



Report

**“What’s in it for children
and young people?”**

**How to develop opportunities
for creative participation
... playfully!**

e.p.a. congress
9th - 16th May 2012
Derry≈Londonderry





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Introduction

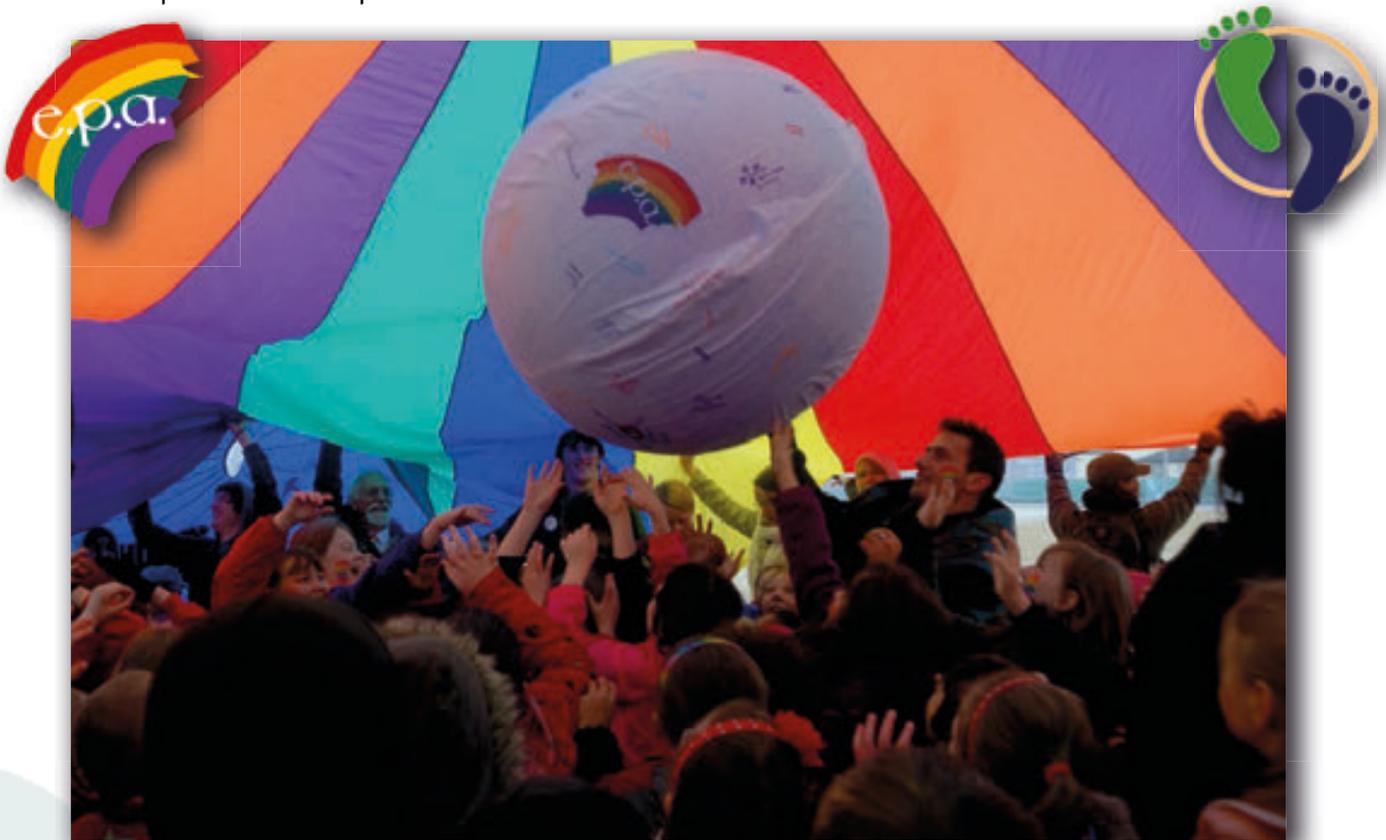
Yes ... we did it! We created the conditions for over 50 participants from 23 European countries to meet in Derry~Londonderry. The theme "What's in it for young people" enabled participants to share and interact with the issues of participation and citizenship.

Highlights of this training course were those workshops presented by participants, a lot of effort and creativity was expanded in this process.



The stories of the "Troubles" and our visit to the Bogside and the "Free Derry" murals, the cross border work being done between Catholic and Protestant, enhancing the peace process despite the remnants of the paramilitaries trying to stop the process.

On the down side: 6 of our participants had their Visas refused, one with the quote "as an unmarried young woman with only 700\$ in your bank account, I do not believe you would return" was the comment of the UK Border Agency in Beirut!! The UK Ambassador in Minsk had made an exit for two months under political pressure between Belarus and UK and this had the effect of denying out two participants who eventually got their Visas end of May!!



The amazing Play Action on the Ebrington square (the last 170 years used as military barracks) and the Peace Bridge with over 300 children in the pouring rain ... they loved it, we used rainbow parachutes as massive umbrellas and had a local Samba band to dance us over the Bridge.

