



DJS/TC LOM (2010) 1

Strasbourg, 18 January 2010

Training course

Democratic Leadership and Management of Youth Organisations

Strengthening the sustainability capacity of youth
organisations through their democratic leadership and
management

**6 – 14 April 2010
European Youth Centre, Strasbourg**

**Course description
Call for applications**

<http://www.coe.int/youth>

Youth policy and youth participation

The Council of Europe is the continent's oldest political organisation, created in 1949 on the basis of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Today, the organisation brings together 47 member states; its mission in relation to its core values remains fully relevant, as the purpose of building a more cohesive and united Europe remains a permanent challenge.

The Council of Europe has since long considered the role of young people and their organisations in the building of Europe and securing its core values as a crucial one. The creation of the European Youth Centre and European Youth Foundation in Strasbourg, in 1972, responded to the needs to promote independent and viable international youth organisations, where young people and youth leaders could practise democracy, citizenship and civil society development while playing a pioneering role in international cooperation and intercultural learning.

Providing opportunities for those young people most actively involved in international youth organisations and in international youth work to develop their leadership and communication skills became one of the main missions of the youth sector of the Council of Europe. Such was the purpose of the intercultural language courses and of the first international courses for youth leaders. The creation of the European Youth Centre Budapest in 1995 has further strengthened the capacity and role of the Council of Europe's youth sector and enabled it to respond to the new realities of the continent. The European Youth Centres have thus enlarged the range of training and educational opportunities for youth organisations while developing new training concepts that took into account the new realities and needs of youth work and youth policy across Europe.

The policy and programme of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council is based on four working priorities defined by its governmental and non-governmental partners in Agenda 2020 set by the 8th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for youth¹ and the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe²:

- Human rights and democracy: youth policy and youth work promoting the core values of the Council of Europe
- Living together in diverse societies: youth policy and youth work promoting intercultural dialogue
- Social inclusion of young people
- Policy approaches and instruments benefiting young people and children

Youth organisations are key partners in the planning and implementation of these projects, reflecting the philosophy of co-management between the governmental and non-governmental sectors. They also play a key role in the implementation of the programme, notably through study sessions and in running activities supported by the European Youth Foundation.

Active involvement in a youth organisation is one way for young people to participate in society and to practise and exercise democratic power sharing. Therefore, well-developed and dedicated youth organisations are one of the prerequisites for greater participation of young people in society. Many youth organisations experience challenges related to their sustainability, as a result of sociological developments or/and as a result of youth policy

¹ Final Declaration: "The future of the Council of Europe youth policy: AGENDA 2020 - http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/IG_Coop/8_CEMRY_declaration_en.asp#TopOfPage

² Resolution CM/Res(2008)23 on the youth policy of the Council of Europe - http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/IG_Coop/8_CEMRY_CM_resolution2008_23_en.asp#TopOfPage

changes. The Joint Council of Youth, the co-managed decision-making body of the Directorate of Youth and Sport has thus decided to pay particular attention to the sustainability of youth organisations and to initiate projects that can contribute to it.

Why a Training Course on Democratic Leadership and Management of Youth Organisations?

Given that the role of youth organisations is also to be the voice of young people, trained to exercise democracy, they are irreplaceable partners in youth work and youth policy. The sustainability of these youth organisations is therefore key to their effectiveness and the effectiveness of youth policy.

An important component of their sustainability is related to the capacity of their leadership to organise and mobilise their members, the young people, in ways that not only secure the viability of their projects but also, equally importantly, secure an effective democratic participation and citizenship. Democratic leadership skills are thus important in any organisation. But no one is born a democratic youth leader: leadership and democracy can be learned and, moreover, can always be improved.

It is equally important to support the development of management practices of youth organisations that enable sustainability and participation. At the level of the Council of Europe, this is especially relevant for those who develop and run international activities and where intercultural processes are a daily reality and often represent an additional challenge.

