



NO OFFENCE

A practical booklet for setting up international youth projects with young offenders, ex-offenders and young people at risk of offending or currently in prison

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INCLUSION
RESOURCE CENTRE



Education and Culture

NO OFFENCE



SALTO-YOUTH STANDS FOR...

...‘Support and Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the **YOUTH** in Action programme’. The European Commission has created a network of eight SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres to enhance the implementation of the European Youth in Action programme which provides young people with valuable non-formal learning experiences. SALTO’s aim is to **support European Youth in Action projects** in priority areas such as European Citizenship, Cultural Diversity, Participation and Inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, in regions such as EuroMed, South-East Europe or Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, with Training and Cooperation activities and with Information tools for National Agencies.

In these European priority areas, SALTO-YOUTH provides **resources, information and training** for National Agencies and European youth workers. Several resources in the above areas are available on **www.SALTO-YOUTH.net**. Find online the European Training Calendar, the Toolbox for Training and Youth Work, Trainers Online for Youth, links to online resources and much more...

SALTO-YOUTH actively **co-operates** with other actors in European youth work such as the National Agencies of the Youth in Action programme, the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum, European youth workers and trainers and training organisers.

THE SALTO-YOUTH INCLUSION RESOURCE CENTRE WWW.SALTO-YOUTH.NET/INCLUSION/

The SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre (in Belgium-Flanders) works together with the European Commission to **include young people with fewer opportunities** in the Youth in Action programme. SALTO-Inclusion also supports the National Agencies and youth workers in their inclusion work by providing the following resources:

- training courses on inclusion topics and for specific target groups at risk of social exclusion
- training and youth work methods and tools to support inclusion projects
- practical and inspirational publications for international inclusion projects
- up-to-date information about inclusion issues and opportunities via the Inclusion Newsletter
- handy commented links to inclusion resources on line
- an overview of trainers and resource persons in the field of inclusion and youth
- bringing together stakeholders to make the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities more effective and easier

For more information and resources have a look at the Inclusion pages at:

 www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/

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INTRO WHY THIS BOOKLET?

The SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre's mission is to stimulate **Inclusion for ALL young people** within the European Union's Youth in Action programme. However, due to several reasons, not all young people get the opportunity to participate in international projects. The Youth in Action programme does not reach a variety of young people who face various obstacles to participate in these projects.

On the other hand, participating into Youth in Action projects might be a new start for certain groups to **integrate into society, a way of setting your life on track again, to practice forgotten or develop new skills and competences.**

This booklet is meant to be a resource for workers, as youth workers, social workers, prison workers, probation officers and everybody who works with the target group and in whatever capacity.

- ☛ We will refer to these workers in the booklet, but meaning all of them.

The target group described in this booklet are: young offenders and ex-offenders and those young people at risk of offending. A group which you will not find represented a lot in international projects and more specifically in the Youth in Action programme. There are many reasons for this. An obvious one is that the travelling possibilities for young people in prison are limited. Another one is that people working with this target-group have considerable doubts about if it's really possible to send this kind of young people on a European Voluntary Service-project to another country or to take a group of them on a Youth Exchange. A third reason could be that people simply don't know about the opportunities that the Youth in Action programme offers.

The main reason for this booklet is that many projects done over the past years with this target-group have turned out to be successful. They not only showed that projects are very well possible with this group but they also made clear that the young people participating in these international projects profited to a great extent from these experiences. The **impact** of the projects often had a **very positive influence** on the lives of these young people.



The organisations involved in these projects are very enthusiastic about the opportunities that the Youth in Action programme offers and can integrate these projects into their methodology and approach in order to **realise the organisation's objectives**.

This booklet aims to inform you about the possibilities and opportunities that international projects offers for your work with this group of young people. An effort is made to describe the target-group and the background of these young people and to explore the needs to be addressed in projects for this group. From there the link is made to the benefits of Youth in Action programme and will step by step zoom into the different phases of an international project. Next to that, and in between, you will find the stories of some of the successful projects mentioned above. They might give you concrete ideas for your own projects.

- 👉 This booklet doesn't give you a detailed description of all the ins and outs of the Youth in Action Programme. Visit http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.html for the updated contact details of the National Agency in your country.

Life's hard when you've been behind bars,
Mental & Physical scars, waiting for years to pass,
But I'm free now nothing's stayed the same,
With two nephews, I'm an uncle with a next on the way,
Second of seven and driven by my sibling's achievements,
Out looking for work, I found some people named PEACAN,
They said, they're there for ex-offenders,
I said "The world's against us. Tell me how do we impress employers?"
See I can get paid many ways easily,
but now I'm free I want to stack it legally,
All my boys is locked up, fiends, or deceased,
Don't want to be a wasteman roaming the streets
I told Peacon "You must understand I'm a changed man,
won't offend again want to help other children,
so they won't take that path",
GBH, robberies, not going to class, Come out the dark, cos,
There isn't a single vision that's impossible
All things are possible!
Want to help another youth, EVS is there for you
So what you wanna do? What you wanna go?
Yeah it may be difficult but

everything's
POSSIBLE



Now I'm up in Sweden on a voluntary scheme, Probation put me
through to EVS I'm living my dream,
I'm getting closer to the kind of life I see myself in,
Everything is Possible, I'm packing up that life of sin,
Wanna make a change, I'm in the studio, dropping lines like dominoes,
Surrounded by faces I aint seen before, talking a language I don't know,
Its different cultures, sharing cultures, not just a free trip,
I'm having fun, but learning so much with those I work with,
Joachim, Adam & I went to blue hill, saw so many girls street dancing,
Adrenelin pumping, like they can't stand still,

Look at any watch and know exactly where the day's gone,
So much done, we're heading back to where we came from,
Hurgadsta a house, looking like big brother,
Heavy clouds above us, but no-one worried 'bout the weather
I hit the bed memories of the day in my head
I feel blessed I got to know EVS

There isn't a single vision that's impossible

All things are possible!

Want to help another youth, EVS is there for you

So what you wanna do? What you wanna go?

Year it may be difficult but

EVERYTHING is POSSIBLE!

It's not impossible,

All things are possible.

Sweden June 2006



PROFILING

In this booklet we are talking about young offenders, ex-offenders and young people at risk of offending. Who are these young people? Not an easy question to answer because of course there is a great diversity in this group. Still it makes sense to give it a try and to see what kind of characteristics we can identify amongst our target group.

Before going into a ‘**robot photo**’ of our target, first some general descriptions and definitions on ‘young people with fewer opportunities’.

1 YOUNG (EX-) OFFENDERS: A FINGERPRINT

WHO ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

The **definition** of young people with fewer opportunities is very broad – on purpose. The realities of the different countries around Europe (and sometimes of regions within these countries) is too diverse to have a very specific definition. e.g. a ‘poor’ person in Scandinavia might be considered ‘rich’ in Eastern Europe, a gay person in Cologne probably faces less discrimination than in a small countryside village in the Balkans, and so on. That’s why within the European Youth in Action programme the target group is defined by the **obstacles** they face. The term “fewer opportunities” means that certain young people have **fewer possibilities than their peers**. This can be for a variety of reasons:

1. **Social obstacles:** young people facing discrimination (because of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc.), young people with limited social skills or anti-social or risky sexual behaviours, young people in a precarious situation, (ex-) offenders, (ex-) drug addicts, young and/or single parents, orphans, young people from broken families, etc.
2. **Economic obstacles:** young people with a low standard of living, low income, dependence on social welfare system, long-term unemployed youth, homeless young people, young people in debt or in financial problems, etc.
3. **Disability:** young people with mental (intellectual, cognitive, learning), physical, sensory or other disabilities.
4. **Educational difficulties:** young people with learning difficulties, early school-leavers and school dropouts, lowly or non-qualified persons, young people that didn’t find their way in the school system, young people with poor school performance because of a different cultural/linguistic background, etc.

5. **Cultural differences:** young immigrants or refugees or descendants from immigrant or refugee families, young people belonging to a national or ethnic minority, young people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion problems, etc.
6. **Health problems:** young people with chronic health problems, severe illnesses or psychiatric conditions, young people with mental health problems, etc.
7. **Geographical obstacles:** young people from remote, rural or hilly areas, young people living on small islands or peripheral regions, young people from urban problem zones, young people from less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities, abandoned villages...), etc.

Young people with fewer opportunities are young people who, largely due to their personal situation and sometimes also due to the choices they make, face different and/or more difficult obstacles in their lives than other young people.

In many cases, individuals may fit into

several of the categories described above at the same time (e.g. a teenage mother who lives in a remote village and who suffers from alcoholism).

This compounds their difficulties still further.

Obviously, an individual should **not automatically be included** in the “fewer- opportunity” group simply on the basis of one or two characteristics. For instance it would be a mistake to include a young people in the fewer-opportunity group just because they come from an immigrant background. Similarly, it is incorrect to presume all single parents or all young people with disabilities automatically have fewer opportunities.



- More info on **Young People with Fewer Opportunities** and the Inclusion Strategy of the European Youth in Action programme at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionStrategy/

Although the examples given here are just the tip of the iceberg, they do show the **complex nature of the difficulties** facing young people belonging to this specific group of fewer opportunities.

What about (ex-) offenders or those at risk of offending?

When we talk about young offenders or youth at risk of offending, we are on the whole talking about a group of young people on the outskirts of mainstream society. **Those not enjoying the accepted normal life experiences of their peers.** They may have chosen a different life through the friendships they have built and experiences they have bought into or may have had little support to choose a different lifestyle.

Interestingly when you type Youth Inclusion into a web browser the **predominant sites** you are led to, all relate to **social inclusion & crime reduction**, describing how crime figures reduce as young people become more ‘included in society’.

There is great importance in promoting inclusion in society for this target group, young people committing crime, on the verge of it or who have a history of committing crime have often got into a situation they feel they cannot get out of. They are often **excluded** from ‘mainstream society’ by their own doing, but if and when they wish to **re-enter** this accepted society, this can be much more difficult, than when they made their exit!

They now have **negative stereotypes** attached to them, they have made **poor friendship** choices and have **little social or family support** to re-engage with positive activities. Many of this target group do not know what **support networks** are available to them, and they would almost certainly be unaware of opportunities available through the Youth in Action programme for example. These areas of education and support may very well be where our job as professional youth worker comes in – to offer knowledge of such programmes which can include such a target group, then to provide the necessary support to engage. Hopefully leading these young people one step closer to inclusion.

Exercise – The Young People in Your Context

“Fewer-opportunities, (ex-) offenders, ...” is the term used here to describe a specific group of young people. Others call this group by other names – “disadvantaged youth”, “young people at risk” or “young people at risk of offending”, ...

You can do this exercise with the young people you work with, with colleagues, or maybe even together with the members of the board in your organisation or institution.

Needed materials are a big pieces of paper, pens, post-its.

1. What terms are used in your context or in your language to describe these young people?

Method: put a big piece of paper and hang it to the wall. Give everybody some post-its to write the descriptions on. Hang them on the piece of paper, summarize them and discuss this with the group: What kind of messages do these titles communicate about the young people?

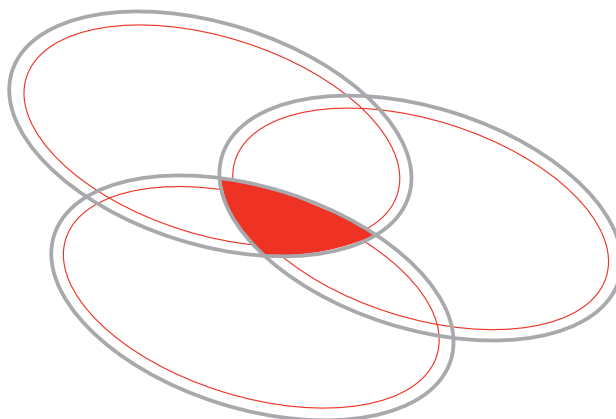
2. What are the most important issues or obstacles facing these young people

a. In your town?

b. In your region?

c. In your country?

Method: draw a vendiagram (see picture) on a big piece of paper. Every circle has a theme: one is for your town, the second one is for the region, the third one is for the country. Use pens with different colours and let everybody write down their obstacles on the big paper in the vendiagram. When everybody is finished, you can describe and summarize what is written, discuss this with the group and draw some conclusions.



WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

Inclusion! This is a very common buzz word used in every day work with this target group. It has in many circles of society (particularly those aspiring to political correctness) replaced the word exclusion which was in recent years the typical terminology, with phrases such as; socially excluded, at risk of exclusion, school exclusion etc. It was felt by many that this word gave negative connotations and that we should rephrase these terms, emphasising inclusion, **but,..... inclusion in what?**

Helping young people in this target group to overcome their obstacles, empower themselves and become included in society at large is a part of the process of “**social inclusion**”.

Social inclusion involves providing **opportunities** for those members of society who do not enjoy the same level of privilege as others and striving to ensure that all aspects of society are “**open to all**”.

Social inclusion is **difficult to quantify**. How can it be said with certainty that someone has been “included” and what is such a conclusion based on? We are often lead to expect that inclusion should be a big achievement – a kind of “hallelujah” moment where all problems are solved and the individual lives happily ever after. Professionals working with fewer-opportunity young people know that inclusion, especially in the early phases, can take much simpler forms and is an **ongoing process**.

A young person can be said to be “included” when they...

- | | |
|--|---|
| - smile | - take their own initiative |
| - voluntarily take part in an activity | - make friends |
| - can concentrate on a task | - are accepted by the rest of the group |
| - observe the rules | - show up on time |
| - ask for help | - help or praise another young people |
| - contribute to a discussion | - are not afraid of physical contact |
| - show patience | - are happy |

Some of these examples may appear to be “small” or insignificant achievements, but it should be remembered that achievements which are easy for so-called “regular” young people can be major accomplishments for young people from the fewer-opportunity group. Having said that, another interesting aspect is to look at inclusion as a process rather than a goal in itself which obviously adds new ambitions and through that also challenges to this kind of work.

Exercise – Inclusion

1. Discussions around young people from an offending background often speak of the need to “include” this target group in society. What precisely does this mean?
Consider the following questions:
 - 1A. Inclusion... in WHAT?
 - 1B. Inclusion... WHY?
 - 1C. Within the inclusion process... WHO includes WHO?
2. Within your specific context, think of ways that you could recognize whether or not a young person is “included” (for example in a group, in a team, in school, among their peers, etc.)
List five (5) concrete indicators that show you when a young person is successfully included.

2 BACKGROUND OF OFFENDING

WHAT DO WE SEE?

Many of these young people are not very successful in the **regular school system**. Their results are poor, they cannot cope with the system as it is and behavioural problems are rather the rule than the exception. As a result they frequently drop out of school.

Also as a consequence of this many end up in **unemployment** or jobs that only last for a short period alternated with periods of unemployment. In general this group has a large distance to go before being ready for the labour market. Financial problems and a lack of fixed income is one of the results.

A considerable number of these young people live or have a history of living in residential homes, often due to **family - and / or behavioural problems**.

The abuse of **drugs and alcohol** is high in this group with all the obvious problems related to that.

Social skills are in general underdeveloped. Many of these young people have **problematic contacts** with adults, not accepting authority and having feelings of distrust in relations with adults. This also works the other way around. Many adults have problems to cope with these young people, avoid them as much as possible and don't accept their behaviour. As a result these young people often find themselves in an isolated position in society.

A proportionally large percentage of this group comes from a different cultural background facing **integration problems** and all the connected challenges.



CASE STUDY: DANNY

Danny had been in and out of prison for many years. Most crimes were connected to his problems with alcohol. He had been brought up by his grand parents, but they were no longer prepared to have him stay in the house due to his anti-social behaviour.

Staff from his home organisation were involved with Danny's family and in particular had close liaison with the grandmother to explain about European Voluntary Service and the benefits it gave to young people. They ensured that Danny was able to return to the family home whilst awaiting his European Voluntary Service placement. Unfortunately due to his license conditions, he was not able to travel to Europe when originally intended. Before he was able to go at a later date, he unfortunately spent another period in prison.

