



Separated Children in Europe Programme

Networking with Youth to
Combat Violence against
Separated Children



Report from
Workshop with separated youth
13-15 June 2008
Aalsmeer, the Netherlands

Introduction

This report describes the process and outcomes of the Separated Children in Europe Youth Network workshop in Aalsmeer, the Netherlands, 13-15 June 2008. We have tried to summarize the "lessons learned" and start with a general overview of the meeting, describing participants, overall goals, practical arrangements and general experiences.

After the general overview there are more in depth descriptions of the used methods, the most important outcomes and experiences with different parts of the workshop.

The minutes, PowerPoint presentations and hand-outs of this meeting are available in separate attachments (see the end of this document).

Participants

Youngsters:

We got in contact with the youngsters through the NGO's that are involved in the SCEPT programme. We asked them to link us up with separated children, between 15 and 25 years of age, that were able to understand and express themselves in basic English.

From November 2007 – May 2008 19 youngsters joined the network, 17 youngsters from this group participated in the workshop (2 were not able to travel within the EU).

The youngsters from the network live in 12 different countries: Austria (1), Denmark (2), Finland (2), Germany (2), Hungary (2), Ireland (2), Malta (1), Netherlands (1), Norway (2), Poland (1), Slovenia (2) and Sweden (1).

Originally they came from 9 different countries: Afghanistan (4), Angola (1), Burundi (1), Cameroon (1), Ethiopia (1), Nigeria (2), Rwanda (1), Somalia (5), Togo (1).

13 participants were male, 4 female.

The age-range of the youngsters was from 15-25 with an average age of 19 year.

Staff:

-Lise Bruun, project coordinator Save the Children Denmark

-Simone Bommeljé, project consultant, Yohri, The Netherlands

-Zaïna Karekezi, Advisory board member and hands-on expert, The Netherlands

-Yvonne van 't Oever, project consultant, Ympuls, The Netherlands

Goals of the workshop

- Fun for the involved youngsters
- Empowerment of participating youth on how to build a sustainable network:
 - Learning to know each other
 - Knowledge on network skills and communication
 - Knowledge on funding
 - Knowledge on SCEPT topics – violence against separated children.
 - Knowledge on (use of) influencing European Institutions
- Discussion on ideas/plans for the website
- Discussion on ideas/plans for the youth network
- Start the discussion on goals / plans for final seminar
- Kick off of the youth network

Practical arrangements and general experiences

In the practical arrangements there were 3 main considerations in the decision-making, namely: **team-building, safety** and **fun for the involved participants**

Hotel

We had the opportunity to arrange the meeting in a small hotel that could be booked for single use of our group. This was a way to guarantee safety, all people in the building were part of our group and we could easily keep track of all participants. Having your own place also helped to build up a team. During the day we had our meetings in the restaurant of the hotel and in the evening this became a place to hang out, listen to music and dance. Another way to create safety was to choose a hotel in a small city, close to but not in Amsterdam.

We made a schedule for the rooms, having shared rooms for males and separate shared rooms for females. The staff was 24 hrs available, had a first-aid practitioner on board and a list of all important phone numbers in case of a calamity.

The Hotel was not big, but it had a very inviting, friendly and luxurious atmosphere. Our investment in a proper location and good food turned out to be highly appreciated by the youngsters, it gave them the feeling that their presence really mattered.

Activities

During the day we had breaks where the participants had some time off. They used it to lunch, walk into town or take some rest in their rooms. The 2 evenings in the programme were used for group activities.

On the first evening we went out to have a dinner at an Indian restaurant. This restaurant was chosen because of its youngster-friendly atmosphere and possibility to share different dishes as a group instead of all having your own plate of food. Indian food turned out to be a good choice, a lot of youngsters remembered the food from their home country and all were very positive about the restaurant. Afterwards some youngsters went to the hotel (5 min. walk) to get some rest and others went to a local bar to watch EU football matches.

Since seeing Amsterdam is one of the things you have to do when you are in Holland, we arranged for a boat tour through the canals of Amsterdam on the second evening. A safe way (with our group only and private transport) to have fun and experience this together as a team. On the boat we had an Indonesian meal while watching Amsterdam from the water. When it got a little chilly the roof of the boat was closed and the youngsters discovered that it was possible to play their own music on board. An amazing way to see Amsterdam and a wonderful experience to share as a team.

Before we went to Amsterdam a few of the older participants were asking if they could go out in the capital by themselves. This was a difficult situation. We solved it by telling them about their responsibilities and informing them that they would have to pay for transportation by themselves. After the boat tour however, they all went back to the hotel with us.

One overall tip is to choose restaurants where they can leave out the pork meat (in Indian restaurants for example they don't serve pork meat at all).

