



Towards a culture of peace

Report of the study session held by
EEE-YFU and YEU
in co-operation with the
European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre, Strasbourg, France
May 22 - 29, 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

European Educational Exchanges – Youth for Understanding (EEE-YFU) and Youth for Exchange and Understanding (YEU) organized the Study Session “Towards a Culture of Peace” on May 22-29, 2005 at the European Youth Center in Strasbourg, France. The seminar brought together young Europeans from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds to discuss possible steps towards the culture of peace.

The aim of the Study Session was to enhance participants’ understanding of the concept of culture of peace, improve their competences to address conflicts constructively, and facilitate intercultural learning in their every day life and work. Specific objectives were used in order to achieve the overall aim of the session. Among those objectives were:

- To encourage participants to share and explore the understanding of Culture of Peace and its underlying values,
- To introduce relevant theories and concepts of conflict, peace, culture, and inter-cultural learning,
- To provide tools for self-assessment on personal competences for dealing with conflicts,
- To encourage participants to create personal action plans to transfer the knowledge gained and act as multipliers in their communities,
- To inspire and broaden future international and inter-organizational cooperation.

Participants of the Study Session were young volunteers from both YFU and YEU organizations, according to their backgrounds and experience. They were actively involved in different activities on national and international levels. All of them had prior knowledge or interest in the topic. They were willing to contribute to inter-cultural dialogue and act as multipliers after the event. In general, all participants were tolerant towards different cultures, open-minded, and willing to learn more.

While preparing the Study Session the team agreed to follow the red line all throughout the program. That is, even though we should deal with large societal conflicts, the major focus of the program should remain on inter-personal or inter-group conflicts. The reason for such decision was the intention to empower participants for what they could really do in their realities, thus contributing to the Culture of Peace in every day life. It was not so easy to vary between those levels, but in the end the team has really managed to have the coherent program, shifting smoothly from more societal level to a more inter-personal one.

The Study Session lasted for 6 working days. Introduction of EEE-YFU, YEU, and Council of Europe to the participants opened the seminar. The first working day mainly focused on getting to know each other and expectations towards the seminar, as well as group building activities. These were viewed as crucial due to the nature of the topic, analysis of which required personal understanding and trust of one another. Afterwards participants introduced the conflicts, important to them, with the help of “Peace TV”, a homework-based session.

The second day of the program began with warnings from the past. Mr. Saif Abu Keshek, representative of the Palestinian point of view in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, gave his personal testimony. He delivered an overview of the historical and political background of the conflict, outlining six major components of the development of the conflict. The session continued with the documentary “Traces”, focusing on the conflict in former Yugoslavia. Furthermore, participants moved closer to understanding, and further exploring concepts of peace, culture, and culture of peace through the controversial statement game, the Peace Wheel, and the Peace Collage.

The program continued with intercultural learning sessions, exploring participants’ understanding of Culture, Intercultural learning, Conflict, and Peace. The “Abigail” story set the basis for discussions, which continued with the inter-active lecture on Cultural identity and Intercultural learning, as well as Marry Douglas’s Cultural Theory. To end the day, a session on cooperation between EEE-YFU and YEU took place, facilitated by Nuno da Silva and Mrs. Åsa Nilsson Söderström.

Participants further concentrated on conflict transformation. They learned differences between conflict and violence, and tried to explore the reasons behind emerging conflicts. Similarly, they focused on communication skills, especially active listening, which can be a way to avoid misunderstandings, often leading to conflicts.

Moreover, the group looked at their own behavior during conflicts during the “Theatre of the Oppressed”. Afterwards they learned of 3rd-party-intervention methods for conflict transformation, with a particular focus on mediation. At the same time they had an opportunity to apply their newly gained skills to various role-play situations.

The last day of the session was designed in a way to allow participants to find out possible ways of contributing to the Culture of Peace in their every day lives. This was achieved by constructing the every day life “Peace Builder”, completing the self-assessment tool and creating “10 Steps to Peace” exhibition.

In general, expectations towards the Study Session were not only achieved, but also exceeded. As the red line was followed all throughout the seminar, participants deepened their understanding on past and current conflict situations in the World, as well as gained knowledge on conflict and peace theories. They not only got theoretical skills, but also were able to put them into practice. Young volunteers learned different aspects of fields of communication, conflict analysis, conflict intervention, 3rd party intervention, mediation, and intercultural learning. This allowed them to deepen their knowledge on conflicts and reasons behind those. Participants reflected on their understanding of Culture of Peace, and how they personally / as members of their organizations could contribute to peace building in their realities.

The Study Session was seen as essentially important to both organizations. The topic “Towards a Culture of Peace” interested them for a long time and was finally explored by young people who were motivated and willing to spread their ideas and share the knowledge gained with their fellow volunteers back home.

