

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Dialogue Dinner “How to engage youth in the causes of Global Citizenship?”

INTRODUCTION

“In the face of the many existential challenges and opportunities confronting today’s world, more and more people around the globe are motivated to get active and engage in transformative processes dedicated to building a fair, sustainable and peaceful world”¹. In the scope of the European project “Facilitating Global Learning”² and in the framework of the European Youth Forum³, we organized a Dialogue Dinner with youth experts to find new ways to reach and engage young people in Global Learning challenges (Global Learning is understood to embrace a wide range of theories and concepts, including Global Education, Education for Sustainable Development, Development Education and Global Citizenship Education). Our goal was to recognise and assume the opportunities and responsibilities youth have as members of a global society. Participants of the Dialogue Dinner were asked to look for ways to encourage youth to actively participate in shaping both their immediate and wider surroundings and to seek for learning opportunities to foster the competencies (knowledge acquisition, skills, values and attitudes) required of an informed and critically thinking young global citizen.

DESCRIPTION

For the event we decided to adapt the World Café methodology as a simple, flexible and creative process to explore and innovate “on the task” – finding new

¹BÜKER, G. *et al*, “Global How? Facilitating Global Learning – a trainer’s manual” (2016)

² In partnership with NGOs from Romania (Agenda 21) and Germany (finep, epiz and DEAB)

³ Held in March 2016, in Lisbon

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connections and ways to engage youth into Global Learning themes. World Café was transformed into a Dialogue Dinner, where participants were dining while debating. There were 8 tables with 6 themes (2 repeated) of Global Learning available for the participants of the debate. The themes were:

1. Identity and cultural diversity (understanding and respecting cultural diversity; understanding multiperspectives, not only an Eurocentric view; valuing minorities and indigenous knowledge; valuing interculturalism; promoting cultural heritage)
2. Human rights at the global level
(right to education; right to water; right to vote; right to participate in the cultural life of the community; right to freedom of thought; right to freedom of religion; right to...)
3. Sustainable consumption and production and economic alternatives
(local/environmentally responsible production; sharing economy; social and solidarity economy; de-growth; permaculture)
4. Global inequalities (85 richest people own the same wealth as 3,5 billion people (2014); 50% of the world population own less than 1% of the global assets; over 20% of the world population lives on less than \$1.25/day, which is called extreme poverty)
5. Migrations and refugees (push and pull factors of migration; impacts of migration; forced migrations; refugees and asylum seekers; importance of humanitarian aid)
6. Climate change (causes of climate change; impacts of climate change for nature and humanity; ways to mitigate and avoid it)

Each participant had a chance to take part and share her/his ideas in two different discussions. The discussion guiding points were:

1. Relevance (Why youth should be engaged in these themes? Why is it important for them?)
2. Places (Where should activities take place: schools, bars, universities, parks, internet?)
3. Strategies/methodologies (Which strategies and methods can be used to engage youth? What are the innovative, creative ways to reach them?)

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4. Stakeholders/partnerships (Who are the main stakeholders that can establish platforms of communication with youth? What kind of partnerships should there be for effective cooperation?)
5. Activities (What types of activities are appealing for the youth? What are the actions that could attract and engage them?)

These points were the corner stones of the debates. The facilitators, that were assisting each debate, were noting down the ideas and suggestions. Also, the participants had a chance to share their feelings, thoughts and reflections by writing and drawing on big flipcharts.

IDEAS

The debates resulted in many interesting opinions and ideas. The most important conclusion that were reached in the debates is that youth should recognize and act on global issues, because we live in a globalized world, where everything is interconnected and influences each one of us. The awareness about global situation among young people is not very high.

At each table with a different topic, we discussed the relevance of Global Learning themes and concluded that in times of high mobility and **refugee** crisis, youth should be aware of causes, consequences and reality of forced **migrations** and of refugees.

In terms of **climate change**, youth are aware of the problem, but don't see the direct effects. There should be more focus on local and particular consequences, therefore young people could understand the problem better and act on it.

About **global inequalities**, many young Europeans don't see the inequalities nor they are aware of how privileged they are, that is why is important to raise awareness about the world inequalities so as to raise their participation in society. It is also crucial for young people to understand and value identity and cultural diversity. Since we live in

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interconnected world, we should respect our own identity and the differences and similarities between other cultures to live in harmony with others. We emphasized that youth should fully enjoy their rights and freedoms without discrimination on any grounds. Special attention should be paid to young people with fewer opportunities, including those who are affected by discrimination. After all, it is youth's right and duty to create and live in a sustainable and equal world for all.

We all agreed that it is important to raise awareness and interest of global issues among youth. In order to do that, young people should have everyday access to Global Learning. It would help youth to gain multiperspective knowledge, develop empathy, critical thinking and responsibility for their choices not only in local context, but also globally.

Global Learning themes should be implemented in national curriculums, so that every student has access to them. School is the most important actor in Global Citizenship Education, since youth have daily contact with it and school environment influences them in a great matter. For example, it is important to integrate sustainability issues on school policies and raise connection to nature among sports – the more respect and connection they have, the more environmentally responsible they will be.

It is important to rethink the paradigm of Professor vs. Educator. One suggestion is changing the position of “omnipotent” teacher into more open-minded education that would allow multidirectional communication and learning through experience. We recommend the use of more non-formal methods – as they are more involving, and very often young people learn through them while experiencing and having fun.

Multidimensional Global Learning can also change the youth's attitude from passive to active, as they would become transformative agents. It is important to pay attention to encouraging the participation and volunteering service – through being in “other's shoes” they understand the importance of solidarity and acting for a more fair society. Also, young people would have a chance to act and see real effects locally, by e.g.

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straightening the sense of community by inclusion, implementing economic alternatives, supporting local producers,....

In the matter of **stakeholders**, is important to engage youngsters in the process of preparing the project, for example brainstorming in local youth organization to find out what are their needs and suggestions. What also seems vital is that activities should always be developed and implemented in synergy with a group of actors that understand and fulfill the needs of youth. Global learning projects should involve local community, public, private and 3rd sector organizations willing to cooperate – families, schools, municipalities, museums, libraries, religious organizations, youth organizations, universities, NGOs, media, business, etc.

About **strategies**, it is also important to reach youth through role models by engaging famous people, local or global, as ambassadors of the projects – it would be much more appealing to youth and would have a great impact in terms of visibility and awareness.

It could be created a platform to connect locally youth with migrants from different cultures – to help understand each other better by activities like cooking dinner together, going on events, etc. There was a special emphasis on sport, since all the sport activities are very inclusive and help to integrate.

Moreover, there was the idea of experiment to understand the reality of refugees – to pack one day to school the bag pack only with the most essential things like the students were to run away and migrate illegally. This experiment could teach the students to empathize more with refugees. To value identity and **cultural diversity**, youth also should have more possibilities to work, study and travel abroad to get intercultural experience, especially outside of Europe.

To raise the awareness and empathy on **Human Rights**, we suggested creating more Human Libraries – a framework for conversations that can challenge stereotypes and prejudices through dialogue.

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Companies also have a role in global development. By hiring young people with social and environmental interests the enterprise itself could be positively contaminated with those ideas and behaviors and create a bigger difference has a social responsible organization.

Applications (apps) and games with ecological and social themes are important to teach about ecological footprint to present the estimation of human impact on nature and personal possibilities to lower down climate change. And youngsters spend so many hours per week gambling that including these themes on games would possibly influence them.

Also, there should be an investment on school gardens for youth to cultivate and learn the respect and value to nature and plants.

In terms of participation, youth local councils should be promoted in order to engage youth into local issues.

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