

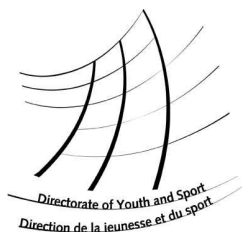
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Dialogue for Peace; Intercultural Learning applied in local contexts

Report of the study session held by
Children's International Summer Villages
- CISV International -
in co-operation with the
European Youth Centre
of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre Strasbourg
06.11.2005 – 13.11.2005



This report gives an account of various aspects of the study session. It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team of the study session. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report does not give an day by day overview like a diary of our week in Strasbourg. It is ment to try and summarise the outcomes of our discussion, to give some insight into the background thoughts of the topics that we touched upon and the results we belief we have achieved with this Study Session.

The topic of the Study Session was “Dialogue for Peace – Intercultural Learning applied in local contexts”. Thus the main focus lay on topics like the intercultural dimension of the local context, identity, intercultural learning exercises and intercultural competence. A focus was also put on creativity, dialogue as such and needs analysis. As particulary important came out that intercultural learning is not about accepting everything; that tollerating everything is as good as ignoring everything. When a youth-worker wants to set out to provide a group of young people with an intercultural learning experience, it is of crucial importance that before s/he conducts a thorough introverted and extroverted needs-analysis. With this we mean a process of becoming aware of the own needs and the own motivation (introverted) to be involved in youth work with an intercultural dimension as well as being aware of the needs of the target group (extroverted), their social reality and their learning potential.

We believe that the participants of the Study Session have now a deeper knowledge of the concepts around intercultural learning, - competence and –dialogue as well as an increased self-awareness on why they are and why they want to be involved in youth work. They gained skills in needs analysis, fundraising, creativity, dialogue and facilitation and their capacity to carry on intercultural group work was enhanced.

As an outcome of the Study Session we have identified a lack of quality assurance tools and methodologies as well as an implementation of such in many educational programmes that claim to be intercultural. We have found that a focus should be put on the individual unique and diverse identity, rather than focussing on assigned cultural belonging.

Suggestions for the future work of the DYS and the CoE in general are in two fields: practical and political. The practical suggestion that we would like to make is to come back to the use of glasses instead of plastic cups for breakfast meals and in the plenary. An organisation that

stands for human rights and sustainable development should start in it's own house with this attitude of non-waste where waste is not necessary.

We would furthermore suggest that the political dimension of Intercultural Learning and – Dialogue should be discussed further within the structures of the Council of Europe. Being on the top of the agenda for the coming years, we believe that Intercultural Dialogue has to be filled more with content and concreteness to avoid to become a farce. The concept of Identity should get more attention, for we believe that cultural belonging is as complex as modern multiple identities are. The question of identity is not only important in Intercultural Dialogue, but also when it comes to European Citizenship and Discrimination.

This was the first Study Session for CISV and it was a great educational experience for everyone involved. The support from the Educational Advisors were a fantastic new experience and the infrastructure of the Youth Centre in Strasbourg provided a superb learning experience. As for CISV, the main outcomes were that the content-competence of the participating members was increased and that they had a chance to network with youth-workers from other organisations. We also learned new methods from the two team-members that were not from CISV.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the Study Session “Dialogue for Peace – Intercultural Learning applied in local contexts” was to motivate, inform and educate young people involved in youth work by providing a forum that allows vibrant interaction and exchange as well as by offering new information; and to deconstruct and demystify the concept of Culture and Intercultural Learning in order to enhance a more differentiated use of it, to increase the capacity and motivation of the participants to carry out local activities with an intercultural dimension.

In order to reach this ambitious aim, we have set out several objectives, which were divided again in four different phases: Reflection, Exchange, Training and Innovation. These phases also describe the flow that we set out to have during the Study Session. Like a curve the Study Session started basically at the participant’s doorsteps, collecting them and valuing their experiences, concepts and ideas. We believe that there is already a huge potential of knowledge within each participant and by facilitating a conscious reflection process on the acquired experiences and knowledge this tacit knowledge can be then used more effectively by the carriers. Through an exchange of the reflected experiences already acquired by the participants a synergetic effect can be stimulated and the participants can learn from each other (of course the team and anyone else can also learn a great deal from the participants).

From this first participant-centred phase of reflection and exchange we then transferred the information input to the expert and team for the ‘training-phase’ to end the Study Session again participant-centred in the ‘innovation phase’. There were no sharply intersected phases, but each phase smoothly faded into the next phase. Reflection and exchange were also prominent elements during the training phase as were they for the innovation phase. We have, however, divided the phases with regards to the focal attention that was given in that particular time of the programme.

Thus, based on the principle of participant-centred learning and a synergetic approach to the Study Session, we started the week by facilitating the participant’s reflection on their underlying ideas and concepts of culture and intercultural learning approaches. For this we wanted to create an environment for a productive exchange of experiences, ideas and concepts in the field of intercultural non-formal education to peace for the participants to identify common interests and issues.

Once the dialogue between the participants was fostered and encouraged and an exchange of experience and good practice was already flowing, we continued with providing the

participants with a theoretical framework on intercultural dialogue and intercultural education, non-formal education and facilitation methodology to enable them to further develop activities they conduct on a local level with an intercultural dimension. Training sessions were also offered in ‘creativity methods’, ‘needs-analysis’ and ‘fundraising’. This was done with the motivation to provide the participants with tools, which can help to implement new ideas and methods of intercultural learning in their local contexts. We also planned to begin the process of developing approaches of local educational activities with an intercultural dimension, which were new to the participants. Written material was planned to be produced during the Study Session to help the participants take the ideas studied away with them and we encouraged the participants to form communication networks to continue communicating with- and support each other.

The participants came from quite diverse backgrounds and covered a wider age-range. The youngest participant was 17, while the oldest was 29. Eleven participants came from European CISV associations and generally were in a position of responsibility for a group of youngsters.

