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Youth
Association

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Malta UNESCO Youth Association

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Introduction

MUYA's second committee was elected on the 27th of March 2008.

MUYA now enjoys a list of more than 100 registered members. In its second year, the committee has met six times and organised three local events for its members and/or the public.

The Association has participated in six international projects with 17 opportunities for youths to travel for these events. The association has also applied to organise a training course about Human Rights on the 1st of November deadline of the Youth in Action Programme however this was not approved due to lack of funding. The Association applied again on the 1st of February deadline and this time it was approved.

The Association has also applied to be accredited as a Maltese European Voluntary Service Organisation and it has been approved.

During this last year, Malta UNESCO Youth Association also became officially part of the National Youth Council.

Participation in international youth projects

Count Me Out – Manchester, UK – April 2008

Organiser: Community Service Volunteers (CSV) TEN

Maltese Representatives: Lorna Toshney, Sarah Marie Spiteri, Jonas Farrugia, Matthew Sammut

The topic of this exchange was about sexuality and sexual minorities in Europe, quite a hot topic as it is still quite a taboo to talk and express freely one's opinion in certain countries about this issue, Malta being one of them.

The other participating teams came from Estonia, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, and the UK – in all forming a group of 35 participants – all individual and unique people, a pleasure to meet every single one of them and find out about their different cultures and lifestyles. Getting to know each other was done through film presentations from each country, we all had a chance to show what we had to offer through our cultural evenings, initiating with a multicultural evening in which we presented various local snacks and drinks. For the Maltese cultural presentation the presented a slide show with Maltese scenery, our national anthem 'l-Innu Malti' in karaoke style, some local music and we prepared the traditional baked rice dish 'Ross il-Forn'.

Throughout the ten days the participants had discussions and workshops about sexuality, its various aspects, prejudices, stigmas and stereotypes. Being in the heart of Manchester was great as the team managed to mix with the locals, and the fact that the Gay Village was situated just 10 minutes walking distance from the head quarters and hostel was even better.

The exchange was very media orientated; the participants were given some workshops up in Preston where the CSV actual head office is situated, about scripting, filming, recording and editing – using these new found skills the participants were given the task of creating their own short videos, which will be distributed to many EU organizations for possible promotional usage. A debate was also held on the topic, transforming the work space into an actual studio, which the participants recorded from.

Be diverse! – Szeged, Hungary – April 2008

Organiser: Szegedi Katedra Oktatási Alapítvány

Maltese representatives; Philip Caruana, Audrey Rose Spiteri, CJ Saliba

The main aim of the TC was to train participants from South East Europe and European Union to prepare, implement and evaluate workshops on cultural diversity within international youth exchanges. Other aims of this TC included raising awareness on cultural diversity, to develop competences for using cultural diversity as a positive tool within youth work and to understand different ways for active participation of young people within culturally diverse projects.

The first day included group building activities with the aim of strengthening the relations between the participants of the TC followed by the 'Intercultural Evening', where different participating countries presented their traditional food and drinks. The second and third days focused on the concept and theoretical aspects of cultural diversity both on an individual and national level. The course further provided background information on the Youth in Action and European Voluntary Service (EVS) programmes.

The fourth and fifth day were left for the preparation and running of a workshops by the participants themselves. These were divided into 4 groups, each carrying out a 60 minute workshop on a chosen topic related to cultural diversity. The workshop conducted by two members of the Maltese delegation was titled 'Immigration Integration' and touched on the sensitive topic of migration, whilst the third Maltese member took part in the workshop titled 'Religion and Children', which dealt with the problems faced by children in cultures where their religion results in a minority group.

The last day was left for the evaluation of the workshops and TC and allowed time for the creation of contacts between participant organisations. During the TC, the Maltese delegation created various contacts for MUYA.

After the training sessions, the participants enjoyed sight-seeing tours of Szeged, both by day and night, a relaxation evening at the thermal baths of Szeged and a flight tour over the city.

