



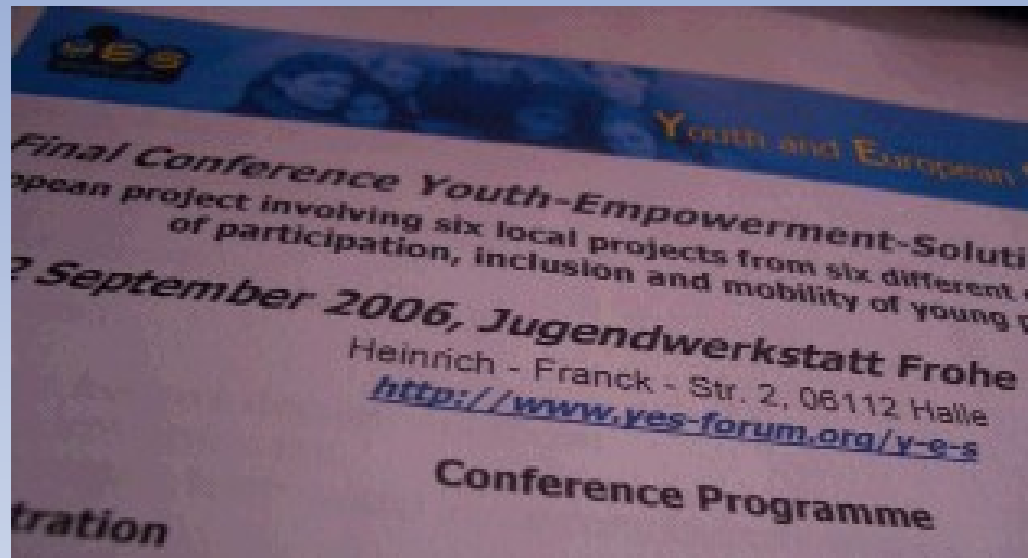
Youth-Empowerment-Solutions Final Conference Halle 21-22 September 2006



Networking of pilot projects in favour of youth participation (EAC/10/04)

Design of the final conference in Halle

The final conference in Halle was not designed as an isolated event but part of the project's working process and we applied the learning from the previous two project years. In particular learning from the youth event in Granada in March 2006 was taken into account.



Preparation and pre-visit



A thorough evaluation of all project events prior to Halle was done within the Project TEAM. This included controversy discussions but once a decision was reached it was supported by all. Preparations for Halle included also a pre-visit to “test” logistical details, timing and usability of the conference venue.

Conference Venue



The Jugendwerkstatt Halle was used as the conference venue. The conference room was able to host 50 people and more and it was possible to use different settings during the two conference days. Important was also the outside play-area and the in-house catering service as well as all technical and logistic support during the two-days.

The local host



Young people and the project workers from Halle hosted the event. A big compliment for the perfect organisations and. For example, logistic arrangements where completed by a van-taxi-service, almost working 24h to transfer participants from airports-to-hotel-to-conference-venue-to-dinner-venues-to-leisure-activities, etc.

Mobility of young people



What is common for many of us was a first time experience for the young people who took part in the project activities and the Halle conference. A good preparation at home was therefore important and a last „familiar“ meal. Young people shared at the conference their impressions of what it is like to come to a different country and different culture for the first time.

Positive effects



Mobility of young people was one of the core themes of the project. We created opportunities for young people who never travelled abroad to experience mobility in Europe. There are various accounts of the positive effects this had on the personal development of the participating young people.

Arrival



All participating groups were asked to take pictures during the trip and to share them upon arrival. Young people from Halle drew a huge European map on a wall-paper so all groups could document their trips and share their impressions.

Clear roles and leadership



One of the learning from a previous event was that there should be no adult in the room with a clear and transparent active role. We used different coloured T-Shirts to identify roles and task of all participants in the room (Blue=project participants and project workers, Black=Adults with supporting roles, Red=Translators and language scouts)

Translators



There was an extraordinary level of commitment by all involved in this project. This was most visible within the team of professional translators who played an essential role in bridging between the different groups and languages and were flexible enough to cope with different conference settings.

