



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



E.A.S.Y. Booklet Series Vol. 4

E.A.S.Y. Methodology revisited:

The V.I.P. Approach (evaluated) ■ Participatory Needs Analysis



Education and Culture DG

'Youth in Action' Programme



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

Welcome to the fourth 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 fourth booklet a lot!



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E.A.S.Y. Booklet Vol. 4

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The V.I.P. project approach and methods

In order to do our job as V.I.P.s some specific conditions have to be met.

In a project it all hinges on good teamwork. Therefore consultation and communication within the team are particularly important. Above all in critical situations two people keeping cool are better than just one. Hence support from the group is of major importance if not indispensable.

Teens do not really listen to adults tell them anything because they often have the feeling they are being talked down to. In order to establish contacts with young people it can be advisable to deploy so called V.I.P.s. These people are in the most cases young adults who know well certain youth or subcultures and who know how to best approach their peers. If due respect is missing young people tend to feel unfairly treated quickly and react by turning-away. Quickly you are deemed uppish and arrogant and you will be excluded. Adults do have this problem quite often.

In order to avoid this, not only the initial approach is important but also to really build up good

and honest relationships with young people. Only on this basis it is then possible to respond to everyone individually. It is also important to know your own limits and to be aware of the boundaries of young people in order not to overstep them. Speaking from our own experiences the following methods proved to be of value:

To provide confidence which as aforementioned is inalienable in a V.I.P. project you have to cultivate contacts constantly. This is done for instance through regular chat with the different groups. The talking is mostly about troubles that young people have caused or their personal conflicts. The V.I.P. project here tries to counsel or to arbitrate between the parties to find the lowest common denominator and to avoid escalation which sporadically happened to occur in the past. The chats are taking place spontaneously but at regular intervals depending on where and when you meet the groups. During conversation it is important to show the person or group you are dealing with respect because only in this way it is considered to be honest talking.

Important points in this context are:





- maintaining eye contact
- to keep calm and serene
 - being courteous
- not allowing for provocations
 - active listening

But adherence to these rules is for the birds if you do not act as an example yourself. Because otherwise young people will not take you serious. You should be able to role-model for them and to offer a perspective, be it school, sport, or society. To be decent and to behave well should go without saying and does not deserve special rewards as young people will get used to this and may only change their spots for recompense. As a tool' and an opportunity for young people to improve their skills and communicative competences we offer regular events such as:

- sport tournaments (for example: Soccer Night)
- Champions' League Nights
 - bowling and billard
- special trips (swimming pool, theme park etc.)

Certainly participation requires a proper attitude of the young people otherwise such events are made impossible. In order for the young people to understand

this, consequence is very important: occasionally misfeature can lead to revocation of an event. This is to give them a break to reconsider behaviour.

Common characteristics with the approach of The Scary Guy

Not so long ago we got to know The Scary Guy. In the beginning we did not find him really convincing. But lately it turned out that we have more in common than expected.

- the importance of respect
- courtesy
- role modelling
- human relations
- to be on a par with someone

The Scary Guy has experienced more than enough what it means to be excluded and to be discriminated against to know how to deal with what he calls „negative energy“ in a constructive way. We ourselves had to make similar experiences and can understand young peoples' way of thinking and reacting. That is exactly why it is so important to have the V.I.P. project. Because without this project there would not exist a young people-adult interface to transfer such knowledge and information easily.

The V.I.P. approach an intermediate classification of working-tools, training-modules, methodology and (intercultural) attitudes

1. Introduction – a short journey through experiences, theory and back to practice

The V.I.P.-approach in Darmstadt-Kranichstein (Germany) started approximately 4 years ago. The main intention is using experienced young people, who have grown up in „social hot spots“, to establish better relations with so called socially disadvantaged young people on location.

During the E.A.S.Y. project we were able to develop a lot of new working-strategies in order to create positive relations with the young people. Therefore we followed and will continue to follow resource-oriented strategies instead of deficit-oriented ones for sustainable street-work concepts.

Within the E.A.S.Y. project parts and especially in the meetings with our European partners, we were able to create a first idea for the importance of best practice-exchange, which has direct influence towards our local work.

Since then, we came to the increasingly definite conclusion, that, on one hand, the group of V.I.P.s can learn a lot from the

intercultural learning field. And on the other hand, we discovered, that at the same time, our local experiences could give fruitful advices for intercultural learning processes abroad. This was an important result for the group of V.I.P.s, because they could find out step by step, that European projects are based on the idea of giving and taking on a very pragmatic level.

Following these experiences, the V.I.P.s and the local coordinators were „infected“ by the idea how other approaches in the context of positive consultation with „difficult clients“ could enlarge the internal V.I.P.s' pool of attitudes and methodology.

