



European Activities to Strengthen Youth (E.A.S.Y.)



E.A.S.Y. Booklet Series Vol. 2

V.I.P.-Training Course Bonn/Germany ■ 20.-29.07.2007

Midterm Conference & V.I.P.-Training Course ■ Logroño/Spain 20.-28.03.2008

Final Conference ■ Berlin/Germany 10.-14.12.2008



Education and Culture DG

'Youth in Action' Programme



Wissenschaftsstadt
Darmstadt



E.A.S.Y. - The Booklet Series

Welcome to the second volume of the E.A.S.Y. Booklet Series. The series documents the process and outcomes of E.A.S.Y., a large scale European project* which lasted from 2006 to 2008. E.A.S.Y. stands for: „European Activities to Strengthen Youth“ and was realized within the framework of the Youth in Action Programme operated by the European Commission. E.A.S.Y. dealt with innovative approaches in European youth work with special focus on the involvement of young people with fewer opportunities into activities starting from the local and aiming up to an European level of mobility and exchange - a level that often seems to be ‚completely out of reach‘ for the target group in question: „Europe? That’s something ‚inaccessible‘, a ‚mystery‘, maybe for the others, but not for me!“ ... really? We were not sure about it, but motivated to find literally easy ways to extend the chances of participation of young people with fewer opportunities. First of all in so called Local Attractor

Projects, but also on the occasion of international meetings and during training activities where good practice experiences and knowledge could be exchanged and methodologies of involvement and participation could be elaborated.

The so called V.I.P. approach was in the center of all activities: young people do certainly have the biggest competence to deal with their own affairs, and when it comes to youth work it is probably them who know best what the role of the so called „professionals“ should be in order to facilitate the achievement of their goals. The project was run by a network of six partner organisations from Germany (Network ROPE), Italy (GIOSEF UNITO), Lithuania (Youth Exchange Agency), Poland (SZANSA), Spain (Inter Europa), and the UK (TribesNETribes). The Centre of Excellence (CoEx), established from the (local) project coordinators and young V.I.P.s, was in charge of project-management, documentation and public relations. We hope you will enjoy reading our second booklet a lot!



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The V.I.P.-TC Diary

A day-to-day record of the
Training Course

Friday, 20th of July 2007

V.I.P.s and local coordinators are arriving to Bonn during the day. The weather is hot and only the Italian group that is driving all the way from Torino by car might be not too happy with this fact. The TC-venue Haus Venusberg is situated on a beautiful hill and surrounded by rather posh villas. We do like the place at first sight, not only because it offers perfect working conditions (we can use the biggest conference room equipped with any kind of tools appropriate for international conferences) but also a party-cellar for the afterwork-part of the programme.

Monday, 21st of July 2007

The V.I.P.-TC starts with an official welcome speech by Sven Rasch and Andi Krauss. In order to familiarize participants with the location Annette Mütter of IKAB e.V. gives us a little tour around the building. We learn where buses to Bonn downtown departure from and where they arrive back - not too much a surprise that the two bus-stops are opposite side of the street, but much of a surprise that they don't drive really late at night.

We better stay inhouse!

Back at the seminar room then we have a close look at all the V.I.P.-TC's programme - it is as dense as intense and focuses especially on the development of Local Attractor Projects and V.I.P.s' skills and competences. But also a „Trip to Cologne“ is planned for Thursday, a place that should not be missed by anyone who's just around. Some ice-breakers and getting-to-know-each-other-games help everybody to prepare for working together more easily. We use the newly invented „Applespritzer-Laptop“-method to learn each others' names and to pronounce them properly (if you want to see how it works go to the „Video Gallery“ on www.easy-easy.eu).

It is fun and it really helps a lot! Drawing a common European Map gives us a visual impression of the extent of the E.A.S.Y. network.

Drawing is also required for the next exercise: we collectively produce „individual portraits“ of all participants. This is to have an idea on how we are seen from the outside.

The portrait is used individually then to add personal information, kind of „wanted poster“ it is becoming in the end - but certainly not for gangsters!





It goes together with the „smooth chair“-exercise: people who do not know each other well yet do have a guess on the strengths and capacities of someone sitting in the middle of the room. He/She is taking notes about what is being said by the others and might discover some ‚talents‘ and aspects he/she has never thought about before. A very motivating thing to do.

After the lunch-break we continue with more activities that bring people closer together and after dinner we go into „reflection groups“ (re-groups) countrywise. The re-groups are very helpful for a daily examination of the programme and the international group's work.

The TC-coordination group which is made up of the local coordinators meets later in the evening to plan for the next day in details.

Sunday, 22nd of July 2007

The morning is dedicated to an extensive „Exchange-phase“. Progress and amendments in the work programme on local and international levels are shared between V.I.P.s and local coordinators from the six partner countries. The groups prepare for the presentation of their LAPs using a „check-list“ that asks

whether the common E.A.S.Y.-objectives are really met with the local activities. The presentation itself is facilitated by Dariusz Grzemny, local coordinator from Poland, in the form of an „E.A.S.Y. Talk-Show“. Participants are guests in the Talk-Show and the audience together with the showmaster have the chance to give constructive feedback on their presentations. It is quite impressive to hear and see what has already been achieved and its also interesting to see where there are obstacles on our ways. The process of information exchange and discussion is continued in the afternoon at the „Info-market“ where newcomers in the V.I.P.-pool have the chance to learn more about the organisations involved in E.A.S.Y.

Monday, 23rd of July 2007

The topic today is „V.I.P.-Profile“ and evaluation. With the help of other V.I.P.s the TC-participants are taking a closer look at themselves: Who am I as a V.I.P.? How do I define my role as a V.I.P.(eer-educator)? Which skills and competences are needed for the ‚job‘ I'm doing, especially when it comes to working with so called ‚difficult‘ young people? How can I be motivating myself

To prepare for this session we use the „rope“ and „magic stick“-exercises. Half of the group does one of these very common group-building activities while the other half of the group observes their peers trying to manage with the tasks.

