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Introduction

MUYA started with a work group of five individuals back in July 2006 and was officially founded on the 15th of February 2007.

MUYA now enjoys a list of 92 registered members and other contributors. In its founding year, the committee has met six times and organised eight local events for its members and/or the public and/or for international participants. MUYA has also collaborated in three projects/events on a local level

The Association has participated in eleven international projects with 32 opportunities for youths to travel for these events. The association has also organised an international project in Malta in December 2007 where 25 youths from 5 different EU countries participated.

MUYA has been granted €15, 116.35/Lm 6,489.45 by local and European authorities to carry out its work.

Participation in international youth projects

'We are the Other – Feasibility Visit' – December 2006 – Rimini, Italy

Organisers: Associazione di Promozione Sociale Joint

MUYA workgroup representatives: Sarah A. Suda, Stephanie Degiorgio

The Feasibility Visit was the ground work for a youth exchange planned for summer 2007 which in the end was not approved by the Italian National Agency but however created new networks for all the organizations involved. The main goal of the whole project 'We are the other', was to give the opportunity for youth from different countries, religions and social environments to come together in a youth exchange and to facilitate the destruction of their reciprocal stereotypes and negative ideas of the "Other". The Feasibility Visit brought together participants from EU and MEDA countries.

'Citizen-ship – a course on local community decision making methods' – January 2007 – Narva-Joesu, Estonia

Organiser: Estonian UNESCO Youth Association

MUYA workgroup representatives; Sarah A. Suda, Maria Filetti, Martina Guillaumier

The event took place in Narva-Jõesuu, in one of the most picturesque village in North-East of Estonia, from 23rd to 29th January 2007. The character of the event focused mainly on the presentation of a democratic method of conflict management called Citizens' Jury. Additionally participants were also acquainted with Loesje creative writing methods. Participants were from Hungary, Finland, Cyprus, Malta, Slovenia, Romania and Estonia, each represented by three (3) youth workers. Travel expenses were covered by European Commission's Youth Programme at 70%. The organizing team consisted of Beata Öry and Gabor Kuna, trainers, Cromo Foundation, Hungary; and Olga Bogdanova and Deniss Jershov, trainers/facilitators, EUYA, Estonia.

The participants learnt a particular methodology for reaching consensus called the Citizens' Jury Method. It is a method that involves people in the process of local decisions regarding their life and environment. The jury generally consists of 12-30 citizens representing their own microenvironment. The jury members are representative in the frame of age, gender and opinion. The jurors listen to experts and other information providers and experts must provide neutral, professional knowledge. It is a method based on competence and the participants undertake an informed and focused discussion with fairness where no participant dominates the discussion.

The final result of a CJM, is a written recommendation created by consensus, which is sent over to all responsible. As a consequence, CJM is strengthening the local democracy by promoting co-operation between local citizens, NGOs, local employers and local authorities.

The AIM of the Citizens' Jury Meeting training was to enable participants to realise Citizens' Jury Meeting in their local realities, share the knowledge and exchange experiences on democratic decision making methods, provide practical experience on creative text writing as a tool for involving the public, giving the opportunity for participants to develop their group facilitation skills, contribute to the enhancement of involvement of local citizens.

‘The Phoenix – Freedoms and Liberations’ – November 2006 – May 2007 – Turin, Italy; Krakow, Poland; & Strasbourg, France

Organiser: Terra Del Fuoco, Turin, Italy

MUYA representatives: Philip Caruana, Nicole Blackman, Cathleen Tanti, Sergio Mallia, Robert Gatt, Matthew Tanti, Anson Aquilina.

The project was organized by the Association “TERRA DEL FUOCO” of Turin, Italy. The project will take place from November 2006 till June 2007. During this time participants built a common base of remembrance and reflection in order to consider how the basic principles of Europe are able to guarantee peace and justice to European citizens and to the rest of the world. The project had three important meetings, in which participants gathered together:

- 30th of January to 3rd of February 2007 in Krakow;
- 21st to 25th of March 2007 in Turin and Rome;
- June 2007 in Strasbourg.