What was common to all participants was that all have worked with intercultural groups and were interested and keen to expand their capacity in this regard. Each participant was asked to fill in an extensive questionnaire in their application form upon which they were selected. We were looking specifically for participants who already have an idea on intercultural learning and already have worked in intercultural contexts. However, we didn’t want to have experts with a too set mindset. We valued curiosity over expertise in our selection of participants and open-mindedness over an elaborated definition of culture.

The main issues discussed were culture and intercultural learning, needs analysis (personal and target-group oriented) and intercultural locality.

As already mentioned we followed four phases in our flow of the programme: Reflection, Exchange, Training, Innovation. To further break this down we gave each day a name, describing what was going to happen that day.

The first content filled day, Monday the 7th was the ‘Introduction Day’, where we introduced the participants to CISV and the Council of Europe, where we had activities on Hopes and Expectations, where we did group building activities and where we had a world-café, facilitating initial reflections on Intercultural Learning in local contexts.

The second day was the 'Interculture Day', which was led and facilitated by the expert Michal Modlinski from Poland. There the participants discussed terms like Culture, Identity and Multiculture. Michal further went into the concepts of time and space, discussed what makes an exercise an intercultural learning exercise and introduced the group to concepts of multiculturalism of Bennett, Schwarz and Titley among others. In the evening of that day we held a NGO-Restaurant to provide the participants with a Forum to learn about each others NGOs and from what background they come.

The next two days were going under the label 'capacity building day', where the participants could select from a variety of workshops that were running parallel. This was done to meet different needs of participants, to equip them with tools to bring back home and that can facilitate the implementation of their project ideas that they were working on during the 'project day'. Using the Open Space technology the participants were given the possibility to exchange and discuss different ideas they have in the field of intercultural learning in their local contexts. Through this they could inspire themselves and enrich their ideas with the feedback of others. After the Open Space the participants worked in 'Think Tank – Groups' according to similar project ideas. Each participant worked on their own ideas, but they did so sharing a room or table and thus could ask each other for feedback and ideas. On the next day, the 'taking it back home day', the think tank groups wrapped up their work and presented their project ideas in small groups to fellow participants that were not in their groups before. After several evaluation methods and reflection groups the Study Session was then over and closed in a farewell party.

PROGRAMME – INPUTS AND DISCUSSIONS

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ISSUES:

THE INTERCULTURAL DIMENSION OF A LOCAL CONTEXT

In a globalised Europe, intercultural encounters do not only happen when one travels abroad. This is a far too simplistic view on culture. Describing culture equal to nation is inadequate as culture and nation are just not the same. A lot of youth organisations organise youth exchanges with partners from different countries to meet and to learn from each other. But the same thing can also happen in the neighbourhood. Instead of making a youth-exchange with another country possibly the same learning experience (maybe even more) can take place while doing this exchange with another district in the same town. Culture is more than just ethnicity or nationality; it is also the socialisation, the living conditions, the way of life.

It can thus be very educational to meet people who might have the same passport, but who have been brought up in a totally different way, who have different values and different opinions. By meeting those who are different, one learns not only about them, but a great deal about oneself.

It is an often observed phenomenon, that those who we meet in international exchanges, are not that different to each other. They have similar interests (curiosity about other people, countries and cultures) and similar backgrounds (families who value an intercultural, non-formal education for their children). At least in CISV programmes, it much too often happens that those who meet are very similar to one another, even though they live in different countries. With a focus on the intercultural dimension of the local context, it is not only the geographical distinction that comes into play, but merely the social and socio-cultural aspects of culture and create the diversity among those who share the living space of one community. It is important for the youth (and people in general) to learn how to embrace this cultural diversity in the local area, to find in it the source for creativity and growth.

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IS NOT ABOUT HAVING NO OPINION

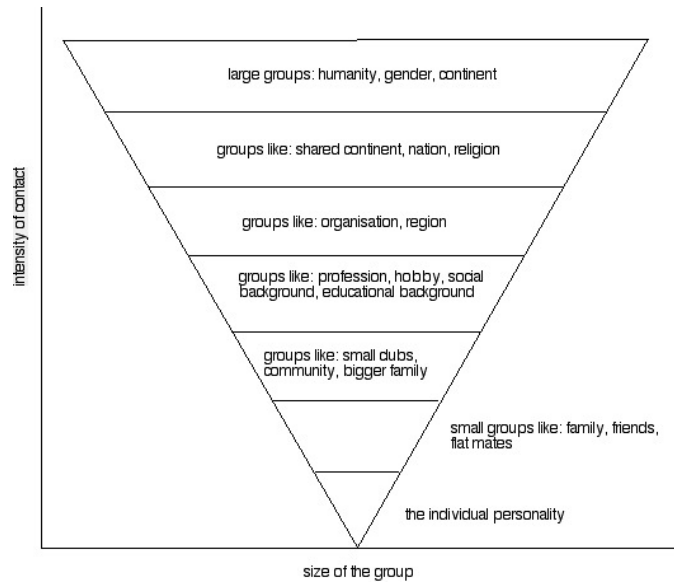
A key point in the discussion on culture and intercultural competence was the thin line that the question about tolerance draws. Is it ok, not to tolerate everything? Is it ok to reject

another person's opinion? This is a discussion that goes on in many youth-work contexts and our answer is yes. Too often intercultural competence is confused with the ability to accept every kind of behaviour and valuing it as different. But this confuses the value given to a person and the value given to this person's opinions. In our discussions we came to the conclusion that intercultural competence is merely about having a stand-point and knowing why. Knowing oneself and the own socialisation makes it easier to understand where ones own opinion emerges from and to understand where others opinions result of. However, this does not mean that one must accept that racists do what they do because that is their culture. It does not mean that the discrimination of women has to be accepted because that is part of radical islamists culture. It does not mean that the violation of human rights has to be accepted because that's the part of a dictatorships culture. There is a thin line between tolerance and ignorance. The tagline 'all different, all equal' explains quite well what intercultural learning is about. The understanding that people are different but that they stand on an equal basis, that they talk eye to eye with each other and that there is no superior or inferior. Therefore it is the responsibility of youth workers, politicians and citizens in general to work against the notion 'all different and thus not equal'. When one accepts injustice as just a different way of handling things, one might as well close the eyes towards the world and build a little safe dream world. But youth-work is about not accepting injustice, not accepting inequality and not accepting discrimination. Intercultural Competence is also the ability to discuss and to argue for this, it is about having an opinion; it is about not accepting everything that is happening in the world.

