

Youth Peace Camp

Engaging young people and youth organisation from conflict stricken regions in dialogue and conflict transformation



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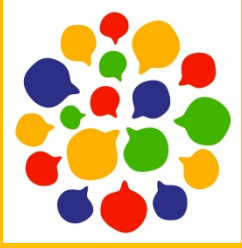
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Report

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what is it?

Youth Peace Camps were initiated by the Council of Europe in 2004. The Youth Peace Camp concept brings together young people and youth organisations from opposing sides from conflict-stricken regions to take part in dialogue and conflict transformation activities. The activities are based on human rights education and intercultural learning and are designed to provide the young people with a positive experience in living and learning together. In 2012 the Youth Peace Camp took place at the European Youth Centre Strasbourg under the direction of the Youth Department of the Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation.

Young people growing up in regions affected by armed conflicts, being exposed to and/or enduring the consequences of extreme forms of physical and structural violence, are often confronted with dramatic life forming experiences, emotions and challenges. Such experiences may strongly influence their views and behaviour towards their own and other communities, their relation to conflict and peace and their identity. Many young people, despite often adverse circumstances, choose to engage in constructive initiatives and dialogue instead of being the multipliers of hatred and rejection which fuel prejudice. When supported and recognised in their role, these young people may become peer leaders and educators and, in turn, sensitise and involve other young people in dialogue, mediation, intercultural communication, conflict transformation and peace work projects.

In their role as peer leaders and in learning about conflict and peace, it is important for them to be able to relate to, and to be confronted with, the life stories, experiences and aspirations of other young people from other conflict regions. The Youth Peace Camp provides space and time for young people to better understand conflicts and their transformation by listening to and living with other young people affected by other conflicts elsewhere.

InterCultural Learning and Human Rights Education play a central role in the Youth Peace Camp: recognising and addressing prejudice; combating aggressive and exclusive forms of nationalism; identifying the competences necessary for youth actors active in inter/multi-cultural environments, and so on. InterCultural Learning is understood to be a natural part of the educational content and approach for Intercultural Dialogue and together with Human Rights Education respond to the dilemmas resulting from physical, structural and cultural conflicts.

The Youth Peace Camp provides a safe space for young people from different conflict-stricken regions to learn together about conflict, to share their experiences with other young people and to build their capacity to engage and develop future conflict transformation projects and initiatives.

Youth Peace Camp brings together young people with high potential to be multipliers with no or little previous experience in peace work or international activities but who have a strong interest and motivation to get engaged in such processes for the first time.

The Youth Peace Camp also enables the Council of Europe's youth sector to identify and document challenges faced by young people in conflict regions and to improve its ability to support youth projects in those regions.



Aim:

To engage with young people and youth organisations from conflict stricken regions, providing them with a positive experience in living and learning together, to allow for dialogue and conflict transformation activities based on human rights education and intercultural learning, to take place during and after the project.



Objectives:

To develop the conceptual and practical meanings of conflict, peace, and conflict transformation through dialogue

To share among participants their personal experiences of conflict and violence and their coping strategies, identifying what is common and specific between them

To develop the competences of participants in conflict transformation, intercultural learning, and dialogue including a critical understanding of the personal and collective identities and its role in conflicts

To learn about human rights and human rights education as frameworks for conflict transformation and dialogue

To learn from existing practices and experiences of people within the youth field working on dialogue and conflict transformation

To motivate and support participants in their role as multipliers and peer leaders in peace building activities with young people from their organisations and communities

To increase the role and expertise of the Council of Europe, in particular its youth sector, in working with conflict transformation as part of its mission in relation to intercultural dialogue



Facilitator Team

The Facilitator and Training Team consisted of seven¹ facilitators – one for each country / community represented in the Youth Peace Camp. There was also one Senior Trainer and an Educational Advisor. This team was further pedagogically supported by the Head of the Youth Department. The facilitators and trainer were selected through an open call distributed in the Trainers Pool of the Council of Europe and the network of previous Youth Peace Camp participants. As a result 2 of the Facilitators were participants in the previous year and 2 had been Facilitators the previous year. In terms of gender balance, there were 3 female Facilitators, 4 male Facilitators and both the Senior Trainer and the Education Advisor were male.

Having previous years Facilitators and participants was a great asset to gaining insight into what worked well and what to avoid. Many comments and pieces of advice from these members of the team directed and formed strategy and programme design.



The responsibilities of the Facilitators included:

- Assistance in selection of the participants of Youth Peace Camp
- Facilitate the learning experience of the participants
- Empower all participants in the project, regardless of region/background
- Conduct sessions within the programme
- Co-ordinate and run the daily Reflection Groups
- Be responsible for the National and Bi-National group meetings
- To support /lead small working group discussions
- Help the participants to work on peace multiplying activities in their own communities following the Peace Camp week



The Senior Trainer and Education Advisor were responsible for:

- Supporting the facilitators in their responsibility to support the participants
- Develop conceptual parts of the programme
- Develop, implement and report on the programme of activities
- Coach and support the Facilitators in their work
- Coordinate the preparation process for the Youth Peace Camp
- Support participants in their group and individual learning processes
- The Educational Advisor was responsible for the overall administration of the project and leading the team of Facilitators and Trainer.

