Good Practice in Youth Information

employment – structured dialogue and participation – peer-to-peer
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I am happy to present you the latest, third edition of ERYICA’s Good Practice Booklet. Like before, it is filled with success stories from our network and it seeks to inspire the creation of new, innovative projects, while giving recognition to the achievements displayed.

The importance and relevance of youth information and counselling these times are flagrantly exemplified by the thickness of the Employment chapter and we do believe these tools and efforts provide much expected help for young people. On the other hand, the exchange of such experience is also one very attractive aspect of membership in ERYICA.

The success of this publication is reflected by the co-operations and projects that develop from the ideas presented here. Therefore I envisage meeting little twins, clones and other, genetically engineered mutations of these good examples across the ERYICA network.

Sanja Vuković-Čović
ERYICA President
1. employment
introduction

By Jan Zlatan Kulenović
Omladinska Informativna Agencija, Bosnia and Herzegovina

In July 2014, 5.062 million young persons (under 25) were unemployed in the EU-28, of whom 3.327 million were in the Euro area.

The youth unemployment rate was 21.7% in the EU-28 and 23.2% in the Euro area. That means that almost one out of every five young persons in the labour force was not employed but looking and available for a job. In July 2014, the lowest rates were observed in Germany (7.8%), Austria (9.3%) and the Netherlands (10.4%), and the highest in Spain (53.8%), Greece (53.1% in May 2014), Italy (42.9%) and Croatia (41.5% in the second quarter 2014). Youth unemployment rates are generally much higher, even double or more than double, than unemployment rates for all ages. In East European countries that are not members of EU the situation is even more difficult (e.g. youth unemployment rate in Bosnia-Herzegovina is 63%).

Educational qualifications are still the best insurance against unemployment, which clearly increases the lower the level of education attained. This characteristic was noted in all Member States in 2013, as the average unemployment rate in the EU-28 for those aged between 25 and 64 having attained at most a lower secondary education was 17.9%, much higher than the rate of unemployment for those that had obtained a tertiary education qualification (5.9%).

As response to the youth unemployment European Commission adopted new approach (called: “The Youth Guarantee”) to tackle youth unemployment which ensures that all young people under 25 – whether registered with employment services or not – get a good-quality, concrete offer within 4 months after leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. The good-quality offer should be for a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, or continued education and be adapted to each individual’s needs and situation. Developing and delivering a Youth Guarantee scheme requires strong cooperation between all the key stakeholders: public authorities, employment services, career guidance providers, education & training institutions, youth support services, business, employers, trade unions, etc.

Such situation gives more value and opportunities to youth information and counselling work and makes position of YIC work extremely important and useful.

Firstly, in transition from education to labour market young people want all kind of reliable information, but also professional support in finding right opportunities for them to become more attractive at labour market and for their career development (e.g. about different courses and training programs, mobility programs, ERASMUS+, scholarships for continuation of their education etc. available for young people).

Secondly, YIC workers across Europe see their role beyond pure information provision, also in motivating, increasing self esteem and promoting lifelong learning of young people, especially from vulnerable and marginalized groups. As part of that work some YIC organizations provide different training programs for increasing employability skills of young people (e.g. writing CV, how to do job interview etc.) or serve as a link between youth and employers (info on job offers, apprenticeships, internships, organization of job fairs and other events where young people can meet potential employers).

Some YIC services have special programs to support young entrepreneurs in various ways (counselling on establishing start-ups, info on registration, finding other support, funding etc.).

Thirdly, in some countries YICs are used as a focal point for consultation processes with young people on youth employment measures, especially in the framework of Youth Guarantee National Implementation Plans.

This dynamic work and variation of methods of youth information and counselling services across Europe give important support for youth employment today. However, their good practice is also useful for learning and it serves as inspiration for their peers with challenges and experiences they have in their projects.
1.1 *now act!*  
Youth Employment Solutions – Yes!

The issue of youth employment is handled by many stakeholders. However, one aspect of crucial importance that is often overlooked in the solving of this issue is the participation of the young people, as they are the only ones who know best what they need, what is missing, what would help them the most to get work.

The project Now Act! Youth Employment Solutions – YES! is implemented by the United Nations in Montenegro in collaboration with NGO Forum MNE and NGO Expeditio. Among other aspects, the project implied online and offline consultations with young people on the issue of youth (un)employment. Forum MNE was in charge of both consultations’ processes, as the organization that reaches the biggest number of young people from all parts of Montenegro.

Achievements:
Thus, within the offline consultations, a national workshop was held and it was designed to enable the participation of young people in solving of the issue of their unemployment. The participants, 40 of them from whole Montenegro, had a chance to discuss this issue through an interactive process, and to design solutions to the problem that were later recorded and presented in the form of a 4 minutes’ long video Ways to employ more youth, that can be seen at the Forum MNE YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YDMvLoKU15s.

In order to enable online consultations, a web portal http://www.mladi-odrzivabuducnost.me was created. Its main goal was to be available to all the people interested in this issue and willing to exchange opinions, experiences and ideas, in order to reach new solutions for this challenge. The solving process went through 4 phases: first phase implied talking about the issue, the problems faced, positive examples and ideas; the second phase included proposals of solutions that seem feasible; the third phase saw a selection of the best proposals through a grading system by website visitors, and by a professional jury. Altogether there were 14 solutions received and 7507 votes were registered through the online platform, while, at the same time, the professional jury (Forum MNE, Directorate for Youth and Sports, NGO Expeditio and the UN System in Montenegro) voted. Based on the results of voting, at the end, 4 solutions were selected to be financed and implemented. All of the solutions contribute to improvements of some aspects in the area of youth unemployment. The solutions are in the process of implementation.