The aim of the project was to create a forum where groups can share episodes and events that had been significant for the remembrance of their country, to visit Auschwitz’ concentration camp and the city of Krakow the base for reflection on European Union’s history; to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome as it formed the basis for UE in 1957; to elaborate and discuss a common report about the future of Europe as the final step of the work began with the forum; to visit the European Parliament in Strasbourg in order to hand in the report and deliver it. The project included the participation of 700 European young people

The group leaders of each country met in Turin in November 2006, hosted by “TERRA DEL FUOCO” Association, to discuss the project and create a web forum. During these days the group leaders decided the main themes concerned with Europe and discuss themes among the other group leaders. These themes were widespread through the web forum and brought to Turin in March in order to share them with all participants.

From October 2006 to January 2007 each national group worked on an important episode of national history either through meetings or web forum. The episode was subsequently shared in Krakow with all other groups, bringing themselves their own episodes.

From 30th of January to 3rd of February 2007 the international meeting took place in Krakow, Poland. All participants visited Auschwitz concentration camp and the city of Krakow. During these days each group, through their group leaders, shared with the others a report concerning historical events of their own country that had been significant in EU’ s history. Groups will also discuss about the themes shared through the web forum.

From January to March 2007 each group worked on a topical theme concerned with Europe, that have been previously chosen by group leaders. Topics will be discussed either through meetings or web forum.

From 21st to 25th of March 2007, all participants were be hosted by Turin's Municipality. Each group, through its group leaders, presented a report to share with the others, concerning a European topical theme. The theme will be the result of the work made by group leaders in Turin during the October meeting and spread through the web forum. Reports are the basis on which all groups worked to create a unique report. At the evening of March the 24th, all groups left to Rome to celebrate, the following day, the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, one of the most important steps made toward EU.

In June 2007 the 700 youth met all together in Strasbourg, France, to visit the European Parliament where the final report was delivered.

‘European Passport in my Pocket’ – April 2007 – St. Petersburg, Russia

Organiser: Baltic Armenian House NGO

MUYA Representatives: Joanna Bonnici, Jurgen Scicluna

The 4 day seminar took place in Russia’s cultural city, St. Petersburg. Participants from 14 different countries discussed European citizenship and brought to light different realities in their respective countries. The concept of citizenship was discussed in depth and also how different approaches of youth work could be used to promote active citizenship among young people. Several tools including T-Kit 7 and Compass were passed on to the young participants for them to use in their respective communities.

‘Youth Opens the Space – Intercultural, Civic and Peace Education; Dialogue and Action: Your Reaction?’ – July 2007 – Wroclaw, Poland

Organiser: Poland UNESCO Information Centre

MUYA representatives: Sarah A. Suda

The conference organised by the UNESCO Information Centre in Poland, was a follow-up of the UNESCO EuroMed Youth Forum that was held in Cyprus in November 2006.

The conference involved 80 participants from all over the EuroMed region who met in one place to discuss through open space methodology the issue of their concern as regards intercultural, civic and peace education. The aim of this conference was to continue elaborating on recommendations related to education, training, raising awareness and networking adopted in the Cyprus forum. The conclusions of the discussions will be channeled into the preparations of the 5th UNESCO Youth Forum which will be held in Paris in October of this year.

The open space methodology proved to be an effective tool to work with as it created an atmosphere of involvement, active participation and responsibility for the outcome of the meeting. The several participants committed to the outcome of the conference brought about fruitful conclusions and also plans of action for future cooperation and new partnerships.

A report for each session of discussion suggested and implemented by the participants themselves was drafted and compiled together with others and these provide an extensive resource of information and recommendations for the participants and their respective organizations to continue to develop their work in the area.

'Nature Therapy' – September 2007 – Itesti Forest, Romania

Organiser: Repere Organisation

MUYA representatives: Ryan Borg, Christian Debono, Matthew Sammut, Mario Delia, Sara Pace.

Nature Therapy was a one week youth exchange in Itesti forest, Moldavia region, Romania between the 13th and 20th September. The Youth exchange was organised by a Romanian NGO named Repere. Maltese participants were joined with groups from Slovakia, Latvia, Spain and Turkey. Activities included trekking around Itesti forest, putting up tents, selecting between edible and wild fruits and vegetables, learning how to set-up a controlled fire, making bows and arrows and bird houses.