On the organizational level, participants exchanged information and broadened their knowledge of activities of both EEE-YFU and YEU organizations. At the same time, they came up with concrete proposals for future cooperation (such as organizing study visits, inter-organizational exchanges, new YFU and YEU organization establishments, etc.). Basis for inter-organizational cooperation was set, even though no concrete projects were developed. Follow up activities, such as Young Europeans' Seminar (YES) on the topic of "Conflict Resolution and Mediation" and International Young Convention on the topic of "Excuse me, is this conflict yours?" took place after the event and were influenced a lot by the knowledge and understanding of the Study Session participants.

This Study Session was beneficial in many different ways; it enriched the organizations and the participants. We would strongly recommend other organizations, working in fields of youth exchange and dealing with inter-cultural communication, to focus more on the issues of conflict resolution and achieving greater peace.

Introduction

European Educational Exchanges – Youth for Understanding (EEE-YFU) and Youth for Exchange and Understanding (YEU) organized the study session “Towards a Culture of Peace” for many reasons. The seminar brought together young Europeans from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds to discuss possible steps towards the culture of peace. The aim of the Study Session was to enhance participants’ understanding of the concept of culture of peace, improve their competences to address conflicts constructively, and facilitate intercultural learning in their every day life and work.

The overall aim was to bring young Europeans of different cultural backgrounds together in an international setting in order to:

- Encourage participants to share and explore the understanding of culture of peace and its underlying values,
- Explore philosophy of non-violence and its relevance to the culture of peace,
- Introduce relevant theories and concepts of conflict, peace, culture and intercultural learning,
- Clarify types, causes and levels of conflicts and our responses to them,
- Identify and explore methods and develop skills for interpersonal and intra-group conflict transformation in everyday situations,
- Reflect on use of intercultural learning as a tool for conflict transformation,
- Provide tools for self assessment on personal competences for dealing with conflicts,
- Encourage participants to create personal action plans to transfer the knowledge gained and act as multipliers in their communities
- Inspire and broaden future international and inter-organizational cooperation.

There were 27 young people from different European countries participating in the event. All participants were members of either EEE-YFU or YEU, with an experience in intercultural exchange through one of the organizations. Those young people were active in their national organizations and thus were a valuable asset for the Study Session. The selection of the participants was made through the YFU and YEU networks, according to their background, personal interest in the topic as well as motivation to build further projects. All young volunteers were willing to contribute to the intercultural dialogue and had interest in developing international young activities. As the working language was English, everybody could communicate well with one another. Moreover, all of them were supported by their national organizations, meaning that they were trusted to take on responsibilities for multi-cultural or intercultural activities after the course. Finally, we achieved the aim of having a gender, age, social background as well as geographic origin balance (Table 1). The general profile of participants was: open-minded, communicative, active in their respective national branches, and potentially contributing with the input of the study session to their local surroundings.

How many people applied to participate in the session?	36	
How many participants were expected?	30	
How many participants actually did attend?	27	
Details on participants	Male: 13	Female: 14
	Number of countries of residence	
	22	
	Age (average)	
	23	

Table 1. Summary of participants' profile.

The program of the Study Session lasted for 6 working days. The first day was mainly devoted to getting to team building activities, which were seen as essential for further discussing this particular topic. However, the actual concept of Culture of Peace was touched while analysing homework of participants. For the whole duration of the seminar participants and the team were able to follow the carefully thought through read line. The discussions began with analysing world-related issues, and looking at the conflict events of the past. Further, the program moved on to looking at the current issues, and everybody tried to establish a common understanding of culture, conflict, peace, and culture of peace. Moreover, attention was drawn to oneself, analysing different conflict transformation methods and deciding on possible steps to take in order to contribute to the better world and culture of peace¹.

During the Study Session we particularly focused on:

- Presentation of conflicts from different social and cultural realities
- Culture of Violence: a situation in Palestine and the Balkans
- Understanding peace
- Culture of Peace
- Intercultural learning
- Conflict analysis through cultural theory
- Behaviours in Conflict
- Conflict analysis
- Communication skills
- Responding to conflicts
- 3rd party intervention and mediation
- Self assessment of peace building competences
- 10 steps to peace
- Cooperation between EEE-YFU and YEU

¹ Please see Appendix No. 6 for the detailed program of the Study Session.

Program – inputs and discussions

May 23rd. 2005

Introduction and expectations

In the opening session, the two organizations, European Educational Exchanges – Youth for Understanding (EEE-YFU), and Youth for Exchange and Understanding (YEU) as well as the Council of Europe (CoE) were introduced in order to give everyone equal understanding of all of them.

The program continued with gathering expectations towards participants themselves, towards the group, towards the topic, and towards the outcome of the session. The outcome was as follows:

Expectations towards the topic:

- find common definitions for conflict and peace
- see conflict as a tool of progress
- gain practical skills

Expectations towards myself:

- to give, take, spread and learn
- be open minded and accept differences
- become part of the group
- gain self-confidence
- learn and explore how to act in conflict

Expectations towards the outcome:

- establish cooperation between EEE-YFU and YEU
- get some new techniques and tools to deal with conflicts
- break stereotypes

Expectations towards the group:

- become one group
- achieve intercultural dialogue and learning
- be prepared, proactive and motivated
- respect each other
- share experiences of conflict

Participants' expectations were in line with the aims and objectives for the Study Session, which showed that the seminar was off to a good start.

