WORLD LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE
CLUB DE MADRID

The Shared Societies Project:
Leadership for Dialogue, Diversity and Social Cohesion

Building a world safe for difference

Replicable example of practice

Commitment VII

Ensure an education system that offers equal opportunity for developing the knowledge, skills, capacities and networks necessary for children to become productive, engaged members of society and that demonstrates a commitment to a shared society and educates children to understand and respect others.

Suggested Approach:

- Introduce a curriculum on pluralism, diversity and mutual understanding to be implemented in all schools as a full subject, including assessment. This would include developing an understanding of the benefits of social cohesion as a national vision and how individual behavior can promote or damage good community relations.

Commitment VIII

Initiate a process to encourage the creation of a shared vision of society at local and national level.

Suggested Approach:

- Instigate a project in schools and other institutions for young people to think about their society and their place in it and the place of other identity groups and also invite them to reflect on a question such as “What my country means to me”. This could use mediums such as art, drama, music, poetry, film, photography and story-telling.

Commitment IX

Promote respect, understanding and appreciation of cultural, religious and ethnic diversity and support local communities in exploring their identity, sharing their experiences with other identity groups and working together with those groups on common concerns.

Suggested Approaches:

- Encourage cultural activities that explore issues of concern about relationships between different identity groups.
- Initiate awareness programmes to encourage respect for difference. It should highlight the positive features of pluralism and diversity and the obligations of living in a shared society and building a shared future.
- Develop and promote the implementation of awareness programmes on the nature of racism and sectarianism and how they can be combated at an individual and group level throughout all levels of society.

Dutch National Youth Council's All Different, All Equal Youth- Campaign

Country: Netherlands

Background

- The Netherlands is a highly multicultural society and it has had problems with diversity and accompanying segregation of people in different areas of society.
- The challenges are being addressed in policies, in different departments of government and in various interest groups of civil society.
- One of the interest groups is youth. The Dutch National Youth Council is an umbrella organisation with different youth (and youth-led) member organisations. It has been active in the field of youth-empowerment on different subjects, with the aim of getting the youth involved in society and ensuring that their voice is heard.
- They try to engage the youth in different social issues with their slogan: "Think along, decide and participate"
- For a few years intercultural dialogue has been on the Youth Council's agenda and a large campaign, inspired by the European Council's all different, all equal campaign (ADAE) was set up to raise awareness on racism, discrimination and intolerance mainly amongst the youth in the Netherlands.

Goals

- Involving young people in thinking about the differences and similarities between the various ethnic and cultural groups in the Netherlands
- Helping young people to oppose all forms of discrimination and intolerance.
- Engaging youth from different educational, cultural, ethnic backgrounds, male and female in a dialogue, though not necessarily in a conversation-format.
- Raising awareness and giving young people a voice to express their opinion through different forms of cultural expression.
- Confronting youngsters with prejudice and ideas they might have about people belonging to other ethnic, racial, cultural or even gender groups.
- Using peer-to-peer education to give young people the opportunity to engage in a dialogue facilitated by themselves and teaching each other about the underlying prejudices that are inherent in attitudes towards people, and which we need to be aware of.

Method

- The project started in May 2006 and ended January 2008.
- The Dutch National Youth Council has a Board member responsible for international projects and in 2005 that Board member took responsibility for the initiative.
- The Campaign consists of a number of components. Raising awareness is most effective when components of the campaign are being organised parallel to each other.
- The school-tour is the largest element and most effectively in direct contact with the youngsters.
- The National Youth Council trains young workshop leaders to go to different schools to talk about the all different-all equal theme and play an 'ADAE' game about prejudice. This game can be found in the European Council's ADAE intercultural learning book http://www.hrea.org/erc/Library/secondary/different-equal-en.pdf or http://www.eycb.coe.int/edupack/default.htm
- The young workshop-leaders get allocated to different schools across the country to speak to the students.
- The National Youth Council worked in this campaign together with a large number of regional organisations in order to ensure that the workshops are applicable to the most recent situations arising in that region.
- The workshop has different elements, from which the teacher can choose beforehand through communication with the Youth Council. This ensures that the workshop coincides with the age and ability level of the children they visit.
- Material for the prejudice game, like a short video, need to be designed before going to a class and playing the game. However there are games in the handbook which do not need much material.
- The initiative has a presence at festivals where many young people are present. Often, other organisations are present and try to spread their message and ideals through flyers and posters.
- Debates are being organized in different places where young people engage in debate with politicians, celebrities and people active in civil society. The debates are often organised at festivals.
- Hiphop-battles/rap-battles are components of the campaign where young people are being challenged to battle on the ADAE theme.
- ADAE ambassadors have been appointed from public persons that are known and respected by most youngsters. In the Netherlands they have included the Moroccan-Dutch rapper Raymzter and the artist Pete Philly. The ambassador tries to be at the debates or other places where the campaign is physically present.
- The initiative uses multimedia, including the internet because they are the forms of communication with which young people feel most comfortable

- Young people are challenged to create and up-load a video where they show the best way to tackle intolerance and promote the message that discrimination is not relevant to this time.

Impact

- The initiative has been active at 10 big festivals and other smaller events, where actions were carried out and young people were encouraged to express their opinions on the ADAE-theme.
- 80 schools have been visited in the school-tour.
- The campaign received wide exposure through the collaboration with TMF (Dutch music television network) and 6pack (a Dutch television-program and group which are very well known among youth)
- 30 hip hop battles have been organized
- Thousands of young people have expressed how they are against racism, discrimination and intolerance.
- There has been significant participation by public figures whom youngsters look up to and relate to.
- Videos (max. 1 minute) have been submitted by young people in which they had to come up with a possible approach to counter the intolerance in society.
- The awareness of youth has been raised and a large group (dozens) of youngsters have submitted and carried out their plans to fight discrimination, racism and intolerance.

Establishing conditions

- The willingness of schools to cooperate with the school-tour is the most important condition

Comments

- Youth-led engagement is necessary for youth to participate and recognize themselves in these shared goals
- The reliance on volunteers is always a difficult task. This means that there is a need for establishing incentives for these young people to volunteer and stay committed.
- Getting into schools requires a large amount of time spent in establishing and maintaining contacts with the school and a large degree of time-management with respect to allocation of workshop-leaders to coincide with the school's agenda.
- The teacher needs to be in the class-room while the game is being played as he or she has the authority in case of disturbance.

- It has been possible to use existing tools, which are feasible, user-friendly and applicable in a wide range of schools in different countries.
- The use of the all different, all equal game shows that the continuance of a method that has been initiated by the European Council is itself an example of a best practice. It shows that using something that already has been developed by one organisation, institute or person can be complemented by the actions of another organisation which is more aware of the specific context and fits well into the situation.

Contact / References

- www.jeugdraad.nl
- www.livetogether.nu