



The Sparkle Project:

Working with young people
...reports from seven initiatives



Exchange & support networks
for the use of the Handbook
'Make change yourselves'
with young people in their communities



First published 2013

© interdiac 2013

All rights reserved. Apart from fair dealing for the purposes of review or criticism, research or private study, no part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electrical or mechanical means, now known or invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission from the publisher.

Publisher:

International Academy for Diaconia and Social Action, Central & Eastern Europe, o.p.s (interdiac)

Dukelská 264/5

737 01 Český Těšín

Czech Republic

E-mail: office@interdiac.eu

www.interdiac.eu

Phone: +420 558 764 341

Editor: Tony Addy

Layout: Infiniti art, s.r.o., Český Těšín

Printed in the Czech Republic by: Infiniti art, s.r.o., Český Těšín

ISBN 978-80-260-4833-6



CONTENTS

PREFACE , Janka Adameová	2
INTRODUCTION , Tony Addy	3
1. Community Based Projects with Young People	5
“LIVING HOPE” FOR PETROVKA, Nicole Borisuk	6
PARTICIPATION OF DISADVANTAGED YOUNG PEOPLE, Uliana Goncareenco	10
2. Working with Marginalised Young People	13
“SPARKLING COOK” - PROJECT IN MINSK, Catherine Evsukova	14
‘58th ACADEMY’, Elza Ginetsyan	20
YOUNG PEOPLE AS RESEARCHERS, Janis Boguzs	22
3. Church Based Work with Young People	25
ESTONIAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, (EELC) ASSOCIATION FOR WORK WITH CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE PROJECT, (AWCY) Teele Jänes	26
GERMAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CONGREGATION, Liubov Galimova	29
TEENAGE THEATRE PROJECT Viktor Szloboda	31
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	33

PREFACE

One of the most important priorities identified by the interdiac members is the growing marginalisation of young people and the need to develop new approaches to working with them and with communities affected by high levels of disadvantage and unemployment amongst children and young people. This was already a priority before the impact of the 'financial crisis' turned the situation for the worse.

The starting point for this specific project was an evaluation of existing experience in the network and the development of two training workshops in Tbilisi and Novi Sad. These formed the basis of the interdiac Handbook which was elaborated after the workshops with the participation of all those involved.

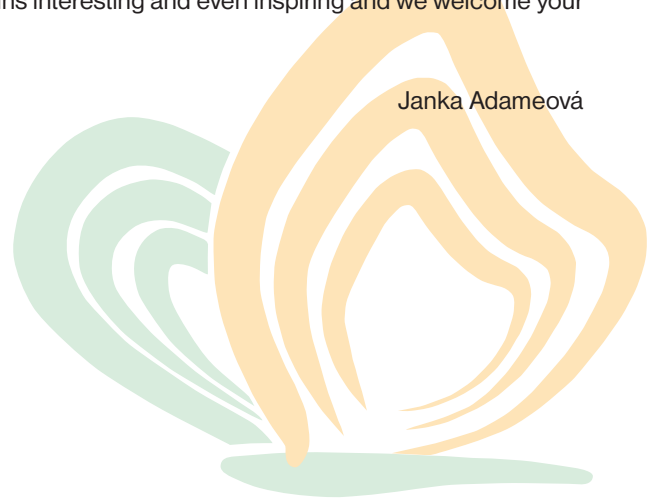
Having produced the Handbook and organised an international workshop in Yerevan, to develop the ideas for its use, it was decided to organise a further training programme related to work out the use of the Handbook in practice and also to facilitate its dissemination. In addition interdiac wanted to develop a statement on the ethics of both working with young people and using the Handbook.

The result was the 'Sparkle Project' formally known as *'Exchange & support networks for the use of the Handbook 'Make change yourselves' with young people in their communities'* which ran from July 2012 to June 2013. Two workshops were held, the first hosted by interdiac partner, Moldovan Christian Aid from 26th - 30th November 2012 and the second by interdiac partner, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia from 8th - 12th April 2013.

This project once again proved the value of the interdiac network and the importance of the participatory approach because the participants were very enthusiastic in using the Handbook and developing their local projects. For our part, interdiac will continue to focus one of our priority areas on work with marginalised and disadvantaged young people and the participants in this project will continue as part of the network.

We hope you find this booklet and the stories it contains interesting and even inspiring and we welcome your comments and feedback.

Janka Adameová



INTRODUCTION

The project stories collected in this book are derived from the work of participants in the unique 'Sparkle' project which aimed to develop the use of the interdiac Handbook, 'Make Change Yourself – Handbook for empowering young people in everyday life'. The project itself was organised with an introductory workshop in Moldova in November 2012 and a second workshop in Estonia in April 2013.

The first workshop introduced participants to the interdiac Handbook in an experiential way and then each participant (or in some case pair of participants) had to work out the tasks to be completed 'back home' in-between the workshops. The tasks included:

- Developing a concrete project or action using the approach advocated by the interdiac Handbook.
- Developing a process of increasing the use of the Handbook in their home context by creating a mini-network.
- Working on the statement of ethical orientation to working with young people.

In addition the participants worked on a practical paper to share an Ethical Orientation on Social Work and Work with Young People which was finalised after the Estonia workshop and which has already been published by interdiac (available from: office@interdiac.eu)

The whole process was organised in a participatory way with support for participants in their project work and the second workshop in Estonia brought together the results from the 'in-between' period and continued the development work on the three 'main lines'. The formal project is now finished with the various publications but interdiac as a network based academy continues in communication with the participants as they develop their work in their respective contexts.

