



# **The 2002 Report of Activities of Youth Action for Peace**

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## About this Report of Activities

The 2002 Report of Activities of Youth Action for Peace (YAP) has been developed keeping in mind that the work of YAP is orientated towards young people, local communities, and works with national and international institutions, governmental and non-governmental structures, mass-media and any person that considers the philosophy of YAP, applying the principle of transparency. YAP feels it is responsible in front of its main beneficiaries and community, in general, towards its partners and grant makers.

This report is available in printed form as well as in its on-line electronic version at the following address: [yapis@xs4all.be](mailto:yapis@xs4all.be). It pictures basic information about YAP, its programmes and activities ran during 2002, the social context of these activities, the financial resources and their allocation as well as the most outstanding achievements at international level.

## Youth Action for Peace

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Abbreviation: YAP

Date of establishment: 1923

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## **Strategic Directions**

*Ever since its founding in 1923, Youth Action for Peace has been aiming for societies of justice, peace and human solidarity. It supports all those who, oppressed, want to take their destiny in their own hands in order to create a liberating society.*

*Youth Action for Peace is part of and working in a globalising society. On one hand YAP exchanges volunteers world-wide and benefits from new tools such as the internet, on the other hand we can only deplore the effects of neo-liberalism. This paradox lead to the congress theme of globalisation. YAP wants its action to be consequent with its philosophy.*

*Gathering in Sopron, Hungary, from 16-20 February 2002, the member organisations of Youth Action for Peace agreed on the following priorities for YAP during the period 2002-2005.*

### **Equality**

Peace is not established without respect and participation of all. YAP continues working on the inclusion of all people, as defined in the preamble of its constitution. YAP and its branches commit themselves to especially reach out those men and women who are the most disadvantaged and discriminated in order to raise the awareness of society, and to struggle for the recognition, protection and participation of everyone in its activities.

### **Alternative Economy**

The current trends of globalisation do not lead to a more just and peaceful society. There is no balance between human, economical and ecological development, and differences are growing. A way to counter the globalisation of neo-liberalism is to have a better understanding of this process. Therefore YAP must be involved in an international reflection on globalisation. We will join other platforms or movements that develop reflections on alternative economy and the social actions linked to it. Thus YAP will act as a multiplier through the actions it implements.

We need to develop our capacities to be financially and politically more independent. For this we have to develop self-sustainable activities in each organisation.

### **Peaceful independence and self determination**

YAP should (re-) define its definition of self-determination. It should work on identifying oppressed nations and peoples that it will support according to its mission as it did in the case for Palestine.

In the meanwhile, YAP supports groups and nations under military occupation fighting for their independence. In this sense, YAP should intensify youth exchanges and other activities like solidarity actions, raising awareness campaigns about areas of conflict and the involvement of governments in supporting the aggression.

YAP will continue to support the creation of an independent Palestinian state based on UN resolutions.

### **Education for global issues**

People have more and more access to information, but the reliability of the information is decreasing. While media and formal education should be used to develop active citizenship and personal development, we consider that these aims are not being fulfilled at this time. This is why the non-formal educational part of our work has to be emphasised in order to develop a (self-) critical approach.

YAP aims to tackle and raise awareness of global issues such as human rights, international politics and the environment.

### **Armed conflicts**

As a peace movement, Youth Action for Peace should promote a culture of peace as it faces the culture of war, which is surrounding us. We do believe that there is a need to develop a political discourse of YAP on conflicts, their causes and consequences and to follow them through peaceful actions that go against the culture of war.

As a consequence of unilateral world-domination, war becomes more and more institutionalised. Armies are mainly filled with professionals and the use of high-tech makes that disassociation with military actions stronger than ever before. In many armed conflicts artificial reasons cover the quest for economical, political or whatever strategic influence of external entities. The enemy is created to justify the goals that are to be achieved. This process of hiding information and manipulating people will be highlighted by our activities, and we should raise awareness regarding conflicts and our role inside them.