In late 2006 a process in this sense was set into motion.

Widening our perspectives was the key-term and the starting point, as well as giving our own working tools more reliable legitimation.

A basic hint was the implementation of general ideas from the field of „Dynamic System Theory“ or - how to deal with instable situations and/or relationships between people in their daily living routines.

*Scheme below adapted from:
Peter Kruse (2005): Next Practice -
Erfolgreiches Management von
Instabilität.*

	Action-Strategy		Action-Strategy	
	Steering	Regulation	Try and error	Selforganisation /Intuition
Situation of the system	stable	stable	instable	instable
Organisation of the system	simple	complex	simple	complex
Function of the system	Cause - impact	Target performance comparison	Search movement	Change of pattern
	Management of Stability		Management of Instability	



2. Synopsis between three approaches on the level of basic attitudes and intervention-strategy			
levels of consultation in theory and practice, flexible transition / cross over between concepts (metaphorical dimension)	V.I.P. - practice	The Scary Guy	„scientific approach“ - Systemic Consultation
aperitif	authenticity of V.I.P.s; topic-oriented, biographic and cultural based common access in a local multicultural micro-cosmos	authenticity of Scary Guy; topic-oriented, biographic access, comparable experiences with exclusion, „exotic“ personality	approach: contact through „professionalism“, description of a qualified consultation setting
starter	using already grown confidence and respect among and towards youngsters, initiation of reward-systems for good behaviour	charismatic speech „Do you want hate or comfortable cooperation“, human beings are able to make a decision with all consequences	using solution-oriented questionnaire to point out aims and wishes clearly
main dishes (may alter within the different concepts)	stay in contact with the target-group, continuity, reliability, creation of common events with the youngsters on a local level	positive energy instead of negative energy, processing instead of ignoring, creation of positive frames for processing-strategies	description of solutions: e.g., future-pacing, elaboration and composing nice attractors
dessert	transfer to „new“ V.I.P.s creation of sustainability	transfer to „ambassadors“, creation of sustainability	impulses, set into motion-strategies, making differences between past, present and future-strategies (on the level of behaviour, attitudes, etc.)
digestif	ongoing new beginnings („restart“)	ongoing new beginnings („restart“)	close the case or („make a deal“ with the client about next steps)

3. Intermediate description of training-modules, specific approaches and methodological fields

We decided to take the next step, achieving a temporary, specific and first „best practise“ approximation.

Horizontally, one can read the following scheme as a sort of „translation-work“ and/or reciprocal learning process possibilities.

Vertically, one can read it as a suggestion for time/action plans within a project/training.

training-modules, specific approaches and methodological fields sorted corresponding to the phases in point 2, flexible transition/cross over between phases, a clear assignment depending on the respective project-design	V.I.P.s	The Scary Guy	Systemic Consultation
aperitif more an entrance for training activities (training for trainers)	establishment of a consultancy-interrelation info: „I belong to the same background ...“; „simulation / role-play concerning the relationship of public places, meeting points, conflicts among young people in the part of the town“ (movies: „West-Side-Story“, „Hate“ – see below)	establishment of a consultancy-interrelation info: „I suffered from exclusion like you ...“ Scary Guys biography (documentation: „Scary“ – see below)	establishment of a consultancy-interrelation info: „I am a professional and certificated systemic coach/consultant, especially for change management, change behaviour processes - handling of instability“ (appropriate training DVDs / documentations in the field of „dynamic systems“, etc. – see below)
starter training for trainers and direct work with youngsters	eye-contact is important: „3 x 20 seconds“, the deciding factor – see below“; „smalltalk – problemtalk – solutiontalk“, youth oriented welcome rituals and peer oriented language; „we know you, do you know us?“ (compare with internet-platforms like 'face-book')	awareness of consequences from 'negative' communication; „using media, like referring press-articles which describe bullying among youngsters“; „creating tension through Scary Guys tattooed body“; „all of us are offenders and victims at the same time“; „respect-rituals like hugging, shaking hands, etc and why this makes sense“	creation of a comfortable consultancy-atmosphere/situation; „coping, adapting to the clients communication-pattern“; „detailed clarification of the consultancy (co)mission, clear work out of the problem - solution spectrum and available resources“