The “Peace TV”

Furthermore, the program continued with ice-breaking and team-building activities. As mentioned above, those were thought to be of a paramount importance in order to establish a group feeling between diverse participants. Exercises helped everyone to become more empathic and sensitive to other worries and break boundaries towards each other.

After establishing trust, formal introduction to the topic was given, and participants were invited to share their homework. In order to be prepared on the topic,

participants were asked to read a manual on conflict resolution². In addition, each participant had to prepare a poster with a conflict from their local environment, which was used as a basis for interactive education among the participants. Posters were introduced to the whole group in form of a “Peace TV”, thus relating the activity to the overall topic of the session.

It was interesting to see that participants addressed all different sociological, emotional, political and psychological aspects of conflicts. From the presentations different levels and insensitivities of conflicts that participants were dealing with, and different approaches to that could be noticed. Sharing of particular conflict experiences was very touching and emotional, and one could easily see suffer in words and pictures being presented. On the other hand, some participants disclosed their perceptions about conflicts that have happened in the past or are part and parcel of every day live (the psychological conflict of interpersonal conflict is a case in point).

Participants viewed each and every conflict story as special, and enriching the learning process. Each story shared was compared with a little part of a big mosaic, in which hundreds of bits and peaces of colored stone were put together to form a dear and distinct image. In our case, part of the picture formed was an image of a suffering human nature, and formed a basis for further discussions of the study session.

May 24th, 2005

Warnings from the Past

The day’s program focused on the “Warnings from the Past”, and was opened by a personal testimony, given by Mr. Saif Abu Keshek, representative of the Palestinian point of view in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Saif delivered an overview of the historical and political background of the conflict, outlining six major components of the development of the conflict. What is more, he was speaking for his own point of view, thus giving a human touch to all the issues related to the conflict.

Afterwards, participants saw the documentary “Traces”, focusing on people’s experiences of and thoughts about the conflict in former Yugoslavia. The movie captured both Croatian and Serb point of view and discussions about the war of the early 1990’s.

This was an essential part of the program. It had an impact on each and single participant, and gave ground to all the following discussions at the study session.

Understanding Culture of Peace

The session was designed in order to help participants to understand, and further explore concepts of peace, culture, and culture of peace. The session began with a controversial statement game, with only possible answers being “Yes” and “No”. It confirmed the saying “Different people – different opinions”. Participants saw that

² The text: Abarbanel, J. Short Training Manual. *Conflict and Peace. Conflict is natural; Conflict is normal*. Property of the Mennonite Central Committee, East Africa Department.

each and single one of them were interpreting peace differently. At the same time, everybody understood where they were standing, and tolerated various points of view.

To move closer to establishing a common understanding of Peace, the “Peace Wheel” method was used. In order to strengthen the understanding, participants further designed collages on peace and on what it meant to them.

The Wheel of Peace and the Peace collage achieved the aim to create the common understanding of peace and of the culture of peace, which was essential for further discussions of the session.

May 25th, 2005

Intercultural learning

The morning session was devoted to the intercultural learning, in order to explore participants’ understanding of Culture, Intercultural learning, Conflict, and Peace. The “Abigail”³ story was used for introducing participants to this topic. The story was followed by a lecture and interactive discussion on Cultural Identity and Intercultural Learning.

The “Abigail” story generated many discussions, as participants interpreted different characters differently and based their judgments on their backgrounds, experiences and on their cultural values. This exercise made everybody aware of those differences and taught the participants to be tolerant towards one another and accept controversial opinions. This understanding was strengthened even more by the lecture. Participants became aware on what Culture meant for themselves and the others as well as saw how much peoples’ understanding of different issues depended on their cultural backgrounds.

Conflict Analysis through Conflict Theory

The topic was further explored through the lenses of Marry Douglas’s Cultural Theory, providing new points of view towards conflicts. Afterwards, participants were asked to apply the theory in the previously analysed conflicts.

The Cultural Theory benefited the participants, as it gave them a different overview for interpreting conflicts. They thought it was both interesting and useful, but, however, quite hard to apply after only a mere introduction of it.

Behaviours in Conflict

The group moved on to understanding their behaviours in conflicts. For this, the “Drawing battle” exercise was used, engaging participants in a conflict. After personally experiencing the conflict, group members found themselves deep in the discussion, trying to determine behaviours in conflict.

³ Please see Appendix No. 5 for the story.

The group reached an agreement that there are 5 main types of behavior in a conflict: 1) avoiding, 2) accommodating, 3) collaborating, 4) competing, 5) compromising. Afterwards participants were given questionnaires on their behaviours in conflicts, and were surprised to notice that the answers really revealed the 5 types of behavior and explained how they were acting in a quarrel.