¹ Please note that the Facilitator from the Russian Federation was not present at either the preparation meeting or the Youth Peace Camp itself due to personal circumstances.



Participants

The participants of Youth Peace Camp 2012 were selected from over 190 applications. The initial selection of participants was coordinated by the Education Advisor of the Youth Department. This initial selection was then given to the Facilitation Team. The Facilitator Team then confirmed or suggested adjustments to the final selection.

Forty Two participants were selected, between the age of 18 and 24, though only 39 actually attended the Youth Peace Camp. (2 Russian Federation Participants cancelled as well as one of the participants from Azerbaijan). Participants came from four conflict-stricken regions, these were: Armenia and Azerbaijan; Georgia and Russian Federation; the region of Kosovo² and Serbia; and Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

There were 6 participants from each region with the exception of Israel and the Palestinian Authority which had 3 each.

The diversity within the participant sub group was quite good. For example one of the Israeli participants was an Arab Israeli. One of the Kosovo Albanian group was Bosniak.



Only one or two participants had some problems with communicating in English, on the whole however the majority was quite happy conversing and listening in English. As a group the participants were quite careful to be politically correct around one another and careful not to offend fellow participants from the 'other' side. Though this made for a smoother week in terms of not having any major conflicts erupting, it did mean that often the real issues were not faced or talked about in the free time. However the dialogue process that was initiated in the bi-national group meeting did manage to allow participant to explore more sensitive issues between them. Another plus side to this is that most of the group have remained quite active in communications with one another through Facebook for example. Here participants have been supportive of one another, encouraging each other in their future project ideas, asking each other for advice, support and new ideas. Several participants coming from various country/communities are actively seeking to work together to develop their future projects.

² All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.



Programme

Day 0 Friday 22nd June

Arrival Day
Welcome Evening

Day 1 Saturday 23rd June

Official Opening and Introduction through Welcome Space
Group Building
Creativity & Learning
Reflection Groups

Day 2 Sunday 24th June

Individual & Collective Identity
Exploring Conflict and Dialogue Dynamics
Reflection Groups

Day 3 Monday 25th June

Experiences of Young People in Conflict Regions
Sharing personal experienced with conflicts
Presenting the realities of youth living in conflict regions
Practicing dialogue building on the experiences shared.

Day 4 Tuesday 26th June

Experiences of Young People in Conflict Regions
Exploring the concept of violence through dialogue
Free afternoon
Reflection Groups
Free Time

Day 5 Wednesday 27th June

Human Rights, Dignity and Values
Human Rights Protection and Human Rights Education
InterCultural Learning
InterCultural Learning Theory
Reflection Groups

Day 6 Thursday 28th June

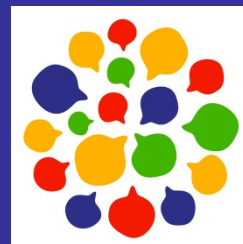
What Do I Do Next?
Developing plans for follow-up after the camp
Reflection Groups
Visit to the Council of Europe Head Quarters, Palais

Day 7 Friday 29th June

What Do I Do Next?
Presentation of the European Youth Foundation
Final national Groups and Reflection Groups
Evaluation Space & Closure
Closing Speeches

Day 8 Saturday 30th June

Departure Day



This section of the report does not cover the entire Youth Peace Camp in detail but provides a description of the key parts of the programme in order to provide a concise narrative of the core of the Youth Peace Camp and its impact.

The build-up of the programme aimed to allow participants to first learn to learn and work together as individuals and not only as members of their cultural group. The Identity session further strengthened the understanding among participants that they are individuals with their own characteristics before being part of the group and their collective identity is related to the groups they are assigned to.

The programme then moved to exploring what is conflict and the common approaches to conflict. After realising that conflicts can also be constructive and an opportunity for development and growth the participants started to explore how they can engage in constructive dialogue. This process put participants for the first time in the situation that they talk as members of a community that is in conflict with the community of other participants of the Youth Peace Camp.

The dialogue process continued throughout the week. For example when exploring violence, Human Rights, and how individual realities can be shaped by the individual experiences of the participants. At the end of the week the dialogue process was closed safely allowing participants to get ready for going home and develop plans for follow up.

Throughout the Youth Peace Camp non-formal education was used as the methodology for learning, this included experiential learning, role-plays, discussions, group assignments, reflection, individual work, small groups, plenary discussions, inputs and exercises.

Individual & Collective Identity

In the Personal Identity sessions the participants worked intensively on making their collages, bringing together the images from magazines and newspapers that they chose as representing their identities. In the debriefing participants declared that they mostly tackled the surface, visual element of their identity. Then they got deeper when they sat in pairs to discuss the work they did. They were able to find some similarities, learned new things about each other and about themselves. That led to the reflection that identity is a complex topic with many levels.

In the collective identity part of the session, the participants were very active. They really shared in their small groups their understanding of their own Identity and tried to find connections between one another and present it creatively. The presentations were very different from one another. One group mentioned unique elements of their culture emphasising similarities and differences between them. It was also clear that some groups focused strongly on the task while others focused on their discussions of the content itself.

During the debriefing of the exercise participants mentioned the activity made them feel more connected than before. They were surprised to find so many connections and joint interests among them. The conclusion of the exercise was the realisation that as an individual you are not alone, many connections exist on many levels allowing for meetings and connections to be found between everyone.

