

# Meet'In EuroMed

SALTO YOUTH EUROMED MAGAZINE

JUILLET 2009

# 12



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# Experience sharing

This 12th issue focuses on a very special activity co-organised by Salto-Youth EuroMed in cooperation with 3 Baltic National Agencies (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia) and 3 EuroMed Youth Units (Jordan, Israel and Palestinian Authority).

Very "special" because:

- It was the first time since 2005 that such an action had been hosted in Israel; the last one was "Let's meet the 3 Cultures" in Jerusalem.
- It was a joint action of two Programmes: "Youth In Action" and "Euromed Youth III"
- It was the first time that 3 European countries and 3 Mediterranean countries decided to work together: their aim, building bridges between their regions and bringing both sides of the Baltic and Dead Sea together
- It was not a training course, not a contact making seminar, not a study visit but a mixture of all three
- The results and the impact exceeded expectations: 7 projects hosted by the Baltic partners!

All the partners and participants involved were so satisfied by this unique and "extraordinary" experience that they spontaneously proposed sharing it with you via our magazine.

In addition, as we started doing in the previous issue, we will continue to highlight the spirit of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation with concrete NGOs testimonies about youth projects implemented during the 2 years of EuroMed Youth III. These testimonies reflect their feelings and their own experiences in a lively way.



Despite the gap between the 3rd and 4th phases of the EuroMed Youth programme, these examples provide concrete examples, if you still needed convincing, that the desire to cooperate between the both sides of the Mediterranean Sea is still strong! ■



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## Global Citizens In Action Project (GCAP)

### Long term seminar (3 phases)

1st phase: October 2008, Jordan

The Arab and European Mediterranean region suffers from a fundamental lack of civic engagement or community involvement on the part of its youth. Given the youthfulness of the Mediterranean population, particularly in the Arab Mediterranean, this trend has profoundly negative implications for the region's future. One step towards combating this problem is to offer young people basic training in the practice of community development, to encourage volunteerism, and through it, an increased level of civic involvement and active citizenship to promote children's safety. To these ends, Jordan River Foundation (JRF) through its Youth Initiatives Unit and Queen Rania Family and Child Center, has started the Global Citizens in Action Project, which is a two phase project spanning three years. In October 2008, JRF ran a 5-day seminar that served as a first phase of a three-year project, in the form of a training, goal-setting, and cohesion-building seminar. This seminar introduced participants to the aims of the EuroMed Youth III programme, the principles of active citizenship and empowered community membership and to the idea of building networks amongst themselves. During the seminar, participants had the opportunity to exchange experiences and to map out an action plan for the 2nd phase. The seminar hosted 20 participants from three countries: Palestine, Denmark and Jordan. Participating organizations were Palestinian Vision, Crossing Borders, Promising Hands and Jordan River Foundation. The seminar included many field trips where participants visited historical locations in Jordan including the rose city of Petra, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. At the end of the seminar, participants established a Facebook group in addition to a movie featured on YouTube [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGRE-0ElmNQ&feature=channel\\_page](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGRE-0ElmNQ&feature=channel_page).



The second phase of the project will be in the form of youth exchanges between youth members of the NGOs involved, in which participants will visit a different participating country to exchange skills, best practice observation, cultural exchanges and participate in the implementation of a local community service project to promote a safer environment for children. Each host NGO will prepare the exchange and a project to be implemented; the designated projects will reflect the skills and priorities of the youth participants in the GCAP program, as well as the children and youth situation and needs of that country. Moreover, the host NGO will mobilize local youth for project implementation during the exchange period. Participants will develop plans and details for the next exchange before leaving.

Exchange destinations will be selected based on availability, feasibility, and any other related circumstances. The purpose of the exchange will be to provide a practical, hands-on experience to reinforce the information received in the seminar, encourage further cultural and practical skills exchanges and to strengthen the network between participants through the implementation of community service projects.

The finale of the GCAP project will go back to where it all started, which was an exchange in Amman. The concluding exchange will have the same outline as the previous exchanges but with an additional dimension. It will conclude the previous years' experience of participants collaborating together as Global Citizens in Action. A special meeting will be part of this exchange to highlight participant achievements throughout the project, to emphasize the tangible benefits on the region as a whole, and to demonstrate the concrete results that civic participation and regional cooperation can bring about to other young people. Participants will reflect on the experience as a whole and summarize the results of their work in a final report that will include training manuals, toolkits and recommendations for future actions. ■



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## Communicating Palestine across the Mediterranean

### EVS project

2008 (7 months), Bethlehem, Palestine

**B**ethlehem, the place where Jesus was born, is only a bus ride away from Jerusalem's centre and is the first stop on the West Bank for many visitors to the Holy Land. When political or military events in the region permit it, a daily flood of tourist buses enters Bethlehem to visit the Church of the Nativity, followed perhaps by a souvenir shop or a restaurant. There is also a much smaller but steadily increasing number of groups who come to meet Palestinians, stay with host families or check out the Separation Wall. Bethlehem-based non-governmental organizations such as the Arab Educational Institute (AEI-Open Windows) are interested in making contact with such visitors, especially when they show openness to learn more about the difficulties and oppression of daily life in Palestine.

For locals it is important that visitors do not only come to see the "dead stones" of church buildings but also learn about the hardships and sumud (resilience) of the "living stones," the living community.