The most memorable activity was climbing Mount Cehalu and reaching a summit of almost 2000 metres and spending a night in an orthodox monastery on the way back. Also included were organised visits to Peatranant, a city in the mountains and to Bacau. In Bacau the entire group of youths was invited for a press conference with officials of Bacau local council and EU officials at the Town Hall. In Bacau the participants also met the Patriarch of the Orthodox region.

The aim of this exchange was for the youths was to develop survival skills and learn to appreciate more the natural environment and different cultures.

Total Quality Management in EVS Projects – October 2007 – Vilanova i la Geltru, Barcelona, Spain

Organisers: Barcelona Voluntaria

MUYA representatives: Fabrizio Mifsud Soler

The objectives of this Training Course was to build capacities to manage EVS projects as a coordinating organisations and to transfer specific skills and knowledge to increase the quality of EVS projects. The training course took place in a picturesque fishing town just an hour by train from Barcelona. Organisations from eight different countries attended the course, these included: Lithuania, Spain, Estonia, Bulgaria, Scotland, Turkey, Poland and Malta.

The course aimed at improving the participants' ability in dealing with volunteers both as sending and hosting organisations. These management skills included proper communication tactics and conflict management tactics, both vital when it comes to handling volunteers. It sought to remind its participants that these volunteers are there of their own free will; they deserve being taught, helped, given attention and encouraged in a peaceful environment.

5th UNESCO General Youth Forum – October 2007 – Paris, France

Organiser: UNESCO

MUYA representatives: Martina Guillaumier

The 5th UNESCO General Youth Forum in Paris took place on the 12th and 13th October. This forum has become an integral part of the UNESCO's General Conference. It is a space for debate, reflections and proposals by young people. Every two years the Forum gives young people from UNESCO Member States and international youth and student organizations the opportunity to share their experiences, identify common concerns and contribute to the work of UNESCO. The 2007 Youth Forum examines the results and recommendations from a series of Regional UNESCO Youth Forums held in 2006 and 2007 on the theme of 'Young People and the Dialogue among Civilizations, Cultures and Peoples'. This initiative was a direct follow-up to the 2005 Youth Forum, where youth participants had stressed the need for increased consideration of the specificities of young people in different regions when it comes to the promotion of dialogue and peace.

'I know How' – December 2007 - Slovenske Konjice, Slovenia

Organiser: Youth Center of Dravinja Valley

MUYA representatives: Clinton John Saliba

Organised by the youth centre of Dravinja Valley, an organization active in the field of international work, the training course 'I Know How' connects Mediterranean countries and European countries in order to foster the idea of organizing youth exchanges between MEDA and European countries.

The training course gave all the ingredients necessary for a successful project. Idea gathering, quality project making, games as a useful tool, history of relations between Mediterranean and European countries, contact making, project writing and intercultural learning all form part of this training course. The training course took place from the 7th till the 16th of December and involved the participation of non-governmental youth organizations from different EU and MEDA countries.

The aims of this training course was for NGOs to find each other and plan projects together, to present a universal model for cooperation and realization of projects together, to share ideas, practical knowledge and expectations, to provide participants with information on the theory of games, to make participants aware of intercultural differences and what to be careful of and finally to make common projects.

Innovative Methods to Empower Youth Participation and Active Citizenship – February 2008 – Vilanova i la Geltrú, Barcelona, Spain

Organiser: Barcelona Voluntaria

MUYA representatives: Christianne Caruana, Joanna Bonnici

This training course provided specific non formal learning methods and personal development tools that participants can use in their respective organizations to enhance the degree of commitment and active participation of young people and improve their youth work activities. The training course created a playground where theory was put into practice in order to develop a deeper understanding on learning and thinking styles, behavioural styles, pro-active attitudes and communication styles. The aim of this training course was also to practice teamwork, intercultural and creative skills and develop attitudes of responsibility, respect and empathy.

Step by Step – Feasibility Visit – March 2008 – Turin, Italy

Organiser: Associazione di Promozione Sociale Joint

MUYA representatives: Stephanie Degiorgio, Marie Louise Vella

The aim of this Feasibility Visit was to gather together groups of young people in order to plan a series of future projects within the new "Youth in Action" programme of the European Commission. The Feasibility Visit provided a moment in which the participants could share and confront ideas, and worked together in small groups on different drafts so that at the end of the three days the groups had some tangible results on new projects.