Exploring Conflict and Dialogue Dynamics

The main exercise here was to build a city consisting of 7 buildings using recycled materials of boxes, card and paper. From the first moment many members of the groups grabbed what they could – there was no discussion in the groups about what they would need, individual members just reacted. Some then realised they had a lot and distributed what they had to others, while some participants had to ask other groups for materials. After participants built their 7 buildings in pairs they were presented with the city limits which were smaller than the sum of the buildings together.

During the debriefing the reactions of the participants were as follows: on first seeing the territories there was panic, fear of failure and confidence of success. One person suggested a strategy to the group for planning and leadership but the rest of the group decided things should just be built and completed as fast as possible – task oriented. Another group voted on every decision and abided by majority rule. One group thought about needs of a community and prioritised accordingly. Two groups sacrificed cultural buildings but justified it with saying that cultural activities could take place in alternative buildings. The third group succeeded to arrange all their buildings in the allocated space, (though they were one building less than the other groups). Some people dropped their ideas or sacrificed their building for the greater good of the group. It was reflected that many people make decisions in reality that affect us whether we like it or not.

Experiences of Young People in Conflict Regions

In their role as peer leaders and in learning about conflict and peace, it is important for the participants to be able to relate to and to be confronted with, the life stories, experiences and aspirations of young people from the so called opposing side of the conflict they are involved in as well as other conflict regions. The specificity of the Youth Peace Camp has been the possibility to better understand conflicts and their transformation by listening to, sharing stories and living with young people from the opposing side as well as young people from other conflicts elsewhere.

The following series of activities formed a crucial foundation and preparation for the dialogue that was to come between the different conflictual groups. It also helped to show that dialogue is as much about perception and listening as it is about speaking your own point of view, therefore highlighting the difference between dialogue and debate.

In groups of three, participants were given a series of questions, two of them had to answer at the same time and the third try and understand the answer. In the debriefing of the 'Active & Attentive Listening' activity participants realised that it wasn't easy to listen when two people are talking at the same time. Participants came to the conclusion that there is a difference between hearing and listening, everyone can hear but not everyone knows how to listen

In the next activity, 'Perspectives', participants were shown a film in which things happen that we do not automatically register on a conscious level. From this activity participants understood that: sometimes we have a way of thinking that we are used to and we do not see anything else that is in the picture.

Groups of mixed participants were then formed for the 'Personal Sharing in Mixed Groups' activity. There were 6 in each group, one from each nationality represented. The instructions were to share a story about how conflict has affected them personally. In this context conflict could mean a personal conflict, family conflict, friends, school/university based, etc. In the debrief the participants reflected about listening to the others experiences that: it was easy because it was interesting but if it's something that I don't agree with it's harder to listen; the more energy/reaction to the story we have, the harder it is to listen; things that are normal to

us are extreme to others and the opposite; helped me feel more related to other people; difficult; the stories are going to stay in my head and heart; I am not alone there are more conflicts in the world; shocked; I am motivated to handling situations differently.

The main activity of this phase and indeed of the whole Youth Peace Camp was the 'Country Presentations' of all groups. It was carefully and strongly recommended for the groups to focus primarily on their personal experiences as a group of young people living in a conflict region rather than to give focus to their own sides historical perspective.

During the presentations limited details were presented about the historical background of any conflict. Participants from other regions raised lots of questions about the background of the conflicts, though not all groups felt comfortable responding to such questions.

In the presentations a few common challenges were presented by most groups: lack or limitations to employment opportunities; loss of your house or not having possibilities to acquire housing in their situation/region; military conscription and the impact on lives of young people (mostly young men); lack or limited access to education; fear on daily basis for attacks, violence and death; limitations in freedom of movement, city, region, country or international travel; limited or no communication possibility with young people from the opposite side.

The activity itself was followed by a mono-national group meeting which was facilitated and then a bi-national group meeting also facilitated. At these two meetings the members of the groups could debrief their experience by themselves and then with the other group. Participants in particular mentioned that their perspectives and of young people in general in their region on the conflict are influenced, (mostly negatively), by the media, friends/peers and their families with direct experiences with the conflict.

The following day the activity 'What is Violent, What is Not?' was used as a follow up to the previous days sharing. In mono-national groups they received a list of 'violent' acts and had to prioritise which they felt were the most violent and which were the least. In the second stage they were joined in their bi-national groups to compare their lists and make a single list. Participants realised that many statements were related to their background. They identified different categorizing of the statements, for example; types of violence used or on possible impact it might have on a person. They used such categorizations to help them in their ranking the statements. In the bi-national groups they explored: ranking was made by all in relation to their own experiences; seeing things differently, participants could agree to disagree. The debriefing of the process led to the overall reflection that today there was easier communication, less tension, and a comfort to go further.

A relation between the outcomes of this activity and the identity activities of two days before was made. Participants commented that: they realised again they have a personal and collective identity; that overall they all have things in common, for example with experiences of violence; how they as a person understand violence relates to their identity and experiences.