Rules

During the whole meeting we had a non-alcohol and non-drugs policy. Only in the evening (free time) 16+ youngsters were allowed to have alcohol at their own expenses.

Smoking was only allowed outside and mobile phones were supposed to be switched off during the meeting. We learned that our group had a good sense of responsibility and we had no problems or incidents concerning this policy. We experienced that giving trust results in taking responsibility. A good example of this was that all youngsters helped the staff to clean up the restaurant in the evening at their own initiative (while they were not expected to do so).

Airport

To guarantee the safety of the participants and make sure that they would all arrive comfortably we arranged for an airport pick up and drop off. We instructed them on where and how to meet us and had 3 people covering the different gates, using Save The Children signs, caps and shirts to identify ourselves. We took lists with contact information of the youngsters and their contact persons to make sure that we could contact them if necessary. Only one youngster missed our arrival committee but through some phone calls we were able to find him at the airport. At the end of our meeting we personally dropped off all participants at the check-in desk and they all arrived home safely.

Friday 13 June: Introduction

Workshop: Welcome

Main aim	Introduction SCEP, explain the programme, clarify expectations and roles and have agreements on the policy during the workshop
Method	Explanation and discussion
Experiences	

Workshop: Speed date and Wall of Fame

Main aim	Participants get to know each other
Method	Couples discussed for three minutes and could write, draw or paste information about the other person on his or her personal sheet of paper. All personal sheets together formed a wall of fame about the group.
Experiences	A quick and inviting way to get to know more about others. The changes were sometimes a bit complicated, so this needs more time. In the end there was not enough wall space to hang all personal sheets.

Session I: Introduction on the project and timeline

Main aim	Inform the participants on the project and different phases of the project
Method	A PowerPoint presentation
Experiences	There was very positive feedback on involvement of youngsters the projects Advisory Board. Also a discussion developed on the importance of being informed and having a network (friends) during the asylum procedure.

Session II: Information on other youth networks

Main aim	Inform the participants on what a network is and how it works
Method	Zaïna tells about her experiences in 3 different networks, namely the Youth Counsel of SCEP youngsters, the Network for exchange of European and Mediterranean countries (north African countries) and the Dutch national youth counsel.
Experiences	Since Zaïna is a hands-on expert she was able to make her story very concrete. She inspired the participants with her positive stories but also pointed out that being part of a network means that you have to take on certain responsibilities. She could very outspoken because she was "one of the group".

Session III Introduction on separated children topics and their rights

Main aim	The rights of children and separated children in particular are explained
Method	a PowerPoint presentation and a quiz
Experiences	A very interactive presentation that explained the CRC in a context relevant to the participants. After this workshop participants told us that they were disappointed that they had never heard of this before but also inspired to do something with this new information. The conclusion of the discussion " <i>Do separated children have rights?</i> " is: We have rights, but we don't actually know that. Experiences with violation of rights are written on post-it's and will be used during the world café.

Saturday 14 June: content

Session I Influencing European institutions

Main aim	Participants have more knowledge on how to influence (European) institutions
Method	A PowerPoint presentation
Experiences	

Workshop Communication

Main aim	Participants have more knowledge on communication and presenting a message <i>Sub goals:</i> - getting to know each-other - unleash creativity - decide how you want to present a message
Method	A PowerPoint presentation and (fun) exercise
Experiences	What is needed to make people listen to and remember your ideas? Examples of adds (images) are used to discuss about messages, target groups e.g. The participants are divided in 4 groups and have to prepare a short TV commercial . After the presentations we discussed about the different methods that were chosen: short and visual, convince that the product is convenient, puzzle / surprise people and a before and after situation.

Session II Funding

Main aim	Participants have more knowledge on funding
Method	A PowerPoint presentation
Experiences	

World Café

Main aim	Inventory of ideas on the main topics and activities of this network
Method	There where 4 tables (one for every topic), covered with white paper. Small groups of participants had a 20 minute discussion on a topic at a table. After the discussion the group split up and the participants went to another table (to create different groups for every discussion). At every table there was a host to guide the discussions and ask questions. All ideas or questions where drawn on the tablecloth, for the next group to see what was discussed. A catcher of good ideas walked around to collect the best ideas. <i>The topics that where discussed:</i> -Separated children and their rights -Discussion on ideas/plans for the website -Discussion on ideas/plans for the youth network -Discussion on goals / plans for final seminar
Experiences	A brief summary of the discussions: Separated children and their rights Topics that were discussed at this table: detention, age assessment, deportation, family reunification, education: 16-18 gap, asylum procedures, integration, guardianship and discrimination. Discussion on ideas/plans for the website Topics that were discussed at this table: partly open the website for information purposes, create a guestbook / chat box, have an e-mail if there are replies to your topic / submissions, change lay out, add an agenda, add some games / music, webmaster / ownership. Discussion on ideas/plans for the youth network Topics that were discussed at this table: the structure for coordination / decision making, amount of members, degrees of participation on the website, the goal: influence and raise awareness, keeping network together, attitude and roles. One of the statements: <i>"It will take time we can't change world tomorrow"</i> Discussion on goals / plans for final seminar At this table the plan developed to have different activities on the rights of