Nevertheless this was a very good and effective Congress, the playful non-formal way that e.p.a. uses created the conditions for many young participants leaving with a profound sense of international friendship and enthusiasm for participation.



The opening speech of our participants to greet the mayor and youth and play workers from the region on our open conference day after we spend one week together:

Dear ladies and gentlemen, friends, colleagues and esteemed guests,

We would like to start by saying Céad Mile Fáilte (Irish: a thousand welcomes) to the open conference of the 18th Congress of the European Play Work Association.

We feel obliged to thank the e.p.a. team for bringing together so many unique participants from many different countries.



When we first got the invitation to participate in the congress, we were, of course, extremely excited, but we knew little about the actual events that took place in Northern Ireland. Coming here was the perfect opportunity to learn more about the Irish conflict, but also the ongoing peace process.

Thanks to the project visits we had to organisations such as Youth First, Reach Across, the Peace and Reconciliation Centre, the Gasyard, we were able to gain actual historic data and cultural awareness. This enabled us to construct a reliable chronological framework in which we could explore the solutions the Irish people had come up with.



The two main approaches were dialogue and play. The first one was used to defuse the armed conflict and the second one was used to bring together kids, tomorrow's decision making adults that otherwise would have



never met because of the unfriendly and unsafe environment. It was amazing to learn how the simplest thing can solve such big problems. It is also very inspiring to see what NGOs like The Play Trail and schools like the Foyle View School are doing in order to provide children with adequate playing

conditions. This in terms facilitates the process of growth and citizenship of the kids from the area.



Because we understood the power of play, we held daily workshops in order to share and develop play techniques to take back to our countries. But the most commonly used word in the workshops was PARTICIPATION, for example ...

- participation in youth policy making
- participation of youth in protests concerning human rights, namely the Arab Spring
- participation of youth in community development
- participative video making ...



After getting our theory straight we had the chance to put the idea of play work into practice. The big play day was held yesterday at the former Ebrington barracks, a space used in the past for military purposes. By simply bringing basic toys like ropes, balls and parachutes, we were able to turn the otherwise dull square into a play friendly space. Even though the weather was typically Irish, we managed to make the most of it and bring over 300 children in one place

and JUST PLAY. We samba crossed the Peace Bridge and for a moment we forgot about the soaking rain.



Of course, e.p.a. made sure we could experience proper Irishness. We were baffled by the natural beauty of the countryside, we were taken about the by the exquisite taste of the water of life, i.e. Bushmills whisky, we were left feeling almost irish by taking the cat walk on the walls of the old city and surely, no visit is complete without a cold pint of Irish beer.

In conclusion we would say that during this visit – we've learned so much, had even more fun and truly learnt to break down all differences and REACH ACROSS.



Aims and Objectives

The objectives were to give examples of good practice in youth participation particularly the significance of Derry~Londonderry and the continuing peace process in Northern Ireland. The sharing of experiences from 23 countries and the taste and delight of the Irish culture.

The participants came from e.p.a. partner organisations working face to face with young people in very disadvantaged communities. Their role in this project was to experience the reality of Derry~Londonderry, share their own experiences with each other and to accrue a menu of methodologies on Youth Participation.



The methodology used during this week was the tried and tested e.p.a. "Working, Learning and Playing together", this was established from the beginning with introductions by the young colleagues themselves by presenting a "Poster".



Of the workshops that took place a few were presented and lead by young colleagues. All the workshops had a high level of interaction and creative feedback. The programme had elements of first days getting to know each other, the 11 workshops, 6 project visits to local youth and peace organisations, an International Evening and a Cultural day. On the final day we organized a Conference for colleagues working with children and youth in the North of Ireland, where we shared our results and conclusions.



The conclusions were "In this age of the old sclerotic politics and disgraced neo-liberal economics, it is young people who have something to say and deserve to be heard". We had representatives of the Arab Spring and the Peace Process of Northern Ireland, the still divided Cyprus and the unrecognized Kosovo. We heard how young people are offering an alternative voice. We agreed ways they can be heard using the existing political process and augmenting with the new Internet possibilities.



Workshops

With 11 workshops achieved we saw Drama, Dance, Story telling, Flip Chart, Cardboard, Paint, Video and Photos, and keywords around the theme, all used in this creative process. Each activity was preceded and ended with a playful energizer or game.



The state of play in the North of Ireland - how do young people and children experience the "post-conflict" era?

This workshop started during the Welcome Speech by the President of The Playtrail, when the former school director explained how Play offered non formal learning and opportunities to overcome the divides in the Northern Irish society, which school education usually had reinforced. It continued during our guided tour round the walled city, giving insights to a long divided history of Derry~Londonderry and was continued by our hosts explaining a brief history of the "troubles", how young people were affected and how "Just play" had helped to find ways out of cul-de-sacs. Followed by inputs of the different projects we visited and what they are trying to do in the peace process.



International Project Exhibition

As the important first part of the training seminar the bonding and getting to know each other is essential for a successful seminar e.p.a. provided a "Poster" for each participant, which contained basic information questions and space for creativity and sharing good practice in participation.