Culture within Intercultural Learning activities has to be as Gavan Titley named his discussion paper on culture and intercultural learning in DYS Activities 'Plastic, Political and Contingent', instead of 'Vague, Unpolitical and Detached'.

IDENTITY

Intercultural Learning is also about individuals and groups. Individuals are always members of groups and socialised to be in them. As Jens Schneider said in his book 'on being German': "Each individual is unique in the composition of membership to groups, but in each of those groups the individual is not unique." This principle can be visualised in a top-down pyramide:



Graph by: Bastian Küntzel

Each individual is a member of a large number of groups. Some groups are very big (humanity, gender) and some are small (family, circle of close friends). They differ from each other not only in the frequency in which the members of the group meet each other (in case of humanity they never meet all at the same time; in case of family, there might be a tradition of regular meetings), but also in the shared values, habits and histories. According to Benedict Anderson a group, that is bigger than a small village-community is nothing more but an imagined community, as the members of this group hardly ever have the chance to meet each other and interact. However, also these imagined groups have a set of values and rules that everyone in the group shares and follows to a certain degree. For each person this top-down pyramid would look differently and also the importance of some of the groups might differ. Religion can be of extreme importance to some, while it is not important to others, nevertheless it is there and an integral part of the identity. The same can be true with any other group one might belong to, like family, organisation, gender, etc. The identification with one of those groups has a strong impact onto the identity as a whole. It can often be observed that members of minority groups consider this membership as something fundamental, while members of majority groups don't bother too much about this certain membership and search for something else that gives a great feeling of identification. For intercultural encounters it is important to be aware of the several groups one is a member of and to be aware of the values and rules that each of those groups imply. Only then it is possible to negotiate one's values and opinions with another, culturally diverse individual. Self-awareness, or self-consciousness is the key to the understanding of others.

Looking at the pyramid, one might argue that every inter-personal encounter is intercultural, as no one is the same, thus there is always a certain degree of diversity. Yes, this is true and hence the question arises when an interaction is to be considered 'intercultural' and when not. To this question we did not find a complete and satisfying answer. However, the thoughts and discussions went into a direction that the term 'intercultural' is more adequate for an interaction of members of rather big and dominant groups inside the pyramid. Thus a meeting between a person from a soccer-club and a tennis-club will likely not be considered intercultural, while a meeting between a person from a developing country in the southern hemisphere, who is very involved into his or her religion and a person from a northern-european country who has never seen a house of worship from the inside might very well be considered to be intercultural.

Hence an intercultural encounter can take place when an individual enters into an interaction with a group that s/he is not (yet) a member of. Self-consciousness can not only help to reflect the own intercultural experience but also the other persons reaction to oneself. It is thus the role of intercultural learning activities to equip participants with tools to meet new groups of people openly and successfully. It is very important to know ones limitations and the consequences of an intercultural encounter (i.e. emotional stress) to interact competently and with the desired outcome. This does not imply that one will always go through stress with every intercultural experience. Neither does it mean that any intercultural setting will provide an intercultural learning experience.

WHAT MAKES AN EXERCISE AN INTERCULTURAL LEARNING EXERCISE?

Putting different people with a diverse cultural background into one place does not necessarily make this an intercultural learning activity. The human organism is extremely qualified in keeping itself healthy, for example by ignoring stress and difficulties and focussing (the awareness) on the already known. An intercultural learning exercise can be an extremely educational experience, if planned with care and debriefed properly. A trainer should not do an exercise that s/he has never done before; when intercultural learning activities are done, just for fun, they potentially do more harm than good. It is important to know the group and to know ones own abilities to facilitate intercultural learning activities.

Well known exercises like ‘Abigale’ or ‘Baranga’ can put the participants into great emotional stress, thus it is important to provide a safe environment (like a camp, a course, a study session, etc.), where the participants know that the people surrounding them do not mean any harm. In these exercises the participants might reveal a lot about themselves, their values and beliefs. Hence it is important to provide them with a setting where they feel comfortable opening themselves in this way to others and to themselves. A support structure within the group is beneficial: friends or people one feels comfortable with. It is also important to guide the participants through a reflection during the debriefing, so they understand better what has happened.

CREATIVITY

Creativity was approached in this study session from the starting point of 5 of the main values behind creative processes such as Mindmapping or Brainstorming. These values, as defined by Osborn in 1941 (creator of the method) of Brainstorming: 1. No judgment (neither on the own ideas nor on the ideas of others - every idea is valuable), 2. Variety (the more possibilities, the better), 3. Hitchhiking (building on each others ideas), Be crazy (when what has been tried until now has not worked its time for some new possibilities) and 5. Purpose (why are we trying to get somewhere and where is it?).

During some parts of the session, a direct link was established between these essential creative values and some of the most fundamental values of Intercultural Learning as defined throughout the week by the group and team.

Values such as acceptance, tolerance, inclusion (no judgment), or “multi”culturalism, different cultures living and learning together (variety), finding synergetic solutions for cultural differences (hitchhiking), believing a new common path is possible (be crazy) and understanding and empowering common goals and ideals (purpose).

This linking between Creativity and Intercultural Learning made it possible to reflect on the deeper, more universal, truths behind these values, recognizing that abstract concepts such as diversity or tolerance often referred to in intercultural contexts, are too, concrete concepts in so many other fields and practices.

We believe that this link empowered both the underlining intercultural magnitude of the study session thus far, as well, as contributed to a broader and deeper horizon for the upcoming projects to be developed.

DIALOGUE

Dialogue comes from the Greek word Dialogos (dia+logos=flow of the meaning) and it suggests a collective exploration of meaning. According to quantum physicist David Bohm, dialogue is a shared exploration towards greater understanding, connection and possibility.