Number of participants:
100

Youth Information tool:
Outreach Workshop and Online Platform

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http://europeandcis.undp.org/blog/author/jelena-miljanic/
http://www.mladi-odrzivabuducnost.me

Read more on SHEryica: http://sheryica.org/story/now-act-youth-employment-solutions-yes
Malta
Aġenzija Żgħażagħ – National Youth Agency
2014

1.2 youth.inc

Youth.inc was brought under the remit and management of Aġenzija Żgħażagħ, as of 2014, with a view to adopt a more youth-centred approach and to further strengthen the complementary role of formal and non-formal learning.

It is an inclusive educational experiential programme for young people between the ages of 16 and 21 who wish to continue to build on their educational experience and gain more information, knowledge, values and skills to either enter the labour market or gain qualifications to continue further training.

Youth.inc is based on the premise that success can be achieved by young people if they are engaged and motivated to participate actively in an applied learning environment which is practical in its approach. Applied learning is based on experiential learning and is best suited to young people who prefer a more practical style of learning. One of the key attractions of this type of learning is that young people are given the opportunity to apply their learning in the context of real life situations and challenges. Applied learning is a process of integrating one or more topic areas into authentic learning experiences. It provides opportunities in information gathering and evaluation, the problem solving process, the use of resources and related techniques and in personal skills, occupational awareness, safety and work experience. Applied learning also provides learners with tasks and situations and includes applications of information, knowledge, elements of career awareness, career exploration, and the integration of industrial knowledge and practices into their work and provides multiple ways for young people to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

The method of learning in the programme is distinctly different from the learning methods in primary and secondary education. The learning environment aims to encourage the active involvement of the young person, bearing in mind that it is not a traditional classroom environment. Diverse modes of learning include effective use and assessment of information and leisure, cultural and educational activities are also organized and the programme aims to inform, empower and motivate young people to become more active participants in their own learning.

Achievements:
Youth.inc is an integral part of Malta’s Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving, the National Employment Policy and the National Literacy Strategy and works in cooperation with relevant entities including the Directorate for the Prevention of Early School Leaving. Youth.inc will also be integrated with Aġenzija Żgħażagħ’s existing youth information and counselling services.

The aims of Youth.inc are to:
- Instil a work and lifelong education ethic among young participants.
- Inform young people of learning and employment opportunities.
- Increase their chances of gaining employment.
- Reduce the risk of unemployment.
- Promote lifelong learning.
- Integration into further education and training opportunities and/or the labour market.

Number of participants: 200

Youth Information tool:
Informing, advising and supporting young early school leavers in enhancing their learning and employment prospects.

For more information:
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Read more on SHEryica:
http://sheryica.org/story/youthinc
Since the year 2000, the Youth Information Centre in Luxembourg (CIJ) has deployed ways to collect national job possibilities for young people.

What began with the organization of a holiday jobs fair quickly established as a regular activity of the CIJ to search, collect and make available all kinds of paid occupations for young jobseekers. Each year a larger number of pupils and students is interested to discover work environments for earning professional experiences and money.

At the end of each year, the CIJ is searching all national companies available to recruit young people the following year. A form and a letter of presentation are designed to be sent out to more than 2000 businesses located on the territory of Luxembourg. From the month of January onwards, the concerned employers can give a feedback of their offers in the recruitment of young people through the web portal jobs.youth.lu or the enrolment form on behalf of the CIJ.

Young people have the possibility to receive assistance by the team of the Youth Information Centre for the elaboration of their application letters and their CV. Practical guides are available at the information desk of the Youth Information Centre.

The promotion of job offers is not only made available through the information desk at CIJ and the website jobs.youth.lu, but also through the participation of the Youth Information Centre at regional job fairs.

Obviously the CIJ generally responds to questions of young people and companies about issues of the rights of work, the remuneration for young people, the terms of contract and other practical details.

A large number of youth services and administrations affected by the theme of youth employment rely to CIJs’ job related services.

Based on the right to anonymity as described in the ERYICA youth information charter, the CIJ is respecting personal data of young people that can appear in documents such as the curriculum vitae and supports the autonomy of young jobseekers to contact the employers.

Achievements:
Every year, the Centre Information Jeunes counts, through its statistics and evaluation reports, more than thousand young people who consult between 1000 and 1500 job offers collected each year for or outside school holidays.

The main objective of this service is firstly the provision and information of job offers, not the follow-up of young jobseekers or to make contact with companies.

Luxembourg
Centre national d’Information pour Jeunes
1 January – 1 August every year

1.3 student job search

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1.4 career guidance in terms of curriculum reform

The project “Career guidance in terms of curriculum reform” was prepared with the aim of fostering young people’s decision-making when choosing further education or career.

The initial idea was to change the situation where a large percentage of graduates go to work in a different field than they studied, either for lack of interest to work in that field or for lack of demand.

The basic idea of the project is built on the premise that for qualified decisions about education and career, it is necessary to have reliable and relevant information. It concerns both programs offered by schools and the situation of the labour market, including information about transition from school to work and perspectives of their further employment – thus not only about the possibilities of education but also about the next applicability of the various disciplines. It follows the situation of unemployment in the country, the needs of employers... An important role in this process is the development of career guidance services directly in primary and secondary schools.

One of the main outcomes of the project is www.infoabsolvent.cz, an information system that contains all necessary information for informed decision-making on education and career. The system is unique because it combines educational offers with updated information from the labour market and this way it provides comprehensive informational support for decisions. It also brings an important feedback about assertion of graduates in the labour market and it contains a list of jobs showing where a lack of educated professionals is. For better orientation in the educational and career offer, the portal provides short videos with job descriptions and short on-line test about professions.

The methods of practical usage of the system are verified among users at the schools by trained youth information workers – tutors – from the regional youth information centres. Department of NÚV – National Youth Information Centre is coordinating this part of the project.

Achievements:

This activity has two main objectives:
1. to introduce the website www.infoabsolvent.cz and its possibilities to end users and increase the number of page visitors.
2. to obtain more information about working with the www.infoabsolvent.cz portal at schools. To find out, which proposed methods of use is the best for final users, what are the pros and cons of each proposed ways of work with the portal. Their findings will be used as one of the background materials for setting up the development of career guidance in schools in the future.