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The V.I.P. approach

dessert	creation of initial events, organisation of specific fields for participation-processes;	transfer: how could a successful setting for positive behaviour / actions look like;	stimulating activities or 'calm down' strategies to strengthen clients internal self organisation-capacity for future challenges;
training for trainers and partly direct work with youngsters	preparation for EU-exchange-programs (confrontation with foreignness in a smooth, 'low-level' and very pragmatic way)	„detailed evaluation of the 7 days and 7 nights experiment – responding instead of reaction model“; empowerment-tools and strategies in this sense	„reframing“; „comparing individual behaviour, corresponding context conditions and consequences foreseen“; „Walt Disney workshop' – elaboration of realistic visions and reachable targets“
degistif	sustainable methodology which means:	knowledge-transfer / training for future 'ambassadors';	contract between client and consultant about next steps / 'milestones';
training for trainers	local competence can not be transferred one to one, but transfer of methodology/attitudes etc. through training is possible; „buttons, t-shirts etc. as a symbol for identification with a 'positive' process“; „job-shadowing“ „work in V.I.P.-tandems“ – mutual consultation - especially in critical situations, 'self-controlling', advanced knowledge about involved 'persons' and 'systems'; „training of transmission-capacity“, means: How to 'translate' wishes / demands of young people for adults and decision-makers („controlled dialogue“-methodology, make use of a coordinator / professional 'translation'-experienced social-/community worker)	initial events for the next 'round'	depending on the clients wishes, a continuous controlling / monitoring of (intermediate) results would be helpful



Following the above outlined first scheme, we are willing to design a catalogue of methods, referring approaches / attitudes / background information and innovative inputs step by step, to support „growing“ training-modules in the field. This should happen through a constant implementation of relevant tools in this sense on the E.A.S.Y.-website (www.easy-easy.eu). Our partners and other interested persons, groups and organisations are welcome to follow this intention!

First examples are (compare with the scheme above):

Method 3 x 20 seconds:

The first contact – during the first 20 seconds – with other human beings seems to be very important in establishing all future relationships. In pairs of two you should try to find out:

1. what is possible within 20 seconds in order to create a positive relationship
2. which words or terms could be helpful
(verbal communication)
3. which gestures and movements could be helpful
(visual communication)

You have 15 minutes!

Option or alternative: What has to be done, to create a negative relationship?

Material: pencils, posters, maybe camcorders

Method 7 days & 7 nights (The Scary Guy):

The Rules: During the next seven days:

For 7 days and 7 nights you should not call any human being bad names. You should not give them other names than their real names. Whenever you slip and make a mistake, there is a simple way out. Just apologize honestly and you can continue with this „self-experiment“. Take notes: In which situations did I succeed – in what situation was it difficult or „impossible“.

The „self-experiment“ could be a parallel part of a training-workshop, too.

Option or alternative: One could reduce the time-frame corresponding to the setting or target-group.

Material: pencils and small diaries

Method reflecting-team:

Very likely you will find proper descriptions for this „famous“ systemic consultancy method in your language, too.

Selection of movies and documentaries

that may (partly) support learning- and training processes – most of them are multilingual:

West-Side-Story, 1961: famous movie/musical about fighting youth-gangs and the contradiction of love and hate

La Haine/Hate, 1995: Consequences from violent behaviour among French youth-scenes and authorities

Inspector Columbo serials: „Prescription Murder, 1968“ and „Try and catch me, 1977“: About the „Columbo-principles“

Scary, 2006 – a documentation by Uli Kick: Scary Guy's biography and his working-strategies, methods, settings (in English and German)

Probably you will find various training DVD's about „self organisation theory/dynamic systems/systemic intervention“ and other appropriate consultation strategies in your language, too.

4. First results/conclusions for Intercultural Learning competence from the V.I.P.'s (Darmstadt-Kranichstein) point of view – a short summary:

In our opinion, a basic skill for intercultural competence is an open minded attitude. On the first view this sounds banal, but builds up a certain pattern, which creates a difference between two basic principles or radical positions one could take over, ranging from „unilateralism“ (an agenda that supports on-sided action only) to „ambiguity-tolerance“ (the ability to perceive ambiguity in information and behavior in a neutral and open way) - see scheme below:

-2	-2	+/-0	+1	+2
unilateralism	disassociation from others, refusing actions	me and the others as the central key-question	cross over, cross border orientation, overlooking, facing actions	ambiguity-tolerance





Regarding this scheme one could at least ask two questions:

Do I prefer to keep barriers and protect myself from „strange“, different personal behaviour, different groups, different cultures, of which I am more or less afraid of (-1/-2)

or:

Do I prefer to reduce distance and create a positive open minded relationship with other individuals, groups, cultures even though I do not agree with all those different behaviour-patterns (+1/+2)

It's the „difference that makes the difference“ or in Scary Guys' terms:

Will negative energy still determinate (latent) attitudes and actions towards others in the future, or shouldn't it be more and more a positive energy-flow to be manifested – step by step through trainings and practice-exchange...?

This seems to be a very „uncomfortable“ strain, but could be „easy“ if we go on with „change management“ and „change attitudes“ long-term-projects in the sense of the E.A.S.Y. project.