During the input on 'Structural, Cultural and Physical Violence' reference was made to sexist comments and stereotypes as an act of violence linking them back to statements and attitudes that had been expressed earlier in the week. Often we do not even perceive that an act of violence is being committed if it does not affect us directly. It is only when you are the receiver of the violence, for example the person a sexist remark is directed to that you experience it as an act of violence. Not to forget the unconscious violence that many of us experience without being really aware of it but which still impacts our self-esteem.

After the short input on 'Empathy' participants reflected that: Finding too much empathy might let me put down my guard and I cannot afford that always; don't want to feel with them too much, might not be able to protect myself. I am allowing myself to be exposed; allow myself to listen; defensive, then understand where the other side stands.

Human Rights Dignity and Values

Rui Gomes made an interactive input on Human Rights, Dignity and Values. He asked all the participants to draw a flower on a piece of paper, in the middle of their flower they should put "ME" (themselves). Each petal is a need, the more important the need the bigger the petal, the less important the smaller the petal. On the leaves the participants should write what is needed to fulfil those needs (that dimension in your life).

Pairs then shared with each other their drawings and commented back to the plenary: everything is linked in one way or another, without one thing you can't have the other.. After participants shared with each other their drawings they were asked "what is important in order to feel respected, and to be a dignified human being?" Responses included: freedom; security; everything is connected like a chain.

It was explained that Human Rights are about dignity. You can only understand and appreciate dignity when you face humiliation. Examples of humiliation included: extra checks at an airport which is upsetting, no trust in who I am; humiliation could be repeated constantly, like in the airport I am always put aside for thorough extra checking.

During the discussion, the participants reflected on questions posed by Rui and came up with a number of examples of Human Rights issues that they face or are aware of. Human Rights are universal but many face issues, for example; Palestinians can't move between Gaza Strip and the West Bank, their right to move freely within their territory is violated by Israel; Human Rights are not perfect because humans made them, humans are the subject to have these rights, humans violate them; Religion does not violate human rights, human practice of religion could violate others human rights.

All Different All Equal – always in tension!

Human Rights Protection & Human Rights Education

The game 'Frozen Lake of Human Rights' was introduced. The participants started to plan and prepare strategies for the game. The participants were active and running to 'save' the Rights from the lake.

During the debrief they reflected and shared their feelings from the game. They also connected the game and their behaviours with the different types of conflicts that were explained in the previous days. Some of the comments were as follows: conflict between those who want to get a chance to try to put the articles in the correct place and those who were picking all articles too quickly put them in place; different conflict resolution strategies were taking place; some felt there were several conflicts, others didn't sense any; people appreciate relationships differently; some wanted to understand the articles, but many times there wasn't any time or space to understand what the article was or what it meant.

And another question that was raised was "Why are some of the same human rights mentioned several times in different forms?" Participants shared and commented by saying that: they should be everywhere because they are basic, those groups who find it more difficult to enjoy their rights are mentioned more.

InterCultural Learning

Participants were divided into three groups, separated and given a series of instructions for a simulation game. After the preparation phase the game itself started and it was first time that the groups saw how each group looked like and heard their 'new languages'. During the communication it was obvious that within each group there were people who were actively involved in the process and others who were passive and took more the role of observers.

In the debrief participants shared that they defined and showed their 'new culture' through the given rules, through the strategies they defined while still separated, and through the presented goals in the instructions. When asked how they defined their culture, they responded with the visible and tangible elements; by special nose, specific greeting, smiling, language, flag, and use of colours.

A number of further points were raised from the debrief: one group shared that every time they split up to get information from the other groups they came back together to make decisions about what they had found; another person shared that when they decided something on their own they realised it may not be so good for the team; One group experienced lots of misunderstandings; for others the language barrier was a huge barrier in the game; several people commented that the needs of everyone should have been considered; other still commented that they saw a parallel with their own situations, 'we have this kind of situations in our conflict region'; it was recognised that the people who tried to negotiate were not successful and that it was very hard for them; one stated 'we didn't succeed to negotiate'.

For summing up the session the theory of the 'Cultural Iceberg' and the role of InterCultural Learning in the conflict transformation process was presented.

InterCultural Learning Theory

After being introduced to the concept of InterCultural Learning, participants were presented with the Bennetts model, one stage at a time. They were asked to suggest what came to their mind when they see the title of the stage. Examples and definitions were provided.

Denial of Difference: An individual denies that cultural differences exist. They experience their own culture as the only 'real' one."

Defense against Difference: When you are trying to keep your culture, to be different and show how you are different

Minimization of Difference: Pay less attention to the differences

Acceptance of Differences: See the differences and accept both sides

Adaptation of Differences: You adapt to yourself things from the other culture

Integration of Differences: Mix differences of both cultures

After the interactive presentation participants watched the Pixar movie 'Day & Night'. It was shown once without interruption. The second time it was shown, the participants were asked to shout out which stage of the Bennett model they felt was being shown at different points of the film.

What Do I Do Next?

The session started with reminding the participants of the importance of the Youth Peace Camp and what they had learned and experienced. They were asked to reflect on how they could use this basic knowledge when they go back to their communities. An example was provided from Youth Peace Camp 2011 from Dana and Ma'ayan who told participants about their successfully implemented follow up project 'The Snowball project'. This is a project where young people from Israel and the Palestinian Authority meet every second month on the border between the two regions.