While it is true that not everybody in Bethlehem or elsewhere in Palestine is particularly motivated to tell his or her story to visitors yet again, nonetheless people generally remain open to visitors, especially young Palestinians. They want to meet, host, talk, join, and act as guides for visitors on local journeys. As they themselves can seldom go abroad due to travelling or budget restrictions, they experience visitors as a window to a different, more normal world. Encounters with foreigners create an opportunity to correct prevalent stereotypes about Palestinians as either terrorists or completely helpless victims. Moreover, young people can improve their English, which is so important when looking

for work or for studies. Contacts with a visiting foreigner or foreign groups and organizations can lead to a chance to journey abroad - a dream for many young Palestinians. Exchange projects have been developed after a visit by an international group, such as a computer-mediated youth exchange or the joint building of a website.

For an NGO like AEI, it is important that young Palestinians can become civil "ambassadors" for Palestine, whether in face-to-face meetings or through Internet exchanges. As the Palestinian story in its fullness is seldom dealt with by the international media or by politicians, many foreigners get a picture of daily life in Palestine only after having real-life meetings or Internet exchanges with Palestinians themselves. Palestinian educational organizations consider it essential that youths do not fall in the trap of high-sounding but meaningless words that are not backed up by a factual picture of real life. Visitors should have direct access to interesting and relevant information about the reality of Palestinian life, including that of young people.

This was the background for the "Communicating Palestine" EVS project. Together with the Belgian volunteer Anaele Hermans and the sending Brussels-based JAVVA ([www.javva.org](http://www.javva.org)), AEI designed a project that on the one hand prepared young Palestinians from the Bethlehem area on how to communicate the reality of their daily life to foreign youths, and on the other, developed a full-fledged information package in English and French about the life of Palestinian youth. This package was a concrete, clear end result of the work.



*Making Cartoon animation*

Over the course of the volunteer's stay, various ideas were put forward to make the package as attractive as possible for present-day young Europeans.

It now includes a magazine about Palestinian youth with a history of the conflict, sources, and theme-based sections that focus on issues such as youth and gender, youth and work, study, religion, human rights, and so on. It also included a documentary in which young Palestinians in different areas of the West Bank were asked: "Which place do you like most and which place do you like least?" (A young woman from Qalqilia, a city in the north of the West Bank that is almost surrounded by the Separation Wall, chose the very same place near the Wall as her answer to both questions. Under the circumstances, she did not know any other place she liked...).

As so often happens with projects, new ideas sprang up along the way. For example, Anaele Hermans contacted her friends working in an animation cartoon NGO in Belgium called "Camera Etc." They came over in the summer of 2008 to organize two successful courses in cartoon animation for Palestinian kids and youths – the output of which also became part of the information package. While manoeuvring the obstacles and checkpoints in the West Bank and hearing the countless stories of young and old Palestinians, Anaele Hermans decided to design a "checkpoint game" along the lines of the traditional Steps and Ladders/Mother Goose game. It is now available at the AEI offices in large and small format for visiting young people to play. "Wait three turns as the soldier at the checkpoint is in a bad mood"...gives you an idea of what's on the cards!

This type of project takes time and a solid information package on a complicated subject requires reflection. In Palestine, many people tend to plan as little as possible since all the ongoing political



*Working on cartoon film*

events mean that one never knows what will happen tomorrow. Moreover, young people – with the exception of the most talented and motivated - are not much used to writing long papers, although they talk well and have interesting stories to tell. The information package thus benefited from the writing and designing skills and knowledge of an international volunteer who listened well, networked easily, and kept a respectful attitude to people struggling with hardship.

With hindsight, it also turned out that it encouraged at least some young Palestinians to look differently at themselves. International visitors have more opportunities than locals to travel through Palestine. The West Bank, sadly, has become "regionalized" – young people in a city like Bethlehem rarely enter other areas of the West Bank, let alone Jerusalem.

The interviews in the package will be used as training material for AEI groups to learn about young people's lives in other areas and to discuss how Palestinian history and identity can be best communicated to foreigners. The Communicating Palestine workshops further encouraged the participants to look at their reality in a fresh way and by doing so to not to lose hope.

Sympathetic foreigners help to create hope, and are listened to when they raise critical questions about youth issues and rights. (An example of a critical question raised by international volunteers was: Are young Palestinians, especially the girls, over protected and kept at home for too long?)

Visiting youth volunteers have the motivation and a network to ensure follow-up to their work. Ms Hermans, for example, has developed a programme with her sending organization to organize a work camp with young Europeans, Arabs and Palestinians this summer. Even better, new volunteers are showing interest in continuing what she started! ■



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## MED 2DC

# Dialogue and Cultural Diversity

### Seminar

1st May - 31 October 2008, Jordan

The project MED 2 C brought together 18 organizations from 8 Mediterranean partner countries (Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia) and 8 from Program countries (Spain, France, UK, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Hungary and Romania). The main aim was to consolidate the capacities of partner organizations and improve mutual understanding of issues related to youth and knowledge of the 3rd phase of EuroMed Youth programme. It was a new challenge for the Tatawor association. First we learned about the new conditions for the 3rd phase of the EuroMed youth programme that differ from phase II: the call for proposal procedures and application forms are much more complex, for example. The session has improved our capacity to respond to calls for proposals from the European Commission. We also learnt how to work in an even richer intercultural context, thanks to the presence of organizations from new regions of the world such as Romania and Hungary. The Jordanian organizations invited to attend this seminar will be responsible for the use and dissemination of these new learning experiences since they are best placed to implement the results across Jordan.