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GENETICA EVOLUTIVA
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FISIOLOGIA
FISIOLOGIA

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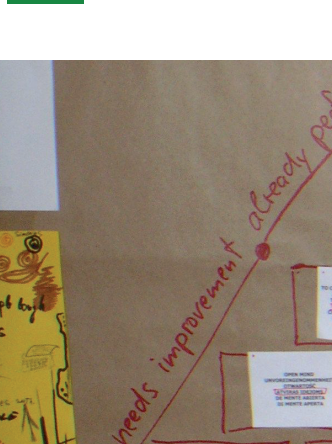
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could improve in one or the other dimension - easy method!

In order to bring some V.I.P.-creativity to the TC in the later afternoon we do another exercise that we adapt from COMPASS the manual on Human Rights Education with young people. It is called „Sports for all“ - you probably know it!

The day ends with a little evaluation of the TC so far and then we go into re-groups again.

**Tuesday, 24th and
Wednesday, 25th of July 2007**

The morning is free. People sleep a little bit longer or take a walk downhill through the forest in order to be fresh for the „communication“-block of the programme.

We have invited to experts in the field: Anthimos Dimitriadis and Jürgen Hellmann, trainers from Esslingen and Mannheim (Germany), who will give a concise overview of different communication-styles and work with groups of different sizes for the next one and a half days using practical exercises.

The video-camera is a very important tool for Anthimos and Jürgen. And to many V.I.P.s it is a new feeling to watch themselves whilst communicating. Anthimos and Jürgen stress the

importance of body-language and other aspects of nonverbal communication.

Jürgen, an educated actor himself, offers some exercises to get more acquainted with the „body-talking“.

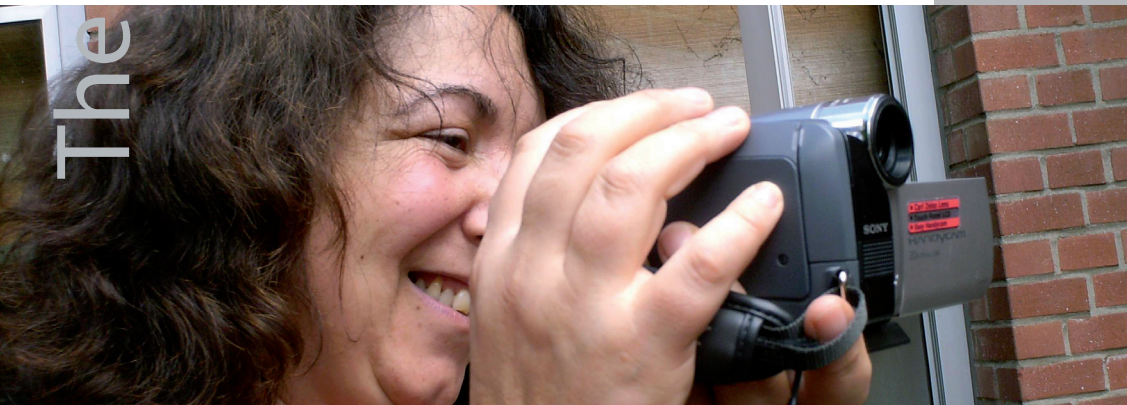
Anthimos promotes „equality“ in communication: In order to ‚convince‘ somebody of something, you do not have to overwhelm him or her with arguments or even push people. You better pull them by being a good listener first and through being authentic in your own words and - very important - „consistent“ with your deep convictions - your language, consisting of the words you use and the appearance of your body mirrors directly who you are anyways: There’s nothing to hide behind.

Together with the group 3 Theses on communication are discussed and a very nice exercise from Non Violent Communication (NVC) then helps people to reflect upon typical communication-situations in which they felt bad. We try to remember such situations and to write down the exact quotes we once have heard from somebody. How did we feel when we heard these words? What was it we needed in

that situation and did not get while hearing the sentence? Then: How do we think the other person felt when he/she was saying the things she/he said to us (which made us feel bad)? Which might have been his or her needs in that moment she or he was talking to us?

We end up with a chart of „Possible Communication Outcomes“ that makes it very clear: only if my own needs and the needs of the other are more or less equally met we will be feeling good when we are done with communication. In three out of four situations nevertheless my own, the other's or even both our needs may not be met well enough through communication. To be focussed on needs (my own as well as the other's) can be very helpful in any communication-situation. But it is not an easy thing to be focussed in this way all the time! We are used to *react* rather than to *respond* to other people's words and actions. It is a learned behavioural pattern for the most of us and to change it possibly requires much more training than could be provided even during a longterm project like E.A.S.Y. - Yet, once the concept is clear and the idea is understood it is possible to start making that change.

In the evening we watch the documentary „Scary“ about a man from the U.S. who calls himself „The Scary Guy“. Two of the German V.I.P.s, Rachid and Essayas have been visiting him in springtime in England where he works with schools and delivers short and longterm trainings. His message is as simple as logical and true: we need to eliminate anger, hate, violence, and death - worldwide! But how the hell are we gonna do this? And what could be the role of young people in this effort if every generation really gets the chance to change the world (as it is often claimed)? Scary starts from (verbal) communication as well. He tries to raise awareness of the fact that all of us are involved in what he calls „a flow of negative energy“ (as we are reacting all the time on negative things we hear and see, mostly with our words). But also we do have the power to make cognitive and emotionally healthy choices about what we see and hear from others in the form of their words and actions. Scary's idea is to empower young people to make their own choices rather than being reactive only to their environment. We discover quite a lot of similarities between the approach of Non Violent Communication (refer to the





WIKIPEDIA-article „Marshall Rosenberg“ if you want to learn more about it) and The Scary Guy's concept. It is a perfect „food for thought“ if you do (peer-)education. Check it out!

