Our White Sea

Reflections on Youth Policy and the Management of NGOs in the European and Mediterranean Regions

Extracts from "Our White Sea" Conference *16-22 November 2009*, Euro-Med Youth Platform

Contents

Foreword

The diversity of youth organisations is a strength for networking channels as it triggers cooperation and exchange of practice in the youth field. The Euro-Med Youth Platform (EMYP) celebrates diversity and acts as a spring board which activates and supports networking between youth organisations in the Euro-Med region. Furthermore the EMYP continuously promotes capacity building opportunities.

This report is the presentation of a six day conference entitled "Our White Sea" organised by the Euro-Med Youth Platform in collaboration with SALTO Euro-Med and the Maltese, Greek and Turkish Youth in Action National Agencies. The Conference was an opportunity for 41 participants coming from Belgium FL, Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Portugal, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey to deliver knowledge about:

- The role and the place of NGOs towards youth policy;
- Organisational management: comparative analysis;
- Project management,
- Funding tool opportunities mainly through the Youth in Action Programme and the Euro-Med Youth Programme.

Experts from the Euro-Med Region were invited to participate in the "Our White Sea" Conference and shared their insight on Youth Policy in the Euro-Med region and NGO's work in practice. Contributions and results of the workshops inspired by the experts and proposed by the participants are collated into this report.

Introductions

1

Introductions

1.1 General Introductions

"Our White Sea" Conference was an exercise to build and enhance cooperation, partnership working and developing understanding. The event succeeded in bringing together a wide variety of perspectives and in providing an environment in which ideas could be discussed. The partners were: The Euro Med Youth Platform, SALTO Youth Euromed Resource Centre and the Maltese, Turkish, and Greek National Agencies of the EU Youth in Action Programme. The following introductions demonstrate some of the perspectives and provide a background for the remainder of this report.

1.2 Introductions from partners

Mauro Pace Parascandalo, National Coordinator European Union Programmes Agency and Silvano Cristauro, Programme Manager Youth in Action Programme Malta

In ancient times the Mediterranean sea was considered to be a focal point for the people living on its shores, providing unity, transport and a means of exchange and interaction. Simliar to the conditions that prevailed in ancient times, today the Medittreranean, is not connected only by the sea but by the people that live on its shores and their will and need to communicate with each other. Human activity was particularly highlighted in early times through an eloborate network of coastal navigation that permitted the exchange of goods/merchandise linking together the people that resided in the various regions of the Mediterranean. This activity stretched-out like a web all across the Mediterranean shores forming an extended sequence of trade, in which goods where bought and sold. The cargo itself may have altered its nature a few times by the end of the voyage.

This intricate navigational practice brings me back to "Our White Sea" conference and with a little imagination I will use it as a metaphor, where goods or cargos represent ideas; ports or coastal cities represent young people and their NGOs and the navigational practice itself would assume the role of networking opportunites for youth.

On a more concret level, the conference represented an opportunity for networking at various levels. In fact, while the event was hosted in Malta it embodied a joint effort, experience and an opportunity to share resources between the Euro-Med Youth Platform, SALTO Euro-Med, and the National Agencies of the Youth in Action Programme from Malta, Turkey and Greece. I trust that "Our White Sea" served its purposes to highlight cooperation among the European and Mediterranean participants. Ultimately, the main aim of this conference was to gather NGOs and stakeholders from all sides of the Mediterranean together, to:

- Reflect and discuss their experiences at NGO organisational and management level
- Produce a comparative analysis of good youth work practices.

During the conference participants had an opportunity to cover various aspects relating to the field of youth. In this respect the content included the following:

- Youth Policy in the regional context
- Realities of NGOs in the Euro Mediterranean area
- Good practices

- Information about the Key Actors in the Euro-Med area
- Tools for project management
- Opportunity for networking.

Sefa Yahsi: Head of the Youth in Action Unit, the Turkish National Agency

I have to admit that the name of the conference was really meaningful and suitable for the themes of the conference. As a National Agency (NA) of a country having shores on the Mediterranean Sea, the main motivation of the Turkish NA for being a partner to the conference was that it has always been interested in cooperation with other National Agencies in activities having participants from MEDA countries. Youth policy has been another area of cooperation for Turkish NA. It now becomes more apparent that more cooperation on youth policy should take place among the stakeholders in the youth field. With the commencement of the 4th phase of Euro-Med Youth Programme, a more strengthened and enriched cooperation and support to EMYUs from the NAs should be structured since, in the external evaluation of 3rd phase, one of the findings was 'lack of articulation and cooperation with the other stakeholders (in particular from the National Agencies of the Youth in Action Programme)'. I believe the Conference has been very successful and fruitful as it was a good platform to see potential and challenges in youth policy.

Federica Demichelli: SALTO-YOUTH EuroMed Resource Centre

SALTO (Support Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities) EUROMED strongly supports Euro-Mediterranean cooperation; offering training, educational tools and sharing of good practices.

The mutual understanding between Europe and Mediterranean countries is and will be the challenge for future cooperation. There is the need to reflect about the different approaches of social work and those used by Associations and/or NGOs. In order to ameliorate this cooperation there is the need for better tools that enhance the exchange of knowledge that will eventually build in the future, a stronger and professional partnership. The actors involved in this process need to share their values, define why they are cooperating and to better focus on their target group.

We need to go further into this process of mutual knowledge in order to be able, in future, to have well trained leaders and young members of Associations and NGOs on board ready to work in synergy on commune projects.

"Our White Sea" was a very important experience of cooperation between Euro-Med Youth Platform, SALTO Euro-Med, and the National Agencies of the Youth in Action Programme from Malta, Turkey and Greece. The conference represented an opportunity for starting a path of mutual understanding among organisations belonging to Mediterranean Countries and Europe. The Conference provided participants the possibility to go deeper in the mutual knowledge and in building future partnerships. Of course, this has been a starting point to be developed in the future years in order to reinforce the cooperation.

1.3 Euromed Youth Platform Mapping and Needs Analysis

During the year 2009, the Euro-Med Youth Platform (EMYP) carried out a mapping exercise. The aim of this exercise was to provide youth organisations with information about funding sources. Funds are a common concern for youth groups and organisations who wish to embark on projects. Therefore this publication 'Fund Hunt' is envisaged to be a resourceful handbook and a point of departure for anybody in search of funds to support a good project. The Fund Hunt document can be found at: http://euromedp.org/content/docs/712010101823EUPA%20Fund%20Hunt%201.pdf

A second research exercise was a needs analysis. The origin of this exercise was during the Euro-Med Youth Platform re-launch conference in June 2008. At the time young people from Tunisia, Syria, Palestine, Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Jordan, Greece, Italy and Malta met with the aim to explore further the development of the Euro-med Youth Platform and focused on networking functions.

The Study initiated in November 2008 when a small group of young people met to study the outcomes of the conference and finalise a questionnaire. Questionnaires were sent to the members of the working group and were disseminated through various contact lists, including that of the EMYP in January 2009. Data collection started to be collected in March 2009. Unfortunately the response from the questionnaires was too poor to come up with statistical data. However, both youth gatherings were rich sources of qualitative data and the data analysis could be conducted in August 2009. The procedures to finalise the publication "Youth Work Network" started in November 2009.

Why do we need network activities?

Networking activities are needed to acquire resources which organisations lack thus promoting the idea that organisations can complement each other in a quest to 'pursue joint goals, deliver joint programmes and coordinate efforts to grow more effectively.

Young people believe that networking is fun and playful, stimulates creativity and innovation, encourages opinion sharing, enables a clearer understanding of our own and other cultures, overcomes stereotyping, changes people's lives, avoids duplication of work, develops and shares knowledge and enables collective thinking and team building.

A four step model was developed which was intended to be:

- A tool that motivates organisations to engage in networks
- A guide to inspire the Platform to support networking activities
- A reflective journey for young people who are to engage themselves in networks and bring change in society.

1. Create pools of network potentials

The following themes were identified by young people as themes which can be taken up by Euro-Med network potentials:

- Right to Movement
- Peace Making
- Conflict Resolution
- Minority Rights
- Intergenerational Dialogue

2. Activate a Network

Young people think that networks can be activated by making information more accessible, putting up calls for networks on the Euro-Med Youth Platform website, securing potential partners and distributing good practices.

3. Motivation to engage with commitment

Young people think that support creates and reinforces possibilities. Support is divided into four main areas:

- Financial resources
- Relevant connections
- Assistance to convene network meetings
- Help in the follow up process

4. Removing barriers

Lack of freedom of movement, poor language competences, lack of equal respect and valuing, diverse legal expectations, lack of political will and religious diversities and fixities were the main barriers for networking.

Young people think that network activities work if those involved are open, awake and alive to become aware of the options other than what they are doing now, trust themselves, are conscious and well informed of the risks that need to be taken, have a pluralistic view. Commitment, organization, experience and appreciation were terms used to describe components of a successful networking activity. Networking activities are enhanced when people are open to feedback and criticism, are less judgmental and less narrow-minded and are positive, creative, constructive, as well as critical. Furthermore, young people stated that one should seek for funding opportunities and continuously remind themselves of the overall aims of the project.
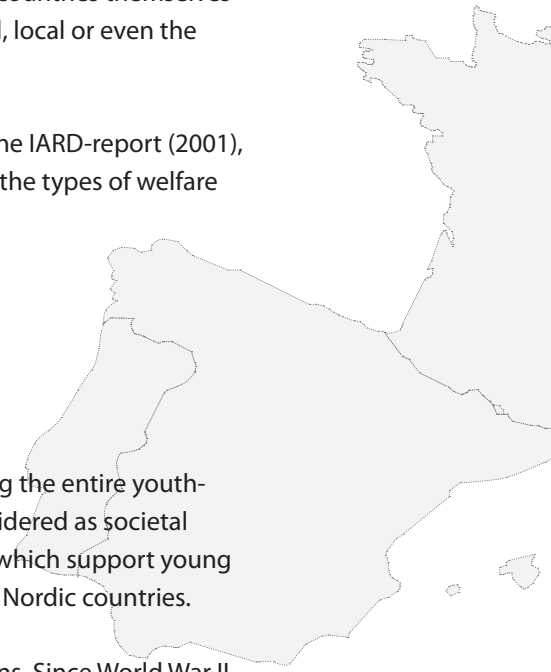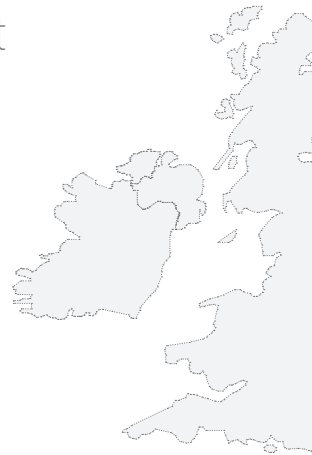
Throughout a network activity young people wish to engage in the following eleven points:

- Setting up of an e-learning platform
- Training development
- Information exchange
- Sharing of good practice
- Campaigns
- Petitions
- Conventions
- Political lobbying
- Producing published materials
- Research
- Financed projects.