We can also confirm that this action has

resulted in the discovery and/ or better understanding of possible opportunities for young people in the EuroMed Youth programme. The direct impact 6 months after the seminar concerns more than 100 young people who are prepared to integrate a potential project: 25 trained people, 4 training seminars, 8 youth exchanges, 4 EVS (8 young people). With the exception of the 4 EVS, the part III section in the application forms for each of these projects was signed during this seminar.



In addition, the partnership is currently committed to 3 complementary networks that confirm our willingness to promote and enhance the strength and energy of this partnership:

- The MED 2DC network supported by the web site. It will develop an action plan on 3

parts of the EuroMed Youth Program (Youth Exchange programs, training and EVS) for the year 2009

- The Youth4media network, based in Germany. It has already included 5 members of the MED 2DC network and has been working on developing actions in EuroMed Youth and Youth in Action programmes
- The Swedish-based network that has already been approved by the national Agency (the network includes Jordan, Sweden, Spain, Armenia, and Azerbaijan ...).

The seminar was organised in 3 phases: a preparation phase where partners produced the tools and documents to improve mutual understanding between participants and ensure we could reach our objectives. During the seminar, general knowledge of the opportunities and limits of the EuroMed Youth programme III were explored in the first 2 days to ensure that everyone was on the same page. This was followed by a series of workshops to create concrete cooperation situations among the partners. The last phase consisted of the implementation of the first part of the action plan. This part was materialized via 2 main actions: backup for drafting and submitting projects before the different deadlines and the completion of the Website dedicated to Med 2DC to support communication, follow-up and the visibility of the project. ■

### “Training kit for Euromed Youth programme III”

Support documents for workshops 1 and 2 focusing on the understanding of non-formal learning

Support training documents on Euromed Youth programme III to raise participants' level of knowledge

Support documents for workshop 3 and 4 to help obtain the formalization of realistic and achievable projects.

Support Document for the final evaluation of the seminar to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the seminar based on various qualitative and quantitative criteria.



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Visible results of this 3rd and last stage include:

- 1 youth exchange that took place in Romania (August 2008)
- 1 seminar in Germany (in October, 2008)
- 1 seminar in Morocco (in November, 2008)
- 1 training session in the Czech Republic in January 2009
- 1 youth exchange program submitted by the French partner MEDDIACS in September 2008
- 1 training seminar submitted by the German partner in September 2008
- 1 EIDHR project submitted by Tatawor Association (Jordan) in partnership with the Med 2DC Egyptian and Palestinian organizations
- 8 of the participating organizations joined the European association "Youth4media" as members. This association is piloted by MED2DC's German partner
- 1 Networking project submitted by the Swedish partner and approved
- 1 EVS in preparation for a Jordanian young person, supported by Tatawor, to be hosted by the Spanish partner.
- the involvement of JOHUD, a Jordanian association, as a partner in a training project negotiated during the training seminar conducted in Morocco in November 2008. JOHUD will also organise a youth exchange in April between the Czech Republic and Jordan, directly financed by Czech and Jordanian organisations.

The MED2DC website is accessible at this address: <http://med2dc.tatawor.org/>



## Let's share our traditional wedding ceremonies



### Youth exchanges

October 2008, Cappadocia region, Turkey

**T**ufak Youth Club (Tourism Folklore Research Centre in Ankara) held its first Cultural EuroMed Project in the Cappadocia Region.

Our partners in the project were Stowarzyszenie Przyjazio DZTL "Mali Gorzowiaczy" (Poland), "Yildizlar" Folklore Group (Romania), The Students Union at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Israel), for a total of 12 male and 12 female youngsters and group leaders.

In the first 3 days of the project, participants took part in creative drama activities to help them get acquainted and learn to trust each other as well as to enhance and develop their creativity & role-playing skills.

Each country's participants shared their national wedding ceremonies and rituals with the others via the materials and documents they had brought.

Participants discussed how to demonstrate their wedding ceremonies to the audience. During the meetings, methods such as whistling, brainstorming sessions and Q&A were used. At the end of the plenary period, participants planned how to demonstrate their wedding traditions in 4 stages, namely the introduction of the new couple, informing the families and relatives and asking permission to get married, the wedding itself and leaving the family home.

Participants worked together to act out the scenarios and demonstrate the wedding traditions and ceremonies of each country. Many of the actors/actresses for the wedding ceremonies of a particular country came from another.

Preparations for the music and costumes of each country and lighting effects were then added. The preparatory phase highlighting the introduction of the couples, the stage of informing the families and asking permission to get married, along with the wedding itself and leaving home for each country was then completed and demonstrated by all the participants.

The demonstration of the wedding ceremonies was successfully carried out by all the participants in the Mustafa Hotel in Urgup (one of the most attractive tourist destinations in Turkey) before an audience composed of the citizens of Urgup and hotel guests from different countries. The activity created a very positive atmosphere for cultural exchanges. It took almost 45 minutes and involved the active participation of all the groups and the audience, successfully highlighting the universal elements, differences and





*Wedding ceremony demonstrations*

similarities in wedding ceremonies from different cultures.

First of all, spectators were able to observe that despite linguistic, religious and cultural differences, the wedding ceremonies and traditions in each country have universal elements. Cultural prejudices were overcome and everyone involved did their utmost to contribute to the project and demonstrate their positive motivation towards each other.

The participating youngsters went through a cultural learning process and developed their interactive communication and creativity skills.

The citizens of Urgup, where the demonstration took place, also had an opportunity to experience the different cultures and wedding ceremonies through their performance.

