



**Youth and European Social Work
Y.E.S. FORUM (EEIG)**

Put yourself in my shoes!

Living in Europe - young people explore their communities

Vivre en Europe : le Jeunes explorent leur quartier

Leben in Europa - Junge Leute erforschen ihr Lebensumfeld

<http://www.yes-forum.org/living-in-europe>

Project Report

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Table of Content

0 Introduction: Youth and European Social Work - Y.E.S. FORUM.....	3
1 Objectives of the Project.....	4
2 Project implementation: Research locations and activities	5
2.1 Granada - Spain	5
2.2 Heilbronn - Germany.....	6
2.3 Torre del Lago, Lucca - Italy	7
2.4 Metzingen, Reutlingen - Germany	8
2.5 Liverpool, UK - Seminar	9
3 Conclusions and Products of the Project	10

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0 Introduction: Youth and European Social Work - Y.E.S. FORUM

Y.E.S. FORUM (EEIG) is

- an organisation tackling social exclusion of young people and promoting active citizenship
- members from organisations and individuals in 8 European countries with the objective to extend to all member countries of the European Union and the candidate countries
- a network- exchanging ideas and experience- drawing together practice, research and policy
- uses modern ICT and multi media methods to involve, include both young people and organisations working with them

When, what, who and where?

- Y.E.S. FORUM was set up in 2001 with the support of EC programme B3-4101 as a preparatory measures to prevent and combat social exclusion) a partnership between organisations in France, Germany & Italy.
- The initial project developed the organisation Y.E.S. FORUM to provide not only a means of communication, but a lobbying organisation, which would use its experience and its networks to increase inclusion of young people.
- Y.E.S. FORUM was set up as a formal organisation at EC level in 2002. Founder members are from Italy and Germany, but there are members from 8 countries now, and a series of levels of involvement which members can chose to have.
- Y.E.S. FORUM members exchange regularly through www.yes-forum.org using internet chats, email and the whole range of services offered on the website. These are developing all the time. Partners involved in joint projects meet or exchange according to the requirements and needs of their joint enterprise. The formal Y.E.S. FORUM organisation meets to create a strategy, business plan and conduct business.

Strengths of Y.E.S. FORUM model:

- Addresses the lack of Europe wide networks with a focus on children, young people social exclusion and participation/inclusion
- Commitment to the inclusion of young people
- Use of ICT and multi media methods increases access and promotes inclusion
- Model is inclusive in terms of languages and cultures
- Range of types of membership encourages breadth of organisations and individuals to participate
- Y.E.S. FORUM provides a series of building blocks which can help members find partners, develop new initiatives and work together
- Potential to span practice, research, policy and change
- Ability to do action research

1 Objectives of the Project

Put yourself in my shoes! Living in Europe - young people explore their communities was developed to draw together Y.E.S. FORUM's knowledge and experience in promoting participation of young people and community development and in making use of Multi Media techniques to do so. Based on the principles of action research young people explored their communities and presented the findings towards the members of the community and to peers in other European countries. The project was based on the following objectives:¹

- **"Empowerment of young people:** Young people are supported and encouraged to analyse their own life situations, their relationships and their integration in the local communities. Our focus is on young people at risk of being socially excluded (education, employment). We want to empower them to develop strategies and perspective for their integration in school and job market and to support them to discover and build support systems."
- **"Building skills for social inclusion:** The planned activities also focus on building social and life skills of young people. Social and life skills are developed by being part of a research team which is responsible for planning and implementing all activities on local levels and for the administration of the local budget. Technical skills are acquired by working with hardware and software using COMMA."
- **"Promote participation:** The planned activities support that young people have a say in decisions which effect their lives. COMMA will help youth to tell decision makers "put yourself in my shoes" while taking a decision on my behalf and "ask us" because we know best what we need. The particular objective of this project is therefore the promotion of participation on local levels. COMMA is used as a tool to express young people's perspectives and to make their voice precise and clear."
- **"Community capacity building:** Young people are part of communities in which they live. Their well-being and access to public services like education, recreational services, social services and employment depends on the strengths and capacities of local communities. The presentation of young people's research activities are thought to make an impact on adults and decision makers perspective of their communities in order to discover weaknesses and strengths of communities. It will help them to understand what actions have to be taken and how to involve young people. Youth should be seen as a positive force in developing a community."
- **"Tool-Development:** We want to further develop COMMA as a Multi Media Archive and research tool and make it accessible for organisations and projects working with young people at risk of social exclusion on a European Level. "

¹ As presented in the project application from 1/10/2002

2 Project implementation: Research locations and activities

2.1 Granada - Spain

The first project group which took part in the project activities was from Granada, Spain. The activities were linked to the JUVE S. XXI of IMFE and focussed on the northern parts of Granada which can be characterised by a high level of migrant population and unemployment. The participants learned in workshops how to build and use black and white cameras and to develop the pictures thereafter. The focus was on discovering the community, problems, resources, places and people. The project participants shared their findings in local community meetings with local decision makers.