A Training exercise on presentation techniques: Each participant had limited time to explain and describe their projects with the poster and the issues facing them in their work with young people.

These posters were also on exhibition during the final day Youth Conference that took place.



Participation – aims, methods and misunderstandings. How to develop opportunities for creative participation and empowerment.

Being the focus of our Training Course, we had 4 workshops on different aspects of Youth Participation:

“Let’s raise youth participation in public life!”

One of the young colleagues presented their concept how to challenge the lack of youth citizenship throughout Europe and suggested to bring together young people and public authorities to address 4 key issues: youth and citizenship, youth and democracy, youth employment and youth entrepreneurship.



“Let’s become an active citizen in rainbow city”

Two colleagues had prepared a simulation, where all participants were invited to practice real citizenship in a fictive city – in a playful way.

How to use participative video in youth work

Another workshop showing practical examples how to use video as a tool to encourage young people to become interested and active in their communities to showcase issues and problems in a creative and accessible way.



The Arab Spring as an example for youth participation?

What can European young people learn from their surprising and encouraging examples of youth participation? How can we support the initiatives of young people on the other coasts of the Mediterranean? We discussed also the vital role of social media.

“When will Adults listen to young people?” and why young people should NOT be the ones who pay for International financial mismanagement!

This workshop - an open ended debate, with a brief role play introduction to the causes of the Global financial meltdown, let participants describe the reality of this situation on young people in their own communities.

Youth Exchanges as an alternative to social exclusion

How they can work towards youth empowerment. A look at the EU Youth in Action Programme.

Many participants had experience of Youth Exchanges, but this workshop created the conditions for them to focus on why an International Youth Exchange is such an amazing and great tool to facilitate and encourage participation and how they can prove young people can play an active and creative part in our society.

Where “peace walls” divide ...

... and how fresh approaches can playfully work in Post conflict communities. Following the Play Action we had a lively debate on the need and use of Play as a tool and methodology in conflict communities, examples from other communities in conflict emphasised this approach.

Just play! – why and how PLAY should be taken seriously by everyone

For this e.p.a. Play Action participants prepared games from their cultures and communities and played them with local children in Derry. This was on the newly liberated former “Parade ground” of the old British Army barracks on the banks of the river Foyle. This international meeting brought together about 300 children (in the pouring rain!!) enjoying three hours of fun and games at times under large rainbow parachutes as umbrellas, assisted by a Samba Band and dancing (!) not marching across the peace bridge.



The barriers in our communities: How Social exclusion affects young people and children – and how to open doors and windows of opportunities for and with them.

Looking further to after a “Violent Conflict” has subsided to what we as youth and play workers can do to offer young people an alternative in both looking at our histories and to the future.

All different - all equal!

... a still valid approach to challenge traditional conflict lines in the North of Ireland and other troubled communities? To end this amazing week we looked at the famous statement of the 90's “all different – all equal” to see the wealth and beauty of the cultures we carry with us and the changes that are needed to ensure equal rights for a peaceful community, where young people are respected and can then nurture their societies.

Where “peace walls” divide ...

... and how fresh approaches can playfully work in post conflict communities. Preparing the Play Action we had a very interesting and interactive workshop by an experienced youth and play worker from the North of Ireland on the need and use of Play as a tool and methodology in conflict communities, he gave examples of cross border play work in Belfast.

Intercultural evening

This wonderful and amazing activity took place in a special needs employment Centre, where young people learn to cook for themselves and also learn catering skills to enable them to find employment. The night was astounding in the way and variety of the food the participants had brought with them and prepared. Many of these dishes were accompanied by a song, sketches, music and dance - a truly intercultural night.



Derry International Youth conference

This day represented both an evaluation and a feed back session to other North of Ireland colleagues. It began with greetings by the Mayor, followed by a summary presented by two young colleagues. We then split into issue groups with a final feed back and “Some more wee questions about participation” to end the Youth Conference.

Intercultural Playday



Imagine: a big empty square which was used as military base during the last 170 years, a newly constructed and much-debated Peace Bridge which connects the



square with the Centre of the City, a group of Youth and Play workers from all over Europe who can't wait to help reclaiming this piece of land for the youth and the



people of Derry~Londonderry, a local Samba band, a brave host who invited children from all schools around the city - no matter if they see themselves as Catholics or Protestants, Unionists or Republicans from both sides of the river and lots of Irish rain!



Feedback from Drumachose primary school:

Thank you very much for organising the play day at Ebrington Square and the Peace Bridge. The rain was terrible, but it was still great! Taylor enjoyed singing songs under the parachute. Emily's best bit was dancing in the hall. We all loved doing the



parade across the bridge. Charlie will not forget everyone dancing to the Samba band (Mrs. Simpson's favourite bit too!). Emma wants to say thanks to the girl who lent her a scarf for her head because she had no hood on her coat.

Can we do it again on a sunny day please?





- singing and dancing to the Samba band
- had great fun waving the flags
- interesting to listen to people from other countries speaking
- saying goodbye in all the different languages
- loved the guard of honor back to the bus.