Take your own decisions and share your experiences, ideas and visions with us!

The V.I.P.-team from Darmstadt-Kranichstein/Germany

The V.I.P. approach

Evaluating E.A.S.Y.

final evaluation and conclusion with regards to self-evaluation of participants

the concept

According to the general aims of the project E.A.S.Y. and in order to comply with the requirements for realisation of project accompanying self-evaluation a possibly high level of active involvement of the young participants had to be assured as well as implementation of methods to make this participation „easy“.

Hence the decision that „control“ of learning gains should be carried out as assessment of process-related achievement by the young people themselves as far as possible. Already at this stage the remark that generally speaking this approach was right even though some of the young people – despite thorough introduction of the self-assessment form – were obviously not up to the task and method of self-evaluation. It can be gathered from evaluation of the forms that this overload at least for the greater part of the young people did not originate from a lack of understanding but more from foreign language deficits. We will get back to this.

Self-evaluation by young people was embedded in a concept of project accompanying formative evaluation to firstly cope with the specific innovative character of the project and secondly to allow for all stakeholders to take well-founded corrective, modificatory, or ameliorative action in the process of the project. At this mainly the key phases and core processes of the project should be in the spotlight of epistemological interest: local projects („attractor projects“ and their European dimension), European trainings for V.I.P.s and multipliers or social workers and youth workers, and finally the V.I.P.-method as such, whereupon not only the learning processes themselves (development of all stakeholders) were a subject matter to this formative evaluation, but also the different aims of the project with regards to content (educational objectives in terms of advanced options for action based on different/new perceptions, insights, and knowledge etc.).

The final report of the whole E.A.S.Y. project gives proof and draws conclusions with regards to practice-oriented efficiency of this evaluation concept, respectively, concerning the aims of quality development and quality assurance, comprehen-

FINAL EVALUATION OF V.I.P.-APPROACH (group#1)



FINAL EVALUATION OF CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE (group#2)



FINAL EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES (group#3)





sible documentation of individual and collective learning processes, and commitment to transparency and accountability by saying what has been done for what reasons.

results of self-evaluation

The self-evaluation form is designed in a way that for seventeen statements the level of agreement is examined (from „I fully agree“ to „I don't agree at all“) and in another three statements people are asked for their current opinion.

Thirtythree self-evaluation sheets form the basis of the analysis. Twentynine of them were filled in during the Training Course for V.I.P.s in Bonn (July 2007), the remaining four have been filled in during the Final Conference in December 2008. Neither with regard to general tendency nor in relation to significantly differing ratings a seperate treatment of the results seems justified (independent of the small numbers that do not allow for statistical analysis either) so that the following remarks refer to the total number of self-evaluation forms.

In addition to this evaluation more evaluation results from the Training Courses leave a mark on this report.

Ideally all young people should have filled in the form several times during the project and in different situations. This turned out to be impossible because of the special profile of young people involved (partly with special educational needs – or in former socio-paedagogical terminology: especially disadvantaged) but also because it was emphatically desired to respect the dynamics of the whole project which would occasionally require different priorities, different ways of learning and thus different methods of evaluation. Only at the Training Course in 2007 it was possible to get one self-evaluation form from every participant at the beginning and at the end of the seminar. The four sheets from the Final Conference were only filled in one time so that for fourteen young people there exists a „before and after“ self-evaluation.

As was mentioned initially it can be concluded from the comparison that mainly at the beginning of the Training Course and thus in the starting phase of the project there existed substantial difficulties in communicating in English, a foreign language to most of the participants.

This is true for verbal involvement – regardless of support by the respective group leaders (local coordinators) – and with regard to individually answering to the questions of the form written in a foreign language. In fact the form was presented, explained, discussed in national groups with the assistance of local coordinators, and filled in for test purposes at the „kick-off“ meeting (Mühlthal 2007) but apparently this could not erase difficulties in understanding as to English phrasing well enough.

Therefore comments and opinions given in the first form are predominantly written down in the respective mother tongue (whereat learning difficulties are again apparent). Also in some of the forms exactly identical quotes (copied from someone else) can be found which again permits the conclusion that some of the young people – as a matter of necessity to write down the self-evaluation in a language other than their mother tongue – have been overstrained. From the fact that in the second form all young people made an effort to formulate in English follows that the learning environment during the training course could strengthen their self-confidence. Also all of them

(with the exception of a few people all of them from the same country) mention that they had intensively communicated with others so that their knowledge of English was applied, though rudimentary. This assessment is also confirmed by numerous comments in the second form that express motivation and aim of English language acquisition. Assessment of the statement „I feel well prepared for my tasks as V.I.P.“ is of particular importance because this method was the „heart“ of the project, and the training course was especially designed in order to impart the basics so that V.I.P.s could perform this task in their local projects efficiently and professionally.