During the project, each country group also organised a "country evening",

where they shared their national values via the music, traditional dances, food and beverages of their country.

The project group visited Avanos (a well-known pottery centre), the Open Air Museum, Uchisar Castle, and carpet weaving centres, Zelve, Derinkuyu and Kaymaklı (well-known for their underground cities) in the Cappadocia region. The youngsters also visited other interesting places with unique landscapes.

During the project, the Turkish Contracting Authority was very supportive of the project and the group. Its assistance in bureaucratic procedures and documentation was highly appreciated and the preparatory stage of the project was successfully completed without any delays. Thanks to the positive response and support of the Contracting Authority, we felt safe and able to push the project even further.

On behalf of our Club, TUFAC, we would like to express our warm feelings and thanks to all the participants, local and government authorities and to all our members... :) ■



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## Seminar "Let's meet between regions: Baltic – Dead Seas"



*This SALTO-YOUTH EuroMed Seminar took place on September 14-21, 2008 at the Dead Sea (Israel) and was organized by EMYU Israel and attended by 21 youth workers. The activity was an initiative of the SALTO-YOUTH EuroMed Resource Centre in partnership with the National Agencies for the Youth in Action Programme from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the EuroMed Youth Units from Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority.*

*The idea for the activity germinated during the TCP officers meeting in Bonn in October 2007 between Zita Krastina from the Latvian NA and David Krausz from EMYU Israel. Their enthusiasm in turn convinced their colleagues at the Estonian and Lithuanian NAs and Jordanian and Palestinian EMYUs.*

### Coordinator's point of view by Claudio Kogon

September 2008, an average of 32 degrees, heavy desert, hot, strong sun, the Dead Sea welcoming everyone, mountains all around and the sun rising and setting in them. 21 youth workers from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority getting together to discover their own regions.

The context was not easy: on one hand the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and on the other, the end of the third phase of the EuroMed Youth programme. This led to some participants wondering why they should cooperate when more than half the participants could not submit or host any projects...

The answer came from inside the participants themselves: their determination to cooperate despite their differences and overcome obstacles combined with their curiosity and strong belief in youth work.



Most of the participants from one region didn't know much about the others: what were their borders, cities, customs, language, etc. We heard questions along the lines of: "Do they speak different

languages in their region? It all sounds the same..."

Slowly but surely, participants learnt about their differences and common points; soon Israelis, Jordanians and Palestinians



abandoned English for Arabic and Baltic participants and Israelis did the same, moving to Russian.

In terms of coordinating, one of the most difficult tasks was to design the activity: how could we reconcile all the needs and expectations of all the different actors? How could we achieve a balance between getting to know their own cultures and organizations and being exposed to the local culture and youth work? Most of the activities took place on the shores of the Dead Sea, alongside trips to Bedouin villages and Community Centres, as well as visiting Jerusalem and taking a long awaited "floating bath" in the Dead Sea. As the week evolved, ideas for future projects started to come up. As a team (that included officials from NAs and EMYUS), we helped participants refine their ideas into youth projects, clarify concepts, discuss topics and establish new partnerships.

As a coordinator, however, my ongoing question was "How do we bridge the

gap?" How do we bring regions together when within the same region there is a long history of war, attacks, suicide bombings, disputed land and a never-ending story of vague peace treaties? How could we bring together these widely different cultures? Is it possible to think about young people from both regions working together?

Having been involved in EuroMed projects since 1999, I've learnt time and time again that there are more similarities than differences, even though they are sometimes hard to identify; that curiosity is still a value, despite the apathy of Western societies; that governments are one thing and people are another; that willingness is important but determination is also needed to move the process on; that languages are not barriers but bridges; that human beings are afraid of what is different but interested in sharing; that it doesn't matter how much you prepare yourself, reality is always a surprise; that while a formal setting is needed it is in the informal

moments that ties are formed; and that my main duty as Coordinator is to facilitate and ensure that each participant finds his/her own place to express and fulfil his/her own expectations. ■



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## Israel EuroMed Youth Unit's point of view By David Krausz

### Why cooperate with the Middle East region?

The EuroMed youth programme is a platform for innovative, creative and fascinating encounters between young people and stakeholders in the Euro Mediterranean region.

As such, it is not surprising that at the annual TCP meetings held annually in Bonn, Germany, ideas come up and connections are made for new training seminars and encounters between the different European national Agencies and Meda Youth Units. The TCP meeting in October 2007 was no exception, especially for EMYU representatives from the Meda countries who were participating fully for the first time and saw this meeting as an opportunity to enhance existing partnerships and develop new co-operations.

Together with Bernard Abrignani who, as head of the RCBS and also in his capacity as coordinator of the SALTO EuroMed RC, was supporting the Meda countries initiative, Zita Krastina, representing the Latvian national Agency, Giedre Tumosaite from the Lithuanian NA, Ali Bibi from the Jordanian EMYU and Dua'a Qurie from the Palestinian EMYU, we came up with the fascinating idea of building a partnership between the Meda/ Dead Sea triangle: Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Authority and the Baltic sea triangle: Lithuania, Latvia & Estonia.

The TCP was the ideal place to meet and plan the first step of this partnership, which was the seminar " Lets meet between regions: Baltic – Dead Sea".

Together with the other participating NAs from Lithuania & Estonia and the Jordanian and Palestinian EMYUs, the first seeds were planted and planning went ahead.

Initially the hosting countries were supposed to be Israel and Jordan, since they share the

Dead Sea shores. Unfortunately, Jordan was unable to host and it was decided to hold the seminar at the Ein Gedi Guest House on the Dead Sea shore.