We commit ourselves to discuss each conflict situation (with the input of the branches), on a process based on the principles of peace defined in the Preamble of our Constitution

## ***SEMINARS, YOUTH EXCHANGES AND TRAINING EVENTS***

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### **Mediterranean in Action, dream or reality?**

**Dates: 9-15 February 2002**

**Place: Vienna, Austria**

***With the kind support of the Youth Programme of the European Commission***

Over the past few years, YAP has been organising a large number of projects in and with the Mediterranean region, both under the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Action programme, and outside it. Within the Youth programme, activities have included youth exchanges in Palestine and Egypt, study visits and (training) seminars in the region, as well as EVS exchanges with Palestine. Also, on a decentralised level, several Palestinian EVS volunteers were hosted by the French branch of YAP, and the first steps were taken towards sending several EVS volunteers to Lebanon. Finally, YAP and its Mediterranean partners have been discussing a long-term strategy to improve Euro-Mediterranean youth exchange cooperation together with other international platforms.

In this sense, the need arose for the evaluation of the past activities, for coordination within the movement, and for the planning of future actions on a long-term basis. Also, since several new partners have been identified, there was a need for a certain transfer of knowledge. The same was true for new persons within the existing partner organisations.

The main aim of the seminar was therefore to improve and enhance Youth Action for Peace's activities and capabilities within the Mediterranean region.

This goal has been achieved through the following objectives:

1. Identifying a clear philosophy behind working in the Mediterranean region.
2. Having long term strategic planning for the movement in the region
3. Evaluating the previous activities
4. Exchanging experiences with different platforms & partners
5. Finding new partners in the region
6. Introducing the different EU funds and finding alternative funding
7. Diversity of the projects and setting up a follow up mechanism
8. Regional cooperation within the Mediterranean region

From these objectives five main categories were identified to create the "Red" line of the program and the seminar itself, these categories were:

1. The evaluation of previous activities (where the movement have failed and where it did succeed)
2. Philosophy (Discussion over the existing philosophy of the movement working in this region, how strong is it, and if it is to be changed, how and why?)
3. Funding (Giving the basic knowledge for the participants about the existing funding programs to finance activities in the Mediterranean region, whether from the European Commission or other sources)
4. Creating clear and / or new strategies to be the base of the project formation and cooperation.
5. Cooperation (initiating new initiatives and programs where the movement will boost its activities in the Region).

This seminar brought together a total of 10 active youth leaders from the Mediterranean region to meet with 18 of their European peers who are interested in developing youth projects and youth co-operation between the two regions. During the seminar, the participants explored the different possibilities for implementing reciprocal youth exchanges between Europe and the Mediterranean region. Through working groups, panel discussions, exercises and discussions, they were enabled to share experiences and to develop contacts among each other.

It should be mentioned though that this seminar has been one of the most difficult we have ever had in terms of visa problems. A total of 7 visa applications were rejected, even though we started the demand for the visas more than a month in advance. This meant that the participants from Jordan (3) and Algeria (3) could not attend the meeting. The same was true for an Algerian resident in the UK.

The results of the seminar are therefore quite ambiguous. On the one hand it is clear that the lack of Mediterranean participants and enough experienced European participants has made it difficult to evaluate the past experiences. It should be acknowledged that this objective of the seminar has not been reached completely. On the other hand, it should be said that despite this, the seminar has finally resulted in an increase of activities and cooperation between Europe and the Mediterranean. Examples of this could be the first international workcamp on Art in Egypt, a large-scale EVS project between Baladna, IPYL and the Youth Development Department of the Orient house, the study visit of Gudran to several YAP branches in Europe during the summer 2002, and various meetings between different Mediterranean organizations in Jerusalem, Haifa and Amman. The overall result of the seminar is therefore quite positive, even though there remains a lot of work to be done in the region.