At the beginning of the training course there are two self-assessments „I don't really agree“ and three „I don't know“. For the rest this statement is rather true, one time even „fully“. After the training there appear no more „I don't really agree“-assessments. Less than one third now declare „I don't know“ and for the rest there is one half shifting to „I fully agree“ (one shift from „I don't really agree“ to „I fully agree“) and the other half stays with the first consenting assessment. There-with one essential aim of the TC





is accomplished. It results from the local coordinators' motivating preparation of their groups and is also owed to the fact that for the vast majority of participants being together with youth from other countries was a primary and predominantly positive experience that neither at the beginning nor at the end of the training course anyone marks with a cross an ambivalent or negative emotion towards the statement „I am pleased to be working on this project as a V.I.P.". This assessment is backed up by many comments – even if partly much abbreviated – mainly in the second form that suggest a new and more positive feeling for Europe, for getting together in an European group, and for the interest in another country, another culture, and another language. After the training course several young people from different countries and – striking – all participants from one country explicitly state in continuous text to now have found a more positive approach towards the topic Europe. An evidence for adequate consideration of the European dimension in training course didactics. This does not contradict sporadic comments of participants who state that they

do not get along well with a few young people from a certain country. Obviously this is more about unsolved communication and interaction problems on interpersonal level. However the general aspect: communication, interaction and language seemed to be of higher relevance for many young people – at least based on evaluation of the forms – because in several comments it is mentioned that they would have wished to have more communication and language support from the supervisors in different situations in order for them to establish more intense contacts. What this means on an individual basis cannot be deduced from the forms. Yet it can be proven that this wish does not come along with any negative impacts on motivation, commitment, and active participation: the respective statements are being assessed positively in the majority of cases.

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Participatory Needs Analysis

using images production and photo elicitation

In the framework of the E.A.S.Y. project our partner organization from Torino/Italy GIOSEF UNITO elaborated an innovative methodology that was applied on local level as the Italian Local Attractor Project and discussed by the international team of V.I.P.s during the international trainings and conferences in 2007 and 2008.

GIOSEF UNITO

Giovani Senza Frontiere - Università di Torino is a youth and students association of the university of Torino created in 2004. The main aim of the association is to promote active participation of young people at local and international level using peer education in formal and nonformal settings (www.giosef-unito.org).

The association was created as local branch of the national youth organisation GIOSEF founded in Rome in 1999 (www.giosef.it).

The organisation promotes local, national and European activities such as:

- international mobility programs (YOUTH in Action, Socrates, Leonardo)
- symposia, seminars and training courses
- research and publications on youth policies at local and national level
- work camps
- campaigns

In order to ensure real access of all young people to these activities, ever since its creation, GIOSEF UNITO has focused on the key role of multipliers, using peer to peer information and peer education as tools to develop knowledge and skills of young people and be able to act in their local community.

Trough its cooperation with the international youth organisations WFM – Young Women from Minorities and MoE – Minorities of Europe, GIOSEF UNITO has developed its local training activities with particular attention to the inclusion of young women and minority youth leaders at local level.

The association is also founding member of Forum Nazionale Giovani and Forum Giovani Piemonte and was a member of the National Campaign Committee for the All Different – All Equal Youth Campaign on Diversity, Human Rights, Participation





(www.alldifferent-allequal.info) with the role of coordinating training activities on Human Rights Education.

GIOSEF joins E.A.S.Y.

GIOSEF UNITO has joined the E.A.S.Y. project thanks to successful previous cooperation with the partner organizations, in particular with Network Rope in the field of Youth Exchanges and Human Rights Education with young people. E.A.S.Y. project represented for GIOSEF UNITO an opportunity for the development of a local project in the rural area of Cuneo (Piemonte) which aimed at giving to a group of local youngsters, aged 16-26, the necessary tools to organize local to international youth activities focused on their needs in relation to their local context. The local youth face disadvantage in terms of access to international mobility projects and youth policies in general, lack of leisure centres and spaces for young people.

Furthermore, before GIOSEF started the project, there were not any examples of activities undertaken directly by the local youth in this area. GIOSEF UNITO has developed a social analysis of the area, using

different tools, such as:

- research of previous statistic reports from the Region and the Province
- research on the results of previous projects for young people financed by the Region
- qualitative interviews with local youth, starting with „potential multipliers“
- a participatory needs analysis using images production and photo elicitation (which is presented in this article)

Ever since its creation GIOSEF UNITO has used the methods of peer education, empowering young multipliers to develop their competences and previous knowledge in relationship with their own context.