Bohm Dialogue (often referred to simply as Dialogue by its proponents) is conducted in groups of 10 to 40 people, who sit in a single circle, for a few hours during regular meetings or for a few days in a workshop environment. Participants "suspend" their thoughts, motives, impulses and judgements exploring and attempting to "think together" collectively. According to the proposal, Dialogue should not be confused with discussion, lecture, discourse or debate, which, says Bohm, all suggest working towards a goal rather than simply exploring. Meeting without an objective or agenda is done to create a "free space" for something new to happen.

The goal in a Bohm dialogue is to achieve collective mindfulness where participants are more concerned about group process than individual ego or position.

Dialogue can at times be truly magical, dissolving the boundaries between us and the world and opening up wellsprings of realization and resonant power. Dialogue, with this sort of understanding is a crucial process among communities and people in which individuals are more conscious of their thought streams and process during communication. This kind of awareness opens more space between people to connect beyond differences and layers of learned behaviour and habits. This is definitely a prerequisite for healthy intercultural dynamics.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

All too often intercultural learning exercises are done for one reason: they are fun and the trainer has done it once and thought it was a nice activity. But this is the wrong starting point. A successful exercise will always be based in the needs of those who are participating in it. May those needs be consciously expressed or implied in the behaviour. It is the trainer's responsibility to find out about such needs, to identify them and then to have the right exercise ready to answer those needs. But there is also another dimension to it. The needs of the trainer / youth worker. It is important for us as youth workers to know why we do what we do. It is important that we are aware of our motives and our relation to the target group. Earlier we talked about the various groups that every individual belongs to. As also the youth

worker is a member of a number of groups, s/he has to identify whether or not s/he is a member of. In case the youth worker is a member of the target group (as the team of this study session was a member of the target group of this study session), then it is more likely that s/he will already know a great deal about the needs and values of the group. The bigger the distance (not necessarily geographical distance but rather in terms of knowing the group), the bigger is the need for a thoroughly conducted needs-analysis.

MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY SESSION

RECOMMENDATIONS OR STATEMENTS ON ISSUES THAT REQUIRE PARTICULAR ATTENTION AND WHICH COULD BE ADDRESSED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EUROPEAN YOUTH WORK

Intercultural Learning has developed to be a key word in the context of European youth work over the past years. It is a key to obtain funding for activities and support from institutions. What is lacking is a discussion on quality assurance and content. The social sciences around the issue of intercultural communication (psychology, sociology, education, ethnology, linguistics, media-science, etc.) have themselves not yet come to a clear definition on what culture actually is; definitions from the 70s and 80s are dominating the discussions (Hofstede: Culture is the collective programming of minds). In this context, projects on intercultural dialogue are facing the same ambiguity. What is intercultural dialogue? What is intercultural learning? The answers are complex and controversial. In the context of European youth work this means that particular attention has to be given to the quality of projects that attempt to foster intercultural dialogue and the tools of their quality assurance. It is simply not enough to put people from different cultural backgrounds into one room and let nature take its course.

With the portfolio for youth workers an important step has been taken on an issue that was also under discussion in the Study Session: the individual youth worker him/herself. It is important for youth workers to understand their own values, their own motives, why they are engaged in youth work and why they want to work in intercultural contexts. This is a reflection that doesn't take place enough. YNGOs are glad to find volunteers to help with the programmes. Not every youth worker wants to change the world. Some just enjoy the youth work context, as it is indeed very enjoyable. This should not be judged, but both the youth

worker and the organisation should be aware of it. When people are given responsibility over children and youth and when they are further given the mandate to provide these with educational experiences, great attention has to be given to the self-awareness of the youth workers and to their skill training.

MAIN RESULTS FOR THE ORGANISER OF THE STUDY SESSION

The Study Session was initially applied for by CISV International and Students' Forum 2000. In the time between the approval of the Study Session application and the actually Session itself, Students' Forum 2000 stopped to exist. It is therefore only possible to give an overview on the results for CISV International.

This was the first Study Session that CISV organised in partnership with the Council of Europe's Youth Directorate. This in itself was a very valuable experience for us. Before we never had the possibility to really focus on one theme intensively for one whole week and we never had the possibility to invite people from outside of the organisational context of CISV. In addition to that we never before worked with a professional educational advisor and external team-members. For CISV it was very good to be able to communicate our values and ways of communication to other organizations and at the same time being able to compare them with theirs. To both the participants with CISV-background as well as the team-members it was important to have the chance to directly compare different organizational cultures.

Just having started a new programme, that is based on local activities it was also very valuable for CISV to have this space in which the different possible dimensions of this programme could be thought about.

Many of the participants with CISV-background especially from the Eastern European countries have many responsibilities in their local associations, associations that just started forming in the past few years. The exchange on intercultural learning and all the different topics discussed at the study session have thus the chance to be transported in the organizations in many ways. Intercultural learning in local context is a topic very important to improve the organization's work in the future and having motivated members and trainers in the local associations will multiply the ideas that were discussed in the week in Strasbourg.

Supporting the local actors not only in exploring their own ideas and giving them tools to implement their knowledge and on top of that motivating them to go on with their good work

is another extremely important aspect for CISV. We need the energy and passion of the people working in the local associations in order to stay true and continuously improve our work.

This study session gave the organization new input on its every day work and will thus improve the latter.

The main results were the strengthening of content-competence within members of CISV, the networking with other organisations and the inclusion of new methodologies by having two team-members from outside the organisation.

Strengthening of content-competence within members of CISV

Within the last year a development has started in CISV International. Mainly young activists have started to lay more focus on local projects with an impact on the community, rather than international camps for children and youth. Those camps and interchanges are still the core programmes of CISV, however this new development is very welcomed as well. It was thus important to provide these young people with a forum in which they can enhance their competencies in running local projects with an intercultural dimension. Intercultural education has ever since CISV was created in 1951 been the core of our activities and now it was time to bring this to the local level. One of the reasons we opened the call for application also to other organisations was that we believe that youth workers learn best from youth workers. Thus by bringing in experiences from different organisational contexts we could widen the horizon of possibilities that could be discussed.