## **International Congress**

### **"Global co-operation – Global challenges for Youth"**

**Venue: Sopron, Hungary**

**Dates: 16-21 February 2002**

***With the kind support of the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe***

Youth Action for Peace is an organisation with a very critical approach towards the current tendencies of globalisation. At the same time, we have ourselves been trendsetters in globalisation, as since 1923 we have been bringing people together from different regions, cultures and backgrounds. Is there an underlying paradox in the actions we undertake towards societies of peace, justice and equality on one hand, and the devastating effects of a certain form of globalisation which we are benefiting from on the other hand? We want people to profit from mobility and mutual learning processes, but at the same time we notice the impact of neo-liberalism in an always more globalised world.

In this congress, we wanted to come up with a set of key points on which we want to work further during the next years, a plan of the actions to be undertaken. The programme started with an input of a few experts in the field of globalisation as a kick-off. Then, after an evaluation of the priorities and work-plan of the period 1999-2002, we started searching for the paradoxes in our daily work. The "fields of tension" that were identified led to the issues we want to work on during the next few years: a new priority plan.

The congress gathered a total of 75 youth activists from all over the world: 36 from the EU, 25 from Central and Eastern Europe (including Switzerland, Russia and South East Europe), 6 from the Middle East, 6 from Latin America and 2 from Asia.

The new priorities include: Equality, Alternative economy, Peaceful independence and self-determination, Education for global issues, and Armed conflicts.

## **Project management in Actions for Peace**

**Dates: 14-21 April 2002**

**Place: European Youth Centre, Strasbourg**

***With the kind Support of the Youth and Sport Directorate of the Council of Europe***

The basic philosophy behind the structure of Youth Action for Peace is to create a soft-bed in which rather vague ideas can actually develop into something concrete: allowing young people to realise the projects they have in mind. The meeting is therefore part of YAP's continuing efforts to involve more young people who are active on a local level in its international structure. In this sense, the study session can be seen as a follow up of the

study session on Organisational management in EYC 2001, and the training for trainers as supported by the EYF in 2001. At this point of time it is considered important to allow a very new generation to take its role in the international movement and its projects.

This study session therefore emphasised on the development and practical management of international youth and voluntary service projects and the enabling of democratic participation in youth structures. It focused on preparation, carrying-out and evaluation of projects as well as the active involvement of young people in defining the profile of the activities.

The work was done individually, in working groups and in plenary sessions, including lectures, games, discussions as well as time for self-reflection. The programme developed several issues like:

- implementing international youth projects: management, communication, human resources, etc.
- basic planning of projects: what do you want, why and how?
- non-violent conflict resolution in an intercultural context
- evaluation methods

The final day was dedicated to the development of practical future projects between the participants.

The objectives of the study session were therefore:

- To enable the participants to gain basic knowledge and skills to realise the projects they have in mind.
- To get familiar with concrete methods and tools of preparation, carrying-out and evaluation of projects.
- To enable them to develop practical solutions concerning the management of projects in their respective organisations.
- To get tools and methods for non-violent conflict resolution in an intercultural context.
- Know about and handle the reality of teamwork.
- To improve the co-operation between youth organisations.

The specific situation in the different European societies was taken into account by enabling an exchange of different points of view and creating an atmosphere of mutual understanding. To this end, the study session gathered a total of 33 participants coming from Belgium (2), Bosnia (1), Bulgaria (1), France (5), Germany (2), Greece (1), Holland (1), Hungary (2), Israel (1), Latvia (2), Mexico (1), Palestine (1), Poland (1), Portugal (1), Romania (5), Russia (2), Spain (2), Turkey (1), UK (1).

## **Training on inclusion: working with disadvantaged young people**

**Dates: 17-19 May 2002**

**Place: Epinal, France**

One of the main aims of YAP is to "struggle against the different forms of violence, exploitation, injustice and exclusion; against networks of ideological, religious, sexist, political, cultural and economic oppression and imbalance of natural surroundings" (extract from the preamble of the constitution). For this reason, YAP and many of its branches have been working on social inclusion for many years now.