This was followed by the exercise 'What Can I Do in my Community'. During the individual exercise participants were asked to think and write just their own project ideas and stick their ideas on the wall to be visible for all the participants. They then had to answer the following question: 'When I get back home, I will...' and present their own project ideas. In the project development session, the main phases of project development were explained: justification; aim/goal; specific objectives; activities; outputs; evaluation; and budget. It was pushed that participants needed to be realistic. Participants then got together in bi-national groups to share their ideas in more detail and look at how they could cooperate to develop their projects or combine overlapping projects.

Some of the developed project ideas are already being implemented, they are presented at the end of this document.



Conclusive Results

On the last day of the Youth Peace Camp participants completed a written evaluation form, a summary of their responses can be found at the end of this report. The impression from the evaluation forms indicates a high level of satisfaction. The participants are happy to have been involved in the Youth Peace Camp.

The main success of the camp is primarily about relationships. Participants reported that they had made new friends and connections. They discovered new things from the others and had the opportunity to be representatives of their own community. The opportunity to share their experiences and feelings was one of the most important aspects of the week. The participants also created solid bonds with the trainers/facilitators.

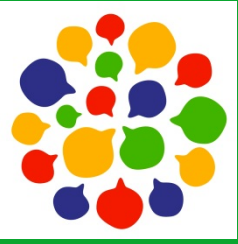
The learning aspect is the second main success of Youth Peace Camp 2012. All of the participants came with different backgrounds, experiences and expectations, and all found fulfilment in a way or another. The knowledge they received, above all about conflict transformation and intercultural issues, had a strong effect on them. It motivated them, inspired them to create projects, to start something new back home and to involve other people into the same kind of process.

Some Points to Re-think

The Human Right's session gathered a lot of comments. Either it was considered unclear, misunderstood or there was simply not enough time to explore it. The content and the way it was organized was for some frustrating. It is recommended that more time be dedicated to this topic during the next Youth Peace Camp.

The need for "going deeper" was also something that appeared frequently in answers. Some participants expected to have more open discussions or to have more opportunities and time to express their feelings concerning the conflict issues.

A significant part of the participants complained about the games implemented as part of the learning. They were considered as useless, childish or misunderstood. Opinions about them are divided. It is recommended that a greater effort be made in explaining the goal of a game.



Team Evaluation

In essence the team was happy with their work and the Youth Peace Camp as a whole. Several things were noted in the final team meeting:

Number of regions: An argument arose as to whether there should be 3 or 4 conflict stricken regions – there were mixed arguments with the majority of the team feeling that 4 regions works well.

Programme: It was felt that it was too busy, there were too many subjects and issues which were tackled superficially. This was particularly in relation to Human Rights and Identity, these especially needed more depth and more time. However even with the number of days extended by one this year, it is still difficult to see what could be cut out to give more time to each subject.

The use of games was appreciated by the majority of the participants though quite a number felt there needed to be more specific theoretical inputs.

Language: Only one person this year experienced any significant language barrier, a great improvement on the previous year.

Timetable: The lunch breaks needed to be longer, in order for the team not to have to rush their lunch and so have time for preparation for the afternoon activities. In terms of the participants, if they wanted to go to the city they needed more time. This was an issue on a couple of occasions when groups went into the city for shopping and were substantially late for the afternoon session.

Debriefs: Most of the debriefings did not fully challenge the participants to the extent they could have. This was partly due to time and perhaps partly due to the Team being careful not to push too hard.

Logistics: The support staff (Nina and Nathalie) were highly praised for their support for the participants, regarding travel and visa situations particularly. This information was passed to all of the Facilitator Team from their participant groups and was experienced by the Team themselves.

The whole process needed to have started at least one month earlier, the beginning of May was too close to the actual event and made travel, visa and programme development too rushed.

Keeping the entire building free from other activities during a Youth Peace Camp was very much appreciated and the principle should be maintained for the future.

The technical support in terms of working materials was not so good, the printer in the team room was removed, this meant that all printing had to go through the Educational Advisor who was already overstretched in his role and other work. It took a couple of days to finally receive the basic standard materials that are normally provided for every activity

Music for Peace building among the Caucasus region

Nikolaï KAZANTSEV (Russian group)

This project is one of the artistic ones imagined by the participants of Youth Peace Camp 2012. It consists in giving charity concerts, (two musicians will be involved, Nikolaï himself and another one, Georgian), in public places in Georgia: especially schools or refugee camps. The concerts will be associated with training courses and this project is mainly aimed for young people who suffer from the conflict in Georgia. They plan to execute this project in three steps, by gathering and prepare a team this summer, then create and prepare the activities until January 2013. The project should actually start in May 2013.

Business community of young entrepreneurs

David KHOSROSHVILI (Georgian group)

Using an existing organization in Georgia, (Liberty Camps/Academies), in which he is already engaged, David wishes to create a project involving meetings, conferences and an online platform on business and economical topics. This events would gather young people interested in those subjects from Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, and if possible Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The main objective is to enable these young people to create connections and to build a community based on trade and mutual interests. He plans to make a pilot testing of the project in Autumn or Winter 2012, in one of the Liberty Camps set up by his organization. He has also some ideas concerning the funding of his project, and has participated in Friedrich Naumann Foundation Academy, (Naumann Foundation being one of the main found sources for Liberty activities in Georgia), in order to present the project.