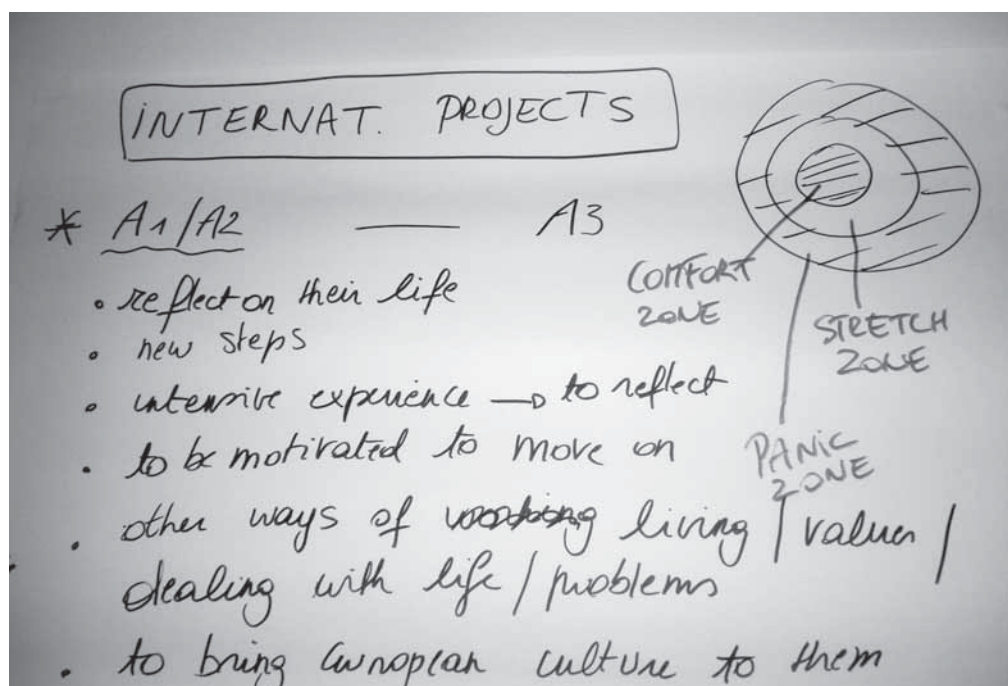
However, perseverance, together with a number of preparation & pre-departure training events to keep him motivated, meant that Danny finally went on a 3 week European Voluntary Service placement in Poland in the autumn. The experience was around environment and conservation and Danny spent time working in a local community park to ensure that it was kept at its best for visitors who went there to relax. Danny stayed with a local family and spent his relaxation time with volunteers from other countries. When he came back Danny said it was the best 3 weeks of his life!

His grandmother said he was a changed person. Danny had been staying in the guest room before his departure, but together they converted the loft so that he could have his own space. His host organisation is now preparing Danny to travel to France for a 3 month European Voluntary Service experience. The first 2 months will be spent on a heritage project and the last one will be helping at an international camp. The National Agency is very interested in Danny's case and currently including him in a video to promote European Voluntary Service to this same target group in different settings.

- More to find on European Voluntary Service on the website of the European Commission http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.html.

WHAT'S BEHIND WHAT WE SEE?

So that's what we see. But what is the background of what we see? What makes it that these young people are acting like they do? When we want to do meaningful work with these young people it's important to answer that question in order to tailor our approach.



It must be said that of course these backgrounds can differ greatly.

- **Personal problems**

Serious social and emotional problems can dominate these young people's lives which makes them face life in a way in which negative feelings and feelings of fear take over. These **negative feelings** preoccupy the young people to such an extent that all their actions and experiences are coloured. **Failure anxiety** can cause the young people not to start anything.

- **Problems at home**

Conflicts at home, divorce, psychiatric problems or prolonged unemployment of one of the parents can completely preoccupy the young people. There just is no possibility to aim for his/her own goals. The young people seems to show **indifference and lack of interest** but mentally he/she is at home.

- **Lack of self-confidence**

A lot of these young people have pasts which are often characterized by negative experiences and failure. They lacked the skills for tasks they had to face or were aiming too high. Consequently they have developed a **sense of inferiority**. The young people feel they have no control over their life and think they can do little to change their situation. A **feeling of competence** is missing which easily leads to passivity and feelings of apathy. The motivation to take anything on disappears, since the young people has the idea being incapable to manage his/her own life.

- **Limited awareness of problem**

Some young people are not aware of their problems and therefore feel no need for change. For a number of young people insufficient awareness of problems goes hand in hand with the **denial** of them. These young people place their problems outside themselves, because they are afraid of confronting them. **Feelings of insecurity** are compensated by opposite behaviour: a big mouth and showing off. Not they, but the rest of the world has to change.

- **Lack of motivation**

Sometimes these young people suffer from a **lack of perseverance**. They lack motivation, are put down by something futile and **easily give up**. By others this behaviour is often recognised as 'no backbone'. Such an attitude is stimulated by consistently experiencing failure. Being spoilt or overprotected at home can lead to the frustration tolerance developing insufficiently. The young people has **not learned to postpone needs** or drops out when goals striven for are too far away in the future.

- **Negative experiences with school and school life**

Young people who prematurely leave school have often developed a strong aversion towards it. For them the subjects are too theoretical, the classes too large and the lessons too dull. The ties with school are limited and they **do not see the use of school for future employment**. These young people are not motivated by a certain **future perspective**, but are focussed more on immediate satisfaction of needs. This often leads to bad school results.

- **Strong ties with the ‘wrong’ friends**

Bad school results and negative behaviour of young people **evoke counter-reactions** of the world around them. Teachers and classmates regard them as stupid, troublesome or dishonest and will treat them as such. This can lead to negative labelling and social isolation of the young people. Such a process increases the chances that the young people will seek **alliance with deviant subgroups**, causing reinforcement of all sorts of problematic behaviour. The need for recognition and appreciation brings these young people to connect themselves to reference groups who influence their behaviour negatively.

👉 Adapted from ‘**Get Going**’ - Motivating young people to break out of deadlock. Klomp/Kloosterman/Kuijvenhoven

The **conclusion** might be that you don’t get what you see. Often these young people present themselves as ‘cool’, self-confident and forceful but under that image you’ll find often a low self-esteem and many fears.

3 BENEFITS OF YOUTH IN ACTION

Social inclusion is about **reducing inequalities** between the least advantaged groups and communities and the rest of society by **closing the opportunity gap** and ensuring that support reaches those who need it most.

Our target group is very diverse and different profiles of young people have their own **specific types of needs**. Therefore the goal they are trying to reach and the process leading to it will take a different shape and a different length of time for each individual. Often a step-by-step approach, starting with small goals and achievements leading to bigger ones, works best. But there is no one way or one specific method of achieving social inclusion.

If a young person cannot recognise how the international experience directly relates to their needs and their situation, then there is a danger that the project will take place in a vacuum with no link to the individual's real life: past, present, or future. To avoid this, the pathway approach helps young people and their organisations implement international projects in such a way as to be able to gain the maximum benefits of the programme. This approach works on the basis of an individual's "**personal pathway**".

An international project should not be seen as a goal in itself. The pathway approach takes the international project out of the vacuum and links it directly with a **young person's long-term learning objectives**. This approach takes into account an individual's past development, assesses their current situation, and then gives the international project a place which relates directly to a young person's future aims and goals.

In this context, it should be stressed that the Youth in Action programme should not be seen as the ultimate goal. It is not easy to make a clear long-term plan with our young people and it is difficult to judge whether an international project is the right option for each individual. However, an international project can be an important stepping stone on the pathway that can lead to all sorts of new future directions.

- 👉 For more information on "**the pathway approach**" check "Use your hands to move ahead" to download from the SALTO website: www.salto-youth.net/UseYourHands/

This booklet doesn't pretend to be a handbook for working with young offenders, ex-offenders and young people at risk of offending. The main aim is to explore how the Youth in Action programme can contribute to this work which exists in all kind of different forms and approaches in Europe. Still in this framework it is worthwhile to see what are the main aims and objectives when working with this target group in order to connect that to the possibilities that the Youth in Action programme offers.

BENEFITS: IN GENERAL

- **Space to reflect**

Often the young people we are talking about in this booklet lack the space as well as the experience and ability to reflect on their life. They live from one day to another, from event to event. In order to set for themselves new goals in life they should become aware of their situation. To create **space and a safe environment** out of the daily pressure for survival seems to be an important element in programmes with this target group

- **Trustful relationship with youth worker, social worker, ...**

Many of these young people don't have very positive experiences when it comes to relationships with adults. In their experience adults like teachers, social workers, police officers etcetera, did not accept them and showed lack of respect. As a consequence we regularly meet distrust and strong doubts when starting to work with this group. Building a relationship needs a lot of effort. At the same time we know from research and experience that the relation between young people and supervisor is of crucial importance for the success of a programme. **Gaining trust, showing acceptance and involvement and offering safety** are vital for a good relationship.

- **Positive experiences /self-confidence building**

As said before, it's certainly not an enormous amount of positive and successful experiences what keeps our target group going. They are almost used to 'failing'. All their life they've heard that they are 'stupid', 'incapable', 'difficult to deal with'. These experiences determine their approach and attitude towards taking up new tasks and challenges and leads to feelings of inferiority and a negative idea of their own possibilities. The lack of self-confidence makes them avoid experiencing new 'failures'. To rebuild their self-confidence it's important to go through **positive experiences** and to find out and recognise their own competences and skills.

- **Competences and potentials**

During most of their life the emphasis has been on 'what they are not able to'. In school, from their parents, from social workers they've heard what they do wrong, what they should change, what they should do different. They know very well what they cannot do. This focus on the negative side is by the way not only the focal point of the young people. The people who work with the young people are used to directing their attention towards the problems of the young people, not so much on their competences.

For the young people it's crucial to find out what competences they have and which potential competences they want to develop. In order to do this, it is necessary that they have chance to act and be responsible to get the above mentioned positive experiences and the possibility to reflect on those experiences to **identify** competences. Therefore it's essential to be **assisted and guided** by workers who are able to identify and name the competences they see.

- **A future perspective**

To get out of the vicious circle which living from day to day brings it's inevitable to develop a long-term future perspective. A difficult task for many young people. They are not used to looking far ahead but seek immediate satisfaction of their needs. For some young people also a strong focus on their past can also block them from looking forward.

To set a future perspective it's important for the young people to set their own goals which are strongly connected to his/her own wishes and needs and which are achievable. In the beginning these goals should be set **short term and in small steps** to create the possibility to experience success. **Realistic goals, being well phased**, stimulate the young people for more and further planning to create a new 'life-perspective'.



BENEFITS: IN SPECIFIC

We have been taking a closer look at our target group and we looked at the needs to be addressed when working with this target group. But how does that all relate to the Youth in Action programme? In what way can Youth in Action **contribute to and enrich** the work with these young people? In this chapter we try to describe some important elements and characteristics of the different possibilities in the Youth in Action programme to see in what way young (ex) offenders and young people at risk can profit from the programme.

- **Being ‘out of daily life’**

Being in another country during a Youth Exchange or as a volunteer in a European Voluntary Service project, and even in a Youth Initiative in prison, brings opportunities and challenges. It means being out of your daily life. No parents around, not the friends you usually hang out with, not the familiar places you are used to go, not the same cellmates. It’s all not there.

Being freed from all that daily pressure but also being in a situation where the ‘normal’ solutions don’t work anymore. You can and even have to invent yourself again. When getting into a conflict at home you can always run off to a friend or to the pub. But now the pub and the friend are not there. The new and different environment forces you to find new solutions for the challenges you meet. In the beginning maybe a frightening experience. But then you discover that you find those new solutions, you find other ways to deal with what comes on your way...and, what’s more important, it works, you can do it!

Being ‘out of daily life’ and away from your home also **creates a distance** which helps you **to reflect** on your life and to make **decisions** about how life should go on.

- **An intercultural experience**

Being in an other country means to be confronted with an other language, with an other culture, with different customs. You find out that what you always thought was ‘normal’ is maybe not that normal here. People have different perceptions; look at things in a different way. But there are also a lot of things which seems to be pretty much the same as they are at home. A confusing experience. It makes you feel uncertain and uncomfortable. It makes you question your own values and certainties.

But then you don’t have much choice. To survive you have to reconsider normality, you’ll have to ask, to communicate, to open up and to try out. A sometimes difficult but also exciting challenge which forces you to look at yourself and which helps you to broaden your views and perceptions.

To go through that process and to discover that you manage is a thrilling experience giving a **boost to your self-esteem**.

- **An intensive and different contact with the worker**

The young people and youth worker or social worker being together in a Youth Exchange offers new opportunities. The new environment and situation, for both the young people and the supervisor, will change the relationship.

For the supervisor there is the chance to see the young people acting in different circumstances, doing different activities, taking up other roles. It opens the possibility to see other and maybe new competences and potentials of the young people. Probably also the young people finds out new competences. It's important for the supervisor to confirm those competences and to stimulate the young people to further develop.

Also the mentor in a European Voluntary Service project is in the position to observe the young people in a new environment acting out new roles and tasks. Most of the times, being in a different environment, opens up the young people and makes him/her want to talk about all the experiences.

As said before, being out of daily life allows for reflection. The supervisor has the opportunity to assist the young person in that reflection and to **facilitate the process** of making new plans for the future. Of course it's important to give a **follow-up** after the project to assist the young people to make the plans come true.

- **Taking responsibility**

The different actions in the Youth in Action programme offer the possibility for young people to be active and take on responsibility. It's not only an opportunity that Youth in Action offers, it's actually one of the main aims and values promoted by the programme.

Being involved in a Youth Exchange means being co-responsible for the programme, for the activities, for the logistics. A big variety of tasks have to be fulfilled addressing a large variety of skills. As mentioned before, it's important for our target group to carry out projects and tasks in a successful way to increase self-confidence and self-esteem. Preparing a part of the programme, preparing a meal, searching for travel possibilities, managing the bar, setting up a web log.....and so many other tasks to be done which could be an excellent opportunity for young people to **take responsibility and to complete a task in a for them satisfying way for them**.

It speaks for itself that the same goes for a Youth Initiative. These projects should be the responsibility of the group of young people and make it necessary for them to divide tasks and responsibilities.

European Voluntary Service offers the opportunity for the volunteer to take up different tasks and to plan for a longer period. With the help of the mentor an activity plan can be set up where different tasks can be combined. Short-term and long-term tasks, easy and more challenging tasks.

The main facet is that the young people gets the chance to experience **feeling responsible** for a certain task or project and has the opportunity to finish that task in a successful way. To have something to be proud of.

- **Working together**

In all the different Youth in Action activities young people are confronted with the fact that they have to work together with others and in many cases with people from other countries. For many of our young people the first time that they experience teamwork. Being involved in a Youth Initiative really means making decisions together with others, being able to **listen to other opinions and to communicate your ideas** and to keep up the team spirit . The same goes for the Youth Exchange or the team in an European Voluntary Service project.

A big challenge but the good thing is that there is a constant opportunity to learn from the difficulties and problems.

By evaluating the teamwork on a regular basis, as well in the team but also in individual talks between young people and supervisor, there are great learning opportunities for the young people.



- **An intensive experience with long term effects**

There are many elements which makes a Youth in Action project an intensive experience. An experience with big challenges, lots of excitement, many difficult moment and numerous happy experiences.

Confusion, joy, loneliness, feelings of belonging and friendship are strong emotions that occur during these projects. It makes you feel shaken quite often and this also means that strong guidance is sometimes needed and fundamental to help the young people to make further steps.

There is a saying stating that change only comes after chaos. Experience shows that the intensive period that young people go through during this kinds of projects often have a long-lasting effect. The sentence 'this project changed my life' sounds quite dramatic but still is used often by young people from this target group who took part in a Youth Exchange or European Voluntary Service project. All the new experiences and all the confusion makes them reconsider the things that are important for them. New windows are opened.

For the ones who work with these young people it's important to be aware of the strong impact and emotions coming up, to keep those new windows open after the project and to assist the young people to keep the energy and spirit up.

Although many of the benefits outlined are real for all young people, the advantages are magnified for our target group by the fact that this is sometimes very much **a once in their life opportunity rather than an opportunity available amongst a selection of alternatives.**

Young people represented in this target group often come from families in lower socio-economic situations than their 'included' peers. They may never have experienced family holidays or any other form of international travel. They may never have spent time with people from other cultural backgrounds, and may only have stereotypical knowledge of other European countries. Few will have any linguistic skills and for many this experience can be a chance to enjoy a cultural exposure that has never been in their reality.

- **Practise social skills**

Originally, the young people's social network (friends, family, gang, etc) often have the expectation that, when returning from prison, the young person will fit in to daily life easy and smoothly. This is often not the case. Their original situation hasn't changed, but the young person has lived in a completely different and isolated world for awhile.

For example: making your own decisions and choices, structuring your own life, small talk with neighbours, how to cope with technical evolutions in daily life (e.g. so called ‘e-administration’: all kinds of official forms to download from websites), etc.

Youth in Action can give these young people a context and environment (e.g. European Voluntary Service or Youth Initiatives) where they can get the opportunity to learn, practice and experiment in a **safe environment** different and new social skills they will need when returning back home.

- **Making a fresh start**

Being abroad as a young person, you don’t carry with you a history when arriving on the first day of, for example, a European Voluntary Service project. People don’t know you, don’t know your past and don’t have specific expectations towards you. It offers the possibility to make a fresh start, not hindered by things that happened before.

Some organisations in the UK send young people on a short term European Voluntary Service experience during their probation time or community sentence. This means that they go directly from prison into an unknown but ‘normal’ daily life. This gives them the opportunity to be an individual without ‘a history’ of crime, prison, etc. They can **start from ‘blank’** and this might create new opportunities, experiences and new perspectives. This experience is a **strong incentive for in-depth follow-up** when returning home after European Voluntary Service.