Networking with other organisations

It is now 3-4 years that CISV has started to open up to co-operations with other organisations. Before that time CISV was very happy in doing its camps and interchanges, which was always done on a high quality level. However, the awareness has increased that it is extremely educational to cooperate with other organisations and that one can expand the horizon with different points of view and different traditions of conduct by working with people who have 'grown up' in a different organisational context. On the other hand we believe that also CISV has a lot to offer to other organisations. For that reason we opened the call for application to all organisations and ended up with an interesting mixture of organisations. A little bit over one-third of the participants were from CISV and the rest were from different organisations, many from countries in which CISV doesn't operate yet. After the Study Session two participants (from Moldova and from Azerbaijan) have contacted our international office to

offer future co operations. This will help us to offer our programmes to a wider range of children and youth in Europe.

New methodologies

We were fortunate enough to have two team members for the Study Session who were not from CISV and who could bring new and fresh ideas in terms of facilitation and methodology. One of those is a professional trainer for creativity methods and enriched our programme with his methods and approaches. The open space technology was introduced to us by the second ‘external’ team member and was highly appreciated not only by the participants but also by the team.

MAIN LEARNING POINTS FOR PARTICIPANTS

As extracted from the evaluation forms that were collected on the last evening of the Study Session, but also through the ongoing intense contact that the team has with a number of the participants, we feel that the following are the main learning points for the participants:

Deeper knowledge of the concept of Intercultural Learning, and for most of participants, an interest in knowing more about the theory of Intercultural Learning.

Before the Study Session most participants were already acquainted with the concept of Intercultural Learning or at least have been activists in organisations that conduct intercultural camps and exchanges. However, most participants never before spent time to study the theories that lay behind the concept of ICL, and mostly didn’t feel the need to do so. Through introducing them to underlying ideas of intercultural communication (i.e. Malinowski, Senge) and intercultural learning (Tittley) we have accompanied them to a journey of curiosity about the foundations of those activities that they conduct on a frequent basis.

Increase in participant’s self awareness

All sessions on identity, motivation and needs analysis have been done in an inclusive, interactive and non-formal way. Thus learning about the importance of self-awareness in intercultural communication lead to an increase of self-awareness in the participants themselves. The quote of a participant’s statement in an evaluation form: “I didn’t know that I know so much” shows that we have been able to reveal some reserves of tacit knowledge

within the participants themselves (at least in some) that can be utilised in further projects that those participants might implement.

Skills gained on Needs analysis, Fundraising, Creativity, Intercultural Dialogue, Intercultural Communication

In the third phase of the programme of the Study Session, “Training”, we offered a variety of workshops to the participants. According to their needs they could choose one out of two workshops in three following time slots. The workshops varied from skill training (like fundraising and intercultural facilitation) to awareness training (like creativity and motivation). But also the overall setting of a diverse group and the social process that was reflected on a daily basis in the steam-groups contributed to enhanced skills in intercultural dialogue and communication. Both intro- and extroverted needs analysis played a crucial role in our Study Session. Introverted meaning a needs analysis of the youth-worker him/herself. A reflection on the underlying values and priorities of the youth-worker as an individual can lead to an increased consciousness about the reason why s/he does what s/he does and hence can lead to an increased motivation to do this in a sustainable way with high quality. With extroverted needs analysis we mean the research and reflection on the needs of the target group. This is important to design projects that actually answer the needs of a certain group of people and are not only based on the imagination and mood of the youth worker and his/her organisation.

Capacity to carry on Intercultural group work

All participants already had experience in intercultural youth work. May it be through international camps and exchanges or through community projects. We believe (and the results from the evaluation forms have shown) that the participants felt an increase in their motivation to carry out intercultural youth-work and an increase in their capacity to do so. Also the competence to work in intercultural teams has been enhanced through intense and reflected group work and discussions. This experience will facilitate such co-operation in future settings.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECTS DEVELOPED DURING THE SESSION

The Study Session didn't aim to develop concrete projects. We placed a big focus on the 'Study' – the learning and development of the participants. In the last phase of the Session the participants developed project ideas, which they discussed with fellow participants and team-members. However, all these were designed for local projects with an intercultural dimension. And since all participants came from different local contexts, all projects were different. There was not one big project developed for the organisation as such.

As an example out of the many project ideas developed we would like to describe here one idea that was developed by a Polish participant:

Intercultural Learning with local Minorities

The idea is to create a new Youth Centre involving the local community, composed by Polish people and minority of Roma that live together in one of the poor districts of Wrocław. Eventually the NGO 'Angelus Silesius House' (ASH) received from the municipality a building in this district that would be possible to transform into a centre where young people from the district could meet and spend time. ASH was working with 20 young leaders during a three month long project in order to give them the tools so they could design their own projects that would be dedicated to the rest of the youth from the same district. The idea that came up after the Study Session was to invite also young Romas to take part in a similar training course, relevant to their needs, expectations and possibilities, and through that involving them in creating the Centre so they could express their ideas and have the impact on what is going on in their district. It will be important to integrate the 20 youngsters that have already been trained and 20 of young Romas and involve them to work together as now the groups of Polish and Roma youngsters don't have any contact. In this way all the youth from the district (in majority Polish but also in a big part Roma) could feel a part of the local community, get to know each other better through working on the same goal – creating the Centre. Practically the project would involve Roma youth with the help of Roma assistance that ASH was already working with and who have a responsibility of dealing with problems of Roma youngsters at school. The project will get financial and logistic support from the municipality and from the Citizen's Initiatives Fund.

**POSSIBLE SUGGESTIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
(INCLUDING FOR THE WORK OF THE DIRECTORATE OF YOUTH AND SPORT)**

As a result of the Study Session we would like to recommend a couple of issues. These are on one side a very practical one (mainly the management of the European Youth Centre), on the other side more concerning policies.

PRACTICAL:

It was very much regretted by the team and the participants of the Study Session that we had no choice for both, breakfast and during sessions, but to use plastic cups to drink juice and water from. It was remembered by those who have been in the house before that only one year earlier it was possible to use glasses, which were not thrown away after use, but could be washed and re-used again. We strongly recommend to come back to this policy of ecological sustainable procedures in the Youth Directorate and in case this is not possible or wanted, would appreciate an explanation as to why that is!

