

EUROPEAN CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH PEACE ACTIONS A TOOLKIT



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Introduction

Never before in human history have we faced a world of so much complexity and so many challenges, all unfolding at a dizzying pace. Even our most progressive approaches to human organization are quickly becoming obsolete — insufficient for navigating the challenges and harnessing the opportunities now in front of us more than ever to develop a culture of peace. To create a new European consciousness around global stewardship among the new generation is an emergency.

Children for Children –Children for Peace collaborates with children and youth from Europe to create a European consciousness through a strong culture of inner and external peace. This project is a collaboration between six organisations recognized internationally that have coalesced their focus on peace education based on living values and ethical behaviours fostering sustainability.

The venue of the activity was in the traditional mountainous country-side of the historical region of Maramures, Romania giving the young European participants the opportunity to experience the village life in Romania and appreciate the local traditions as well as observe the impact of modernity and life in the 21st century on rural Romania.

35 participants from five countries (Romania, Hungary, Great Britain, Switzerland, and Germany) came together between 5 and 12 August 2011.

The objective was to encourage young people to reflect upon European topics and to involve them in the dialogue on peace and conflict issues in Europe and globally. The project had a European dimension and stimulated reflection on the new solid European society and its values.

Romania as host country shared from their perspective the depth of their traditions and up-to-date experiences. Youth coming from different cultures expressed their desires to learn and live the simple unity of all humankind no matter of their diverse situations, religions or ethnicity. During the activity days they discussed the true meaning of peace, inwards and externally, and how to achieve changes in their own lives. The project aimed also to encourage young people to reflect on the essential characteristics of European society and, in addition, to encourage them to play an active role in their communities and to be active participants in their whole life.

The children, youth and elders present at Apa Nord gathering ...



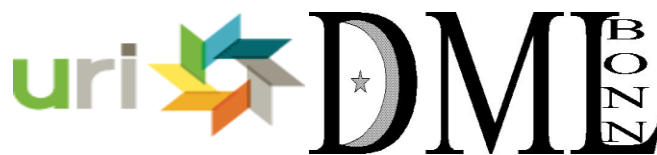
The Partnership



Children for Children: Children of Peace Foundation in Romania is a non-governmental organization whose main purpose is to promote and protect the rights of young people and develop international cooperation for the development and cultivation of peace. The organization includes 150 members between 15-35 years. The programs help young people develop a strong personality and to strengthen their self esteem, promote a culture of peace and mutual understanding. The programs offer information needed for youth: competencies, skills, attitudes for making their own decisions, to create their own future, in line with the socio-economic reality in which they live. To be a good European citizen is needed dignity and respect for cultural diversity. Our organization is heavily involved in youth rights, providing equal opportunities to everyone. It is a member of the Youth Employment Summit Campaign, to tackle youth issues after school graduation. It is a member of the International Association for Volunteer Efforts (IAVE) project aimed to create a European network for EU Peace and Understanding.



Children of the Earth is a 501 (C)(3) tax-exempt corporation established in 1990 and received recognition as a non-governmental organization of the United Nations for its work with young people around the world in 1992. We dedicate our work to the building of a better future. We deliver programs, which provide young people with the empowerment and leadership skills necessary to advance peace in the world today and in the future. We foster building networks of cooperation, multicultural understanding, spiritual values, and ethical living skills. Children of the Earth inspires and unites young people, through personal and social transformation, to create a peaceful and sustainable world. Website: <http://www.coeworld.org>



DML Bonn-Cooperation Circle within URI Deutschland e.V. and URI Europe co-organizes projects in Germany and internationally on intercultural and interfaith dialogue based in the community. We co-organise annually about five conferences related to interfaith dialogue in cooperation with various partner organizations. Activities focus on the Abrahamic faiths, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Baha'i, and integrate people of no faith. They explore how people of faith and of none can cooperate in a secular European society to support social cohesion and a balanced society. These events such as the annual Christian-Islamic Conference at Pentecost (a family event), the Three Faiths Summer School at Ammerdown/UK or the Standing Conference of Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe have been vibrant occasions for

many years, often decades. Some have started as far back as 1972, some date back 20 years or more, which makes them unique worldwide. Websites: <http://www.uri.org/> and <http://www.muslimliga.de>