- **Practising Citizenship**

In addition to this, citizenship has not featured in these youth’s lives and now engaging in programmes which often have European Citizenship as a core element allow these young people to consider not only their place in their local or national society, but also how they fit into wider Europe. For many living in countries which do not require people to carry ID gaining a passport through the Youth in Action programme is often their **first step to feeling included as a citizen of their home country**.

- **Training for workers**

Also for those people who work with the young people international youth work is a new and challenging activity. Especially the intercultural dimension of the work demands for special competences. The Youth in Action Programme offers a wide range of training courses to support the competence development of those working in the Programme. Next to that a wide variety of brochures, booklets and other material has been produced to support the workers.

- More training opportunities to find in the training calendar (www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/TrainingCalendar/) and training tools in the SALTO toolbox (www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/toolbox/)



CASE STUDY: NIKOLAI

Nikolai had been in prison twice – crimes related to anti-social behaviour whilst under the influence of alcohol. Nikolai was very interested in music, when work with him began, his home organisation had just begun a partnership with an organisation in Italy who wanted to receive two volunteers who were interested in music to be involved in a new short-term host project.

Nikolai went to Italy, with another volunteer, in summer 2005 to help a local host organisation with a large annual music festival. He spent his time promoting the festival around the local towns, delivering leaflets to local people and helped with the setting up of the stages, crowd control and clearing up afterwards.

On his return, Nikolai applied to college to study Popular Music. He was accepted and although he had no formal qualifications, he could talk about his experiences in Italy which hopefully aided him in his interview. Although Nikolai successfully completed the first term and started again after Christmas, he had to abandon the course, due to anomalies in the state benefits system which do not allow students over 19 to participate in full time courses and still claim benefits. Nikolai has stayed out of trouble though and is currently on a New Deal (a Government employment access course).



PLANNING & FOR INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS



PREPARING

1 PLANNING INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

There are a few key points we would recommend when setting up or preparing for an international project, whether it is you first or your 21st. Although setting up projects does get easier and the more experienced an organisation becomes, they are less likely to make as many mistakes, concrete in-depth planning should always be a key element, which will hopefully reflect in the project's success.

- **Communication**

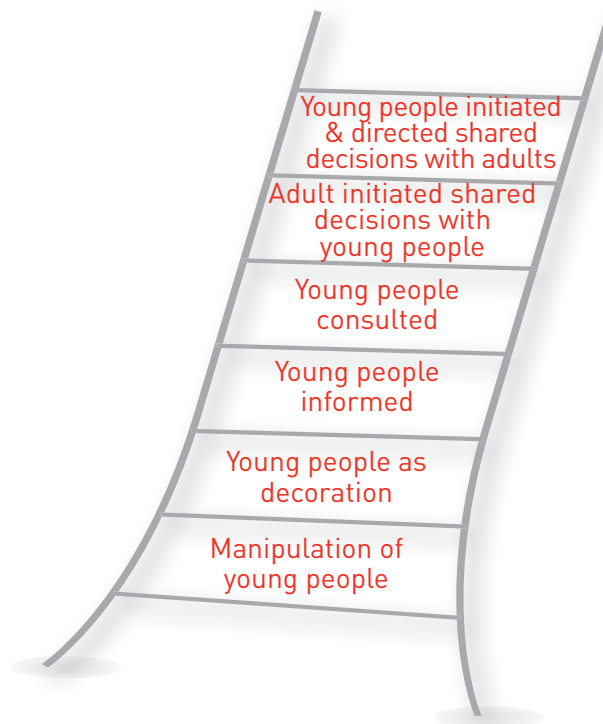
The red line running through the setting up and planning phase is communication. Communication with the young person, with their other support agencies, even their peers or parents if appropriate. Communication with your international partners, and last but not least communication with your National Agency.

Regular ongoing communication is likely to have a direct link to the success of any project. In the beginning of the project or on a very short project the communication will probably need to be more frequent.

If a young person is on a three month activity, the communication after the initial settling-in phase may move to less frequent calls or emails whilst things are running smoothly. Again close to the end of a project communication should step up again in order to support preparations for re-integration. Although not essential it is good practice this communication (from host project to young person – particularly after an European Voluntary Service project) continues. To a host organisation this young person was probably one of many they have hosted, to the young person it may have been such a significant experience it changes their lives.

- **Involvement**

Your young people and in this case the target group of young offenders or those with an offending background should be included in the planning phase of the project. Many times in the past these young people have probably been ‘placed’ into an existing programme which may or may not suit their needs. Where possible it is good practice to involve the young people in all processes of an activity, the planning, activity and evaluation phase – of course this is not always possible with a transient group with high support needs, but where possible it should be an aspiration.



Exercise:

The Ladder of Participation is a good way of getting the young people to focus on their role in the project. To find out how important they think participation is young people are given two different colours of “sticky dots”.

- **Red:** What they think their current level of participation in the project is
- **Green:** Where they would like their level of participation to be in the future

Ask the young people to discuss their thoughts with other members of their group then stick their dots onto the ladder in the appropriate places. It is good to return to this exercise throughout the project, as this will enable you to identify how inclusive the group feels that the process has been.

- **Starting with the young people's needs**

It is essential as already mentioned that inclusion in a mobility project is “needs led” not “project led”. It is not appropriate to slot a young person from this target group into a project just because there is space. The opportunity should be **tailor made** for this young person, ensuring that a need assessment and risk assessment have taken place at the outset, followed by a high quality supported project by both partners. It is essential that partners are working together considering equally the needs of the volunteer in parallel with the organisation.

- **Clarity about support possibilities and actual activities**

In the same vein, it is important that a hosting partner in this relationship identifies who they can and who they cannot support. For example one partner may say for a youth exchange they can support young people with a history of drug or alcohol misuse because the exchange will have high staffing & underage young people, therefore alcohol will be forbidden. Where as for another programme such as hosting a volunteer for four weeks on a volunteering programme, they may say a young person with this background could struggle due to the fact they would live with other volunteers who would drink socially, and may be put in too much temptation, yet volunteers with an offending background not relating to substance over-use could be managed. It is also important to give the young person real concrete information about the actual activities they will experience, in order as far as possible to prepare them for their experience.



- **Planning**

Often any international working with this target group will require more efficient and lengthier planning. **More obstacles may arise and problems may take longer to overcome.** There may be more practical issues with this target group, such as legal papers required to travel, or a young person may be receiving multi-disciplinary support from a team of people, such as a counsellor, a probation or youth offending worker, hostel accommodation staff etc. In order to satisfy all the support agencies and professionals, time must be taken during the planning phase.

- **Identify problems early**

Sometimes problems will occur before a young person or group leave on a project during the planning stage, for other young people it will be in the first stages of a project, and for still others, it could be closer to the project ending. For other young people the problems will be on return from their international experience. It is very important to identify these problems as early as possible. Organisations are often afraid to admit a project is failing. Often a problem identified early and **dealt with immediately can mean a project actually continuing rather than coming to a premature end**, especially when they feel they had prepared well and the young person really was ready. They are worried about the young person experiencing another failure in their life, about what others may think, and about whether funders (in this case the National Agency) will think they have mismanaged resources. For the young people, this is a justified fear, many of our target group feel society has failed them and they are failing in society. For an experience in the Youth in Action programme to be just another failure to add to a long list is certainly something to be avoided, and the best way is to identify problems early.



CASE STUDY: ANTONIA

Antonia was 23 and had spent nearly all the past 7 years in prison for crimes mostly committed to fund her heroin addiction. Her history of crime and drug addiction meant that she was no longer welcome at the family home. On leaving prison she was found accommodation in a hostel, where staff were committed to European Voluntary Service and had previously sent other residents to Europe. Her home organisation works very closely with this hostel and met this young lady whilst she was staying there.

Antonia continued to receive the support she needed to abstain from heroin and started to receive prescribed medication. Antonia participated in a 3 week group placement in Norway, where her sending organisation send a group every summer. These group projects have the added benefit of us being able to send support staff with the young people. This experience allows for around 10 young people, together with 2 members of support staff, to work and live in a village in Norway. They live together in a large house, eat all their meals together and share the household duties. Their European Voluntary Service experience is spent helping in the village, doing whatever tasks are required, e.g. haymaking, wood cutting, etc. Staff from her sending organisation accompanied Antonia on the project which aided the transfer of her medication to Norway.

The experience went well, although it did take Antonia a while to settle into the community living. On her return she again made contact with her family and inspired by the progress she had made Antonia was able to return to live at home. She has remained out of prison for over a year now, the longest time previous to that had been 7 weeks, and now works with her father.

2 PREPARATION

As already identified in the planning chapter, proper preparation is crucial for the success of a project. That goes for the preparation of the young people as well for the preparation of the team working on the project.

PREPARING THE YOUNG PEOPLE

For many of the young people this will be their first experience going abroad. They will have certain fears but also certain expectations. It's important to deal with those. This means spending sufficient time to exchange and discuss the images, the fears and the expectations they have. A clear picture about what is going to happen during the Youth Exchange or European Voluntary Service-project is essential especially for this target group. It might also be important to tell them what a Youth Exchange or European Voluntary Service-project is 'not' to take away false expectations.

The involvement of young people in the preparations and programme is vital in this phase. The European Voluntary Service volunteers need to feel that they are planning their own programme. They should be the main actor in the communication with their hosting organisation and mentor, assisted by their supervisor.

As described in the chapter before there are numerous ways to involve young people in the preparation of a Youth Exchange. The main purpose should be, as much as possible, to make participants feel it's **their project, 'owned' by them.**

In European Voluntary Service-projects but also in Youth Exchanges and Youth Initiatives it's important to work on individual preparation of the young people focussing on the question: **'What do I want to get out of this?'** To sit down with the young people to make their individual action or learning plan. This plan can function as a guideline during the project and as well as a tool for **evaluation and self-assessment.**

Exercise: Collecting needs and setting objectives with the young people

For young people it's often not easy to express wishes and needs. They are not used to setting objectives for themselves. When you ask them directly what are their wishes, often you will not get an answer. Nevertheless you want to come to a programme according to their needs which makes it crucial to find out what these needs are. Here some suggestions and ideas that could help you to assist the young people to express his/her needs.

A session on talking about needs could be based on:

- wishes expressed by the young people at that moment
- wishes expressed by the young people in the past
- suggestions from family and friends or support staff
- suggestions from the supervisor
- outcomes from exercises like 'In Ten Years' and 'My Web'

Try to involve the different aspects of life: school, family, work, friends, free-time etcetera.

➤ In Ten Years

Although it's mostly difficult to express wishes on the long term many young people have an idea about how they want to look their life like in ten years. In this exercise you start to ask questions about 'your life in ten years'.

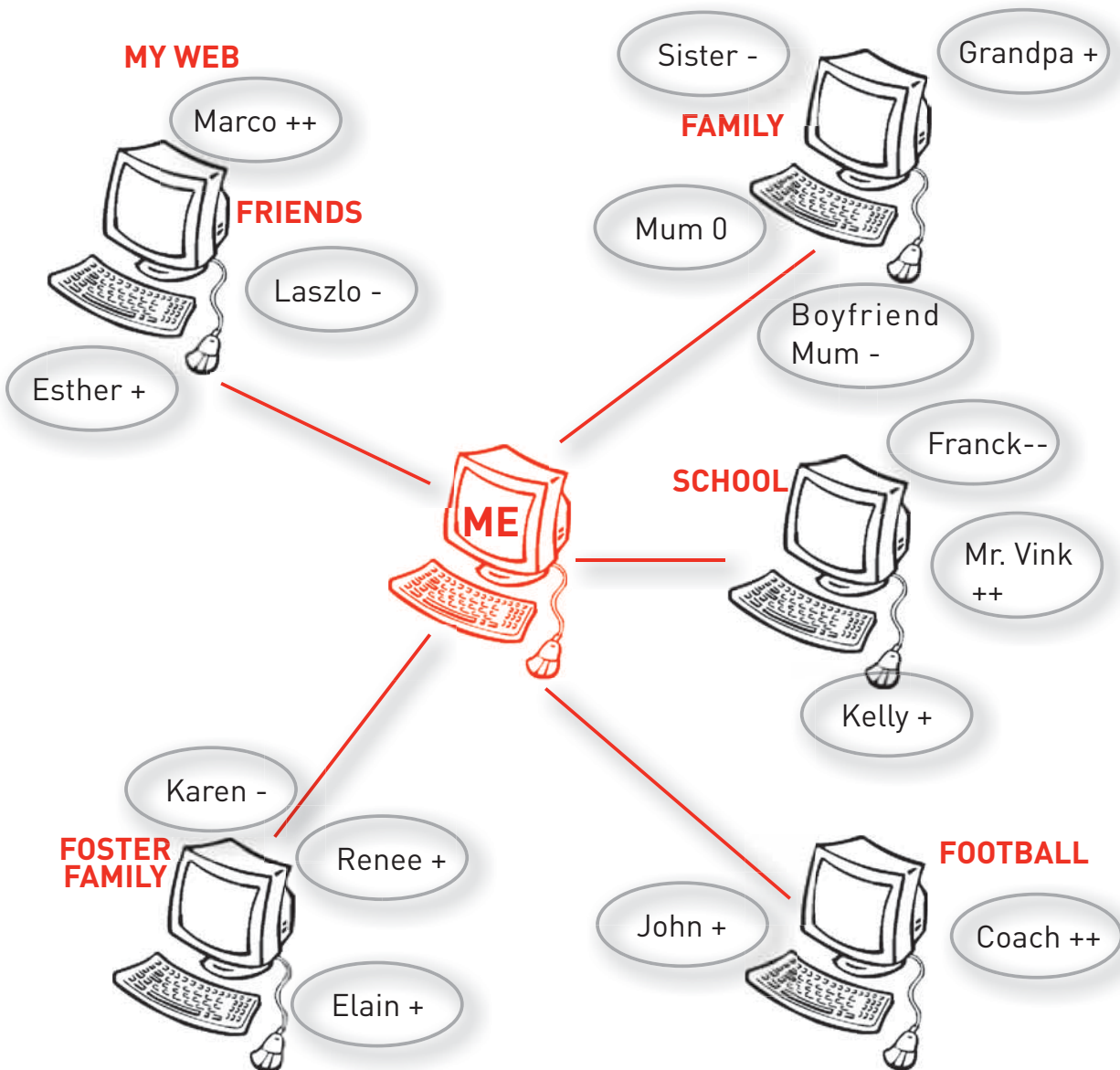
- How do you live then?
- With whom will you live?
- How will you spend your evening?
- Who will be your friends?
- What does your day look like?
- What will be then important issues for you?
-

It gives the young people the opportunity to fantasize freely about life in ten years. When having that future picture you ask what that means for life in five years. What are the consequences of the picture you made of your life in ten years for your life in five years? Then you ask the same questions about 'life in two years'.

In that way you slowly work towards short-term and medium-long term needs and objectives.

My Web

'My Web' is a tool to help the young people to 'map' his/her network and to see what are important persons in the young people's life. Persons that can also be of great value when it comes to assistance and support for the young people when making plans. Involving VIPs (Very Important Persons) can be a successful way to keep young people on track when aiming for new steps in life. 'The Web' can be a starting point to see who are the persons that play an important role in the young people's life. After having 'drawn the map' a conversation can start about the different relationships.



➤ Making an Individual Action Plan:

- Aims should be the aims of the young people, not wishes of others.
- Aims should be realistic and achievable, favourable in short term. Divide big vague aims in smaller achievable objectives.
- It must be possible to evaluate the aims, so that the young people can see the progress.
- Formulate the aims in a positive way (not: 'I don't want to ...' but 'I want to...').
- Try to choose aims that are close to the competences of the young people.
- Combine short-term and long-term aims (it feels good to achieve something already after a short time).
- Combine different kind of aims (e.g. aims relating to attitude and aims relating to skills).

