



Contribution of EPTO to the White Paper of the European Commission on Youth Policy

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With the support of



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- The European Peer Training Organisation (EPTO) is a European network of young trainers involved in combating racism and xenophobia. The aim of this programme is to provide young people and especially youth leaders with training tools enabling them to lead workshops on respecting multicultural diversity. The EPTO network is active in 10 European countries.
- EPTO's activities began in 1996 at the initiative of the Centre Européen Juif d'Information (CEJI), using the materials of the Anti-Defamation League's A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute, with financial support from the Youth for Europe Programme of the European Union. Partnerships with numerous youth, educational, and anti-discrimination associations at local, national and international levels have also contributed to the development of EPTO.

Introduction

The goal of EPTO's contribution to the White Paper on Youth Policy is to emphasize the important role of youth in the promotion and construction of a multicultural Europe.

EPTO believes that the involvement, education and awareness of youth in the promotion of citizenship are necessary aspects of the fight against discrimination and exclusion.

Formal, non-formal and life-long learning

Section I: Statement of views/ Definition of needs

- **Context**

- Eurobarometer survey No. 47.2 entitled: "Young Europeans" published in 1998, showed that 27.5% of young people questioned thought that "there were too many foreigners in their country".

- For Europe to continue its march forward, it has to complete its economic and political progress by offering the "European dream" to its youth. It is based on this blueprint for the future that it must mobilise its education and training resources¹.

- Life-long training and education plays a strategic role in encouraging access to a knowledge-based economy and society². However, emphasis must also be placed on the essential role related to formal, informal and non-formal education for the creation of a **European citizenship** from which no one is excluded³.

- **Citizenship** can be described as a social and dynamic practice during which the feeling of belonging is created through communication with others in spite of differences. The reality of active citizenship can only come about with the creation of a shared culture based on:

- The recognition of the dignity and centrality of the human being;
- Rights and social obligations and the fight against exclusion;
- The rejection of prejudices and the understanding of the value of equality;
- Interculturality, i.e. the value of diversity and the acceptance of a pluralistic society.⁴

¹ Accomplishing Europe through education and training - Study Group on Education and Training – Report on Education, Training and Youth - European Commission - 1997

² Conclusions of the Lisbon meeting of the European Council - April 2000

³ Memorandum of the European Commission on life-long education and training

⁴ Study Group on education and training set up by the European Commission in 1995

- **EPTO Recommendations**

- Generally speaking and given the above-mentioned aspects, EPTO supports the development of a system of education and training with the following objectives in mind:

- Promoting a shared, democratic culture based on equal opportunity;
- Developing practices and relational behaviour based on discovery and respect for others and being able to be critical when confronted with stereotypes;
- Promoting an "intercultural school" and the central role of formal and non-formal education when passing on common values;
- **Giving responsibility** to all those involved in education to allow for a holistic and integrated educational approach linking the various entities constituting the direct surroundings of the young person, i.e. **parents, educational establishments, associative structures, social workers and local authorities.**

Section II: Measures to be taken and resources needed for implementation

Introduction: Mainstreaming and transversality of the struggle against racism and xenophobia

- The principle of mainstreaming aims at integrating the goal of anti-racism in all actions and community policies at all levels, i.e. strategic planning, implementation of the action, follow-up and evaluation of the results and consequences. New **partnerships** between the European institutions, Member States, community organisations, NGOs and all social partners should be created.⁵

- Furthermore, the Treaty of Amsterdam includes a non-discrimination clause, Article 13, encouraging European institutions to take measures to combat discrimination "based on sex, race or ethnic origin, religion or convictions, disability, age or sexual orientation".

- The implementation of **Article 13** was formalised in a plan of action against discrimination whose main objective is "the change of practices and attitudes" by mobilising the players concerned.

- EPTO believes it is essential that the EU's youth programmes support informal structures for young people to implement this plan of action.

EPTO Recommendations

- 1) Give institutional recognition to non-formal education.**
- 2) Promote the role of formal and non-formal education in the field of anti-discrimination and citizenship.**
- 3) Set-up consultation and permanent partnerships.**
- 4) Value and increase the position of minority groups in education.**
- 5) Provide support for networks promoting citizenship and anti-racism education.**
- 6) Value and increase intercultural education in youth exchange programmes.**

⁵ European Conference on the fight against racism at European level - February 2000

1. Give institutional recognition to non-formal education

- **Create certification and methods of accreditation for non-formal education**

- Placing non-formal education at the same level as formal education should be officially recognised by educational institutions. Certification and accreditation programmes should be set up and **recognised** European-wide with a view to valuing non-formal training and the specific role of voluntary youth organisations in this process.