One very challenging aspect of the Sparkle project was that it comprised such a diverse group of participants. Some were young volunteers working in their own contexts with varying levels of experience and others were professionals in youth, social or pastoral work. In addition, for some the Handbook was a new resource, whereas one had been involved in its writing and production. There was also a wide range of expertise apart from that in working with young people, including research and fine arts for example.

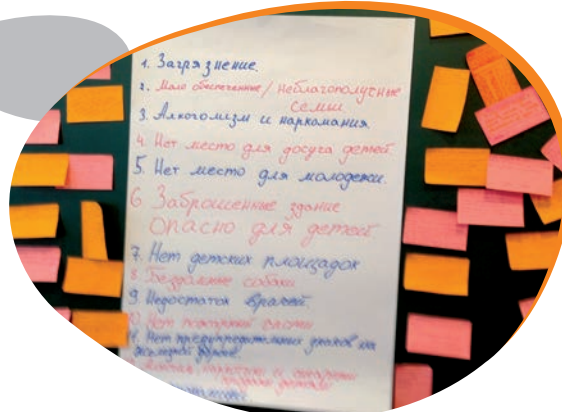
The interdiac Handbook takes an unusual approach to learning because the main focus is not on tools (although it contains tools) or on methods (although several methods are described). The approach is to build on the biography and experience of the learner whether a paid or unpaid worker (or perhaps a disadvantaged young person). Biography provides the basis for developing motivation and expectation and also contains important 'resources' for life and work. On the basis of this personal work, the Handbook advocates a human-ecological approach to analysing personal and group situations and a participatory approach to community or group work. In the process of the project we found that it takes time to appreciate and implement this novel approach which does not start with a prescriptive idea of the outcomes of youth work. Traditional

service models are deeply embedded in culture and even without training or experience people tend to have an already existing approach to social and youth work which the interdiac approach aims to transform.

In the light of these remarks we can now turn to the stories presented in this booklet! They are based on the papers that the participants prepared for the workshop in Estonia and represent 'work in progress'. As already described, during the period December to April participants began to develop their own work and document their learning. The papers included here are 'actual practice papers' which give a snapshot picture of each participant (or pair of participants) context and actions at a particular point in time. Each person (and their background organisation) is continuing to develop their project and to promote the Handbook. Other follow up tasks which group members have started include translating the Handbook into Russian so it can be used in more contexts. And maybe we could look forward to a future project booklet describing the next phase of development of these projects!



Community Based Projects with Young People



“LIVING HOPE” FOR PETROVKA, UKRAINE

NICOLE BORISUK

Living Hope is a member organisation of interdiac and Nicole Borisuk was part of the team which produced the Handbook ‘Make Change Yourselves’. So far their experience has been in urban neighbourhoods in Odessa, doing long term work with marginalised young people. In this project, ‘Living Hope’ began to develop a new centre in a small village outside Odessa. Key resource people are the young people from the village and from the existing centres in Odessa.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

My name is Nicole Borisuk and I am the leader of a Ukrainian based NGO called “Living Hope” which is working for and with children, young people and families who are facing challenging life circumstances or exclusion. Born and educated in Germany, I decided in 1996 to move to Ukraine dreaming to establish a professional and community based support system for children in need. Learning by doing, reflecting on what was done and not being afraid of new methods and approaches describe the way we have developed our ministry over the years. What started with only two motivated volunteers grew into an NGO running two day care centres in Odessa visited by up to 80 children and young people daily.

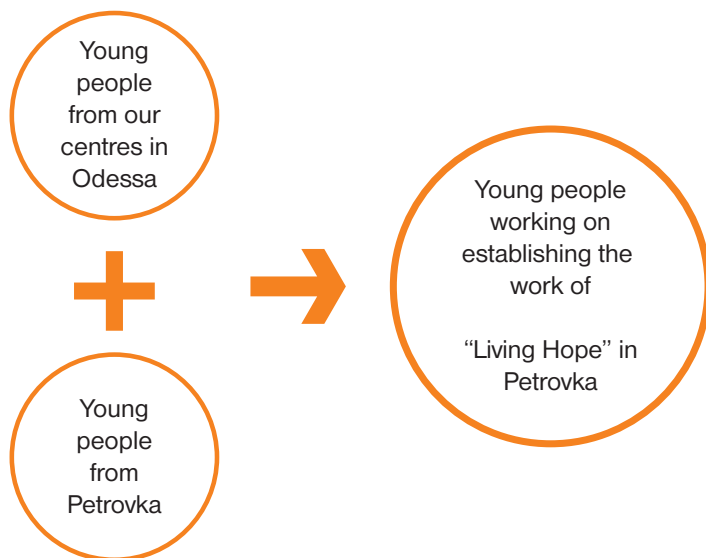
Participation and inclusion of all people connected to “Living Hope” are our key approaches. We want to motivate and teach even children that engagement in community work adds a great value to their personal development and to the development of the context where they live in.

Young people in Ukraine nowadays face a multitude of economic, social and ideological problems. The increasing injustice and inequality of possibilities challenges especially the younger generation in disadvantaged urban and rural areas.