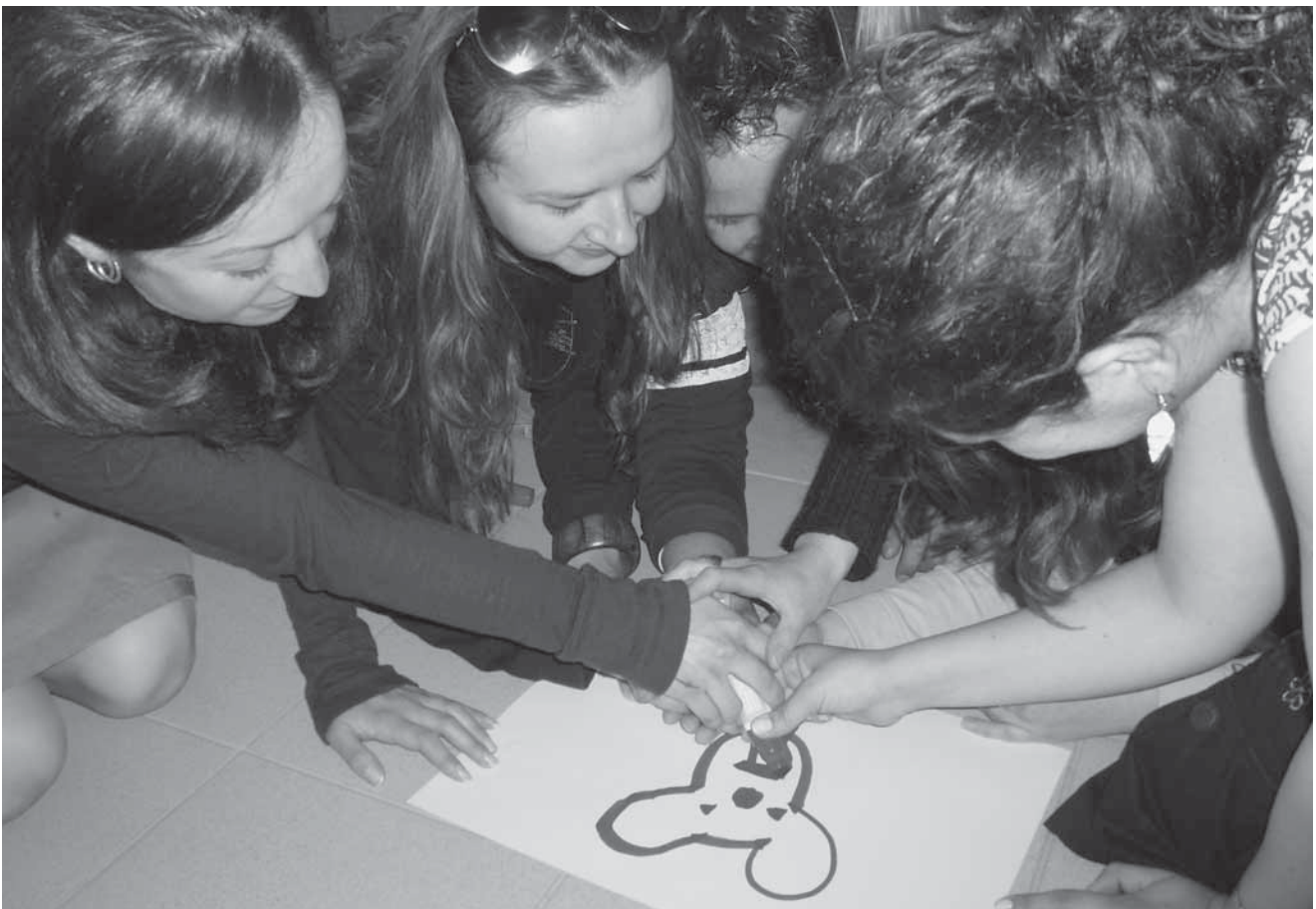
- ☞ For more information on **Intercultural Learning**, download the T-Kit on Intercultural learning from www.training-youth.net and www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/toolbox/
- ☞ Looking for **methods for expectations & young people**: check the SALTO toolbox at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/toolbox/
- ☞ Methods for preparing young people for **an intercultural experience** are to find in the **All Different All Equal Education Pack**. You can download it from the SALTO toolbox (same link as above) and the website from the Council of Europe: www.coe.int

PREPARING THE TEAM AND SUPERVISORS

Working on a Youth Exchange means working in an international team with partners from other countries. Teams where you will find different cultures, different educational backgrounds and different approaches when it comes to working with young people. These differences might have considerable consequences for many things when it comes to working together. During the exchange this might lead to misunderstanding, confusion and conflicts.

Therefore it's essential to take up the challenge of **how to deal with these different perspectives and approaches**. In the preparation time an adequate amount of time should be spend on exchanging and discussing approaches. A time consuming but also very interesting and **enriching** activity. It makes you reflect on your own working practice and probably your values and beliefs will be questioned. The main challenge is to come to a common approach in which individual values and beliefs are respected.

It helps in those discussions to take real cases to see how to act. It avoids the risk of getting only into theoretical never ending discussions. And.....in only a few weeks you will have to work with real cases anyway.



from TC No Offence

A preparation meeting is crucial but also take advantage of all the other communication possibilities that are there before and after your prep meeting. Send each other documents about your working principles and methods, start discussions on-line, write down worries and send them out, share the good and difficult experiences when preparing your young people.

A good and prepared team is a key element for a successful exchange.

As already highlighted in the planning chapter, sometimes it may feel difficult to hand over ‘your’ young people to a mentor in another country. Also here it goes that the approach towards working with young people can be quite different from yours. So again it’s important to communicate. To inform the other about how you worked with the young person and why you chose that approach. To let the other know why you think this European Voluntary Service project can contribute to the development of the volunteer and what you see as main learning points for the young people.

There is a ‘but’ in this issue. Many of the young people we are talking about carry with them a big load of dossiers that are produced by all kind of people and institutions over the last years. Dossiers that create a certain image. The European Voluntary Service project offers the young people a new start without all that history. In other words it’s important to be very careful and respectful when it comes to sending information about the volunteer to the hosting organisation. The best way to do this is to do it **together with the young people**. When possible, let the volunteer decide what is proper information to send about him or her in order to build a satisfactory relationship with the mentor.

Youth Initiatives have as an important characteristic that they are planned and implemented by young people. In other words: the role of the worker/**coach** is limited. At the same time we know that the young people of our target group might have considerable problems to start a project without any assistance. The role of the worker/coach therefore should be directed mainly at making the young people responsible for their project and giving them tools to manage. The worker/coach can be a reference point when problems arrive and can offer to be a regular meeting point for reporting the progress of the project. The challenge in this role is to find the right **balance between assisting and leaving the responsibility** with the young people. You don’t want to miss the point where you can give a crucial spur for continuing their project but you also don’t want to end up as the one keeping the project going.

 Find more tips and tricks for the **coach** in the SALTO-YOUTH **Coaching Guide** at www.SALTO-YOOUTH.net/CoachingGuide/

3 RISK ASSESSMENT

‘There’s no money back guarantee on future happiness’, sings Elvis Costello. The same goes for planning projects. You can not be prepared for everything. Still it makes sense to think about those things that could go wrong. Based on your experiences and by going through the programme you can identify where risks might appear. For those risks you can at least prepare yourself. Not on your own but as a team. Decide as a team if you are capable of handling those risks.



INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Who has to do what, in your organisation, in case of an emergency or crisis? Who to contact when things go wrong?


Outside your own organisation, it is important to know and to agree who will do what in case of emergency / crisis. Which details do you need to transfer to which persons, organisations, institutions, etc.

In a crisis situation you need to **proceed fast and efficiently**. There’s no time to discuss nor to negotiate. Therefore these ‘risky questions’:

- In case of emergency/crisis: who is the contact person in your organisation?
- Who is the contact person in your partner organisation(s)?
- Who will inform partner, family, probation officers, social worker, youth worker, etc.
- Who will inform the other participants (yours and from the partner groups) in the project?
- Who will contact the insurance and responsible for follow-up for this issue? Who’s the contact person in the insurance company?
- ...

In order to proceed fast, it is necessary to collect beforehand essential contact details of people and organisations, e.g.:

- Emergency number of your organisation and other organisations involved + who to contact (24 hours on 24 hours)
- Contact details from the most important people for the young person. This could be, according to his situation and request: partner, family, probation officer, social worker, etc.
- Emergency numbers of emergency services in the hosting country
- Contact details from the insurance company
- Contact details from your Embassy or Consulate in the hosting country

 **Tip:** you can put all this information on a little and handy list and disseminate it to all the involved youth workers in your international project

Listing risky questions:

A list of questions you could ask yourself trying to assess the risks:

- Is all information about medicines, special diets, allergies of participants available.
- What do we know about the availability of medicines in the place we are staying?
- What about insurance? Do we need any special travel documents for a young person recently released from prison?
- In case something happens to a participant do we have contact details to parents, family, foster home, social worker.
- Are there any risks in programme elements planned? How to deal with, how to control, how to minimise these risks?
- Knowing the participant(s) and the programme, what could be challenging and therefore lead to or result in risk full behaviour?
- Are there special situations or circumstances which can lead to strong emotions for a participant? (e.g. travelling, having not enough individual space, home sickness, alcohol)
- What could be challenging developments in the group process knowing the participants?
- How do we deal with alcohol and drugs, also taking into account 'availability' and possibly different laws or social norms in the direct surrounding of the venue where the project takes place?

- Do we inform the local police about our stay?
- Which phone numbers should we give to participants? (e.g. place of venue, mentor, local police, mobile number of staff-members etcetera)
- Where is the nearest doctor, hospital, police station?
- Do we have a full list of all emergency numbers?
- Do the team members have each others phone numbers?
- What if a young person commits a crime in the host country?
- Do we as youth workers know the different laws in the host country and what the process is in the worst case scenario if a young person gets arrested?
- Can we book flexible travel in case a young person needs to return early?
-?

👉 More to find on health and safety in international projects in the **Health and Safety Guide** of the National Agency of Ireland at www.leargas.ie or the **Trainer's Manual** from the Child Protection Awareness Programme www.childprotection.ie

RISK ASSESSEMENT:

✳ An Example

The Governmental Youth Care Institution 'De Zande'

'De Zande' is a closed educational community facility for minors under the Flemish Community in Belgium. In the setting in Beernem 40 girls aged between 12 and 18 years live. They are placed there by the juvenile court due to a great diversity of reasons. The institution deals with non-accompanied minors, gypsies, girls victim to 'smuggling-refugees, victims of incest, drug-addicts, girls coming out of prostitution etc.

They had some bilateral and one multilateral youth exchange with similar institutions having a comparable kind of target group.

These are some examples from their risk assessment:

- **Sufficient staff**

With this group of young people a sufficient number of staff members is crucial. It happens quite often that a girl needs individual guidance, especially in this new and challenging environment which a youth exchange is. So, people need to be available. This means one educator for two girls. De Zande makes timetables for the educators with people being responsible for several hours while others then have the time to relax.

- **Clear agreements**

In different countries and different organisations there are different rules and regulations. The approach towards the young people can differ a lot. It's important to be clear about that when preparing a project. Rules about simple things as smoking or drinking alcohol can be the reason for many problems during youth exchanges. It's not always possible to come to common rules. Sometimes you want to stick to the rules you have at home. In that case it's important to explain that to the young people.

- **Emergency**

The De Zande staff makes sure that there is always the possibility to be in contact with the people at home when they are on a youth exchange. Therefore it's crucial to check the possibilities for internet and mobile phones. Also they make sure to have access to the local emergency numbers and the local authorities.

Another important issue is to bring enough medication. Many of the De Zande girls use medicines and it turned out that these medicines are not always available in other countries. Make sure you have a kind of certificate from a doctor which you might need when you pass the border with all these medicines.

- **'Dead moments'**

Avoid dead moments. It's important to have a full programme, especially with this group. The girls easily get bored and that has a bad influence on the atmosphere. Take sport equipment, games and comic books with you.

- **Reflection on experiences**

There are a lot of experiences during the youth exchange, every day again. It's hard for the girls to deal with all that. To solve that, the girls write down their experiences every day and make drawings and pictures. It helps them to take the time to reflect and it's a nice souvenir to take home.





PARTNER FINDING

1 HOW TO FIND A PARTNER GROUP?

The most interesting part of an international project is **the contact and co-operation** that is made with organisations from different countries. Engaging with partner organisations is a very **enriching experience** with many potential benefits.

AND PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

But how will you locate **suitable partner organisations**? Is there a list where you can choose from? Should you search for a partner organisation on the internet? Should you visit various organisations in a certain country and then choose one? There are more ways than one to find a partner organisation. Different organisations prefer **different partner finding techniques**.

Within the European Union's Youth in Action programme there are a variety of **tools to help you find a partner group** (for an exchange) or a **project** (for a voluntary service):

- Most National Agencies (NAs) in the Youth in Action programme have some kind of **partner request form** usually in electronic format on their homepage. The NAs can forward your completed form to one or more of the other NAs located across Europe. These NAs use different ways to circulate the partner requests to potential partners (e.g. e-mail lists, homepage, newsletters). You will find a list of NAs at http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc443_en.htm and at http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth/contacts_en.htm
- Some National Agencies also have a **partner finding database online**, e.g. the German and British NAs - you can locate these databases via the SALTO partner finding page at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/partnerfinding/
If you are looking for a host organisation for a European Voluntary Service project, you will find a **host organisation database** at <http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/>

- Some centres for Regional Co-operation have **addresses of youth organisations** in so-called “partner countries” with whom Youth in Action programme projects are possible. e.g. SALTO Eastern Europe & Caucasus: www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/eeca/, SALTO South East Europe: www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/see/, the EuroMed platform for co-operation with EuroMed countries: www.euromedp.org
- ...

International platforms such as

- **EUROMET:** www.euromet.nu is a **European youth care alliance**, a network of institutions covering both Eastern and Western Europe, providing various educational, socialisation, treatment vocational programmes, working pedagogically with seriously disadvantaged children and youth. EUROMET’s objective is to encourage practical projects either on a bilateral or multi-lateral basis which increase the knowledge, skills, practice of its members. This is achieved through staff exchanges, youth exchanges and youth visits to other institutions, discussions and presentations, and projects of practical help and aid.
- **Street work:** www.streetworker.org is a common website of organisations dealing with street work in four countries (France, Spain, Greece and UK). The website aims to create a frame for professional street work, interventions, ethics etc.
- **Youth Express Network**, a network of youth and social workers working on local, regional and international levels with young people with disadvantaged backgrounds. A pan European non governmental organisation. They offer training courses for youth and social workers, study sessions and seminars, publication of magazines and newsletters, cooperation and cross border projects, awareness raising and advocacy... But they also offer a data base of potential partners in Europe: www.y-e-n.net
- **Youth and European Social Work** fosters a permanent dialogue about the needs and interests of socially excluded young people or those threatened by social exclusion. Promotes the cooperation between government bodies and non-governmental institutions in the field of youth social work in Europe and offers new instruments for the transnational dialogue as well as strategies which help to use them efficiently. Check www.yes-forum.org for more information.

- The European Commission also support the introduction, implementation, and promotion of innovative and qualitative elements in non-formal education and youth work. The projects must have a clear transnational European dimension and contribute to European co-operation in youth matters. You can find a list of these **Innovative Long-term Youth in Action projects** on www.salto-youth.net/eeca/npcdatabase/

While participating in various Training Courses, Partnership Building Seminars, or Short Study Visits, you may well meet youth workers from **potential partner organisations**.

This way of finding a partner group has some extended advantages, when working with young (ex-)offenders. In between these meetings there is time to exchange some vital information and personally get to know the other youth worker, social worker etc. From experience, many workers working with this target group have explained the importance of “**the personal click**” with this person from a potential partner organisation. Knowing you share similar opinions and visions on life, but also in how to work with this target group, how to proceed, the importance of international projects for them, ... is an **excellent basis for (a long term) cooperation**.

- ☛ Information about different **training opportunities** can be found on www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/training/ or from your National Agency. A list of the contact details of your National Agency, is to download at http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc443_en.htm

2 BUILDING A TRUSTFUL PARTNERSHIP

It is not difficult to build a partnership, however it does require some work. A trustful partnership does not prevent you from having discussions, disagreements and misunderstandings, but it creates a space in which they can take place in a **safe and empowering environment**.

The key to a successful partnership lies in one essential aspect: **personal relationships**. It is important that the initiators of the partnership (e.g. youth workers that met on a training course) like each other and get along. This is a **solid base** for a partnership to **continue to build on**.

It involves more than just finding a partner organisation and getting along with a youth worker abroad: the main issue is **how to retain and work with this partner**. The following are some elements that you may have to reflect on in your partnership!

Based on the **Training-Kit on Social Inclusion** available from www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/ and www.training-youth.net

Are your organisations compatible?

Especially when working with young offenders or those at risk of offending, it is important to create partnerships between organisations that reach similar target groups, because the impact of this Youth in Action experience will be continued in their daily life.



from TC No Offence

Therefore it is important to find out answers on the following questions:

- Do your organisations share **common aims**? Or are they at least compatible?
- Do the organisations work with a similar **target group** (age, mix, gender, educational background, geographical situation)? And if not how will you deal with the differences?
- Do your organisations have similar **activities**? Would you find a programme in common that both organisations are happy with?
- Do you have similar **organisational capacities** (size of the organisation, budgets, available networks)? Or would you find ways to work together on an equal footing?
- Do you have similar **organisational cultures** or working spirit? Or at least the openness to adapt to different ways of working?
- Do you have **common educational principles**? Are the differences in approach reconcilable?
- Do you have efficient **channels of communication**? A common working language?
- Do you have similar **legal requirements** (health & safety, needed qualifications, alcohol & drugs policies, etc.)? Are they compatible?
- Do you have your **hierarchies' support** to join in such a partnership – time and resources should be freed to work on this co-operation?

Of course no two organisations are completely the same and share all the above elements. It is important to be flexible, but also to be conscious of how you will deal with the differences. The more similar your organisations are, the easier the co-operation, but perhaps less to be learnt from each other.