2

Youth Policy in Europe and the Meda Countries

Youth Policy in Europe and the Meda Countries

2.1 A European perspective – Miriam Teuma: Department of Youth and Community Studies, University of Malta

From Youth Policy in EU Countries to EU Youth Policy

Leaving behind the tiny Maltese island to backpack across some other European Union countries has made me ask more questions about youth policy rather than finding answers. Youth policy in EU countries plays an important role and is fundamental to defining decisions and providing a course of action within society. It provides a framework for ethical and equality objectives ensuring that the needs of young people are met. However the structures responsible for youth policies, the terminology used and the basic concepts vary enormously from country to country. Landscapes of unmatched concepts can be seen not only from north to south but even within countries themselves since youth policies in some EU countries are decentralized towards the regional, local or even the voluntary sector.

Youth policy is in fact treated differently from country to country. According to the IARD-report (2001), EU models of youth policy can be divided into four categories corresponding to the types of welfare regimes identified by Gallie and Paugam (2000). These are:

1. The Universalistic Model
2. The Protective Model
3. The Community-based Model
4. The Centralised Model

The **universalistic**, way of constructing youth policy is characterised by targeting the entire youth-population. Youth is defined as up to the age of 25 years. Young people are considered as societal resources and the major aims of youth policy are autonomy and independence which support young people in living a successful youth life. Such a policy model is mainly seen in the Nordic countries.

The **protective**, mid-European model of youth policy has relatively long traditions. Since World War II, young people have been seen as a social group, who are to be protected, promoted and supported. This perspective is still seen in some countries. Policy in this regard targets both the disadvantaged groups and the whole generation of youth. The youth concept is "mixed". Although the resource- and the problem-discourse co-exist, there is a traditional tendency to think of young people as a vulnerable group and policies in such countries are formulated within this conceptual framework. The main aims of such policy model are social integration and prevention of social and participatory problems.

The **community-based** youth policy model is mainly developed in the United Kingdom where the state has traditionally been reluctant to interfere in local youth work. Youth is generally conceived as a problem, and youth policies are directed towards disadvantaged groups, aiming to prevent social problems. The focus lies on problems of social exclusion of youth, the prolonging of youth and the lack of societal participation among young people.

In the Mediterranean EU countries youth work and support has until recently been the responsibility of the family and the Church. A national **centralised** model of youth policy has emerged in the past 20 years. Local authorities have limited involvement, but there exists an aim to change this, as well as an ambition to have more young people participate in various organisations. Young people are defined between 13 – 25/30 years of age, and the image of youth is a "mix" of the resource - and the problem - discourse. The main aims of youth policy in these countries are to strengthen the autonomy and independence of young Mediterranean people.

In general youth policies across EU countries are aiming to produce comprehensive and effective systems of cooperating institutions that, together, further the development of young people who will be effective as workers, parents, neighbours and citizens in a democracy. This broad concept initiated a political cooperation between EU countries to dialogue on youth policy issues.

The cooperation in the field of youth policy has been developed since the 1990's on a very small legal basis. The Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) in addition to the Maastricht Treaty of 1992) and the Nice Treaty (2001) described the European Community's task in this field only as enhancing the exchange of young people and their leaders. However, European action programmes (1988 Youth for Europe, since 1996 European Voluntary Service, 2000 Youth, 2007 Youth in Action) have expanded their activities beyond mere exchange programmes.

In addition to the action programmes, on 21 November 2001 the European Commission adopted a White Paper entitled 'A New Impetus for European Youth' (COM(2001) (681), thus setting out a framework for cooperation in the field of youth. Amongst other things, this was a response to the apparent disaffection of young people with traditional forms of participation in public life. It also called on young Europeans to become more active citizens.

The White Paper provided the impetus for the development of European cooperation in the youth policy field. This took place on the basis of the 'open coordination method' (OMC), which means defining common objectives and translating them into national policies. The OMC's instruments are guidelines and recommendations, sometimes assisted by action plans of the member states. With the OMC, the Commission aims at securing minimum standards, at allowing learning from each other, and at the nationally adapted achievement of common aims. Part of the OMC is the regular evaluation of progress reports of the member states and the publication of an activity report synthesis. This procedure aims to adopt new objectives based on experiences. The White Paper on Youth identified four youth-specific topics that were and still are being covered by the Open Method of Coordination in different stages: "Participation", "Information", "Voluntary activities" and "Better understanding of youth". In June 2002, on the basis of the White Paper, the Council of the European Union established a framework for European co-operation in the field of youth which was made up of three main strands:

- Young people's active citizenship;
- Social and occupational integration of young people; and
- Including a youth dimension in other policies.

In March 2005 the European Council adopted a European Pact for Youth as part of its revised Lisbon strategy refocusing on growth and employment. The main objective was to improve school education

and vocational training, mobility, integration of Europe's young people into the workplace and social inclusion. At the same time, the aim was to develop a better work-life balance agenda. The Commission subsequently adopted a communication (COM (2005) 206) which described how the Pact could be implemented. The Commission believed that the Pact's objectives should be integrated into the European employment strategies and the Education and Training 2010 work programme.

In 2007, based on progress reports from the Member States, the Commission concluded that, while some progress had been achieved, a committed joint effort at European level was still necessary to make further significant progress in the youth field. After further consultation and an impact assessment within all the member states the commission came up with a strategy "Youth – Investing and Empowering". The new strategy is cross-sectoral, with both short- and long-term actions. It is based on a dual approach:

- **Investing in Youth:** putting in place greater resources to develop policy areas that affect young people in their daily life and improve their well being.
- **Empowering Youth:** promoting the potential of young people for the renewal of society and to contribute to EU values and goals.

The actions involve key policy areas that affect Europe's young people, particularly youth education, employment, creativity and entrepreneurship, social inclusion, health and sport, civic participation, and volunteering.
The new strategy also emphasises the importance of youth work and defines reinforced measures for a better implementation of youth policies at the EU level.

The strategy "Youth – Investing and Empowering", which is a follow-up to the renewed social agenda announced by the European Commission in 2008, has the following goals:

- to create more opportunities for youth in education and employment,
- to improve access and full participation of all young people in society, and
- to foster solidarity between youth and society.

As such, it constitutes a part of the EU's coordinated response to the current crisis. The strategy also proposes a better, more flexible and simplified method of coordinating youth policy among the Member States, with reinforced links to the Lisbon Strategy for more growth and jobs.

In November 2009 the Council adopted a Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field for the next decade. Based on the 2008 strategy the new framework will invite both Member States and the Commission to work closely together to provide more and better opportunities for young people in the European Union. The Resolution will attempt to employ a dual approach to develop and promote specific initiatives in the youth field and mainstreaming initiatives in the cross-sectoral dimension. Different policy sectors will now work together to provide more opportunities for young people.

To conclude, I come back to Malta with many coloured backpacks. My discussion shows that although there is an attempt to establish an overarching European youth policy, youth policies across Europe are diverse due to the different cultural and historical backgrounds. What I tried to do was to group the backpacks according to their colours and at the end I tried to put them all in one luggage deposit. However the content in each backpack is unique since young people in each country have different needs and policies are developed to cater for young people's needs. European Policy is the luggage deposit and the coloured back packs are the national youth policies each country has.

2.2 Youth Policy, a MEDA perspective - Bernard Abrignani: Salto Euromed Coordinator

Introduction

The overall aim of the studies undertaken in **Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian territories: Gaza and the West Bank, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey** on Youth Policies, was to be a reference tool which would give all stakeholders in the field of youth, as well as youth project organisers, an overview of the situation of young people and of provisions available for them in the 10 partner countries. Details can be found at http://www.salto-youth.net/EMyouthpolicies/

The objectives were to identify whether there was a Youth Policy, legislation or any other national strategy addressing the needs of youth and what kind of provision was made through non-formal education and youth work in the relevant partner countries.

The outcomes of the studies, each produced in a report format following a common structure for all the ten studies, give an enlightening overview of the definition and situation of youth in the Mediterranean partner countries. The studies focused on young people's rights and entitlements as active citizens, such as opportunities to vote, get elected and contribute to the decision-making process; the challenges faced by youth such as unemployment, immigration, housing, marriage, generational and cultural conflict, young women's place in society; young people's reactions in response to such challenges and description of provision for leisure-time activities and non-formal education through governmental and/or non-governmental youth institutions and organisations.

A reading of all the studies shows that a national youth policy is not yet fully implemented in any of the partner countries. However, each of them has a number of national directives, legislations, policies and/or strategies to address youth issues, usually at cross-sector level, even if youth are not, in some cases, recognised as a priority. The definition of youth varies from country to country, sometimes even within the same country depending on the responsible national authority. Non formal education has no, or limited, place in most of the studied countries, formal education being the main priority of national authorities. The Euromed Youth Programme is assessed positively and considered to be an essential tool for the promotion of youth work and non-formal education.

Algeria

According to the estimates, 10.7 million young people (aged 15-29) live in Algeria, which corresponds to 30% of the overall population. Net enrolment rate for primary education is 95% and that of secondary education is slightly higher than 60%.

The Algerian Constitution guarantees the right to education, which is free, universal and compulsory until the age of 16. The Labour Code allows young Algerians to work after being 16 years old. Minimum age to get married had been set to 18 for men and 16 for young women. The age of civil majority is 19, which also refers to voting and exercising civil rights. The institutional approach defines youth mainly through biological categories, limited by age. Each institution has different categories: for example, the Ministry of Employment defines youth from18 to 35 year s old, whereas the Ministry of Youth and Sports considers the age group as 18-30. Nevertheless, most policy makers refer to youth as those under the age of 30.

Hundreds of local and national associations exist in the youth sector, most of which work on social development or childhood and youth matters. The associations' influence remains modest not only because of the weakness of financial and material resources, but also because of the lack of training and isolation of the associative activities. It is only since 1989 that a new, more liberal law has been governing associations and therefore, it has only been a short decade since the association movement has developed and structured. There is no local or national youth council in Algeria, nor is there any federation of associations involved in the youth sector. There are, however, more and more networks of associations of young people, which are getting organised at local or regional levels.

The civil society potential, the start of cooperation and partnerships between the structures of the state and of the associations bode well for the reinforcement of the Algerian associative sphere in youth matters. The requests for proposals come from the Ministry of Youth and Sports as well as from the Euromed Youth Programme or from the NGOs' plan of action (with the Ministry of National Solidarity), directly or indirectly to contribute to the development of associative frameworks and convey a project culture in practices of non-formal education and development of associations.

There are some international support mechanisms, working to support Algerian civil associations of development, such as the European Union's cooperation with the Algerian government and other bilateral mechanisms with countries such as France.

Morocco

Today, 20% of the population is in the 15-25 years old bracket. The state now devotes 30% of the national budget to education, which is its second priority since 1999, when the National Education and Training Charter was adopted. But Morocco still has the highest rate of illiteracy in North Africa: 50% of the population and 36% of the young adults. The aim is to reach 5% by 2035.

