



Offene Arme, offene Herzen -
Young Europeans come together and
show how to share...
Sylt • Hamburg



Unlock your Mind
Kurgan • Tyumen



Jovens4dignity -
Youth work in our communities:
re-discovering dignity
Lisbon • Palermo



Take 5 - Welcome to Europe
Hamburg • Flensburg

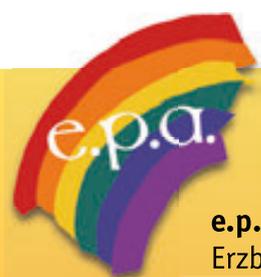


EuropaJugendBüro.de

e.p.a. • european play work association



Annual Report 2016



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Dear friends, partners and supporters,

2016 was an amazing and moving year with beautiful projects, fruitful encounters and many inspiring young people. At the same time the year showed its shady sides with ongoing international conflicts, anti-European and populist voices and financial insecurities influencing the work of the e.p.a. network.

Many years ago we produced postcards and posters: "... if the old dream of a **peaceful and just Europe** is not to be swallowed by multinationals or wilt under eurocracy or become a nightmare, Europe needs **youth initiatives from beneath!**" We could probably update a few words to describe even better what is going on and what is needed at the moment, but there is no reason to take our old poster down. We are still strongly convinced that we need and we have to support grass root youth initiatives and we are confident that our work and our projects contributed positively to a stronger Europe showing more solidarity with young people.



Thanks to everybody who added a colour to one of our activities in 2016 by creating, participating, planning, debating, p(l)aying, sharing, organising, celebrating, multiplying, managing, evaluating, documenting and working!



We especially thank **the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg** for the continuing support for our European and International network and it's International Youth Work activities.

The e.p.a. team

Hamburg, February 2017



The e.p.a. network was substantially supported by





Europa JUGEND Büro

All year through e.p.a. provided a youth drop-in centre “Europa JUGEND Büro” in Hamburg, with open access to opportunities for European youth mobility and intercultural youth co-operation. We created local visibility for current European themes, supported youth initiatives, voluntary service, encouraged committed youth workers and organisations to become involved in international youth work and informed them about European funding opportunities, training and intercultural methodology. e.p.a is an active Eurodesk relay centre and pro-active partner within the European network. > EuropaJugendBuero.de



Eurodesk Networking

In April e.p.a. took part in the Annual Meeting of Eurodesk network in Bonn, where new strategies for the year were discussed and developed. In October e.p.a. represented the German network in a European Eurodesk Meeting in Trieste, Italy, promoting the approach of intercultural non-formal learning in youth mobility information work.

In co-operation with Eurodesk Germany e.p.a. organised a two days in-service training activity for youth workers and (vocational) teachers in November in Hamburg to become “mobility pilots”, to enable them to offer information and advice on youth mobility for the young people they work with. > eurodesk.eu



European Week

The European Week (30.04. - 09.05.) provided once again a good opportunities for European Networking and for Awareness building related to European themes. e.p.a. invited young people to several events, each of them with a different focus. We invited people on the Hamburg pedestrian zone with interactive elements to discuss about European values; a school event with workshops on European migration debate; an open mobility information afternoon with playful methods; an online webinar to European information and a network cinema event with European movies and a debate on migration with representatives of the youth organisations of political parties.



European Volunteers Meeting

e.p.a. hosted meetings of Young European Volunteers, who are or have been young participants in the EVS European Voluntary Service, to agree activities for 2016, which would emphasise and publicise the idea of young people engaging in EVS and promote European mobility and citizenship. Some of the activities were implemented and presented during the European Week.