When the above questions on the level of the organisation are discussed with your partner organisation, specific questions in the light of to the young people's needs and objectives are important to consider.

- **Evaluation criteria and monitoring:** What criteria do the partners use to monitor and evaluate projects and the partnership? At which intervals? What would be the limit of acceptance?
 - **Partnership Timetable:** What is a realistic time span for the project? The co-operation time span? What deadlines must the partners adhere to?
 - **Distribution of tasks:** Who does what? How flexible and reliable is the process for distributing tasks? What backups are foreseen?
 - **Budget and resources:** What resources, both human and financial, will each organisation commit to the project?
 - **Co-operation between organisations and groups:** How will the youth workers and the young people in both organisations contact each other? How could they get to know each other better?
 - **Communication and coordination:** How will you keep all stakeholders informed about the project? How are you going to ensure regular contact between the partners? What needs and what doesn't need to be communicated/reported? How will you make decisions?
 - Agree on the **final project plan**. It is important to make sure that the plan is agreed upon by the decision making body of the various organisations involved. Ensure organisational support for and commitment to the project.
- 👉 Read more about Setting up partnerships in the **T-kit on Social Inclusion**, chapter 4, page 30 - www.training-youth.net and in **Over the Rainbow** from the SALTO 'Inclusion for All' series at www.salto-youth.net/OverTheRainbow/

FUNDING FOR



INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

There are many different ways of getting money for your project. However, the target group you are working with is already hard to KEEP them into the project, besides motivating them to do fund raising. Still, it's worthwhile to explain to them this side of the project too!

But before making this step, it's important to answer as well as possible the following questions.

1 FINDING MONEY

Before you start planning your project with your partner organisation you will need to **draw up a budget for your project** and secure funding. You will need to make an estimate of all the money you will spend on your project (*expenditure*) and all the money that you hope to receive (*income*). This will give you an idea about whether your project is **financially viable or not**. If it isn't financially possible you will either have to lower the cost of your project or put more effort into raising more funds. Some examples are listed below.

List all the items of expenditure and income in two separate columns. When you have completed this inventory of cost items and sources of income, put an approximate cost on the different items, based (as far as possible) on real figures.

✦ For example:

OUT	IN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation meeting (travel, food, accommodation, rental of meeting room) • Communication costs (e-mail, stamps, phone, internet, etc.) • Office costs (electricity, rent, water, office stationary, etc.) • Project costs (travel, visa & insurance, food & accommodation, rental of meeting room & equipment, material, leisure time activities, etc.) • Trainer fees & staff costs • Evaluation & follow-up costs • Unexpected costs (5%) – etc. 	<p>A mix of the funding providers listed below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Youth in Action Programme • Grant from the local authority • Fundraising (party, cake sale, etc.) • Use of meeting room and computers donated by Company X • Contribution from the organisation • Etc.

Important tips!

- ★ **A budget needs to be balanced** – every cent that you spend needs to come from somewhere.
- ★ **Phase your budget** – put all the expenses and income on a timeline to see if there will be periods in which you will have to finance expenses before you have received the relevant grant (grants sometimes only arrive once the project is finished).
- ★ **Do your research** – the more you base the figures on actual prices the more realistic your budget will be. Take into account price fluctuations, exchange rates, some unforeseen circumstances, etc. Don't base your budget on the cheapest of the cheapest as special offers might no longer be available when you will have to organise your project some.
- ★ **Don't go it alone** – it is very easy to make mistakes or to overlook certain costs or possible income sources – you could ask some people who aren't involved in the project to **double-check the budget and the figures.**

2 APPLYING FOR FUNDING

Once you know how much money you will require, you can effectively try to acquire this money from a variety of providers, foundations and individuals. Funding providers make money available for a reason: it is up to you to see to what extent your project fits the provider's objectives and criteria. Usually these guidelines are mentioned online. Read them carefully before you make an application.

Once you have decided to apply, it is important to **convince the funders of the reason why** they should fund your project or organisation. It might be clear to you, but if you don't explain the reasons why your project is worthwhile from the perspective of the funder, it will be difficult for the selection committee to justify giving you the funding.

Some tips

- ★ **Get to know your (potential) funders:** why are they willing to give you funding?, what are their requirements?, who is the best person to contact for more info or feedback on your potential project?
- ★ Check the **terms and conditions of the funders** e.g. staff costs (some programmes do not allow salaries for youth workers or trainers), unexpected costs (will they fund contingency costs?), etc.
- ★ Check the rules as regards **buying large equipment** (e.g. computers, cameras, etc.) as often funders will not finance these longer-lasting investments that will remain beyond the scope of the project.
- ★ Check the **rules as regards co-funding** (e.g. the EU Youth in Action programme does not recognise other EU funding as co-funding; sometimes contributions in kind are not regarded as co-funding – check with your national agency/funding provider in case of doubt).
- ★ Translate your project into the **language of the funder:** e.g. there is a big difference between “getting to know the local environment” and “a guided city tour”; some use the terms ‘European Citizenship’ or ‘active citizenship’, while others prefer ‘participation’ or ‘empowerment’ etc.
- ★ It will be necessary to prepare a different **budget/application adapted to each funder** and their terms and conditions.

- ★ **Facilitate the work of the selection committee.** Use the application form provided and stick to the questions asked (this will be the only information required to base their selection on). Provide summaries and avoid lengthy prose or unwanted attachments. Make them smile.
- ★ **Is it clear?** The funding provider may not know your organisation, your work, your internal jargon. Ask a “naïve reader” external to your organisation or project, to check if your application makes sense.

- ☞ You can find some application specifics for the **Youth in Action programme** in “What is behind the paperwork” - Coyote 9 (August 2004) www.training-youth.net
- ☞ Find more tips and tricks about budgeting, funding applications and financial management in the **Training-kit on Funding and Financial Management**: available to download for free from www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool/371.html and www.training-youth.net

3 THE EUROPEAN UNION'S YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME



The Youth in Action programme is the European Union's current **mobility and non-formal education programme**. The programme promotes active European citizenship, participation, cultural diversity, and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.

It offers different possibilities to young people to set up projects with an international dimension (e.g. group exchanges, voluntary service, group initiatives, youth democracy projects).

It also provides funding for support activities for youth workers. This aims to increase the quality of the youth projects.

The Youth in Action Programme is open to young people and youth workers in the so-called “Programme Countries”. These are the EU members, the EFTA countries (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein) and the pre-accession country (Turkey). There are some (limited) possibilities to set up projects with other regions (neighbouring partner countries).

- ☛ Visit http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc443_en.htm or contact the National Agency of the Youth in Action programme in your country.

There are **several types of projects** that receive funding. The funding rules of the Youth in Action programme are largely based on a simple system of flat rates and fixed amounts depending on the number of participants, the activity, its duration etc.

- **Youth Exchanges** (where groups of young people come together)
 - **Group Initiatives** (local projects originating from youth groups)
 - **Youth Democracy Projects** (European partnership, allowing the pooling, at European level, of ideas, experiences and methodologies from projects or activities at local, regional, national or international level, in order to improve young people’s participation)
 - **European Voluntary Service** (young people volunteer in another country)
 - **Support for youth workers** (training, seminars, job-shadowing, feasibility visits, etc.)
- ☛ Find out more about this programme by downloading the **Programme Guide** http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc443_en.htm or contact the National Agency in your country.

The Youth in Action programme focuses specifically on ‘ensuring that **ALL young people**’ **have access** to it and special efforts are made to include groups of young people such as young offenders, ex-offenders or young people at risk of offending.

The term Inclusion relates to any young person with less opportunities, so any young person at risk of offending or with an offending history would automatically fall into this target group. In the application process, questions around inclusion ask how the applicant plans to offer additional support in order to ‘include’ such a young person in a programme of youth exchange or European Voluntary Service for example, giving them the same opportunities as their already ‘included’ peers.

The following measure can be used to support ‘young people that are at risk’ or ‘that have special needs’.

- It is a priority within the Youth in Action programme to fund projects from **groups with fewer opportunities**. If equally good applications are received from a group that is at risk and a mainstream youth group, priority is given to the group with special needs e.g. this could be a youth group of youth at risk or with an offending background, depending on the country.
- It is possible to apply for ‘**exceptional costs**’ in your application if the project either involves young people with fewer opportunities and/or with **special needs** (due to a disability, disease or other circumstances) or where the **special nature of the activities justifies** it. This could be, for example, extra staff involved in the project in order to manage it properly in accordance with the policy of the organisation working with (ex-)offenders; special medical care; or other justifiable additional costs due to the specifics of undertaking an (ex-) offenders project.
- Youth Exchanges can be most interesting and challenging when organised on a multilateral level (groups from 4 or more countries involved). However, multilateral exchanges are not immediately advisable when working with extremely difficult young people. Belonging to the group of ‘young people with fewer opportunities’, you can also apply for **bilateral projects** that are less complicated to organise. They usually get priority over other bilateral projects.
- Recently the European Commission also introduced the idea of ‘**Reinforced Mentoring**’ in voluntary service placements. This would cover some of the cost of having a mentor assist the volunteer e.g. with special needs, poor mental health, behavioural problems, etc.
- There exists ‘**Short Term European Voluntary Service**’ which is geared towards young people with ‘special needs’. Instead of going abroad for a period of 2 to 12 months a ‘person at risk’ can take part in a voluntary service project for a minimum period of 2 weeks if it were the case that 2 months were too long.

- There is also the possibility of going on an **advanced planning visit** (preparation visit) to prepare youth exchanges or EVS (European Voluntary Service), and in some cases the youth worker can accompany the **person with ‘special needs’**, in order to get a feel for the project venue, to check the support system, to see if the European Voluntary Service host placement is appropriate for the volunteer, etc.
- Under the Group Initiative projects an amount of 1000 euro can applied for to engage the support of a **coach**, when young people under 18 years are involved.

- When preparing a project, it is possible to use the so-called **support activities** of the Youth in Action programme (feasibility visit, job-shadowing, evaluation meeting, seminar, study visit, training course, partnership building activity, networking). This would come under a separate project and funding application however.



- ★ **Tip:** Regarding the funding, if things go wrong inform the funding body as soon as possible. It is recognised that offenders and ex-offenders are a high risk group and there are many reasons for a project not to succeed. Sometimes it will be necessary to stop a project and return unspent money, at other times it will be possible to make changes to the project and retain the funding to continue the project, maybe in another direction. Don't be scared to explain what has gone wrong. This can often prevent the problem spiralling out of control.
- ★ **Tip:** The above mentioned measures are incentives to encourage the participation of “young people with fewer opportunities” in your project. None of these examples are ‘rules’, but they are measures that COULD be taken by your National Agency of the Youth in Action programme to support your (ex-)offenders project – always check with your NA what is possible and what isn't. You will need to justify and explain why you would need the extra funding.

The NAs are there to inform you (in your own language) about the possibilities available and they can help you with your project ideas or suggest attending information sessions or training activities. Every NA also has an Inclusion Officer that works specifically to include young people with fewer opportunities and young people at risk in the Youth in Action programme. Most of the NAs also have people from ‘inclusion organisations’ in their selection committees.

✦ Examples of youth projects with youth at risk in the Youth in Action Programme A Youth Initiative in the streets of Kaunas, Lithuania

Already for quite some years a group of young people from Kaunas wanted to find a way to show their hip-hop culture to the outer world. But they didn't find any possibility to do that. Till the moment that a local NGO ‘Actio Catholica Patria’ informed them about the possibilities of the YOUTH programme and especially about ‘Youth Initiatives’.

These young people were between seventeen and twenty-one year old scholars and students. But in fact they don't go to school or university very often. They are ‘anti/school’ and at risk of dropping out. Most of them have problems with alcohol and drugs. Their behaviour is not accepted by society which brings them in an isolated position. Some of them started to commit small crime. To put it short, young people at risk.

They immediately got themselves organised and applied as a group to use ‘Youth Initiatives’ as a possibility to organise a two day hip-hop festival in Kaunas.

Their main aim was to inform people about their subculture and to give them an opportunity to take a closer look at the different elements of that culture. They wanted to show that the hip-hop culture is tolerant and universal and at the same time they wanted to invite the community of Kaunas to be more open minded towards the young people of today.



Many famous bands were playing at the festival. But there was also space for people not that famous but very active in this culture. Activities as DJing, MCing, break-dance and graffiti were offered.

It brought the young people space to create, to dance and sing and to express themselves in various ways. The youth initiative project gave them the possibility to show themselves and to

start to communicate to society. By doing the project they managed to organise a two day event and to acquire all the skills and competences that come with an activity like that.

They worked as a team, they made a lot of contacts and they communicated to sponsors.

After the festival the young people went on and are still now organising other hip-hop events. Next to that the group was active in informing other young people about the possibilities of the Youth in Action programme.

De Zande - Youth exchanges with special girls – Belgium/Flanders

“The Governmental Youth Care Institution ‘De Zande’ (a closed educational community facility for minors under the official government of the Flemish Government in Belgium) is very enthusiastic about the results of their youth exchanges. The girls, between 14-18 years old, are placed by the juvenile court due to a great diversity of reasons. The institution deals with non-accompanied minors, gypsies, girls victim to ‘smuggling-refugees, victims of incest, drug-addicts, girls coming out of prostitution etc.

The background of many of the girls gives them a very limited view on the world; they are confined in their own small world. Youth Exchanges offer them the possibility to meet different cultures, different habits, different languages and different perspectives.

Often the girls have gone through bad experiences when it comes to schools and learning. Youth exchanges gave them the opportunity of learning experiences without being taught in a class room.

During the different activities the young people experienced working together with others and are in a way forced to ‘consider the other’. They get responsibilities for certain tasks and learn how to make decisions. For most of them these are big steps and new challenges. The positive reactions on their achievements bring them self-confidence in a relatively short time.

The main outcome is that the youth exchange helps the girls to broaden their options.

Not only the young people benefit

While doing the international projects De Zande found out that also the staff, who worked with the girls, had multiple benefits out of the exchanges. The educators involved in the activity found new inspiration and impulses. The ‘normal’ way, the well-known ‘daily’ solutions, often don’t work in such a project. You have to be inventive and flexible all the time and many times people are amazed by how inventive they can be, which is a motivating experience.

Team work is essential in youth exchanges and people are in a positive way forced to work together with colleagues from other countries and to build a team spirit. The different approaches of the foreign colleagues were experienced as enriching and valuable.

There is a lot to learn in Youth Exchanges, also for the staff. When being confronted with another environment and culture, new innovative ideas come up and new oxygen is provided. Contacts with other institutions from all over Europe open up new views.“

RUNNING A PROJECT



What to take into account when preparing and implementing a Youth in Action project? What are the important elements to make the project a success when working with this specific target group?

1 DURING THE PROJECT

- **Creating safety**

Especially in the beginning of the project it's essential to create safety for the young people participating. Take care of a full programme and be clear about how the days are structured. Don't make young people hanging around for hours on the arrival day of the Youth Exchange. Don't leave the European Voluntary Service-volunteer with a lot of free time during the first days. Offer activities that help the young people to communicate, that take away the language fear, that help them to explore the environment. Personal talks between young people and supervisor can help them to understand the chaos coming from all the different experiences.

Being in a new environment means **finding new ways to survive**. The programme should help the young people to find those new ways.

- **Time for reflection and evaluation**

Plan time for reflection and evaluation. For the young people this is an intensive experience and they need space to deal with all the emotions and confusion they may go through. Make time at the end of every day in a Youth Exchange to sit together in groups and to exchange the experiences. It helps to see that **others went through similar experiences as you did**. Expressing your emotions is already a big first step in dealing with those feelings. Just to have the opportunity to blow off steam is a good reason to have those daily reflections.

Take care that there is time and space available for individual reflection with those young people who need that kind of personal attention.

As referred to earlier, for the individual European Voluntary Service volunteer it is even more important to have a place and a moment to share all the new experiences and impressions. Certainly in the first week of the project it is needed to have daily meetings with the mentor to express feelings and to go through all the simple and practical things that occur when you start to live in another country. Later in the project the frequency will be less and the focus will be more on the learning process of the volunteer.

Reflection and evaluation are important tools to make **the learning complete**. Just going through all kinds of experiences does not necessarily lead to learning if you don't have the opportunity to reflect on these experiences.

There is a big variety of methods that can help you to look back on the day or a certain part of the programme with a group of young people. Just to sit down and talk can sometimes be a good solution but in other moments you might need a more active method as for instance The Living Dartboard.

👉 More of these methods you can find on the SALTO website. The below mentioned exercise is based on the following tool: www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool/281.html/

Excercise: The Living Dartboard

The Living Dartboard is a variation on the dartboard you can find in pubs.

You need an empty, rather big room. In the middle of the room is an object (chair, paper, flower etc.), which has the same function as the centre of a dartboard.

In this case: the more you agree the closer you get to the middle-point, the more you disagree the more you get away from that point.

The leader reads out statements about the exchange and the young people choose a spot in the room according to their opinion about that statement. After everyone has chosen his/her position participants can be asked to clarify why they are standing where they are.