The main authority in charge of the New National Youth Policy is the Ministry of Youth and Sports. It is helped by three other Ministries: Childhood Affairs, Female Affairs and the Interior. Local and national authorities and elected officials are involved in action plans against social insecurity and exclusion. The funds for this policy attain less than 1% of the budget because these actions must yet prove their efficiency. The two main priorities are to modernise establishments devoted to young people (summer camps, youth centres, housing), and to increase institutions which help young people to find a place within society. However, there is no National Youth Council in Morocco.

Non-formal education and youth work offer activities devoted to free time. These include formal activities such as technology and computer courses, language and literacy courses. Today there are 440 such associations, the number having doubled in the past four years. They host many clubs dealing with music, cinema, literature and sport.

There are some difficulties in recognising volunteer work in Morocco. The INDH programme wants to include formal institutional recognition of volunteer work in the future. The status of youth associations and non-governmental organisations (NGO) allows some of them to be recognised and to receive funds, after the reform of the law on associations in 2002 and the decrees of 2005. The non-profit associations which are recognised by the state must fulfil a general public service mission and may receive financial assistance. On an estimation of 38,000 associations, only 8,400 hold this privileged status. Their use of funds is highly controlled. Associations receiving foreign assistance must inform the government.

In Morocco, three kinds of associations can be identified today: large national associations that work with all kinds of people and rely on a vast network of unpaid volunteers trained internally. Beside them, there are new associations, created after the terrorist attacks in Casablanca in 2003, which are devoted to development and offer targeted activities. Their young leaders deal with international foundations. These associations are very successful among the youth population. The last ones are small neighbourhood associations, working mainly with youth at-risk, which find it difficult to recruit members and leaders.

The large associations are gathered in federations and national youth unions. The National Institute for Youth and Democracy brings together young delegates elected for one year.

In conclusion, the Moroccan youth policy is marked with paradoxes. The decision-makers have enhanced the quality of youth infrastructures and leaders' skills, but the association networks are at a turning point because young leaders need more recognition and professional training.

Tunisia

Tunisia counts 11,410,000 inhabitants and young people represent 18.2% of the population. Today, work is a major problem for youth. The Tunisian state has the political will to multiply access to the Internet for formal as well as informal education.

Youth is recognized as a priority since the Declaration of 7 September 1987. The young people can hold a seat in elected committees. The fourth consultation of youth is now organized by the "Observatoire National de la Jeunesse" (National Youth Observatory) for the 11th development Plan as part of a larger dialogue with young people.

About 1.5% of the state global budget is devoted to the Tunisian Youth policy. In addition to this last fund, the presidential youth programme of the 11th plan is centred specifically on employment with three priorities. The associations which work with people with specific needs are helped by the state, particularly when they contribute to their integration in the economic cycle.

The second priority focuses on education: the presidential programme aims at an 80% success rate for the completion of compulsory education. The third priority is called *Youth facing their future* and encourages counselling and assistance for young people, even for those who live abroad.

There is a lack of recognition for non-formal education because the actors in charge of its promotion are not yet clearly defined. Only a few individuals employed in the youth sector are very conscious of the necessity to rethink education and to increase access to non-formal education.

The others are trapped in the academic system. Anyway, while non-formal education is not officially recognised, it plays an essential role in society and often makes up for deficiencies of the formal sector.

Due to the necessity of promoting non-formal education, the training of the youth leaders becomes a necessity, but which is unequally fulfilled in organisations throughout the country. The state institution in charge of training, the Higher "Institut Supérieur de l'Animation pour la Jeunesse et la Culture" (Institution of Youth Leadership and Culture), does not fulfil all the needs and the state privileges the extension of these training programmes

through regional units. The big associations, such as the Tunisian scouts, use experienced internal staff to train their youth leaders, but the smaller do not have such possibilities and only a few of them are helped by international organisations. Furthermore, the status of recognized volunteers is often confused with those of unpaid workers.

In the context of liberalization and privatisation, the state has transferred to the associations part of the responsibilities it was in charge of, mainly in the social sector but only 5% of the young people choose the associative engagement for their free time. Because of this, the state prioritises the access to information for young people through Youth Information Points all over the country in the youth centres. Today, they are more than 300 information points in youth centres and 80 itinerant centres in the rural isolated areas.

The distinction between the official youth sector and the independent associations, the NGOs, is difficult because of the state control. Beside the big official associations, there are a very dense network of small associations but also youth centres, rural clubs, which offer activities, formal and non-formal, and social services such as job search, health and lodging. The official youth associations are represented at the national level by federations.

In conclusion, it can be said that the national youth policy, as well as non formal-education, are still waiting for recognition from both state and society. It is more accurate in Tunisia's case, to speak of plural strategies concerning youth rather than a single youth policy. The work of the non-formal sector, while essential, has only imposed itself in recent times. The state has made cultural and sports infrastructure a priority and has thus worked with the associative network and NGOs. As a result, there are now public programmes, without however, the existence of any defined youth policy. The existence of the National Youth Observatory has marked a big change in the state's approach to recognizing youth.

Syria

Syria is facing a very interesting historical moment in the field of youth. The social and economic environment of the country is changing fast and radically. Youth Policy is becoming a priority because the young people are the majority in the country and they will be the new leaders, workers and decision-makers in the coming years. The process of defining Youth Policy is still under way.

The youth population in Syria had increased to 25,4% in 2005, presenting challenges for job creation for young people. The population between 0-14 years of age was of 33% in 2006. The annual population growth rate in the 2005 was of 2,5%. The unemployment rate among youth (ages 15-24) in Syria stood at 26% in 2002.

At the moment, there is no official Youth Policy in Syria but since last year, the Government has been working on a National Youth Policy that will be the base for the Five-Years Development Plan. This Plan will be the operative strategy about Youth Policy in Syria and it will define structures, activities, procedures and a budget for young people.

The situation of young people in Syria is clearly very complex and needs adequate answers. The problem of employment is only one issue. The others are the changes in society affecting their daily lives, their values and their relationships within their families.

A large portion of the youth work is still delegated to institutions, schools or international organisations. There are not many youth centres and the majority belong to the Revolutionary Youth Union (that has been entrusted by the Government to coordinate the activities for young people in Syria). Civil society is increasing its voice and its tools to be visible and active towards the political system, but there are still some obstacles. Young people aspire to more freedom of expression and to create associations. Everything is possible, but with much uncertainty about the time it takes to complete procedures. In Syria the constitution guarantees freedom of speech and expression: the right to participate in a constructive way in the life of the nation. But the State of Emergency in force since 1963 severely restricts personal liberties. The young people request complete freedom in their daily lives and the respect of their rights. The Syrian youth is living in this moment of transition and most young people are struggling to be active citizens in their own country but also to be aware about the possibilities offered by the outside world.

Lebanon

Young people in Lebanon represent a fifth of the total population which is estimated to have four million inhabitants. Lebanese youth shares some characteristics with the other Mediterranean youth: a strong unemployment rate, a desire to leave for some of them, a narrow relationship with the extended family, a strong openness towards studies and particularly mobile phone, but also the use of the Internet. But this youth has a noticed particularity: a cultural and space communalization (inheritance from old people and parents), a noticed political consciousness.

When young Lebanese people have finished their studies, they often have to face unemployment. Unemployment, which affects particularly Lebanese youth, weakens young people's occupational integration.

The large proportion of young people who are at school, and the postponing of the average age of the first marriage, contribute to the lengthening of the

age of youth. This is why some people refer to youth up the ages of 30 or 35 years old.

Jordan

Jordanian youth sector is shaped by two factors: youth policy – its formulation and implementation – as well as role and projects of youth NGOs which often provide a backbone or supplement for state activities. Engagement and support of the Royal Family, sustainable and encouraging macro-environment for youth-related projects and activities and availability of funds (including international donors) result in a dynamic and blooming youth sector supported by a youth policy that is believed to be one of the most pro-active in the Arab countries of Middle East and North Africa.

The rapid development of the NGO sector can be traced back to the early 90s and was caused by economic recession and political liberalisation. At that time NGOs started to overtake some of the state's responsibilities and complement them. Jordanian NGOs can be categorised into four groups, each having its particular strengths and problems: Royal NGOs – often with the best capacities; national, secular NGOs – smaller and often with insufficient funding and staffing; religious organisations – linked mostly to the charity sector; and international organisations – branches seated in Jordan that target youth. The non-profit youth sector includes a variety of actors and enjoys favourable structural conditions. The organisations are active in a wide range of fields including: performing basic services (e.g. delivery of non-formal education), organising the community (through community service or volunteering) and advocacy (to which promotion of active participation can be linked). There are many examples of best practices that can be named, which provide not only insights into the solutions, but also problems and challenges the NGOs are facing.

In regard to the NGO sector several challenges were identified. Some of them can be related to their accessibility (increasing the availability of information on youth-related projects and making youth NGO more inclusive), while others to their macro-environment and functioning (insufficient staffing, limited opportunities for youth work training, funding problems). On the other hand, many young people and youth leaders agreed that the development of the NGO youth sector has a significant impact both on personal (self-fulfilment) and on social level (contributing to a positive change).

Israel

There is no official definition of youth in Israel, however the definition most commonly used refers to the age bracket of 13 to 18 years. Some youth organisations however see young people leaving the army at 22 or 23 years as still in the need of youth services and therefore extend the age span of youth for their own definition.

With a median age of 28.8 years, a 16.1% of the total population in the age bracket between 15 and 24, and 44.1% under the age of 24, the youth factor is quite decisive in Israel.

Israel offers a well-developed infrastructure for the participation of young people in decision-making. Youth and students' councils operate throughout the country in all sectors of society at local, regional and national levels. From a very young age youth are encouraged to take part in these structures.

There is no national youth policy in Israel. Recent governments have taken attempts to create such a policy, but due to frequently changing administrations, overlapping responsibilities of government bodies and other political reasons those attempts did not succeed so far. Eight different ministries, and also partly the prime minister's office, are concerned with youth issues. A coordinating body does not exist until now, but for certain cross-cutting topics committees have been formed to formulate sector strategies.

There are no notably developed regional support mechanisms. Other support for youth organisations comes mainly from the private sector and from a very strong relation with philanthropic foundations inside and outside Israel. Most of them are connected to the international Jewish community.

Those organisations provide the different parts of youth in Israel with money and other services, often tied to certain political or religious stances. NGOs have the chance to raise money from these institutions, sometimes also for activities critical of the official government policies.

Palestinian Authority: Gaza and the West Bank

The Palestinian Ministry for Youth and Sports defines youth as the part of the population between 15 and 30 years of age. However, several NGOs employ their own definitions which often cover a wider age bracket. The age pyramid shows a youth growth with 71.7% of a total population of 3.7 million being under the age of 24. Youth in the age bracket of 15 to 24 make up for 19.3% of this. The Gaza Strip population is even younger than that of the other two regions.

Youth unemployment rates are at a 37% high in the oPt leading to high levels of poverty with regional differences ranging from the Gaza Strip, where the situation is worst, to East Jerusalem, where it is best. While educational levels are high in general in regard to enrolment rates, especially the tertiary sector faces problems in terms of quality.

The possibilities for youth to take part in decision-making processes on issues concerning themselves are limited. They themselves however complained that the general political culture, also in youth NGOs, is not open for a broader participation of young people.