The main aim of this training for inclusion was to involve new partners and persons into this field, but also to prepare and coordinate the coming year of exchanges between the different partners involved. The objectives of the training were therefore:

- To Exchange experiences between the participants concerning their work with the target group
- To train new people on working with disadvantaged people
- To introduce the different European networks working with the target group

- To (re-) define of the frame of YAP's work on inclusion
- To agree on the technical organisation of our exchanges with socially disadvantaged young people

The training gathered a total of 12 people coming from France (5), Romania (1), Iceland (1), Holland (1), Belgium (1), Italy (1), UK (1) and Hungary (1). The main result was a strong increase of disadvantaged young people coming from Romania, the United Kingdom and Hungary participating in our activities.

## **Youth Organising Institute: community organising and conflict resolution training**

**19-29 July 2002**

**Venue: Brasov, Romania**

***With the kind support of the Youth Programme of the European Commission***

The Cluj based Youth Action for Peace, working in partnership with the Center for Constitutional Studies and Democratic Development (The Johns Hopkins University and the University of Bologna) created a ten-day Youth Organising Institute which they offered in July 2002 in Brasov. The two-week intensive course convened 25 youth leaders from across South Eastern Europe for an interactive seminar teaching community organising and conflict resolution skills. As a result of the skills acquired, participants are expected to leave the ten-day session prepared to implement a civil society project in their home communities. A team of international and Romanian trainers instructed the summer training.

The main objective of the training course was to form a vibrant core group of civil society leaders who are capable of leading community based projects on a range of topics (anti racism, environmental awareness, anti corruption, etc.), and have developed training skills to assist other civil society groups in their home communities.

The training convened 44 participants from a total of 13 countries for a summer Institute, which focused on building community organising skills and projects as well as learning mediation skills as a result of a conflict resolution training. Participating countries included: Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Turkey, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania and Belgium.

Overwhelmingly positive feedback has been provided by student participants from South Eastern Europe clearly indicating that the model of training is unique, beneficial and effective in the region. The highly interactive pedagogy stands apart from the other models of youth training in the SEE region as indicated by students who have successfully completed the various YAP and Johns Hopkins CCSDD programs. Evaluations indicate that the participants in Youth Organising Institute programs have undergone an intensive multifaceted training program in which many have emerge having re-evaluated their values, gained new management and training skills, and are now prepared to participate in projects on the local levels.

## **Intercultural Youth Dialogue: Post September 11**

**Dates: 25-29 September 2002**

**Venue: Nazareth (Israel)**

***With the kind support of the Youth Programme of the European Commission***

This seminar aimed to enable participants to learn more about different cultures, to learn more about the Arab/Israeli conflict and to understand the importance of being politically, socially, and culturally active in their society. Two European organisations, one Palestinian and one Arab-Israeli organisation joined to create a seminar which would allow youth from 14 different countries to come together and learn about the different cultures, and how to be able to communicate with each other in spite of their differences. The participants came from: Denmark (1), France (5), Germany (3), UK (1), Italy (4), Portugal (2), Belgium (2), Spain (3), Sweden (2), Ireland (1), Malta (1), Palestine (11), Israel (15) and Romania (1).

The seminar was held for five days in the Arab city of Nazareth in the northern part of Israel. By placing the participants in Nazareth, we hoped to open up their minds and allow them to assimilate into the Arab culture. Throughout the seminar, we held an Arab cultural evening where a traditional folkdance was shown to the European participants, as well as an intercultural evening, where the participants from each country presented something unique to them, and played the music from their respective country.

The activities that made the greatest contributions were the open discussions that were held throughout the seminar, and the lectures on Human Rights, East-West relations, .... The open discussions helped in allowing the participants to speak their minds, and discuss the different aspects of intercultural learning. During every workshop (religion, media, human rights, intercultural learning...) there was time given at the end for open discussions in case the participants needed time to reflect on what they heard. Throughout the days, walking through the hallways and lobby, one could find the participants sitting together talking about their feelings or their astonishment about what they were learning.

The participants all in all enjoyed the seminar and benefited from it, as is shown in the evaluations. They were happy with the overall content of the conference, and they had the chance to look towards the future and plan what they could do to continue progressing and enhancing their knowledge of other cultures, and how they can bring the cultures together.