The teachers enjoyed the experience also and would recommend you speak privately to God re. the weather next year!!!

Good luck



Feedback from St. Annes Primary School:

We had a great day in Ebrington, in spite of the rain!!! The girls had a ball and here are some of their thoughts:



- unique experience
- brilliant experience dancing across the Peace Bridge
- it was amazing
- great atmosphere
- sheltering from the rain under the parachutes
- joining in the singing and performing our Spanish song with the Samba band
- learning new games
- first time to cross the Peace Bridge!

More Questions on Participation

What's in it for children and young people? After focusing for one week on participation we found some conclusions, but agreed to ask even some more questions:

1. Young people – having a share

When we were greeted by the president of our host Playtrail, we learned that the Irish language does not know “possessive pronouns”. We learned that in Gaelic, you don't say: “this is my coat”, but “my share of the coat”.

When we talk about young people's participation: do we consider this? Do our young people know that it is not about possessing, but about sharing?

Is this the spirit of our work? To share what we have: as group, as community, as society, as part of one world? And remember that participation belongs to the 3 basic children's rights and 3 P's: **protection** against dangers that might face them, **provision** of all they need and **participation** in all that concerns them.



2. My project, your project - part of what?

May we continue to go on about language: When we want young people to participate, do they know or are aware, what they are supposed to be part of?

What do they “belong to”? A project? ... which per definition has a beginning and an end, a movement, an initiative, a network?

Do we need them for statistics, a signature, as a member? as an associate? Do we really see them as **participants** in our work?



3. Help - cooperate - Co-create

Who has a say? Is the question “Can you help me?” appropriate, because young people help the adult to fulfill their wishes, duties, do their thing?

Or are we co-operating, working for common aims, working together, or even open to a process of re-generating, inventing, trying something new? “Soustvarjanje” - “Co-creating” as the Slovenians say, a real creative process?



4. What is in it for whom? Empowerment

How come that almost all over Europe - we just learned not in Malta - young people are not particularly interested in supporting the traditional political parties anymore.

The majority are not abstaining in the democratic process, because they are not interested in politics, but because they have understood that most parties are just using them, and not really interested in their opinion, needs and ideas?

Empowerment ... Means many things, but also sharing the power, young people having a say in whatever concerns their own lives.



5. Climate change

We have learned a lot about climate change, the dangers of global warming, experts can tell exactly what happens when we consume how much percent more ...



How much are we aware of the climate in our groups, community centres, youth clubs, playgrounds? When some experts label young people as “un-clubable” is this may be due to the climate in the club? Is it too cold? Is there too little sunshine? Is the atmosphere too close? We learned some examples of making it possible for children and young people to participate, and this not only means: space, material, good company, but also an atmosphere, where young people not only are not shouted at, but where they feel invited and encouraged to do what they want to do ...



6. Who is not participating? Part of it? Why and why not?

How open are we? How do we understand our fight against “social exclusion”? The fact, that our young people are not allowed to participate, can’t or are stopped, because they have too little money, the wrong color, special needs or belong to the wrong community?

Is the opposite “Inclusion”? Are we aware that *including* and *recruiting* have the same Latin roots ... To close in? Do our young people, who have suffered the nasty feelings of being excluded want to be locked in?

May we propose we have a closer look at what they need: opening access, equal opportunities to get in, invitations and the freedom to move in and out?



7. “Include me out”

For those who speak English as their mother tongue, it might not sound so rare: the words “include me out” sounds strange to those learning English. What it means is: “I do not want to play with you!” ... Do we take it serious when young people say “No”?

May be they do not want more slices of the same cake but a different gateau all together?

Or even not another cake, but want to mix their own dough and as the Portuguese say “meter as mãos na massa” and get committed in their own initiative?

Creating the conditions for children’s and youth participation ... let’s look beyond policy papers and beyond professional debate: Participation is found on the play trail, in the work of the projects we visited and on a wet Monday morning: 300 children taking over the Ebrington base ... and doing it playfully!



Comments by our hosts

I have been involved with e.p.a. for the past 10 years and always had a dream, that my city of Derry would have the opportunity to host a youth congress. I was delighted when they agreed as for e.p.a I have always learned so much from each congress and brought home so many new skills. The most important and vital tool I learned was PLAY. I discovered how play can be used to bring so many different young people and children together in a fun and positive way. The City of Derry has so much to offer to NGO's across the globe. We have had our conflict and so many young life's shattered over the process. This conflict took us nowhere, only backwards. The peace process has brought so many positive changes and especially for young families. It's time for us to share our experience from the peace process and it's vital that we share this with friends around the world.



To have European youth and play workers coming to our city was not only exciting, but they all came full of new skills and knowledge. Participants give 100% each day of the congress as well as sharing so much information. For myself and most people, the play action day seemed to be the highlight of the week. For the first time in 170 years, the international workers and over 300 children from different back-

grounds and schools play in the pouring rain on a disused army base, which has been transformed into a public, shared space. As well as play in the Irish rain we all danced across the new peace bridge, led by a local samba band. To see so many children smile was the proof of a very successful event.