Traditional breakfasts, (webTV programs)

Yulia ELYAKOVA (Russian group)

The contents of the project is quite simple, it consists of creating short TV shows, (of one or two minutes), presenting a traditional breakfast from one country or region. The TV show would be introduced by a child, in mother tongue, subtitled in English. The short movies are very simple to realize, and Yulia already made the first one, presenting the Russian traditional breakfast. It took her 20 minutes to film. She hopes that other participants will take part in her project and send her videos of the same kind. This project is made in order to enable people to learn from each other's cultural differences, first concerning breakfast, and maybe about other topics later. She plans to make a complete TV programme by asking for financial assistance in order to get it permanent and regular.

To download the video:

<https://disk.yandex.net/disk/public/hash=Fo6kfl52yXg8MgqaahLrvhYVyUzblyunVib1J%2FaKorg%3D&final=true>

Regional volunteering projects

Varsik NERKARARYAN and Marta KHACHATRYAN (Armenian group)

Varsik is now engaged in several projects on a regional level. Once back home, she has been contacted by the National Democracy Institute in Armenia in order to organize a town hall meeting, gathering young people from the region of Ljevan so that they can meet officials to talk about the problems they face in living in this region. She is now working as a volunteer with 9 other people on that project.



She recently got answers from participants of an Azerbaijan group about local trainings, (which was the idea they got in Strasbourg). They hope to realize some project at the end of September.

She also created a Facebook group, named "I'm a volunteer" that aims to bring young people in her region together and start acting with them:

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/389571434436594/>

Finally, she plans to create, (with the cooperation of Marta), a Clearing House in which to organize trainings on Human Rights and cultural understanding topics. This place would also be a meeting point where young people who want to volunteer could find information about different NGO's and their activities.

Peace through traveling

Albina HAJIMAHAMADOVA (Azerbaijani group).

The main goal of this project is to organize a common trip to any other country, in priority for young people living in South Caucasus region. Albina believes that the easiest way to understand each other is through common interest, here being a traveller. She would create a blog on the Internet in order to gather and display any kind of information about traveling, and then organize the first trip in February 2013. She also plans to get financial assistance.

She plans to make also a second project, with the help of the organization she is engaged in: AEGEE, (European Student's forum), so any country which is part of this organization can be involved in the project. The idea would be to organize national holiday and invite young people from different countries to take part to the event. The project would also involve trips to other regions of the country and language lessons with detailed information about culture given during the event.

Finally, with the help on an Armenian girl met in another project made by the Council of Europe, she is planning to open an information website about peace ("peacenews"), the goal being to give truthful information, without propaganda. The project is not detailed right now, and the online platform is being created for the moment.

Blog about YPC 2012:

<http://albina-nirvana.livejournal.com/2061.html>

Training with IDP's

Lasha GOCHIASHVILI (Georgian group).

Lasha plans to use the outcomes of Youth Peace Camp 2012 to make a training for Georgian IDP's in September, about conflict.

Facebook page and club concerning peace

Afag NADIRLI (Azerbaijani group) and Hovhannes HARUTYUNYAN (Armenian group).

Afag and Hovhannes are planning to first of all to find young people in their local societies who are shearing their viewpoints concerning exciting conflict between two countries. Then for presenting similarities between Armenian and Azerbaijani traditions and behaviours we will be open a Facebook page. Through the page will be promoted idea that two countries can coexist, (example of Russia and Georgia may be used). The Facebook page may later grow to a web site and magazine. One of the ideas is also open a club in Georgia where young people from 2 countries can meet, to spend nice time together; play

national typical games, etc. As there is lack of information among people in each conflicting county it will be great possibility for young people for discover each other and to understand that not all people from conflict sides want war.

Peace and Conflict

Jeyhun MAMMADLI (Azerbaijani group)

Jeyhun is planning to realize long term training course. As a first phase it is planned in autumn to realize training course for young people, (from 18 to 25), from regions in Armenia and Azerbaijan. As a second phase the participants of the training courses from Armenia and Azerbaijan will meet together in the third country (Russia or Georgia).

Peace and Conflict

Mohammad WARI, Adaya HADAR , Kareen SILBER (Israeli group) and Fadi ALTHAYABEH, Ramez KIRMIZ, Tamara KLEIBO (Palestinian group)

Participants from the Israeli and Palestinian groups developed one common project which consists of two parts. One of the ideas is to travel within the country borders, (Palestine-Israel), visit Palestinian camps and to try to help people living there by doing some volunteering work, activities for children living in camps.

The other idea is to meet with the participants who were at the YPC from both sides, and to do some common activities such as cooking. These kind of activities will give chance to know each other's culture more and more! The plan is also to meet from time to time, to keep relations and stay in touch.

Photo exhibition, film making and bike tour

Vahan KOSTANYAN, Anahit MUSHEGHYAN (Armenian group) and Gamar ALIZADE (Azerbaijani group)

According to project ideas there will be a photo competition which will be done both in Armenia and Azerbaijan and will present only the eyes of people. During the photo competition 5 winners will be selected from each country. The winners will have chance to come together in neutral territory, (third country), and to participate in film a making workshop as a result of which will be created a short film. As a final stage a photo exhibition and film screening will be organized both in Armenia and Azerbaijan. The project idea includes also simultaneous biking tour in both countries which will promote peace.