Structured Dialogue



e.p.a. co-ordinated and ran the “Take Five – Welcome to Europe” inter-regional large-scale Youth conference in Flensburg, Germany with a 100 young people, representatives of local authorities and politicians from 5 Northern German “Länder”. The aim

was to experiment and practice a “structured dialogue” and youth participation. This year we concentrated on the questions of migrant and refugee policies, putting the focus on the integration and equal and peaceful living together in society. With playful method workshops and youth-led policy dialogues young people with and without refugee background had the chance to get to know each other, learn more about local and European policies. > welcome-to-europe.net



Young Training for SDGs

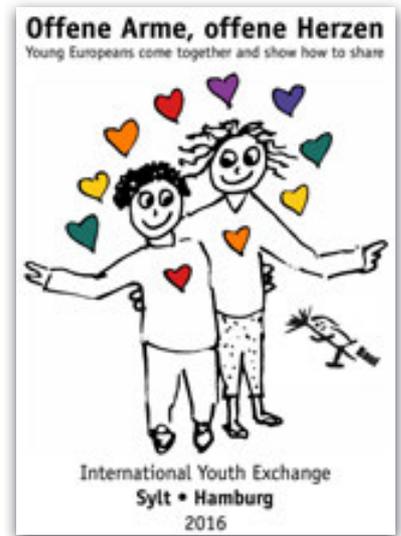
A two-days Training Seminar (21. - 22.05.) supported young people from the North of Germany with interests in development policy. Using a mix of non-formal learning and intercultural methods, the participants learned to create their own educational youth project using the Sustainable Development Goals as a frame and tool for educational communication. The next step is to develop a “train the trainer” youth seminar in 2017 for the wider implementation of the SDGs and for the promotion of the importance of youth in this process. The training was organised together with Engagement Global and Kipaji Educational Development.



Youth Exchange “Offene Arme, offene Herzen - Young Europeans come together and show how to share ...”

e.p.a. and the adventure playground “Baui” invited the “South-North” International Youth Exchange to come to Hamburg and the island of Sylt for two weeks from 25th of June – 9th of July with 60 young people from 7 countries in Europe - Palermo (Italy), Lisboa – Madeira (Portugal), Málaga (Spain), Hamburg (Germany), Liverpool (UK) and (Maribor/Ljubljana) Slovenia.

An advanced planning visit (APV) was organised in April in Hamburg and Sylt: Together with young representatives from all partner groups we looked at programme, accommodation, visits, workshops, logistics, agreed on rules and transport ... and enhanced the feeling of “looking forward...”!



I have discovered that refugees are often rejected and are given little opportunities in the new communities they live in. They are often labelled. Listening to stories about them has given me a voice to help them and tell people in my own community the struggles they are facing.

CHAMANE, Liverpool

The context of the Exchange was the refugee situation, where millions of people are forced to leave their homes. European governments are divided in their response to refugees between those, who support their civil societies organising a warm welcome, and those, who build new fences to keep the refugees out.



In a spirit of international friendship the participants discussed and debated under the theme “Offene Arme, offene Herzen - Young Europeans come together and show how to share...”, considering aspects like Diversity, Equal Rights and opportunities, skills and values. We looked at the current refugee and migration situation and collected ideas on how we can cultivate a welcoming climate.

The participants came from politically, socially and economically disadvantaged communities. Despite these difficult realities in their communities, they all showed and shared the willingness to use their full potential and be active citizens! All 6 groups and every single one of the young people, brought a range of abilities and creativity, which was more than an “added value” to the programme of this IYE.

I have learned to not to judge anyone by their look, religion or any other reason. I've learned that every living refugee/Immigrant has a long history behind, I've learned they should be helped not judged. I have learned great lessons, I've learned things that in Malaga I would have never learned.

BEA, Málaga

Programme and methodology followed the principles of non-formal learning approaches, with interactive and playful activities. The young participants gained knowledge on the



overall project theme migration, intercultural awareness, theory of prejudices and discrimination and European values. Participants enjoyed both, their personal growing as well as new social competences – stepping out of the comfort zone. They returned to their countries with more experience, knowledge, tools and enthusiasm, which they can use, share and multiply with their friends, youth groups and European communities.

> go-epa.org/en/offene_arme

Every time you participate in such encounter, you change a little the way you think, so you always change something little in your life when you return home, like for example the way of living or simply changes your opinion about what you have been working this two weeks.

WUARDA, Málaga



Youth Exchange “Unlock your Mind”

e.p.a. has been organising multilateral youth activities between East and West (Western and Eastern Europe) since 2003. This Exchange took place, where Europe meets Asia traditionally on a road between Yekaterinburg and Tyumen in Siberia and brought together 60 young people from UK, Germany, Romania and Ukraine, hosted by our Russian friends in Tyumen and Kurgan, 13th - 27th of August 2016.



