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Focus Group: Diaspora Youth in Europe

Within the 17th University on Youth and Development

CEULAJ, Mollina (Spain) 21 – 24 September 2016

Report

1. Attendance List

Bruno Antonio

African Diaspora – *Facilitator of the meeting*

Sana Afouaiz

Maghreb Diaspora

Ayoade Wallace

African Diaspora

Azad Hussain

Asian Diaspora

Rocio Cervera

NSC - *Project coordinator*

Rim Filali Meknassi

NSC - *Project assistant*

2. Agenda

Thursday 22nd September

	Item	Activities
9h30	Opening of the meeting	Welcome Round of presentations Review of agenda Expected Outcomes of Diaspora youth Focus Group
10h00	Context	North-South Centre & Youth Programme Background iLEGEND project: context, objectives, outcomes
10h30	Global Development Education	From theory to practice in the framework of NSC and beyond
11h00	Coffee Break	
11h30	Organizations	Getting to know our organizations' work Sharing our organizations and personal experiences on working with Diaspora Youth Groups
12h00	Organizations cont.	Identifying needs
13h00	Lunch	

15h00	Diaspora Youth	Creating a common understanding of the concept
16h30	Coffee Break	
17h00	Methodology	Discuss project phases and expected outcomes: 1. Assessing needs; 2. Mapping Diaspora youths 3. Capacity building programme
18h30	Closing	

Friday 23rd September

	Item	Activities
9h30	Methodology cont.	Discuss project phases and expected outcomes: 1. Assessing needs; 2. Mapping Diaspora youths 3. Capacity-building programme
11h00	Coffee Break	
11h30	Focus group results	Presenting and discussing main outcomes with NSC
12h00	Follow up	Identify coming steps
12h30	Feedback and Evaluation	Evaluation of the meeting
12h50	Closing of the meeting	

3. iLEGEND project: context, objectives, outcomes

On 25 July, the Council of Europe and the European Commission signed a three-year project building upon the successful experiences of their previous Joint Management Agreements (2009-2012 and 2013-2015). This new JMA, implemented by the North-South Centre under the name “**Intercultural Learning Exchange through Global Education, Networking and Dialogue**” (iLEGEND) project, aims at raising awareness of global interdependence and solidarity through Global Development Education (GDE), youth cooperation and intercultural dialogue in Europe and beyond. It also intends to foster inclusive and equitable quality education for the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies.

The **overall objective** of iLEGEND is to strengthen GDE in EU member States and potential EU member States, particularly where it is least established, by promoting dialogue, networking strategies, capacity building and exchange and dissemination of good education practices in the field of GDE.

It will more specifically aim for:

- The involvement of stakeholders in promoting principles and concepts of GDE in policy-making and curriculum development, enhanced through improved dialogue and networking (Expected Result ER1);
- Educators and youth multipliers to gain competences and tools to promote and disseminate principles of GDE to students and young people (ER2);

- The dissemination of good education practices and methodologies to equip educators with relevant tools to increase commitment of students and young people to global interdependence (ER3);
- The improvement of the knowledge and understanding of GDE issues among students, young people and general public through awareness raising activities (ER4).

NSC activities planned for this project will be implemented in **“quadrilogue” format**, bringing various actors of governance together to inform European citizens of pressing development issues and to raise awareness and critical understanding of their role and responsibilities in our interdependent world.

Having these objectives in mind, **diaspora youth and young migrants will play an important role** in the iLEGEND implementation and its outcomes. Indeed, as globalisation has increased the volume and scope of international migration, it transformed societies and cultures, creating diasporas and developing transnational identities — the feeling of belonging to two or more societies at once. Young people are generally at higher risk of exclusion and marginalisation, and diaspora youth more particularly as the different generations of immigrants often grow up in some kind of identity gap, neither connected to the hosting country, nor to the home country anymore. Learning from the experiences of diaspora youth/young migrants' communities/organisations can make valuable contributions to integration policies and support global/development education.

As a **bridge between their countries of residence/origin**, diaspora groups contribute positively to both countries. They are partners for the promotion of democratic values and human rights as they play a significant role in democratic change by promoting in their countries of origin the values they consider positive in their countries of residence and can also play a relevant role in fighting extremists' tendencies. In this context, special attention needs to be paid to the role of young migrant and diaspora youth.

4. Expected Outcomes of Diaspora Youth focus group

Building up from previous successful experiences with youth leaders of Diaspora – specifically African Diaspora Youth Network in Europe (ADYNE) – the NSC will continue to develop the work with groups of Diaspora youth and young migrants who have proven to be crucial actors in the promotion of global/development education, representing for the hosting societies an immense richness in terms of global education, human resources, intercultural opportunities and possibilities for relationship with the sending societies.