At a certain moment the young people can be invited to come up with a statement that they want to check with the group.

Statements could be:

- there is enough free time in the programme
- I can understand everybody in this group

- the food is absolutely fabulous
- I think we are talking too much
- I have some ideas for activities
- ...

For individual young people to evaluate their day in a Youth Exchange or in a European Voluntary Service-project, it can help to give them some guiding questions. You could give a paper with those questions every day or you can provide the young people with a diary where these guiding questions are part of. To provide it in an attractive form and to leave space for drawings, cartoons etcetera, can help.

Guiding questions could be:

- What was the best moment of the day?
- What was a really bad moment?
- Was there something really new that I learned today?
- What would I like to do different in the coming days?
- With whom do I have good contacts?
- With whom would I like to talk?
-



Exercise: Secret Friend

Another positive activity to add to a youth exchange could be a game called secret friend.

At the start of the exchange everyone is given a piece of paper with the name of one of the group members: the person on this paper becomes their secret friend for the whole exchange.

Their aim is to do nice things for this person. Maybe secretly leave a bunch of flowers they have picked inside their shoes or write a note complementing them on an achievement they made the previous day.

This activity is particularly beneficial with this target group, who have perhaps little experience of living and functioning in positive, complementary circles. Each day during the evaluation session, any nice secret friend activities can be shared, giving further esteem and value to the recipient but also the secret friend. This is a great opportunity to help young people learn to give to make others feel good, something many will have no experience of. At the end of the exchange participants can guess who their secret friend is.

- **Structure and flexibility**

This target group often needs a lot of structure and clarity. The programme and timetable of a Youth Exchange should be clear and the same goes for what is allowed and what not. At the same time this group needs to act, to try, to learn from mistakes, to take responsibility, to fulfil tasks, to experience success. The **risk** in a lot of programmes with these groups is that there is a full exciting programme with lots of interesting activities and exercises but in the end it's the staff that provided the programme and was fully responsible for every minute of the Youth Exchange. Young people just follow the programme but don't take any responsibility, simply because the chance to take responsibility was not offered to them.

Giving responsibility to the young people should be an essential element of the approach and programme. As written before, already a lot can happen relating to this in the preparation phase.

It depends of course a lot on the group you are working with how you bring that into practice. For some young people getting too much responsibility could block them or give them only a bad experience. It's important to tailor your approach in this. The main attitude should be to be always be attentive for 'who could do what'. Some young people could be excellent in guiding the group through an exercise, others can be great in taking care of the sound system.

It's about keeping your eyes open for possibilities for young people to act and take responsibility. This also means that the programme should be **flexible** enough to give space to young people. When you find out that one of the girls is an excellent DJ, there should be the possibility to organise a DJ-workshop, where she can show and share her competences.

Again the trick is to find the right **balance** between needed structure and flexibility.

Volunteer what responsibilities he/she will take and how the level of responsibility will increase in the course of time. Also here it's important to adjust tasks and responsibilities to the needs and capacities of the young people.

- 👉 In the SALTO-booklet '**Use your hands to move ahead**' you can find a lot of information about planning tasks in Short Term European Voluntary Service projects.

www.salto-youth.net/UseYourHands/

2 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Going abroad with our target group is quite a challenge, that's clear by now. Motivating them, involving them in an active way are 'only' the first steps. The 'real thing', an international project, is the highlight of the process for these young people. However, even though the preparation phase was intense and prepared the young person on different facets of his life, this is no guarantee for a project without any conflict.

Handling disagreements, expressing frustration, dealing with confusion, lacking basic resources, ... are in general not easy to deal with, and specially when **lacking skills and competences to manage these situations and feelings**, is very hard for our target group. Still, in any conflict, there is the potential for growth and positive change. Conflict is not necessarily destructive, if handled properly. It can become a valuable tool in building up, skills and personal strengths: when acknowledged and explored in a safe environment, it can provide powerful situations and reactions, to refer to and follow-up after the project. Viewed in this light, the conflict and the way it is managed can be seen as an opportunity to deal with self-esteem and trust.

The youth worker's role in this journey of discovery is to be open, non-judgemental, accepting and positive, and careful trustees of young people's growing vulnerability and openness. They should help the young people to recognise that confronting conflicts is a step forward in their relations to others and will give them an experience they can rely on in their daily life back home.

- Adapted from the **T-kit on Social Inclusion** from the chapter on “**Conflict management**”
- For more information on the origin of conflicts in an intercultural situation, check the **T-kit on Intercultural Learning**

Levels of Conflict: there are different levels of conflict. Mostly when a conflict is not dealt with, it will go down the different steps like a roller coaster: incidents are numerous and tension rises.

A lot of frustration can be avoided by **bringing conflicts into the open in an early stage**, in stead of letting them develop in something more serious and difficult to deal with. It is important to be able to recognise the different levels.

LEVELS OF CONFLICT

Things don't feel right. Maybe difficult to identify the problem. Feeling uncomfortable, but not sure why.

DISCOMFORT

Short, sharp exchange without lasting internal reaction. Something happened that leave one feeling upset/irritated with unwanted result.

Motives and facts confused or misunderstood. Thoughts return frequently to the problem.

INCIDENTS

Relationships effected badly by negative attitudes and fixed opinions. People see each other in a worse light. Relationship is constant source of worry.

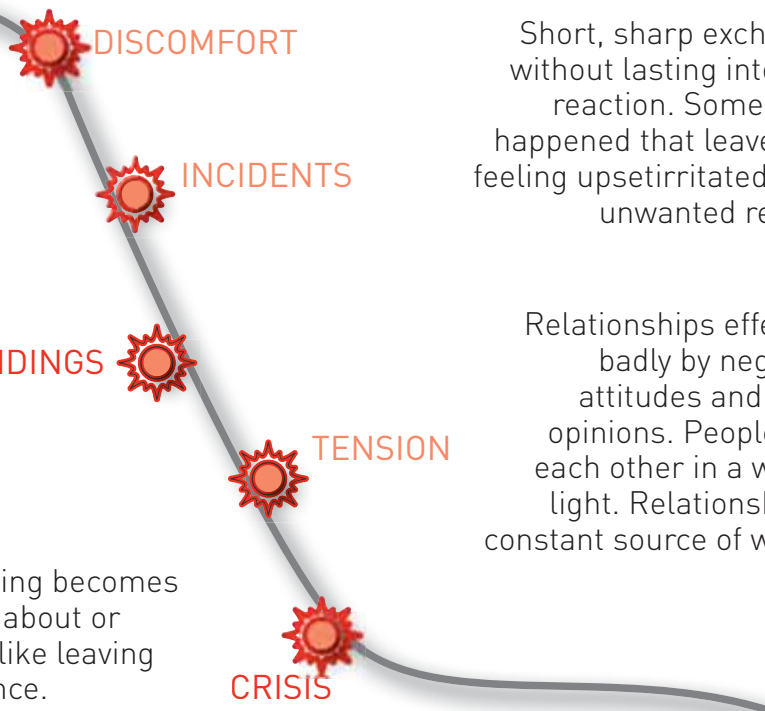
MISUNDERSTANDINGS

TENSION

CRISIS

Behaviour is effected normal working becomes difficult extreme gestures thought about or carried out. Possible major event, like leaving job, relationship break-up or violence.

CRISIS

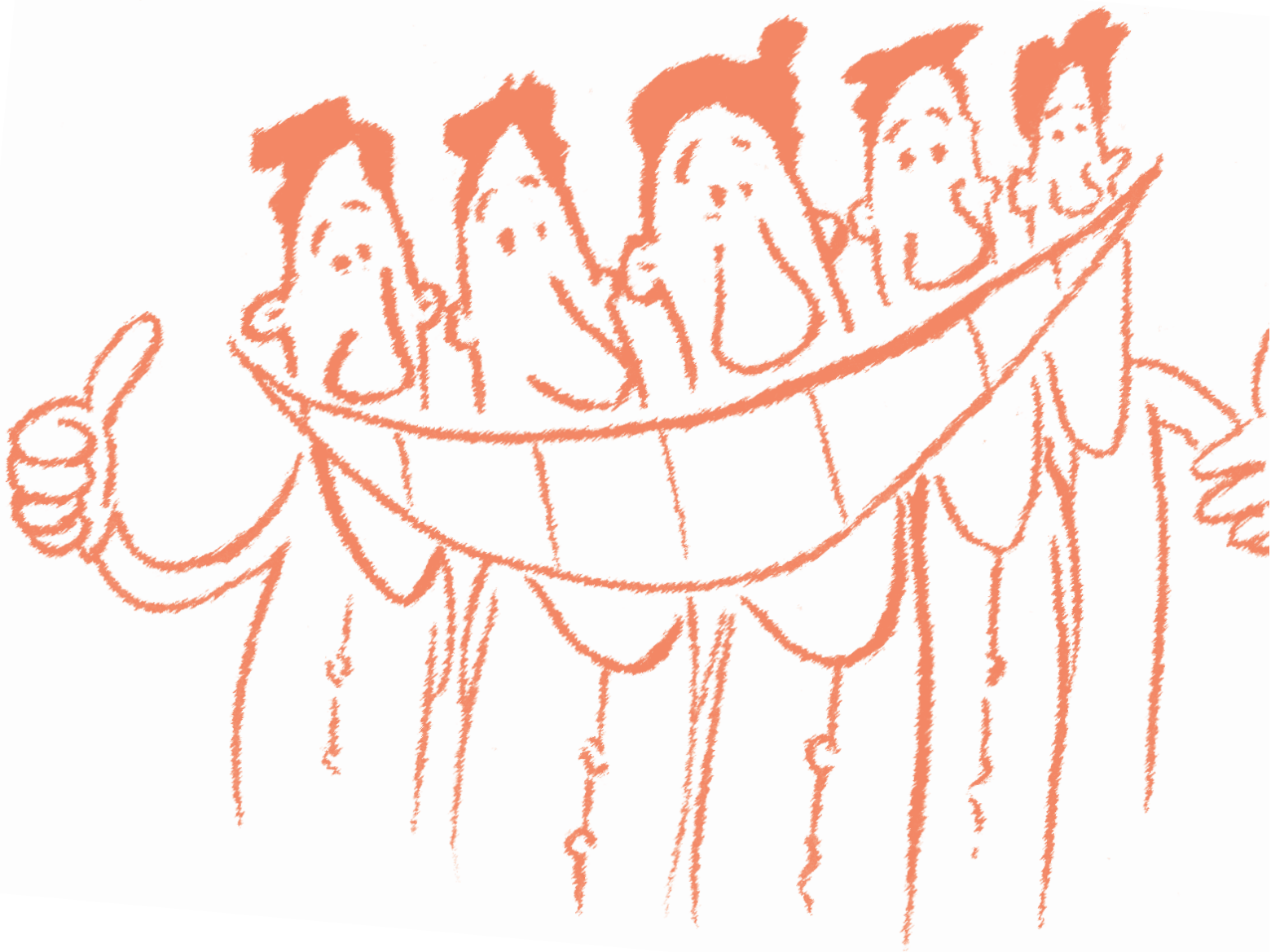


- 👉 Adapted from the Conflict Management Seminar, European Youth Forum, Bled, November 1999 & from *Playing with Fire, Training for the Creative Use of Conflict*, Fine & MacBeth, Youth Work Press, Leicester, 1992 & from TCI, Rui Gomes, European Youth Centre, Strasbourg, 1994

Some tips for managing conflicts:

- ★ Find a situation or environment in where the young person might feel safe and can speak freely: privately, or in a group; open air or in a closed environment; ...
- ★ Listen to the young person and don't take sides (any side)
- ★ Encourage the young person to talk and LET him/her talk (don't overthrow the him/her with your own conflicts and experiences)
- ★ Help the young person to explore where the roots of the conflict could be: different values, habits, norms, cultural backgrounds, ...
- ★ Try to understand how the young person feels and thinks
- ★ Try to find out which roles or strategy both parties are using (if there are parties involved, depending on the conflict)
- ★ Ask the young person if you could help in any way
- ★ Help the young person to clarify the situation, perhaps the conflict is based on a (intercultural) misunderstanding: avoid judging what you don't understand and promote tolerance of ambiguity
- ★ Don't impose your cultural norms, but try to understand the cultural rules on both sides
- ★ Ask the young person whether s/he has an idea about how the opposite party might be feeling
- ★ Encourage the young person to formulate possible solutions for the problem. In this way he/she will feel more involved in the solving phase and support his/her own proposals for solution.
- ★ Encourage the young person to talk to the other party in the conflict if both are ready for this, help establishing a fearless atmosphere where open communication is possible (neutral territory, with an external mediator, ...)
- ★ ...

FOLLOW-UP NOT A



1 FOLLOW-UP: A CRUCIAL PHASE IN THE PATHWAY APPROACH

Let's start with a strong statement: 'When you plan to do this kind of projects with this target group without follow-up.....don't do the project'.

SINGLE EVENT

A Youth Exchange, a Youth Initiative project or a European Voluntary Service project are not just single one-time events. They should be part of a whole. One of the main characteristics of these projects is that they are an intense and powerful experience with a lot of **impact** on the young people involved. That needs a good preparation but also needs a well planned follow-up. Coming home after an international project without having any possibility to do something with your experiences and new perspectives makes the project worthless and puts the young people probably deeper into his/her problems as before.

We have already made reference to the necessity of **re-integration support**. The rebuilt motivation, the new ideas and energy and the new, during the project developed, skills need to be taken up and transferred into action plans. That process needs to be facilitated in an intensive way by youth workers, social workers or other supervisors. In other words: When an organisation sends a European Voluntary Service volunteer it needs to plan time for when the volunteer comes back. The last day of a Youth Exchange is not the end of your working with the group.

Don't let the project end as a one time experience but let it be the beginning of a new road ahead.



CASE STUDY: JOHANN

Johann was in prison for petty crimes and was introduced to his home organisation by his probation officer, who attended one of our promotional afternoons. Johann was inspired by a host project in Sweden who offered him a project working with music, dance and sport. The project inspired Johann to look into European Voluntary Service further and consider a second project maybe even for a longer period. Recently Johann was invited to join a member of the staff from his sending organisation to visit one of the prisons in Estonia which has also been active in the Youth in Action programme. Johann attended this event and a rap song he wrote promoting European Voluntary Service was included in this event. After returning from this event Johann has begun work with three friends on a group initiatives project for which they were awarded €7,000 where the group will set up a basement recording studio aimed at young people at risk of offending. The studio will encourage young people to learn about rapping & making music videos and will also give them chance to see themselves on TV maybe, for the first time in a positive light. Johann's quote which remains with us from this programme is "If I knew there was something like this for me when I was 16 I would never have ended up in prison, I want to offer young people from my community the things we never had when we were kids that way maybe they won't get into trouble."

Follow-up can also be put in practice within the Youth in Action programme. More and more organisations follow this '**pathway approach**' in which different elements of the Youth in Action programme are used for a young people. Starting for instance in a local Youth Initiative and to follow that up by doing a Youth Exchange. Or doing a short term European Voluntary Service after having been involved in a Youth Exchange.

The Youth in Action programmes offers a variety of opportunities that can have an especially strong motivational element in the process of the guidance of these young people. But this is one way of a 'pathway approach'.

In the line of working with young (ex-)offenders and those at risk of offending, let us make a **plea for using the Youth in Action programme as a tool into their personal pathway.**

For some young people, living abroad in a new culture can be a de-stabilizing and confusing experience. Sending a young person on an international project as a substitute for a holiday or as a stop-gap solution can often do more harm than good. A young person can return home more de-stabilized than before they left. Such approaches are of little value to the individual or to their organisation.

Therefore, the follow-up phase could be called as the ‘**most important**’ phase in international project work.

- For more information on “the pathway approach” check “Use your hands to move ahead” to download from the SALTO website: www.salto-youth.net/UseYourHands/

2 SOME METHODS FOR FOLLOW-UP

The evaluation and follow-up phase begins once the young people return home from abroad. This phase can be the most difficult of the entire international experience, because it is in this phase that a young person has to process their learning and make their next steps along their personal pathway.



Although the act of evaluating is actually quite short, the **larger process of digesting and processing** the international experience can take some time. This is especially the case for young (ex-) offenders and those at risk of offending. They often need support from their youth worker (or other worker) to recognize the learning that has taken place and to guide their next steps.

from TC No Offence

Listed below are some simple methods which can be used at different stages of the evaluation and follow-up phase:

Closure

- Spending a period abroad, can be a very intense experience. A good first step in the evaluation/follow-up phase is to round-off or close the international experience. This can be done at the end of the international project by organising a final party.
- During the final party, or during a small ceremony, present the young person with a certificate, called “**Youthpass**” to mark their achievement in the project. For example: all EVS volunteers receive a Youthpass certificate which describes and validates the non-formal and informal learning experience acquired during the project.

What is a Youthpass?

“Through the Youthpass the European Commission ensures that the experience with the Programme is recognised as an educational experience and a period of non-formal learning and informal learning. This document can be of great benefit for the future educational or professional pathway of the participant.”

