

EUROPEAN FELLOWSHIP

“Moving Forward – Keys to Reconciliation”

Training course for voluntary leaders in Millisle, Northern Ireland, 9.–16.4.2006

At the Easter time the European Fellowship organised a one-week training course for young voluntary leaders aged 17–25 years. The course gathered 42 participants from 10 different European countries. The venue was Ganaway Activity Centre in Northern Ireland, United Kingdom with BB UK & Eire as the host.

The course was part of the European Campaign “All Different – All Equal” and was supported by European Youth Foundation.

The programme was planned and implemented by the young leaders themselves – 6 team leaders from 5 countries formed the planning team for the preparations and the overall running of the course, and the national teams prepared the themes and led the workshops. Some of the material of the course can be found on the web

<http://www.ptk.fi/ef>

The Education Pack of the previous “All Different – All Equal” campaign was used for the theme work and found very useful. Both Education Pack and Domino were introduced to the participants, as well as the whole new campaign and its structure.

The mornings were reserved for the themes, which this year were Diversity and Reconciliation. The themes were introduced by various methods like drama, discussions, art, group work and role-plays.

In the afternoons there were workshops of practical issues like arts and handicraft, outdoor games, leadership skills, cooking on fire, canoeing and wall climbing. Evening programmes introduced the diversity of Europe – the participants shared dances, songs and games from their home countries, and national food and snacks were enjoyed in the international buffet.

One of the highlights at the course was the guest speaker, Mr. Colin Craig, Development Director from TIDES, Northern Ireland. Tides Training is an ethically based Voluntary non profit company. It is committed to helping build the community infrastructure necessary to sustain a lasting and equitable peace in situations which have experienced violent conflict. The name TIDES is constructed from five separate elements which act as the core value base for the functioning of the company. These are; Transformation, Interdependence, Diversity, Equity and Sustainability. These principles form the base for all its work. Website <http://www.tidestraining.org/> Mr. Craig introduced the history of the conflict in Northern Ireland and told about the efforts in bringing different parties closer to each other in the region. Mr. Craig has experience in conflict solving training e.g. in Macedonia, Kosovo, Pakistan and Bosnia.

Another important experience was a study visit in Belfast. The training course was invited for a reception at the Belfast City Hall (having its 100 year jubilee) and had the privilege to meet the High Sheriff of the Belfast City.

The idea of the course was to learn new skills, share ideas, exchange good practices of youth work, get to know other cultures and make new friends. This model also gave

an experience of planning and running an international event. The participants are multipliers in their own organisations putting into practise and sharing what they have learned. Contacts established at the course will most probably lead into youth exchanges later, which was one of the goals.

“The Easter Course is a place to overcome one’s prejudice, make new friends and enjoy the similarities and differences of the other young leaders.”

Ms. Anna-Riitta Simonen (21 years), Finland

“It was a great experience to spend a whole week with other young people from different countries. Although we were from different countries we played together, we sang the same song. We had the same successes. “

Mr. Daniel Varkonyi (23 years), Hungary

Tuovi Varis
Secretary
European Fellowship