	<p>separated children that could be combined in one main activity (having an exhibition was the sum of all discussions). Most of the suggestions were very concrete, one example: "Have an entrance fee or funding (to make DVD to inform separated children on their rights)".</p> <p>Looking at the sphere during the discussions and the outcomes at the end we can conclude that the world café method really worked with this group. Since the groups were small all participants felt free to give their opinion. Having a table host helped to stay focused. The Catcher of good ideas had a positive and inspiring role: she helped to get the ideas concrete.</p>
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Open Session	
Main aim	This open session was meant to have time in the programme for things that came up during the earlier meetings and/or breaks.
Method	Plenum
Experiences	<p><i>This open session was used to have a Quiz on children's rights and a discussion on how we are proceeding</i></p> <p>During the quiz we noticed again that the youngsters were really inspired and did see the CRC as something they could work with in the future.</p> <p><i>A summary of what participants said they learned during the workshop:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separated children also have rights and voices / Child Rights Convention (5) - We can effect and help others and need to fight for changes in future (3) - We are all separated children and have similar problems (2) - We have to actively work together (2) - We should take this information to our countries/ European Institutions (2) - There are organizations that fight for our rights (2) - 3 participants focused on specific skills they learned or need to learn: (English language, focus on a topic and experiences from other networks). <p><i>A summary of how participants feel about this workshop:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Happy to meet all persons from different countries and make new friends - Impressed, the direction in which we are going is right one - Responsible

Session IV How to continue with the network	
Main aim	To discuss the way the participants want to develop the network into an independent and sustainable network.
Method	Guided group discussion
Experiences	<p>During this session we asked the group to decide on different things that came up during the meeting.</p> <p>Goal: We are fighting to get separated children happy.</p> <p>This network needs stages to become independent, the majority agrees to take over more and more responsibility in future.</p> <p>The network wants to have a lot of youngsters involved, but only 2 representatives per country. There are now 12 countries involved; more different countries will help to have more influence.</p> <p>Participants want to draw up rules and a policy for the network- we'll keep this in mind.</p> <p>We have a discussion on the different roles that should be divided amongst the network members tomorrow.</p>

Sunday 15 June: building on network skills

Session I How to work towards the final seminar

Main aim	To come up with a concrete plan for the final activity
Method	Guided group discussion
Experiences	<p>We discuss about a plan for the Interactive Exhibition. Topics we discuss about are: target person(s), date, place, location and message.</p> <p>We decide to have a positive message: be happy and claim your rights as the umbrella message for all countries</p> <p>Youngsters are asked to think about a national activity, some examples are used to explain.</p> <p>Turning an idea into a concrete plan seemed to be a bit difficult. Here we really noticed that some of the youngsters found it a bit difficult to understand the bigger picture. Probably because some youngsters struggled with the English language and the abstract idea of an exhibition.</p>

Session II How to continue with the network

Main aim	To discuss the way the participants want to develop the network into an independent and sustainable network.
Method	Plenum
Experiences	<p>First we all tell about our strengths and knowledge (what are your qualities) and then all are asked what role they are interested in.</p> <p>We discuss about possible problems in communication and how to deal with them. One of the questions we discuss is: "How to challenge each other to have active forum?"</p>

Closure of the workshop, Evaluation:

Main aim	To learn how the participants have experienced this meeting
Method	Evaluation forms + participatory evaluation in groups
Experiences	<p>Good</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge on Children's rights (Child rights convention) - good explanation on funding; - Communication: how to organize ourselves - Being active as network member is important - It's a challenge to unite children from countries <p>Could have done better:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More time 4/5 days - There is always more to learn <p>Inspiration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children have rights! - We can (together with NGO's) tell EU that we exist, with same rights as other EU children and express our views to people that are important - There are people and organizations that work for us <p>We can work together (and be strong!) One can do nothing, but a group can.</p>

Workshop Symbolic kick-off of the network

Main aim	Fun and an "official" moment to be involved in the start of the network.
Method	All participants try to put the European flags in place. Then they connect with colored ropes and form a visible network. After 3 attempts we manage to keep the globe in the air with this net(work)!!!!
Experiences	-If you are connected as a network you can accomplish a lot-