Cooperation between EEE-YFU and YEU

This session was lead by Nuno da Silva, president of YEU International, and Mrs. Åsa Nilsson Söderström, director of EEE-YFU. Even though it took place outside the usual program hours, it attracted a many participants. The aim of the session was to further explain both of the organizations to everybody. It was very [???](#) to hear about EEE-YFU and YEU from experts from inside of the organizations. At the same time, participants learned more of the funding opportunities in Europe – and this set the basis for further projects between the two organizations. Last, but not least, many participants showed interest in establishing YFU and YEU organizations in countries where those organizations do not exist.

May 26th, 2005

Conflict transformation

One of the two parallel sessions started with a presentation “Conflict Transformation – understanding a conflict”. Furthermore, mapping of the conflict was introduced. The session ended by participants trying to map a particular conflict.

During the session, participants were able to take a different look at the Conflict. They agreed that conflict and violence are two different terms, and, as conflict represents both danger and opportunity, violence can be avoided if required actions are taken at the right time. It was also understood that conflict, and, in turn, conflict transformation, relates to human needs. This added up to a greater understanding of the topic. Participants learned the basics of mapping the conflict, and were confident in their ability to use it further.

Communication skills

The second parallel session focused on communication skills, and active listening in particular. It was facilitated in an interactive way, both giving participants an overview of differences between listening and actually hearing, and engaging them in the discussions as well as practical exercises.

These exercises helped participants explore their active listening skills. They learned and understood that active listening should be an essential part of their every day lives, as it might even prevent certain conflicts from appearing.

May 27th, 2005

Conflict transformation methods: responding to conflict

In order to help participants explore and understand behavior in conflicts, the interactive “Theatre of the Oppressed” method was used. Participants had to choose a conflict they wanted to perform, and then went on stage acting it out for a few times – with improvements in their conflict behavior at all times.

Theatre of the Oppressed was an ideal way to explore what was underlying the conflict that participants were playing. At the same time, it gave an insight to the Non Violent Communication, as well as helped understand what behavior is most appropriate in a conflict situation in order to achieve the Win-Win solution.

Conflict transformation: 3rd-party-intervention and mediation

In the first part of this session, different 3rd-party-intervention methods, such as mediation, facilitation, conciliation, arbitration, and litigation were introduced. This short lecture-type presentation explained differences between the methods, and participants were able to see that all of them vary in terms of formality, language, willingness to cooperate, etc.

Both organization viewed mediation as an essential skill for their volunteers. Thus, the remaining part of the session was used for exploring the subject of mediation. It was introduced in a non-formal way, engaging participants in a conversation and questioning their understanding of mediation. After learning the 5 stages of mediation, participants moved on to apply their newly learned skills practically via some role-plays, where they had to undertake roles of both conflicting parties as well as a mediator⁴. Afterwards, everybody got back together and identified the skills a good mediator should have.

It was essential and interesting for everyone to learn of the basic concepts of mediation. Applying it practically was difficult and challenging, but a very good way to gain experience in conflict mediation, and to try to practice the knowledge. This activity gave a completely new visual perspective of mediation. Participants also understood that in order to apply mediation skills in their daily lives, a lot of practice is needed.

May 28th, 2005

Every day “Peace Builder”

The final day of the Study Session focused on personal attitudes towards the conflict and ways to add to the peace in the world. The first exercise challenged participants, asking them to create a “Peace Builder” – a figure that represented how they, as a group, would go on with building peace.

⁴ Please see Appendix No. 4 for the role-plays.

All participants, even though different, had similar understanding of how to proceed with building peace around them. The exercise only made them aware of this.

Self Assessment

In order to explore the day's topic further, participants were given the Self-assessment tool. The main idea of this was the scan to current state and what were the areas that one should develop in oneself.

This assessment helped each one of the participants to find their strengths and weaknesses, needs for further development and becoming experienced peace builders. This would also help them to promote gained knowledge and skills of being a peacemaker.

Culture of Peace revisited: 10 steps to Peace

One of the last exercises of the Study Session was to think, process and create ten ideas of the "steps" we would take in near future towards becoming ambassadors of culture of peace. They were to be written on the paper footsteps, and made available for observation.

This activity helped to realize what conflict, peace, culture, and culture of peace really meant for the participants, and what they could do in order to move the world around them closer to the Culture of Peace. Participants thought, in general, that being tolerant, respecting each other, using conflict transformation and active listening skills as well as becoming involved in similar activities were the first important steps to be taken.

Dream Walk through the Study Session

The activity was aimed at reminding participants of their feelings and thoughts before and during the Study Session. At the same time, it looked into the future and possibilities there. This way, participants were able to reflect their feelings, emotions and experiences from the period of the time related to the Study Session. This was really relaxing and at the same time emotional moment for all, because it gave an opportunity to go through experiences that everybody has had together.

Evaluation

This part of the program consisted of 3 elements. To begin with, a non-verbal group evaluation was held. Participants had to evaluate the group, the organizing team, the leisure activities and the facilities on the scale from "did not like it" to "liked it a lot". Further, participants were asked to write letters to themselves, summarizing their feelings, thoughts, ideas, and future plans in relation with the "Culture of Peace". These letters were collected, and will be mailed to everyone after half a year. Finally, the written evaluation had to be completed.