“Unlock your mind”
International Youth Exchange
Kurgan + Tyumen
2016



Our theme “Unlock your Mind” created the conditions for young people to look at the world creatively and critically, to see through the propaganda and media misinformation and judge issues by the facts as they see them, to be able to come to their own decisions and conclusions.

An Advanced Planning Visit in Kurgan and Tyumen in Siberia was carried out in April, looking at venues, cultural activities, transport, Visas, risk assessment and finalising the programme.



The nicest experience for me was seeing other members of the exchange coming out of their shell and going confidence day by day. The most important experience for me was the rope walk and seeing everyone support and encourage each other. The most moving experience for me was saying good bye to everyone as I would like the exchange to last longer.

RHIANNON, Liverpool

The exchange programme and methodology were focused around the participants experiences including spaces to get to know each other, to discover new cultures and to contribute to the debate in workshops designed and presented by the young people themselves. We visited an orphanage and organised a play day for the children, we went to museums in Kurgan and Tyumen, sang songs at the embankment of the Tura river and shared our experiences with the local community.

The nicest experience for me was that I came out of my comfort zone/shell and got to experience and learn new things about people and Russia. The most moving and for me is and I can't answer as they all did.

KEIRAN, Liverpool





At a time when East and West in Europe are stuck in confrontation, even violence and the economic and political environment is against young people ... this Youth Exchange provided a rainbow of opportunities for an alternative agenda and vision. > go-epa.org/en/unlock_your_mind

This exchange was a real discovery for me. It is very hard to get to know the world through the television and the internet. The communication with people from different countries helped me to look at the world from another side, more important side. Side of feelings and human values. In particular the exchange helped me to look at me and to understand who I am. Only the exchange open your eyes at the world..

DMITRY, Kiev

I learned that we are people coming from many cultures and with different backgrounds and we cannot change people's ideas about life just like this easy. People will continue to put labels and maybe those who are ready to open their mind but when someone tells us about a new think, we say that till now we were close-minded.

ANDREA, Bucharest

Training Seminar "Jovens4Dignity"



The e.p.a. international training seminar "Jovens4dignity - Youth work in our communities: re-discovering dignity" was hosted by the Eco-estilistas, a youth and community association, which works on a voluntary basis in a very disadvantaged community, Chelas, in Lisbon. The activity examined the theme Dignity, with its different dimensions linked to the situation of young people and their commitment in European disadvantaged communities. Further, the aim of the activity was to create a redefined understanding of the connections between youth empowerment, local community-based work, promotion of social and human rights and international networking.

The preparatory meeting took place from 11th to 14th of June 2016 in Lisbon. We discovered the venues, the conditions our host group works under and the infrastructure. The final programme and responsibilities were discussed and agreed.

The main activity, International Training Seminar, took place from 7th to 14th September 2016 in Lisbon and involved 30 participants from 20 countries within the e.p.a. network. The programme was a mix of theoretic and practical Workshops, project visits, an official town hall reception, socio-cultural activities and some amazing cultural visits.



The Workshops contributed different perspectives to the theme Dignity and were implemented through non-formal, participative and intercultural methods.



The idea behind the essential role of socio-cultural actions in the programme – e.g. two thematic Workshops, Play Action, Catwalk, Kizomba session, thematic linked project visit – was to show the possibilities for dignified and creative interventions in one’s own community, with suitable methods, when working with and for young people, and both working with and living dignity as a daily commitment.

This seminar put on the table a really important question – dignity and that was moving for me. Many years I had a problem with my dignity, hiding my identity but here I realized that's one of the most important things you have.

ANI, Sofia

I understood how important is voluntary work and participation of people. I learned that working with community is the perfect way to find solution for problems.

ASDREN, Frankfurt

In the end we collected and compiled the results and ideas from our workshops and created our own “Road Map to Dignity”. For this road map the group collected ideas, stepping-stones and important elements for more dignity in the life

of young people in disadvantaged communities. The results were shared with participants, encouraging them to spread and share the outcomes. A Follow-up-Meeting in Palermo took place in October, where the project team worked on the evaluation and dissemination.