The Palestinian government, with the support of UNICEF and other actors from the academic field and the civil society, has already started to develop a youth policy in the year 2000. It was finalized in 2005 and now awaits implementation. A wide consultation process has taken place in setting up the policy which included various ministries, the civil society, and also a large number of young people. However, several of the youth NGOs interviewed raised criticism towards the process, especially as the policy until now fails to be met by a dedicated budget or an appropriate plan of action.

About 507 youth clubs and centres and about 250 other organisations dealing with young people are active, 42 of which working exclusively with youth are found in the Gaza Strip. In addition, there are the international NGOs and organisations which offer youth activities. Furthermore a number of youth movements, such as the youth organisations of the big political fractions, are not only existent but also often have high numbers of members, although they lack constant activities. While youth clubs deal mostly with sports and receive partial funding from the government, the majority of youth organizations are dependent on foreign funds. Due to this many interviewees remarked that the majority of youth projects are donor-driven in matters of the priority areas they cover, and which often shift quickly. In order to establish a NGO, a minimum age of 18 years is required. However, in reality only very few of the organisations are actually youth-led. And it is difficult for young people to really advance to a leading position in an organization.

Egypt

Youth in Egypt has come to the limelight and occupied a significant position in the national agenda. The analysis of youth situation in Egypt illustrates that although youth potentially constitute a demographic gift, they put enormous pressures on the educational system and the labour and housing markets. The youth face various challenges that affect their personal as well as career development.

The youth policy in Egypt is derived from the constitution and legislations that aim at socializing youth and teenagers, guaranteeing their rights and defining their duties. These rights and duties have been stretched out through a large number of laws that regulate the family, child rights, education and political rights.

The first thing to note on the national youth policy in Egypt is the overlapping definition of youth and children due to the type and the set up of ministries and agencies considered responsible for youth such as: Education, Higher Education, Youth and Sports.

With regard to non-formal education and the youth NGOs, the NCY provides civil education for a large number of youth and teenagers and considers it one of its priorities. The NCY has established the central administration for civil education and young leadership which is responsible for youth training and capacity building of youth workers in NGOs and governmental organizations. In the recent years, there has been an upward trend in the number of youth leadership developmental programmes, whether government-led and organized by the National Youth Council or by other actors like UNICEF and Euromed Youth Programme. A number of officials confirm that NGOs are invited to play a leading role in experimenting with, and then scaling up the less formal education programmes. It is now increasingly accepted that civil society and youth associations are critical of any sustainable process of development.

The UN study in cooperation with the Arab Network for NGOs showed that 303 NGOs now exist in Egypt. Another study carried out by the World Bank classified 122 NGOs as youth NGOs and 44 groups as informal youth groups. Only 14 youth organisations are members of a union of youth NGOs called the "Federation of Egyptian Youth NGOs" which was established in January 2006.

It can be argued that the percentage of youth organizations is small in relation to the general percentage of NGOs in Egypt (less than 0.5%). Moreover, the percentage of youth NGOs is small in relation to other NGOs concerned with specific target groups, such as women. However, generally, youth organizations face major obstacles to become more effective, the most important of which are limited funding, poorly qualified staff, and difficulty in attracting unpaid volunteers. The legal framework governing youth associations is the same law that governs civil society organizations.

Consequently, the current Law 84/2002 is a crucial dimension in recognition and funding of associations and impacts powerfully on their effectiveness. This Law allows greater recognition of civil society organizations than any previous law, but it also restricts civil society.

Turkey

Since the early years of the Turkish Republic, "youth" existed in public debates. There are about 12.4 million young people aged 15-24 in Turkey. This is 17.6% of the total population.

In the Turkish legislation, there is only one single provision which addresses youth in the Constitution of the Turkish Republic (Article 58) and youth is referred to as people to be protected. A specific law devoted to youth does not exist and the rights and services for youth are included in general laws and regulations.

This structural approach towards youth issues and problems is sector-based and fragmented. The absence of a single governmental unit or one single policy document results in the multiplicity of state actors both regarding youth related decision-making and provision/implementation of services.

The development of youth work in Turkey owes a great deal to NGOs working on youth issues and youth organisations. As the major users of non-formal education, there are various categories of organisations, which have different legal statuses: associations, foundations, youth clubs, youth centres, student clubs, private companies (non-profit activities) and youth branches of the political parties. The exact number of youth related NGOs at the country level is difficult to indicate but it is stated to be around 60, and there are some 120 organisations whose activities affect young people in different ways. These organisations often share similar aims and they function in almost all fields and activities related to youth. While there are experienced and institutionalised youth organisations, relatively new ones with fewer experiences face problems on the way to get institutionalised.

By 2008, there is not yet a National Youth Council (NYC) in Turkey. However, the need for a NYC is increasingly voiced since the 1990s. Three major groupings of NGOs and youth organisations are associated with the attempts to establish a NYC in Turkey, but the existing legal framework and lack of sufficient infrastructure made an establishment impossible.

The public authorities admit the absence of a separate tangible youth policy and law directly regulating youth policy in Turkey. Other perceived problems are multiplicity of actors dealing with youth issues; absence of a NYC; low levels of education and mobility of young people and difficulties in disseminating the information. The youth leaders, youth trainers and NGOs, individually or collectively voice their concerns and perceptions about the work of public authorities; about the youth related legislation and policies; about the civil society, youth work and the involvement of international mechanisms in the youth related activities in Turkey.

2.3 Results of the workshops on Youth Policy in practice

Following these expert inputs, participants in the conference were invited to present information and promote discussion about their perspectives on Youth Policy in their countries and/or organisations. A number of time slots and locations were offered and the participants managed the delivery of the workshops themselves. The notes below give an indication of the information shared and the content of discussions.

Youth policy in France (Jamel Elougille and Alice de Mascarel)

Alice and Jamel presented first the main institutions involved in youth policy in France: Ministry in charge of Youth (Ministère de la Jeunesse), regional public authorities (Conseils Régionaux, Conseils Généraux), and parishes.

They particularly focussed on the role of the National Institute for youth and people Education (INJEP) which is a very useful agency for Youth NGOs in France. Then Jamel explained the youth Councils system and how it allows young people to be involved in the life of their city.

Finally, they presented the National Programme on youth and its priorities, as well as the new programme edited by the Haut-Commissariat à la Jeunesse et à la vie associative.

The participants noticed that a lot of French authorities are involved in youth policy at all territorial levels. The French participants developed some examples, based on their experiences, of resources available to Youth NGOs in France. Alice detailed for instance the several agencies and organisations located in her campus that could give her organisation various resources (funds, material and rooms for events, training).

It is true that young people's expectations and the effectiveness of actions are often elusive, especially as youth policies, by tempting their image of dynamism, may turn against the community when problems arise. The fact is that the era of "leisure-consumption" seems long gone, and local officials are more interested in enrolling their actions towards young people under the Territorial Development Policy.

For example, many municipalities are included in a device combining the cash allowance and the agricultural social insurance fund to enhance and develop local youth policy (12 to 18 years old).

At last, we have several devices driven by the department to allow financial assistance to youth initiatives (fund youth initiatives and challenge young people).

Youth Policy in Egypt (Ibrahim Gabre)

Youth age in Egypt ranges from 16 to 30 years which falls under the responsibility of the high institute of youth (HYI). The (HYI) provides programmes in centres of youth established by the government in all Egyptian towns and villages.

In these centres, seminars, round tables and listening circles are carried out to discuss youth problems and the best solutions available, there is also a programme to choose youth leaders. These centres contain facilities to cater for sport activities and a library.

In addition, the ministry of labour is responsible for training courses for youth in order to prepare them for new job opportunities in the market either in Egypt or outside and try to increase their chances of getting a job in the Egyptian market or by agreement with Arab or European countries. Lectures about policy making and administrations are delivered to higher leaders.

Youth Policies in Egypt (Mai El Gabry)

The Youth policy in Egypt presentation was started by Mai El Gabry who talked about youth policies as set by the National Democratic Party. Most countries adopt a national youth policy that is marked by comprehensiveness and integration. Such policy specifies the needs of youth in all fields and designs goals and strategies to meet these needs.
Governmental and non-governmental organisations have been presented with a draft containing plans and programmes relating to the needs of youth. The National Democratic Party (NDP) has pledged in the Youth Policy Paper that was presented to the first annual Conference in September 2003 to start sketching out a national youth policy. The NDP promised to propound this paper to organisations concerned with youth, pledging that the opinions of these organisations would be the basis for the final draft of the national youth policy. Inas Abdelatif, introduced the Bibliotheca Alexandria to the group, she discussed how the Bibliotecha implements these policies.

Palestinian Authority (Mousa Abassi)

Moussa Abassi focused on few points that affect the Palestinian youth policy, which are the following:

- The youth population
- Youth organization structure
- Youth organizations
- Problems Facing Palestinian Youth
- Education

Moussa added that there are different attempts to develop an accredited youth policy in Palestine but there was no approval for the policy from the PNA. A Youth law proposal is found in the **Palestinian Legislative Council**, as youth and youth leaders hope that this will be a priority for the next PLC.

2.4 Conclusions

So what do we conclude for these different perspectives on youth policy in EU and meda countries? We can see that diversity is everywhere: Diversity in priorities, diversity in the reach and scope of policy areas, diversity in the agendas of different international, national, regional and local bodies. Youth work and non formal learning are recognised in many countries but not in others. Formal education takes precedent in most, if not all of the countries when measured by Government spending and yet youth work is seen to contribute to public life, citizenship and employment.

Many policy makers have made the connection between youth work and social cohesion and tackling disadvantage and exclusion. The concept of participation is recognised and embraced in some countries but not others and different countries have more or less developed process in place to collect the views of young people when creating policies that affect them.

Youth organisations have varying degrees of power and influence. Many act as a voice for young people in relation policy issues while others are more strictly controlled by the authorities. The role and development of leaders in youth organisations is clearly an important features of any review youth policy across the region. Leaders hold crucial positions in the lives of young people and their organisations. Training them to enable young people to contribute to policy development is and will be a high priority.

National and local authorities in the past seem to have limited their agendas regarding young people to provision of sporting activities and keeping them out of trouble. This is now changing – the value of the views of young people is being recognised more and more; and given the rising populations of young people in many countries, this will be increasingly important.

The role of Non Formal Learning and Education in the Youth Policy is not always clear and sometimes confused with the formal schooling system. The role of volunteering projects and local associations is important in developing the role of NFL in the civil society and in the educational system. Some countries are starting to include in their National Youth Policy NFE and the role of volunteering as part of their provision.

Many countries still have no specific laws or any kind of recognition about Youth Organisations and their activities. This sometimes can cause a lack of funding and institutional recognition.

3

The reality of NGOs in the Euromed Region

The reality of NGOs in the Euromed Region

3.1 Introduction – the dimensions of NGO reality

During the conference, the participants were asked to consider some of the different dimensions of managing NGOs.

The following table summarises the discussion.

Finances	A Rigid Approach	A Flexible Approach
	Able to plan ahead	More likely to be able to transfer funds from one sector/project/activity to another
	Up to date records	More motivation
	Once the plan is ready – then we can relax!	Team environment
Decision making	**By Young People**	**By Older People**
	More innovative	Less risk
	Closer to their own needs	More credibility
	More energy (some ideas from older people may seem unreachable	More know-how of bureaucracy and loop-holes
	Developmental experience	Able to contribute to the finances of the NGO?