Looking back at all the evaluations everyone concluded that the Study Session was a success. It left everybody full of feelings, thoughts, impressions and ideas. Certainly, aims for this session were not only achieved, but also exceeded.

Main outcomes of the Study Session

Outcomes for the participants

In general, the expectations towards the Study Session were not only achieved, but exceeded as well. As the red line was followed all throughout the seminar, participants deepened their understanding on past and current conflict situations in the World. Furthermore, they gained knowledge on conflict and peace theories. Participants not only got theoretical skills, but also were able to put them into practice. They learned different aspects of fields of communication, conflict analysis, conflict intervention, 3rd party intervention, mediation, and intercultural learning. Participants reflected on their understanding of Culture of Peace, and how they personally / as members of their organizations could contribute to peace building in their realities.

On the organizational level, participants exchanged information and broadened their knowledge of activities of both EEE-YFU and YEU organizations. At the same time, they came up with concrete proposals for future cooperation (such as organizing study visits, inter-organizational exchanges, new YFU and YEU organization establishments, etc.)

Main learning points for the participants

Additionally to the above-mentioned outcomes of the Study Session, the main learning points for participants were:

- Deeper understanding of conflicts,
- Getting to know the difference between conflicts and violence,
- Learning of possibilities to contribute to culture of peace,
- Understanding of identity, culture, and cultural identity,
- Applying practical skills in dealing with conflict.

During the Study Session participants learned more than the above-mentioned issues. They understood values and beliefs of different cultures, and the impact of those on our behavior. They learned that misinterpreting one another can result in a conflict, and of possible means to avoid that or to solve it once it has emerged.

Main results for the organizers

The topic “Towards a Culture of Peace” was absolutely relevant in a sense of conflict resolution, which is necessary for organizations, dealing with intercultural exchanges. EEE-YFU and YEU got many volunteers who will spread the knowledge gained acting as multipliers both inside and outside of the organizations. The knowledge gained increased participants’ abilities to work with young people, and prepare them for their opportunities, responsibilities, and challenges during their exchange.

The Study Session was very valuable, and helped the two organizations to strengthen their networks and increase possible inter-organizational cooperation. The outcomes

of the seminar will be used for further intra-organizational reflections on implementation of our mission.

Projects developed

Even though no concrete projects were developed within the formal parts of program, the ground was set for establishing new YEU and YFU national organizations. During informal time initial ideas and contacts have been established between the two organizations. Participants discussed possibilities for further cooperation, i.e. organizing study visits or seminars together. Moreover, participants of YFU and YEU organizations from the same country were committing themselves to increase the activities performed together on the national level.

Follow up activities

To begin with, the report of the Study Session will be published on the DYS (Directorate of Youth and Sports) website, and access to it will be granted to others, interested in the topic. This report will also be submitted to each national YFU and YEU organization for inspiration and further references.

Participants have the opportunity to continue their discussions via an e-group in which they are able to share project ideas and concerns for the follow-up events.

On the YFU side, the project continued with the “Young Europeans’ Seminar” (YES), which took place on June 30 – July 4, 2005 in Werbellinsee, Germany. There, about 500 participants were given a chance to meet and discuss the topic of “Conflict Resolution and Mediation”. Participants of this Study Session were actively involved in the preparation of this seminar. The YES was a success partly due to the fact that organizers gained knowledge during the week in Strasbourg, and were able to transmit this knowledge to other YFU returnees.

On the YEU side, the session continued by the intercultural exchange, approved by EYF, on the topic “Excuse me, is this conflict yours?”. The seminar took place on August 1 – 16, 2005 in Romania. 50 young people were present in the event, and many of the participants of this Study Session were actively involved with the preparation of and participation in the event.

There is a potential and initiative to maintain the partnership in the year of 2006. YEU has already submitted an application for organizing a Study Session on the topic of “Raise Up – Developing Youth organizations: Visibility & Sustainability through PR and Fundraising” in partnership with YFU in spring next year.

YFU community is beginning to take concrete steps towards establishing exchange programs in Egypt. YEU is one of the organizations that will probably be involved in the development of these exchanges, possibly acting as one of the main partners in the beginning.

Finally, the two organizations are planning to continue cooperation by organizing study visits, inter-organizational exchanges, mutual events, etc.

Final Conclusions and Recommendations

In general, both organizations and participants were very satisfied with the process and outcomes of the Study Session “Towards a Culture of Peace”.

The topic was relevant for EEE-YFU and YEU, organizations that are working in the field of intercultural youth exchange. Organizational work involves a lot of intercultural communication, which sometimes can result in problems and even conflicts, if issues are not properly addressed and discussed. EEE-YFU and YEU both depend on volunteers, who are, in most cases, not professionals in fields of mediation or conflict resolution. The Study Session proved beneficial in terms of making participants more aware of differences between cultures and people’s behavior, influenced by their background. Young volunteers developed common understanding of various terms, such as Conflict, Culture, Peace, and Culture of Peace. They learned of different cultural theories as well as methods for conflict resolution. What is more, participants applied these skills practically and feel more confident in doing so in their ever-day lives.