Every young person can ask for such a certificate. The content of the certificate should be agreed between the young person and his/her mentor of the host organisation.

👉 Download the Youthpass from the website: www.youthpass.eu.

👉 More to find about the recognition of non-formal learning in the youth field on: www.youthandrecognition.eu.

Evaluation and reflection

Evaluation is a process that needs to start at the very beginning of a project. Here are some tips and methods to set the process in motion:

- If some of the young people are fond of writing, have them keep a **daily diary**. At the end of the project, ask them to review what they have written to see if they can identify any changes in their behaviour, beliefs, attitudes, skills, etc. If the young person has difficulties with writing, they can also draw a daily picture, or make a weekly collage out of images in magazines to represent events and emotions.
- Encourage the young people to think about their **future** at all stages of the international project. The future is not something to be kept until the very end. This can be done informally by asking them what they are thinking, which direction their thoughts are going. In the evaluation stage they should look back on the plans they had at the beginning and consider to what extent those plans have/have not changed. The effect of this is stronger in longer projects, but even after only a few weeks it can be very insightful for the (ex-) offender or those at risk of offending.
- The practical aspects of the international experience (daily activities, accommodation, skills learned, etc) are easier to evaluate than others (for example, the intercultural experience). But a picture can speak a thousand words... To evaluate the **intercultural experience**, give the young people a disposable camera. Have them take photos of people, places, and things in their project which are important to them or which made a strong impression on them. Use the photos to start a discussion about differences and similarities between countries and between cultures.
- At the conclusion of the project, help the young people make an inventory (list) of the skills they learned. Help them identify how that learning can help them take their next steps along the pathway (in finding a job, gaining a qualification, within their family situation, etc.).
- After a group exchange or if there are several volunteers returning at once, it can often be very useful to organise a **group evaluation**. It is very helpful for these young people to be supported by peers who have had similar experiences. Be aware that the group situation can have a negative as well as a positive impact.



from TC No Offence

Integration

Like evaluation, integration is a process that starts on the very first day of the project.

- Before the (ex-)offenders or those at risk of offending travel abroad, their organisation should spend time with them **considering their pathway and making a follow-up plan for the post-project phase**. This should include ideas as to what should happen, when, which steps have to be taken, how long, etc. Some steps can already be set in motion before they depart. Bear in mind, however, that these young people are likely to come up with new ideas while they are abroad, so it doesn't hurt to have a back-up plan (or two) in mind.
- Arrange opportunities for the young person to e.g. volunteer in their own community.
- If possible, give the young people the chance to **implement the skills** they learned during their international activity (for example, if they took part in a dance project in EVS, encourage them to give a short performance or organise a dance workshop).

👉 Based on “Use your hands to move ahead” to download from the SALTO website:
www.salto-youth.net/UseYourHands/

3 STEP BY STEP

✦ An example from Rome

In 2005, an 18 year old boy came to the **CEMEA** (*Active Education Methods' Training Centres*) office in Rome, accompanied by his mother. This is their story: “ He had committed a crime and so his mother wanted to involve him in some social voluntary activities to keep him away from ‘bad company’. They had seen some leaflets about European Voluntary Service and wanted to receive some further information.

This boy did not seem very interested in anything. It was very difficult to approach him and to communicate in general. He was greatly lacking self esteem but he behaved in exactly the opposite way, giving an appearance of strength and lack of motivation in what we were proposing.

At that moment, we were not aware of his background so we proposed him a **long term European Voluntary Service** as a first step. But, after the second appointment we realised that he did not feel ready for this. It was a too big step for him. He was lost, scared, did not feel confident at all... so we tried with short term European Voluntary Service and we got exactly the same result. For this reason, we thought about a Youth Exchange that was going to be held in Germany. Fortunately he decided to join it.

This **Youth Exchange** seemed to be a good solution for several reasons. It would be a very practical experience with concrete and visible results. This was no individual activity which would make him feel more confident. There would be a person to accompany him and it would last for only ten days. Another important advantage was that English was not needed.

During the preparation activities for the youth exchange we tried to give him a “leading role”. For instance, some dinners were organised to create a group atmosphere and he chose the place to go in his area (the territory that he knew well and where he felt confident.) This was very important because he had many stereotypes and was not very open with people “different” from him. In fact, all the rest of participants were university students while he had left school very early...

The Youth Exchange was a big success and the first result arrived very soon. In fact, when he arrived in Italy, he asked his mother if he could go and live for some months with his aunt that lived in another area of a big city. In this way he could be further away of 'bad company'.

Then we involved him again by proposing him a group **European Voluntary Service** in Spain. His application form was approved but unfortunately, the Spanish National Agency did not approve the application form of the other 11 applicants that composed the group. This created a big problem for us because the process so far had motivated him (he had found a job and was "behaving well"). So it was important to keep his motivation high. The Italian National Agency helped us to see, considering the specific case, if there was any possibility of making him participate in another project within the same organisation but it was not possible.

While we were dealing with this paper work, we decided to involve him anyway in a pre-departure training that we were organising for a group of **Leonardo Da Vinci stagers**.

The participants of this TC were all young people between 18 and 27 years old with a good level of studies and with experience as social animators. He felt very well integrated in the group and realised that most of them spoke at least 2 foreign languages, had already finished university and had many programmes and objectives in their lives. He found this all very motivating and the day after the training finished he enrolled to school.

After this, as he had not managed to participate to European Voluntary Service in Spain, we offered to apply for another **European Voluntary Service short term** project in France.

This time, the project was approved by both National Agencies and he departed for 3 weeks. He made a great project. He integrated very well, was always ready to give a hand, nice with colleagues, children and other volunteers. The hosting organisation even offered him the possibility to come back for a **long term European Voluntary Service** after he will have finished school.

So, now we will try to keep him involved in some of our local activities in which he will be a resource for other young people. Meanwhile he will try to get the diploma at school and then we will propose him again a project."

4 DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS

Another valuable, but most forgotten step to take in the post-project phase is dissemination and exploitation of results. The aim is to create more impact with your project, to raise the visibility and to improve the dissemination and exploitation of your project results.

You can “**multiply**” the results of your project: ensuring the results of your project are used by others, further developed in other projects, carrying out follow-up activities to make the project results more sustainable, adapting (elements of) your project to other contexts, running the project again with different people or in different settings – so that you (or others) can build on the experience of the first project.

Visibility is another term that is closely related to the discussion of ‘doing more’ with your international youth project. Throughout your project, you can show off the work you are doing. You can use your project to get your organisation into the spotlights, you can highlight the possibilities the Youth in Action programme has to offer other people, you can raise your profile by showing in a coherent way what great activities you are doing,... Doing a project is a valid reason in itself to communicate about your activities, about your organisation and about the Youth in Action programme to the outside world.

Here are some **examples** increasing the visibility of your project and working on the dissemination and exploitation of your project results:

- **Spread the word**
Presenting your experience and showing off your Youth in Action projects to others gives them information that such kinds of projects are possible, potentially also for them. You **inspire others** to take on European projects.
- **Create spin-off effects**
You would think that your youth project is mainly for the young people. However, there are lots of people involved with the project: the board, parents, friends, local authorities, community... Involve them for **more impact**.
- **Improve the reputation and recognition** of your organisation
If you make it clear that your organisation is behind different projects and if you show the positive results of your activities to a larger audience, this will **raise the profile** of your organisation.

- Get **more funding** for youth projects
If you show that your projects have a **big impact** on young people, the youth sector, youth policy or society in general, then the decision makers will also be more inclined to give money to them.
- Raise the **motivation** of the young people and youth workers
When you promote your activities and results in different media or at relevant meetings, the people involved in the project will be proud of their achievements. It is great for the group-feeling: **Yeah! We did it!**
- Increase the **sustainability** of your results
If you make sure your project is not a one-off activity and use the experience for new projects, for continued learning, for influencing policy, etc. your project **results last longer** and benefit more people
- Enhance the **impact of EU funded projects**
When everybody is demonstrating all the great results they achieved and the products they developed in their Youth in Action projects, it will **convince others** that European projects are beneficial and worth supporting.
- ...

In this context with the young people who form our target group, dissemination and exploitation of project results can be seen as **two fold**:

There may have been many failures in these youth's lives and this could potentially be one of their first successes where involvement in this programme actually gives value to their lives. In some small way, their lives could, by the opinion of others, be given value by the fact that they are engaged in a positive programme such as Youth in Action.

On the second point, the target group we refer to in this booklet young people at risk of offending or young ex/offenders, have often had little that they have done given value to.

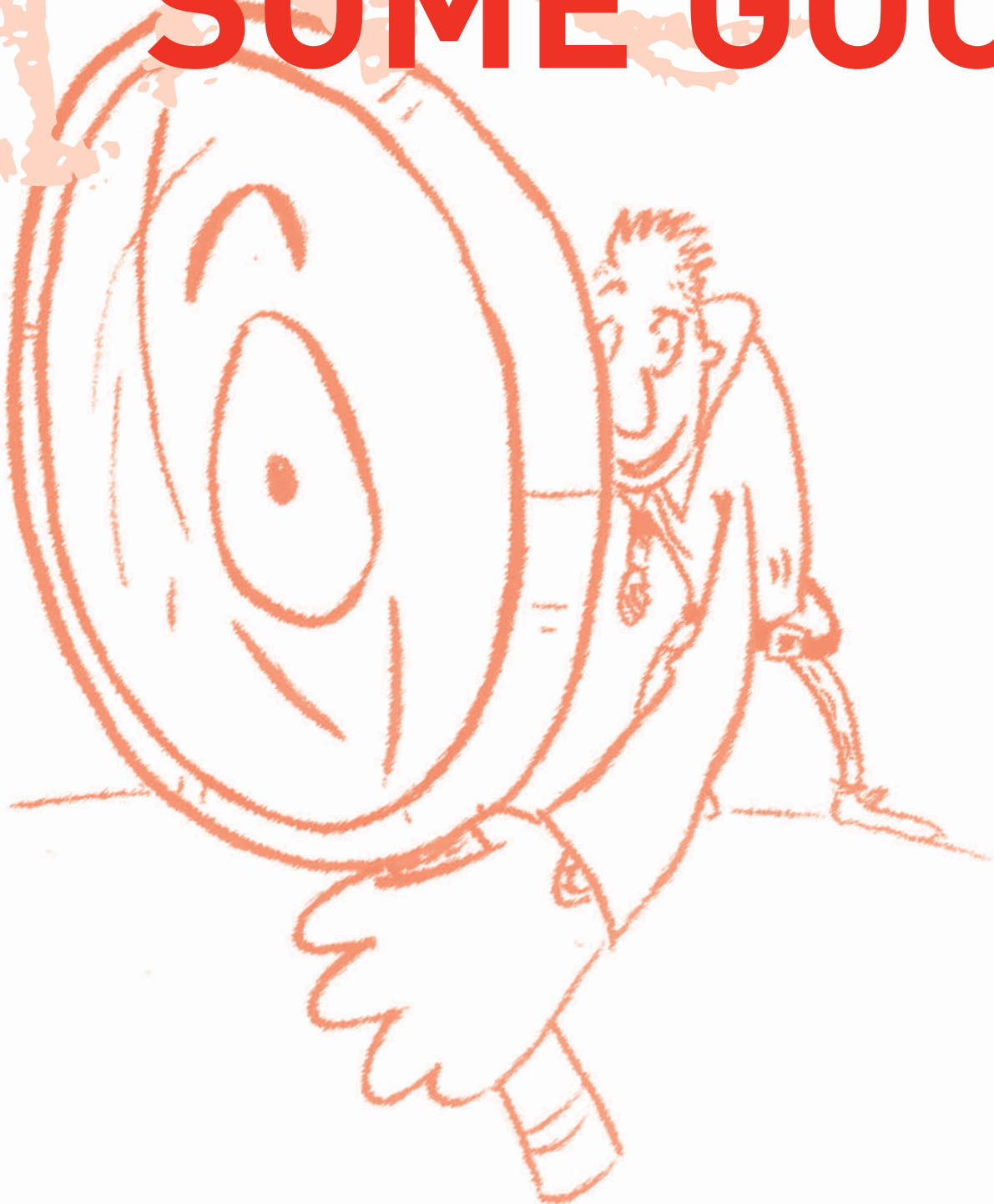
As we already highlighted many of this target group have had little in their lives celebrated, or given validity to. They have not had these same experiences highlighted as their more engaged peers. This is one of the reasons that we feel that the valorisation of this project is such an important element. It can be the first stage of these young people seeing engagement in something positive as positive!

Sometimes it can be difficult to **get the support of your organisation** (e.g. board etc) to engage in Youth in Action projects because they take a lot of the youth worker's time and also require co-funding. However the arguments above, and the possible impact a youth project could have, can be helpful in convincing your colleagues or board members to give it a try. When you make clear what youth projects can achieve, they might be more inclined to decide in favour of engaging in an international youth project, or of even incorporating it into a structural part of the youth work you do.

- ➡ More to read about dissemination and exploitation of results in the **SALTO booklet "Making waves"**, to download from www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/MakingWaves/

Some good practice for inspiration
How does this all work in reality?
Here you will find descriptions of
projects with young offenders,
young ex-offenders and young
people at risk of offending, that
took place in the frame-work of
the Youth in Action (then still
YOUTH) Programme. Projects that
might inspire you.

SOME GOOD



PRACTICE FOR INSPIRATION

YOUNG PRISONERS ACTIVE IN ESTONIA



In the Murru Prison near Tallinn in Estonia six young people -serving long sentences between eight and seventeen years - meet regularly to work on their project 'Why have things turned out this way?' The idea for the project came from the young prisoners and aims to bring together young prisoners and youngsters at risk of offending. The young men work on a video in which they tell their life-story. In an open way they share their life-experiences as an example and as a warning for those kids who might be in a period of their life where they could make the same kind of choices as the young prisoners did and which brought them finally in Murru.

The project is a new experience both for the boys in the core group but also for the social worker and psychologist of Murru prison who support the boys in implementation of project. They were surprised about how enthusiastic and motivated the young prisoners were to get involved and it is of even greater importance as the opportunities for free-time activities and non -formal learning through youth activities are anyway quite limited in prison

This project is a Youth Initiative supported by the Estonian National Agency.

TRAINING PRISON WORKERS

At this moment there are already more than ten Youth Initiative projects running in prisons in Estonia. Some of the young inmates who had participated in these initiatives have been released by now and are still in contact with programme. For example, some of them have promoted their project experience to other young people, one boy participated in short-term European Voluntary Service in UK.

These projects are results of the national training programme launched by the Estonian National Agency in 2005 to support development of skills in working with young people and in project management in this very specific context – in prisons. During this long-term training programme, people working in prisons were first to be trained to use European youth programme as a tool for their work with young inmates.

The roots of the idea are to be found in the experiences of the European youth programme in Estonia so far, which had proven relatively good results in inclusion of young people with special needs as well as those with background of alcohol and drug abuse. There had also been projects involving young people sentenced to probationary supervision, for example.

At the same time, in youth field on national level the need to support professional development of people working with youth at risk has been clearly recognised in order to guarantee better impact of youth work. So the idea was born for a long-term training where prison staff can gain both theoretical knowledge but also develop their skills through starting practical implementation of real projects in their work place, in co-operation with young inmates.

Opportunities within European youth programme are wide and varied but of course, the juvenile detainees have their limits to communicate with the outside world and for this reason first of all the Youth Initiative projects (action 1.2. of the Youth In Action Programme) were taken as a basis: projects that groups of young people could start themselves involving their peers inside prison. To organise discussion groups or workshops, graffiti competitions reflecting subjects that mean something to them etc. The main point was that projects should be based on the needs and interests of the young people, allowing the workers supporting the project to provide feedback to the detainees' activities and to support their positive learning experiences – and thus their self-esteem.

As a preparation for the training course, introductory visits were made to all participating prisons. Also the participants started to approach those young people in whom they saw the potential to get involved in future youth project.

The first phase of the training course focused on setting the scene for future co-operation: getting to know each other, intro to the European youth programme Programme as well as development of initial project ideas.

Based on the needs expressed by the participants, the second phase predominantly looked at youth work methodology, including practical workshops to develop skills in forum theatre, creative writing and other expressive techniques for work with young offenders.

The final phase focused on evaluation of project practices so far as well as development of future follow-up actions.



Ülly Enn from the Estonian National Agency:

‘Amongst young people in prisons there are many who look back at their life and are motivated to change and develop themselves through youth projects. The opportunities for this are otherwise currently rather limited in prisons and participating in a youth project provides young people with opportunities to communicate, to learn about project topics and project

management, build their cooperative skills and much more. It also often represents the first experience these kids have of contributing to a project on their own initiative.

Given the predominantly preventative objectives of youth work as a general approach, it is a shame that information and the chance to participate failed to reach these kids while they were still at liberty. But now, being in prison and meeting their first opportunity to make something of their ideas and to enjoy it and gain valuable experience from it for the future, it may help them to develop their coping skills remarkably. And thus the training project and its results have shown that not only for these young people but also for the youth work there is room for further developments and expansion to those areas where the youth work is not yet that actively present.’