The black and white pictures were scanned in and have been therefore archived and are available electronically. Members of the Granada project group took also part in "Living-in-Europe" Chat sessions.

Selected Impressions from Granada:



Members of the Granada-Research team observed: Flamenco-Workshops for young people, old craftsman, construction zones in the city, work and education projects for young people.

2.2 Heilbronn - Germany

Also Heilbronn the second project location in Germany could participate in the "Put yourself in my shoes activities" through their linkage to the JUVE S. XXI project. The project team was formed by five young people and one support worker from the Jugendwerkstätten Heilbronn. The project team focussed on the topic of unemployment and lack of education of young people in Heilbronn. They researched the educational measures of the Jugendwerkstätten and interviewed former participants of courses. Picture and Video material was archived by the project group and presented during an Open House day of the Jugendwerkstätten and during a joint meeting with the Youth Parliament of Heilbronn.

Selected Impressions from Heilbronn:



The pictures show members of the project team taking part in computer and art- and craft classes. Another pictures shows the youth parliament of Heilbronn.

2.3 Torre del Lago, Lucca - Italy

The Research group from Italy was a frequent participant in the "Living in Europe" chat sessions. Their research sessions were hosted in the youth information centre in Torre del Lago which is administrated by Enaip Lucca.

The group experienced difference with young people from other countries through youth exchanges. For the young people it was most interesting to discuss issues related to their personal perspectives (education and employment) and around the Iraq crisis.

Besides the Torre del Lago group young people from the Centrokaboom in Lucca (youth centre) joined the project activities to report about their various projects and activities (musical, bands). Also the situation of young people in the Lucca Region is quite difficult.

Selected Impressions from Torre del Lago, Lucca:



The pictures show the members of the project team and young people from the Centrokaboom in Lucca.

2.4 Metzingen, Reutlingen - Germany

Another research group from Metzingen and Reutlingen took part in the project activities. After joint planning sessions the group divided into two sub-groups to explore their community under the questions "what are the meeting places for young people in Metzingen" and "how is the population of Metzingen effected by the various factory sale markets which is attracting a lot of visitors." The research group also used both, digital video and photo which the group edited and archived afterwards.

The research results was forwarded to key stakeholders of the community since the young people wanted to share their observations and point out certain issues and make recommendations for improvement.

Selected Impressions from Metzingen, Germany:



The pictures show members of the project team by editing the material and by conduction the research and interviews. One picture shows the local youth centre and the office for youth counselling and streetwork.

2.5 Liverpool, UK - Seminar

The seminar "Involving young people" 30/10 to 2/11/2003 in Liverpool supported by the European Youth Programme was used by project partners and young people to share results of the project with each other and with other Network members of the Y.E.S. FORUM.

The project presentation and related discussions took place in several workshops. Tony Dobson from the Children Society led a workshop on the community multi media Archive (COMMA). José Alfaro introduced the action research approach used for the "Put yourself in my shoes - Living in Europe" project in general and in particular for the project activities in Granada, Spain. Paddy Logan from the Liverpool City Council who leads a team of Youth Engagement Workers, who are all young people working with young people presented their work during the seminar. Brendan McGowan from the UK Youth Parliament facilitated a workshop to think about what the most important aspects of Participation are. At the end of the seminar the following key points have been drawn together which participants had identified about "**Participation in Practice**".

- The value of stories: different stories=different experience
- Making projects practical and accessible
- Care in sharing experience- how does it translate?
- Importance of language, types of expression and cultural context
- Importance of process throughout participation
- Children's Rights as a basis for understanding participation
- Our approach to children: a risk, at risk or having capacity& issues of power& control affect participation
- Tensions in working for quick results or sustainability
- Link between respect & fairness for young people and participation
- Pressures on those working with young people (resource, organisational)



3 Conclusions and Products of the Project

First of, all through the project experience and knowledge has been built on how to use an action research approach in combination with multi media schemes to promote participation of young people. Since all project members are linked to the Y.E.S. FORUM Network these are resources which can be used in the future and for other projects.

The project participants responded positive to the project objectives and project activities and welcomed the combination between multi media work and approaches to empowerment and participation of young people.

As a result on each project location a "story" and/or "several stories" has been developed highlighting certain aspects of the young people's life and the community they are living in. The digital electronic picture and video material has been edited and archived by using the COMMA - Community Multi Media Archive. The archive were loaded and exchanged through the web-server www.yes-service.org. Under www.yes-forum.org/living-in-europe the internal and public project presentation took place. Under this URL also the project report and the COMMA user manual - which has been developed through the project - will be available for download.

The project helped to develop similar future activities. For example at the moment there is a project implemented call "Young people's NEWSLETTER - for and from young people". In Liverpool projects funded through the Liverpool Children's Fund are using multi media schemes and the yes-forum.org web editing facilities to promote participation and multi media skills of children and young people.