Basis for inter-organizational cooperation was set. This is of an extreme importance for both organizations that are preparing young people for their responsibilities and opportunities in the changing, interdependent world⁵.

This Study Session was beneficial in many different ways; it enriched the organizations and the participants. It was necessary for all parties involved. We would strongly recommend other organizations, working in fields of youth exchange and dealing with inter-cultural communication, to focus more on the issues of conflict resolution and achieving greater peace.

⁵ According to the mission statement of YFU organizations.

Analysis of the Study Session

Summary of participants' evaluation

Participants' evaluation is summarized in a way that it describes their thoughts on various issues.

Expectations. Most participants felt their expectations were met and few considered them even exceeded. Only two or three considered that the expectations were only partly met. The majority also considered this to be a great opportunity to improve their peace building skills.

Inter-organizational cooperation. Participants welcomed the culture and common aims of both international organizations and felt motivated to recommend both organizations within their local communities.

Accommodation. Participants evaluated the EYF facilities as very good.

Food. This is always a difficult element to satisfy everybody's needs but in general, participants appreciated the food prepared by friendly and generous people from the kitchen.

Theme. The participants found the theme very relevant and considered the format as strength.

Program: Content and methods. Generally, most participants graded all the activities above 5 in a scale from 1 to 10. There was hardly any activity which had a disappointing evaluation both content and methods wise. After reading all the evaluation forms we felt that the majority of participants enjoyed the balance between theoretical and practical elements of the programme and appreciated the more practical focus. The most graded activities were the Guest speakers inputs, the Abigail exercise on intercultural learning, the Communication workshop, the Theatre of the oppressed session, the Mediation case studies role-plays and the 10 steps to peace individual reflection.

General elements of the program. Generally speaking, diversity of methods used was quite appreciated by everybody, as well as were group building exercises and energizers. The intercultural night and the dinner out was also very much enjoyed.

Visits. The visit to the European Court of Human Rights was included in the beginning of the free afternoon and majority of participants found the information given very interesting, but presented in a boring way.

Reflection groups. They were also very highly considered, and participants found it a crucial element of the programme.

Assessment of the group. Participants rated the overall participation of the group as between good and excellent. The same goes to the working atmosphere both during

sessions and leisure time. Analyses of their own participation in activities was rated as between average and excellent.

Appendixes

Appendix 1 – List of Participants

Name, Surname	Country	Organization
Hanna Bodenmann	Switzerland	YFU Switzerland
Adina Mihaela Ciobanu	Romania	YEU Romania
Emanuel Ionut Crudu	Romania	YEU Romania
Tawfik Dhouib	Tunisia	YEU Tunisia
Laura Grünhagen	Germany	YFU Germany
Maryna Gusak	Ukraine	YFU Ukraine
Tufakgi Haytham	Palestine	YEU Palestine
Sardar Huseynov	Azerbaijan	YEU Azerbaijan
Triin Kala	Estonia	YFU Estonia
Kaisa Kallio	Finland	YFU Finland
Julija Lazauskaite	Lithuania	YFU Lithuania
Argyris Loizides	Cyprus	YEU Cyprus
Marina Maric	Croatia	YEU Croatia
Anje Mertinkat	Germany	YFU Germany
Heli Pärna	Estonia	YFU Estonia
Marek Pomocki	Poland	YEU Poland
Indre Rackauskaite	Lithuania	YFU lithuania
Malgorzata Radwanska	Poland	YFU Poland
Hadrian Sciberras	Malta	YEU Malta
Sidrit Cela	Albania	YEU Albania
Matilde Thye Hansen	Denmark	YFU Denmark
Aleksandar Tsukev	Bulgaria	YFU Bulgaria
Maartje van Rije	Netherlands	YFU Netherlands
Marc Weiss	Switzerland	YFU Switzerland
Stanislav Zaitsev	Kazakhstan	YFU Kazakhstan
Zied Mabrouki	Tunisia	YEU Tunisia
Janis Zunda	Latvia	YFU Latvia

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Appendix 3 – List of Methods Used⁶

- **Presentations**

Team members informed participants of different issues, relevant to the topic. Presentations were constructed in an active way, engaging participants in the discussions. Power Point, flipcharts, and overheads were used.

- **Group work**

Allowed participants to work together and practice working in the culturally diverse team.

- **Group building exercises**

Various. They included the “Face Painting”, “Reach the Ball”, “Flying Carpet”.

In the “*Face Painting*”, there are 2 circles of participants, facing one another. Members of the outer circle get a sheet of A4 paper and a marker each. Their partners of the inner circle write their names on the paper, and give the sheet back to a person in the outer circle. Afterwards, people, sitting in the outer circle, begin drawing their partner from the inner circle. After a few moments the leader of the exercise sings “velele”, and people in the outer circle move to the right by one person, leaving their paper behind. So, everybody gets to draw everybody, as they are moving to the right until they find themselves in front of the person they began the exercise with. After this first part of exercise, members of inner and outer circles change – and the session is repeated.