- ☛ If you are interested in the experience of this training programme and its results, please have a look at “Youth work in prisons?” at <http://euroopa.noored.ee/node/404>
- ☛ You can contact the **Estonian National Agency** at www.noored.ee

GIANT STEPS



Using the different possibilities of the Youth in Action Programme for ex-offenders

CEMEA del Mezzogiorno

CEMEA (Active Education Methods' Training Centres) started in France in 1937 with the aim of developing democratic and participative behaviours. After the war, Cemea spread all over the world. Today the Cemea movement is active in 29 European, African and American countries, co-ordinated by the International Federation with its headquarter in Paris. In Italy, Cemea started in 1950 and they gathered in the Italian Federation of CEMEA in 1974. Cemea refers to the active education: a kind of education that tends to get free the human being, offering situations in which anyone – child, young people, adult – can become conscious of the world around her/him, contributing to its evolution, in a perspective of individual and social development.

CEMEA del Mezzogiorno in Italy has been hosting in its educational services Italian young people “on probation” since 1998 and works in an area of Rome with a very high rate of unemployment, big presence of second generation immigrants and “street young people”. The centre run by CEMEA represents the only alternative to ‘bad company’, alcohol and drugs.

Young people ‘on probation’ are accompanied by educators who stimulate these young people to practice roles of leadership and responsibility to which they were not used to. In this way CEMEA wants to improve their self-esteem and awareness of their own abilities.

CEMEA has developed a more direct collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and with their probation officers. A strategy entitled JUSTice in Time has been created with the idea of complementing the work that the probation officers already do with these young people. This strategy consists of the creation of mobility opportunities (individually or in groups) through the Youth in Action programme and it supports the process of support and the “on probation” period that the Ministry provides with an educative process based on non formal education.

The process begins through the youth exchanges as a first experience to get closer to international activities and a preparation to mobility and knowledge of 'the other'. Then, the following step would be short term European Voluntary Service and finally long term European Voluntary Service projects after their "on probation" period. After that they could be "youth leaders" themselves and function as resource persons for other young people.



Background of the target group

The young people CEMEA works with are aged between 16 and 21 years old. They have all committed a crime and are usually pre-selected by the probation officer. It is not important which kind of crime they have committed. What is important is the kind of progress they are making, the risk for themselves and the others and their legal conditions (some of these young people cannot leave the country). All this is taken into consideration by their probation officer who evaluates in which cases the young people could benefit from participation on an international activity.

CEMEA works both with girls and boys but the majority is male. For this reason, in order to create gender balance, mixed groups are formed by involving young people from different backgrounds. All young people benefit from this, especially juveniles, because normally they have a very straight sense of identity and they feel they belong to a closed circle of people (gangs). By being and living with people different from them, they put down many stereotypes and open their minds. A good example of this happened in a youth exchange in Austria. One of the young people had a light mental disability and during the first days he had some difficulties in getting integrated. The staff talked with the rest of the Italian group composed by 3 juveniles, 1 Iranian immigrant and 1 girl that lives in a "hosting centre" and asked them to help the staff to integrate him. Especially one of the young people from the Ministry of Justice helped him a lot by introducing him to other participants from other countries, never leaving him alone and they became really good friends.

Passi da Gigante

At the moment CEMEA is involved in the development of an innovative method within the Youth in Action programme to encourage the participation of disadvantaged young people in international mobility programmes.

The project has been developed, aiming at supporting young people with less opportunities who do not have the confidence necessary to participate in Short Term European Voluntary Service. The concept is a complete cycle of new activity projects, training and access to existing / external European opportunities.

Passi da Gigante (Giant steps) involves 8 partner from 6 different countries and was created in Innsbruck in 2005.

One of the main objectives of this project is to facilitate the entry to European Voluntary Service for young people who are not ready to enter European Voluntary Service as the very first step.

Four different steps

The project started with a seminar that brought together European Voluntary Service centres, local youth workers and probation officers in order to explain the process and to teach them about the different possibilities of the Youth in Action Programme. This all to help them to identify suitable candidates, to prepare the young people and to start the organisation of the activities.

The second step was a Youth Exchange in Austria involving 6 countries. Each country brought 5-6 young people and two youth workers. The main activity of the Youth Exchange was the renovation of a community building which gave the participants the chance to create something together which was visible and concrete, a real outcome. Next to that sport activities, excursions and other activities were done by the young people.

During the youth exchange, an introduction was done to the other actions of the Youth in Action programme, with a special focus on European Voluntary Service. All partner organisations presented their own hosting projects so that participants could have a general view of the concrete possibilities.

At the moment of writing the project is in its third phase. A catalogue of existing short term European Voluntary Service projects is offered to the participants, describing the type of work, the location, the dates etcetera. Off course not all participants will do an European Voluntary Service-project, some of them will stop at this stage, or they will do a project later.

The last step of the cycle will be again a seminar in which the work will be evaluated and improvements will be suggested for the next project. Because that seminar will be also the launch meeting for the next Passi da Gigante project.

Challenges and difficulties to overcome

CEMEA and their partners in this project are quite happy about and proud of the results so far. While running the project they also met some challenges and difficulties that they had to overcome.



- **Money**

Although the Youth in Action programme funds the main part of a programme like this, still additional money is needed. This is a problem, because especially his young people normally have no money and it is not easy to find local funding for this kind of target group (it is not attractive for local sponsors).

- **Special support**

This project has been possible because of the collaboration with already existing institutions that deal locally with this group of ‘problematic’ young people.

The young people needs to be guided before, during and after the activity. The activities are simply tools, what counts is the guided process. Working with these young people requires a lot of energy and specific competences, but at the same time a good knowledge of the work with international activities. Probation officers and social workers have specific competences for working with them but miss the knowledge about the international dimension of the work. At the same time, international youth workers have many competences about international work but do not have specific skills in the work with “problematic” young people. The challenge was taken up by a strong collaboration between the two different groups of workers.

- **Long term cooperation**

When dealing with these young people, it is important to give them concrete and feasible opportunities, and the only way to obtain this is through the work with solid and reliable partners and a concrete programme. To establish such collaboration is a long and difficult process. Besides this, working with disadvantaged young people requires a lot of time that many responsible of organisations do not have. Another problem is the big turnover of people in organisations while this strategy needed a constant work for a long time.

In this specific case, CEMEA had an added problem. They collaborated with a public institution (a Ministry) and usually it is difficult to involve them in this kind of single activities. It is important to explain them the general objectives and to show them the benefits for as well their young people and themselves.

- **The approval of the single projects**

All the different phases of this project have been presented to different National Agencies as individual projects. But all of them were necessary to have a successful strategy. For instance, initially, the preparation seminar had been presented in Spain but had not been approved so it was decided to present it in Poland. All this caused a delay of 2 months and so the period that was planned to select participants was too short. The next time it would be better to present it as a Europe-wide project or to involve National Agencies in the overall strategy so that they see the wider project for which all the phases are fundamental. Opportunities for this are improved in the new Youth in Action programme where it is now more possible to apply for linked activities.

- **Personal motivation/involvement**

This project, as many other projects, depends a lot on individual motivation and involvement. It requires a lot of efforts in terms of energy, time and money. Keeping organisations motivated depends very much on the personal motivation of the representative.

- **Presence of sufficient staff**

Dealing with these young people is not easy and it is important to have a good proportion leader/participant. The participation of two leaders for each national group has been fundamental for the success of the project. Unfortunately, not all National Agencies agree on this necessity, so this project would not have been supported in any country. This kind of extra support is normally easily accepted when dealing with disability, because the need is “physically evident” but it is not so evident when dealing with young people with social problems.

- **A possible problem that might pop up**

Now the Youth Exchange has taken place CEMEA is trying to motivate young people to join short term European Voluntary Service projects. These young people have all committed a crime and in some countries it is not possible to work (even voluntarily) with some categories (for example: small children) if you have committed a crime. CEMEA will have to be very careful and verify all this before offering the placement to the young people.

Altogether a lot to take into account and many challenges to tackle. But the people at CEMEA certainly will continue. The motivation is high because of the good results so far. Many other giant steps will follow.

👉 You can contact **Cemea** via www.replay.cemea.it

EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE DIRECTLY FROM PRISON



'Everything's possible' is a national organisation, situated in the United Kingdom, which supports young people and offers them opportunities for European mobility. Everything's Possible specifically, but not exclusively, targets young people from minority ethnic communities as well as those with less opportunities. The organisation also has a presence in a prison in the North of England, where they run a citizenship education programme, and also offer young people on release from prison the chance of involvement in European mobility programmes.



CASE STUDY: TARIQ

Tariq was a persistent offender, mainly due to lack of family support, and was even resigning himself to the fact that he preferred to be in prison, rather than trying to survive as a homeless person in the outside world.

After much trouble getting Tariq a passport, he needed a birth certificate first and the name he went under was not the one on his birth certificate, he spent 3 weeks on a placement in Denmark.

The experience was working alongside offenders in Denmark who work and live in a Social Enterprise as an alternative to prison. Everything's Possible normally send two young people to this project at any one time, in order to offer peer support between the volunteers, but also allowing the chance to integrate with young people from other countries. Tariq enjoyed his experience, it was a first taste of work for some time and he was keen to talk about his experiences with potential volunteers. He attended one of the citizenship events Everything's Possible regularly holds in the prison to publicise European Voluntary Service. Unfortunately Tariq recently returned to prison and may well be in prison for some considerable time. It could be that he could spend some of this time promoting European Voluntary Service!

REFERENCES, RESOURCES AND FURTHER READING

Some more SALTO “Inclusion for All” publications:

- **Fit for Life (2005)** – using sports as an educational tool for the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in youth-work
- **Village International (updated 2010)** - setting up international projects in rural and geographically isolated areas
- **Inclusion & Diversity (updated 2008)** – how to make your youth-work and youth projects more inclusive and reach more diverse target groups
- **No Barriers, No Borders (updated 2008)** – organising international mixed ability projects (including people with and without a disability)
- **Over the Rainbow (updated 2008)** – creating sensitive projects with young LesBiGays and young people questioning their sexual orientation
- **E.M. power (2008)** – empowering Ethnic Minority young women through international youth projects
- **Youth and the City (2008)** – developing meaningful international projects with young people in disadvantaged (sub)urban areas
- **Inclusion in Practice (2008)** – inspiring examples of inclusion projects within the Youth in Action programme
- **Going International - Inclusion for All (updated 2009)** – practical methods and advice for youth workers organising their first international project for young people with fewer opportunities
- **Use your Hands to Move Ahead (updated 2009)** – using practical tasks to increase participation by young people with fewer opportunities in short-term EVS projects
- **Inclusion by Design (2009)** – a manual for youth NGOs to approaching inclusion in a strategic way
- **Making Waves (updated 2010)** – greater impact with your youth projects through visibility, dissemination and exploitation of your project results
- **Images in Action (2010)** – running a positive image-building campaign for inclusion groups
- **Working for Work (updated 2010)** – how to use the Youth in Action programme with young unemployed people
- **Let’s Youthpass it on for All! (updated 2010)** – recognition of non-formal learning through the Youth in Action programme for young people with fewer opportunities

👉 Find them all at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/

Looking for youth work and training methods on Inclusion and other topics?

Browse through the SALTO Toolbox for Training at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/



- **T-Kit Series:** *The training kits are thematic publications written by experienced youth trainers. They are easy-to-use handbooks for use in training and study sessions, published by the Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission on European Youth Worker Training.*

- Social Inclusion
- Project Management
- Organisational Management
- Methodology in Intercultural Language Learning
- Intercultural Learning
- International Voluntary Service
- Under Construction... Citizenship, Youth and Europe
- Training Essentials
- Funding and Financial Management
- Educational Evaluation in Youth Work
- Evaluation
- Euromed Co-operation

👉 Downloadable at www.training-youth.net or www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/

- **Education pack (2nd edition):** *Idea, resources, methods and activities for informal intercultural education with young people and adults (2005)* available online at: www.training-youth.net
- **Compass (Education pack All Different All Equal):** *Manual on human rights education with young people (2002)* Available online at: <http://www.coe.int/compass>
- **Get Going:** *Motivating young people to break out of deadlock* Klomp/Kloosterman/Kuijvenhoven (ISBN 9066655798)
- **Youth Work In Prisons (2007):** *Long term training project for prisons in Estonia 2004-2006 – by the Estonian National Agency for the European YOUTH programme* Ully Enn/Elina Kivinukk (ISBN 978-99B5-9672-6-3)
To download from: <http://euroopa.noored.ee/node/404>

ONLINE RESOURCES

More inclusion links and resources at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/

- **Social Inclusion Resources** - *The SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre develops, collects and disseminates resources which can help youth workers and youth leaders to implement inclusion projects* - <http://www.salto-youth.net/inclusion/>
- **SALTO Newsletter on Inclusion** - www.salto-youth.net/InclusionNewsletter/
- **YOUTH information through Eurodesk** - www.eurodesk.org
- www.coe.int/youth/ (Council of Europe – youth)
- www.training-youth.net (Partnership on European Youth Work Training)
- www.eyesip.org.uk (Youth Inclusion organisation)

TOOLS FOR TRAINING

- **Methods and Tools for Inclusion Projects and Training-** www.salto-youth.net/InclusionTools/
- **Looking for a Trainer or a resource person on Inclusion-** www.salto-youth.net/InclusionTrainers/
- **CD Evaluation:** *SALTO-YOUTH has produced a CD ROM to encourage good practice in the use of evaluation in training.* This guide is available in all the National Agencies or at evaluation@salto-youth.net ; www.salto-youth.net/evaluation
- **Training Opportunities on Inclusion** - www.salto-youth.net/InclusionCourses/
- www.impact-see.org (Evaluation)
- www.reviewing.co.uk (Active Reviewing guide)
- www.woodcraftfolk.org.uk (Educational Resources)

INTERNATIONAL PLATFORMS / NETWORKS

- www.y-e-n.net (Youth Express Network)
- www.euromet.nu (European Youth Care Alliance)
- www.streetwork.org (organisations in 4 countries dealing with streetwork)
- www.yes-forum.org (Youth and European Social Work)
- www.enoa.de (European Network of Animation)
- www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk -*The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) oversees the youth justice system in England and Wales.*
- www.esc-eurocrim.org - *The European Society of Criminology aims to bring together in Europe persons actively engaged in research, teaching and/or practice in the field of Criminology.*

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www.everythingspossible.org

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A special thanks goes to:

- The **participants** of the TC 'No Offence' 2006
- **Uly Enn** – *team member of TC 'No Offence' and contributing to this booklet with her feedback and with her experiences in Estonia in working with young prisoners -*
<http://trainers.salto-youth.net/UlyEnn>
- **Gintare Kurtinaityte** – *for sharing her experiences with the Kaunas street festival*
- **Clair de Moor** – *for her contribution about the work done by De Zande in Belgium*
- **Elizabeth Adán Cabello** – *for her contribution about the experience of CEMEA del Mezzogiorno*
- **Tony Geudens** (SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre, Belgium) *for his moral and practical support and feedback*
- **Inez Adriaensen** for 'emergency-laptop-support'

EDITORIAL INFO

Published in November 2007, current reprint in December 2010 by
SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre

www.salto-youth.net/inclusion/

(Support & Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the YOUTH programme)

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This booklet is based on the SALTO TC No Offence 2007, www.salto-youth.net/TCNoOffence and on the contributions received from different experts in the field.

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Printing: Newgoff, Mariakerke

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SALTO Inclusion cares about the environment. This booklet has been printed on environmentally friendly recycled paper. Order or print this publication only if you really need it. The Earth says 'Thank you!'

Youth in Action programme aims to be open for all. Yet it is evident that not all young people, especially young people with fewer opportunities, have equal access to international projects. Some of them face a constellation of disadvantages and obstacles which makes it simply too difficult for them even to think of going abroad or to start communication with foreigners. Young (ex-)offenders, those at risk of offending or currently in prison for sure belong to this group of young people for whom the above description suits well.

Still, from the past, there are many successful projects which have proven the long-term effect of international projects on the personal life of these young people. When offered on the right time in their personal pathway and as a method to enhance their inclusion a step forward, international projects can be a very positive catalyst.

So is it really possible? Yes. Will it be easy? No. But getting young people on board for something like this is already a big step forward.

“No Offence” is a practical booklet aiming to stimulate the participation of young (ex-) offenders, those at risk of offending or currently in prison in international projects.

“No Offence” aims to challenge you, as a youth worker, social worker, probation officer and everybody who works with this target group and in whatever capacity, to set up international projects with the target group. This booklet provides you with tips and tricks.

So take a deep breath and jump into the international project work to make a step forward in your daily work with this target group. No offence, right?

Based on the SALTO “TC No Offence” youth worker training course (2006).

This booklet is part of the SALTO “Inclusion for All” series. Download them for free at:
www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/