A "mind-map" of how the participants understand NGOs was created and the information is reproduced here:
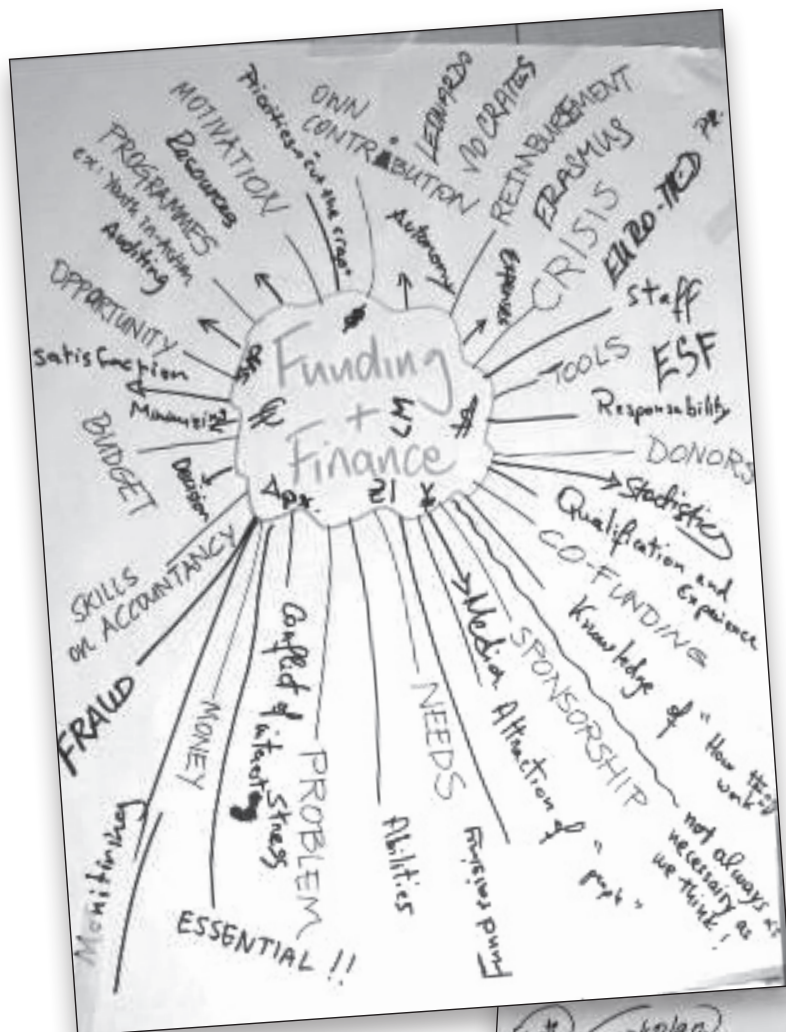
Chart 1:
Funding & Finance

Chart 2:
Relationship
with authorities

Chart 3:
Challenges

Chart 4:
Governance (Top
level management
& leadership)

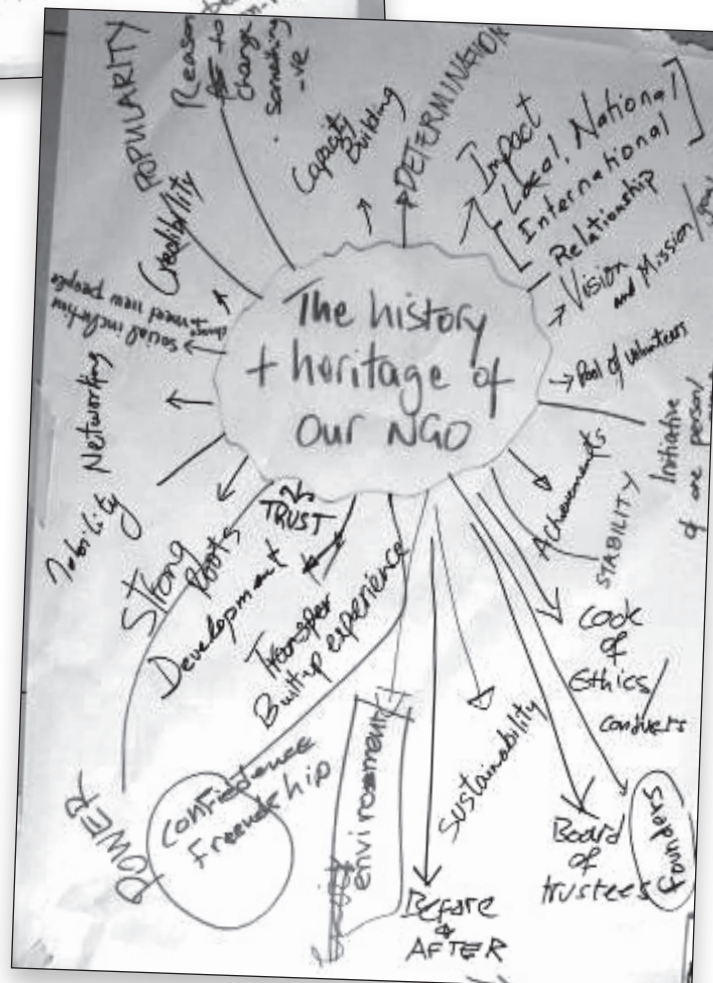*Chart 5:*
What do people get from being involved?

Chart 6:
The history and heritage of our NGO

Challenges	Volunteers, Networking, Funding, Find high skilled workers, Relationship with the Government, Organisational growth, Motivating people, Political situation, Recognition of non-formal education, Mobility, Creativity and innovation, sustainability of organisation, Strict rules (inflexibility), Cooperation process, attracting young people
The history and heritage of our NGO	Development, Built-up experience, Trust, Confidence, Power, Environment, before and after, Sustainability, Board of trustees, Founders, Code of ethics/conduct, Achievements, Stability, Initiative of personal growth, Pool of volunteers, Vision and Mission, Goals, Relationships, Impact, Local-National-International, Determination, Capacity building, Credibility, Popularity, Reason to change something negative, Social inclusion chance to meet new people.
Relationship with other organisations	Human Resources, Responsibility, Opportunity enrichment, Mobility, Creativity, Avoid duplication of work, Share resources, Responsibility, Friction and conflicts, Exchange, Commitment, Coordination, Co-funds and joint projects, Learning form the others, More options, Mapping and networking, Complimentarily, Partnership, Experience, Competition, Diversity, Friends, Harder decision-making
Funding and Finance	Knowledge of 'How things work', Sponsorships, Attraction of people, Needs, Fundraising, Media, Abilities, Problems, Essential, Conflict of interest, Stress, Monitoring, Fraud, Skills ad accountancy, Decision, Budget, Minimizing, Opportunity, Auditing, Programmes eg. Youth in Action, Resources, Motivation, Priorities, Autonomy, Own contribution, Reimbursement, Expenses, Tools, Euro-Tied, Staff, Donors, Tools
What people get from being involved	Opportunities, Money, Stress, Hope, Commitment, Involvement, Knowledge, Training, Open-mind, Satisfaction, Training, Experience, Dynamism, Creativity, Time-consumption, Friction, Network, Confidence, Intercultural competencies and dialogue, Responsibility, Cooperation.
Relationship with authorities	Petition, Low, Demonstrations, Audits, Control, Funding, Regulation, Local authorities, Universities, Parliament, Work plan, Attempts to motivate them, Discussions, Cooperation, Interests, Municipalities, Jail, Recognition, Support, Hypocrisy, Army, Lobby, Advices, Legislation, Elections, Conflict, Communication.
Governance (top level management and leadership)	Responsibility, Chaotic management, Control, National Agencies, Finance, Experience, Procedures, Politics, Honour, Participation, European Commission, Rationality, Ignorance, Accountability, Democratic process, Superiority, Circulation, Transparency, Ministries, Chaotic management, Representatives, Bureaucracy

The participants were asked to consider the VALUES that inform their NGOs. The list is below.

To be open to other cultures	Objectivity	Responsibility
Creative, constructive way of spending time	Connectivity	Integration
Co-operation, support, tolerance, respect	Equality	Respect
Give wings for youngsters	Social Justine	Participation
Brighten to your horizon	Transparency	Teamwork
To show young alternative	Dignity	Accountability
Putting the last first	Mobility	Cooperation
Freedom of expression	Respect	Positive interaction
Tolerance	Sharing	Empathy
Initiatives	Honesty	Loyalty

3.2 A case study on the situation of NGOs in Egypt, within its Current Obstacles (Gehad Amer)

NGO's Background

The Non-Governmental Organizations' role in Egypt is considered as short-term work, as it can be classified in 3 historical phases:

The first phase was the end of the nineteenth century till the World War I; this phase was characterized by the charity nature. The second phase was after World War II till the early nineteen eighties. This phase was characterized by government control over the civil society, especially during the period of socialism. The third phase was in the late eighties and early nineties which focused on activating social work more than providing services.

This shift to social work was a result of the following three main reasons:

- I: the failure of previous development experiences in third world countries.
- II: the collapse of the communist model in Eastern Europe followed by the fall of the Soviet Union.
- III: the revolution of the information technology in the field of communication which supports the idea of democracy on both levels; as a concept and a practice with all its dimensions.

This demonstrates that NGOs in Egypt are like any other human experience, facing many struggles which have to be confronted in the early stages.

Obstacles facing NGO's work may be divided into the following three main pillars:
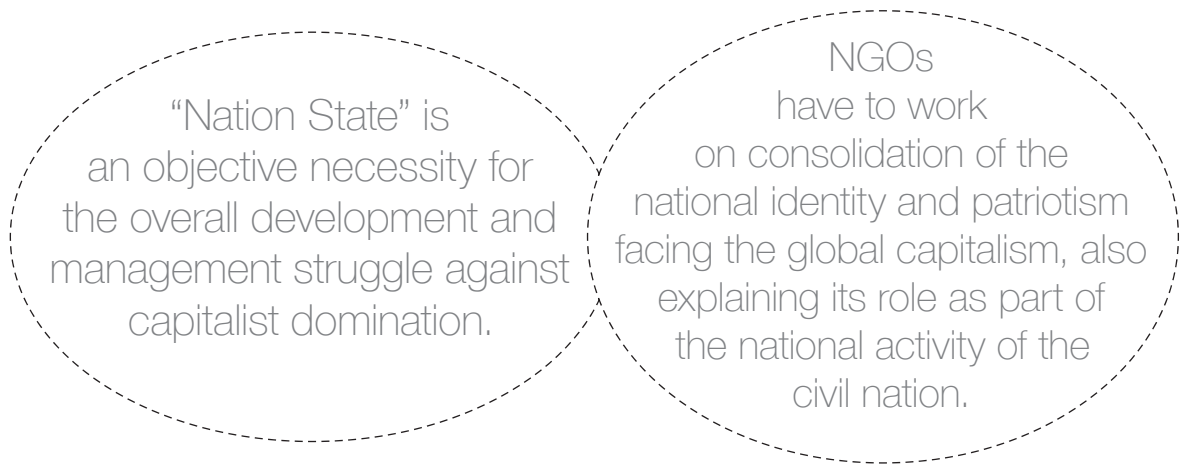
Political Obstacles

In the political area NGOs may take three main roles. These roles vary and shift according to the values of the particular organisation, which may support the authority, oppose the authority or complete missing points of the authority.