Local Projects

‘All Different, All Unique’- Photography Exhibition

- *National Youth Day – 18th March 2007 – St. Julian’s, Malta*

The Association organized a photography exhibition inspired by the theme of religious and cultural diversity. The exhibition took the name of the Universal UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity holding the same name. The exhibition included 15 photography works by collaborators from all over Europe linked to quotes promoting cultural diversity and extracts from the Universal UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity. The exhibition was launched during the National Youth Day activities at Baystreet in St. Julian’s, Malta.

- *Birkirkara Civic Centre – 20th – 27th March 2007 – Birkirkara, Malta*

The same exhibition was moved to the Birkirkara in order to expose the works and create awareness on the importance of cultural diversity amongst the general public.

‘Creative Writing Workshop – World Book Day’ – 22nd April 2007 – Valletta, Malta

Malta UNESCO Youth Association participated in World Book Day activities at St. James Cavalier, Centre for Creativity. An in-house team focusing on creative writing methodologies conducted a workshop using Loesje creative writing methods with the general public.

Creative Loesje Posters at Earth Garden Festival – 5th & 6th May 2007 – Ta’ Qali, Malta

A set of Loesje posters were elaborated in order to be exhibited at the Open Village at the Earth Garden Festival in Ta' Qali. The theme of the posters was environmental awareness.

Annual Plenary Forum – 16th June, Birkirkara, Malta

The Annual Plenary Forum took place on Saturday 16th June at Birkirkara Local Council. Present at this event were members of the Association and a representative of the National Youth Council.

During this event, the participants present proposed ideas and themes that the Association should tackle in the next year. The participants proposed a year long campaign on cultural diversity and intercultural and interfaith dialogue and further ideas have been proposed on education and culture.

The methodology used in this forum was the 'Citizens' Jury Method'. The facilitators for this forum were Sarah Suda, Maria Filetti and Martina Guillaumier who gained training in this methodology in a training course in Estonia in January this year organised by the Estonian UNESCO Youth Association (EUYA) in collaboration with the Cromo Foundation from Hungary.

EU meets U! – Round Table – MEP Simon Busuttil – What would be your priority if you yourself were an MEP? – 7th September 2007 – Valletta, Malta

Eleven young people met with MEP Dr. Simon Busuttil at D'Agostino Ristorante to participate in a round table discussion about EU issues. The young people present discussed in his presence about the issues that bother, concern or motivate them. The

issues discussed were education, EU funding, migration and FRONTEX and human rights. The participants were asked prior to the round table what issues would be their main priority if they themselves were MEPs. This helped Dr. Busuttil get to know better the interests and priorities of the participants of the round table prior to the event.

Dr. Simon Busuttil felt encouraged by the proactive attitude of the young participants and urged the Malta UNESCO Youth Association to continue with such work as it is not only beneficial for youth but to society at large.

EU meets U! – Round Table – Head of EC Representation, Dr. Joanna Drake – How to make the EU relevant in tomorrow's world? – 26th October 2007 – Valletta, Malta

On the 26th of October a small group of young people met with Dr. Joanna Drake - Head of EC Representation in Malta to discuss together on how we can make EU relevant in tomorrow's world. The main point discussed was how we can make the EU relevant for the citizens themselves especially in a small country which has only been part of the EU for a few years. The discussion also offered insight into what is happening in other countries since amongst the participants there were foreigners from EU countries France and Estonia. Dr. Joanna Drake commented that it is of great pleasure for her to see such enthusiasm and interest amongst the young generation to make the EU relevant to themselves and to the society at large.

International Project organised in Malta

'The I and Beyond – The Perception of the Self in a European Environment – youth exchange, Action 1.1 – St. Julian's, Malta

The project looked into the socio-cultural influences on the individual (or the self) in a European context. Participants from 5 EU member states, Malta, Italy, Spain, Estonia & Lithuania delved into what are the factors that form the Self and the perception of it. The concept of identity was explored both in terms of individual identity and cultural, European identity. Creative expression was highly encouraged throughout this project combined with collective expression whereby each participant's individual expression and cultural baggage was brought into play to create a unique collective expression. The aim of the project was to bring out the cultural and individual differences between European citizens in order to enhance appreciation of diversity even within a European context.

The 8 day project took place in President's Hotel in St. Julian's with the participation of 25 young people from 5 EU Countries. The project was granted funding from European Communities.