We did not encounter very many difficulties in implementing the project. The only obstacles we had were in part because of the situation in Israel. A lot of the participants cancelled because of the ongoing conflict here, but in the end, the participants that came were very pleased with the seminar and the subject matter that was discussed. The participants from Turkey and Tunisia unfortunately did not arrive due to visa problems. We would definitely undertake in another project of this kind though, because even though there were difficulties, the seminar was ideal, and the participants as well as the organisers were positively affected by the discussion group.

## **The Final Conference: multiplying grassroots experiences of volunteering against racism**

**Dates: 25 September - 05 October 2002**

**Venue: Berlin (Germany)**

***With the kind support of the Youth Programme of the European Commission***

Between October 2001 and September 2002, a group of 14 young people and 3 active members of member NGOs of Youth Action for Peace, had been involved in a European Voluntary Service project whose objective was to better understand the causes and consequences of racism and xenophobia in contemporary Europe and to fight against these tendencies by work in grassroots organisations.

Of major importance in this project was the transmission of the experience, to achieve a multiplier effect. This was in part achieved by the contact with those who suffer from racism or whom, consciously or unconsciously, perpetrate it. They wished however both to leave concrete, palpable results, touch a larger public and in doing so acquire skills in transmitting our experience. To this end, YAP decided to organise a Final Conference in October 2002 which took the form of a day-long radio and a short television show, which were also spread through the internet.

The evaluation right after the final conference was intended to concern the entire one-year project from the point of view of the volunteers. Nonetheless, the Final Conference was extremely present, including in its emotional impact both on the volunteers and on the prep team (let's put it this way: the moments where nobody in the room was crying were few).

In order to develop this context, it is important to note that the prep team had made a choice – announced to the group one month in advance – to leave them to realise the Final

Conference project by themselves. Our feeling was that after one year « together », there was more value in such an approach than having a prep team heavily present.

Simultaneously, the difficulty for the prep team to position itself in this dynamic, and the heavy burden of technical tasks to be completed, led the prep team to be excessively absent. The volunteers, rather than feeling that they had been given their liberty to succeed or fail, felt they had rather been abandoned by a prep team « who didn't care » (which is totally different from suggesting that they were not up to the task).

This analysis by the volunteers must also be relativised. The prep team has been fairly present in the project as a whole; if the volunteers felt « abandoned » it is also because they realised a) the enormity of the task b) their poor collective preparation and implication for the task c) the difficulty, even after working for one year on tolerance, of living and working together in a group d) that after one year of voluntary service, with the dreaded « future, what next » ahead, it is difficult to concentrate on a Final Conference.

It is therefore difficult at this stage to draw a final conclusion about the success of the project. While the above is true in the context in which a global evaluation was carried out two days after the end of an intense specific project, we are at the moment of publishing this report still waiting for a final evaluation by the prepteam, which will come later in the year.

The 24 participants in the Final Conference came from Italy (1), Hungary (2), Romania (4), Germany (4), Spain (7), Belgium (1) and France (5).

## **Study visit to the UK**

**Dates: 07/10-12/10**

**Venue: various places in the UK**

In the framework of its international exchanges, YAP wished to give the opportunity to its branches to develop their activities with the UK, and more particularly support the efforts of its branch in Great Britain. These activities could include youth exchanges, EVS projects, seminars as well as training courses. Currently, the lack of hosting projects in the UK makes it quite difficult to develop long-term perspectives, and only very punctual activities are organised. This study visit therefore aimed permit us to meet new local organisations, to visit new projects, and to set up concrete activities. YAP therefore decided to organise a study visit to the UK, with participants from both the international movement and its different national branches. In total, there were 8 participants, coming from the UK (3), Italy (1), Belgium (2), Hungary (1) and France (1).