In November 2009, the Council of Europe organised an expert seminar on “promoting and sustaining the role of Youth NGOs”. The participants in this meeting, who were representatives of international and national youth NGOs, drafted recommendations on how the Council of Europe and other institutions and organisations could support youth organisations in sustaining their role. The first course on democratic leadership and management of youth organisations was originally held in 2008. The present edition of this course builds on this experience and the conclusions from the seminar on promoting and sustaining the role of Youth NGOs.

This training course aims to enable young people actively involved in the running of youth structures to develop their attitudes, improve their skills and receive additional information and knowledge in order to manage youth organisations (programme, units or boards) in a democratic, efficient and effective manner. Ultimately these improvements should result in an increase of the quality of the activities these organisations run, in their sustainability and in their contribution to youth policy bodies and structures.

The course is rooted in the experiences of three landmark courses offered by the Directorate of Youth and Sport in the past years:

- the training course “Working in International Youth Structures” to introduce newcomers in international youth work to the existing international structures for youth participation;
- the training course on “Organisational Management”, intended to develop the capacity of managers in international youth organisations as a way to make them more efficient and sustainable;
- the training courses on “Youth Participation” which attempted, in different ways, to foster the participation of young people in and through youth projects.

The course on Democratic Leadership and Management of Youth Organisations is, however, more than a just a synthesis of these three. It is intended to serve as a “laboratory” for the educational and political role of the Directorate of Youth and Sport and its capability and focus

on organising and delivering training of democratic youth leaders in view of further developing the role of youth organisations and democratic youth leadership.

Approach and main contents

Democracy, Civil Society, Human Rights, Citizenship and Participation will be the core concepts as well as the basis for this training course.

Furthermore, the concept of youth policy, the role of youth organisations therein and the approaches of the main European institutions/organisations active in the field of youth policy will be introduced. The course programme will also provide participants with the opportunity to develop their ability to contribute to the sustainability of youth organisations, including advocacy, democratic and shared leadership, empowering and motivating volunteers, bringing democratic and quality decisions, resource management, conflict management, development of organisational strategies and organisational learning. This training course will concentrate on youth organisations that are active at national and international level.

The course is founded in the conviction that non-formal education and intercultural learning are the basis of any educational process in youth work at European level. Furthermore, these two are very important for every process of organisational learning.

The emphasis put on young people - multipliers and their supporting organisations secures concrete impact and a response to real needs in the youth organisations. The course will empower the participants (who will be actively in touch with their board/secretariat and analyse their needs, as well as opportunities together) to introduce changes in their organisations. These changes, if democratic, multipliable and effective, should contribute to the development of the youth organisations and to greater youth policy, as well as youth participation in civil society, in general.

Main aim:

The main of the training course is to strengthen the capacity and sustainability of youth organisations by developing the competences of their democratic leadership and management structures.

Objectives:

- To develop a common understanding of the concepts related to democratic leadership, such as: democracy, participation and leadership, civil society, human rights and citizenship
- To raise participants' awareness and provide space to reflect upon the value of youth organisations/structures - their role and impact as democratic leaders within society
- To develop the participants' ability to relate the work of their organisations with youth policy
- To develop participants' understanding and knowledge of various forms of youth participation through youth organisations
- To introduce the main European institutions and organisations engaging in youth policy development and implementation
- To define and further develop leadership and civic competences as well as relevant management skills (conflict management, advocacy, motivation, shared leadership, decision making, empowerment, strategic planning, resource management)
- To support participants in analyzing and further developing their organisation internal processes and mechanisms

- To raise awareness of the importance of intercultural learning within youth organisations and develop participants' competences to work in intercultural environments
- To promote co-operation between youth organisations in Europe

Methodology

The course is designed as a mutual learning situation, where participants can experience and compare different approaches to democratic leadership and managing youth organisations. The course programme and contents are organised so as to encourage participation, shared leadership and responsibility of the group, while using active and participatory methods. The programme of the training course will provide space for individual as well as group reflection and debate, furthermore, take into account the experience of participants before, during and after the course. Contributions from experts, visits, workshops and group work will help to create the theoretical and practical framework in which participants will reflect upon existing organisational concepts and structures and how to develop them further. In this learning process, the youth organisation, in which the participants are active, will be involved through open communication channels. A team of experienced trainers organises the learning process and provides guidance to the participants' personal development during the course. A short preparation before the course and follow-up after the activity are planned through the e-learning platform of the Directorate of Youth and Sport.