United Religions Initiative UK develops projects across Europe to facilitate greater understanding and greater respect between people of different religions or no religion, to create a culture of peace, justice, and protecting all beings on earth. We learn to live together with a variety of spiritual traditions and respect the identity and moral values of every individual. We are strongly supported by the UK Government, "Face to Face and Side by Side" program partnership framework for the development of strategies of a multi-religious society sharing EU objectives of social cohesion and integration. Website: <http://www.uri.org.uk/>



Centre of Unity Schweibenalp in Switzerland has activities that are based on a profound belief that each of us has the power to transform the world by strengthening the link between the inner life of mind and spirit with the outer life of service and action, learning to live together with a variety of spiritual traditions and respect the identity and moral values of every individual. Website: <http://www.schweibenalp.ch>



Magyarorszáért Európában Egyesület Foundation in Hungary is dedicated to building a better future. It offers programs that give young people competencies, skills, empowerment and leadership necessary to promote peace in the world today and in the future. Promotes networks of cooperation, multicultural understanding, spiritual values, ethics and life skills.

About This Toolkit

The European Consciousness Through Peace Actions Toolkit was born out of the desires of the organizers of the youth project to share their learning and support the intentions of some participants to carry forward the methods with other groups of youth in their communities. More broadly the toolkit is targeted for European youth facilitators, educators and trainers.

The toolkit is structured along the thematic purposes that were followed by the youth project:

- Establishing a sense of community
- Setting intention
- Identity and belonging
- Peace and conflict
- Forgiveness and reconciliation
- Participation and problem solving
- Closing and moving forward

Within each thematic chapter the tools and methods used are detailed according to purpose, timing, description, facilitation tips and lessons learned:

- Purpose – why this tool/method was used to reach the wider thematic objective,
- Timing – necessary time needed for its use as well as recommended moment within the wider picture of the gathering,
- Description – brief narrative of how the tool/method is happening
- Facilitation tips – needed resources, guidance for facilitators to draw all wisdom from the process and the group, problems that may be encountered and ways to go beyond them,
- Lessons learned – we saw what did not work and decided to do it differently the next time.

It is important to understand that the flow or process that was followed during the project was driven by an initial planning with all the organizers and finally emerged organically upon being confronted with the intentions and profiles of the participants.

The language of the toolkit is an easy to follow, basic level of English. We encourage volunteer translations of this content into other European languages for wider transmission of the information. If you have a translation please share it with us so it can be made available. You may find our contact details at page 29.

We hope you enjoy applying these activities with your colleagues and friends.

Establishing a Sense of Community

The human species has a long experience in community living and indeed this type of association is inherent to our survival through the ages. The XIX-th and XX-th centuries drive for individualism, especially in the areas of Europe and North America and to certain extents in other parts of the world, has seen the degradation of community values and living practices and alienation of the people from their communities. Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, wars and natural disasters have also made their mark on fostering divisions in communities. At the same time throughout human history we have seen an expansion of the concept of communities from the tribal, ethnic-based, religious-based, national-based and now regional-based like the European Union. In the XXI-st century, global challenges are testing our powers to further extend the idea of community to include the Earth-based. We believe it is not only possible, but indeed necessary for peaceful and sustainable living.

The spiritual basis of the community is the idea that “We are One”. Can we create an awareness among Europeans of our inter-connectedness and our joint responsibility for global stewardship? The youth project “European Consciousness Through Actions for Peace” has proven us that we certainly can try and achieve for a short period of time to model the change that we want to see in the world – a sense of community among members of diverse ethnic, religious, national backgrounds and having a wide range of ages.

We have taken into consideration the following aspects:

- Space
- Agreements or rules of living
- Celebration and mourning
- Sharing and giving voice
- Conflict management
- Memory and remembering
- Fun and relaxation

Space

We all shared the same house for a period of a week in the village Apa Nord, near the lake in the historic region of Maramures, in the North part of Romania. Living quarters were split among women and men and within a room there were groups of 4 to 8 people. Such close sharing of the space enables the presence, emotions, words and actions of each individual to vitally influence that of the group and vice-versa. The energetic traditions of feng shui had been used in the decoration of the house and garden.

