impact of the course and motivated them to develop their capacities further, as well as shaping the perception of this LTTC as a crucial phase in their lives.

The course has effectively addressed its objectives and proved to have a substantial impact on individual participants, their organisations, and communities. Beyond this individual and local level, the impact of the course extended to national and international levels. It was clear that the course successfully achieved its aims and essentially contributed to promoting minority youth work and human rights education from European to local level and vice-versa.





Follow-up actions and recommendations

A Consultative Meeting held in November 2002 at the European Youth Centre Budapest completed the process of the evaluation, by reviewing the results of the study, analysing the existing needs of minority young people and minority youth leaders and by developing recommendations for further action¹⁸. The meeting also took into account the conclusions and suggestions of former participants of the course, expressed at the evaluation seminar held in Leicester in July 2002¹⁹.

The meeting observed that significant improvements and progress have been made at the European level during the last six years, especially with regard to awareness within European youth policy and programmes of the need for a positive approach towards the participation of minority youth at national and international levels. The meeting also agreed that the situation today is very different from that of 1995 and requires renewed activity and approaches from the Council of Europe and its governmental and non-governmental partners.

At European level, the following issues were identified as being of particular importance:

- structural barriers such as resources, competence and recognition for the sustainability and consolidation of minority organisations and networks;
- an obvious need to bring minority youth issues and related challenges (including racism, discrimination and social exclusion) into the mainstream of youth policy;
- a general lack of awareness and involvement of the “youth” dimension in debates and policies dealing with minority rights and minority participation;
- European youth participation structures still not being suited to the reality of minority young people and to their associations and networks (e.g. dispersed and heterogeneous membership, irregular resources and structures, unclear sustainability, etc.).

The participants of the meeting identified a range of challenges that young people from minority backgrounds face at national and local level, while acknowledging widespread differences in the situations in the member states of the Council of Europe. They also developed recommendations for further action at the general (youth) policy level and with regard to those training and support measures needed to meet these challenges efficiently. What follows are

¹⁸ "Consultative Meeting on Evaluation and Impact Study of the LTTC "Participation and citizenship" on empowerment of minority youth leaders. Conclusions and Recommendations for follow-up" European Youth Centre Budapest, 21-24 November 2002 (DJS/EYCB/LTTC P&C-CM/2002/33)

¹⁹ "Reviewing Five Years of Experience in Training of Minority Youth Leaders" (DJS/EYCB/LTTC -PC/2002/27)



the recommendations for follow-up of the meeting, including concrete recommendations for follow-up of the course and for sustaining the development of youth policies that are inclusive of minority issues.



1. GENERAL (YOUTH) POLICY LEVEL

The European Steering Committee for Youth and the Advisory Council should consider drafting a policy recommendation on the development of training and participation of minority youth leaders at national and local levels.

- The revision and updating of the charter on the participation of young people at local level should include specific provisions and proposals for minority young people.
- The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance should systematically include a special chapter on “Youth” in its country reports.
- The Council of Europe should promote the participation of the existing European Roma youth networks in the structure of the European Roma Forum.
- The Council of Europe National Youth Policy Reviews should include in the future a separate chapter on minority youth issues. Similarly, the inclusion and participation of minority youth in youth policy development should be introduced as an indicator for the quality of youth policy at national and international levels.
- The Directorate of Youth and Sport should further support the sustainability of minority youth organisations in ways that address their existing needs (especially through the European Youth Foundation).
- European institutions should develop special internship programmes for minority youth leaders.
- European minority youth organisations should be encouraged to organise hearings on issues faced by minority issues with relevant political bodies.
- National youth policies should always consider addressing specifically minority youth issues.
- National institutions and organisations concerned with young people should involve minority youth organisations with the design and implementation of programmes and projects addressed to minority young people.
- Whenever they are not already doing it, national youth councils should pay special attention to being inclusive of minority young people’s concerns and organisations, notably by raising awareness among their member organisations and effectively opening up membership of organisations to minority young people. In addition, National Youth Councils should be encouraged by competent bodies to open dialogue with minority youth organisations on the concerns of minority youth. The provision of internship opportunities for youth leaders from minority youth organisations in the National Youth Council of their country could support such a dialogue. National Youth Councils should also consider having an officer to deal with minority and multicultural issues.





2. FOLLOW-UP TO THE LTTC

The positive results and impact of the LTTC must be continued in 2004 and the possibilities for participation extended to other organisations, minorities and participants. In designing and planning the implementation of a future LTTC, the following elements should be considered.

- The course should reflect the current challenges of minority young people, as part of the fight against racism, intolerance and all forms of discrimination and of the work priority on Human Rights Education and social cohesion. The course should be run on a regular annual basis.
- The course should be addressed to minority youth leaders and should include people from all minority groups, including ‘Gay/Bi-sexual/Lesbian/Trans-gender and disabled young people.
- The practical phase of the course should include active support measures for the participants and their projects, such as mentoring, project visits and, where appropriate and relevant, financial support for some projects.
- The contents of the course should ensure the inclusion of new elements such as training on advocacy for minority and human rights and links with national youth policies (and their actors). The gender perspective on key issues should be systematically included in the programme.
- Minority organisations should be closely involved in the preparation and design of the course.
- Minority organisations should closely follow up the participants of the LTTC, notably in view of networking with national organisations and with other minorities.



3. OTHER TRAINING AND SUPPORT MEASURES

- A Training Course for Trainers active with minority youth issues should be provided, possibly in 2005, with a view to consolidating the learning experiences of the LTTC trainers and former participants and to ensuring a higher level of visibility and treatment of minority issues in other training activities.
- A training seminar for the National Youth Council’s representatives on ways of involving minority youth in the NYC’s work should be organised, preferably in co-operation with the European Youth Forum.
- A training seminar should be organised, possibly together with the Directorate of Social Cohesion, on the integration of people with disability/mixed abilities.
- The language courses provided by the Directorate of Youth and Sport should give priority to youth leaders from minority organisations as a way to support the consolidation of their organisations.
- The Directorate of Youth and Sport should systematically provide information on the accessibility of its resources for minority youth (EYCs, EYF, etc.), including the provision of technical assistance for participants with disabilities in activities at the European Youth Centres.



- The requirements for compensation of loss of earnings should be simplified so as to avoid employers knowing the organisational affiliations of participants.
- Information about minority youth issues should be integrated into the programme of other training activities.
- The participation of leaders of minority youth organisations in the rest of the training programme should be encouraged and given priority by those in charge of selecting participants.

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During five years, from 1997 to 2001, the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe has carried out a long-term training course with the aim to empower minority youth leaders and enhance their participation at local and national level. The course "Participation and Citizenship", a direct follow-up of the European Youth Campaign "all different - all equal", has involved some 150 minority youth leaders and youth workers who have developed and implemented a similar number of projects.

This is a summary of the evaluation of the course and of the impact achieved on participants, the minority young people and the communities in which they were active.

The Council of Europe has forty-five member states, covering virtually the entire continent of Europe. It seeks to develop common democratic and legal principles based on the European Convention of Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals. Ever since it was founded in 1949, in the aftermath of the second world war, the Council of Europe has symbolised reconciliation.

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