Encouraged by the regional government of Odessa and by the positive results which are obvious in the life of the young people that have grown up in the Living Hope day care centres, “Living Hope” decided to start a third centre in a small settlement 60 km north east of Odessa called “PETROVKA”. The “Sparkle Project” served as a starting point for the new project, which will be opened in autumn 2013 and which has involved young people from the very beginning.

GOALS

After the breakdown of the Soviet Union and the following transition process, the social, economic and educational system of Ukraine changed radically. Especially rural places such as Petrovka experienced a shock wave of unemployment and the breakdown of medical and social institutions as well as the closure of all after school activities for children and young people. Very slowly new models of social activities are being introduced to the changed reality.



With our project we aim to remove the gap between young people living in urban context and young people living in rural areas and initiate common activities.

Furthermore we wanted to learn from the youngsters living in Petrovka about their settlement, because we understand that they are experts of their own context.

Another aim we always have is to give to the younger generation opportunities to play an active part in their community and create places for volunteering in local and international contexts.

Within our "Sparkle Project" we had the goal of involving the local young people in analysing the local context, defining issues and finding solutions for the problems in their settlement. We wanted to teach them the basic project planning and implementation skills by practical example.

It was very important to us to not only plan and analyse on a theoretical level but take a step towards practical tasks and common activities, showing that change takes place as soon as we become active ourselves.

Encouraging youngsters, creating a safe environment for learning and sharing ideas as well as facilitating the process of getting them involved in local projects were key goals for our project.

METHODS AND RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

The “Sparkle project” included 4 meetings with the local young people in Petrovka. For the preparation of the meetings we used the interdiac Handbook “Make Change Yourself”, which gave us a lot of practical advice and ideas for the planned activities.

The first two meetings served as a theoretical platform and had the aims of getting to know each other and learning about the context from the local young people. I was accompanied by young volunteers from our Odessa centres in these and other meetings.

After an icebreaker introduction game which helped to create an open and informal atmosphere we divided the group in pairs and asked the 30 young people to define the “most serious or obvious problems in their place today”. The results were shared with the group.

The top ten issues defined by the group were the following:

Pollution on the environment

Poor and dysfunctional families

Alcoholism and drug addiction

No meeting place for young people/ no place for children

Deserted buildings dangerous for playing kids

No or too less playgrounds

Homeless dogs

Lack of doctors/ no fire station/ no warning signs at the railway station

Alcohol, cigarettes and drugs sold even to children

As a follow up task the youngsters were asked to document these issues by photo and video, so we could also have a record of the changes after we had done some work. The pictures of “Petrovka before” are available on our web site (www.hope4kids.com.ua).

Taking these materials as a basis for our further work, at our second meeting, which already involved youngsters from both local public schools, we thought together about “how we can tackle the concrete issues” and in which mini-project each young person would be willing to join. A great wall full of ideas was the result of this afternoon.

The next two activities had the goal of showing that with simple practical work we already can change the world around us, but if we are only talking nothing will really change. Youth work always has to be concrete and show some immediate results in order to keep the youngsters motivated.

One day we did a day of practical work at the future day care centre removing old things and rubbish from the rooms. The second time we organized a community work day for the group attended by 12 young people from Petrovka and Odessa where we cleaned up an outside public area and painted the fence.



PARTICIPATION OF DISADVANTAGED YOUNG PEOPLE, CHISINAU REGION, MOLDOVA

ULIANA GONCEARENCO

Moldovan Christian Aid is a member organisation of interdiac which has had a focus on community development strategies which was included in the interdiac Handbook. This project continued in the same direction by involving Christian young people in several localities around Chisinau in developing a response to the fact that in rural areas young people lack the facilities and resources. It is hoped that the project, which had good results could be continued in more remote rural areas in the north of the country.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

My name is Uliana Goncarencu and I work for "Moldovan Christian Aid" which is an NGO based in Moldova. Within the organization I have always enjoyed working with young people because they have great potential to change things for the better. The youngsters represent a unique force within the country. The investment that the state grants to our young people will bear fruits in time. This is one reason why I consider the youngsters to be an important focus of my work. By empowering and active involvement in social life through voluntary work, our society will be transformed and we will have a better world.

Youngsters need to be trained and informed in order to reach high intellectual peaks. They need a person to follow - they need a mentor. Also, to reach success, exchange of experience, both on local and international level is welcome. Thus, it would be very nice to have in each locality a small group of youngsters trained and educated in order to become trainers in their communities.

GOALS AND RECEPTION OF THE PROJECT

My project tries to stimulate participation among Christian young people coming from socially vulnerable families from the north part of Moldova. The major purpose is to present the working methods from the interdiac Handbook to active young people within the rural context and to stimulate them to work in community

and use the methods in their future activities. After communicating with the young people and presenting the Handbook, all together they came to the conclusion that it should be presented within the local schools and even it should be used to support the creation of youth centres in each school in the rural areas, where young people, whatever their background, could meet and communicate.

Motivating the youngsters was not so difficult. Poverty, mass migration, and other social issues affect young people from all rural areas of Moldova. Thus, simply communicating with them and offering alternatives and the proper impulse, leads the young people to understand the need to work together in order to build their more beautiful future.

After presenting the project idea and the working methods described in the Handbook, the youngsters became very enthusiastic. It is significant to mention that unfortunately, in rural areas of Moldova there is no direct access to information, thus it is important to use open and democratic approaches to practice which shares information and gives access to further information resources. This is the reason why proper education and the correct leading of the young people is a key task. By the way, in rural areas not only the youngsters but also the adults are eager for new information and projects.