The project has also prepared a draft concept of an integrated system of career counselling, which aims to streamline the counselling services provided by education and employment institutions.

Not only young people have the benefits from the project: the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, regional authorities, employers and trade unions can all receive something from it. For example, it can serve as a tool for predicting further trends on the labour market.

Number of participants:
Thousands of students, graduates, teachers, professionals

Youth Information tool:
Counselling and career guidance, website

For more information:
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Read more on SHERyica:
Since the beginnings, one major aim has guided the work of the Solna Youth Centre: to support young people’s dreams – from small to big. Youth Idea tries to answer fast to young people’s demands.

The projects supported by Youth Idea can include youth companies, organizing a youth event, starting a football team, creating your own summer job, getting back to studies or finding a job.

Youth Idea is based on four pillars: Counselling/Networking/Resources/Funding

Counselling: Young people have access to professional youth information workers who can support them during their project. It can mean providing information, offering new perspectives and views, counselling or just acting as a support person to discuss their ideas, thoughts and fears.

Networking: In order to offer specific support to the young people and their projects, Youth Idea has established a broad network of organisations and professionals who can support them during their project. It can mean providing information, offering new perspectives and views, counselling or just acting as a support person to discuss their ideas, thoughts and fears.

Resources: Young people have a lot of ideas but in order to put them in practice they need resources. Youth idea offers this in different ways: access to training, facilities, equipment, etc.; everything in order to assure that the young people get the necessary means to implement their ideas.

Funding: Investment in young people and their ideas is the most profitable one, not just for a single person but for whole society. As a local body the budget is limited but Youth Idea can pay some of the small investments that the young people need in order to start their projects. Sometimes a small capital will make a big difference.

The target group for Youth Idea is quite broad since one of the main aims in Solna’s youth policy is inclusion. Young people who get support from the project are motivated students, entrepreneurs, drop-out students, young people in a situation of unemployment, etc.

During this autumn Youth Idea will focus on creating a better collaboration structure between municipal bodies and companies in order to support young people’s ideas. The “One hour” initiative will make possible for employees/companies to offer, mainly through the companies’ CSR programmes, just one hour to support young people. This support will manifest in the form of study visits, job-shadowing, mentorship, meetings and more. In the future, we hope that this time investment will be followed by economical support.

Achievements:
The most important achievement is many young people with stronger self-confidence, increased knowledge, skills and experience and better opportunities in the future. After several years of work, Youth Idea is a reference not only for young people but also for different organisations as high schools (with which we established good cooperation for their Youth companies programmes), Jobcentre (trainings, counselling, CV, etc.), employment, social and education municipal council (closed cooperation for example in summer job programme, drop-out programme, youth entrepreneurs fair), etc.

Some good examples of Youth Idea:
• A youth company which got support to make a user register (around 30 €), is now working with an Internet company on international level.
• Young people with fewer opportunities who, with some support and guidance, created their own football team. Now they are supporting other young people in the area to establish new teams.
• A young person who left the school and was unemployed, after participating in a training and an international seminar, started to work in his new field of interest.
• A group of young people worry about social issues, borrow some facilities and music equipment and organized a very successful charity concert. During the project they also learnt to use computer design programmes to create their own poster for the event.

Number of participants: Around 400

Youth Information tool:
Counselling, networking, social media, online services, peer-to-peer, international projects.

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Read more on SHEryica:
http://sheryica.org/story/youth-idea-youth-entrepreneurship-support
1.6 youth employment and professional inclusion services

Employment and professional inclusion are among the top two topics which young people seek our help for, together with education. We offer young people series of permanent daily services, monthly workshops and fairs which we organise on a regular basis.

1. Our daily services on employment:
- Face to face and distance information and counselling on how to find a job in France or abroad
- Job ads on www.jcomjeune.com
- Customised support for CV and application letter writing
- Help on how to prepare oneself for a job interview
- Specific support on social and professional inclusion for young people with a handicap
- Advice on how to organise a job-hunt offered by experts from the National agency for the unemployed

2. Our employment workshop offer:
- Job-dating sessions are a good opportunity for young job-seekers to meet employers for short interviews. We provide them a quality service with a human touch as well as a learning-oriented and professional services.
- Workshops are organised monthly for small groups. Methods used are interactive, based on listening to each other and sharing experiences. They focus on methodological and practical aspects. They cover a wide range of topics linked to employment, such as:
  - Self-confidence, a key element for a job, training or internship search;
  - How to look for a job on the Internet in an efficient way;
  - How to create or to take over a company;
  - How to look for a job abroad;
  - Work, training, entrepreneurship in the social economy.

3. The yearly fairs we organise to foster youth employment:
- Social economy jobs for young people: In 2014, more than 4 300 young visitors had an opportunity to meet more than 30 recruiting organisations who offered 700 job ads.
- Youth professional inclusion week. Topics covered:
  - Apprenticeship. Target groups are mainly secondary school pupils and dropouts.
  - Handicapped youth and work: guidance and employment for young handicapped people. Target groups are young handicapped people with a low level of qualifications and who may face discrimination.
  - Adult education. Target groups are young people who are unemployed, working or dropouts.
- Summer Jobs in France and abroad: Each year, more than 15 000 young people attend this fair and get an opportunity to meet employers and find summer jobs in all sectors.

Achievements:
Young people find a wide range of services which match their needs in terms of job search, information, counselling and guidance. They also learn how to increase their employability and gain confidence in highlighting their skills.

Our Youth Information Centre offers a whole package of services to young people and helps them feel less alone in their search. Recruiters who attend our fairs value the fact that applicants they meet in our Youth Information Centre usually match their criteria.