Therefore the strategies used in the E.A.S.Y. project were in line with our methods and represented an important added value to our local activities in Cuneo.

Why a participatory needs analysis?

Every action-oriented project with young people responds to specific needs according to different countries, local, cultural, social and geographical contexts. Every group of young people has its own specific needs, but sometimes it is difficult to

Participatory Needs Analysis

recognise clearly the individual characteristics and needs within the group.

Why else?

It is important to give the chance to each individual in the group to freely express her/his own needs despite the commonalities/differences in the group, in order to find out which are the common issues to address in a project that involves youth as actively from the assessment until final evaluation.

When?

The method can be used with a defined group of youngsters involved in a project management activity during the needs analysis preliminary to the project planning phase.

Who?

The analysis is organised by the largest number of stakeholders that can be involved: this include mainly youngsters and organisers, but also other partners in the project which can share their visions about local needs of the project to be started.

Aim

To plan a project which starts from the needs expressed directly by the young people involved.

Objectives

- to analyse local needs from multiple perspectives
- to provide a free space for expression
- to include every single participant in the decision making process
- to create a dynamic for individual expression, not influenced by differences in the group in terms of individual attitudes and social roles (leaders influences, friendships, etc.)
- to value the opinion of youngsters as central to every phase of the project
- to overcome difficulties due to different levels of language skills (verbal and written) and abilities to express complex concepts

Methodology

The group of young people and organisers are asked to reflect on one given key word or concept which can be general (e.g. „exclusion of young people in the local community“) or more specific (e.g. „diversity“, „addictions“, „family“, „Europe“) according to the area of the youth activity to be started.

Phase 1) production

- Each person takes 5 pictures with a camera (or any other image taker device) of anything in their local context which he/





she believes represents the key word

- pictures don't have to be artistic or beautiful but meaningful
- each person works individually and doesn't share his/her images with the others
- participants give the 5 images to the trainer some days before the activity, either by printing them or sending them by email

Phase 2) interpreting

- all images are printed out and attached to a flipchart paper per each person
- under all images an envelope is attached
 - images are not given any title yet by those who took them
 - all participants are asked to imagine what the pictures represent, in order to give multiple perspectives of the same pictures and multiply possible meanings to them
 - all participants write possible titles to each others' images in a small sheet of paper according to their interpretations, and place the papers inside the envelopes under the pictures, in order not to influence each other during this phase

Phase 3) sharing

- in working groups all participants share their interpretation

of the pictures they took and discuss the different visions coming from the group

- most common „titles/needs“ are selected by the group
- all groups gather to present the results of their discussions and define the main needs they would like to fulfil in the common project

Phase 4) action

- on the basis of the main need/s identified, the group chooses the aim of the project to develop together

Materials

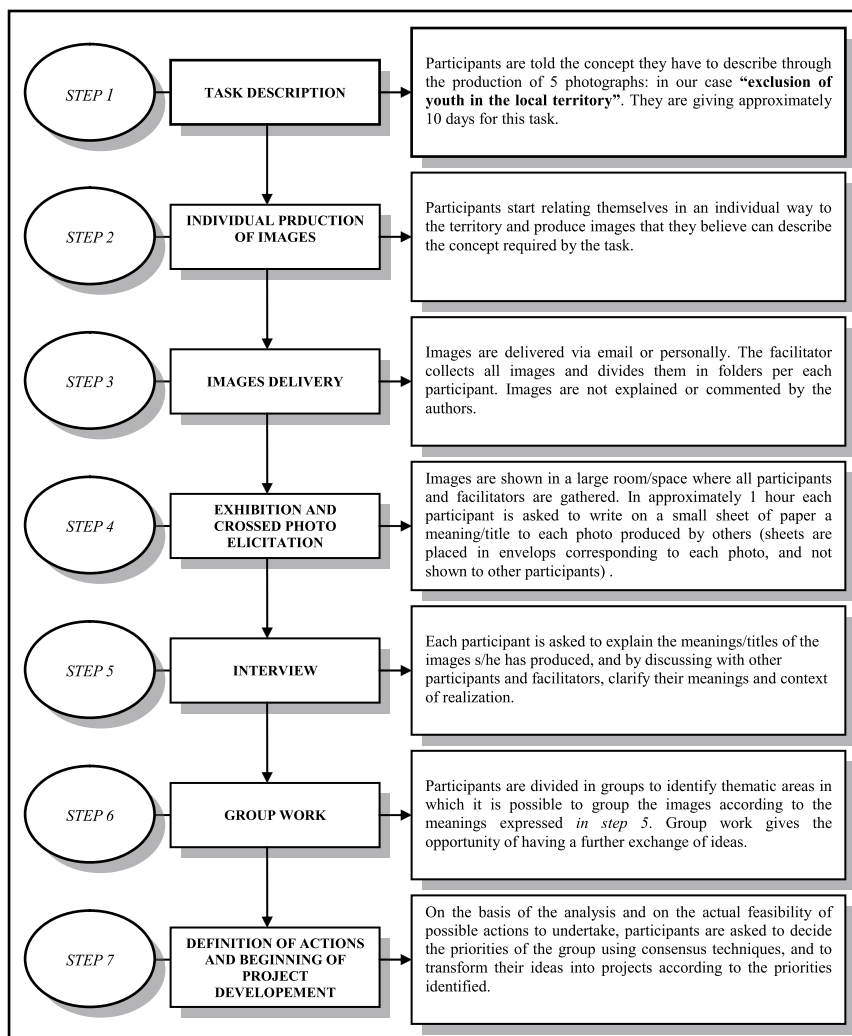
1 image taker device (camera, mobile, etc.) per participant, photo printer, envelopes, 5/10 piece of paper per participant, pens, large room