METHODS

I used the following methods during my work:

- *The life time-line which* is a simple tool for showing the process of a person's development and for marking the important influences which shape the motivation and expectations for work in the social and diaconal field.
- *Social photography*, where the group of youngsters I have worked with explored their environment, community. The young people chose to make social photo project on the overall topic of Life in the Rural Community. The theme can be specified in advance or it can be open. The method is flexible and it can be used in youth work for various purposes, for example, participatory research and reporting, or for embarking on creative work that enables the youth to explore their creativity and surroundings in a more vivid and unusual manner. In other words, the young people are able to develop on their learning and skills through such visual expression.

Also, many other games and activities from the Handbook were translated and presented to the youngsters. It is important to mentioning that they came with the initiative to change some details according to their context. They have also discovered some games similar to the ones they used to play.

RESULTS

In the project the aim was to conduct three youth workshops. The working plan was to create a future perspective for the young people. It was also agreed to create a support group at the community level for young people who feel alone, and in the future to create support groups in and between all localities participating in workshops.

For me personally the project had a positive impact, I expected that there would be many difficulties! But there was a positive feedback and because the young people desire to change their lives, they were very active.

OBSTACLES

Of course there were obstacles but they were more financial. Due to financial barriers all projects being conducted at the moment are concentrated in Chisinau and its suburbs. It is very difficult to get to the northern regions, because of poor roads and the cost of the transportation. The communication using social networks is a solution, but for this communication to be effective it must include several projects in those regions. I think we should draw attention at all levels to the fact that the quality of life in remote rural areas should to be at the same level as that in the centre of the country.



Working with Marginalised Young People



“SPARKLING COOK” - PROJECT IN MINSK, BELORUS

CATHERINE EVSUKOVA

Belarus Orthodox Youth Union has a long track record of social service work and wanted to use the Interdiac Handbook to promote new work with youngsters living in orphanages.

Catherine Evsukova writes that they focussed on the fact that usually when they leave the orphanage the young people do not have even the everyday life skills to survive. They used cooking together as an entry point to this problem and to building relationships of trust.

The project improved the skills and confidence of the young people and will be continued.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The project “Sparkling Cook” has been arranged and carried out by the mutual power of volunteers belonging to the Belarus Orthodox Youth Union. The Union has for many years successfully united dozens of active young people ready to show initiative and be organizers and implementers of various social projects. It’s generally known that ‘addiction’ to learning and communication is inherent to almost all youth representatives. In our project the working groups are commonly introduced by the students and young workers (18-28 years old), who are full of fresh ideas and they are encouraged to implement them in the wide field of helpful social actions and they are undoubtedly at the best age for working with teens.

I would say that in Belarus there is one huge social direction capable of bringing volunteers together and that is orphans. According to the latest data, there are around 25 000 orphans in the territory of Belarus, 27% of them are kept in the homes and orphanages. We are aware of that our orphans are kept mostly in good conditions, provided with all vital practical necessities, but it is evident that they are lacking of attention, love, care and partnership. The government and staff are not able to cover all the children’s needs in communication and warm feelings essential for personal formation.

Being young ourselves, we aspired to using our initial knowledge, skills and ideas and applying them to working with various kinds of youth. I would say that in our project we have an ‘image’ of a volunteer – a female volunteer is commonly a student whose study is related to medicine, psychology, pedagogy, human sciences and, at the same time male volunteers are mostly working people, who are good in technology and computer

science. In general the volunteers' motivation in our case is determined by the Christian precept about helping the neighbour; this is especially clear if you deal with defenceless children.

We made a decision to start with a series of short-term programmes dedicated to the socialization of orphans.

We started with the project "Sparkling Cook" based on Orphanage N7, Minsk, Belarus; the group we selected consists of orphans between the ages of 12 and 15 years. The number of participants was set at 12 children and it was agreed that the meetings would be every two weeks. The project was carried out during the period February-April 2013.

GOALS AND FIRST STEPS

From the first steps of working on the project we have realized that we had to make it attractive and useful both for orphans and for volunteers. That is why we took into consideration both sides interests and motivations. Young volunteers are 'personalities' who can become a close friend, a comrade and good example for each orphan we are starting to work with. That made us very attentive in selecting youngsters who were going to be a part of the working group. The main characteristics are: responsibility, reliability, openness, honesty and affection for children.

The motivations of volunteers are sometimes also shaped by the strong intention of starting their own families and in this case they were the following:

1. To make orphans feel happy and needed;
2. To share ideas, skills, heartfelt warmth and care with lonely children free of charge;
3. To try themselves as "parents" (to distribute roles on the right way in their own future families);
4. Meet like-minded persons;
5. To change their activity after hard working (learning) day;
6. To develop communication skills and pastime with children.

Orphans are especially sensitive to betrayal, inconstancy and lying, so we had to win their trust and assure them that we would not disappoint their hope and belief. This was the main point of extra care during the whole period of the project implementation.

The main idea of the project was to teach the children one of the most useful skills – cooking. The reason is that normally, they get the food at the canteen and when leaving the orphanage at the age of 18, they have no idea what to do with the money when they get to the supermarket.

They buy products without a clear planning what to prepare and how to divide their allowance for 30 days

of the month. And of course these are mostly spaghetti, potatoes bread and milk – they have no idea about healthy food and tips for preparing tasty and useful recipes.