POLICIES AND PRACTICES:

Cultural Diversity is nice and everybody values it! If someone doesn't, s/he can participate in Intercultural Learning exercises and afterwards will embrace diversity. Intercultural Dialogue and Intercultural Learning are the answers to any major problems modern societies face.

How wonderful would life be if it was really that easy. But societies are complex and the identities of those who construct them by living in them are not any less.

The Summit of Heads of States and Governments of the Council of Europe has put, among others, Intercultural Dialogue and Interreligious Dialogue high on the agenda of the action plan of the Council of Europe for the coming years. It is thus important, also for the DYS to discuss how they can live up to this ambitious aim, while remaining true to their innovative and adequate approach to education. The term culture can describe both nothing and everything. If Intercultural Learning activities and projects on Intercultural Dialogue should remain on the agenda of the DYS in the future, either the projects have to be as complex as the term culture itself and the individuals as cultural agents are, or it has to be broken down to

more concrete and political. Who attributes cultural membership? Those who offer intercultural learning activities? How do they know?

The future handling of activities around Intercultural Dialogue and Intercultural Learning will have to include discussions on identity, the political dimension of Intercultural Dialogue as well as intro- and extroverted needs analysis.

IDENTITY AS A KEY-CONCEPT IN INTERCULTURAL LEARNING AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

People are not only members of one culture. As earlier discussed in this report, a person can be, and most probably is, a member of a diverse amount of groups, and each of those memberships will influence this person and make it unique. Intercultural Learning will have to take all these layers into account, to be adequate to the realities of young (and also of old) people. An activity that is based around one certain cultural belonging will discriminate other elements of identity and not refer to the whole of a person. In reflecting Intercultural Learning exercises, these elements of identity have to be taken into account. Once participants have come to start to understand their own complexity, they have a better starting point to understand the complexity of others. The understanding of such complexity can further facilitate a valuing of people as they are and not as they are perceived by others. This can in its logical result help fighting discrimination, which is generally referring to only one element of identity.

A discussion should take place if a geographical diversity will causally also result in cultural diversity and how a cultural diversity that is not shown through ethnicity or nationality can be instrumentalised as a learning vehicle.

THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Intercultural Dialogue is high on top of many political agendas. It was approved by the Heads of States and Governments to be one of the work priorities of the Council of Europe in the years to come. For this it has to be filled with concreteness, otherwise it will become a farce. To say one is for Intercultural Dialogue does also imply that one is against racism, xenophobia, discrimination, anti-semitism. For Intercultural Dialogue to have a chance and a fruitful ground to flourish on, structural actions have to taken first. Inequality is the main

reason for a lack of Intercultural Dialogue, as a dialogue can only take place on an eye-to-eye level. A depoliticisation of Intercultural Learning and Dialogue makes the concept empty and impactless.

Another pitfall that one has to bare in mind is that people are not just from 'one' culture. Members of minorities are not 'just' members of that minority, they are much more (having a sexual orientation, cheering for a certain football club, having a certain belief, listening to certain music, etc.). Cultural diversity is not only to be found on the most visible level. It is important to avoid to instrumentalise certain groups of people to 'celebrate' diversity. This will at best have no impact and at worst alienate them even more. All people are different, but equal and groups of people are different, but equal. However, inside these groups all people are different as well! Each individual is unique and each person's uniqueness needs a possibility of expression.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

It is difficult to describe all activities that are happening as a result of the Study Session. As 2/3 of the participants didn't come from CISV Associations we cannot monitor as well as with the CISV participants how their project ideas are implemented. However, an e-mail list was established and the participants keep in contact and inform each other on how their projects and lives are proceeding. Some ideas also just stay in their heads and when the time is ripe and the possibilities are there they are implemented. However, from the side of CISV certain activities are foreseen:

Articles to be published in relevant CISV-publications:

The format of a Study Session is generally unknown to CISV, especially outside of Europe. Articles will be published in the International Junior Branch Infoletter, which reaches youth on all continents, who are active in youth work and who might get inspired to take up Intercultural Learning also in their local contexts. CISV also publishes a journal on trans-cultural education, Interspectives. The outcomes of the discussion we have had in the Study Session will also be published there and made public to a wide audience of volunteers, universities and other organisations.

A workshop at the European Junior Branch Meeting:

Many of the CISV participants at the Study Session will be at the European Junior Branch Meeting in the spring and will offer a workshop on Intercultural Learning in local contexts to transmit the information they have gathered and the experiences to fellow European CISV-youth. Through this multiplication we hope to reach an even bigger audience and inspire and inform more people with the outcomes of our discussions at the Study Session.

Projects on local levels:

At last years Annual International Meeting of CISV a new programme was launched, called Mosaic. This programme of CISV is focusing on local projects with an educational dimension and an impact on the local community. The ideas for projects that have been developed during the Study Session will find a good supports structure through this programme and have thus a high potential of being implemented.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To start this part of the report we would like to quote a participant from Russia, who wrote us an e-mail in the beginning of March after having reflected about the Study Session for a while:

‘For me this Study Session was especially valuable for it’s “personal approach”, for its attention to personal development, for making us think and rethink things to which we had already formed strong attitude.’

This describes very well what we want to stress in this report and with which we would like to conclude. We approached the theme from two sides: an intellectual and an intuitive. In the intellectual dimension we discussed theories of culture, of identity and intercultural communication. In the intuitive dimension, however, we asked the participants about themselves, we asked to reflect. Why is it that they want to work with intercultural groups? What is it that fascinates them? Which was the moment when they felt that this was the right thing for them to do? A big focus on our Study Session was on introverted and extroverted needs analysis. Understanding oneself, the own enculturalisation, the own socialisation is a key to understanding others and their needs. The key word here is ‘attitude’. This is also

something that we would recommend to be elaborated further in the DYSs educational service: Needs Analysis. The t-Kit on project management already gives an indication on how important it is, however, most people we have met and who came to the Study Session asked for concrete methodology and ideas. Also the introverted needs analysis is not yet discussed much.