a scheme for participatory needs analysis using images production and photo elicitation

is to be found on the next page and at www.easy-easy.eu for free download!

SCHEME FOR PARTICIPATORY NEEDS ANALYSIS USING IMAGES

PRODUCTION AND PHOTO ELICITATION





IDENTIFYING THE CHALLENGES

The project development phase was developed on the basis of the needs and aspirations expressed by the V.I.P.s in the social analysis activity. As an example, we provide a summary of the main areas of interest identified by youngsters during the analysis next to one of the images produced that helped identifying each theme:



lack of young people in the local territory (mid and high Maira Valley)



emigration of youth population from the valley



lack of access to services and information

Participatory Needs Analysis



insufficient public transports in the valley, with consequential lack of access to leisure opportunities for young people (in particular for those not having a driving license yet)



lack of sports facilities



lack of gathering places for youth



impossibility to access the local decision making bodies (municipalities and region)

TRAINING V.I.P.S

- Team building
- project planning
- define NEEDS →



PICTURE
YOUR
NEEDS

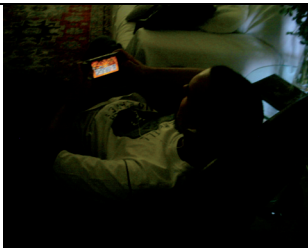
DISCUSSIONS AND
PEOPLE FROM ALL
THE VALLEY ABOUT



absence of cultural activities apart from those offered by the catholic churches



high rate of suicides among youngsters



self-exclusion of youth

Participatory Needs Analysis

Participatory Needs Analysis

Defining a common action

Access to international youth mobility and international opportunities in general terms was not identified as a primary need by the youngsters, who focused more on the problems faced day by day by themselves and their peers living in the local community.

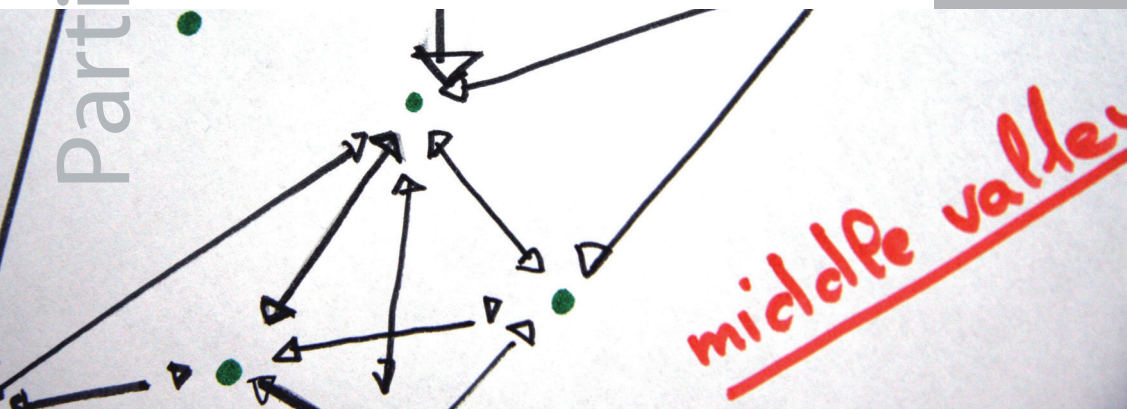
A wider issue was raised during the analysis as a transversal problem/cause of the challenges outlined above: **the lack of a strategy for local development taking into account the real needs of local population, especially young people.**

According to the V.I.P.s, the valley faces in fact not only the crucial problem of emigration and lack of young people, but also the imposition of development strategies from powers outside the valley (National Government, Region, Development Agencies etc.) which never took into account the possibility of consulting the local population on decisions for mid and long term policies. This challenge (which we identified with the V.I.P.s as „lack of participatory approaches by institutions“) affects the sustainability of life in the valley in many spheres: socially, economically and in relation to environment. Young people living in moun-

tains and rural areas are often more aware and concerned on the environmental impact of development policies as their daily life and work is much more in contact with nature comparing to their peers living in urban areas. In addition to this aspect, the Maira Valley is the key place of a debate lasting for the past 60 years on the pro and against reasons for building a hydro-electrical dam that would, according to most of the local population of the mid and high valley, change radically the landscape of the valley and its socio-economical structure.