Number of participants:
145 000

Youth Information tool:
Job-dating session, workshops, fairs, website, leaflets

For more information:
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Read more on SHEryica:
1.7 mots d’emploi

Mots d’emploi is a pedagogical kit that offers through various formats an original approach on the employment and the training field, thanks to specific partnerships. It’s aimed to young people with fewer opportunities between 15 and 21 years old, and living in Brussels.

It’s a toolbox that contains:
• 2 DVDs presenting jobs and careers via socioprofessional insertion (made by and with young people)
• 2 brochures (guide and list of socioprofessional trainings – bilingual guide to employment)
• 1 flyer (depicting a blog about socio-professional insertion aimed directly at young people where there are information files and where they can ask their questions online)
• 1 photo language that leads the young people to express themselves and their representation as much as their experiences of the working world.
• 1 list of useful addresses that deals with employment, help and orientation services
• There are also some tips for other educational activities on the subject such as debates, role-plays...

The main tool is a pedagogical game that is conceived as a role-play game in which players through concrete simulations, dictated by cards organized in four themes, discover the working world, existing training possibilities when you don’t have a diploma, how to prepare for a job interview...

By fulfilling some challenges, the youngster assimilates without realizing it a lot of information and therefore lives an experience that can be useful and guide them in their professional steps. It’s accompanied by a user guide and a lexicon so the participants and the facilitator can get through specific vocabulary.

All those tools can be used separately and are complementary so you can have a transversal approach of the subject, and moreover adapt your activity to the group and the timeframe you have.

Achievements:

The main goals of the kit are:
• Inform about specialized structures in supporting young people looking for a job
• Give an overview on the possibilities of existing trainings in Brussels, highlighting the socio-professional insertion field

This pedagogical kit is realized for the young people to take their place into the society and to make them citizens that show solidarity, that are responsible, active, and critics by:
• Letting them access to a complete information on employment and training
• Facilitating the meeting between those young people and the different services of professional insertion and trainings
• Helping them to define their professional or training project

Number of participants: 4 – 14 (can be played in teams if more participants)

Youth Information tool:
Pedagogical kit

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Read more on SHeryica:
Young Scot in partnership with Creative Scotland and Creative and Cultural Skills

March 2013 to present

1.8 creative apprenticeship programme

Young Scot, national youth information and citizenship charity for Scotland worked with Creative Scotland, the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries in Scotland on their youth employment programme.

This programme involved developing and delivering a programme of apprenticeships, aimed at 16 to 19 year olds across Scotland to help them in to their first work position in a creative organisation. Apprentices were recruited in thirteen different organisations across Scotland, from Stornoway in the Western Isles, to inner city Glasgow. Apprentices were involved in many ‘behind-the-scenes’ roles which young people may not usually consider as a career choice, and included Community Arts Management, Technical Theatre, Live Events and Promotions, Venue and Heritage Operations and Creative and Digital Media. Young people worked for four days a week on average in their workplace and could complete coursework for their level three qualification with a specialist and could complete coursework for their fifth day. Creative Scotland supported some of the costs of the apprentices’ wages, and all young people were recruited on at least the national minimum wage.

Young Scot worked with partners, including Sector Skills Councils, Training Providers and national skills organisation Skills Development Scotland, as well as with employers and apprentices. Young Scot supported employers throughout the process of recruiting a young person, supported with any issues, and provided soft skills and employability training for their apprentices once a month throughout the course of the apprenticeship. An employers’ handbook was developed allowing for best practice to be gathered and shared for future programmes. A fund was also provided that allowed employers and apprentices to address any training needs by requesting to go on additional courses. Young Scot also worked with apprentices, supporting them to develop personal development plans, developing their training needs analysis and working on positive destinations with each of them.

Achievements:

This programme was a huge success and resulted in positive destinations for all young people. The aim of the programme was to maintain the employment of the young people involved if they wished to stay with their employers. By the end of the programme, 68% of apprentices will be going in to a second year of employment with their employer. This is helped by a small amount of incentive funding which was provided by Creative Scotland to allow organisations to gain match funding for the remaining costs. Three of the apprentices have decided to go on to further or higher education, with one being accepted in to the prestigious New York Film Academy where he hopes to develop his career in cinematography. The remaining apprentices have moved on to employment which has suited them more. This programme took a brilliant step towards measuring the possibilities of recruiting young people in to the creative industries and supporting an area of sector growth with fresh talent. All young people were paid a wage which was significantly higher than the standard apprenticeship wage and all for a minimum of one year contracts which could easily be extended. Young people had opportunities developed by the Young Scot Modern Apprenticeship Coordinator which other young people would never have the opportunity to take part in, from backstage work experience at the MOBO Awards, to opportunities to meet and interview people working in their field in different locations and question them about their career journeys. Having a Modern Apprenticeship Coordinator in place meant there was somebody to oversee the programme, ensured there was consistency in practice and that all young people were being adequately supported and allowed for additional training to be in place. The support mechanism was an important tool for employers, many of whom were small organisations with only a few members of staff and minimal human resources expertise. Creative Scotland also developed a progression programme of Traineeships, aimed at 20 to 30 year olds, to reach young people who perhaps were one stage up from an apprenticeship programme.

Number of participants: 13

Youth Information tool:
Our key youth information tool is www.youngscot.net, where we provide information, ideas and opportunities for young people aged 11-26 around youth employability to help them become confident, informed and active citizens.

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Heather Minto, MA Coordinator heatherm@youngscot.org www.youngscot.net

Read more on SHeryica: http://sheryica.org/story/creative-apprenticeship-programme
The Fórmula Jove is a programme sponsored by the Directorate General for Youth and the Catalan Youth Agency in the Government of Catalonia. Fórmula Jove is a social and occupational inclusion and cohesion programme for young people with special difficulties.

The ultimate goal of the programme is that the Catalan society should be able to fully integrate young people in the labour market. To that end we work to reduce situations of disadvantage experienced by groups in a vulnerable situation or process, especially in the fields of training and employment, while not forgetting other factors such as community.