The Maltese group felt that this TC was a wonderful experience even given the demanding training sessions. This knowledge learnt will be used to benefit the local community and international youths during events hosted by MUYA.

Smash The Mirror – Youth Exchange – May 2008 – Bareggio, Italy

Organiser: Associazione di Promozione Sociale Joint

MUYA representatives: Sarah Suda, Christianne Caruana, Jurgen Galea, Daniel Mifsud, Daniel Sammut, George Frendo

A group of six Maltese participants, represented MUYA in a youth exchange about stereotypes and identity in a province of Milan called Bareggio from the 6th till the 16th of May 2008.

Participants from Italy, Sweden, Poland, Hungary and Malta lived and worked together for ten days during this 'Smash the Mirror' exchange.

The group participated in several workshops, games and activities that led them to break the usual stereotypes they are used to. Amongst the activities, the national groups presented a survey conducted in their countries about stereotypes of the other four countries which were present, in their homeland. Other activities included a session about the history of each country in relation to the rest of Europe.

The best thing about this exchange was that it was organised very closely with the local council of Bareggio so the citizens of the town were present at many of the events organised as part of the exchange. Amongst these was the Intercultural Evening held on the Europe Day - 9th May at the Centro Polifunzionale Martin Luther King in Bareggio.

Other activities included evening activities organised by the young people of Bareggio through Progetto 360° for the foreign participants of the exchange. The group also participated in a Karaoke session which was broadcast live on an internet radio station OKMusik.com.

Amongst the workshops that took place was also a Loesje workshop, one of which was led by Sarah Suda and which brought about brilliant results.

The participants also took part in several art workshops including multimedia, theatre and graffiti, the latter organised by Progetto 360°.

For most of the participants this was a completely new experience and it opened their mind to new horizons.

Eurocolors – Velletri, Rome, Italy – September 2008

Organiser: Associazione per la Formazione, gli Scambi e le Attività Interculturali

Maltese Representative: Sarah Suda

The Project aimed to educate, support and motivate young people and young workers to reflect on the importance of multilingualism. Delegates from more than 20 European countries met to discuss and exchange good practices about language learning and cultural diversity.

The aim of the project was to provide a platform for discussion and exchange of good practices, based in theoretical inputs and around the theme of multilingualism, concretely "how to stimulate languages learning and the respect of cultural identities".

The Seminar was hosted in Italy, in the city of Velletri (Rome). Velletri is a city found about 25 miles from the capital city in same Roman province with a population of about 49,000.

Throughout the project, the participants of the seminar presented their own Country State projects to incentivate multilingualism, participated in workshops on the topic and also attended talks about the incentives in multilingualism by the Italian authorities and the European Commission.

Youth Volunteering in an Enlarged Europe – October 2008, Villanova, Barcelona, Spain

Organiser: Barcelona Voluntaria

Maltese Representatives; Claudette Mifsud, Jurgen Scicluna

A six day training course that reflected on the issue of youth volunteering: significance, possibilities, positive effects; the role of volunteering to promote solidarity and integration in Europe, combat stereotypes and racism. Young people are the future of our society, they can shape a more just and inclusive Europe, so the host organisation felt that is necessary to deal at best with the issue of youth volunteering, in order to empower young people and foster the values of solidarity, justice, equality, respect, peace. The training course delved into how to manage youth international projects, especially the ones in the framework of European Union Youth in Action Programme. The training also

aimed to collect best practices to create new projects and to reinforce international partnerships in order to establish a system of mutual counselling for youth volunteering activities.