Why co-operation between the Baltic States and the Dead Sea region? Firstly, both groups of countries are relative "newcomers" to the "Euro Mediterranean Dimension" and more specifically to the youth programme. We have frequently encountered ignorance and a lack of knowledge about their neighbours from participants from both regions during our seminars and meetings. On the other hand, highly motivated NAs and EMYUS were willing to participate in the new platform of Euro Mediterranean partnership and develop activities so that young people could learn about each other and develop partnerships.



The initial aim of the seminar was to meet the needs of the NAs and EMYUs. This meant:

For National Agencies in the Baltic States:

- supporting youth organizations in finding good, trustworthy partners in the Mediterranean region
- fostering the exchange of information about the Youth in Action and Euro Med Youth programmes as possible vehicles to facilitate participation in projects hosted in Meda countries

- offering the best environment for Baltic organizations and their youth workers to understand and learn about the reality of the Meda region and the state of play for youth policy and youth work

- encouraging good co-operation, promoting real partnership building between European and Meda organizations

For EuroMed Youth Units in the Dead Sea region:

- supporting youth organizations in finding good, trustworthy partners from EU countries, specially those EU regions that are not geographically close

- fostering the exchange of information and the already existing experience concerning the Youth in Action and Euro Med Youth programmes as the tools for implementing international youth activities

- giving Meda organizations an opportunity to learn about the reality of youth work and youth policy in European countries.

Based on the follow-ups and evaluations from the seminar, I believe that we have achieved most if not all the aims put forward. With the support of Euro Med Youth programme Phase four, further activities will be implemented to help this exciting and important partnership advance even further. ■



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## Lithuanian National Agency's point of view By Giedre Tumosaite

### Moving two Seas closer...

Nearly a year has passed since the "Let's meet between regions: Baltic and Dead Sea" seminar in Israel. Looking back on the preparation process, negotiations and discussions among the National Agencies and EMYUs, recruiting participants and, finally, the getting together for an effective week at Ein Ghedi Youth Hostel on the coast of the Dead Sea, I am more and more convinced that it was really worth all the effort.

Despite the strong motivation and interest of all countries and institutions involved, the seminar turned out to be a true learning challenge for all of us. Probably the most difficult was to understand different points of view and accept different ways of taking decisions and responsibilities. By the time we got to last-minute discussions about the programme and its elements, learning objectives, all knowledge and confidence about intercultural learning and work in an international team had almost disappeared... However, it was a good exercise to test the limits to our own tolerance and empathy. One can only discover the real value of this hard process when one dares to experience it personally.

However, there were other reasons that encouraged us to start strengthening co-operation between two regions:

- For almost two years, the YOUTH IN ACTION programme has been the only well known and explored resource in Lithuania (and the Baltic States) that supports co-operation in the youth field with Mediterranean Partner countries. We believe that youth groups and organizations from Mediterranean Partner countries are well informed about the opportunities offered by different phases of Euro-Med Youth programme. However, there is a lack of solid awareness and understanding of the general support system for co-operation between European and

Mediterranean partner countries (including Baltic and Dead Sea regions). As a National Agency, we wanted to encourage participants to take advantage of this seminar to discover all the possible ways to realise their ideas.

- No traditional co-operation links exist between the Baltic States and Mediterranean (Dead Sea) regions. Nevertheless, we see that our young people are curious and open to new challenges and new learning opportunities (new cultures, realities, possibilities).

- Youth work and youth organizations in Lithuania (and other Baltic countries) have been active for over 10 years now. The groundwork in terms of setting up structures, establishing relations and communication systems and defining our common values is now completed, leaving organizations free to direct their attention and efforts towards a new level of quality and development. New, more global, themes and new partnerships are being taken on and explored by youth organizations and youth workers.

Since 2004, the National Agency of Lithuania has been investing significantly in preparing, encouraging and supporting youth organizations and youth issue related structures to open a new page of International youth co-operation, particularly with Mediterranean Partner countries. We have been able to observe the advances made in recent years (increasing number of projects, number of people / organizations obtaining necessary competences etc.). We also have noticed that regular support (training, counselling, assistance in partner finding etc.) is the tool necessary to ensure the quality of such co-operation. It helps promoters gain better understanding of the specific aspects involved in such co-operation; better knowledge of the realities in the regions; better understanding of youth and voluntary work traditions; intercultural awareness etc.

The seminar "Let's meet between two regions" provided a great opportunity for us (Lithuanian National Agency for the Youth in Action programme) to open a new page and extend the borders of co-operation and involve new promoters with no experience of co-operation with Mediterranean Partner countries. We particularly focused on project promoters from places located far from big cities that had some previous experience in EuroMed Youth or Youth in Action programmes.

It should also be noted that limiting the number of participant countries in the seminar (Estonia, Israel, Jordan, Latvia, Lithuania and Palestinian Authority) helped to make it safer and more suitable as a learning experience. Careful preparatory work with participants also contributed to ensure expected results.