We believe that an essential plus point of this programme, and even more so after the impact of the recession in Catalonia, is increasing youth employment and helping young people find work. We reach that by training them so that they could get jobs in fields of employment and economy that provide a specific response to the demands and benefits of each region.

In addition, the programme seeks to improve networking between professionals, institutions and organisations working with this group.

To this date the programme has benefited nearly 300 young people from all over Catalonia.

Achievements:

The project contributes to the visibility of the diversity of young people in all their aspects. Reducing unemployment rates for young people living in Catalonia, regardless of their origin, is our priority.

In addition, the programme seeks to increase and improve social and occupational opportunities for less qualified young people. This means getting young people who have dropped out of (or been unable to access) education for whatever reason back into school.

Another of the programme’s core areas is enhancing the skills of young people with a lower educational profile.

The programme also aims to foster the integration of young people taking part in the Fórmula Jove through participation in the associations and community life of their area and surroundings.

Number of participants: 300

Youth Information tool: Youth Offices (regional youth services)

For more information:
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2. structured dialogue and participation
Structured Dialogue is a continuous process that brings together young people and policymakers across the European Union to discuss, formulate and make proposals for developing youth policy at the national and European level. Structured dialogue is a part of the EU's Youth Strategy 2010–2018, and its purpose is to promote the involvement of young people in the preparation of decisions that concern them. The overall thematic priority of the next Implementation Plan of Structured Dialogue with Young People (4th cycle for the period until 31 December 2015) is youth empowerment. The aim is to strengthen the access to rights and to highlight the importance of political participation of young people.

Hearing young people's voice and opinion and providing them with space and opportunities is important to enable them to learn to trust society. If young people lack this trust in society, or in their own abilities to make a difference, they will not be interested or motivated to get involved. Therefore, young people's growth and development into active members of society requires space, knowledge and support. A responsibility for young people's upbringing means providing them with opportunities to get acquainted with society and its structures. It is particularly important to show young people how they can make a difference – either on their own or as a group – to society and be genuinely involved in decision-making. Knowledge is a key, and informing young people of their rights is one of the most important tasks of youth information and counselling services. These services also have a crucial role in reaching out to young people.

Everyone working with young people should, for their part, ensure that the opportunities provided by Structured Dialogue are not available only to well-organised, active young people. We should ensure that all young people, regardless of their current situation or background, have an equal opportunity to be involved. We should make sure that young people get a chance to be heard. Structured Dialogue should not be just superficial consultation with young people, but a tool for real dialogue between young people and all actors participating in the development and implementation of policies that concern young people.

By enabling young people's involvement, we are building our common future and the kind of Europe where young people want to live. Feeling good about oneself and being able to strengthen one's skills is important for us all, but particularly for young people. Therefore, this section's good practices in youth information related to participation and involvement are an inspiration and example for all of us. I consider it important that Good Practice in Youth Information is not just for ERYICA's members, but that its excellent examples will be spread widely through different networks and channels.

We have now highlighted a number of good practices: the next step is to find out how effective these projects and measures are in achieving results. To enable high standards for evaluating young people's participation and involvement, we need indicators and key figures. It makes sense to involve young people in developing them. Read more about the targets, national structures and measures of Structured Dialogue. Engage young people in discussion and provide them with space to be heard. Let's make young people visible!
2.1 Youth Voice of Cyprus

The Structured Dialogue is an opportunity for youth of Europe to discuss about important issues that concern them. It is based mainly on public consultations and online questionnaires where young people and also organisations related to youth, discuss vital issues for a better European society for youth.

It is organised by the countries holding the EU presidency.

In Cyprus, the Youth Board of Cyprus which runs Youth Information Centres and Eurodesk, participates at the National Working Group on the Structured Dialogue. Thus, Eurodesk and its multipliers – the YIC – organised successfully during 2013 six regional Public Consultations. The Consultations were organised and achieved based on collaboration with the Cyprus Youth Council. These meetings were organised regionally in different parts of Cyprus. Specifically during the Irish Presidency with a thematic priority of Quality Youth Work, three meetings were achieved as it seems below:

1st Meeting: At the Limassol Youth Information Centre on 30th of January
2nd Meeting: At the Larnaca Youth Information Centre on 12th of June
3rd Meeting: At the Agros Youth Information Centre on 6th of July

Achievements:
Young people of Cyprus had the opportunity to voice up their recommendations based on the aforementioned thematic priorities and have a say on the development of European policies related to youth at both national and regional level.

Online questionnaires, news, results and relevant reports related to Structured Dialogue were disseminated via Eurodesk and YIC on a regular basis, through social networking (emails, Facebook and Twitter) and also via newsletters and websites such as the European Youth Portal and Youth Board of Cyprus. An additional relevant dissemination tool is the Structured Dialogue Online Blog (developed by an intern of the YIC), where policies, information, pictures, data of meetings and conferences are available to youth of Cyprus. The dissemination process is also supported and achieved with the help of the National Working Group on the Structured Dialogue based on collaboration with Eurodesk, Youth in Action, YIC and general support from the Youth Board of Cyprus.

Participants who took part at the Public Consultations had then participated at the European Youth Conferences and had also become Youth Ambassadors of the SD in Cyprus. The Youth Ambassadors had also contributed to the SD section of the European Youth Portal.

Most importantly, the results of the national consultations but also the Joint

Recommendations are used by the YIC to advocate young people’s needs towards relevant stakeholders, according to the different topics under discussion.

Number of Participants:
53

Youth Information Tool:
Public Debate

For more information:
Eleftheria Christoforou
cheleutheria@youthboard.org.cy
www.youthboard.org.cy

Read more on SHEryica:
http://sheryica.org/story/structured-dialogue-youth-voice-cyprus
2.2 democratic participation – listening to the voices of young people

Aġenzija Żgħażagħ has taken a number of initiatives to enhance young people’s right to information, democratic participation and civic engagement and actively involve young people in debates and policy-forming dialogue in relation to the European youth policy agenda.