For that purpose and as part of the preparatory phase of the project, the NSC is gathering a group of young experts who could contribute to narrow down the specific objectives and the main activities targeting diaspora youth in Europe in order to design a relevant flow for the upcoming three years.

Bearing in mind the overall objective and specific objectives of the iLEGEND project, **the focus group mission** is to:

- To help to define a specific working methodology that will allow to exchange concrete successful experiences that will contribute to build more inclusive societies in both, EU Member States (countries of residence) and countries of origin by nurturing from concrete successful experiences of diaspora youth/young migrants in Europe.
- To advise and identify strategies and approaches on how to actively involve diaspora/migrant organisations in networking and dialogue platforms that promote principles and concepts of global interdependence/development education in policy-making (at least one workshop with policy-makers/year)
- To contribute to define the basis for a research on mapping of diaspora/migrant organisations in 4 regions: Balkan, Baltic, South-East Europe and Mediterranean and Visegrad regions.
- To provide inputs that will support the design of training activities and awareness-raising activities related to diaspora youth and young migrants in Europe to help promoting understanding of issues of interdependence and global citizenship.

5. Creating a common understanding of Diaspora Youth

Defining Diaspora Youth was the first step of the discussion during the preparatory meeting, as it is fundamental to have a common understanding of the target population before any further conceptualization of the project. Being a very large and unfixed concept, delineating the “Diaspora” term was a key step to build upon for the focus group.

Diaspora is often defined as the spreading of people from one original country to other countries. **Azad Hussain** described it as a **social and political concept that designates a settlement of a community outside of its home country.**

Bruno Antonio reminded the importance of the **factor of time** in the definition of the concept, specifying that Diasporas are large groups of people settled in another country for a certain amount of time. The issue that arises here is the one of recent migration waves, as the case of students or refugees, and their comprisal in the concept of diaspora. The question of generation(s) also emerged as it is relevant in the definition of the target group.

Ayoade Wallace adds here the idea of reparatory justice. As many diaspora communities originated from the colonization era, the project should, according to the expert, include the idea of payback and compensation for these groups.

On the basis of these definitions, many questions derived as to the **delimitation of the target group** for this project. Indeed, **Sana Afouaiz** indicates that NSC could choose to work with mixed groups of diaspora communities, separate them according to different criteria (already settled communities; new comers; refugees; Europeans with other heritages...), collaborate with already established Diaspora Youth networks in Europe (such as ADYNE); target young Diaspora leaders as it did during previous experiences; or aim at working with marginalized diaspora communities to further empower them.

BA pointed out that the choice of specific target groups will depend on where the focus of the project is, whether we target the **creation of a sense of identity** within the diaspora communities

(as in the case of ADYNE) or **capacity-building** and reinforcement of skills tailored to the different needs.

The focus group agreed that research on the diaspora networks in Europe and more specifically on how the **multiplying effect** in these groups function could help define relevant target groups for the project. It would also help understand whether it is more relevant to build on this multiplying effect within the Diaspora Youth networks or in the society as a whole, with the aim of preparing it to host better the next generations of migrants.

The **age category** proposed for the project is 18-30 years old, to work in accordance with the other activities of the Youth Co-operation Programme of the **NSC**.

6. Identifying Diaspora Youth needs, problems and challenges

NSC noted that feedback from previous years of co-operation have emphasized the value-added of the Diaspora dimension in the project and the need to maintain it. However, a concrete evaluation of the results of this dimension in the preceding JMAs doesn't exist as they were more based on an **observation-reaction scheme**. A clear image of the problems and challenges faced by diaspora youth and young migrants in Europe to better design a project flow tailored to their needs has to be constituted, hence the **importance of a preliminary research phase**. It will designate which groups need more support and more specifically the kind of support needed.

The expert group first examined the **challenges faced by diaspora youth/young migrants** in Europe to **better understand their potential needs**. **SA** explained that the main issues experienced by these communities are economic. Indeed, the lack of decent opportunities, primarily on the labour market, leads to a lack of resources, poverty and deprivation. **BA** adds that the challenges can also be of cultural nature, as a low level of education and a lack of understanding because of language barriers can hold back the integration of these groups. **AW** noted that health issues, physical but also psychological (low confidence...), can constitute as well major challenges for Diaspora Youth in Europe. This could be linked to a certain extent, as **AH** mentioned, to the issues of discrimination and racism faced by these communities, which eventually lead to criminality among them.