Moreover, there is no culture of eating. It is a canteen without beautiful table layout (table cloth, napkins, candles etc.). The groups of kids gather together according to the timetable. There is no idea of beauty to share the food you cooked with your friends or colleagues.

It is also very important to see the good characteristics in other people's work – not to be concentrated on yourself or your stereotypes about other person. So, the project aimed to encourage the children to evaluate how each group member was successful in doing his or her job and praise each other or laugh if something goes a bit wrong.

In addition, the cooking and shopping process can be done in time only under condition that the roles are well distributed (especially when you have 12 workshop participants). Therefore, before each workshop the kids will distribute the responsibilities and after each workshop they make common assessment.

Thus, the project is aimed at teaching the kids how to:

1. plan the shopping;
2. find inexpensive and healthy recipes;
3. cook together healthy food;
4. serve the table;
5. enjoy the meal together;
6. clean the dishes together;
7. look at the best skills of each participant – and show appreciation ;
8. distribute the responsibilities for next time.



TIME PLAN AND LOGISTICS

Month	Activity	Methods
January	Getting all the necessary approvals from the Head of the orphanage N7 Discussing the programme with the group master	Individual preparatory work
February	Introductory meeting with the children: - explaining the idea of the cooking course, - getting the kids interested, - receiving the feedback and wishes (what they dream to cook, which experience they already had) 1 st Cooking meeting (choosing the recipes, going to the supermarket, preparing the food, sharing the meal together)	Group work Assessment
March	2 nd and 3 rd Cooking meetings During the 3 rd Cooking meeting: -discussion about the food market for the Annunciation (7th of April) - choosing together the best recipes (to make a stand at the market and get the people taste the food that kids have prepared)	Dice Evaluation
April	4 th Cooking meeting – dedicated to the Annunciation market Participation in the market (for the kids to get appreciation for the work they have done and an inspiration to cook more)	Storytelling

METHODS

Making the project and implementing it we have relied on interdiac Handbook and in particular the following ideas:

Group work – elaborating group rules together (deciding together what we do as a team, developing necessary skills for team activities, building trust and common vision)

Assessment – discussing steps taken, skills improved, problems met, difficulties overcome. For the first meetings it was extremely difficult to evaluate the results of the cooking meeting and the interdiac proposals from the Handbook were useful for our work:

- Weather Forecast Evaluation;
- The Rainbow Evaluation;
- Onion Evaluation;
- Body Evaluation;
- Dartboard Evaluation;
- Scale Evaluation;
- Net-work Evaluation;
- Dice Evaluation – (rolling the dice and finishing the sentence under the number:
 - 1= I feel...
 - 2= I would like to wish something to somebody...
 - 3= I would like to thank somebody for something...
 - 4= I learnt...
 - 5= I understood...
 - 6= I would like to say ...)
- Storytelling – creating the story for our group by choosing the symbolic animals (donkey, giraffe, chameleon, lion etc).

RESULTS

The project was successful with unexpectedly visible results. After 3 month of mutual work orphans and volunteers managed to build warm and confidential relations. The children became more opened, sociable and balanced. The tutors noticed that the kids are more organised and independent. Undoubtedly we hope the results of the “Sparkling Cook” project will be useful for orphans after they graduate, when they will have to be independent and to care about their families.

As it was planned before, in case the project would succeed, there are network-building opportunities in Belarusian cities of Gomel and Grodno. Two orthodox brotherhoods are working with orphans there for a long time already. The “Sparkling Cook” project was presented and discussed with the youth brotherhood leaders responsible for social work. Consequently, experience will be shared and cooking workshops, implementing the Handbook methods, will be introduced in the orphanages of Gomel and Grodno.

OBSTACLES

The modern orphanage system of bringing up children in boarding schools in Belarus doesn't inspire the development of individual qualities, and finally orphans don't have any idea about their place in the world. They are lacking the ability to create relations with adult people, they have no models of behaviour and they are unable to make reliable choices. As orphans are under strict control and supervision, they lack the common skills for achievement of success and are in need of permanent outside approval and praise. But we managed to overcome almost all of them, due to perseverance and commitment of the volunteers.

From the other side the biggest administrative obstacles while carrying out the project were the following:

1. Reluctance of the local authorities to contribute,
2. Lack of faith and positive look-out in relation to volunteer and church organizations,
3. Stereotyped public way of thinking.



‘58TH ACADEMY’, GYUMRI, ARMENIA

ELZA GINETSYAN

In Gyumri there is a social centre of the Diocese of the Armenian Orthodox Church, which is linked to interdiac member, the Armenia Round Table. This project was developed by one young volunteer from that centre who used her skills in art and her creativity to build a project with other students based on creative arts. They wanted to work in a different way with children from a social care centre and Elza Ginetsyan describes how everyone learnt from this experience!

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

My name is Elza Ginetsyan and I'm from Gyumri, Armenia. I'm a 20 year old student. My project was about art and it was a very important possibility for me to realize it in my hometown, Gyumri. The aim of the project is to bring children from the Social Care Centre in the 58th District of Gyumri together with students from the University of Arts to give the children with fewer opportunities the chance to broaden their cultural horizon. The children are between 7 and 16 years of age, with different skills and full of energy.