Meals were set at fixed times, three times a day containing organic and fresh produce bountifully catering for vegetarians and non-vegetarians. The eating area was also open and enabling for conversation. Water and tea were offered and coffee was possible to be made for those over a certain age.

Cleanliness practices were kept daily which created an ordered and beautiful area for work and play.

The activities took place in the same inside area and outside in the garden.

Smoking was not allowed in the house. Light, occasional drinking was permitted and each adult was made responsible for their measure of drinking. In the future, we would argue against any alcoholic beverages.

FACILITATION TIPS

Factor in space and location well in advance according to the number, sex and age of the participants.

All methods will be affected by the available space.

Aim for accessible to all transportation means, open, clean, well-aired and well-lit venues carrying positive symbolism for all participants.

LESSONS LEARNED

Keep living standards the same for everyone throughout the period.

Never downgrade unless specifically required by a participant.

Consider elderly needs of privacy.

Provide for disabled individuals proper access and space.

The Living Agreements

Well-functioning communities sooner or later are faced with setting up some common understandings and agreements such that each individuals' dignity is respected and harmony can be maintained. Our small community found it very important to involve all those present from the beginning into discussing what agreements should be shared. The list upon its acceptance by all was reviewed then every morning and added to as needed – that is why it was called a living document or The Living Agreements.

It is many times difficult with rebellious teens to discuss “rules that should be obeyed” without triggering their inner fighting mechanisms. The way you introduce this process is important. With humour and live role playing, Matthew, one of the facilitators, created a light and comfortable environment, full of fun in order to approach some of the points of order.

Examples of points of agreement from our group were:

- put the cellphone on vibrate
- come in time for the sessions
- listen actively
- announce your intention to speak and wait for your turn to come
- no interrupting the speakers
- no showers in the period 22:00 – 06:00
- address the idea and not the person

What happens then when all points are agreed upon is that the whole group can act in holding themselves accountable for each trespassing. Whenever there happens to be trespassers, the group should tactfully engage the person and hear their reasons first, without shaming or blaming. Behind each act of disobedience there is a basic need which deserves to be answered.

Whenever a new individual joins the group, they are presented with the Living Agreements and he or she also agrees to live by them. If there is no immediate agreement on all accounts, the moment to discuss them and agree once more is at the beginning of the day when they are taken up.

The Living Agreements are ideally displayed throughout the programme on one of the walls of the venue as a reminder and a point of reference.

FACILITATION TIPS

Role play humourously some of the desired and not desired behaviours.

Take up the Living Agreements every morning.

Post the Living Agreements in visible place throughout the programme.

Discuss the need for a method of holding accountable trespassers.

Celebration and mourning

The need to remember and appreciate the important moments of life have led communities to honour them with rituals of celebration and mourning. During our time together we celebrated the beginning of the gathering, the ending, birthdays, and we mourned the international day of the nuclear explosion in Hiroshima (6 August) and the recent passing of one of the friends of a participant.

Our celebrations came with song and dance, flowers and cakes and our mourning time with prayer and meditation and offerings of sincere condolences.

We used each occasion to mark the significance and meaning of the moment, to frame it in the lives of the individuals and in our lives in order to know each other better through what is important for us, to be together for each other, and to make speeches and practice addressing groups of people. Each time a coordinating person was necessary to get things prepared and to facilitate the moment. The specific person either took it upon themselves due to their relationship to the event, or was asked to support the coordinating team. They were given the complete confidence to be creative and hold the group together.

Sharing and giving voice

The opportunity and ability of the individuals to express themselves is crucial in a community and we desired to honour the participation of everyone. We informed all participants about the programme that we had in mind with everyone and we followed our progress along the passing of days. Whenever there were changes we consulted each other and offered options for going forward such that the needs of all are heard. We found it most difficult to cater to such a wide variety of individuals and acknowledge that along the lines of fun and tourism we have not satisfied all needs.