When discussing these challenges, **questions on the potential target groups** of the project were raised: if discrimination and racism are chosen to be the challenge the activities focus on, the communities experiencing the most prejudices should be the priority group of the project. Alternatively, if cultural barriers are identified as the main challenges faced by the diasporas in Europe, second-generation communities that are already settled could be the target group as they can reach the others better and their multiplying effect could be greater. **SA** proposed to look for common challenges faced by all types of diaspora groups to have a more inclusive project with greater impact.

BA suggested taking a step backwards in the discussion, to examine the **root problems** of these challenges in an attempt of better understanding the situation of young diaspora communities. Language understanding, behaviours, beliefs, and more particularly Religion, were indicated here as one of the main cause of the culture clash and identity crisis faced by young migrants and diaspora youth living in Europe, which ultimately reduce the level of intercultural understanding in societies. This is, according to **AW**, aggravated by the lack of quality/adapted education, especially cultural education and awareness. **AH** pointed out that this causes a loss of sense of belonging for Diasporas and a weak social link in the host countries, which can be enhanced by urban exclusion (ghettoization) and institutional discrimination (access to services...), especially when coupled with inadequate or ineffective integration policies. Eventually, the absence of political representation for these groups could be a root issue for the challenges they face.



As a final step of this analysis, **BA** proposed that beyond the analysis of the Diaspora Youth needs, the focus group could also design this dimension of the project in terms of **value-added of diaspora communities in Europe** and the way of enhancing their positive roles in making societies more open and inclusive. The expert pointed out that settled diaspora groups can help people facing similar challenges (discrimination; racism; access to rights...) and support their integration to a certain extent. **AW** added that they could also provide hope and inspiration for others while sharing their experiences. Lastly, their knowledge and understanding of local realities can also be an advantage to build upon during the project.

Encouraging integration through practical experiences was another aspect highlighted during the discussion. Since if we take in consideration working together with Diaspora groups that are settle for already significant time, this group can be again a source of support to the new comers or recently established groups of migrants or refugees.

A concern was raised here about the scope of the project: could the role of Diasporas in their home countries play a role in the project or does it enlarge it too much? The question stays open for the **NSC** to consider.

7. The project: aim and objectives

Bellow you can find the results of the brainstorming exercise on the project aims and objectives done by the experts:

Aims:

- The main aim of the capacity building programme is to promote and enhance the capacity of diaspora youth to create more inclusive communities by developing quality initiatives and policies in the framework of GDE/GE.
- Raising solidarity and awareness among diaspora youth.
- Engage and empower diaspora youth to become leaders in the future or in the community

Objectives:

- Map, characterize and identify the main needs of diaspora youth in terms of capacity building (research dimension) and to develop a capacity building programme that address the identified needs;
- Develop the competences of youth leaders and youth workers (multipliers) to develop initiatives and the framework of GDE/GE;
- Increase the number of initiatives being implemented according to the principles and methodologies of GDE guidelines;
- Identify reference youth leaders that can be role models and inspire and support local youth diaspora groups (mentoring)
- Provide moments of networking and exchange of best practices among diaspora youth,
- Create a pool of youth diaspora practitioners on GDE/GE (resource group of capacity building/policy development);
- Increase the policy focus on youth diaspora and on GDE/GE at different policy levels;
- Increase the recognition and the capacity diaspora youth to facilitate the integration process of migrants, refugees, among other groups;
- Contribute to change the mind set and current narrative concerning diaspora youth and young migrants;

8. Working methodology, phases and expected outcomes

The **NSC** presented in the beginning of the preparatory meeting the foreseen activities for this dimension of the iLEGEND project. The Centre targets **three annual capacity-building activities** and **three workshops** gathering grassroots organisations and decision-makers during three years, from the end of 2016 to the first semester of 2019. The group of experts asks the **NSC** for further clarification on the workshop activity.

The **NSC GE methodology**, the **GE guidelines** and **peer-learning** will be the basis for designing the working methodology of this project. The **quadrilogue format** will also be implemented in the framework of the activities proposed for the next three years.