The difference between NGOs and political parties remains in terms of legal organisational aspects:

Nature of the activity of the NGO'S	Nature of the activity of the National Parties
Works on sector basis and its main aim is to develop and improve the situation in a specified sector of the society that underlies the political aspect of NGOs but far from the game of power and authorities.	Political parties assumes to seek the authority to implement a comprehensive community program

The difference between political parties and NGO's leads us to the need to identify the nature of the relationship of such organizations and the state.

"Nation State" is an objective necessity for the overall development and management struggle against capitalist domination.

NGOs have to work on consolidation of the national identity and patriotism facing the global capitalism, also explaining its role as part of the national activity of the civil nation.

In this sense there are two necessities and two realities:

- The first is from above and is to achieve unity in the community.
- The second from below and is to achieve pluralism.

The full control of the state over the society many times kills freedom whilst the control of society over the state in several cases leads to conflict without a real reflection of the will of the majority.

The transformation of NGO's presented the government and the state a challenge to move from the concepts of nationalism and patriotism to globalization. In contrast, the government should step back from the concept of (Louis XIV), "I am the state and the state is me", and support NGOs activities without imposing guardianship on them. This will make NGO's a tool for feedback through activities of the civil society and a source of information, necessary for development strategies.

The following illustrates this cycle:

| Link the work of NGOs in the Arab world | The reality of development activities related to the public | To be a source of support for identity and an area of Arab cooperation |
| Activating the role of regional importance of the domestic and global level | Source of development and preservation of national identity | Important to humanitarian connection |

Economical Obstacles

The foreign funding for organisations has been always a big dilemma and NGOs have been accused of being the reason for western or foreign countries interference in national affairs in order to achieve political goals. Therefore, NGOs have to be very careful in dealing with organizations when knowing that may have second intentions.

The following represents the roles of three main actors:

Government	NGOs	Funders
• When drawing up legislation to prevent such aid to clarify all the reasons in a public.	• Insistence of these NGOs in their agreements with the funders to make the Egyptian judiciary is the ruling on all disputes that arise;	• Accept amendments to be under development and not the imposition of one opinion over the other.
• It can also leave this matter to a committee formed in a democratic community for NGOs to have the same status of its assessment.	• And there is self-evident must be noted is that the agenda of NGOs must be a domestic agenda and not be imposed from the outside.	
• Or through a joint mechanism between the two.		

Socio-cultural Obstacles

The social dimension is the main concern of most NGOs, and social work is a common feature among the various activities for associations. Organizations have potential to penetrate different social sectors through the participating members in existing projects; also by letting individuals participate in the self-development of political knowledge Therefore NGOs can be the way to overcome this problem. For the cultural dimension, NGO's must acquire more cultural awareness, also through definition of community civil organizations and its important role.

From the Motivation Dimension the civil society organizations including the existing capacity have a capability to penetrate within the community, participate in the development process and push youth to work in frameworks of development which gives the whole process a dynamic character.

However, the work of NGOs operating in specific sectors mainly in the social sector specifically with women and children and on economic sectors namely with workers and consumers need to fit within the concept of real development. The missing mechanisms for full coordination and joint planning can be the only channel for Development. If possible the development process must be the main fragment in the implementation phase with IT at the planning level.

The problem of institutional development

Egyptian NGOs stepped into their last stage of development: Their activity was based on voluntary work and the idea of paid work was considered as unethical. Years after, the activity and efficiency of these NGOs made them not only develop at an institutional level but also to reach continuity. Here two main problems emerged: On one hand ethical considerations made many founders reject such transformation and pushed others to adopt the same attitude. On the other hand, practical issues in some of these organizations stood in front of this transformation.

Combining elements of the founders and new members was a strategy used by several organizations to overcome this dilemma and in a later step was the use of cadres that can be called professional cadres especially in the form of consultants.

This transition period has seen a number of obstacles and difficulties that still exist in many organizations. A salient question was asked: How to achieve successful integration of decision makers and volunteers responsible into an influential operational structure?

The answer is to move towards a development within civil society institutions. This increased the need for more democratic structures, although the process of implementing democratic decision-making faced many difficulties, ranging from the legal structure to the institutional structure of the NGOs.

The decision-making process of institutions operating by voluntary staff was linear rather than hierarchal. During this period the need to institutionalise the decision-making structure was initiated. This was implemented through new mechanisms of decision-making capable of activating the management and consolidating the democratic approach.

The problem of stability and continuity

During the past years the problem of stability and continuity was a priority issue on the agenda of the dialogue between civil organizations (NGOs) due to:

- The contribution of many community inputs
- International funders as main pillar for funding

The reality showed that this is mainly associated with the capacity of these organizations to make in-depth changes in order to survive. Regardless of the fact that this is not an organization's goal itself, such changes and the mechanisms they bring with them, have caused and are the main touchstone of stability and continuity.

3.3 Why do we need NGOs?
Why are they important to have them in society?

Miriam Teuma: Department of Youth and Community Studies, University of Malta

NGOs Support all activities and concerns that make a vibrant civil society. They may:

- ***advance science and thought;***

- ***develop culture and art; and***

- ***protect the environment.***

They:

- create an alternative to centralized state agencies and provide services with greater independence and flexibility.
- promote pluralism, diversity, and tolerance in society while protecting and strengthening cultural, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and other identities.
- promote pluralism, diversity, and tolerance in society while protecting and strengthening cultural, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and other identities.
- establish the mechanisms by which governments and the market can be held accountable by the public.

Beyond providing services, a more important role of NGOs is as a facilitator of citizens' participation in their societies.

NGOs increase "social capital" by providing people with opportunities to build trust in each other and the capacity to work together toward common goals. By social capital we mean *the norms and networks of civil society that enable groups of individuals to co-operate for mutual benefit (and perhaps for broader social benefit) and may allow social institutions to perform more productively. Social capital is embodied in such forms as civic and religious groups, bonds of family, informal community networks, kinship and friendship, and norms of reciprocity, volunteerism, altruism and trust.*

- ***The influence and importance of NGOs differ depending on the national context in which they operate.***

- ***The constitution of a civil society varies from culture to culture.***

In Conclusion

Often NGOs undertake to 'shape the larger political and social reality' facing them (Pharr, 2003) or invoke rights of public debate around common concerns (Habermas, 1989; Perez-Diaz, 1998)

3.4 Practices & Realities of Mediterranean NGOs within a focus on Egypt (Ahmed Fauad)

Generations of NGOs

Ahmed started by providing an introduction to the development of the NGO sector in Egypt, the issues tackled are as follows:

The History of NGO development

From Charity to Empowerment

1945	Relief and Rehabilitation
1960	Service Provision (Subsidized)
1980	Community Comprehensive Development
1990	Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)
2000	Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

History of Civil Movement in Egypt

- Need for a Civil Sector (1850 – 1950)
- Regulate the Civil Sector (1950 – 1971)
- Encourage the Civil Sector (1971 – 1981)
- Need for a Civil Sector (1981 – 1990)
- Human rights Generations & Confrontation (1990 – 2000)

The Growth of civil sector after law 84 year 2002 especially Business oriented NGOs and corporate social responsibility (CSR) (2005 - present)

History of Egyptian NGO's

- 1821 Greek Charity Association in Alexandria
- 1859 Egyptian Institution Association
- 1868 Knowledge Association
- 1875 Geographical Association
- 1878 Islamic Charitable Association
- 1906 Welcomed Endeavors Association
- 1938 Ministry of social Affairs

In 1976, the number of registered NGOs reached 7,593 and by 1999, it had risen to 16,000. Most of these (74.5 %) work in social care represented by social aid, caring for special groups; the handicapped, family care, childhood and motherhood. The rest of NGOs (25.5%), their activities are in local development. The declared official number of association members is three million.

Now more than 26000 NGOs are registered as working under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Solidarity. They are responding to some negative social phenomena the Egyptian society has witnessed lately. Furthermore, they apply pressure to put these phenomena on the government's agenda. Particular issues are the problems of homeless children and child labor.

Political Impact   Economic Impact

History – Belonging – Vision – Mission – Objectives

Identity

Strategic Planning – Organizational Structure – Governance – Public Relations – Fund Raising

Strategy   NGO   Operations

Programs – Projects – Activities

Resources

Human – Financial – Assets – Information Technology – Organisation – Legacy – Acceptance – Time

Legal Impact   Socio Cultural Impact

External Environment

Political Impact

Globalization increased the trend of global movement towards democratization, pluralism and decentralization. Global Funds are being allocated to empower the civil sector.

Mediterranean NGOs were playing a non-civil role implementing either foreign or local political agendas. Non-financially sustainable NGOs accepted to be manipulated either by the Foreign or local funds just to survive while old generations such as CDAs were lost in the expansion.

Economical Impact

The economy was also affected by Globalization; namely in the adoption of new concepts, Economical Structural Adjustment ESAP and privatisation. Other global and intercontinental partnerships are the WTO, the Euro Med and the GAT. There is the need to create more social security networks.

Mediterranean NGOs had a bigger burden targeting the negative aspects of the free economy such as increase of unemployment, low wages, destruction of local industries, lack of subsidization, increase of prices. In many Mediterranean countries, the role of governments were substituted by the civil sector where governmental institutions acted as complementary role.

Legal Impact

The evolution of laws and policies sometimes work in favour of the civil sector and sometimes creates deeper threats. An increase in the civil sector role yet with greater controls on Fundraising activities & Foreign Funds:

- Mediterranean Civil Sector (Egypt) was always hindered in sustaining financial revenue or an Income Generating Model.
- Foreign funds; Governmental approvals involve a long process.

This leads to a continuous never-ending cycle: Routine – Miscommunication - Routine.

Socio Cultural Impact

There is a continuous need for social solidarity and decreasing the massive economical pressures. Social Capital grew together with the increase of religious oriented charity. Restricted charitable funding also increased; mainly operating in the social field, delivering basic needs such as food and shelter, clothing, medical assistance and school fees support.

NGO's deal with several forces in the external environment, especially with:

- Funding Agencies
- Governmental Institutions
- Local Community Beneficiaries
- NGOs Networks Foundations Research Centers
- Non-Governmental Institutions.

NGO's deal horizontally and vertically

Horizontal - Non Governmental Institutions: NGOs, Networks, Foundations, Research, Centers: Relationship of mutual strengthening

Governmental Institutions: Monitoring, Regulating, Supporting, Funding: Relationship of complementarity, confrontation

Vertical - Funding Agencies: Local, Regional, International, CSR, Individual: Relationship of accountability and support.

Local Community Beneficiaries: The Reason behind Everything: Relationship of representation, legitimacy.

What Now?