Comments



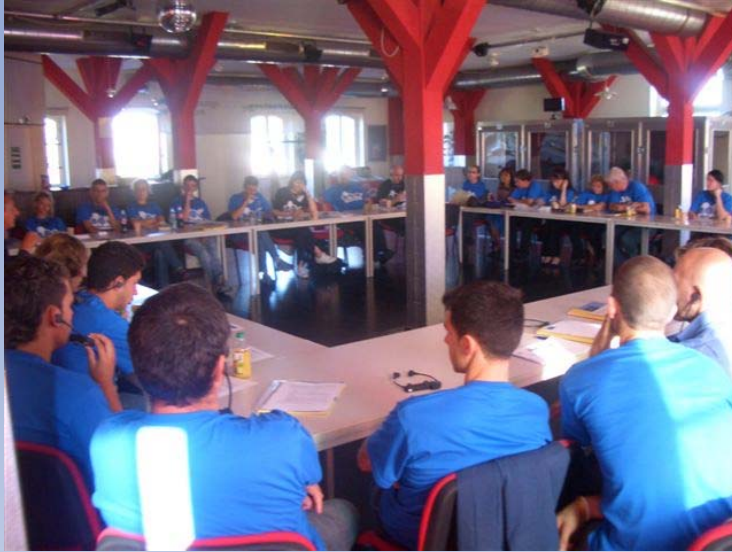
“I felt good helping you to communicate. This time it was not just that I was the "machine" without any thoughts but I had the opportunity to give an input, too. That is something special.”

Internal project DAY 1



The conference was divided into a DAY 1 and DAY 2. DAY 1 was the internal day for the participating project groups, to get familiar with each others and the conference setting, to celebrate achievements and to prepare for DAY 2.

Conference setting on DAY 2



Day 2 was organised as a more formal conference setting with translation equipment but with the objective to put young people on centre stage and to involve them in all activities. All participating adults were asked to take the role of active listeners during the whole conference and not just take part as passive observers.

Input on DAY 2



Day 2 started off with a welcome from the host Klaus Roth and a reflection on participation and the Y.E.S. FORUM's working style done by Thomas, This took up to an hour but was all the time adults had to speak before young people and their project workers presented their experiences and learning from their local participation projects.

Presentation by young people



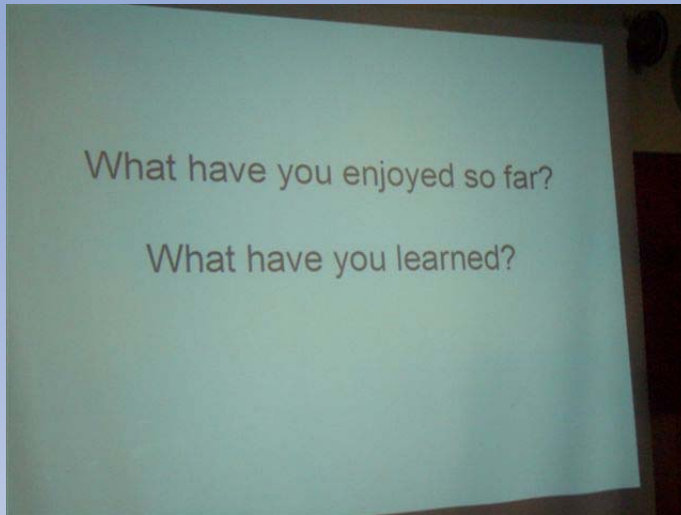
All young people showed a level of maturity and confidence which was truly astonishing. They partly presented in a foreign language or were assisted by professional translators.

Communication Exercise



The main objective of the afternoon was to allow for direct interactions between all participants, in particular between young people and adults. The communication exercise combined elements of meditative self-reflection (music, walking) with small discussion rounds and mixed groups of young people and adults.

Communication Exercise



Each discussion group was supported by at least one translator who was at times the facilitator and initiator of the discussion as well.

"I loved the idea of walking around, listening to music and then suddenly be divided into different groups. Usually, after five minutes, there was a really vivid conversation."

Re-fresh



Volleyball was one of the very popular activity-based activities over lunch to refresh and reload after the mornings.

“Volleyball had a positive impact on our relations to our Spaniards and to the participants from other projects. It is a team sport and therefore it also promotes team work, doesn't it?”

Fish-bowl method



A final discussion round using the fish-bowl method was used to conclude the conference. The methodology allowed for everybody to get involved on a voluntary base and for people to join the discussion round as long as they liked. The centre was on the fish-bowl in the middle and all listeners grouped around the inner discussion circle.

Young people being in charge



What we achieved in Halle was to put young people in the centre, to provide them with a positive experience and an opportunity to grow.

“They were quite self-confident and it says a lot about the work you have done and how much it is needed. It is only when you feel respected as a person by society that you can give something back and improve society”

Taking our learning to Brussels



The EU Commission invited all European participation pilot projects to an evaluation meeting to Brussels, 16-17 October. Ben Fox on behalf of the Y-E-S young people, Jim Davis on behalf of the project partners and Thomas Vollmer as the project coordinator participated in the meeting.

Auf Wiedersehen in Europe...



Further information and
full project report
under

<http://www.yes-forum.org/y-e-s>

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