The experts proposed the following potential activities / program flow:

Activities / Program flow

Activity Proposed	Description	Target groups	Expected outcomes
Research and mapping	See section 9.		
Training courses / Capacity-Building activities	Residential, online, preparatory support and coaching phase, peer-to-peer learning	Youth leaders & Youth workers with Diaspora background	Develop the competences of AD youth; Plan local initiatives to be implemented in the frame of GE/GDE
Mentorship programs	Online, professional programs with certificates	Youth leaders & Youth workers with Diaspora background	Support local initiatives development and capacity building
Local initiatives	GEW, local projects, cooperation with schools, competition of the most innovative initiatives that call for solidarity, intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding	Diaspora Youth; Youth leaders, Youth workers, Working within Municipalities	Creation of local support groups; cooperation with public authorities; Implementation of local initiatives of GE/GDE
Regional workshops	Present results and evaluation moments	Youth leaders from Diaspora	Dissemination and advocacy
Campaigning	Local campaigns; online campaigns (We are one campaign)	Community in general	Foster intercultural dialogue
Exchange programs	sending a group of youth diaspora to live with host families of different background;	Youth leaders & Youth workers with Diaspora background	Improve cultural understanding
Policy advocacy and recommendations	Sending youth diaspora representatives to EU institutions to deliver their recommendations	Youth leaders & Youth workers with Diaspora background	Advocacy and supporting agenda development on the field

Annual conference	Gather decision-makers and youth diaspora representatives	Quadrilogue actors	Advocacy and supporting agenda development on the field
Focus group	Focus group with follow-up projects	Experts on the theme; Youth leaders & Youth workers with Diaspora background	Concrete educational projects in the field of GDE
Database of Diaspora youth organisations / Online dialogue platform	Mapping any practices of GE in diaspora youth organisations; Youth diaspora share how they contribute to GE and their personal experiences	NGOs, Platforms other networks working with the target group	Networking; dissemination good education practices and methodologies

Two questions were raised at this stage: on the one hand, the available **budget** for the project and the possibility of co-funding for local initiatives; on the other hand, the issue of **evaluation and monitoring** (how to track the results? Who would do it? Which budget?).

9. Coming steps

The experts agree to set two next steps for the preparatory phase of the project:

A. CALL FOR RESEARCH

The preparatory phase of the Youth Diaspora dimension of the iLEGEND project will include a research stage for which a call has to be prepared. The calendar and the budget will have to be defined by the **NSC** in the call. The methodology of the research will be proposed by the retained research team and submitted to the NSC.

To better define this phase, the experts agreed on the following expected objectives:

- **Mapping of diaspora/migrant youth organisations**

The research shall aim at creating a database of Diaspora Youth organisations and diaspora youth-serving organisations working in 4 regions: Balkan, Baltic, South-East Europe and Mediterranean, and Visegrad regions.

It will more specifically focus on mapping the diaspora organisations that promote and disseminate Global Education Principles and survey the existing practices in diaspora youth communities in terms of Global Education (even if not designed as such)

Proposals to support the mapping exercise

- Identify and contact existing national networks (e.g. SOS Racismo in PT, ACCESS network in UK, etc.)

- European Networks (ADYNE, FEYMSO, etc.)
- Local organizations networks (contact organization working with diaspora youth groups and request their support to other partners working in their region/area)
- Research institutes, Universities and researchers working on the topic of youth diaspora, migration and integration topics.

- **Collect evidence for a better targeting strategy**

To validate the aim of this project, its objectives and program flow, the research here will, by clarifying the definition of the concept of diaspora, help identify the main target groups of the project and their specific needs in terms of capacity-building.

This step will also work towards understanding the role of diaspora communities in their host and home countries, and more specifically their contribution in the construction of more inclusive societies. This will support the identification of the working areas of these groups and the potential/follow-up actions that could be implemented after the project.

In this phase, the research can build up from the NSC previous experiences with youth leaders of diaspora.

- **Identification of good practices**

The research shall identify and share the practices and/or policies that are being implemented in terms of Diaspora Youth. For that, it will focus on the experiences of these groups with the implementation and dissemination of Global Education Principles.

The research team can construct on data emerging from projects targeting Youth Diaspora that were successfully implemented in Europe by similar institutions/donors and by diaspora organisations.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The research should support the impact assessment by identifying tools for monitoring and evaluation relevant to the project.

B. GATHERING OTHER DIASPORAS IN EUROPE

BA is followed by the other experts of the group in his proposal of putting around the table other diaspora groups that were not represented in this preparatory meeting (Romania; Portugal...) to have a more inclusive discussion on the project and its potential outputs and outcomes.

10. Feedback and evaluation of the meeting

The meeting was concluded with a short moment of evaluation and feedback regarding the main outcomes. Where the 2 working days were generally very much appreciated by the group

and they demonstrated their availability and motivation to continue available for the coming steps.

It was proposed to have another focus group before the first training course and this moment would already be supported by the results of the mapping exercise completed during the research phase of the project.