The objectives of this study visit were:

- to develop youth and voluntary exchanges with the UK
- to give the opportunity to the participants to get a better knowledge of the reality of young people and their organisations in Great Britain
- to improve the working relations between YAP UK and the other YAP branches

Although our main concern was to work closely with YAP UK and get to know its board members better, we obviously met many other organisations that can be divided into two types: those we will work directly with and those that will be local contacts for our British branch.

After visiting a traditional partner of the British branch, the Othona Community, our group met with new contacts that are likely to become partners of YAP UK in the future, whether through concrete work such as the organisation of work-camps or through exchanges of information. As the Bristich branch is still very small, it was also important for them to be known and provide information to bigger British organisations. We hope that the contacts will help the organisation develop.

We could also visit some of our partners, or partners of the branches or the international secretariat, and introduce our organisation and the activities that we are doing. These

contacts should enable us to develop our long term exchanges and other activities such as seminars or work with disadvantaged people.

Finally it was also enriching and interesting to spend some time with representatives of the other branches and be able to share our experience during the long trips... The two formal meetings that we have every year do not necessarily leave us the time to talk and exchange on a direct basis. It was also the opportunity to see people work on the spot and not in a meeting.

The concrete results should be felt as soon as next year, with an increase of the number of projects proposed by our British branch (which has the immediate effect of offering more possibilities to send short term volunteers to the UK), new possibilities to send long term volunteers new perspectives of work with disadvantaged people.

We now have to keep all these contacts and continue to support the work of our branch in the UK, thus enabling them to go on developing while we are doing the same. We have realised the importance of being in a movement, as well as being European, where every branch and associated group is supporting the other, sharing experience so that all can develop, keeping their own identity while having the feeling of being part of a whole.

## **Evaluation seminar on working with disadvantaged young people**

**Venue: Palazzolo (Sicily), Italy**

**Dates: 23-25 October 2002**

This evaluation was a direct follow up of the training seminar on social inclusion of May 2002. The aim was to provide follow up for the new partners and participants of the training in May, thus deepening their understanding of the work with disadvantaged young persons, and to evaluate the work done, in an effort to improve this work. Another aim of this meeting is to define strategies to follow up with the returning participants and their social workers. The meeting gathered a total of 12 persons from France (4), Italy (2), Germany (1), Belgium (2), Romania (1), Hungary (1) and the UK (1).

The objectives of the seminar were:

- To exchange experiences between the participants concerning their work with the target group in the months between the training and this meeting
- To deepen the understanding of the less-experienced people on working with disadvantaged people
- To evaluate the frame of YAP's work on inclusion and to define areas for improvement
- To evaluate the cooperation with other European networks working with disadvantaged young people
- To define strategies on following up young disadvantaged volunteers and their social workers after the young person returns home

The evaluation of the meeting was very positive and led to the general proposal of organising systematically a preparation and evaluation meeting for the hosting and sending of people with less opportunities.

## **LONG-TERM VOLUNTEERING (LTV) PROJECTS**

### **LTV in YAP International Secretariat**

**Dates: January 2002- December 2002**

**Place: YAP in Brussels**

The volunteer, Alfredo Garcia from Spain, was integrated in the existing activities of YAP, according to his needs and abilities. Thus the expectations of the volunteer were matched to the opportunities that can be offered by the International Secretariat of YAP. While the volunteer assisted in most activities, he was strongly encouraged to choose a special project for which he carried the responsibility for implementing it, with the guiding support of the staff members of the International Secretariat.

The proposed task for the volunteer was to assist in the co-ordination between the International Secretariat and the preparatory teams of the activities, thus facilitating the communication between them.

Alfredo was also involved in the preparatory teams of two international seminars of YAP. The first one was a training on project management, organised in April in Strasbourg, and the second one was on Intercultural Youth Dialogue, organised in September in Nazareth. He was also responsible for editing the final reports of those activities, in close cooperation with the rest of the preteam and the International Secretary of YAP. In this way, Alfredo had the opportunity to learn about international project management from very experienced members of YAP. Apart from this, the volunteer chose to work on a project to update the international website of YAP, as well as on the newsletter to which he brought a tremendous and positive change. Finally, Alfredo was involved in the Belgian associated group of YAP, where he led a workcamp for several weeks, and he participated in several seminars.