There is no way that one can sustain a professional LOVE relationship with all those partners unless it is well constructed. It is vital to remember the following table:
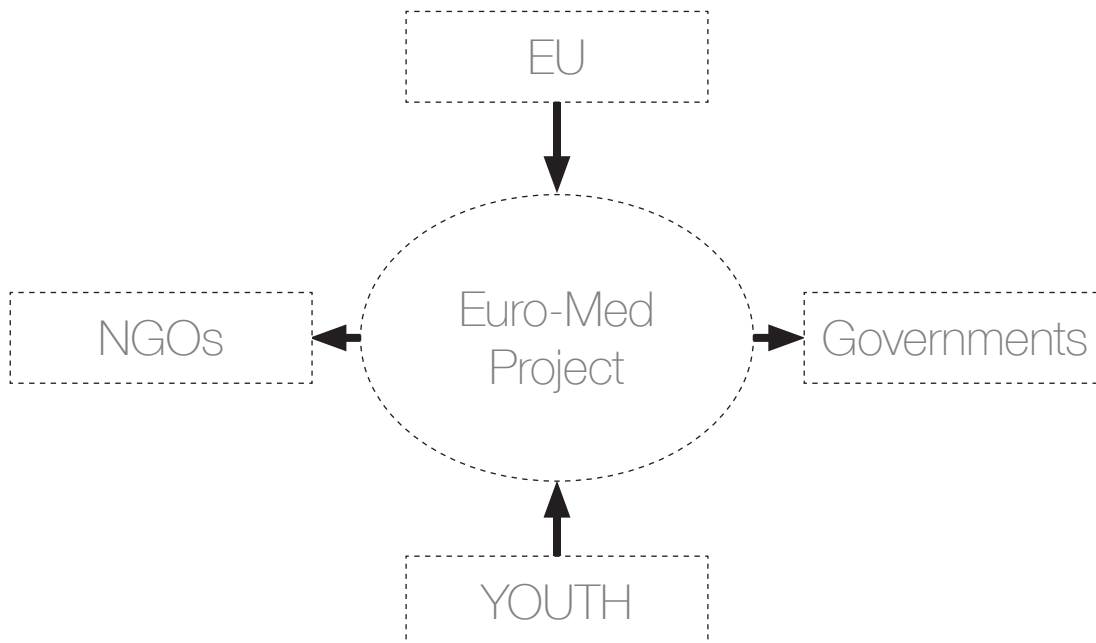
Internal Environment

   Identity

- Name
- History
- Geographical location
- Vision
- Mission Objectives

   Strategy

- Strategic planning
- Organisation chart
- Levels of participation
- Internal Governance
- Fund raising strategies
- Organisational culture

   Resources

- Human
- Physical
- Technical know-how
- Information
- Operational
- Legitimacy
- Time

Operations

- Programme
- Project
- Activity

Challenges in the Mediterranean:

Lack of…

- Institutional base & strong Capacities
- Clear Vision implemented in a long term Strategy
- Fundraising strategies to provide financial sustainability
- Unity (Geographical – Specification)
- Solid Partnership with Horizontal & Vertical partners

Euro Med In Egypt 2002 – 2005

In 3 years one of the best Capacity Building Strategies was Planned, Executed and Evaluated to Address:

- 44 Youth Trained Internationally
- 30 Youth Networked with Partner NGOs through CMS
- 72 Youth joined International Events through EMYU
- 61 Youth Trained By SALTO Euro-Med
- 34 Youth Attended Events in Partnership with EMYUs
- 790 Youth were hosted in Egypt attending Youth Exchanges
- 182 Youth were sent abroad attending Youth Exchanges
- 21 Youth were sent abroad for EVS projects
- 60 Youth were acting as Multipliers for the Program all over Egypt
- 3 Youth are recognized as official Euro-Med Trainers
- 3700 Youth attended 74 Informative Sessions about Euro-Med

The Impact of Euro Med:

Individual

- Exposure to External and Internal Culture (Intercultural Learning)
- Enrich Personal Experience & Enhance Self Reliance
- Raise Social Intelligence

Organization

- Enrich the Human Resources
- Create a new pool of Ideas
- Open the door for creating a Variety of Activities addressing youth
- Raise concepts such as Volunteerism & Citizenship
- Participate in the Community Development

Community

- Create a New Generation believing in the CHANGE
- Enrich the Social Capital of the Community
- Build a Highly effective generation of NGOs act as Pressure Groups to lobby against local authorities to change laws and Policies

Threats

- Lack of the local Administrative &Technical support (Hosting & Sending)
- Lack of facts & figures of the beneficiaries weather Quantitative or Qualitative
- Lack of a long term Strategic Plan that should add to the local impact
- No known Multiplication or Replication aspect
- No Consistency from the Governments using the trained calipers as a part in decision making or adopting national initiatives

Conclusion: *The change will never come unless it stems from within.*

3.5 Association of the Local Democracy Agencies (Marco Boaria Projects Development Officer, ALDA: Association of the Local Democracy Agencies)

The Association of the Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) is an International non-governmental organization. The LDA's are local NGOs act to foster Human Rights and local democracy. Nowadays, ALDA is active in strengthening the process of European integration in South Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. The association also tries to promote active citizenship and citizens' participation and to foster equal opportunities and youth policies. ALDA is engaged in supporting sustainable economic development.

Methodology and strategy

To achieve its aims, ALDA bases its activities on manifold methodologies and strategies.

- Decentralised and multilateral cooperation
- European and international networks for local action
- Technical assistance and training
- Project management and project assistance.

Areas of intervention

The largest part of ALDA activities are in South-Eastern Europe, above all in the Western Balkan region. ALDA recently opened an LDA in Georgia and plans to expand its network with 2 other agencies in Armenia and Azerbaijan while trying to open towards democracy in Belarus by cooperating in projects with local NGOs. ALDA is extending its activities towards the Mediterranean, hence supporting the efforts of the European Union to re-strengthen the links with the North African countries.

The Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Political Decision-Making Process *(Adopted by the Conference of INGOs at its meeting on 1st October 2009).* ALDA has the responsibility to coordinate the implementation of this Code within the INGO Conference of the Council of Europe.

The Objectives of the Code are:

- To contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for NGOs in Council of Europe member States and Belarus by defining at European level, a set of general principles, guidelines, tools and mechanisms for civil participation in the political decision-making process: the Code is based on actual experiences from NGOs and civil society organisations across Europe, sharing their good practice and useful methods for engaging with public authorities.
- To make sure that it is a relevant and useful tool for NGOs and civil society organisations from local to international level in their dialogue with public authorities and government bodies.

Steps in the political decision making process:
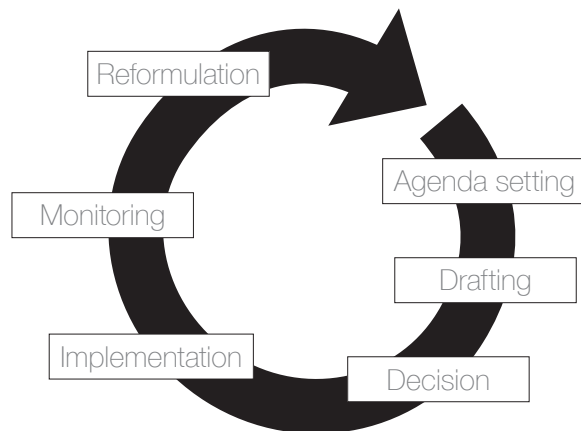
Agenda Setting

The political agenda is agreed by the parliament and government but can be shaped by NGOs: new policy initiatives are often the result of influence of the campaigns of NGOs.

Roles and contribution of NGOs:

Advocacy: raise issues, concerns and needs for a specific user group, point of view or a general public interest that is not yet covered by legislation.

Information and awareness raising: involve and represent members, users and key citizen groups and act as channels to reach citizens; to listen, react and inform.

Experts and advisors: experts with knowledge on a specific topic play a key role in setting the political agenda. Their analysis and research identify needs in society and are provide crucial perspectives.

Innovators: development of new solutions and approaches; demonstrating how these may be brought onto the political agenda.

Service providers: key actor in forming policy and creating alternative or non-existent services for a specific user group.

Policy drafting

Here NGOs are often involved in areas such as identifying problems, proposing solutions and providing evidence for their preferred proposal.

Advocacy: guaranteeing that consideration is given to the needs and interests of stakeholders affected by the draft policy.

Information and awareness building: NGOs inform membership, users and key citizens' groups about the drafting process.

Experts and advisors: provide analyses and research on issues under consideration or raise additional priorities to be included in the policy draft.

Innovators: provide solutions through the introduction of new approaches, practical solutions and concrete models which bring benefits to specific user groups.

Service providers: input to policy drafting to ensure consideration is given to their specific role and the necessary conditions are met.

Watchdog: Follow the drafting process to make sure stakeholder concerns are considered and that the process is inclusive and transparent.

Decision

Government motions should be open to input and participation of NGOs. At this step consultation is central to informed decision making. However the final power of choice lies with the public authorities, unless the decision is taken by a public vote, referendum or a co-decision mechanism.

Advocacy: influencing the decision takers before a vote.

Information and awareness building: informing membership, users and key citizens' groups about the political decisions and their potential effect.

Experts or advisors: provision of detailed analysis to inform and influence decision takers.

Watchdog: following the decision making process making sure it is democratic and transparent.

The different levels of participation of NGOs in the decision-making process:

LOW   LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION   HIGH

3.6 Results of the workshops on NGOs in practice

As before, following these expert inputs, participants in the conference were invited to present information and promote discussion about their perspectives on managing NGOs and projects in their organisations. A number of time slots and locations were offered and the participants managed the delivery of the workshops themselves. The notes below give an indication of the information shared and the content of discussions.

AFS - Turkey - Deniz Olcek

My NGO has a simple management style which is not as hierarchical as it seems on paper. We have a board which regulates the relations with the foundations, institutions and ministiries and deals with financial arrangements. However, in working groups, by which I mean the group who deals with hosting activities of AFS intercultural programmes or the film festval project team, we have a kind of management system which is called round table management. For every group, we have a coordinator, but he/she is not the boss, is just responsible for the coordination of people. The division of labour is made according to people's interests and everybody chooses how they would like to contribute. So, each volunteer paints a small part of the whole picture and each is responsible from his/her own part. At the end of each activity, during the evaluation we criticize ourselves and tell our recommendations to each other in a constructive way to enhance the quality of the work that we will perform next time.

YEL (Young Entrepreneurs and Leaders) Malta - Rebekah Tanti Dougall

Youth Policy:

As a fresh youth organization, we are aware of the principles in the National Youth Policy as YEL focuses on matters that affect young people. On the political level, the Youth Policy is a very important document which gives direction to the Government and to the European Union when dealing with issues related to young people. YEL is satisfied with the way consultation was conducted. The fact that youths from different youth organizations were involved in the consultation process is a positive step towards active citizenship.

As an organization with entrepreneurship and leadership as its core, YEL strongly encourages the importance given to entrepreneurship in different sections of the policy as we believe that entrepreneurial competencies are very important and should be included as part of the educational opportunities of young people.