Thursday, 26th of July

In the morning Annette Mütter from IKAB e.V. facilitates a session about the „European Dimension“ of the E.A.S.Y. project. As V.I.P.s are promoting the ‚idea‘ of Europe as well as its youth mobility programmes it is of big avail to become acquainted more with these programmes and current developments in the youth field. Annette encourages the V.I.P.s to use themselves as much as possible the offerings of the YOUTH in Action programme and to help others to learn more about it and to possibly use it. In the afternoon we take off for an afternoon-trip to the city of Cologne. The trip includes a little boat-tour on the river Rhine and for sure we all throw back our necks to get a glimpse of the tops of the two gigantic spires of the famous Dome of Cologne.

Friday, 27th of July 2007

In the morning we get back to V.I.P.-Profiling. Again we use the pyramid-method for skills and

competences self-assessment. In the afternoon we deal with project-communication. V.I.P.s and local coordinators get trained again in using the MOODLE-software that shall be used more intensively for E.A.S.Y.-communication. Some of the V.I.P.s find it quite hard to work with MOODLE. We decide to look out for an easier to handle groupware-system that might replace the first one later in the project. The evening sees the re-groups and a TC-coordination meeting again.

Saturday, 28th of July 2007

The first part of the morning is used to further development of the principle standards for project-management and public relations within the E.A.S.Y. project. We then evaluate with the help of some sociometric exercises the Training Course and its programme elements. In national groups we use the following guideline-questions to also assess the Training Course outcomes in this perspective:

- A) Which are the most memorable moments for you as a V.I.P. in this Training Course?
- B) Is there anything that was not included in this Training Course

you would have liked to have?

C) Your overall satisfaction with the Training Course?

The last step for the V.I.P.s is to individually work on the self-assessment sheets that IKAB e.V. has provided for evaluating in a longterm perspective the V.I.P. approach of the project. The afternoon is dedicated to packing suitcases and some bilateral negotiations on collaborative projects of the E.A.S.Y. partners and first preparations of the next international E.A.S.Y. event the Midterm Conference and V.I.P.-TC 2008 which shall be held in Logroño/Spain.

A long working day ends with a funny „Farewell-Party“ that we celebrate outside as the weather is still very fine!

Sunday, 29th of July

Some of the participants departure quite early some still have time for clearing up the working spaces. Not too long before we meet again in Logroño!

author: Sven Rasch

photos: Maria Peralta and Sven Rasch





Conference & V.I.P.-TC Diary

A day-to-day record of both Events

Thursday, 20th of March 2008

V.I.P.s and local coordinators arrive from five different countries to Bilbao airport and travel by bus to the region of La Rioja, world famous for its vineyards and the beauty of its capital Logroño. María Peralta, local coordinator of the E.A.S.Y. partner Inter Europa Rioja, picks up each group from the bus terminal and takes everyone to the Midterm Conference/V.I.P.-TC-venue which is quite close to the river Ebro but also to the centre of the city. We are accommodated in single rooms and enjoy meeting old friends and already get to know new ones.

Friday, 21st of March 2008

The first morning of the combined Midterm Conference and V.I.P.-Training Course (we decided to put both events together for practical and logistical reasons) starts with an official welcome from the members of the Centre of Excellence made up from the group of coordinators of the E.A.S.Y. project. María Peralta in the name of Inter Europa also welcomes us warmly in her town

and introduces us to some local experts who have been working for a longer time with the Spanish V.I.P.s and now will support us also during the TC. For the 'newcomers' a short introduction to the E.A.S.Y. project is given and also an overview of the work programme for the next seven days. We then have the pleasure to enjoy a good meal at the refectory and continue in the early afternoon with getting-to-know-each-other activities some of which are facilitated by the local experts Agustín Martínez and Kaia Maasing.

The participants are then asked to think about their individual „fears and expectations“. Starting from these perceptions we revisit the work programme again to see whether expectations can be matched and where changes are still possible to be made.

Dinner (or „cena“) we take outside in some lovely Tapas-bars of the Calle del Laurel. For some it is the first time to ever experience this mellow way of eating and drinking at a pretty warm Spanish night in spring-time (the next days its gonna be cold the weather-forecast says). This Friday night is also very special because we witness the

„Viernes de Dolor“ (Friday of pain) which is part of the holy week or „Semana Santa“. During this week some impressive processions take place in which the „Cofradías“ (confraterinties) play a mayor role. One of the E.A.S.Y. V.I.P.s, Julian Lapeña, is a member of such a fraternity and he can explain well the traditions and specific rituals of the Semana Santa.

Saturday, 22nd of March 2008

The Midterm Conference takes place today. It is the opportunity to reconsider properly what has been achieved with the E.A.S.Y. project and what still has to be done in order to reach its specific aims and objectives.

The analysis of the use of MOODLE as an internet based groupware-system for online cooperation for the Centre of Excellence and the V.I.P.s is critical and leading to the final judgement that - while the idea is still good - the software is not really appropriate to our needs.

The user-unfriendliness was discovered by many V.I.P.s and the Coordinators when working with it at home. Sometimes it was hard to enter the platform, internal communication was more difficult than ‚traditional‘ E-mailing, the pages could not be customized easily in order to

suit the corporate design of the project, and there were some more obstacles and difficulties... From the experiences he had with E-learning-platforms and open source content management and groupware systems Dariusz Grzemny, local coordinator from Poland, had suggested to use JOOMLA instead of MOODLE.