The project was originally foreseen to be funded by the Youth programme of the European Commission, but unfortunately it was rejected. We decided to continue the project anyway, with our own finances.

### **EVS IN MEXICO**

**Dates: January – June/September 2002**

**Venue: Toluca, Mexico D.F., Puerto Vallarta (Mexico)**

***With the kind support of the Youth programme of the European Commission***

This project was the follow up of several activities organised by Youth Action for Peace and Nuestra Tierra in the past few years, including several multilateral EVS projects, as well as youth exchanges and more recently a training seminar for youth leaders in Europe and Latin America. This multilateral project was also the result of a cooperation between different organisations in Latin America mainly through the AVOS platform. Through this new project, we wished to involve new partners and build-up innovative projects.

Because of their experience in receiving EVS volunteers and running voluntary service projects, Nuestra Tierra, the Mexican branch of YAP acted as the local coordinator of the project. In total, 7 EU volunteers were hosted: 2 in Nuestra Tierra and 5 in 4 other local organisations on the East side of Mexico. The projects were either social projects (working with children and disadvantaged communities), associative projects or environmental projects.

The preparation took place in Brussels for 4 days. Some of the volunteers had received a preparation by her sending organisation already, so this one was focusing more on the country they were leaving for, cultural facts, conflict resolution and intercultural learning. A group of 8 volunteers going on EVS projects in Palestine and Israel was having the preparation as well. They could share their expectations and create contact that they kept during the whole period of the EVS.

Before leaving for their projects, the volunteers had been prepared to be living difficult situations mostly due to a change of culture and values, therefore they could assume the

problems they had to face as "normal problems". (the biggest difference they faced were the work culture).

We did not have a direct contact with the hosting organisations; the coordination in Mexico was done by the Nuestra Tierra, the Mexican branch of YAP. The cooperation with Nuestra Tierra went very well. It is obviously not so easy to stay in touch with volunteers who are living at such a distance and in such a different environment. The coordinator in Brussels had some e-mail contact, though it was more informal contacts. The volunteers would refer to the coordinating organisation in Mexico in case of any problems, who would refer to us in case they could not resolve the situation themselves. Fortunately, this did not happen.

The mid-term evaluation took place in April 2002 in Puerto Vallarta (Mexico) and the final evaluation took place in France in one of the centres of the French sending branch of YAP, Solidarités Jeunesses, with all the volunteers and one representative from Nuestra Tierra. The group of the volunteers who did EVS in Palestine were also present at the meeting. The meeting was facilitated by the same representative of the sending branch and the EVS coordinator of YAP.

As an overall evaluation, we are therefore very satisfied with the overall development of the project.

## **EVS IN PALESTINE**

**Dates: January-June 2002**

**Venue: Haifa (Israel), Hebron and Bethlehem (Palestine)**

***With the kind support of the Youth programme of the European Commission***

The project was the result of several activities organised by YAP and its Palestinian branch the "International Palestinian Youth League" (IPYL) in the last few years. It was the follow-up of EVS multilateral projects organised in 1999, 2000, 2001, as well as the outcome of 2 networking and training seminars organised as support measure in Italy and in Jordan in 1999.

The EVS project gathered 8 EU volunteers from 5 different European countries in Hebron and in Haifa (Israel). The hosting projects are all working with the local community, mostly young people or children, and the main aim of the project was to enable both European volunteers and young Palestinians to benefit from an intercultural experience and from a sharing of knowledge. Another objective for the hosting co-ordinating organisation was to enhance the cooperation with organisations abroad, but also between themselves. Palestinians have considerable difficulties to move freely. For this reason, the role of the EVS volunteers as a direct link between different organisations was considerable. Thus, all volunteers faced very different situations such as refugees camps or Hebron city in the West Bank, and Haifa in Israel. Those three parts where Palestinians are living are completely different one from another and the volunteers could therefore have a complete vision of the situation.