To conclude from an organisational side we can say that this Study Session was an extremely helpful and important opportunity for us to discuss a theme that is of great importance to us with the necessary time and the educational support that was needed. This Study Session was the first for us, but we will for sure apply again when we have a topic to discuss that can not be dealt with on a half-day of a weekend meeting.

CISV Study Session – Evaluation Summary

Positive evaluation → +

Negative evaluation → -

Quoted from participants evaluations

1. General Evaluation

General Impression: 4,83 / 5

Main comments:

The week was FUN and very strong emotionally, the Group and the atmosphere were wonderful, lots of usefull practical tools were given.

The team was appreciated, and the participants left very motivated.

Very few said the group was divided in 3 : CISV participants, Russian speakers and others.

2. Programme elements

Programme Element	Evaluation (5)	Comments
Welcome evening, Ice breakers	4,35	++ DJ SAM + Interactive, Dynamic; Made people feel comfortable. - For one person, too much physical contact
IC breakfast	4,42	+ Original Idea; Some food left for the week
Introduction	4,46	+++ Brief and informative + Well organised; though provoking - Lecture type; lack of some info on the CISV presentation
Gives and Gets	4,15	+ Funny and creative way of provoking personal and group research on their gives and gets -- The Machine confused people and restrain their creativity about what they can give to the Study Session - Not enough time to think about what you can give
Group Building, Magic stick	4,54	+++ Magic Stick is very effective to create common principles - The discussion after the game was too long.
Initial Reflecting, World Cafe	4,77	+++ The Method; Personal reflection ++ Sharing ideas - Time limits
IC Party	4,38	+++ FUN - Team missing; Disorganized Party
ICL, Culture, Identity & Multiculture	3,5	+ Very Good outcome; good type of learning; good exchanges in small groups ++ Expert; professional sessions, well prepared -- Lack of facilitation; boring speech; Missing some group feedback; too theoretical - Changing groups too often is not good; confusing
ICL, Relations btwn	4,12	++ Simple story to support the theory

Culture, Identity & Multiculture (bob)		-- Detailed; point of view of the expert; needed for further work - Some misunderstandings made discussion out of line - Confusing; low energy
ICL, What makes ICL ICL?	3,68	+ Personal space act + So interesting -- Too theoretical; not very clear - Low energy
NGO Restaurant	4,15	++ Good concept; fun - Lots of sharing ---- Not enough time - Not enough NGOs
Workshop IC Facilitation	4,81	++ Practical, concrete; fun ++ Many techniques and usefull tips + Theoretical and practical +++ Trainers
Workshop Fundraising	4,72	+++ Usefull; Needed
Workshop Creativity	4,83	+++ Inspiring; very usefull tools ++ Dynamic; Fun
Workshop Dialogue	4,5	+ People learned a lot and used the tools during open space + Magic moment - Not enough time
Workshop Motivation	4,89	++++ Life changing WS!!! Raised self-awareness. ++“So many things I didn’t know I knew” + Inspiring; clear
Workshop IC Teams	4,8	++ Interesting and helpful exercise; Inge
Free Afternoon + Dinner in town	4,5	-- Not enough time
Local Needs Analysis Target Group	4,35	++ Helpful; practical dimension; helped to focus on the local level; concrete - Boring
Open space	4,31	+++ Concept of the Open space + Inspiring Session for starting ideas - Not enough time; lack of concreteness; lunch time not used
Community of practice, Starting	4,12	++ Some good exchanges; good for a starting point -- Work in group was confusing; Loss of time; projects too differents in some groups; confusing
Community of practice, continued	4,61	+ Individual work & Sharing at the same + People were free - Some loss of times because some things were done the day before
Feedback groups	4,35	++ Team member helpful; interesting talks; good feedback & inspiring for implementing projects --- Speaking time in the group was not balanced, not enough time
Follow Up, Looking in the future	4,39	++ Needed; Idea of the letter is very good; optimistic; motivating when they’ll recieve it

		-- Not enough time
Stream Groups	4,8	++ Talks in Steam Groups helped for the whole group and for individuals to have the chance to talk. ++ Talking piece (bob); facilitators were great
Tai Chi	4,56	+ Very nice - Too early
Working on the report	4,27	+ Good initiative from participants - Didn't work very well
Energisers	3,96	++ Excellent; all different; funny - Many people don't like energizer, find them not useful -- Not enough energisers; too childish ones - Known by CISVers
Creative Writing WS, Loesje and bob	4,89	+ funny, creative; something to take home +Informal

3. Structure and content of the programme as a whole

++ Well prepared, organised and planned. No wasting of time, good time management.
+ Content and structure were both predefined and flexible in order to fulfill the goals of this week.

+ Workshop supported each other

+ Honesty in the intentions of the Team.

- Not enough time for visiting Strasbourg.
- Some activities would have needed more time.
- No possibility to participate in every Workshop.
- Too many aspects of ICL were stressed and the attention was sometimes distracted by this abundance of topics.

4. A/ Most relevant part

- 1) Workshops – 15
- 2) ICL Day and sessions – 7
- 3) Free afternoon – 6
- 4) Cooperation started between NGOs – 4
- 5) Methodology – 1
 - Open Space – 1
 - The group feeling – 1

B/ Least relevant part

- 1) ICL Day – 6
- 2) Food – 2
- 3) NGO Restaurant – 1
 - Topics of open space – 1
 - Free afternoon – 1

5. Methodology / Flow

++++ Methodology were well mixed up, activities reached the purpose and were well chosen.

The team was aware of the group of participants. The group of participants was nicely turned into a team working together by the flow of the week.

+ Interactive methodology

+ The IC Day was a very good base to further work.

+ A week where the energy was kept at a constant very high level.

+ No feeling of being pressed by time.

“ The flow of this week was like the strong breathing of the ocean, and if some foam was to be seen it only reminded us of the shiftiness of the surface...”