The objectives of this training course were to learn new methodology to manage, foster and increase quality of youth volunteering activities as a tool for promotion of values of solidarity and multiculturalism, and the promotion of active European citizenship of young people. The countries participating were Spain, Bulgaria, Romania, Malta, Italy, Poland, England, Portugal. The training course included activities such as games, simulation, debates, presentations, excursions

Developing Intercultural Competencies on EVS with neighbouring countries – Murcia, Spain – November 2008

Organiser: Plataforma del Voluntariado de la Región de Murcia

Maltese Representatives: Jurgen Galea

The theme of this project was to develop intercultural skills and provide working tools to the people directly involved in EVS projects for hosting and sending volunteers with neighbouring countries, including Youth in Action and Euromed Youth III programmes. The Training course gathered coordinators, mentors and supervisors from the EU and neighbouring countries. The target group of this training course were Project Managers, Youth Workers, EVS workers and volunteers.

Amongst the main objectives one finds, the training of youth leaders, project managers, tutors and mentors in developing their knowledge, skills and attitude in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the EVS projects, keeping in mind the cultural element.

The training also aimed to provide information to participants about the new Youth in Action Programme and to show the possibilities it has for those who do not know it, to support the development of new EVS projects and improve the quality of the existing ones through the exchange of best practices, case study realisation and theoretical inputs, to provide an understanding of what knowledge, skills and attitudes are needed in the project manager in order to guarantee the learning experience of the volunteers and the success of the project itself.

Local Projects

Book in 1 Day – Celebrating World Press Freedom Day

- Tal-Qroqq, Msida – Malta – May 2008

Because ‘Actually unwritten thoughts are everywhere’! Book in 1 day was creative writing workshops organised to commemorate World Press Freedom Day on the 3rd of May. The results of this workshop were published in a book coordinated by Loesje International called ‘Book in 1 day’ which included the results of similar events from all over the world.

Loesje Workshops

- Floriana – Malta – May, 2008

Following the success of the Creative Writing workshop for World Press Freedom Day, MUYA organised another Loesje creative writing workshop at the Grand Hotel Excelsior on Saturday 24th May, 2008.

Wine & Fruit Night

- Qui Si Sana, Sliema – Malta – July 2008

The Malta UNESCO Youth Association organised a Wine & Fruit Night for its members by the seaside at Qui Si Sana in Sliema.

Celebration of Tolerance – Celebrating World Tolerance Day

- Floriana – Malta – November 2008

The Malta UNESCO Youth Association celebrated World Tolerance Day by organising an event ‘Celebration of Tolerance’ at the Grand Hotel Excelsior in Floriana. This event included short interviews with representatives from Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism conducted by TV personality Clare Agius. Readings from the different religions were read out as were generic readings that promote tolerance and peace.

Promoting Cultural Diversity through Sport – Celebrating World Migrants’ Day

- Marsa – Malta – December 2008

The Malta UNESCO Youth Association celebrated World Migrants’ Day by organising a football tournament at the Marsa Open Centre where irregular immigrants reside following their 18 month detention in the closed centre upon their arrival to Malta by irregular means. The aim of this event was to promote cultural diversity, to go against the negative stereotypes attached to the place and to its residents and to offer a hand of friendship to people in similar situations. The event included the participation of the centre’s residents, Maltese and other European youngsters and a team from the Medicines Sans Frontiers. The teams were mixed in order to create team spirit between individuals from different nationalities.

Accreditations

Malta UNESCO Youth Association has achieved the following accreditations during the past year.

National Youth Council

During the 1st quarter of 2009, Malta UNESCO Youth Association was officially approved as part of the National Youth Council network.

EVS Sending Organisation

During the last quarter of 2008, Malta UNESCO Youth Association was accredited as an EVS Sending Organisation within the Youth in Action Programme. An EVS Sending Organisation promotes the European Voluntary Service and acts as the body that coordinates the sending of Maltese volunteers on the European Voluntary Service experience – which can be a 3, 6 or 12 month experience in voluntary work in a European or third country.

Upcoming projects and activities

MUYA is currently working on a number of projects that will actualize in the coming year. Amongst these, Food 4 Thought – Turin, Italy, EU Carol – Romania, Re-use Your Imagination – Athens, Greece, iloveculture.eu - a EU funded long term project including seminars and workshops in several places in Europe and work on a local level, EU Cruoil – EVS in South Africa,

Approved;