GOALS

The children from the Social Care Centre are full of energy but they have very few possibilities to use their energy in a creative way. The “58th Academy” aimed to select a small group of children from the Social Care Centre who are willing to join a culture experiment. Every child will get together with one student from the University of Arts in Gyumri. In this way they would have the possibility to get into close contact and the students will act like mentors for their partner child. The ‘pairs’ should meet in workshops held once or twice a week in the University and develop a creative process together.

METHODS

Motivation was a key issue for us because it meant that we had to find what motivated young people (students) to be involved in youth work and especially in cultural projects. Also we used the Handbook for

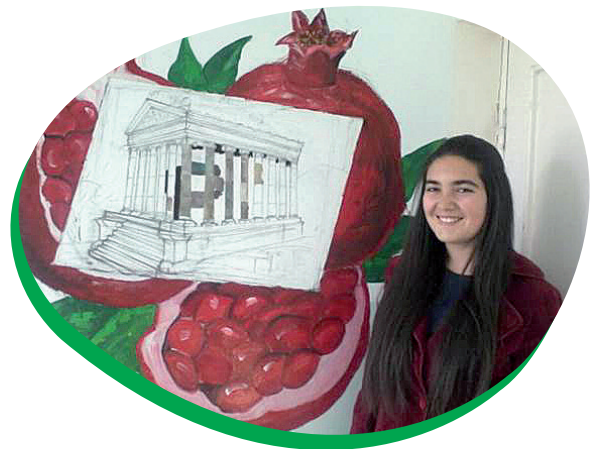
approaches to motivation of the children, working with groups and participation as well as many other different other methods from the Handbook!

RESULTS

It is rather difficult to work with young people and during this project I developed myself, improved my skills and knowledge of how to work with young people. From the side of participants, it is very interesting for them, because they didn't have such opportunities before, to work with young people and to support them in drawing, painting, creating sculptures, and taking photos etc.

OBSTACLES

The greatest obstacle for me was to find money. To realize the project we needed some materials and for buying materials we need some money! The second obstacle to overcome was finding how to motivate and involve students from Art Academy to participate in the project, because as they all are students they feel they haven't any free time.



YOUNG PEOPLE AS RESEARCHERS, RIGA, LATVIA

JANIS BOGUZS

This project takes an innovative approach to working with unemployed young people by creating a project where young people learn research skills. The research topic is related to organising and financing a small NGO. Janis Boguzs describes how this win-win process produced knowledge for the NGO, which could also be used more widely. It also developed skills and gave experience to the young people which they could use in searching a study or working place. Furthermore, it is a contribution to building a democratic society.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The motivation of the association “Social Integration Society” (SIB) is to find out the best financing models for its work by involving the target groups (for example unemployed young people) in the research. The objective of the project is to discover the working principles of non-governmental organisations in the fields of youth and social work and to clarify the principles for acquiring and effective spending of financial resources. On the other hand, the project is an opportunity for young people to learn more about researching by organising this research and thereby becoming young researchers. As the results will be published in a special Handbook, thereby the young researchers will share their work and experience with those society members, who are interested in a nongovernmental sector work. The project is financed by the European Union programme Youth in Action.

GOALS

The main goal of the SIB in starting the project was to gather the necessary data for diversifying and intensifying its ability to attract resources for its work. On the other hand, young persons, especially those, who are unemployed, are one of the association’s main target groups. The project was an opportunity to develop the research skills of the involved young persons and thereby develop their opportunities in the labour market.

In addition, association is planning to continue the research after the project, so it will have an access to skilled and motivated personnel.

As it turned out, the young persons involved were interested in developing their research skills to improve their opportunities in the labour market as well. At the same time, most of them were planning to start their studies in the higher education institutions, so the skills gained could be useful for better results there. The young people admitted that they are interested in the final output – the Handbook as well, because through that they can give their investment in the development of a democratic society in Latvia.

METHODS

Generally the methods we used included: individual work, group work, brainstorming, discussions, presentations, evaluation, education progress diary, mentoring, simulation games, organisation gallery, introduction games and group forming games.

The interdiac Handbook and related seminars were found to be a great support during the preparation phase of the project. To update the expected outcomes (mainly competences) and working methods, the Motivation – Expected Outcome – Methods and Tools chain (individually and then in group) were used during the preparation phase. In addition a similar evaluation was done by the support person (individually) to update the methods and tools, in order to help us to achieve the expected results. Individual and group learning diaries, widely used by interdiac in their seminars, were introduced to the team as one of the most effective tools for evaluation process. In addition the CD attached to the Handbook encouraged organising introduction, ice-breaking and group forming games in order to make the team members identify more closely with the project and to improve working together. They might be useful tool for overcoming the obstacles, described below.

The further stages of the project will include group research, where the interdiac Handbook might be a useful tool for more effective results.

RESULTS

The project is targeted to develop individual and group research skills of the involved young persons. The skills can be used in the labour market, further studies as well as other SIB activities. Besides other competences are going to be team work, presentation, understanding NGO management and economics, presentation skills.

The team leader, who developed the project, will learn the same skills as other participants. In addition, he will develop the understanding of working with the target group members instead of working for the target group.

OBSTACLES

The main obstacles were related to the target of the project and SIB: how to integrate the young persons in the labour market. Already during the preparation phase some of the team members started to work, so they reported they might go out of the project. Furthermore, according to the previous SIB experience, the whole team can change during the project. Therefore we have planned evaluation and further planning activities after each stage of the project. In addition all the materials of informal learning are saved to be shared with the new project members, if there will be any.