-- The IC Day blocked a bit the flow of the week. Low in energy day

- Not enough body exercise, too much brain work. More outside activities.

6. Training / Learning needs fulfilled

Participants said that 85 % of their Training / Learning needs were fulfilled.

Comments:

++ Lots of techniques and teaching methods were provided.

Some more info about the theory of ICL would have been appreciated. One week is not enough to cover such a wide topic... Many participants want to learn more !!

7. Things learned from other participants

++ New projects ideas.

++ New tools (on project management)

++ New&Different cultures.

++ Inspiration.

Different point of view / perspectives on certain topics.

Different experiences in NGO work

CISV view on the topic.

“ It has been enormously challenging and though provoking to meet and learn from CISVers.”

Others' view on the sessions helped to understand them.

8. Personal contribution

++ Sharing experiences in organisations.

++ Speaking, giving opinions

Sharing projects ideas.

Making people feel comfortable

Listening to people.

Love.

9. Group

Diversity in the group

Amazing group and lovely team.

Fantastic group feeling.

Motivated participants.

“ I feel so good right now”

The group was normal.

The mixing of participants could have been better.

Gender balance could have been better.

10. Aims and objectives achieved

<u>Aim / Objective</u>	<u>Evaluation (5)</u>	<u>Written comment</u>
Aim 1 (Motivate, inform and educate...)	4,92	++ Motivation gained Good energy gained Learned a lot More practice needed to use information
Aim 2 (Deconstruct and demystify ICL)	3,54	Refreshing, New, Relevant. Michal should have stayed longer. Opinion regarding ICL still the same. +++ Still a lot to learn on the concept. ICL day was confusing. Titley's document was not reflected on.
Aim 3 (Increase capacity and motivation)	4,61	+++++ Motivation Thanks to the communities of practice motivation and self confidence were gained. Workshops helped a lot.
Aim 4 (Facilitate reflection on culture & ICL)	4,38	By watching the facilitators ++ Workshops helped.
Aim 5 (Create an environment for productive exchanges)	4,69	Open space was a good way to do it. ++ Not enough time to do that
Aim 6 (Enable participants to further develop activities)	4,67	Email list, materials on CD, all this will help. <i>“...Projects will be better because of my participation in this Study Session”</i>

11. Team

++ Motivated, ++balanced, ++diverse, friendly, well prepared, witty, skilful, trustworthy Team.

Team members complemented each others.

++ Good flow of energy coming from the team.

Equality between participants and Team members; Team members growing and learning with participants.

Have another team member just for technical support.

More personal attention to every single participants during “off session”

12. Future CISV Study Session

Ideas of theme, topics for future Study Session / Training :

++ Workshop on Leadership, Teamwork. Facilitation Techniques

++ Work on Self awareness.

Why Peace dialogue is necessary ?

Creativity

Dreams / Hopes vs. Reality : How to include people from every social background in CISV?

How to develop projects in countries where there isn't CISV?

Others :

Making a daily evaluation if there is another CISV Study Session.

13. Technical support

<u>Technical Support</u>	<u>Evaluation (5)</u>	<u>Written comments</u>
Rooms	4,31	View on the EU Parliament Hot water. Not enough fresh air in rooms. ++ Sharing room would have been appreciated.
Food	3,69	"Yves Rocks !" More healthy food, more fresh vegetables. Lack of fruits and fibres in the morning. Variety for vegetarians.
Working space	4,54	
Information before Session	4,73	Course Programme could have been sent sooner
Information during Session	4,92	

14. Other comments

"I didn't expect that this week would be so important for my self-knowledge."

Having Marta and Inge present was very positive.

List of participants names, organisations and countries

NOM	PRENOM	PAYS	ADREMAIL	ORIGINE	CAT
ABDULLAYEVA	ULVIYYA	Azerbaijan	ulviyya.abdullayeva@gmail.com	AVAFE	PART
ABDUSATTAROV	ALISHER	Other	abdusattarov@hotmail.com	ATLAS Youth Initiative Support Center	PART
ALEKSEJUNAITE	KRISTINA	Lithuania	kristina.aleksejunaite@gmail.com	CISV Lithuania	PART
BACANU	SILVIA IOANA	Romania	loanaSB@gmx.net	CISV Romania	PART
BONECKI	MAREK	Poland	marek.bonecki@pl.cisv.org	CISV Poland	PART
ELLONEN	SAKARI	Finland	sakar.ellonen@gmail.com	CISV Finland	PART
FLOREK	ANNA	Poland	aniflorek@poczta.onet.pl	AISEC in Poland	PART
GORDZIEL	CLAIRE	Germany	claire@gordziel.de	CISV Cologne	PART
GULIYEV	VUGAR	Azerbaijan	apa_vugar@yahoo.com	Azerbaijan Psychological Association	PART
KODATKO	DARIA	Russian Federation	kodatkodaria@yahoo.com	Children and Rights	PART
KUNTZEL	BASTIAN	Germany	bastian.kuntzel@de.cisv.org	CISV International	CD
LAZARI	ALEXEI	Moldova	grupa303@yahoo.com	New Culture	PART
MAMMADOV	SHAHLAR	Azerbaijan	mshahlar@mail.ru	Dirchelish Youth center	PART
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NOREIKAITE	VIKTORIJA	Lithuania	vicktorija@gmail.com	JuBIC	PART
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SOBCHENKO	OLGA	Ukraine	olga_sobchenko@mail.ru	Donetsk Youth Debate Centre	PART
SVAJDA	MICHAL	Slovakia	michalsvajda@gmail.com	students' forum 2000	PART
SZÖKE	KAROLA	Hungary	sz_karola@hotmail.com	CISV Hungary	PART
TELEK	FILIZ	Turkey	filiztelek@yahoo.com	CISV Hungary	TM
VALKOVITS	IRINA	Estonia	irisha@hot.ee	Club of Youth of the Future	PART
WAKKRAT	NOAM	Israel	noamwakkra@hotmail.com	CISV Israel	PART
ZANELLA	SARA	Italy	s.zanella@it.cisv.org	CISV Ferrara	PART

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