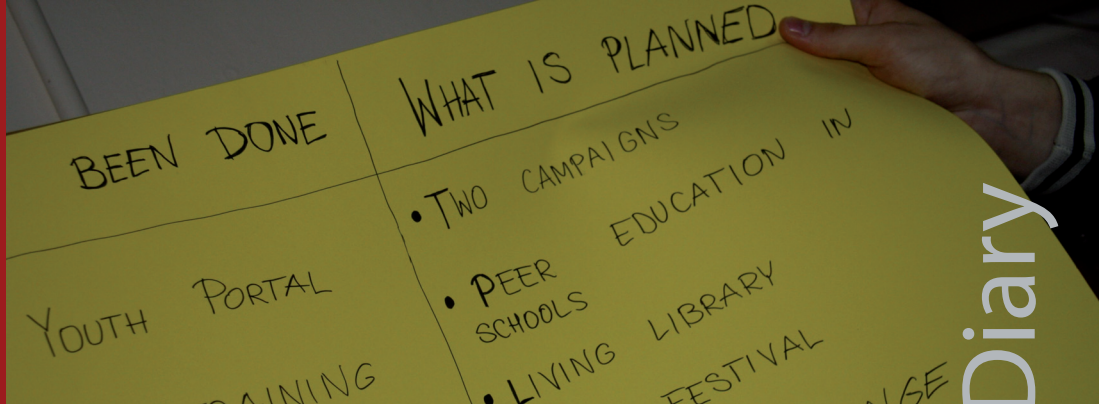
A first trial version had been set up by the Centre of Excellence (CoEx) and especially V.I.P. Paul Czekalla was very helpful in adapting the system to the needs of E.A.S.Y..

The CoEx decides upon the roadmap for development of the new „Public Pages“ that will be part of the ROPE-websites but can be reached through the topdomain www.easy-easy.eu. It is agreed by all partners to establish the Public Pages not only as a „visiting card“ for the project but also as a platform for possible future cooperations that might follow in the track of E.A.S.Y..

Other administrative, organizational and practical issues are discussed, also the question where the Final Conference should best take place.

As Berlin is identified as the easiest to reach place for all partners we decide to run the Final Conference there.





The night sees the „Intercultural Evening“. We try German sausages, hear a beautiful song from Scotland, share Lithuanian bread, Spanish and Polish drinks, and we see a funny Italian movie!

Sunday, 23rd of March 2008

The morning is dedicated to „sharing and presenting“. V.I.P.s with the help of their local coordinators who also assist as translators for their groups prepare posters and short presentations to let everybody in the group know what is the state of the art of their Local Attractor Projects (LAPs) in the moment.

In the afternoon we start with the „V.I.P.-sessions“ that will be continued until the next day. Every national group of V.I.P.s is asked to give an insight of their way of working and attracting young people for (local and European) projects.

Lithuanian and Scottish V.I.P.s are using similar attractors: They have prepared postcards and posters and go to different places and special (youth) events where they promote the idea of becoming a V.I.P., thus to take an active role in local youth policy development, and the YOUTH in Action Programme as a possibility for everyone to benefit from mobility and change of perspec-

tives, and new experiences. We are given an example of how the Lithuanian V.I.P.s work with school children and Eilidh and Alison from Scotland give an account of some very special events they were participating in such as a ceremony with Queen Elizabeth II... actually it was not possible to tell her majesty about E.A.S.Y. but being a V.I.P. in the E.A.S.Y. project has been crucial to the young ladies in being honoured with the „Young Quality Scot Award“ and for having the opportunity to talk to other young people about European possibilities in other forums and events all over the United Kingdom!

The Polish V.I.P.s are presenting a very impressive schedule, too: they did not only launch the „Glogow Youth Portal“ in the autumn of 2007 and plan for a „Living Library“ to be held in their hometown in the summer of 2008, but they are also engaged in campaigning for Human Rights. A set of posters has been produced that confronts people on the streets with different statements and facts about violations of Human Rights. The campaign has been and still is a big success, and its done by young people who have a vision about their lives: V.I.P.s!

Monday, 23rd of March 2008

We continue with the V.I.P.-sessions today. The Spanish V.I.P.s use E.A.S.Y. from the beginning to offer new alternatives to youth with fewer opportunities from Logroño. Their idea is to involve them in their local projects and in the international activities of E.A.S.Y. and to transfer knowledge about European projects to much more young people.

The group meets every tuesday and dedicates the first hour of the meetings to learn English. Sometimes European Volunteers who are working with Inter Europa assist in these courses. But they also help with realizing the Local Attractor Project itself and run presentations about their countries which are very popular with the Spanish V.I.P.s.

The idea to let other young people share their knowledge and experience of travelling abroad in a dynamic and interactive way seems to be very effective in the effort to pass information about the YOUTH in action programme.

The Spanish V.I.P.s were developing the idea of producing a video for other young people about daily life in Logroño that would also show which opportunities there are for young people to take part in trainings and

activities, so to become more active in their own spheres of interest.

The movie was being shot and edited with the help of local experts and almost ready. (Meanwhile it has been finished and you can watch it on www.easy-easy.eu in the Video-Gallery).

The video shall be a master-tool for attracting more young people for instance during presentations in educational centres and the local secondary high school Inter Europa works with. The movie shall also be shown to other young people who come as European Volunteers or as Leonardo da Vinci work-students to Spain and in international meetings that Inter Europa participates in. Alba Moreno, the president of Inter Europa Rioja, sees a clear surplus value in the E.A.S.Y. project for the youth they work with: „We think that the way in which we have started is the best to involve these young people in a local project which comes together with a European project. With the European dimension we encourage young people to get involved in the project and to motivate themselves in order to attend the activities of our organisation on local level. Through participation





in the local activities then the young people gain more confidence in their own strenghts and abilities and feel more comfortable with the idea of going abroad or to participate in international exchanges like E.A.S.Y.!"

Tuesday, 24th of March 2008

The next V.I.P.-session was organized by our Italian friends from Torino. They had prepared for a kind of role-play as an introduction that should demonstrate to the other TC-participants in a lively way the problematic issues young people from the remote area of Val Maira (far off the mega city of Torino) are concerned with.