In the “*Reach the Ball*” the group is divided into two – group members sit behind one another in a line. Thus, two parallel lines of people are formed. In between of the first people in the rows the facilitator places a ball. When he / she gives a start, both first members have to reach for the ball – whoever is first, wind the round. Then the first person goes to the end of the row – and the exercise is repeated for as many times, as necessary, until the first person of one of the rows comes back to the front. The team where this happens, wins.

“*Flying carpet*”. Participants are split into groups of 6-7, and the facilitators of each group tell the following story to their team. You are all coming from the Banana City somewhere in Mars. You got on your flying carpet and decided to visit your friends from the Plum City in Venus. Your trip was very nice, comfortable, cosy and exciting, until your carpet broke down... You are flying very very high up, so can't really take your carpet to the reparation place. There is only one way to fix your mean of transportation at the moment – you have to flip the carpet over. If you do so, it will be fine again. Remember, that you are flying, so can't step of the carpet, and have to flip it over while standing on it!

- **Poster presentations**

⁶ If you want to obtain more information about a particular method, please contact the organizing team (Ieva Dirvonskaite can be reached at ieva@yfu.lt).

Participants worked on different posters in small groups, and then presented their findings / ideas in plenary.

- **Creative expression methods**

“Peace Collage”. Participants were split into small groups, in which they created a collage. The collage was meant to help them express their feelings towards peace. Similarly, it represented what concept of Peace meant to the small group. Different materials, such as markers, crayons, magazines, newspapers, etc, were used for the activity.

“Every day life Peace builder”. Participants were split into groups. They had to create a poster, which would represent a Peace builder – or what they imagine can be done in order to get a step closer to building peace in their lives. Activity is in a way similar to the collage, just with a more personal approach.

“10 steps to Peace”. Each participant was given 10 paper footsteps. Individually, people were asked to create 10 steps that they would take to achieve Peace or to contribute to Peace. Afterwards, all the footsteps were put in an exhibition, so that everybody could learn from one another.

- **Expert / lecturer**

Interactive, lecture-style presentations from invited guest speakers.

- **Movies**

The movie “Traces” was shown during the program – as an educational tool, helping participants understand the real situation in the Balkans. Furthermore, some educational movies (e.g. about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) were shown in the evenings. Formal / informal discussions followed afterwards.

- **Confrontation game and discussion**

The game was played on understanding the concept of Peace. Some controversial statements were read, and participants had to choose between a Yes or a No, they could not stand in between. After each statement some people from each side expressed their opinion on the statement and justified why they stood where they stood.

- **Theoretical input**

This was given while introducing the Marry Douglas’s Cultural Theory. Similarly, 3rd-party-intervention methods were introduced, as were 5 stages of mediation process. In general, theoretical input was in most cases combined with practical activities.

- **Self-assessment tools**

The source: Developed by Mr. Darko Markovic for this Study Session. Allowed participants evaluate themselves and their behavior.

- **Role-plays**

4 role-plays were used. They are presented in Appendix No. 5.

- **Brainstorming**
Participants freely, in a slightly guided way expressed their thoughts on one or another particular topic.
- **Forum theatre**
“Theatre of the Oppressed” method. Participants put their common conflict into a play / theatre, and then analysed it by going through 3 steps:
 - Presentation,
 - Stop - think, feeling,
 - Do and don't think.
 They could stop the play and ask for the character's feelings. They could also replace people in their actions, but no magic was allowed (no magical solutions or changes).
- **Guided imaginary**
“Dream Walk” through the Study Session. All participants lay on the floor with their eyes closed. One of the team leaders then starts talking about the whole process – since the seminar was begun to be planned, participants were selected, they travelled, spent a week in the Session. He / she asks everyone to think about what they are going to do afterwards, etc. Can be a very emotional activity. A good way to remind everyone what and how was / will be happening.
- **Letter to myself**
Participants were asked to write a letter to themselves, in order to remind of moments and feelings they have at the end of this Session, about the time spent here. They also received a picture of ourselves, taken just a few hours before – and put it in the envelope as well. They also had to write down their plans for the next six months in relation to the topic. In half a year that letter will be sent to each one of them to remind of the goals they set, and to evaluate their fulfilment.
- **Reflection groups**
At the end of each day participants gathered into the same reflection groups, composed of about 5 people. There they established greater trust, were able to share their feelings, express happiness, disappointment, etc. Having those groups proved to be, and was perceived by participants as very beneficial.

Appendix 4 – Role-plays

1) Flat mates. Two of your friends share a house, and have repeated quarrels about household chores. Their most recent argument has resulted in them not talking to each other. Both of them want to stay in the house, because of its location and its comfort. Friend John claims friend Tom is untidy, disorganized, and unwilling to do a fair share of the household chores. Friend Tom claims that friend John is obsessive, demanding, and inflexible with regard to household chores.

Friends Tom and John both complain to their friend Mike, who of course wants to maintain the good relationship with both of them. Mike then decides to try to save their friendship, while addressing the problem together.