While it is still too early to know the results, the early signs are promising. I have already mentioned the lessons I learnt myself (I hope my colleagues agree with me!). It is not an exaggeration to say that our common experience laid the groundwork for supportive and efficient future co-operation. We were not the only success: a number of already developed project ideas in addition to completed and submitted applications is fair evidence of a new beginning full of hope and willingness. It will be needed to move two Seas closer... ■



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## Testimonies

### By Giedre, Karina and Robertas on behalf of Lithuanian participants

Why should two distant regions that seem to have nothing in common start co-operating? What are the reasons or purposes that could bring them together? That was a question we asked ourselves before going to the seminar on the Dead Sea coast entitled "Let's meet between regions: Baltic and Dead Sea" in September 2008. We could write pages on cultural similarities, possible common backgrounds etc... You might smile but the strongest element pushing us to move towards each other was... simple curiosity. Here in Lithuania we do not know much about distant MEDA countries and their people, problems and dreams. We assume that people there know equally little about us. Even when we believe we do know something, it's difficult to be sure whether it is a real or fictional image created by, for example, the mass media. Human nature is like that – we prefer to trust our own eyes and feelings.

We therefore prepared ourselves for a real cultural shock before going to meet our colleagues from other Baltic and Dead Sea regions. So you can imagine our shock when we realized that young people there are not that different from us – they face the same obstacles, have the same approach to life, share the same problems... We found more similarities than we could have ever expected. And we are not talking about warm hospitality or traditional habits only. Our most fascinating discovery was a common understanding of the idea and concept of youth work in the local community.

After spending a week in Israel with pleasant and open people, we realized that there were so many common issues that we could co-operate on and learn from each other. The clear framework and structure of the seminar, well designed roles and functions pushed most of the sensitive or problematic issues into the background, thus opening the way towards effective co-operation and understanding. We are aware that there are many obstacles and misunderstandings still waiting for us in the future, but the open-minded atmosphere within the group has made us believe that constructive and efficient co-operation between our two regions is possible.

We hope we will be able to test it quite soon: 2 projects developed at the seminar "Let's meet between regions" have been approved by the Lithuanian National Agency. Together with partners from Estonia, Israel, Jordan, Latvia and the Palestinian Authority, we are going to explore the issue of empowerment of young local community leaders in Baltic and Dead Sea region countries and also to try to discover new and different cultures via a Lithuanian - Israeli youth exchange.

And we are sure that the real learning process is only starting...





## Estonian National Agency's point of view By Kaja Ainsalu

### Why cooperate with the Middle East region?

I have to admit there are not many young Estonians who are familiar with life in the Middle East. The region is mostly known through the media for its instability, ongoing conflicts between different neighbors and religions, terror attacks etc. While this is unfortunately true, people who have visited the area or who live there see a different kind of reality as well. Thousands of years of history, exciting cultures and traditions, magnificent nature mixed with modern life in a modern world. But the real richness of the region is its hospitable people and there is probably no better way to start to get to know the people than by doing something together with them. Hence our youth projects, to help young people do exactly that.

At first glance, one could easily conclude that people from the shores of the Baltic States and the Dead Sea are really different. Maybe yes, maybe no, it depends on your point of view. If you look at the culture and religion, then sure, we are different. Two main ideas come immediately to mind: religion plays quite a marginal role in Estonian society and our society is more focused on individual needs than on the collective. This led to a lot of misunderstandings at first when communicating with each other: why do they do those (funny) things? What is the reason behind it? etc. At the same time, it was a splendid opportunity to learn and widen our world-view. When we move away from manmade society and focus instead on our basic human nature, how different are we then? You have probably heard of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. All humans have physiological needs (food and drink to survive), safety needs (to live and to raise children in a safe environment), needs of love and a sense of belonging (to love and be loved), needs of esteem (to have a positive self-image) and



needs for self-actualization (to fulfill one's dreams). Don't we all want to satisfy such needs in our lives, no matter where we live, whether it is in Estonia, Palestine or Morocco? Just how different are we then? Food for thought, isn't it? For me, the main value of the youth projects lies in the intercultural lessons to be learnt, which provide the tools to understand, note and accept differences. I'm sure you agree that differences enrich our world!

Projects with the Middle-East area are not all that popular in Estonia, as the economic, cultural or religious contacts between us are not particularly strong. This is the reason why the Estonian NA decided to be a partner in the "Let's meet between regions: Baltic and Dead Sea" seminar being held in Israel. It wanted to encourage young people to take part in a different kind of project. The seminar structure

provided a good opportunity to get to know the region and its people, to find partners for future projects and to already start generating project ideas. So far, at least three projects have been submitted with Estonian partners. ■



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## EuroMed youth projects resulting from the seminar

*Although this activity was not initially defined as a project-oriented seminar, the results speak for themselves: two projects were submitted on 1st November 2008 and approved by NA Lithuania; three projects were submitted for approval on 1st February 2009 in Estonia and Latvia, but not granted. And at last another one was submitted in Estonia in April 2009.*

### Training Course "Empowerment4Inclusion"

**Partners:** Karina Ufert (Training Centre "In Competence", Lithuania), Juta Manissalu (Estonian Special Youth Work Organization), Omar Shayeb (Palestine Youth Forum for Cooperation), Daniel Moran (YOFI Israel), Mohammad Taher (Amman Center for Sustainable Development, Jordan), Natalja Gudakovska (Minorities of Europe – The Branch for Baltic and Scandinavian States, Latvia).

24 young leaders from 6 countries who are empowering young people in their local communities to achieve goals (4 participants per country – Mediterranean partner and Baltic countries) will meet in Lithuania from June 9-18, 2009.

TC "Empowerment4Interaction" aims to develop the competence of youth leaders working on enhancing youth participation in local communities in Baltic and Mediterranean countries and to enable them to act as youth leaders for youth participation actions and initiate common projects. Participants commit to follow Active Participation Action Plans, which they will work on during the TC.

