

■ Example of Euromed Youth Project ▼

“Building bridges between European and Mediterranean cultures”

By AYFER ERDOAN



A. CONTEXT AND MOTIVATION

We came up with the idea of the Project “Building Bridges between European and Mediterranean Cultures by using photography, music and literature as tools for common understanding” during the “Step In” training course which took place in Slovakia under the umbrella of the Salto-EuroMed Youth Programme. There we had a great opportunity to meet colleagues from both sides of the Mediterranean and we witnessed the richness of both Mediterranean and European cultures. We were able to meet our future partners but also to exchange opinions, ideas and cultural experiences. We believe that this project will offer youngsters from both sides of the Mediterranean a wonderful opportunity to meet and to taste each others’ cultures, thus building a bridge between European and Mediterranean cultures.

B. PREPARATION

a. We set up a sub-group within the framework of the organization: members get together once a week and discuss the pro-

ject, the activities that will be included, the methods, tools and materials that will be used during the project, the organization of activities, etc. We have also allocated tasks to everyone in this project group.

b. Within the partner groups, we have already formed the project skeleton during the training course in Slovakia. To improve it and exchange ideas, opinions on the project we set up a Yahoo-group with which we have been in contact; we have a chance to know each other better as partners and also to develop further ideas. We have also been using fax and telephone when we need to get in touch urgently in the preparation phase of the project.

c. We are planning a Preliminary Visit in Gothenburg in April 2006 to get together with youth leaders and decide on the draft program and related activities.

C. INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Preparation: young people aged between 18-25, who have an interest in intercultural learning and little opportunity to go abroad and realize this on their own and who are willing to reflect their cultural background, share experiences, exchange ideas and build common understanding between different cultures will be selected from each organization; the group leader will send their short CV to a hosting partner, so that we can make sure that each potential participant fits the participants’ profile of the project. Participants and group leader will meet regularly; they will discuss the aim of the project and share tasks in the preparation of some materials and activities which will be completed prior to the arrival for the project. Group leaders will inform youngsters of the activities involved in the project

and they will make preparations (music, traditional dance, clothing, food, drink, fairy tale, taking photos which will reflect the culture and the lifestyle in their hometowns, etc.) according to the theme of the project.

Implementation: each participant will be provided with a draft of the programme when they arrive for the project. Every day there will be activities centered on intercultural learning and breaking stereotypes. Different tools and methods will be used like role plays, workshops, lecturing, ice-breaking games, energizers, forum theatre, intercultural night, folk dance show, group discussions, etc. The participants’ awareness will be increased on the topic through different methods based on non-formal education.

Follow-up: The participants will be asked to fill in an evaluation form about the efficiency of the tools, methods and activities used in the project and reflect what they have gained from this exchange. When they return home they will act as multipliers within their organization. The group leaders and participants will organize meetings and share their experiences with other youngsters. This way other young people will gain knowledge in intercultural learning and hopefully be motivated to take part in this kind of activities. After the project, each group will be asked to prepare a report, the reports will be made into magazines, and the magazines will be sent to the NGOs and copied there. They will act as a reflection of the project and encourage young people to be involved in “Action 1” projects. A Yahoo-group will also be set up, so that participants can keep in touch and go on sharing experiences and learning about each others’ cultures.

■ Example of Euromed Youth Project ▼

D. THEME

The project "Building Bridges between European and Mediterranean Cultures using photography, music and literature as tools for common understanding" aims to build a common ground for a better understanding of the differences and similarities between European and Mediterranean cultures.

E. OBJECTIVES

- to inform young people about the EuroMed context and the opportunities involved in the EuroMed Youth Program
 - to develop intercultural learning between Meda and Euro participants
 - to break stereotypes and prejudices towards different cultures, nationalities and religions
 - to develop respect and tolerance
 - to come up with a deeper perspective in intercultural learning and "iceberg analogy"
 - to reach a common ground on which participants from different cultural backgrounds will have an opportunity to share experiences, discuss opinions and reflect their cultural identity
 - to motivate them for future contact and cooperation in youth projects
 - to provide them with an opportunity to experience non-formal education
 - to develop understanding towards their social surrounding and their own role in it
- riorities: the project aims to make anti-discrimination a priority of the EuroMed Youth Programme through intercultural learning and promoting a better understanding of the diversity of our common European and Mediterranean cultural heritage.

F. IMPACT AT SOCIAL LEVEL



Local people in the venue of the project will be included in some of the activities during the project (intercultural night, theatre forum, etc.). Participants will also have the chance to meet local people during free afternoons and on cultural city tours. Young people among the local people will have priority to reflect their cultural background and exchange opinions with the participants as this project mainly aims at increasing awareness in young people towards cultural differences and similarities.

G. INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

The working language will be English. Participants will be required to have at least a basic level of English so that they can contact and share their ideas. If any participant needs further explanation due to a hearing or language problem, he or she will be helped by the group leaders by visualising the concept, using body language or presenting it in a written way. The participants will be involved in intercultural learning through different activities and methods aimed at enhancing intercultural exchange. First of all they will be informed of the theme of the project and will be asked to act according to the aim and priorities of the project. They will work in multicultural groups organised according to country, Euro and Meda region and gender. Some rules will be set from the beginning of the project according to our goals to prevent any potential conflict and develop awareness in participants for mutual

understanding, tolerance and respect for differences to fight against racism.

H. FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION

During the exchange, there will be a daily session in which participants will reflect in small groups on the activities and the project. In the course of the project there will be also one big evaluation including all the participants in order to get some feedback on what they have gained, what they would like to carry on and what they would like to change for the rest of the project. The daily evaluations will be activities and main topics carried out during the day. Final evaluation forms will be distributed to the participants on the last day for the evaluation of the whole programme as well as the reflection of what each participant has gained and plans to do with this experience in the future. Thanks to the Yahoo group, the follow-up process will continue for both participants and youth leaders. They will go on sharing ideas, learning about their social identities and building strong friendships by means of the e-mail group, as youth leaders, in addition to this, we will continue discussing our future project plans. Apart from the e-mail group, the project magazine will be prepared with a contribution from each participant and it will be sent to them and their NGOs as a reflection of the project and their experience in EuroMed.

A.E.