The area is located in the mountains in the Province of Cuneo (Piemonte) and is very isolated. Our Italian partner GIOSEF took it as a good example for trying a V.I.P.-project to foster social cohesion and active participation of young people with fewer opportunities. They are in constant contact with their peers in the valley (that is actually made up of three smaller valleys: the low, the middle and the high valley) and together they are developing an interesting way of applied research which they call

„participative social analysis using photography“. It is meant to be a way of finding out in an easy but still very precise way how young people think and feel about their local environment and to identify their capacities for change and involvement in their own affairs. (If you want to know more about it check out the E.A.S.Y. Booklet Series Vol. 4). In the role-play three V.I.P.s were typifying the young inhabitants of the „low valley“, the „middle valley“ and the „high valley“ and some daily obstacles they are confronted with. This was followed by an introduction to the method of participative social analysis using photography itself. The TC participants were involved in close examination of original photography of young people from Val Maira and in the interpretation of these. In a next step we compared our own perceptions with the ‚original‘ ones entering in a kind of hermeneutic spiral in order to reveal (original, secondary, and also co-constructed) meaning(s) of the photos.

It seems to be a very powerful tool that can be applied easily to very different contexts. The needs-assessment for local project activity that is enclosed in this approach is probably



beginning.

Most people felt much better when the V.I.P.s approached and offered their support. The simulation is considered a good way of training the skills and competences needed, especially the communicative ones. Some feel reminded of the communication-sessions we had in the TC in Bonn last year (see pages 7 to 9 of this Booklet) and state that „words“ can be very helpful and powerful for conflict-resolution - provided that you really care for the words you're saying and that you actually mean them - from the inside out!

We end the day with a nice dinner outside in the restaurant „The drunken duck“ and look forward to our day-trip to Bilbao.

Thursday, 25th of March 2008

We get picked up by a bus that takes us to the city of Bilbao, world famous not only for its Football Club Athletic Bilbao but also for the Museo Guggenheim a masterpiece of vanguard architecture built by Frank Owen Gehry in 1997. Some of us spend the whole day inside this magnificent building whilst others walk around the old parts of the city trying to get souvenirs for their beloved back home.

Friday, 26th of March 2008

In the morning we are invited to IRJ - Instituto Riojana de la Juventud for a press conference. Emilio del Río welcomes us warmly to the institute and gives an impressive speech about the importance of European exchanges such as E.A.S.Y.. The newspaper „La Rioja“ reports the next morning (see the Blog-entry at www.easy-easy.eu). Also Alba Moreno of Inter Europa gives a nice speech and María, and the two Dariuszs wrap themselves in the flags of La Rioja, Spain, and Europe. We are given little practical rucksacks as a present. Then we're heading for another institute in town the Centro Cultural Ibercaja. We're invited for a special piece of Intercultural Learning: a Curso de Cocina or cooking course! Alba Moreno and Elizabeth Adan were preparing this session especially for the E.A.S.Y. group and actually teach us to do marvellous tortillas and tapas. We enjoy a lot the cooking and the additional information on kitchen customs and traditions of Spain and La Rioja. Unfortunately the rest of the day is not only for eating and drinking. But we have to return home for the late afternoon session of project-preparation - part I.

The idea of the „preparation of projects“-session that will be continued until the next day is to think about more Local Attractor Projects which can be carried out during and also after the E.A.S.Y. project as follow-ups.

Four mixed national groups are asked to think about a title or theme for the project, to prepare a short description, to name the aims and objectives, to think about possible location and dates, of partners involved, and to create a kind of logo for the project, a visual representation.

Saturday, 27th of March 2008

V.I.P.s with the help of translating local coordinators and local experts who are with us, keep on preparing their project ideas until lunch. After lunch we have the presentation of the results. The first group's project is called „Europe in progress“. The aim is „to influence and help with the writing of the EU constitution“.

To prepare for this task young people shall have a „preliminary meeting ... to organize a conference on EU constitution with young people from all countries in the EU. The young people identify an issue of interest from the constitution and then go to do workshops on this issue.“ Once they are back home they can feel more

comfortable in collaboratively writing a „document to present to the European Parliament and on an international website“ which could have the address: www.eu-in-progress.com.

Local development is the topic of the second project idea presented by V.I.P.s. The group wishes to „create a discussion about local developments in rural areas, to help young people take an active role in their community, and to gain new skills“. Three meetings shall help to develop together a „methodology on the topic through informal education and academic approach“. As outcomes the group wishes to see amongst other things: „an international platform on the internet for local development“. The third group presents „Music United - Different Music - Different Countries - One Idea“. The idea is that young people come together for a certain period of time (a minimum of five working days) in order to live together and to make music together, to write lyrics about European topics which will be translated into the languages of all participants involved, and to give a big final show.

„Relations of other Cultures“ is the title of a project idea presented by the fourth group. The idea is „to try to break the





border between different ethnic groups". All partners involved shall run similar workshops on Intercultural Learning, Human Rights Education, Conflict Resolution and share their experiences in international meetings but also on an internet platform.

The aim is to give everyone the opportunity to enjoy his/her „rights to experience a new culture, to improve international knowledge, to improve relationships with other (ethnic) groups, and to improve relationships with the local neighbourhood“.

In the final TC-Evaluation we use sociometric methods and a scheme to check whether expectations collected the first day were met or not and which programme and specific content elements are considered useful or less useful by the V.I.P.s, and what could be done better the next time, respectively.

The overall happiness with the TC is really big, most V.I.P.s hope for a continuation of the project even though it officially ends in December 2008 as they wish to realize more of their project ideas together with their European peers.

But first we have to get ready for the fantastic „Fiesta de Farewell“.

Sunday, 28th of March 2008

The day of departure has come and we are leaving again from Logroño.