2) Marrying couple. Anne and Claus are very much in love. They have been going out for 7 years, and finally have decided to get married. Anne, as a girl, of course dreamt of a big and beautiful wedding, wearing a white, striking wedding dress, a big outdoor party with a hundred invited guests – just like in American movies. Claus, on the other hand, never fancied being in the center of attention. He would rather have just a small decent wedding and a dinner with the closest family members and best friends.

Anne has a very good relationship with Claus' mother, Mette, and turns to her, as usual, for help and advice. Mette is like a second mother for Anne, and usually supports her in her doubts and decisions. But this time, of course, it is about her own son and her future daughter-in-law.

3) YFU situation. Exchange student Erika lives with host family Johansson. The family introduced their family rules to Erika, when she arrived to the family, but student continuously keeps breaking them. Last time they were arguing when Erika was told to get back home from the party at 10pm on a school night. However, the girl was late, and got home at 11pm. She did not phone them or sent a message – thus, the family got afraid and disappointed. Erika claims that a curfew is difficult to her, as she has never experienced it before. She also feels the family does not trust her.

All 3 of them ask the local YFU office to help them solve the problem.

4) Work-place situation. In a cell phone company a sales director's position was vacant. There were 2 valuable candidates for the position – Mr. Smith and Ms. Taylor. Mr. Smith has been working there for 10 years, while Ms. Taylor, who has been there for 3 years, proved to be more creative and successful in her work. The decision was that Ms. Taylor would become the new sales director. Ms. Taylor gives a task to Mr. Smith, and is not satisfied with the outcome. She also feels that he does not respect her, and therefore he is not putting enough effort to the task. The task is very important to Ms. Taylor, as it is the first important project for her as a sales director. On the other hand, Mr. Smith claims that he did his best, and Ms. Taylor only wants to demonstrate her power and superiority over him.

Mr. Smith turns to his colleague, Mr. McCartney, for support. Mr. McCartney is Mr. Smith's tennis partner, and a director of another department in the same company.

Thus, Mr. McCartney does not want to take sides, but decides to try to help the two parties to find a solution.

Appendix 5 – Abigail story

Sad love story: Who is the worst, who is the best?

Abigail loves Tom, who lives on the other side of the river. A flood has destroyed all bridges across the river, and has left only one boat afloat. Abigail asks Sinbad, the owner of the boat, to bring her to the other side. Sinbad agrees, but insists that Abigail has to sleep with him in return.

Abigail does not know what to do, runs to her mother, and asks her what she should do. Her mother tells Abigail that she does not want to interfere with Abigail's own business.

In her desperation Abigail sleeps with Sinbad who, afterwards, brings her across the river. Abigail runs to Tom to happily embrace him and tell him everything that has happened. Tom pushes her from him strongly, and Abigail runs away.

Not far from Tom's house, Abigail meets John, Tom's best friend. She tells everything that has happened to him as well. John hits Tom for what he has done to Abigail, and walks away with her.

Appendix 6 – Daily Programme

	May 22	May 23	May 24	May 25	May 26	May 27	May 28	May 29
8:00 – 9:00	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>
9:00 – 12:30	Arrival	ME & WE: Energizers, Name Games Presentations: - YFU & YEU - CoE & StSe (Intro to Prog.) Expectations: Participants & Team (Aims & Objectives)	Warnings from the Past <i>Personal testimony (Mr. Saif Abu Keshek)</i> <i>Movie: “Traces”</i> Reflection	Intercultural Learning and Concepts Session What is: Culture, Intercultural Learning, Conflict and Peace?	Conflict Transformation - Analyses – Communication Skills	Conflict Transformation Methods - Part 1 Responding to Conflict	Every Day "Peace Builder" <i>Self Assessment of CT competences</i> ICL as a tool for CT Culture of Peace Revised	<i>Departure</i>
12:30 – 14:30	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>
14:30 – 18:30	Arrival	Group Building <i>Guidelines for group work during StSe</i> Homework CoP Me + Peace: - Small groups - Plenary	Culture of Peace: What is it? What Values lay beneath? Non violence, Tolerance, Solidarity, Respect, Diversity, Equality, Social Responsibility Plenary	Call for Conflict-Understanding Conflict: Types, causes, levels & Responses Cultural Theory as a tool to explain positions in conflict	<i>Free afternoon</i>	Conflict Transformation Methods - Part 2 3 rd party intervention Mediation (intro and role plays) Facilitation	Taking Action: Personal Action Plan Evaluation: Formal Active method (emotional sharing)	
18:30 – 19:00	<i>Evaluation groups</i>	<i>Evaluation groups</i>	<i>Evaluation groups</i>	<i>Evaluation groups</i>	N/A	<i>Evaluation groups</i>	<i>Evaluation groups</i>	
19:00 – 20:00	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	N/A	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	
21:00 – 24:00	Welcome evening	Intercultural Evening (food, drinks, music, etc)	Open Space / Inter-organizational exchange		Dinner and night out in Town	Sharing Resources: Presentation of relevant books, websites, movies, etc...	Farewell party	