The main theme of the project is the perception of the Self and the factors that influence it. The context in which this was delved into is the European socio-cultural context and thus the partners chosen are all members of the European Union. Albeit all having a European citizenship, there are cultural differences, traditions and lifestyles that makes us different from one another but there is one thing we all have in common – a European identity. By bringing out these differences both cultural and individual, the aim was to enhance the appreciation of the colourful diversity that makes up the European identity and fight xenophobia, especially in a context where we all should feel united as Europeans.

The objectives of the project were;

- to explore the influencing factors of the Self and the perceptions of it.
- to explore the concept of identity in terms of national cultural identity, European identity and individual identity.
- to enhance the appreciation of cultural diversity in Europe among the participants and the community at large
- to promote European Citizenship among the participants and the community at large
- to encourage creative expression without the fear of judgement
- to combine individual creative expression with collective expression to bring out the feeling of oneness amongst European citizens
- to promote the YIA programme among youngsters who have not had the opportunity to participate in such experiences

The activities first focused on the Self, the factors of influence and creative expression. Prior to the exchange, a preparatory meeting took place among all leaders of the groups in order to plan ahead and share responsibilities. Each country was asked to prepare a workshop session using non-formal methods with regards to different influencing factors of the Self including;

- Family influence –prepared by the Spanish Group
- Peer influence - prepared by the Estonian Group
- Media influence – prepared by the Italian Group
- Societal influence – prepared by the Lithuanian Group

Apart from these sessions, other non-formal sessions were prepared by the host organisation together with leaders of the partner organisations which tackled the nature-nurture debate, the different perceptions of the self and personality. Informal sessions that encourage creative expression both individual and collective also took place throughout the exchange.

Personal Development time was also given on a daily basis in order to give the participants the opportunity for informal networking, access to literature related to the topic and the EU that was made available by the host, partner organisation, the EC Representation in Malta and other local entities.

Collaborations with other organizations

GenoGraphic Project – June 2007

MUYA has contributed to the GenoGraphic Project, an international project sponsored by the National Geographic, IBM and the Waitt Family Foundation.

The GenoGraphic project is an international project for 5years which is now in its second year. The idea behind this project is to create a genetic data-bank which can be used to map and trace human ancestry for the past millenia. More information about this project can be found on www.nationalgeographic.com/genographic.

DNA Samples using cheek swabs from 300 individuals have been collected from Malta. The Malta UNESCO Youth Association has contributed to this project by setting up a team which helped to collect the samples needed.

All the results of the study will be used to answer and shed light on many historical questions regarding our human history, and in particular migration and spread from Africa to the rest of the world.

Collaboration with SUPA (Summer University of Performing Arts) – August 2007

The Malta UNESCO Youth Association collaborated with SUPA (Summer University of Performing Arts) who hosted Odin Teatret from Denmark as part of the Malta Summer Arts Festival 2007.

Odin Teatret staged two performances, apart from conducting workshops and work demonstrations. The public also had the opportunity to attend to a lecture by the celebrated Italian author and theatre director, Eugenio Barba.

MUYA collaborated in SUPA in terms of diffusing of information about the events organised and helping out in ushering during the performances.

Collaboration with Mantra Malta for Mantra Festival 2007 – September 2007

MUYA collaborated with Mantra Malta in organizing an audio-visual photo exhibition which was shown at the Mantra Festival 2007 that took place at the Garden of Rest in Floriana, Malta. This annual festival aims to promote culture diversity through music, art and food. Several contributors from all over the region have sent in their photographs which were displayed on a video presentation which was shown from 8pm onwards on the day of the festival, Sunday, 2nd September 2007.

The video presentation featured photographs taken fall over the world. The aim of this project was to promote the beauty of cultural diversity and promote understanding of different cultures all over the world.

Upcoming projects and activities

MUYA is currently working on a number of projects that will actualize in the coming year. Amongst these, **Smash the Mirror** – a youth exchange in Bareggio, Milan (Italy); **Count Me Out** – a youth exchange in Manchester (UK); **Humour is Serious Business** – a project feasibility visit in Derry (Northern Ireland); **Be Diverse** – a Training Course on Cultural Diversity in Szeged (Hungary); **Book in 1 Day** – a one-day creative workshop in Valletta (Malta).

Approved;