- **Promote youth leadership and peer training programmes**

- **Promote youth leadership**

- EPTO supports the idea that participation of youth in society happens through citizenship training in a formal or non-formal framework. Professional skills are closely linked to social skills. It is by developing leadership that young people will be able to recognize the importance of their role in society.

- Youth leadership should be encouraged by European youth policy with a view to increasing the **participation of youth in local, national and international decision-making processes**.

- Peer training is one of the means of promoting youth leadership in society. It creates empowerment and a pride in leadership, as well as a sense of social responsibility.

- **Peer Training**

- The method of peer training, i.e. calling on the young who have been trained to act as trainers themselves, reduces the barriers that exist between teachers and pupils. Approaches by peer groups, whether in a formal or informal framework, can be successful if they are supported by planning and adequate resources and can have a very positive influence on **attitudes and behaviour**.

- Peer training is a training technique which encourages the development of educating young people by their peers in specific domains while at the same time develops a sense of leadership. To this end, the following should be taken into account:

- Peer training fights exclusion by means that are familiar to youth.
- Each young person knows discrimination from his or her own experience.
- Peer training creates empowerment and a pride in leadership.
- Shared feelings open the way to welcoming diversity.
- Peer training against exclusion substitutes old group values for new ones.
- Peer training against exclusion can create a snowball effect among a wider group.
- Peer training against exclusion keeps ideals alive.
- Success motivates and leads to further successful action.
- Self-confident youth challenge the adults' world.
- Peer training can change the home environment of youth.⁶

⁶ Domino - A Peer Training Manual and a means to fight racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance - All different, All equal - Council of Europe - Youth Department - 1993

2. Promote the role of formal and non-formal education⁷ in the field of anti-discrimination and citizenship

- **Encourage joint projects between various Community programmes**

- EPTO supports the implementation of joint projects in the fight against discrimination allowing young people to take part in initiatives **put forward by companies, schools and universities**. The **Youth, Leonardo and Socrates** programmes should promote the setting up of joint anti-discrimination programmes encouraging young people to work and interact with various formal and non-formal educational environments. Examination of this matter which was initiated by the European Commission should be continued.

- **Encourage and institutionalise evaluation procedures and poles of expertise**

- Evaluation is an indispensable tool in any socio-educational project. It can help identify any gaps between the initial project and its end result. Basic assumptions must be checked against various types of observations and empirical data with a view to adjustment and model building of the training scheme. EPTO believes it is essential that all formal and non-formal education should be provided with **appropriate tools** for effective and continuous evaluation.

- **Modernise curricula**

- It has been acknowledged that life-long education and training not only contributes to maintaining economic competitiveness and participation in working life but is also the best way of fighting social exclusion.⁸

- However, traditional education does not always encourage the building of a strong identity and self-respect. Too many young people leave formal education because they are anxious or depressed. Moreover, social exclusion is one of the growing problems experienced by many young Europeans and is both the cause and the effect of a lack of self-respect.⁹

- EPTO supports the idea that education must provide pupils with experiences which will develop their abilities and feelings of belonging to **participate in a democratic society**. Preventive education against all forms of discrimination must be a priority in specific sectors such as the workplace, schools, universities and youth organisations.

- The integration of non-formal education methods touching on social themes should be encouraged in youth movements and integrated in formal educational courses including intercultural education, conflict resolution, non-violent communication and education in citizenship and diversity.

- **Teacher Training**

⁷ *"Non-formal learning takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training and does not typically lead to formalised certificates. Non-formal learning may be provided in the workplace and through the activities of civil society organisations and groups (such as youth organisations, trades unions and political parties). It can also be provided through organisations or services that have been set up to complement formal systems (such as arts, music and sports classes or private tutoring to prepare for examinations). Memorandum on lifelong learning - Document of the European Commission - October 2000.*

⁸ Memorandum on lifelong learning – Commission Staff Working Paper - Commission of the European Communities - Brussels 2000.

⁹ Building bridges for learning - The recognition and value of non-formal education in youth activity. A study by Dr. Pasi Sahlberg for the European Youth Forum.

- EPTO supports the general conclusions of the European Conference against racism - Strasbourg¹⁰ calling on participants to introduce or reinforce *education in human rights including promotion of anti-racism in school programmes and in the programmes of institutions of advanced learning*. To this end, **teacher training programmes** should integrate human rights education.

3. Set-up consultation and permanent partnerships

- It is extremely important for those involved in educating children and young adults to realise that it is **"it takes a whole village to raise a child"**. In other words, in order to provide rich learning environments for the young, we have to join forces and understand that the quality of education can only improve if various educational methods are interdependent. All the educators aiming at the same target group have to share the same, general objectives: the education of young people to create independent, positive, responsible and involved citizens¹¹.