The Project was approved by NA Lithuania (5th call of the Youth in Action programme on 1st November 2008).

### Youth Exchange "A tolerant discovery of different cultures"

**Partners:** Jolita Surmaite (Lithuania Kolping Society), Daniel Moran (YOFI Youth Forum Ashdod, Israel)

30 Lithuanian and Israeli young people will meet together in Troskunai Culture and Education Centre (Lithuania) from July 1-8, 2009.

The goal of this project is to foster intercultural knowledge and create an open society with active young citizens and to instill tolerant attitudes towards different cultures, religions and societies.

The program will consist of simulations in intercultural communication, intercultural dialogue and tolerance. The project will take place in Lithuania, allowing the participants to get to know the Lithuanian culture and people, including a trip to the second largest city in Lithuania, Kaunas, with its cultural and historic places, including IXth Fort Museum, the Tolerance Centre at Kolping College, Kaunas Churches and Synagogue to learn about the history of Jews in Lithuania.

The other part of the programme will take place in Troskunai Culture and Education Centre, where Israeli and Lithuanian youth will present their national culture using creative tools, active participation and non-formal education methods. Activities will include work groups and discussions on tolerance, intercultural communication, cultural evenings and various games providing opportunities to get to know each other better.

The Project was approved by NA Lithuania (5th call of the Youth in Action programme on 1st November 2008).





## Youth Exchange "Small pieces of one big puzzle"

**Partners:** Kristi Kruus (Saue Youth Center, Estonia), Emad Al Fugaha (Jordan Youth Innovation Forum), Ketevan Esadze (Children and Youth National Centre from Georgia)

The project will use camping, hiking and variants of these (such as canoeing, hiking in swamps, etc.) to break down the walls of cultural differences. Participants will hike in the morning, rest in the afternoon and evenings will be dedicated to "chat-rooms" about everyday life (topics such as the education system, family and relations, faith and law, free time, etc.).

The main purpose is to discover different cultures through everyday life and communication activities. By abandoning the usual "cultural evenings" etc, young people will have an opportunity to discover each other and other cultures through communication activities and helping each other out when the going gets tough.

The Youth Exchange is scheduled for June 2009.

The Project was submitted on the 1st call of the Youth in Action programme (1st February 2009) in NA Estonia, but was not granted.

## Youth Exchange "Sportship"

**Partners:** Mairi Raju (Rõuge Youth Club, Estonia), Nikita Pederin (Israel) and partners of Georgia and Cyprus.

The name of the project is a combination of the words sport and friendship. The activity aims at showing how sport can be a tool of friendship, understanding, respect and peace between countries.

The activity is scheduled to take place from July 21-30 2009 in Georgia.

The Project was submitted on the 1st call of the Youth in Action programme (1st February 2009) in NA Estonia, but was not granted.

## Seminar for Youth Workers "Baltic + Dead Sea"

**Partners:** Oksana Simane (Daugavpils Secondary School #10, Latvia), Israela Nevo (Gallop NPO, Israel)

The Seminar was submitted under Sub-Action 4.3 – Training and networking of the Youth in Action Programme. The topic of the Seminar is social inclusion of youngsters – experience exchange on working with youth at risk using horseback riding therapy as a tool for intervention. The Seminar will be attended by 19 youth workers from Israel (9) and Latvia (10).

Venue: two cities - Daugavpils and Riga (Latvia).

The Seminar is scheduled for the end of June 2009 - beginning of July 2009.

The Project was submitted on the 2 first calls of the Youth in Action programme (1st February and 1st April 2009) in NA Latvia, but was not granted.



## The EM GAME: the recipe



### Procedure:

Background: if you are desperately sick of *curiosity*, strictly convinced that dialogue should be based on *knowledge* (to fight prejudices and to appreciate the other) and strongly *addicted to games* as the nicest way of learning and you speak with someone (the director of SALTO EM) who is sicker than you, it may happen that you sum up the idea of a game as an educational tool, based on the *high ideal* of sharing and getting the *knowledge* of the EM countries. You start thinking of the basic game rule structure and ... here you go: you put yourself into play... and you have to play!

Preparation: for realizing a software game, you should have at your disposal a high dosage of *foolhardiness* mixed to a redundant *determination*, especially if you have no ideas how to create a software game. But this may seem irrelevant, if you can search for someone professional to do it. The problem will arise later soon: where and how shall I search someone, free lance and not an employee of a game brand, dealing with software games? Well, call forth all your *patience* and start searching in the internet: it may happen that you find a good one living in New York (very expensive, but amazing, as a meeting place) or someone, Andrea, living in Pisa (the Italian town with the leaning tower, not far from home) expert with 3D software games. With the chef master Bernard (i.e. director of SALTO EuroMed) you opt for him and invite him and his colleague, Diana, to the Tool Fair in INJEP in order to make them breath and understand in pills the reality of EuroMed youth work. The *foolhardiness* is still reigning, as you all know that you have

### Ingredients:

- basics: curiosity, foolhardiness, determination, high ideals, challenge, game addiction
- for the dough: creativity, intuition, passion, adaptability, patience, suggestions,
- for the filling: knowledge, research, multimedia material, contributions, revision
- for the decoration : attractive interface, friendly usage

no practical ideas on the realization of a game as an EDUCATIONAL tool: again you search in the internet (the best mall for finding the right ingredients) and you discover a French teacher, Denis, with expertise in this. You mix the ingredients (i.e. you call them all in INJEP) and you obtain the cake!