Working Languages

English and Russian are foreseen as the working languages of the course (with simultaneous interpretation). However, to better evaluate participants' language needs, applicants are kindly requested to mention in their application forms *all* the languages in which they are able to work.

Participants' Profile

The course is addressed to active members of international and national youth organisations or other youth structures concerned by the sustainability of youth organisations.

Applicants should have a specific practical experience in leading and managing youth organisations. Priority will be given to candidates who are, or intend to be, part of the leadership and management of their youth organisation, particularly those in charge of international youth activities.

All applicants must:

- be aged between 18 and 30 years
- be a youth leader and multiplier, actively involved in a youth organisation or governmental service at national or international level, working with young people
- be in a position to take on responsibilities within their organisation after the course be ready to learn and further develop their personal competences
- be well informed about their organisation and prepared to explain its activities to the other participants
- be able to work in one of the two working languages of the course - English and Russian (Applicants must have sufficient understanding of either of the working languages of the course in order to comprehend and complete the application form without assistance from another person.)

- be committed to attend the full duration of the course
- be actively supported by their youth organisation or institution - before, during and after the training course.

Procedure for applications

All candidates must apply by filling in the online application form available at <http://courses.opencontent.it/>. The recommendation letter from a sending organisation or institution must be attached to this application. The applications received by post or e-mail will NOT be accepted.

The preparatory team will select 30 participants on the basis of the profile outlined above, ensuring a balanced group (sex, geographical regions, different types of experiences, cultural backgrounds and organisations).

A waiting list may be established. Candidates will be informed as to whether their application has been accepted, rejected or put on the waiting list, by 23 February 2010.

The applications must be accompanied by a letter of recommendation/support from the sending organisation or service, **by 11 February 2010** (at the latest). The letter of support for the candidate should explain the need and the value for the sending organisation or authority and for the candidate to attend this course. If an organisation wishes to propose more than one candidate, the order of priority should be clearly indicated and justification for the priority list should be provided. Applications without a recommendation letter will not be accepted.

The board/secretariat member signing the support letter commits him/herself to actively support and frequently communicate with the participant before, during and after the training course. Open communication channels while the participant is at the training course, including full support and interest of the sending organisation in the learning process of the participant is crucial, for a sustainable follow-up by the organisation itself and by the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe.

Financial conditions

- Board and lodging are provided and paid for by the Council of Europe at the European Youth Centre Strasbourg;
- Travel expenses are fully reimbursed according to the rules of the Council of Europe;
- An enrolment fee of 60 EURO is due by each participant for each the course. This fee will be deducted from the amount to be reimbursed for travel expenses;

Other activities of the Directorate of Youth and Sport

If you are interested in activities related to international youth work, but your profile does not fully correspond with the requirements of this course, please note that the Directorate of Youth and Sport organises other education and training activities. Further information can be obtained from the Directorate of Youth and Sports' Secretariat or from www.coe.int/youth.

In addition to this training course, the Directorate of Youth and Sport has other measures to support the sustainability of youth organisations. These include field activities, seminars and experts meetings, some of them held in the framework of the Partnership on Youth between the European Commission and the Council of Europe. The European Youth Foundation also plays an important role in the support of youth projects and administrative structures of international youth organisations and networks.

Deadline for applications: 11 February 2010

In case you have questions, please contact Nina Kapoor in the European Youth Centre Strasbourg at Nina.Kapoor@coe.int