The „issue of the dam“ was raised during every meeting with the V.I.P.s and was step by step defined as a common concern for all V.I.P.s to be tackled in the Local Attractor Project.

V.I.P.s and coordinators agreed on the idea that developing a project on hydro-electrical development would have not been feasible in a limited time, so through consensual discussions techniques the following theme was decided as the common focus of the local project: **„Youth and Sustainable Development“**. Sustainability includes in fact all the needs expressed during the social analysis, and the concept of acting for a common vision of the future of the local territory.





THE LOCAL ATTRACTOR PROJECT

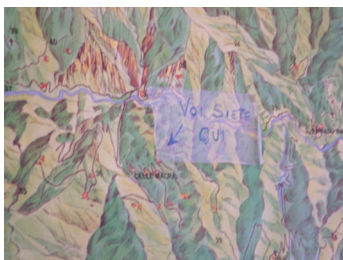
YOUTH AND SUSTAINABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable camp in Valle Maira (Cuneo, Italy) 27-28-29 August 2008

Using project planning forms and projects simulations, the V.I.P.s defined as local project a meeting in the valley for local youth and youth coming from all over the region, to discuss the main challenges and opportunities for young people to act for a local sustainable development and undertake common actions in this field.

The meeting took place in a camping site in Valle Maira (CN), where participants had the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences on methods and theory about environmental, cultural and social sustainability.

The event was planned and organised by the group of local young people that have been involved by Giosef Unito, the topics discussed and the methods used were the result of the participatory analysis process that aimed at identifying the needs and aspirations of the local community as starting point for this activity.



You are here ...





workshops on sustainable development and intercultural learning



focus groups and preparing follow up activities

TARGET GROUP

The event involved totally 20 youth (18 – 30 years old) that were active in youth organizations in the valley and in Torino, or interested on the topics of the meeting and motivated to plan and run follow up activities.

METHODOLOGY

The methodologies used during the days were non formal and informal education, based on experiential learning. Workshops, focus groups and simulation games were the main activities developed during the event. The inhabitants of the local community had an active role in the event by sharing knowledge, experiences and being motivated in exchanging information on their way of life in an understandable and easy way.

SUSTAINABLE APPROACH

The meeting was based in all its phases on the concept of sustainability, meaning that participants and organisers discussed during preparation what could be the best ways to ensure a “sustainable life style” during the camp, not only from an environmental point of view (clean transportation, recycling, consuming local goods, etc.) but also from a social point of view within the group, using working methods that could include equally every individual throughout the meeting. Cultural sustainability was also considered in terms of the importance of the relation with the local community, as one of the main problems faced by the youth in the valley is the lack of people of the same age and therefore the need for intergenerational dialogue plays a major role for the development of all follow up activities.



RESULTS

One of the main objectives of the meeting has been the definition of follow up activities in order to ensure follow up of the E.A.S.Y. project among the young people of Valle Maira.

The projects identified where:

- **Sustainable summer camp**

After the first “pilot sustainable camp”, participants expressed their motivation in repeating the experience of the summer camp in Valle Maira, involving a larger group of young people from the region and discussing every year a different topic. The concept of sustainability as approach and theme to be discussed will be maintained.

At the moment the working group on this camp is discussing the possibility of applying for a grant to the Youth in Action Program to invite an international group of youngsters to the camp

- **Local network of young people working on environment**

As a result of the experience, a group of participants decided to continue working regularly on the themes of environment and clean energies. In February 2009 the group contributed to the planning of a project on sustainability and environment in the frame of Torino Youth Capital 2010 and asked for a grant to the Italian Ministry of Youth.

- **Founding of Persefone – Percorsi di Partecipazione e Sviluppo**

As an outcome of the whole E.A.S.Y. project, the creation of new local association was discussed during the summer camp and was founded in september 2008. Persefone gathers different youth workers, project managers and active citizens that were involved by the youth organisation Giosef – Unito throughout the project in Valle Maira. The main aim of this association is to continue working in the fields of participatory approaches for local development, with particular attention to groups of people at risk of social exclusion. www.associazionepersefone.org

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