We had a great time thanks to Inter Europa and local coordinator María Peralta who together with her team of experts and friends created a perfect space for working and learning together but also for enjoying and having fun.

We'll meet again in the Final Conference which is going to take place in the very end of the year in Berlin (see the following chapter if you want to see how the story went on).

author: Sven Rasch

photos: Christoph Klinger

The Final Conference Diary a last day-to-day record of an international E.A.S.Y. Event

Wednesday, 10th of December 2008

V.I.P.s and local coordinators arrive to Berlin to take part in the Final Conference of the E.A.S.Y. project. It is a rather cold and windy day but everybody seems to be in a good mood. We take a look at the Final Conference programme for the next three days and later at night go out in Berlin which is brightly decorated as it is the christmas season.

Thursday, 11th of December 2008

After a short welcome ceremony using a little song to express our (good or bad), morning feelings' we start working. We take the famous Indiana Jones as a model for a session that is concerned with the 'archeology' of the E.A.S.Y. project. We are digging up again from our collective memory what has happened from the beginning until the (almost) end of it all. V.I.P.s and local coordinators have brought a lot of material in their suitcases which are unpacked now in our seminar room and sorted for a special 'Berlin wall' of the E.A.S.Y. project-flow (see the photo below). Our idea is to visualize in a big dimension where we have come from and where we have

arrived to during the last two years. The 'wall' is being equipped with colourful cards, posters and postcards, photos and a time-line that foresees a continuation of good cooperation in the future out of the E.A.S.Y. project. It takes a full day to arrange it all and to have the additional explanations of the V.I.P.s and local coordinators for their pieces.

Friday, 12th of December 2008

We continue in the morning with reports of V.I.P.s and coordinators on the process of their Local Attractor Projects and other European activities that have been organized in relation with E.A.S.Y. since the last international meeting we had in Logroño/Spain in March 2008. Amongst these there were a trip of German V.I.P.s to join a Youth Conference in Austria (see E.A.S.Y. Booklet Series Vol. 3), a Youth Exchange project between our Polish and Lithuanian partners Youth Exchange Agency and SZANSA, the Trainings on local schools in Głogow about „society rights” by Polish V.I.P.s from SZANSA, their „Living Library” project with support from German V.I.P.s (see E.A.S.Y. Booklet Series Vol. 3), the Italian Attractor Project in Val Maira (see E.A.S.Y. Booklet Series Vol. 4)





and two more small-scale Local Attractor Projects in Germany in which V.I.P.s participated or played an important role (see E.A.S.Y. Booklet Series Vol. 3), last but not least the finishing of the Spanish movie that was still in post-production in March (watch it on www.easy-easy.eu).

The night we spend in Berlin again. The christmas market at Alexanderplatz is not very different from any other christmas market in Germany, but still very cosy.

Saturday, 13th of December 2008

Today we are busy with evaluating E.A.S.Y. and with finances. During the breaks we are being interviewed (see pages 22 to 29).

We use again the self-assessment-sheet of IKAB e.V. which will be used for a summative evaluation (the results are to be found in E.A.S.Y. Booklet Series Vol. 4).

But also we are using the „Evaluation-hands“ to collect ideas for a deeper discussion of the three dimensions: V.I.P. approach, Centre of Excellence (CoEx), and Activities (you can see the hands in E.A.S.Y. Booklet Series Vol. 1, page 16, and in E.A.S.Y. Booklet Series Vol. 4, page 14). In small groups those dimensions are reviewed by all

V.I.P.s using the categories: Highlights (thumb), Advice (forefinger), Sucks! (middle finger), Emotions (ring finger), and Follow-up (pinkie).

It is a common feeling that even though the project lasted for more than two years it was still a very short time for realizing every idea that was there in the beginning. Building up a network, developing projects on local levels and all together transcending European frontiers is a very demanding task. But it is worth it as every end is just the beginning of something new. We wish to continue with some of the processes started through E.A.S.Y. and with consolidation and maybe extension of the small network we could establish. The V.I.P.-approach in youth work shall be further elaborated possibly on an European level again as exchange of experience and mutual counselling are indispensable for quality improvement and achievement.

Sunday, 14th of December 2008

Goodbye to all of you, thanks a lot, and see you again later!

author: Sven Rasch

photos: Christoph Klinger

The Berlin Interviews

**V.I.P.s and local coordinators
talk about E.A.S.Y.**

**Interview with Sven Rasch (Germany)
E.A.S.Y. coordinator and member of the
Centre of Excellence**

*E.A.S.Y. Booklets: Hello Sven, why
have you started the E.A.S.Y.
project?*

Sven: Our idea was to elaborate and improve our approach of involving young people peer-to-peer from the local to the European level. Therefore we wanted to have an international project: to exchange experiences, to see how others do it and to possibly promote some innovative ways together.

We started from our own local experience with youth work in a project called „V.I.P.-project“ and now we were looking out for partners who are working in similar ways with young people.

*E.A.S.Y. Booklets: How did you
change personally and/or
professionally during the project?*

Sven: The E.A.S.Y. project is a lot about participation. I did not sense it before so clearly but through implementation of the project I realized that the way I was working with young people

had sometimes been very directive. In this respect I would say that I have learned a lot about „real participation“ from my colleagues/partners but especially from the V.I.P.s.

My perception of young people has really changed again. Now I am more sensitive to their reality and needs. I think I can understand many things much better now. The lesson learned is: Trust young people! The more you allow for participation the more you gain - all together. I do believe (more and more) in the power of nonformal learning. It is particularly strong when it comes to self-development.

*E.A.S.Y. Booklets: What are your
visions/future plans/dreams?*

I would like to do a Living Library as I have been very impressed by this method which was used in our Polish partner's Local Attractor Project. Actually we're already planning for one to be run in 2010 in Darmstadt.