Evaluation Form Summary

1. How are you? How do you feel right now, at the end of this week?

In general the feelings expressed are very positive. In addition to these feelings participants expressed sadness regarding the fact that the week was ending. Other remarks are about the effects of the process. Some participants commented on the work done during the week, "high level/quality of coordination", "learned a lot", "full of new information".

2. How far in your opinion have the aims and objectives of this Youth Peace Camp been achieved?

As a general assessment the aim and objectives of Youth Peace Camp 2012 were considered achieved by the participants. Four participants made negative comments about the objective 4 regarding human rights education, which was considered as; "messy", "not clear enough". Some comments were made about the "talking" space and time either because facilitators and trainers took too much stage, or because a few participants talked "all the time". Two participants acknowledge the value of the success of aim and objectives achievement for their future, "realized that peace is important", "will continue working after the camp".

3.a. What were your main expectations of the Youth Peace Camp before coming here?

The four main expectations that stand out are: "Gain more knowledge about conflicts transformation"; "Acquire new practical methods of promotion of peace and dialogue"; "Learn more about others and their communities"; and "Meet people from other countries and cultures". Two of the main answers are concerning the fact of learning about others, in a theoretical sense and more practical way by meeting others, which corresponds to the lack of information and opportunities the participants experience in their home countries and communities. There is also the will to better understand by gaining "knowledge" about the conflict situations and acquire the "practical" means to find solutions.

3.b. How far did the course fulfil your expectations? Please explain.

Most of the comments express positive feelings. Participants emphasize about meeting new people and discovering other cultures. Some refer to the knowledge and experience gained during the week;. Some participants point out the positive effect of the process to their personal development, and others refer to the follow-up projects; "willing to go and promote peace", "more useful for my community". A few participants expressed that their expectations were not fulfilled (partly or totally). The main reasons being the lack of efficiency, that things didn't go "deep" enough, and the lack of "practical methods".

4. Which elements of the program were the most useful/valuable to you? Why?

The bi-national meetings were the most mentioned useful element. This was associated with the will to communicate, and make the other side understand their own situation. This confirms that most of the participants were motivated by the opportunity of meeting people from the other side of "their" conflict. The second most useful element was the personal stories session which reflects a more personal, "liberating" expectation towards the process. The collective and personal identity session were seen as the thing that facilitated their communication with the others. The reflexion groups were considered useful. The "Bennett model" was specifically mentioned in reference to InterCultural Learning. The project preparation session was also useful.

5. Which elements of the program were the least useful/valuable to you? Why?

Some participants explicitly wrote than nothing was non-useful. However, some elements of the program have been pointed by several participants as non, or less useful: the games

in general are associated mostly with the adjectives “childish” or “infantile”. Some participants pointed more specifically to the InterCultural Learning game, the “three tribes” game, which was considered as not well understood or implemented and too far from reality. A few participants in each case pointed out that the; human rights/lake session, the identity session, the conflict presentations, and the lecture were in general less useful.

6. What have you missed or you would like that have been different?

A quarter of the participants wrote that they didn't miss anything that everything was fine and well organized. Some participants commented on the way of organizing the group activities, in different ways. For example: half of them demanded to have more activities in smaller groups in order to have more space to express themselves. One Georgian participant regretted that there were not Abkhazian and South-Ossetian participants. A few participants wanted more time dedicated to Human Rights. A few other participants made comments about the lack of free time.

7.a . How would you rate your own level of learning from 1 – 6.

Just under half of the group rated their learning at level 5, the majority of the remainder rated themselves at level 4 and 6 with a minority rating themselves at levels 3 and 1.

7.b. What are your main learning points from this camp?

A large majority express the meeting and discovery of new cultures as their main learning point, either through intercultural learning or having met new people from other cultures. The Bennett model, and the ‘Day and Night’ video were specifically mentioned. A few participants stated that meeting people from the ‘other side’ was their main learning point. Knowledge about conflict transformation and peace building was also expressed. Some pointed to the effects on themselves; the identity session; their role as representatives of their own communities; a change or a better knowledge about one's self. The Human Rights session was one of the main learning points for some.

8. How do you evaluate your own contribution to your learning and to this camp?

A number of participants answered positively. Several expressed a more negative view, tending to blame themselves for not having contributed as much as they could have. A number considered themselves to have contributed by their ‘active’ participation to the sessions. An equal number consider their contribution due to more ‘personal’ characteristics; ‘representative of their own community’, ‘of one side of the conflict they experience’. Several considered their contribution in a more ‘passive’ way, they contributed by learning, here the word ‘learn’ is associated with positive expressions.

9. How do you evaluate the contribution of the group of participants to the camp and your learning?

The general impression about the group contribution is once again very positive. The most important contribution from the group was the knowledge and information they taught to the others. The value of the contribution of the group resides also in their diversity and most of all in their diversity of opinion. However a few expressed more ‘moderate’ points of view concerning the group dynamics, mostly saying that the ‘activeness’ and contribution of the group was unequal, and dependent on individuals.