On a more practical level, a preparation took place in Brussels during 5 days (15-19 January 2002), some of the volunteers already participated to a preparation in their home countries organised by their sending organisations. The preparation involved as well the group of 7 volunteers going for EVS projects in Mexico, in order to create a link between those two groups of young volunteers ; the final evaluation took place with both groups. The team was composed of 2 very experienced people from sending organisations and by the EVS coordinator of YAP. Sessions on Intercultural Learning, on conflict resolution, on EVS philosophy were held and some time has been also dedicated to specific sessions on Palestine/Israel in order to give the volunteers a general overview about this specific area. Upon their arrival, the group of volunteers were given a deep on-arrival training, visiting the more possible projects in order to give to everyone a general overview of the possibilities in the country.

The contact has always been kept with the groups of volunteers, through the co-ordinator of IPYL, personal contacts as well as the EVS co-ordinator in YAP IS and the sending branch

themselves. In such an area, the communication is one of the more important point in a voluntary project.

A mid term evaluation took place in May 2002 in Hebron were the EVS co-ordinator, the International Secretariat and a representative of the French sending branch of YAP went for few days. All the volunteers expect Matthias and Silvia, already left the country due to personal reasons were present at the meeting. At this moment the situation of the volunteers inside the West Bank was not easy because of frequent Israeli incursions, and through long discussions the volunteers explained the team their wish to stay until the end of their voluntary time and to go on with their projects.

The final evaluation was held in France in one of the Centre of Solidarités Jeunesses (the French sending branch of YAP) from 13th to 15th of December 2002. The 2 groups of volunteers (EVS in Mexico and EVS in Palestine) were together for 3 days, together with the representative of the mexican organisation. Unfortunately Maria, Giulia and Sandrine, still in Palestine, could not come due to visa insecurities and Julie had an exam at university exactly those days. Anne Thesenvitz, from the group of EVS volunteers in Palestine 2001, was also present giving good input about her own experience after Palestine.

This evaluation took place 5 months after the return of the volunteers which helped them a lot in taking distance with those 6 months in Palestine/Israel and their voluntary service was therefore analysed with serenity and lots of positive inputs from all of them.

We gained a big experience through the EVS projects we are organising in Palestine since 1999 and even though the projects can still be improved, we are very satisfied about the overall development of the project.

Both volunteers and hosting projects gained a valuable experience for this exchange; for the hosting projects having an European young volunteer brings hope, solidarity and motivation to the Palestinian under occupation. For the volunteers it was a very enriching experience that they almost all continue after the end of the voluntary service.

## **EVS SHORT TERM WORKCAMPS**

**Dates: April 2002 – July 2003**

**Venue: various places in Europe**

***With the kind support of the Youth programme of the European Commission***

The aim of the EVS workcamps project was to involve young disadvantaged people into the work camps that have been organised for many years now by YAP and other organisations. This short term EVS project will be organised in close co-operation between YAP, the Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations (the Alliance) and Service Civil International (SCI).

While the EVS programme was originally set up for all young people, it has been noticed in the recent experiences with this programme, that in practice young disadvantaged people are very little involved in it. YAP wishes to address this issue by including them into our work camps. The main goal of the project is therefore to give young disadvantaged people a first experience in doing a voluntary service away from their homes, with the final aim to involve them in long term EVS projects, as organised by YAP and other organisations. For this reason, the project should be seen as a support measure for long term EVS.

The project included 43 young disadvantaged people from all over Europe so far, and has been extended till July 2003. We expect all 50 places foreseen in the original project to be filled though. The volunteers participated in the short-term voluntary service activities organised by YAP in different countries in Europe since April 2002. The participants came from Romania, Hungary, France, UK, Norway, Italy and Germany.

The project is so far evaluated as quite positive, even though it has not been closed yet. In 2002, several improvements were made to the programme, such as speeding up the feedback from the workcamp leader to the reference person in the sending institution, and the introduction of a questionnaire to follow up with former volunteers.

More detailed content reports can be obtained at

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