The Policy offers a guide to youth organizations on which areas they should focus when organizing activities and only by being aware and fulfilling those guiding principles does the youth policy become effective. If youth organizations do not put into practice the principles of the National youth policy, then the policy is just a piece of paper with no weighting whatsoever.

NGOs in practice:

YEL is a newly established organization focused on entrepreneurship and leadership. We believe that these are 2 important skills that are an essential characteristic for a country's success. Whilst some entrepreneurial and leadership skills may be taught, we believe that the individual must make personal efforts by continuously training and learning as well as broadening one's knowledge on such areas.

For this reason, YEL is motivated to focus on creating greater awareness of the development of such skills amongst young people. YEL encourages young people to be creative and to take on training, educational research and experience in areas that they find interesting. Ideas are fostered from a combination of knowledge and creativity.

YEL also provides adequate opportunities for young people who wish to pursue with their idea for a new business venture or to take on leading initiatives, in their community, region, country and beyond.

Lastly, YEL provides the necessary support for young people who are committed to engage in entrepreneurship and/or leadership so as to allow them to reach their individual dream and the goals they set for the benefit of society and the economy.

To achieve this, 5 sectors have been created, with Project Managers assigned different duties according to the sector they are representing: *Information and Communications* Manager; *Law, Tourism and Financial Services* Manager; *NGO* Manager; *Health, Pharmaceutical and Environmental* Manager; and *Education, Sports and Cultural* Manager.

Egyptian experiences - Mai El Gabry, Karim Khashaba and Ibrahim Gabre

The NGO management presentation by the Egyptian participants was informative and concise: Mai El Gabry made a presentation about NGO management law n.84 in Egypt and how it governs NGO registration in Egypt. She talked about the problems facing NGOs in registration and funding especially from foreign donors, followed by a presentation about her own organization "World Faith" in which she explained that it is an interfaith and intercultural dialogue organization.

Karim Khashaba talked about his organization "European Union Model" in which he explained that it is a model for the European Union created by students of the faculty of political science in Cairo University.

Ilbrahim Gabre also talked about the organisations Egyptian National Association for Science and Scientists (ENAS) and Shehab elm for science and human development (SHAD). Ibrahim said that these organisations carry out many youth activities like the development of young talented students and young scientists to be involved in scientific programmes. They also periodically visit research centres and provide training according to protocols with different ministries. In addition to soft loans (credit projects) for young people and women to start work and increase their income capabilities. The project is implemented by three young people working in the organisation.

Youth Spirit Centre – Jordan – Bayan Quteshat

During this workshop participants talked about NGOs in Jordan how they operate and the challenges that they face.

Bayan Quteshat introduced Youth Spirit Centre an NGO working to build bridges of understanding between youth from different cultures and religious backgrounds. The main aim is to spread the culture of peace and understanding through Interfaith Dialogue. Bayan talked about the way the NGO is managed and the challenges of the organisation. A video about Questscope and its main activities were shown after the presentation.

Moviemiento/Berlin – Germany – Misja Goosens

Moviemiento is a travelling short film festival. The office of this NGO is based in Berlin and with its festivals it travels through Europe and abroad. Around twelve people work part-time for Moviemiento. The members of this organisation come from different academic backgrounds with a mutual passion for travelling and cinematography and a strong belief in the positive effects of 'mobility'.. The organisation cooperates with different partner organizations from all over the world, from other travelling festivals, film academies, to environmental NGO's, art organizations and sustainable design companies. So far Moviemiento implemented:

- Three travelling film festival tours with a bus in 2003, 2005, 2006. (www.moviemiento.org)
- Moving Baltic Sea 2008. A 2.5 months tour with a sailing ship on the Baltic sea. Moviemiento has coordinated with 14 international cultural- and environmental partner organizations. (www.movingbalticsea.org)
- Kinomobilny 2009. A caravan/bicycle tour in zigzag course along the German Polish border, with German and Polish partners (www.kinomobilny.org)
- Moving Visions 2009. A seminar hosted on a sailing ship, about international project development. Participants came from Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Germany and the Netherlands.
- The second half of 2010 we will be on tour in Latin America. Via video workshops for young women we focus on women empowerment in villages in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Chile.

What is round table management?

Moviemiento emerged in 2002 out of a group of friends and professionalized along the way. Our NGO has a director and board only existing on paper. All people involved have the same right to speak and participate in the decision-making process. Moviemiento can be seen as a platform, where everyone can bring in his/her talent and energy as he/she likes. With this freedom comes a high amount of responsibility, acquired from all participating people! No one is being 'controlled' in the work: You have to be able to see the projects you are involved in, as your own, and therefore be willing to give all you can to make them a success. We work on a project basis and the work within each project is divided into smaller work packages, for example: overall coordinator (notice: this is not 'the boss'), film coordinator, tour coordinator, finances, partnership building, public relations etc. For every task there is a certain amount of money as payment included. In this way, everyone works on a freelance basis. Important decisions are made during meetings and discussions with

all Moviemiento's involved. We nearly never have exactly the same opinion, but in the basis we share the same values, so via discussions and common sense we are able to reach satisfying decisions. Moviemiento is always open to work with new people and organizations in order to create an expansion of the horizons for everyone involved.

Participants' response to Movimiento's workshop:

This kind of management style was innovative to quite a number of participants present during Movimiento's workshop and it took a while for everyone to figure out how it works. This is a completely different way of managing than the more 'formal' way (bigger) NGO's are structured. Yet, Misja was enthused how positive the overall response was. Participants were eager to learn more about it and believed this way of round table management could have a positive effect on all people involved. Although Misja doubts that this style of management can possibly be adopted by every NGO she feels satisfied that she was able to shine a light on a different way of managing.

AE20 – Portugal – Sonia Borges

AE2O (Portugal) established Second Chance School in Matosinhos and EVS centre The Republic of the Imagination.

The main points of the workshops were:

- presentation of the NGO AE2O and its way of functioning in relation to the external environment (i.e. support from the City Hall and Ministry of Education)
- Second Chance School of Matosinhos as an example of a project build on the basis of the partnership between the NGO and public bodies in the field of education and social inclusion;
- discussion – non-formal education facing formal system (coexistence, conflict, recognition)
- presentation of the EVS centre "The Republic of the Imagination" – searching for partners

The Jerusalemite Youth Cultural Forum – Palestinian Authority – Mousa Abassi

Mousa presented information about how Youth Organisations operate in Palestine. He stated that in Palestine there are several NGOs working in different sectors mainly education, culture, youth and women's rights. The reality indicated that there is the need for more NGOs to target marginalized groups in society, like youth with talents and skills in addition to children with extraordinary skills. There are urgent needs to involve the families in the planning for the community and youth programs.

Mousa explained the mechanism of building and developing a new NGO. He said that first a steering committee has to be established (informally). Then the committee has to start discussing the different proposals for the NGOs working and the activities that might be activated under the potential organization. Normally NGOs follow 5 steps listed overleaf:

- A letter should be submitted to the Palestinian ministry of interior (the letter explains the mission and objectives of the particular NGO)
- A representative from the steering committee goes to the ministry to deal with the important forms and procedures to register the NGO (club or institution)
- The committee has to nominate a Director and President for the NGO for the upcoming two years
- The organization then starts looking for its premises, it's preferable that the location is not far from its target group - if applicable.
- The organization then starts marketing its programs to local and international NGOs and, parallel to this communicating with potential donors (local and international)
- There has to be seven board members in the organization and the members are elected after two year of establishment
- Three key individuals should identified in any organization (Treasurer, General Secretary and President or Director).

The Jerusalemite Youth Cultural Forum is a Palestinian NGOs located in Jerusalem, there are seven board members: a director, an administrative manager-assigned from the board- a treasurer, a cultural coordinator, a facilities coordinator , a public relation officer and an outside auditor. Mousa stated that he is the youth coordinator and trainer in this organization. He also trains people in the folkloric dance (dabkah) in addition to other topics such as leadership and communication skills.

There is no clear differentiation between NGOs and youth organizations in Palestine. All youth organisations are recognised as NGOs with different roles and duties. Other NGOs in various areas other than youth are directly or indirectly supported by the PNA Ministries. Youth organisations work under the umbrella of the Ministry of Youth and Sport. The Ministry plays a major role in drawing strategies for youth organizations in Palestine. There were different attempts to develop a Youth Policy and Strategy but there was no approval for it yet.

Mousa said that he hopes that through Our White Sea participants can exchange ideas and thoughts with partners from Europe and Mediterranean regions for the benefit of strengthening and developing an international youth policy that might be adopted by all participant countries.

3.7 Conclusions

The overall impression from the presentations and participant workshops is one of complexity and a sense of growth and development.

The relationship between NGOs and Local and National Government is seen as key to the success of NGOs; in some countries because of the funding provided and in others because of the controls in place. Registration of new organisations can be a long and drawn out process but the numbers of NGOs who persevere though the required bureaucracy in places such as Egypt is testimony to the commitment of those involved.

The changing nature of NGOs is also noteworthy: human rights, community driven projects and round table management are all indicators of a shift away from the earlier concepts of aid, support from outside and autocratic leadership. Partnership working is also a common theme in today's NGOs across the regions represented. Partnerships between NGOs and between NGOs and local or national authorities are growing. The benefits gained relate to influence, funding and management capacity. In order for partnerships to work, each partner need to understand and articulate clearly its own purpose, vision and values. The partnership can then develop its objectives which can be tested against the individual partner's needs and aspirations.

The power of NGOs to influence policy and practice was also highlighted throughout the presentations and discussions. Sharing best practice is perhaps the most common way in which NGOs use their influence. They are also regarded by many as a representative of grass roots opinion and a conduit for gathering ideas and information.

The intentions of this section of the "Our White Sea" programme were:

- to learn about different ways of managing
- be challenged about the way we manage our NGOs, and
- understand and appreciate the value of cooperating/collaborating/ networking with NGOs that are managed differently to mine.

The conversations and energy exhibited in the presentations, small workshops and over meals and coffee suggest that this learning, challenging, understanding and appreciating did take place. The real proof will be in the way the NGOs and their partnerships are managed in the future. The work in groups provided participants the possibility to better understand and experiment the different ways of working the NGOs in the Euro Mediterranean area and how these differences can have an impact on their future cooperation.

4

Overall Conference outcomes and conclusions

Overall Conference outcomes and conclusions

This conference brought together a great mix of people: young and old, experienced and inexperienced, operational and strategic thinkers, practitioners and academics and observers. They had a common interest in work with young people and each had influence in their own sphere.

The participants spent time considering elements of Youth Policy and the practice of managing youth NGOs. In a way they provided a snap shot of how things are. They shared best practice and they shared the challenges they face. Each person went away with some more information and (hopefully) greater understanding. There was a sense of recognising that whilst each situation was unique, each situation also had something in common with someone else somewhere in the represented regions.

Most people left with a sense of wanting more – be it more time to share best practice in general; or more time spent on involving young people in policy development; or more information about funding opportunities. But the programme covered a lot of ground. Formal presentations, discussions, visits, informal conversations each contributed to the experience. It may not be possible to evaluate the impact of each of these things in the long term, but experience says that the individual learning and contacts made will influence subtly over a period of years.

Appendices

Appendices

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