10. How do you evaluate the contribution of the team of trainers/facilitators to the camp and your learning?

The general impression was that the team played an important role in the success of Youth Peace Camp 2012. Most used superlatives with comments of positive feelings towards the whole team. Participants acknowledged the success of the team due to their ‘professional’ skills, and the amount of work they did. A number expressed that they

learned from the trainers/facilitators. Some specified their comments and feelings and named the trainers/facilitators, once again, the result is mostly positive. A few stated that some team members didn't contribute as much as others, or that their teaching role could have been more practical.

11.a. Do you think what you have gained from the Youth Peace Camp 2012 will be useful for you back in your own reality?

A large number of the answers are very brief, and positive. The most detailed answers reference the future projects. In addition some participants emphasized the fact that the people they met in the Youth Peace Camp will be useful in their future 'friends'. A few participants pointed to the knowledge they learned as taking part of their future life and work. Only a minority declared themselves not so sure about the usefulness of the learning in Youth Peace Camp, preferring to get back home before deciding how useful it was.

11.b. How will you transfer what you have learned here to your organization and/or to your reality?

The answers show that the Youth Peace Camp was very inspirational, most of all in terms of action. In more than half of the answers the participants used words evoking creation, building and acting. More than half provide details on the types of projects they plan to implement once back home. Some plan to make projects about the promotion of Human Rights, some about InterCultural Learning, and a couple about peace-creating. The second type of 'action' is in sharing their experience with others, either in their own organization or more generally in their community.

12. If you have any comments on the trainers/facilitators team, please use this space here for sharing them with the team.

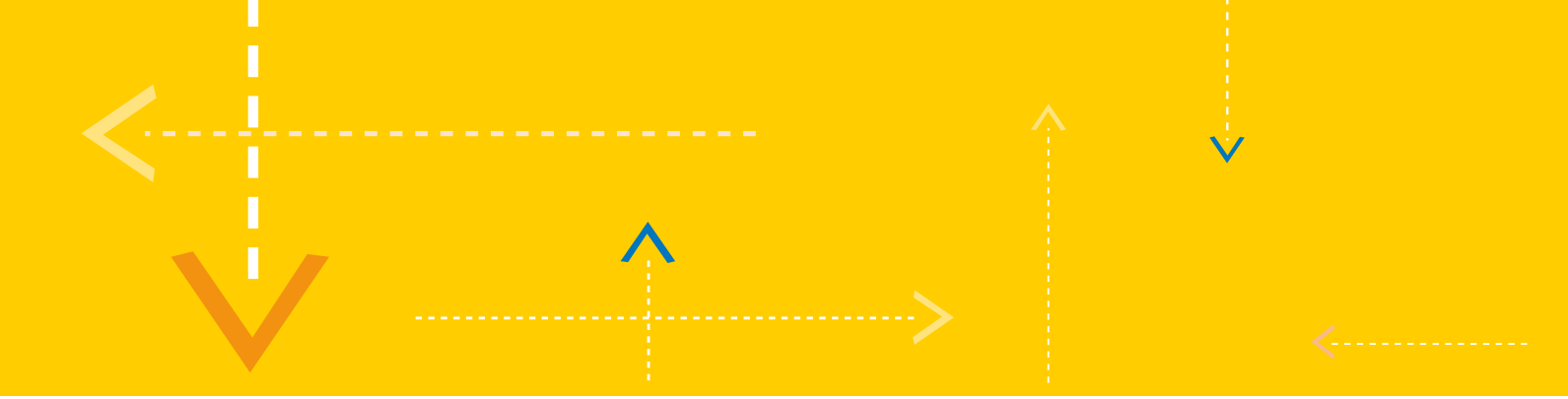
The majority of answers are messages of love and very positive adjectives describing the trainers/facilitators. About a third specified the trainers/facilitators they referred to. Several participants comment on the helping, supporting and teaching qualities possessed by the team members. A few mention the organizational qualities. The reflexion groups are mentioned as a valuable contribution from the facilitators. Some comments point out that some of the facilitators should not intervene so much in discussions and let participants express themselves more. Other comments are that the trainers/facilitators should have taken more part in the evening activities.

13. How satisfied are you with regards to the facilities of the European Youth Centre Strasbourg?

Except for the question concerning the food, (for which opinions are more divided), more than half of the participants gave, 'grade 6', to each question concerning the facilities and staff of the European Youth Centre.

14. Any other comments

The large majority of the answers contain messages of love addressed to the team and to the other participants. One of the participants added a comment about future cooperation with the others, and two of them used quotes from the week to express their feelings; 'Are we together?', and 'all different, all equal'. Regarding the facilities, all the comments are positive; accommodation or working room, and "the best place to feel that you are youth". Air conditioning and negative comments about the food also came up.



The Youth Peace Camps were initiated by the Council of Europe in 2004 to bring together young people from conflict regions and to support them in initiating dialogue and cooperation. The participants follow an experiential learning process and acquire competences in the fields of intercultural learning, dialogue and conflict transformation within a human rights framework.

In 2012 the Youth Peace Camp was attended by young people from the Caucasus, the Balkans and the Middle East who gained a positive experience of living and working together.



The Council of Europe has 47 member states, covering virtually the entire continent of Europe. It seeks to develop common democratic and legal principles based on the European Convention on 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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