The Local Youth Councils Project creates a space where young people can actively and directly participate in their local community and the No Hate Speech Campaign aims to promote intercultural understanding and mutual respect particularly among young people.

As part of these initiatives and in the light of the European Parliamentary elections in 2014, Aġenzija Żgħażagħ secured EU funding under the Youth in Action programme for a project entitled Having your voice heard in Europe – through the ballot box.

The aim of the project was not only to inform and facilitate young people’s active participation in European Parliamentary elections but also to foster in them an appreciation and knowledge of the democratic process itself and its importance for their lives and that of their communities.

As part of the project, Aġenzija Żgħażagħ, employing its register of young people who hold the European Youth Card (some 3,000 young people) and its register of national and local youth organisations (some 100 organisations), conducted an online survey of young people between the ages of 18 and 30 during the period February-March 2014.

The aim of the project was to promote European citizenship and strengthen the information and knowledge base of young people in Malta through their active engagement and participation in the democratic process leading up to the European Parliamentary elections in 2014.

The project employed a variety of measures – public events, publications, videos, vox pops and discussion forums – that aimed to inform young people about the nature and role of the democratic process at European level and the role of the European Parliament in particular.

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Achievements:
A number of identifiable features are apparent from the survey as regards the voting patterns and intentions of young people in both national and European elections, their views of the role of the European Parliament and their attitudes to and expectations of politics at European level.

With regard to voting in General Elections and European Parliamentary elections, the response was very positive. Almost 79% of respondents indicated that they had voted in the 2013 General Election, while almost 75% expressed their intention to vote in the European Parliamentary elections in 2014.

These findings are in line with the evidence which places voting by Maltese young people among the highest in the European Union.

Over 70% of respondents were aware of the role, structure and composition of the European Parliament, while over 60% of respondents expressed a willingness to involve themselves in the electoral process for the European Parliament.

With regard to the issue of European citizenship, the response was also positive.

Almost 80% of respondents considered themselves as being European as well as Maltese citizens, while over 70% indicated that they were aware of their rights as European citizens.

Immigration, education and employment were the most important national issues respondents would like Maltese MEPs to raise in the European Parliament.

In general, respondents emerge as active in the electoral process at both national and European levels and positively aware of the role of the European Parliament and Maltese MEPs. They have a positive view of European citizenship and they appear to see the European Parliament as a means of addressing issues that are as much local and national – immigration, education and employment – as they are European.

Number of participants:
600

Youth Information tool:

For more information:
jason.zammit@gov.mt

Read more on SHEryica:
http://sheryica.org/story/democratic-participation-listening-voices-young-people
Belgium
Info J Centre Indigo and Maison de la Laïcité de La Louvière

Ongoing project since 2006 updated every year and adapted according to the type of elections happening (local, regional, federal, European)

2.3 de deux/trois choses l’urne

“De deux/trois choses l’urne” is an exhibition-animation created by the local information center Info J and Maison de la Laïcité (La Louvière – Belgium), where the young people have to build their own city, so they can understand how a city is organized in an interactive and funny way.

They can also exchange their points of view, choose the priorities of the city and manage the decisions about concrete situations.

They participate to the city elections in comparing their self-created fictional programs with the real programs. For the older, an approach of the belgian political configuration with the political divide and its structuration will be proposed.

It has been created in partnership with Latitude J2 du Centre et de Soignies, Lire et Ecrire Mons-Centre-Borinage, the Ciep-MOC, the Club Achille Chavée and the FPS du Centre et de Soignies.

Achievements:
This series of animations aim to inform the participants about the democracy, its role and the political issues. But it is also a way to discover the hidden face of the elections: how to make a decision, the problematic of the compulsory vote, the type and organization of the votes and the counting.

“De deux choses l’urne” is an activity addressed to the youngsters of 12 years and is composed of 2 phases.

The first one is ‘to build the city’ where the participants have to choose 30 buildings amongst 150 proposed buildings. The chosen buildings correspond to what a city must have and to the desires of the participants. When the buildings have been selected, a debate can start.

The second part « to organize elections » starts with explanations about the working of elections in a global view. Then, the participants must create a believable party and propose a program. From this point, they can compare with the parties. Then comes the vote and the “De trois choses l’urne” is addressed also to the older. This activity develops the 2 phases (explained) with an additional phase where we explain the differences between the political parties, their development following the history of Belgium, information about the votes rights, the left/right political divide, the counting of votes...

Number of participants: 6 to 30

Youth Information tool: Role play and simulation game

For more information:
Sabine Robaye
sabine@centreindigo.org

Read more online:

Read more on SHEryica:
JUBEL (Jugendbeteiligung Liechtenstein, English: Youth Participation Liechtenstein) is a project founded by the Youth Information Centre Liechtenstein (aha – Tipps und Infos für junge Leute).

It was started seven years ago and has since become more than just a project and a process. JUBEL has become a community of young people that are influencing their future. It is a network for exchange. We work together to create something better.

How do youngsters between 13 and 16 become active citizens? What triggers young people to start thinking about the kind of society in which they want to live? There are many open questions connected to participation and youth, but we’ll start with some background.

JUBEL is seen as a countrywide youth parliament that is a platform to connect with other youngsters as well as with politicians and decision-makers throughout Liechtenstein. At the start of the academic year, all new class representatives are invited to a workshop weekend where we focus on 4 things: (1) getting to know each other and teambuilding; (2) discovering the characteristics of a class representative; (3) learning how to speak and act in public; and (4) learning how to realise dreams and projects. This way, youngsters are being supported to participate in co-creating a better future for them and us “grownups”.

During the months that follow, the project groups that were formed during the workshop weekend are supported by mentors.

Shortly after the workshop weekend, there is an event which aims to find additional youngsters that did not previously have the chance to participate, e.g. people that are not class representatives. They select a group to join to support a project.