Church Based Work with Young People



ESTONIAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, (EELC) ASSOCIATION FOR WORK WITH CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE PROJECT, (AWCY)

TEELE JÄNES

This project aims to develop a national strategy for the church's work with young people in Estonia. The church is a member of interdiac and decided to incorporate the interdiac Handbook into its strategy. Teela Jänes describes how during the period of the Sparkle Project the foundation was laid for this project which will continue for future by creating new initiatives with and for young people in Estonia.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

My name is Teele Jänes; I am a youth worker in EELC Holy Spirit Church in Tallinn. Eha Kraft and Triin Salmu are leading the AWCY project in which I am participating as a volunteer. The AWCY board is responsible for seeing through the project and all the related events. The AWCY project is called "Developing support of management and capacity-building for AWCY" and it was actively planned during the 'Sparkle Project'.

The aim of this project is to increase the management capacity and development of AWCY. Further goals are to increase awareness of AWCY's work among the members of this association, among the churches and the local authority youth work specialists.

GOALS

AWCY aims to make the transmission and sharing of information more effective, in order to increase members' activity. As a result of the project we aim to have a written development plan, more active involvement in the association from our members, increasing cooperation between congregations and AWCY and increasing youth involvement in the local community. The target groups are the members of AWCY, members of EELC, young people who live in EELC deaneries and local authority youth work specialists.

METHODS

We have a list of 262 young people who are members of EELC AWCY all over Estonia and who we are using as the basis of our network.



Map of EELC deaneries in Estonia.

We are planning to introduce the interdiac Handbook during the 12 meetings in deaneries and the Handbook will also be introduced to the youth leaders in EELC training course in September 2013. Meetings with young people, local authorities, in open youth centres are planned to be held between June 2013 and February 2014. A summary of results, which will be compiled into the new development strategy, mission and vision (2015-2019) are planned to be produced in the last stages of the project. There will be also media coverage (social networks, Christian Media (newspaper, magazine), and we will be contacting congregations by e-mail, phone.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Members of AWCY all over Estonia will be better informed about the work and motivated to implement the new strategy. Volunteers will also receive valuable work experience which young people need. All Lutheran church young people will have a possibility to participate in relevant youth work and events in their own area and local congregations will be better informed about the youth work possibilities in church.

Local community members, including local authorities when participating in the discussions, will find out about the church youth work. Listening to the young people they may find out how the church youth can be more engaged in the community. Joint projects connect church with the local community and local authorities with the life of the congregation could be developed.

This format if successful will also be used in the future development of the AWCY.

POSSIBLE OBSTACLES

These are only hypothetical as the project is still in its early stages. This is a large project involving many people and including many specific training sessions which are required by law to achieve maximum results. The main possible obstacle could be low numbers of local young people or AWCY members participating and the lack of cooperation on behalf of local authority representatives and governmental youth workers.



GERMAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CONGREGATION, DNEPROPETROVSK, UKRAINE

LIUBOV GALIMOVA

Dnepropetrovsk was a closed city in Soviet times and all churches were closed. Slowly, the Lutheran Church has been rebuilding its life in a context where it is almost unknown amongst the local population. St. Katherina congregation is a very welcoming, homely place and even though resources are tiny, many people come for help. Through its 'open door' policy many people also from minorities – especially young people - find a welcome there. The 'Sparkle Project' was a start in the process of learning for this work and from these beginnings as Liubov Galimova describes, the work will be developed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

I am working in the Congregation of the German Evangelical-Lutheran Church of St. Katharina in Dnepropetrovsk. The church and congregation house of St. Katharina is situated on the central avenue of the city near to the railway and bus stations. Every day many people are coming to the church with their problems. They want to get different kind of help: some need food and clothes; others request counselling, prayer, or need just to talk. Some are in trouble – they need money to buy a ticket to reach home or cannot find job. Many of them are young people who appear in a difficult life situation.

Once a week a special team prepares food and second-hand clothes for these people, they also try to make friendly contacts with them, to understand their real problems.

OVERALL GOALS

We want to help people who are in trouble meeting their needs especially for their 'daily bread' and to give them hope. We would like to help them change their life situation. Our basic understanding is that to make a deeper change in life they need to know Jesus and that this will lead to the most important changes in life. On the other hand, when the young people come their basic idea is that they need to have money and want a happy life. Our congregation is bridge to and between many people.

METHODS

We base our work on this text: "Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? (James. 2:15-16) We start by aiming to satisfy their first needs and then we aim to empower them to change their life.

As a result of the 'Sparkle' project we will now focus our activity on working with disadvantaged young people, developing the day centre and working with our two international young volunteers. In practice we want to:

- Develop more personal work with young people;
- Work for more participation by young people in the life of the congregation;
- Develop more collaborative work with rehabilitation centres;
- Involve more people in our project as co-workers.

RESULTS

The first result is visible: at the day they come to us – they are not hungry, they have got new clothes and have hope. But next day they are coming once more with the same problems.

We can define the following groups of people:

- those, who came from villages to the city to get job and were cheated;
- those, who became homeless for different reasons;
- those, who are mentally ill, or who have alcohol and/or drug problems.

Very often we find there are at least these 3 problems in 1 person.

OBSTACLES

For people who are homeless and/or have the problem of alcohol or drug addiction we can at least advise a rehabilitation centre with which we are in contact. But many people are just mentally ill and we don't know in what way we can help them with our limited skills and resources.