I learnt the we must never stop dreaming, fighting and working for what we believe and what we want to change in our community or in the world, and that there are plenty of good work being done across Europe, that we need to share.

Miguel, Lisbon

The training seminar was supported by the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe. ➤ go-epa.org/en/jovens4dignity





What Europe do you want to live in?

Culture, Participation, Young people's independence, Mobility, Networking, Fair share, Information, Peace and Democracy were the main topics for 50 young people from all Baltic Sea countries who were celebrating an international youth exchange visiting Hamburg in October. The e.p.a. team encouraged and accompanied young people with youth exchange experience to prepare and facilitate this peer-to-peer workshop asking: What Europe do you want to live in?

Referring to the very challenging topic the workshop went well. The views from different countries were very different and the opinions of young people sometimes even sarcastic, as the state of play of Europe seems to be not very promising at the moment.



Round Table in Timisoara / Romania

This gathering in December was organised by a young colleague who grew up in one of the orphanages in Romania and had participated in e.p.a. seminars, mainly funded by the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe (a fine example of sustainability and continuity!).

The theme of the project was *"The therapeutic needs of young people leaving residential care"*, initiated by young people who had been a part of the so called "copii sistema" – the system children, who were brought up in orphanages. It was a great privilege to see "our" young person chairing the round table (over 200 participants). The recommendations that



were worked out at the round table conference were to be presented to the Minister responsible for Residential Care following the new elections in Romania.

Young people from Romanian orphanages have been participating in e.p.a. Youth Exchanges for over 12 years. The reality for most of these young people, is being evicted when they reach their 18th Birthday with hardly any or no social, financial or coping skills or abilities. This can be catastrophic for many of these young people and therefore the work of this round table was essential.

e.p.a. will follow developments over the coming months and years with concern and hope!

Network Development

In 2016 e.p.a. continued our commitment with and for refugee young people in participative projects. In all e.p.a. projects and our organisational decisions, the commitment against xenophobia and for refugee rights were visible. Compared to previous years, the progress was especially made in widening our networking efforts within the Mediterranean Region working on the theme migration and responding to the plight of refugees. Many e.p.a. partners chose their participants for e.p.a. activities taking into consideration their work with young migrants/refugees or/and their own migrant/refugee background. As always being an important dimension of e.p.a., understanding migration in the light of human rights and in a European Youth Work context, became an even stronger focus within our network during the past year.

Especially through the activities in Lisbon and in Palermo, a deeper understanding of the connections between community and youth work was secured within the network partners. Encouraged by good examples from the network, other partner groups started to plan new community projects with this new international support, including especially the needs of minorities. In a situation where many youth initiatives especially in South- and East-Europe have experienced challenging times regarding the economical and political developments with perceptible consequences for the life of young people, the community-based and intergenerational backing support is getting even more vitally important.





e.p.a. in brief

e.p.a. is an international network of youth and community initiatives and associations with partner in over 40 countries: in Europe (including Middle-, Eastern-, and South Eastern Europe), in South America and Africa.

e.p.a. is an International Non Governmental Youth organisation (INGYO), recognised by the Council of Europe, European Youth Foundation, Strasbourg since 1977 and the EU, Brussels since 1986, registered and based as a "Freier Träger der Jugendhilfe" and charity (e.V.) in Hamburg – Germany.

e.p.a. aims to highlight, confront and challenge the problems of young people living in some of the most disadvantaged cities, areas and regions of Europe. e.p.a. endeavours to provide an opportunity for these young people to discover their potential, experience international friendship and fight against apathy, poverty and neglect.

As an international network, the task of e.p.a. is to organise and co-ordinate activities which meet the needs and wishes of network member organisations. These are International Youth Exchanges, Study Visits, Intercultural workshops, Training seminars, activities related to Voluntary Service, International Meetings and advocacy activities directed at local, regional and national governments of Europe and European Organisations.



The e.p.a. network was substantially supported and funded by