The proof of success is when you see young people leaving the congress and setting up new programmes within their own project and sharing their experience. This is what e.p.a is all about. I'm aware that funding bodies want value for money, but they also want to see positive outcomes for



all young people taken part in the project. We have seen this in Derry. Not only is it a place to share experience and knowledge, it's also a safe place for young people to talk about serious issues that affect them in their own countries. This safe environment also gives them the support and most important love and respect from their international friends.

May I say thank you first to all the young people who done us and themselves proud ... The local companies in our city have done us proud by providing an excellent service with the catering, transport and the hotel. Of course this congress would not have been possible without the support of our European funders and of course our local funder Derry City Council.

Overall this congress was very successful. The only negative aspect was, that sadly some of our friends did not receive their visas, therefore could not take part. I hope some day that we will all have the freedom to move without those barriers. I also believe that it's vital that we continue with this work, especially the youth congress as it brings a whole wealth of knowledge and skills together in one group.

*Dominic Bonner
Project Manager, The Playtrail*



It was an honor and a privilege for Derry City Council to support the e.p.a. Youth Training Course on Youth Participation in the City in May.

The rights of children and young people are at the heart of proposals to shape and develop Derry through sustainable engagement processes and structures around equality and inclusion. We want to make sure that every young person has the help and support needed to improve their health and well-being. It is innovative events like

this one, that assist in providing young people with the skills and confidence needed to achieve their potential and improve their quality of life & that of their communities.

I personally, thoroughly enjoyed meeting & participating in the Event & I look forward to working with Liberty Consortium/ e.p.a. on future endeavors as I know the outcomes will be fantastic, due to the sheer passion & commitment of all involved. Well done!

*Helen Harley
Officer for Children and Young People
Derry City Council*



Comments by participants

1. During this meeting in Derry, what was

- the most beautiful experience for you
- the most important and
- the most moving one?



The most beautiful experience for me was this entire project.

For me the most important was that we were "all different all equal".

MARIJA Popova, Kavadarci

To learn about the Derry History it was moving for me because it gave me hope for my country

PANAGIOTIS Erodou, Paphos

The most beautiful - dancing with the children. I managed to hold on the tears but the feelings were so much "à flor da pele" (as we say in Portuguese) - literally means "at the flower of the skin", the feelings wanting to come out all at the same time.

It was ABSOLUTELY OVERWHELMING, ...I have never had so much fun (raining or not). Maybe it was because of the drums, they do touch our soul, but there are no words to describe what I felt back then.

DIOGO Silva, Lisboa

- Beautiful: the many participants on my workshop
- Important: workshops, concentration on bettering skills
- moving: action play day

IMEN Bessassi, Sfax~Hamburg

- The play trail was amazing experience for me.
- The most important thing I saw was so many children smiles.
- When the children were leaving, embraces us and said goodbye!!!

TASSOS Anastasiades, Thessaloniki



- Most beautiful experience was to see all the kids playing in the rain.
- The most moving experience was the project visit at Youth First, the stories that were told there.
- The most important thing for me was to learn about history of Ireland and especially Derry.

TESSE Sinnege, Amsterdam

The playday! It showed me that play works in every condition.

PETRA Hranova, Bratislava



- How wonderful it is to play with kids on rain, even you are all wet and cold, you are not showing this because you want to see kids happy.
- Important: that we need to communicate. That is a tool to solve conflicts, not only between countries, cities, communities, but also personal.
- To see how people are exciting in what they are doing to make life for kids more beautiful.

SIMONA Kazilionyte, Panevezys

Just meeting so many unique people, love it.
Learning the history of the region.
Feeling included to otherwise almost perfect strangers.

MOMO Yordanov, Sofia

- Meeting everyone
- Getting to know languages
- Seeing the wee ones happy and playing

EDWARD Doherty, Derry

The most important - tolerance among cultures. We are so lucky in Portugal for not having such conflicts. The effort the persons make from countries that have conflicts in between was just amazing. I admire them so much and if I already believed all the problems can be solved, now I believe it even more.

DIOGO Silva, Lisboa

The most beautiful and the most moving moment was the big playtrail on Monday, although it was a little scary because of the number of the children, but finally it was wonderful and better than to have few children, and much more exciting! The whole experience was great!

ELENI Roukouli, Thessaloniki

- The most beautiful experience was singing and dancing in the "peace bridge" with children.
- The most important for me were the 3 visits (youth First, Playtrail, peace and reconciliation Centre)
- The most moving one was the story about bogside and all the murals.

SUNAD Kurti, Gjakova



Definitely playing with children. I found myself very surprised when I was playing in the rain. It was helpful and very... I will never forget RAINY PLAY DAY! Unforgettable experience.

Azdren Nivokazi, Gjakova

- 1.The most beautiful experience for me was to see a lot of different ways of solving difficulties in work.
- 2.The most important for me was to find the way, how to work and play.
- 3.The most moving one was to understand that I'm not alone in its quest to make the world better.