Circle sharing was another way we engaged all participants in discussion on important topics. Using the method of the talking stick, the holders of the circle being a man and a woman in the spirit of gender balance, each member of the circle had the chance to make their contribution in the language of their choice and translation was available. Circle sharing with a talking stick is a long-held tradition of the first nations of the Americas and their communities are models of participatory democracy even before Athens. The timing of the circle sharing was especially in the evening after dinner to allow for plenty of time. The themes were formulated simply to make them accessible at the late hours of the evening.

After sections of presentation there was always time (at least 10 minutes) for questions and answers such that we would deal with the new information and enable the experience of others to be heard. We used to ask questions to the little ones about their understanding using a more concrete situation, something that they could relate to given the general issue. In order to have a more open discussion and deal with the generation gap, we had activities that placed people in age-specific groups. It has been an accepted method in education to group people along with others in their own level of understanding and knowledge. Especially because we were so diverse in ages and a parent and a teacher (so positions of authority) of the children were also present we felt the need to apply this method.

Each country group was asked to have gifts for the group of specific snacks and sweets from their country. This was an enjoyable experience for all as we tasted German jams, Swiss chocolates and other goodies. This is important for cultural sharing.

Conflict management



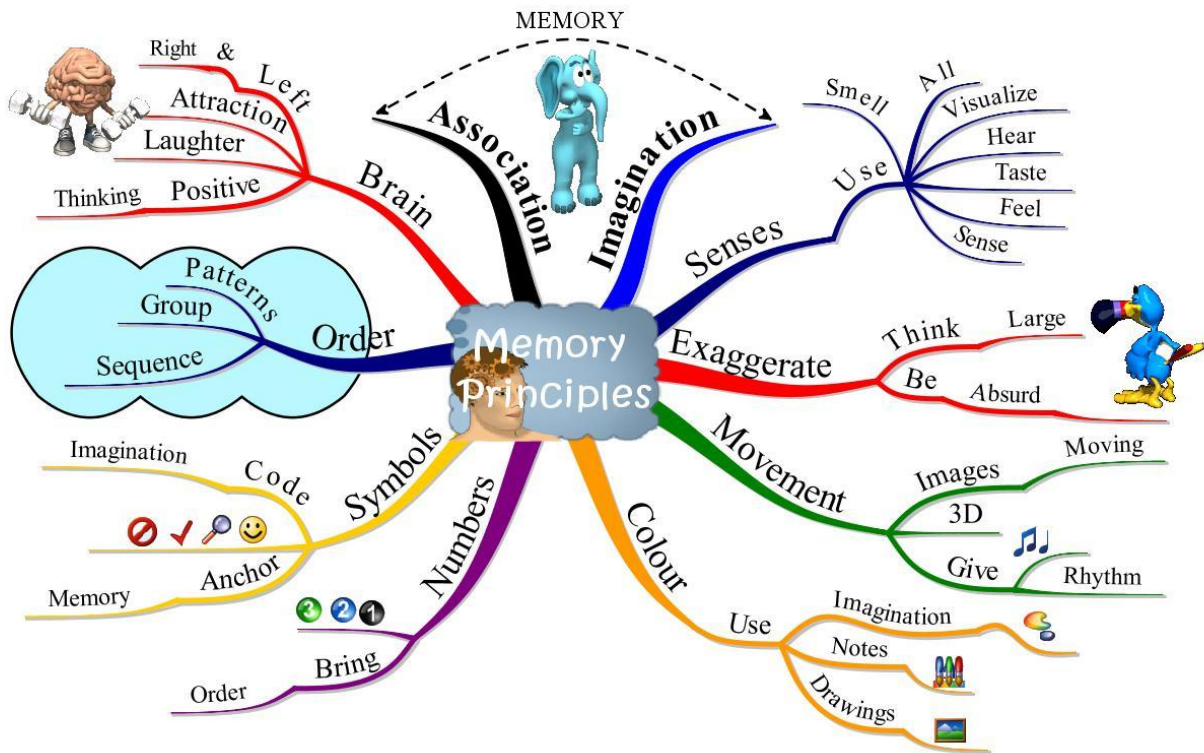
Keeping the peace and dealing with conflicts as they arise is necessary in all groups of people. We felt it was important at all times to practice what we preach and be ourselves models of good behavior and healthy attitudes.

