

## **Africa in IFM – Focus on the African region at the International Committee Meeting of IFM-SEI**

### **1. Brief narrative of the action(s) carried out in the project**

'Africa in IFM' was the focus of this year's International Committee Meeting of IFM-SEI. Due to a lack of funds, it is always very difficult for our African member organisations to participate in meetings of our international, and they are therefore regularly underrepresented in Congresses and International Committee meetings. The grant enabled us to support two young African representatives to attend the meeting and to lead on workshops focussing on the work of IFM-SEI in Africa.

The International Committee is an important statutory body of our organisation and comes together once a year to decide on questions regarding the development of IFM-SEI between Congresses. At the meetings, some time is used for statutory questions, but we always aim to spend a considerable amount of time on thematic work. This year, the thematic work consisted of:

- 1) Three workshops on IFM's educational work on the MDGs, in particular on issues our African organisations are working on: gender equality, poverty and health
- 2) Developing a strategy for the development of the African region in IFM-SEI, in particular how our African members can develop better structures of internal cooperation
- 3) Discussing our strategy for the Europe-Africa cooperation in the youth field

Three participants from Senegal and one participant from Mauritius represented the African continent at the IC meeting (2 of them were supported by the Seed funding). 3 Cameroonian participants were refused visa and could therefore not participate. They paired up with volunteers and vice-presidents coming from other regions to prepare and facilitate the workshops. These workshops were a space to share each other's experiences, best practices and ideas in the thematic fields and in particular to develop concrete action plans for the future of IFM-SEI's work in Africa.

The majority of participants came from European organisations, but delegates from other world regions than Africa and Europe were also present at the meeting (Latin America, Asia and Middle East). They were particularly interested in South-South cooperation, and could also contribute with valuable input into how to organise inner-African cooperation through sharing how they cooperate within their regions.

### **Description of the impact of the project in the community/organisation/network etc.**

The impact of this project can be seen in different areas and is very important for IFM-SEI.

- **Network building and generating contacts** within Africa and between African and European member organisations: The members from the 3 African organisations present met for the first time and were able to start creating contacts between each other in both formal and informal times. The European delegates were happy to be able to meet young African representatives to learn more about the work of our African organisations. Generating these individual contacts is the first important step to enhancing Euro-African cooperation. Through the good atmosphere of the meeting and the interest created for our African network through the workshops, much motivation for common activities and projects was created. Particularly the four young Africans present felt empowered to take a lead in implementing new IFM-SEI projects in Africa.
- **Very concrete ideas were developed for the future inner-African and Africa-Europe cooperation in IFM-SEI.** A new African Vice President together with the secretariat took up the task to implement these ideas. Examples are:
  - o Create a small African co-ordination team composed of volunteers of all African member organisations to regularly update each other

- Organise a networking seminar on how to start cooperation, to better get to know each other and to build up links (possibly linked to a next International Committee meeting in Africa)
  - Launch a global campaign against racist visa rules towards African youth activists and bring this campaign to other global youth networks
  - Have regular long-term volunteers from Africa in Europe and from Europe in African member organisations
- **Adaptations of methods** for working on child poverty, health and gender equality with children and young people on the ground in Europe and Africa
  - **An IFM-SEI position on the newly established Africa-Europe Youth Platform** has been established, so that IFM delegates in the AEYP and other Africa-Europe youth events can better represent IFM-SEI

### 3. Description of the profile of the young people involved in the project.

The Seed Funding provided funding for the travel costs of:

- Yashmeet Yathoo (male, Mauritian Falcon Movement)
- Salimata Traore (female, Mouvement des Pionniers du Senegal)
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In total, 46 participants were present at the International Committee Meeting (16 female, 30 male).

- Africa: 4 (3 female, 1 male, coming from Senegal and Mauritius )
- Europe: 28 (9 female, 19 male, coming from: UK, Belgium, Malta, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Serbia, Lithuania, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Netherlands)
- Other regions: 14 (4 female, 10 male)

### 4. Description of the follow-up plans foreseen after the project

Some very concrete follow-up plans have been developed during the meeting:

- Setting up a coordination team of African IFM-SEI member organisations, led by the African Vice President
- Organising the International Committee Meeting 2012 in Africa and combining it with a networking seminar between African and European member organisations
- Taking a strong stance for a development of African youth policy led by African young people independent of their governments
- Starting a campaign for a better visa system, so that African young people can participate without barriers in youth projects or statutory meetings taking place in Europe.

### 5. Description of main challenges/difficulties encountered in the implementation of the project and identification of key success-factors which could elevate Africa Europe Youth Cooperation further.

One main challenge was certainly the refusal of visa for three participants coming from Cameroon. They were not the ones funded by the Seed funding, but their presence would have meant a more balanced group of participants and more input from the African side. They were refused visa despite a very well prepared visa application and an official appeal. A key factor that will improve cooperation with Africa will certainly be to have less frustrating visa application processes. IFM-SEI will bring this topic to ICMYO to cooperate with other youth organisations on this very important matter.

Another challenge for cooperation are the flight costs for Africans attending activities in Europe or in other African countries and for Europeans going to Africa. We therefore discussed possibilities of a

coordination team that can coordinate the work of the region without meeting in person and who can think of activities other than seminars and camps that can bring the region closer together without in-person meetings.

A final programme of the meeting and a result from the African development workshop are attached.