TEENAGE THEATHER PROJECT, CALVARY CHAPE, BACKA TOPOLA, SERBIA

VIKTOR SZLOBODA

This project is the imaginative initiative of one member of a local church, who from his own experience, understood something about the problems facing children and young people from a disadvantaged or disrupted background. The project combines confidence building through relationships, developing creativity and also integrating a spiritual dimension. Viktor Szloboda describes how the project developed and pin points some important learning for himself as well as the young people.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

My name is Viktor Szloboda. I teach in the Sunday school for teenagers in Calvary Chapel, Backa Topola, Serbia and I was in contact with marginalised kids from a nearby village. These children are basically from 'dysfunctional' families, they have negative self-image and they have lost hope in the future. I was previously going through the same kind of battle myself, fighting with my bad self-image and I remembered how much playing theatre helped me to gain self-confidence. I thought that giving the young people an opportunity for acting would help them to understand how much capability they have. This is why I invited them to form a Teenage Theatre.

GOALS

The main goal of the project was to strengthen marginalised teenagers self-esteem through acting (teenager's theatre), so that they would become more self-confident, and know that they are able to reach success if they endure. The main goal had three sides: to strengthen their self-esteem, to teach them the Gospel, and also to help them to tell the story of the Gospel to others. My expectation was that they would understand it is not mainly about their abilities, but much more about their endurance. By endurance they can reach a success, which can help them to gain a better picture of themselves.

The young people were happy that during a long cold winter they had a place where they found acceptance and could have fun away from their homes.

METHODS

In this project I have found the participatory method to be very useful. I have just shared my ideas of the theatre, and the kids have put together their ideas about story and also about the way it should look on the stage. The story they wrote was reflecting their lives, and it was about how God can help someone whose life is similar to theirs.

RESULTS

These kids have not just put together a scene, but they wrote together over a time of at least two months, which by itself is a great success! Nevertheless some of them wanted to give up and leave several times. The teenagers were stepping into some roles that were not really comfortable for them, which means that they had stepped out of their comfort zone. After showing the play in the church one girl decided to join another acting group, which is very courageous step for her. There are more results which are not detectable so far. Things they have learned about their capability, about acting, about teamwork, endurance, etc. are having a continuous effect on their behaviour and thinking.

During the evaluation session some of the kids said that they have learned better behaviour but it also happened that some of them said that they learnt nothing during this period. However, one of these youngsters also said he was having new ideas for the future.

From this project I have learned not to have big expectations from these kids. Also that success sometimes needs to be defined differently than we think. In this case, with these kids even though some of them wanted to give up and leave the group, they still came back and finished the task they had accepted.

OBSTACLES

As I was working in this project mainly by myself, sometimes it was extremely hard. This forced me to invite people to help. Teamwork is of great importance and is a support. The kids were challenged to my patience and have taught me how to think and be one step ahead of any so-called 'troublemakers'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On behalf of interdiac, I would like to thank the partner organisations and also the leadership team for the seminars for their involvement in organising and leading the seminars. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the participants for their enthusiasm and engagement with the project and especially with their projects and the young people with who they work.

The following people and project partner organisations participated in the process:

Avo Üprus, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Department of Diaconia, Estonia

Catherina Evsukova, Interchurch Mission Christian Social service, Belorussia

Daniela Bordeianu, Moldovan Christian Aid, Moldova

Eha Kraft, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Department of Diaconia, Estonia

Elza Ginetsyan, Armenia Inter-Church Charitable Round Table Foundation, Armenia

Giorgi Tavartkiladze, Georgian Association for Psycho-Social Aid NDOBA, Georgia

Gevorg Grigoryan, Armenia Inter-Church Charitable Round Table Foundation, Armenia

Herman Kalmus, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Estonia

Janis Bogus, Social Integration Society, Latvia

Kristjan Luhamets, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Estonia

Lilia Bulat, Moldovan Christian Aid, Moldova

Liubov Galimova, Congregation of German Evangelical – Lutheran church St. Katherina church in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine

Liudmila Kanash, Interchurch Mission Christian Social service, Belorussia

Mati Sinisaar, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Department of Diaconia, Estonia

Natalia Matei, Moldovan Christian Aid, Moldova

Nicole Borisuk, Living Hope, Ukraine

Olesja Golenko, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Department of Diaconia, Estonia

Ricards Stefans, Social Integration Society, Latvia

Roman Citac, Moldovan Christian Aid, Moldova

Sergei Maschewski, Evangelical – Lutheran church congregation St. Catherina, Ukraine

Teele Jänes, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Department of Diaconia, Estonia

Teona Sukhiashvili, Georgian Association for Psycho-Social Aid NDOBA, Georgia

Uliana Goncareenco, Moldovan Christian Aid, Moldova

Ulla Siirto, Diak, Finland

Veronica Boboc, Moldovan Christian Aid, Moldova

Viktor Szloboda, Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation, Serbia

Janka Adameová
interdiac Director



Notes:

Notes:



**International Academy for Diaconia
and Social Action,
Central and Eastern Europe, o.p.s**



Education and Culture DG

'Youth in Action' Programme



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

interdiac contact information

Street Address

Mezinárodní akademie pro diakonii a sociální činnost,
střední a východní Evropa, o.p.s, **interdiac**
Dukelská 264/5, 737 01 Český Těšín, Czech Republic

Phone

+420 558 764 341

E-mail

office@interdiac.eu

www.interdiac.eu