LUDMYLA Mykhaylova, Feodosia

The most beautiful it was to play with the many children and friends in such a impossible weather condition

The most important for me was to get so much empowered and motivated for my work.

The most moving was the history of troubles told by Michael D... at peace & reconciliation centre.

NINA Krasovec, Maribor



I learned the weather is not unbeatable; it can be defeated with our energy, co-work, motivation and preparation.

TASSOS Anastasiades, Thessaloniki

I've learned a lot about Derry, even by talking to the taxi driver. I've learned a lot of participation and about the projects in all the different countries.

TESSE Sinnege, Amsterdam

I learned many things not only related with work but also with me personally. It was best experience of my life.

SIMONA Kazilionyte, Panevezys



2. What did you learn during this week?

Communication, motivation and training through games...

IMEN Bessassi, Sfax~Hamburg

Play is the way. We can have so much fun joining separated communities! Usually we just think about it as being all so serious (to join communities), all so difficult and all so not possible. It's a huge lesson to understand finally what play work is and how it is done.

DIOGO Silva, Lisboa

That play can unite people from rival groups.

ALEXANDROS Zachariadis, Paphos

I've learned to step one step back and look and reconsider my work. Now I've learned how every important is to always invite young people we work with, to participate at the preparations for projects.

I also get many ideas how to invite volunteers to active participation not only at work, but also in communities we live.

NINA Krasovic, Maribor

That all communities have issues and we have to keep trying and not give up. Never forget that we work for children and we have to give them some liberty as well, not only guiding.

CRISTINA Apostol, Bucharest

First is that we not had to make so many plans for playing. ..Just go and play as we... let the children play. Playing in the rain? it really works.

ASDREN Nivokazi, Gjakova



A lot about “peace-process”
New amazing energizers.
Remembered how powerful play is!

PETRA Hranova, Bratislava

3. Which aspects of the workshop themes did you find enlightening and why?

The Arab spring workshop. for giving an insight in the whole phenomenon “institutional jealousy” for helping understand how this happens.

ALEXANDROS Zachariadis, Paphos

How different organizations can help each other because I work in an organization with needs this and of interaction with other organizations.

TASSOS Anastasiades, Thessaloniki

For me the most interesting workshop was when we have the seminar and spoke in little group, our group spoke about “all equal all different”, that was the first time that we said something about “Roma” people.

JULIYA Dimitrova, Sofia

The way, how we sometimes can talk about serious things in creative and playful ways. Exp. Like explanations about capitalism. Refugees are separated from community, so you can go to them (playbus, Germany)

SIMONA Kazilionyte, Panevezys

The workshop about Youth exchanges, because I wanted to hear more about the effects and other experiences.

How to make young people to participate more, cause I’m working with youth.

LEEA Nieminen, Nurmes



That they were introduced to us playfully. After many workshops I got many ideas, thoughts, especially at the workshop about playwork by Eammon. I liked that there were always some real situation, project in the workshop.

Rainbow city – very nice idea and I find very important that it was made and run by participants.

NATASA Hauzer, Maribor

Participation and how easy it actually is to involve kids and youth.

MARIA CHRISTINA Apostol, Bucharest

The preparation, the communication with the others. That we were trying together I really learned a lot that I did not know!

ELENI Roukouli, Thessaloniki

It was all different all equal, because each of other shared problems that still exist in our countries.

MARIJA Popova, Kavadarci



Petra's workshop about participatory video was so very interesting because I've learned how to approach to project and get empowered to do it with knowledge and motivation and also because like by the way it clicked in my head how very important it is and why is important to start project together with young people and not to invite them when you already have everything prepared.

NINA Krasovec, Maribor

Different aspects of "institutional jealousy" and that I could compare the opinions of my colleagues.

And Eammon's workshop was very encouraging.

PETRA Hranova, Bratislava

The workshop on let's raise youth participation in public life, cause it proven that there is a room and will to achieve better conditions for youth in Europe and I realized that the problems are similar in all countries.

IVANA Baresic, Zador

The most amazing theme was the institutional jealousy. It was a nice moment for an inside analysis of my organization in Rumania; here the discussion about the conflict from Ireland was really interesting. Overall I had a lot to learn.

CRISTINA Niculae, Bucharest

The participation of youth and the equal participation with the same rights were inspiring and gave the opportunities to think more about these things.

MARIA Sondra, Thessaloniki

I found the workshop at the "Arab spring" inspiring.

GAVIN Barr, Derry

I liked the workshops that concerned themselves with youth participation for overcoming difficulties.

MOMO Yordanov, Sofia



I enjoyed the workshop about participative video-working because it could be a very powerful tool for involving youth in their community and also to praise awareness for the community's problems.

CRISTIAN Oproiu, Bucharest

The workshops about how to achieve participation and how to use participative videos as a tool.

SUNAD Kurti, Gjakova

4. What will you “take back” to your work?

Motivation and new energy to bring my project till the end.

IMEN Bessassi, Sfax≈Hamburg

Play more, exchange more, don't be afraid.