The third event, which takes place in March, is called “the general JUBEL assembly”, where the youngsters present their ideas to politicians, representatives from civil society and other interested parties. Moreover, they have the chance to get feedback and build partnerships that can help with the implementation of their projects. As the country is small, decision-makers are contacted directly, meaning the Jublers can make the most of these “short ways” and learn how to use them to their advantage.

The key to work successfully with youngsters is to meet them as equals, have good examples of projects that have already been successful, and be empathetic. Moreover, the mentors have a good understanding for where they are at in their lives (e.g. defining themselves, being in love, physical changes, etc.)

JUBEL is a learning environment for everybody; Coordinator as well as mentor. Learning by doing is a central value of JUBEL; the Jublers explore how to realise their projects themselves. The Coordinator guides them in this process through non-formal learning methods. JUBEL alumni provide mentorship support to the new Jublers. It is a continuous learning journey for participants and the people that facilitate the process.

In short, JUBEL builds a framework and a guideline throughout the year so that the youngsters can initiate and realise projects that they care about.

Achievements:
With JUBEL, more than 300 young people could become active to shape their surroundings and future. Those people were giving life to about 30 projects. In addition, some former participants are still mentoring new groups that form out of JUBEL or have their own initiatives, e.g. the Liechtenstein Youth council (www.jugendrat.li).

Number of participants:
35-50 each year

Youth Information tool:
Workshops and training sessions, working in project groups, public debates

For more information:
Elias Kindle
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http://vimeo.com/jubel/

Read more on SHEryica:
http://sheryica.org/story/young-people-take-future-their-hands
2.5 politics as a boring matter for youngsters? think again!

On the occasion of the European elections in 2014 De Ambrassade designed¹ a game to inform and sensitize youngsters about the impact of the EU as a decision-making body on our daily life.

Through the game complex subjects of European politics are made concrete. The youngsters discover in an accessible, playful and competitive way the challenges and opportunities of the EU today. The game, available in Dutch and French, is structured around 5 big subjects:

- Education (studying abroad, cooperation of schools, non-formal learning...)
- Jobs (working abroad, youth guarantee, mini-jobs...)
- Digital media (privacy, media literacy, safe internet...)
- Europe in the world (international cooperation, migration, travelling...)
- Environmental policy (sustainability, emission rights...)

The development of this game is just one of the actions undertaken within a bigger project in order to stimulate political interest and participation within the main target group of youngsters from 16 to 26. All pillars of this project were realized with the support of the Youth in Action programme.

Besides the game about Europe, 100 youngsters got the opportunity to work out their own political campaign. With this action De Ambrassade wanted to make the dreams, opinions and concerns of youngsters visible within the ongoing election campaign for the regional and federal elections. The participating youngsters, who were challenged, inspired and coached all the way through the project by De Ambrassade, organised local initiatives to go into dialogue with other youngsters about their subject, such as a debate in school or in a youth club. Personal campaign posters with strong statements were created and spread through diverse channels. The campaigns were often fresh alternatives for specific societal challenges from a young perspective. Some popular topics: youth unemployment, education, sustainability, mobility, food waste...

Eventually the youngsters gathered the results of their campaign work in the Flemish Parliament and presented it to politicians. In this way, the point of view of youngsters was pushed forward on the political agenda.

To be able to participate, information is the key. Parallel to the events mentioned above, De Ambrassade added clear and accessible information about politics to her generalist youth information website www.jongerengids.be. Complex political terminology and information about our democratic system was translated in no-nonsense information. On top of this, a website was created with information about the point of view of the political parties on 15 subjects important by youngsters. You can find this position matrix here: http://www.moederallerstandpunten.be/.

Achievements:
Different goals were set for this project. Making sure young people can make informed choices when going to vote, engaging them to take action and speak up, stimulating them to weigh on the political debate, and last but not least: convincing politicians of the importance to take into account the point of view of young people. Because youngsters do have political opinions!

As concrete results De Ambrassade had more than 20 games sessions initiated, 70 campaign images were created with opinions of approximately 100 youngsters. Visitor numbers peeked massively on our youth information websites, especially in the days before the elections. The closing event was streamed on several big media websites and was even broadcasted on television. The event was also a trending topic on Twitter.

Youth Information tool:
An informational game, youth information websites, training

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http://deschoonmoeder.be/

¹ The Centre of Informative Games developed the game in assignment of De Ambrassade, La Conseil de la Jeunesse and JEF België.

Read more on SHeryica: http://sheryica.org/story/election-project-2014-politics-boring-matter-youngsters-think-again-0
3. peer-to-peer
Vertti is a peer-to-peer youth information initiative, funded by a grant from the Ministry of Education, which started as a pilot project in the Turku region in 2007.

The idea was to try a new type of peer-to-peer information model, and one of the objectives was to encourage and involve young people in planning and carrying out youth information activities in their school. The guiding principles were to mobilise young people’s own ideas to improve the availability of youth information at school and to develop co-operation between municipal youth workers and schools.

How to become a VIO
In the Vertti initiative, 13 to 16-year-old secondary school students that have volunteered to participate are trained to become peer-to-peer youth information officers (Vertti information officers, VIO). They operate in their own schools and collaborate with local youth workers and the school, improving the regional youth information and counselling services to better meet the genuine needs of young people. The number of VIOs in a school can vary between two and six, depending on the level of enthusiasm. The total number of VIOs in the Turku region each year is around sixty.

VIOs are selected by schools either at the end of the spring term or as soon as the autumn term begins. The same young people may participate throughout the secondary school. Young people may become VIOs in several different ways. Some volunteer to participate, while others join in after their teachers have encouraged them to do so. Some schools even arrange a special application process, which resembles the process of applying for a job, during which existing VIOs interview the candidates before selection. Some VIOs are also peer students in their school or belong to a municipal youth council.

What VIOs do
Since the Vertti initiative is a joint effort between schools and the municipal youth services, three different people need to be involved: 1) a secondary school student who wants to become a VIO; 2) a contact person at school, such as a principal, student counsellor or teacher; and 3) a youth worker who coordinates the VIOs.

