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European Conference 'Youth for Human Rights: The role and potential of youth work for Human Rights Education mainstreaming'

Tallinn, Estonia / 29th-30th October 2019.

Event summary

The Conference was organised with the aim to share and valorise the outcomes of the Erasmus+ programme Key Action 3 'Youth for Human Rights' project regarding the state of play and practices of HRE in youth work in Europe and to strengthen the commitment and initiate the mainstreaming of HRE in youth work at local, national and European level.

The conference brought together around 120 stakeholders from all over Europe, including Erasmus+ National Agencies, European institutions, local/regional/national authorities, universities, NGO's, human rights education experts, trainers, youth workers and other stakeholders eager to contribute and commit to the mainstreaming of human rights education. The approach was to look into future while celebrating achievements of the project so far. Thus the results of the conference are at least bi-folded:

1. Reflections and inputs from conference participants to be conveyed as policy recommendations for youth programmes and youth policies' development.
2. Action planning and commitments taken by conference participants working on local, regional, national and European level on mainstreaming HRE in youth work.

Furthermore, the conference has resulted in networking among participants according to their own assessments.

Key points

The programme flow was maintained and aims of the Conference reached from the viewpoint of facilitators, but also organisers and majority of participants. The Youth for Human Rights project' results were explored and discussions evolved around the question of mainstreaming Human Rights Education in Youth Work. In particular five specific areas were covered from European programs and policy perspectives:

- The role of Erasmus+ programme National Agencies
- Competence frameworks for youth workers and trainers in the youth field
- Inspiring better policy conditions
- Potential for Cross-sectoral cooperation
- Contributions from Different youth work settings

Human rights education gained additional validation and Conference participants committed to diverse set of actions on local, regional, national and European level. The identified actions are mainly focusing on awareness raising and capacity building. There are also actions looking into potential of networking, participatory budgeting, advocating in relevant policy fields and learning from good practices. At European level in particular actions and commitments were looking into different ways of mainstreaming HRE in different plans and programs.

Main lessons learnt from the organisational and methodological perspectives are:



- Importance of providing enough space and opportunities for participants to actively engage with and learn in depth about project and created outputs, before being able to discuss future;
- Importance of thorough preparation and timely involvement of key resources for ensuring equally high quality level of workshops facilitation and experts inputs throughout the Conference and for all participants;
- Graphic facilitation and visual identity of the Conference are among key factors contributing to creating the right atmosphere and reaching the aims;
- Importance of providing additional time for allowing greater interaction of participants with experts in regards their inputs and also in general providing time and space for participants to bring to the plenary new topics for discussion;
- Importance of effective and efficient communication among the (enlarged) organising team for synchronised functioning of team realising joint vision of the Conference.

Evaluation from participants

Just after the end of the Conference many participants have approached organisers and facilitators to express their positive or enthusiastic feedback regarding the Conference.

The online evaluation has seen 68 questionnaires fulfilled by participants, with the 73% of them satisfied or very satisfied with the Conference.

Several comments underline that:

- it has been a good or great Conference, with a good or excellent organization: programme, speakers, facilitators, participants, presentations, graphics & visual identity, creative environment, results and venue.
- the Conference has been inspiring and most appreciated contributions have been the keynotes, panels, inputs in workshops, work on recommendations, exploration of the project with the living books, plenary discussions, graphic visualisation, and real stories and examples (like Musti's one);
- it also gave the chance of meeting other stakeholders and members of the Human Rights community;
- youth work has a crucial importance for mainstreaming Human Rights Education and protecting democracy;
- HRE values are important for youth work and are empowering young people;
- cross sectoral cooperation and competence frameworks are key points for the mainstreaming of Human Rights Education in youth work;
- Conference participants commit themselves to reconfirm and promote more activities and projects, find new approaches, revise curricula, introduce elements of HRE in the everyday work, in order to mainstream Human Rights Education in youth work and among young people at local and international level;

There are also some critical points and suggestions, for example some participants:

- were expecting more insights about the YfHR project;



- were not totally clear with workshops' aim and format;
- didn't find appropriate the method/structure/facilitation of their workshop;
- don't know how draft recommendations were developed, find not clear to whom final recommendations are addressed, wonder why some of them are very concrete and some others are very generic;
- think that more time was needed, the Conference should have been longer.

Evaluation of project partners

As final meeting, project partners (the 7 NAS of Youth for Human Rights) had their evaluation round about the Conference together with the facilitation team.

Main points highlighted during the evaluation are the following:

- format has been successful, it has not been a typical conference: it has been actionable and inspiring, and this has strengthened the commitment of participants;
- invited experts gave valuable and original contributions with their inputs;
- inputs were inspiring for some participants, not so much for others;
- there has been a good mix of participants: people coming from grassroots youth work, experts of HRE, institutions' representatives, etc. with different visions;
- event atmosphere was nice;
- event facilitation has been smooth, well done;
- graphic facilitation has been a key to Conference success;
- outcomes of the project have been well presented and the Conference has underlined the power of the YfHR project;
- team of project partners has remained in the background, their work has been almost invisible (positive feeling);
- contributions of participants (also in terms of recommendations) have been interesting;
- it has been a great opportunity for networking, important to guarantee a consistent follow up;
- there has not been enough time for interaction with the public after experts' inputs.

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