Well, before that your recipe needs a lot of work, *revision*, *research*, *adaptability* ... in a few words: sweat, delusions, drop of passion, but still driven by *determination* with the idea that the final product will be good and useful.

Realization of the dough: realizing a recipe, when you just have a confused mixing of ingredients, but no indications on the procedures, is simply absurd: you shall rely than on *creativity*, *intuition* and above all on good *suggestions*. If you are determined, with your final product in mind, loaded with *patience* and *adaptability*, you may arrive at a certain point in which you shout "Eureka, it works! And looks very nice, indeed". I have to admit that one of the nicest satisfactions has been thinking something apparently crazy, and seeing it realized!

Preparation of the filling: once the dough is almost done, you need to fill it (with questions, answers, reference material). We decided to ask for a free contribution from trainers and youth workers of the SALTO EuroMed net and the ones who accepted (great people!) had to follow precise rules (topics to be dealt, 3 different levels of difficulty, citing all the sources, using just copyright free *multimedia material* etc...). We received the *contributions* and then the *revision* task was starting and took a very long time together with additional *research*.

### Time needed:

- for the preparation: 6 months (Jan-June 2007)
- for the dough: 6 months (July-Dec 2007) + time needed for adjustments (virtually... a never ending story)
- for the filling: 1 year (Jan-Dec 2008) opened to future additions
- for the decoration: 2 years (2007-2008), always finding new little-nice-attractive tips

Finalization of the decoration: our intent was to create an educational tool not forgetting, but on the contrary focusing on, its playful aspect: learning together with ENJOYING playing!! The compromise between the two spheres brought us often to difference of opinion (two chefs in the same kitchen...) but at the end we reached an acceptable compromise.

We tested it in the various Tool Fairs (to make people TASTE it) and we decided also to train new chefs/animators in a Training Course in Amarante (Portugal) in order to use it at its best as an educational tool in youth work. As a result we had a handbook, which will be soon distributed.

Well, if you are wondering where you can get this marvelous product, be patient a bit and keep an eye in the SALTO EuroMed web site.

To all the young people playing it I wish you to enjoy its taste and to all the animators using it, just rely on your creativity and create your own new recipe!

For all: HAVE FUN (and learn) ■



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# ■ Educational Tool in EuroMed



**TURN THE ROULETTE WHEEL**

TURN!

**TURNERSHIP**

**FLIGHT TICKET**

**TRAIN/BOAT TICKET**

**FUNDING**

**NEGOTIATION**

**SURPRISE**

**CANCELLED**

**DELATED**

**PARTNERSHIP CARD**

**PLAYER INFO**

**NAME:** Andrea  
**NATIONALITY:** Algerian  
**AREA:**   
**FUNDS:** 5,000 / 45,000 €  
**CREDITS / REPRIM:** 0  
**DEGREES:**

**FUNDING CARD**

**SURPRISE CARD**

**SALTO-YOUTH EUROMED RESOURCE CENTRE**

## Publications



### “2 years of EuroMed youth Cooperation”

This publication lists EuroMed youth projects supported by the EuroMed Youth III Programme during the last 2 years as well as EuroMed youth projects within the framework of Actions 2 (EVS) and 3.1 (cooperation with partner countries) of the European Youth in Action Programme. The main aim of the present publication is

to promote the visibility of both European Youth Programmes and to point out the excellent work accomplished by EuroMed Youth Units and National Agencies. It will also be a useful tool for NGOs to identify partners for future projects, in addition to motivating new NGOs to be active in the area of EuroMed youth cooperation.

The publication is available on line in the Salto-Youth EuroMed Library, with our reports <http://www.salto-youth.net/EMlibrary/>



### “Studies on EuroMed Youth Policies in Mediterranean partner countries”

The RCBS (Regional Capacity Building and Support Unit) for the EuroMed Youth III programme was chosen after a Call for proposals to provide a team of 7 experts to carry out 10 studies on « the evolution of the youth sector in Mediterranean area ». The overall aim of the studies undertaken in Algeria, Egypt, Israel,

Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey on Youth Policies was to be a reference tool which would give all stakeholders in the field of youth, in addition to youth project organisers, an overview of the situation of young people and of the provisions available to them in the 10 partner countries. The objectives were to identify whether there was a Youth Policy, legislation or any other national strategy addressing the needs of youth and what kind of provision was made through non-formal education and youth work in the relevant partner countries. These studies and a compilation of the ten are available on line on [www.euromedyouth.net](http://www.euromedyouth.net). A French version for Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia will soon be on line. <http://euromedyouth.net>

## Salto EuroMed Trainings and events

### 2nd part of the year 2009

You'd like to take part in a training session or event organised by Salto-Youth EuroMed Resource Centre? Below is a list of the ones to which you can still apply via our website:

[www.salto-youth.net/tceuromed2009/](http://www.salto-youth.net/tceuromed2009/)

- Training Course “**Environment**” 22-30 Sept; Greece
- Evaluation seminar “**Let's evaluate with our neighbours**” 5-10 October; Poland
- **Mosaic seminar**: qualification of trainers in EuroMed 2-8 Nov. Turkey (Council of Europe)
- 4th edition “**Tool fair**” 10-15 November; Portugal
- Euro-Med Conference “**Our white sea**” - NGO management 16-22 November; Malta
- Training seminar “**EuroMediterranean Voluntary work as a tool for the human development**” 2-6 December; France



**SALTO-YOUTH**  
**EUROMED**  
**RESOURCE CENTRE**



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