At school, VIOs and the coordinating youth workers meet about once a month, usually at mid-morning break or another time during the school day. During the meetings, they discuss topical information needs and the ways to respond. Information channels include classroom alerts, announcements through the public address system, bulletin boards, and the school’s public display system and website. The coordinator provides support to VIOs and guides them in information provision issues as well as joins them for visits to joint regional VIO meetings and events.

Meetings across municipal boundaries
All the VIOs and coordinators of the Turku region meet around three times during each term. The meetings always involve a training theme, light snacks and more relaxed mingling, such as party games, which helps VIOs from different municipalities and schools to learn to know each other. During the meetings, VIOs have practised preparing news releases, making magazines, using a microphone and performing in front of a video camera.

Every spring, VIOs are involved in organising a charity concert, coordinated by the municipality of Lieto. For the concert, VIOs volunteer in different tasks according to their own interests: sell advance tickets, make stage announcements and take care of catering for artists and VIP guests.

Every year, VIOs have Christmas and spring parties where the VIOs in the region get together to have some fun: bowling, snowshoeing or something else. At the end of the spring term, VIOs get a certificate.

Achievements:
After the project, the tried-and-tested initiative has become an elemental part of youth work in nine municipalities in the Turku region. The initiative is coordinated by the Youth Work Centre of the Leisure Section of the City of Turku, but co-operation in planning and implementation in the participating municipalities covers all youth workers who work as Vertti coordinators. In addition to joint meetings, the coordinators communicate with each other via e-mail and through a closed Facebook group.

Number of participants:
50-60 young people participate every year, 400 young people in total so far

Youth Information tool:
Peer-to-peer youth information model

For more information:
www.pointti.info/vertti (in Finnish)
Mirja Teräs, Youth Secretary, City of Turku / Leisure Section / Youth Work Centre
mirja.teras@turku.fi

Read more on SHEryica:
http://sheryica.org/story/vertti-peer-peer-youth-information-initiative-finland
The Regional Service of Youth and Sport is the department responsible for the implementation and development of public youth policies adopted by the Regional Government of Madeira.

The Active Youth program was created in 2003, with the aim of encouraging the participation and collaboration of young people in the Youth Information Centres/Lojas de Juventude of the Region of Madeira.

The Youth Information Centres (YIC) of Madeira provide free internet access and information service to young people. In order to increase access to youth information we have seven YIC in Madeira Island, geographically distributed over 6 counties, namely: Funchal, Camacha, Machico, Porto Moniz, Ribeira Brava, Santana e São Vicente.

The Active Youth Program has the following objectives:

- Empowering young participants with new knowledge in information and communication technologies and in interpersonal relations;
- Sensitize the youth for a fruitful occupation of their leisure time;
- Increase the interest of young people for the future exercise of professional activities;
- Contribute to the process of non-formal education of young people.

This program is for young people aged between 16 and 30 years, which prove to be integrated in education or training system or, having completed their compulsory schooling, aren’t exercising any professional activity or are obeying educational tutelary measure.

The selection process of young people consists of two phases: individual interview and conclusion of training with good performance.

The training provided by the Regional Service of Youth and Sport aims to develop skills in interpersonal relations, information technology and first aid. The young people placed in the Program receive a monetary compensation and have right to personal accident insurance. They develop activity during the week or on weekends, according to the working hours of the YIC where they are placed with safeguarding of their school hours, not exceeding eight hours per day.

The young participants in the Program are responsible to disseminate youth information, assist users in accessing internet and computer tools in general and help in the implementation of the activities in the YIC.

Achievements:
This program gives the opportunity to the participants gain experience in a professional context and allows them to put into practice their knowledge and skills. We are currently planning empower the participants in the program in specific areas of youth information.

In 2013, the YIC of Madeira Region provided support to 43 100 users, a number that has grown over the years and has been driving the opening of new Centres, which were three in 2003 and now, in 2014, are seven.

In 2014, we are not opening a new YIC but we are changing the location of one of them, and looking for young people where they can benefit more from their location.

Number of participants:
326 young people placed since 2003

Youth Information tool:
Youth Information Knowledge Transfer

For more information:
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3.3 watch your web infoscouts

“Watch your web” is a project on consumer protection oriented Youth Information and Media Literacy in social networks. It aims to sensitize youth for a responsible use of data online.

Besides an information portal, a video magazine and information brochures, the project also makes use of the Peer-to-Peer approach and involves youth in the information. It organizes trainings for young people to become a so called Infoscout.

The “watch your web Infoscouts” help others with using digital media in a safe and responsible way. They address problems and demonstrate safe practices.

Any keen young person between 14 and 20 interested in media can become an Infoscout.

Infoscouts take on the responsibility to be available as contact persons for topics related to Internet Security at school, in youth groups and online. They are trained in the fields of “data privacy”, “Smartphone security”, “consumer protection” and “cybermobbing” and learn methods which enable them to pass on their knowledge to others.

Every Infoscout is obliged to organize an event on a specific subject. This can be a workshop, a presentation, a flash mob, a consultation-hour and much else. They receive and create materials for their performance with which they can inform other young people about the edited topics.

Number of participants: 25

Youth Information tool: Online, in Social Networks, and directly peer-to-peer in schools or youth groups

For more information: www.watchyourweb.de

Read more on SHEryica: http://sheryica.org/story/watch-your-web-infoscouts

Achievements:
So far two three-day Workshops have taken place – one in Berlin and one in Cologne, during which 25 youngsters were trained to be “watch your web Infoscouts”. After the workshops, online meetings were offered to support and advise the young people with their projects. Some of them informed their peer-group online in social networks, others organised information events in their school. Furthermore, a group of Infoscouts was on hand for E-Mail consultation during the “European Cyber Security Month”.

Germany
IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany
Since 2013