Generally speaking I would like to be involved much more in international youth projects and to improve my skills in nonformal education. Also I would be glad to see many more of our youth from Kranichstein participating in such international projects as you can benefit so much.





E.A.S.Y. Booklets: Do you think the experience you gained through this project will help you to realize it? Why?

Sven: Absolutely! I gained some more skills in project management, made new contacts, and I am sure our V.I.P.s will be helping to start off new projects.

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: What would you like to wish/suggest/advice our readers?

Sven: I would encourage every youth worker to take part in European youth work activities. It gives an added value to your professional work back home. Don't be afraid of the unknown - just try things out!

Interview with Łukasz (Poland) V.I.P. from Głogów

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: Hi Łukasz, why have you joined the E.A.S.Y. project?

Łukasz: I am working as a volunteer in the organization „Chance” in Głogów. Our local coordinator Darek invited me to join the project and I went to Bonn. In Bonn came a clear idea what the project is about. That's how I joined this project.

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: How did you change personally and/or professionally during the project?

Łukasz: I have become more open minded. When I have met different people from other countries I have realized that here are many ways to act. I really broke up stereotypes about other countries – it is easy to do when you are meeting a real person from this country.

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: What are your visions/future plans/dreams?

Łukasz: I would like to prepare some project. But I dream to do something together with my new friends from E.A.S.Y. project. We do have some ideas... it is a dream :-)

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: Do you think the experience you gained through this project will help you to realize it? Why?

Łukasz: Yes! When I travelled to other countries I saw that it is possible to do lots of things together.

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: What would you like to wish/suggest/advice our readers?

Łukasz: To be a happy, good person, to work with young people, to look around and to be brave: participate in the international projects!

**Interview with Saulius (Lithuania)
V.I.P. from Vilnius**

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: Saulius, why have you joined the E.A.S.Y. project?

Saulius: I was invited by the local coordinator. Later when I went to Darmstadt it became clearer what I can do in this project.

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: How did you change personally and/or professionally during the project?

Saulius: I liked to do presentations at schools – it is something I have done for the first time in my life. Also it was very interesting to prepare all the material for the presentations. We have done it without a help from adults! I felt good that I can tell something to young people, I felt good having the possibility to share my experience and to tell about great opportunities for young people.

Also I have obtained new technical skills – I made post cards myself without having a clue how to do it. By the time I have been doing it, I realized that

I am keen on art things (what I have never believed to be before).

I found new friends from the different countries. I have learned many things about the situation of youth in the different countries. There are many similar problems for young people in all the countries. Somehow it was important to hear.

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: What are your visions/future plans/dreams?

Saulius: I would like to organize something – myself. I am thinking to study a bit later, but it is for later. Now I am happy with my life :-)

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: Do you think the experience you gained through this project will help you to realize it? Why?

Saulius: Yes, this experience was very good. Every good or bad experience is a help. I have huge luggage of skills and the experience I gained during this project I am sure will be helpful. If not right now, some time in my future. In the right place at the right time.

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: What would you like to wish/suggest/advice our readers?





Saulius: I would suggest participating in such or similar projects. I would suggest: do not be afraid, because many young people are afraid, they're having different fears. If you want to understand yourself and others – you have to go and try it!

**Interview with Julián (Spain)
V.I.P. from Logroño**

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: Hello Julián, why did you join the E.A.S.Y. project?

Julián: Because I like travelling and meeting new people, to practice a language and make different things with other people from Europe.

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: How did you change personally and/or professionally during the project?

Julián: I have learned some things from other people – they taught me something. I improved my English. In my school I have almost never passed an exam of writing. When I started to participate in this project I myself asked for the teacher to give me additional courses! So I want to talk to people, so I have to learn a language. I have learned that the situation in my country is not as

bad as I used to think. It was good to compare. I think that I have learned to express my feelings. Because before I was more shy and close person.

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: What are your visions/future plans/dreams?

Julián: I hope to make some meeting/project with the same people. We have become friends with the group. I want to continue being a V.I.P. with the new friends. I also want to learn English better!

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: Do you think the experience you gained through this project will help you to realize it? Why?

Julián: Yes! The two years experience helped me to be a good person and to open my mind. Before I thought that English is stupid to learn and useless, but now I want to say the opposite. Language is very important and I am learning it with my teacher till now (even I have graduated from a school).

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: What would you like to wish/suggest/advice our readers?

Julían: All kind of projects are good possibility to know other people - you learn a lot of things. Every person MUST take part in at least one project in his life!!!

Interview with Roxana Meechan (UK)
local coordinator and member of the
Centre of Excellence from Golspie

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: Hi Roxana, why have you started the E.A.S.Y. project?

Roxana: Because I was working with Andy Krauss and with Darek Grzemny in different projects for a long time already. The idea of E.A.S.Y. project we developped together. We had run a long term project „Pro COOP“ – social enterprise and youth work before. We had a successful partnership and as the result of it we wanted to go deeper and to do something of good quality again. Implementing another project „Give it a go“ I have met Sven and María. As I mentioned before this project was developped from an international team work.

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: How did you change personally and/or professionally during the project?

Roxana: I have been mentoring projects for young people for

quite a while now. In this long term project I could continue to explore good ways of international youth and project work. This international experiences help me to outline the benefits of it for young people more clearly.

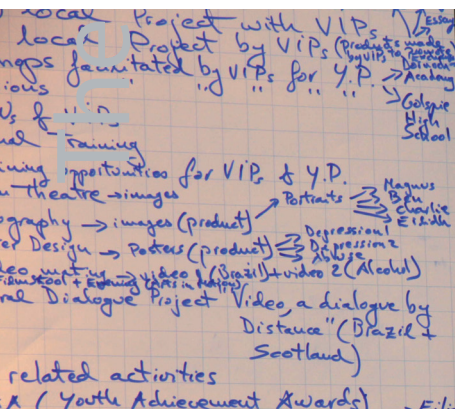
E.A.S.Y. Booklets: What are your visions/future plans/dreams?