- Multilateral partnerships linking NGOs involved in youth matters, schools, parent associations and local and regional authorities should be set-up. The anti-discrimination Action Plan of Article 13, and the future conclusions of the White Paper on Youth Policy, should be implemented **transversally** by the Directorates-General for Employment and Social Affairs and Education and Culture of the European Commission.

4. Value and increase the position of minorities in education

- Immigrant and minority communities have made an enormous contribution to cultural, religious, linguistic, ethnic and social diversity in Europe.

- Given that the full participation of minorities is essential for the creation of a Europe of peace which respects cultural diversity, EPTO supports the idea that special attention should be paid to those young people coming from ethnic and religious minorities as well as disabled people, homosexuals and other individuals from minority groups.

- EPTO advocates promotion of a inclusive society which offers everyone **an equal chance to access high-quality life-long learning** which offers education and training based upon individual needs.¹²

- The situation of minorities should be dealt with in European youth policy by:

- The training of teachers and trainers involved in working with minorities (special attention should be paid to young people who are subjected to various forms of discrimination).
- Raising the awareness of all young people by means of formal and non-formal education about the value of diversity.

¹⁰ General conclusions of the European conference against racism - Strasbourg, 11-13 October 2000

¹¹ Building bridges for learning - The recognition and value of non-formal education in youth activity. A study by Dr. Pasi Sahlberg for the European Youth Forum.

¹² Memorandum on lifelong learning – Commission Staff Working Paper - Commission of the European Communities - Brussels 2000.

- Support for the integration of young people from minority communities who are not part of the institutional youth network.

5. Provide support for networks promoting citizenship and anti-racism education

- Following the principle of mainstreaming, EPTO believes it is important that investment should be made in **supporting projects of networks of young volunteers** engaged in the struggle against exclusion in Europe. Furthermore, more effective **collaboration** should be created using the COMENIUS and ERASMUS networks as well as those financed as anti-discriminatory plans of action as laid down by Article 13.

6. Value and increase intercultural education in youth exchange programmes

- Realising that diversity in Europe is both a force and a source of great richness, EPTO actively encourages a policy of maximum mobility. Nevertheless, intercultural exchanges must be supported by **tools and adequate resources** in the field of intercultural education. If cultural exchanges lack this framework, they tend to lose their coherence and efficacy as intercultural learning experiences.

- EPTO encourages:

- The setting up of exchanges of experts which are regular and well-structured in the domain of intercultural youth education.
- A systematic approach to the use of intercultural tools in youth exchange programmes.

Section III: Examples of best practice

1. Anti-Racist Education Projects

- ALL DIFFERENT/ALL EQUAL Campaign of the Council of Europe

- The ALL DIFFERENT/ALL EQUAL Campaign run in 1996 by the Council of Europe provided excellent resources and motivation for peer education efforts in the area of anti-racism. Although this was a short-term campaign, its materials are still being used and its influence still rings true for youth associations throughout Europe.

- EPTO

- The European Peer Training Organisation (EPTO) is a European network of young trainers fighting against racism and xenophobia. This programme aims at transferring training tools to young people and especially leaders of youth movements enabling them to lead workshops on the respect of multicultural diversity. The EPTO network is active in 10 European countries.

- A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™ Programme

- The A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™ Programme is an example of a best practice in the area of teacher training. This Programme provides awareness-raising training as to the dangers of discrimination and the value of diversity, well at the same time provides innovative pedagogical tools for classroom use. The A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE™ Network provides a structured network for a European exchange of experiences and expertise amongst trainers and teachers who use the Programme in schools.

- Diversity Education Network

- The project launched by CEJI and the Intercultural Educational Unit of the University of Liège consists of the creation of an active network for the exchange of best practice between various, complementary approaches to intercultural education.

- The Bede Anti-Racist Youth Project

- The Bede Anti-Racist Youth Project in the United Kingdom is exemplary for working with marginalized white youth who tend toward racist extremism. The white youth are themselves integrated into mainstream society, and eventually they come together with youth from minority groups to engage in intercultural projects.

2.Citizenship Education

- ***Council of Europe Directorate of Youth and Sport Training Courses on Citizenship and Participation of Minority Youth***

- The Council of Europe holds regular Training Courses dealing with the subject of citizenship and the participation of minority youth. These training courses are either short or long-term and are excellent programs for developing knowledge and skills for the full and active participation of youth in society.

- ***Education for Life***

- Founded in 1999, this organisation based in the Netherlands and working with Israelies and Palestinians aims at practical programmes to help young people to use their full potential in society. These programmes and educational tools are used by children, teachers, parents and schools.