We solved our differences either one-on-one, or by reviewing the living agreements. The key was each of our openness to express discontent and dissonance about the conflict we had or perceived and to have the honesty to approach the right individual who could support us towards moving forward in the direction of resolution and transformation.

We were also faced with a much deeper conflict involving Roma and Romanian children and here we tackled the issue in a circle involving all those who desired and focused on future actions towards a positive outcome, establishing a relationship of friendship between two girls

belonging to the different ethnic groups. We may not have solved the age-old conflict of discrimination and lack of opportunities against Roma, but we certainly did not let it slide. Our approach may be summarized as the following: "May there be Peace on Earth and may it begin with me". A community's transformation starts with the personal and needs to expand to the relational, structural and cultural aspects of living in that community. Our impact was at the personal and the relational level among the participants of the gathering.

Memory and remembering



In the growth and learning process of individuals the memory is very much solicited. All groups of people have an individual and a collective system of memory and remembering at their disposal. Here is how we took this into consideration in building the sense of community within our group.

We can divide the methods in to individual and collective ones. The individual methods of supporting memory and remembering are the following:

- Keeping a journal – suggest people to make notes and keep a journal during the programme. Writing in own handwriting is a very complex brain function that supports memory and thinking, especially building new brain connections as people learn new things.
- Taking photos – a picture speaks a thousand words is the saying. This helps people with better developed visual memory. Make sure their photo taking is not disturbing others.

Collective methods in support of memory and remembering are the following:

- Recording activities as they happened – the coordinators may have started with a schedule, but in the end what happened was up to the present moment. It is important therefore to record all the changes that took place to the initial plan.
- Making notes on flipchart – record important ideas and results of brainstorming on flipchart or on sticky notes. This helps reporting after the end of the project too.

- Changing educational methods every 20 minutes – this is a recognized training method especially for adult learning.
- Repeating the same message three times in different ways – retention of new information is thus very much improved. This also requires hearing it from the learners and making sure that the message was heard correctly.
- Making good presentations – this requires a whole toolkit in itself. We recommend finding such resources online.

A schematic more complicated map of how to support memory can be seen in the picture at the beginning of this section.

Fun and relaxation



The best way to learn and to prepare for learning is through fun activities and taking enough time to relax and reflect. We managed to strike a good balance between structured and free time although some participants may have appreciated the balance to be tilted towards the free, fun times.

During the few days together we danced, sang together, swam in the pool and walked around the property. During the touristic visits there was not so much freedom of movement however the time in the bus was a welcome breathing time in the midst of

much visiting.

We tried to recommend at least 7 hours of sleep per night.

An important afternoon was around the middle of the programme, after the session on forgiveness and reconciliation which was particularly an emotional session with traumatic experiences shared. After lunch we created open space where we asked each participant to propose what they most wanted to do together with others until dinner. This was our way of involving the participants in making the agenda and to allow those who needed space and time for something else or for them to be able to take it freely. Within that some played hide and seek, some learned how to dance Roma style, some watched a movie about the life and work of environmental activist Dr. Jane Goodall and her work with children and youth.

Take a piece of flipchart and divide it in three columns. The first column is the name of the activity, the second is the person responsible and the third is the location where the activity takes place. All can propose activities for which they are responsible. After all options are on the paper, each member of the community chooses which activity they would like to be a part of. Individuals can change their activities throughout the allocated time with the condition that they move in and out silently and respectfully. The paper is left in a visible place to be able to locate all activities. The person responsible can also take notes if the nature of the activity requires it. At the end of the allocated time the group gets together again and the persons responsible share what they've done within the activity, any important outcomes and ideas that emerged and valuable moments. All may contribute at that time with personal reflections. The coming together of the group marks the integrity of the community and the importance of keeping connected.

There are no better times in community when fun and relaxation can involve everyone in ways they find most valuable. Here is where individualism and collectivism can come together to define a harmonious and growing body of people.

Setting Intention



The intention of the organizers is one part of the equation, the intention of all participants is key to gauge also. We have done so with application forms where we asked about their motivation for participating and also what they would like to achieve by being part of the project.