Roxana: To develop another local project, more research-based that is focussing on learning. The bigger projects are the better :-) so it would be interesting to compare with other projects – applying for the same method and then study it: how does it go in the different countries?

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: Do you think the experience you gained through this project will help you to realize it? Why?

Roxana: Yes. Every project helps to understand the whole concept and the process better. It was very interesting to work with particular partners, maybe it will be possible to continue working together in one team with V.I.P.s at the same level.

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: What would you like to wish/suggest/advice our readers?





Roxana: A lot of people scare to attend European projects. They seem to be some kind of „enigma“ to them, something beyond the reach. Like with invisible walls. BUT the reality is that to participate in European projects is within reach for everyone. There is nothing to fear. Only be aware to take the first step...give it a go, try it! I think young people learn about international youth work and exchanges by being involved: learning-by-doing-it or experiential learning. To participate in this field of work young people and youth workers simply need to have an interest in people and travelling but the competences acquired during participation and involvement in such projects are many and varied and of particular relevance in the 21st century. These new gained skills benefit young people in many different ways but these benefits are often difficult to put into words or quantify and qualify, however by involving young people in the promotion of this type of work as carriers of the international youth projects and exchanges flag, the message becomes clearer to those that need to be informed and who are involved in policy making. It became apparent that it would

be useful for Scottish V.I.P.s to join local mechanisms that already exist for young people to have their voice heard such as Sutherland Youth Forum (SYF) and two Scottish V.I.P.s have now put their names forward and have been elected to become SYF Representatives for their school, the Golspie High School. Two other Scottish V.I.P.s are members of another local mechanism such as the Highland Youth Voice. One of the main aims and objectives of the E.A.S.Y. Local Attractor Project in Scotland was to help young people, V.I.P.s within the Project, to „infiltrate“ in existing mechanisms that gave young people a voice to make sure that in every youth participation event's agenda the item „European Youth Projects and Exchanges“ was covered with a talk or presentation by a V.I.P. on why involvement in such projects had helped them to give them a voice and to gain enough confidence and communication skills to be able to participate in public speaking, something that in no way would they have been able to do before becoming V.I.P.s within this project! My organisation TribesNETribes had been set up as a mechanism to design, fundraise for, organise,

lead and facilitate international youth projects and exchanges. TribesNETribes needed to join new Networks, this time local, regional and national networks as they were already part of international networks such as ROPE, Drums for Peace, World Bridgers and Healthy Network, so that the team could spread the word about the benefits of participating in international youth projects & exchanges in a more thorough manner.

The group joined the following new Networks: Caithness and Sutherland Sexual Health Forum, Highland Health Voices Network, Participation Network, and Children's Rights Network.

During the two years' project duration, me as TribesNETribes E.A.S.Y. LAP project coordinator and V.I.P.s looked out for every possibility to attend and make presentations at any youth related event locally, regionally, nationally and internationally to spread the word and to wave their flag. There were many opportunities for making presentations about the E.A.S.Y. project and the work of TribesNETribes, actually, opportunities to which V.I.P.s responded to in both reactive and pro-active ways as some of these events were organised by the V.I.P.s themselves. There were:

The Golspie High School International Youth Projects and Exchanges Information Event, the Working in Public: Art, Practice and Policy Seminar 2 (2007) in Glasgow at the Contemporary Arts Centre organized by On The Edge Research and Scottish Arts Council, the Opening of the Scottish Parliament Session Three Ceremony where V.I.P.s met the Queen in Edinburgh (2007), the Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) Consultation Event on Age Discrimination in London, England (2007), the Forum Theatre Training Week at Carbisdale Castle in Sutherland (2007), the Why Democracy event at the Scottish Parliament organised by Docspace (2007), the Dornoch Academy International Youth Projects and Exchanges Information Event (2007), the Highland Youth Voice Executive Meeting (2007), the Highland Youth Voice Conference in Skye, Highlands (2008), the East Sutherland & Edderton Ward Forum (2008), the EuroMeduc Media Literacy Seminar, Brussels, Belgium (2008), the Golspie Community Council Meeting (2008), and 3 Scottish V.I.P.s have now joined the Sutherland Youth Forum - hope I mentioned everything! :-)





**Interview with María Peralta (Spain)
local coordinator and member of the
Centre of Excellence from Logroño**

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: Hi María, why did you start the E.A.S.Y. project?

María: Because I was in contact with Sven in other projects. Sven has offered to be partner in this project to our organization because he knows us and also the target group we are dealing with was suitable to the project.

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: How did you change personally and/or professionally during the project?

María: Personally it gave me the opportunity to get to know people from other countries and to valorize our working similarities and differences. Professionally speaking I had the possibility to get in contact with new organizations and to get to know more about different working styles. In this project I had to manage with finances - what I had never done in my previous daily work - so I improved those skills, too.

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: What are your visions/future plans/dreams?

María: I want to continue

working with young people on European and local level and I would like to have future projects with our partners. I have got to know new organizations – I trust them. It was easier to sent two of our volunteers to the partner from Lithuania, an organization I know and trust now. It is good to have the new partnerships through E.A.S.Y.. Yet, my dream is to do some projects with Latin America. It is for the future, but one day I will do it :-).

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: Do you think the experience you gained through this project will help you to realize it? Why?

María: Yes, because during this project I have learned many new things which are all very helpful to realize the future steps.

E.A.S.Y. Booklets: What would you like to wish/suggest/advise our readers?

María: I would like to say that Europe is big – it does not finish with the frames of your town. Young people should go out and use all the opportunities offered to them.

interviews: Vita Pavilonyte
photos: Christoph Klinger and Sven Rasch

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