DIOGO Silva, Lisboa

The power of play and how it can bring people together.

ALEXANDROS Zachariadis, Paphos



New games and new ways to think. I also think that I will take back with me my beautiful memories.

TASSOS Anaseasiades, Thessaloniki

I'll take back that almost everything is possible. If you have a playday and its raining you can sit inside or you can just go for it, get wet and have a good time.

TESSE Sinnege, Amsterdam

More play = less problems!

MOMO Yordanov, Sofia

Ideas how to work with children: new games, new energizer, new ways of communication.

Very big motivation to do things what sometimes you see like “no progress”

SIMONA Kazilionyte, Panevezys



Simplify working methods (playing easily).

New games. New friends and contacts.

Nice experiences with other people.

Lots of caring. New aspects, how the work is in other countries...

LEEA Nieminen, Nurmes

A lot of nice games. But I think that I will take back something more important – the courage and desire to do more – I want to check how many play spaces are in Maribor and I want to arrange to go on the street to the children and young people. I will invite children and young people to co-create programs that we have. My wish is also that more people in Slovenia will get to know play work, because together we can do more for and with children.

NATASA Hauzer, Maribor



Simple play and simple play tools.

MARIA CHRISTINA Apostol, Bucharest

I'll take back new ideas, positive energy...

Now I'm more motivated and for sure I'll continue to work with young.

MARIJA Popova, Kavadarci



5. How will you promote “creative participation” of children and young people in your work?

“Play is the way”

But educational, and supportive approach!!!

So many ideas!!!

MARIA Sondra, Thessaloniki

A new and great attitude toward myself and my colleagues.

GAVIN Barr, Derry

I would like to take back all those ideas about the games and the workshops and to make something new. But the one that I would like to take with me more is new energy!

ELENI Roukouli, Thessaloniki

Give them the tools for them to play freely. That way we can just get them involved and we will learn even more.

DIOGO Silva, Lisboa

By introducing play games in our activities.

ALEXANDROS Zachariadis, Paphos

Trying to involve parents and teachers.

Ask them which games they like to play.

EDWARD Doherty, Derry

I will take back all the love, inspiration and motivation that I got in the congress and use it in my community.

SUNAD Kurti, Gjakova

To push, to make possible a 2nd group “Yeti-berlin-Buch” (Youth Exchange Team international)

MARTYN Sorge, Berlin



I will “take back” to my work a lot of interesting games! Experience of working with children, how to make work more productive, how to attract more young people.

LUDMYLA Mykhaylova, Feodosiya

New very good workshops and “never surrender” during the rain in playday.

DJORDJE Palic, Pancevo

With no more competitive games.

Giving a role to each child.

Starting with the “ice breaker”

TASSOS Anastasiades, Thessaloniki

That children and young people need space to be creative and participate – not just physical space but also mental space, not being overwhelmed with problems, tasks etc.

PETRA Hranova, Bratislava

I saw how much is important to listen to kids. To hear their thoughts, ideas, wants. So this will help me to promote “creative participation”

SIMONA Kazilionyte, Panevezys

Feedback to my colleagues ideas from the trip.
It will take some time to process this experience.
I try to get them involved more to play and maybe try to make some youth exchange, camps in our center.

LEE A Nieminen, Nurmes



Use the experience will try to make the playground.

LUDMYLA Mykhaylova, Feodosya

My plane is to organize more public events: (ex. Musical events), I'll organize summer camp. Outdoor activities. And also I'll use RAINBOW.

MARIJA Popova, Kavadarci

I will try my best to include everyone in play sessions.

GAVIN Barr, Derry



Take part in a group and games that I learned.

MARK Baldrick, Derry

I will involve children and young people to concretize the program, not only on the adventure playground, but also in other programs, especially for the training of social skills – we will promote it with our common work and successes.

NATASA Hauzer, Maribor

During our “leave the TV and come to play” actions. I am also thinking about doing this action more often.

CRISTINA Apostol, Bucharest

I like to think that I do this all the time, but I will organize this “drop the TV and come to play with us” in a Bucharest Park, in order to give to the kids the opportunity to play.

CRISTINA Niculae, Bucharest

I really lived the “adventure playground” idea, which I learned form Martyn.

I think it's worthwhile exploring ways to work in that direction.

MOMO Yordanov, Sofia



6. When did you feel you participated most strongly during the week?

During the play at the old army base with the children.

ALEXANDROS, Zachariades, Paphos

When I and Alexandros introduced two beautiful songs from Greece and Cyprus.
TASSOS Anastasiades, Thessaloniki

I participated most strongly during playday (all that day I was strong)
DJORDJE Palic, Pancevo

With the culture evening and with the playday.
TESSE Sinnege, Amsterdam

The playday on Monday, seeing kids smile made me proud to be a play worker.
GAVIN Barr, Derry



Leading my workshop on participative video, and co-leading the one on institutional jealousy, and during the play day.
PETRA Hranova, Bratislava

During the play action.
EDWARD Doherty, Derry

When we played with the children and cross the bridge.
JULIYA Dimitrova, Sofia

On the workshop: let's raise young people's participation in public life. Because I had experience of writing part of local action plan for youths in Pancevo. Also in "institutional jealousy", because I had different experiences through my work.
MAJA Jovic, Pancevo

Every workshop was making me feel that I am participating. Every minute I felt that I am important part of what we are doing.
SIMONA Kazilionyte, Panevezys



During the play Day in Ebringhton.
SUNAD Kurti, Gjakova

As a member of the "emergency-Flag-Team" at the playday
MARTYN Sorge, Berlin

In the playday preparation and in the "informal" things that we had to organize between participants.
CRISTINA Niculae, Bucharest

Thank you for inviting me to share workshop at congress. Although I was very scared I felt very strong because I could participate. I feel I participate at every moment of congress. Sometimes creative, sometimes active, interactive...
NINA Krasovec Maribor

During the Play Action and during our workshop Rainbow City Rally.
CAROLIN Siemen, Hamburg

By walking across the bridge and by working in small groups. I think I was also participating with speaking English for the whole time also with other Slovenian, so that everybody could understand it.

NATASA Hauzer, Maribor



I felt so comfortable, I felt like I was participating all the time. Sure hope it looked like that from the sidelines.

MOMO Yordanov, Sofia

Preparing the synopsis and the materials for the conference. Taking pictures at the big playday action.

CRISTIAN Oproiu, Bucharest

7. Critical & encouraging and any other comments:

Don't EVER stop working. It's worth it. Keep up this amazing wonderful fantastic astonishing good work. The only thing I didn't like was the food, but even that was not a problem. MUITO OBRIGADO!

DIOGO Silva, Lisboa

Thank you for the great hospitality, your support and your diligence. The hotel you chose is perfect. I would be very pleased if I receive your email to learn about you and your actions. THANK YOU!!!!!!!

TASSOS Anastasiades, Thessaloniki

I had a lot of fun during the whole week. Met a lot of new nice people. Maybe a bit more free time :D

I also had a little time before I knew I was coming and couldn't really participate as much as I would like. But after all it was awesome!

TESSE Sinnege, Amsterdam

I can't find some critic about e.p.a.

In my opinion they are amazing organization that manage every time to make amazing projects.

JULIYA Dimitrova, Sofia

I want to thank for the best week of my life, that week gave me a lot what cannot be said by words. THANK YOU SO MUCH!

SIMONA Kazilionyte, Panevezys

I really meet wonderful people; it was a life changing experience.

PANAGIOTIS Erodotou, Paphos

e.p.a. team and Dominic has created so powerful opportunities for us to participate, share and learn that many children and young people around the world will have better chances in their lives. Thank you also in the name of children in our community.

NINA Krasovec, Maribor

Nothing critical. I want just to thank play-trail to do everything possible to that congress be perfect and e.p.a for this great experience in my life.

DJORDJE Palic, Pancevo

Thanks to Christa-Berta, Remo, Tony, Dominic and every international play worker and my family for giving me the best week in my life.

GAVIN Barr, Derry

It was inspiring, moving, motivating, and overall positive experience and I wish I get an opportunity to participate in similar projects, congresses and meetings
It was beautiful and playful.

IVANA Baresic, Zadar



Thank you for really doing the best work ever in empowering the young people and for being committed to the unison of supporting youths and playworkers. I love you all and advice you for staying faithful and the same hard workers that I've met five years ago.

CRISTINA Niculae, Bucharest

Keep Going!!!

ALEXANDROS Zachariades, Paphos

Keep it up, training play workers will do great things. I had my disagreements on the capitalism agenda, but you're such cool people, it didn't matter that much.

MOMO Yordanov, Sofia

To participate in this training course gave me a different point of view. I have changed my thoughts and mind in the good sense of the word, I thank all who have made possible this experience possible! We learn a lot whilst sharing.

AYELEN Portillo, Málaga

Thank you for making things so easy for us, and making my first e.p.a. Experience an amazing one!

Critical: it lasted too less!!!

CRISTIAN Oproiu, Bucharest

I am so sad that we are going to leave tomorrow. What can I say... only strong words: awesome, Legenderry, supportive, interesting, inspired, positive, innovative.

MARIA Sondra, Thessaloniki



**We thank the European Union 'Youth in Action' Programme,
the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe and
the Derry City Council
who made this International Training Course for Youth Workers possible.
We thank our hosts and partners in Derry~Londonderry,
who welcomed us with open arms and
created wonderful conditions for all of us
to play, work, learn and celebrate together.**

Reconciliation - A Definition

Reconciliation is a mind set yet
to be considered
by a people who do not
want to be reconciled
because of a rooted hatred
that has been instilled by
a history we did not make
To be reconciled is to admit
we may have done wrong because
we thought we were right
To be reconciled means we may
have to forgive the deeds of
others who have caused us offence
when we felt we did no harm
Maybe we need to Reconcile
Ourselves with the notion that
we never will be reconciled.
But Maybe, just Maybe.

*by Michael Doherty
Peace and Reconciliation Centre Derry*