A very engaging method and one that provided the anchoring for our beginning and end was the activity of creating together The Ideal Participant, also known as the method of the Body Map. We split the group in three age-groups, the young ones, the students and the adults. On three joined flipchart paper we drew the figure of a person with a face and a heart. We asked the following of the participants within 20 minutes timespace:

- HEAD: What do you as the ideal participant want to think, learn, understand, use your head for during this programme?
- EYES: What do you as the ideal participant want to observe, see and perceive with your eyes?
- MOUTH: What do you as the ideal participant want to speak about and generally using speech for?
- EARS: What do you as the ideal participant want to hear during the programme?
- HEART: What do you as the ideal participant feel and sense emotionally?
- HANDS: What actions would you like to perform as the ideal participant of the programme? How do you see your hands being used?
- FEET: What movements would you like to do as the ideal participant of the programme? How do you see using your feet this week?
- ANY OTHER: suggestions related to the ideal participant that may be linked to other parts of the body.

Each group received 3 minutes time to present their work and clarifying questions and discussions started. We promised all to each other that we would be these ideal participants to the best of our abilities that week. At the end of the week we came back to them and evaluated.

We used other positive affirmations during our work together. Such a practice helps to model the behavior that we want to see and *walk our talk*. One of these was “May Peace Prevail on Earth”. What better affirmation than this from the mouths of children and a wide variety of people such as those in our group. We feel united behind a common affirmation and vision.

FACILITATION TIPS

Visit each group and help them get concrete proposals and stay on the task.

Do not impose your ideas on the group. Listen and ask questions.

Give tips on how to allow everyone to speak within the groups.

Say the remaining time.

Get the attention of the group before you give further instructions.

Place the questions in plain view of everyone.

Identity and Belonging



We are human beings that accumulate a series of characteristics which start to become who we think we are. These also become ways of establishing where we belong. These are basic human needs: the need for meaning, the need for belonging, the need for knowing who we are.

This matter has shifted greatly with Romania's process to join the European Union and Romanians have started to be told that their belonging lies best within the EU. So how have the young people and adults in the gathering felt about this? Some were from older member states, such as the Germans, some came from countries whose belonging is more recent to the EU, such as Romania and Hungary. Also we had a group of Swiss people that had never been a part of the European Union and most likely never will be. Does being European mean anything to them? Here is how

we tried to explore these very complex issues in a limited amount of time with the purpose of revealing its complexity and also help all participants learn something more about each other as well as how they relate to being European.

The Facebook Profile



A basic Facebook profile was drawn on a flipchart paper for each small group of people containing: name, age, location, occupation, religion, family, friends, favourite activities. The participants were asked to tell stories inside their groups about what they put inside each category, stories that really made a mark on them and that determined their selection. This

was done in age-specific groups. As a matter of variation and for reaching better understanding, the adults were asked to consider what the youngest of age would put in their categories – an exercise of empathy.

The setup and implementation as well as debriefing took roughly 40 minutes, however this exercise could be extended easily to 60 minutes in order for more discussions to take place.

The Map of Europe



On a drawing representing roughly Europe we asked the participants to place a sticky note on each of their countries, either of residence or of origin, about what it means to be European to them. We came back to the map at the end of the gathering too such that we could see what changed if anything. Here you can also use an actual map of Europe or a World map. The map can also be projected on the screen and so the sticky notes would be applied to the screen or the wall.

The answers merit discussion and they can be accompanied by short stories of how they came about with the specific ideas.

All in all the activity may take up to 40 minutes depending on how much you wish to go into the discussions.

Cultural exchanges and awareness

Romania is a well-worth to visit country and so we offered the participants the chance to get a taste of our country that would relate to our cultural traditions and what we pride most in the North of Romania, the historical region of

Maramures. With the bus along days, at the beginning and at the end, we drove at museums, monasteries, old churches and a curious cemetery, many of them unique in the world and unique to our country. Guides or brochures helped the guests to get a better idea of the specifics they were seeing and where they were interested. We also benefitted of a knowledgeable local host that had a wealth of knowledge and experience with respect to the places we visited. Seeing other Romanians, shops, restaurants, parks and regular streets gave the participants a local feel.

FACILITATION TIPS

Assign each youth to remember their bus colleague in order to make sure all get back inside without having to count every time.

Allow plenty of time for visits.

LESSONS LEARNED

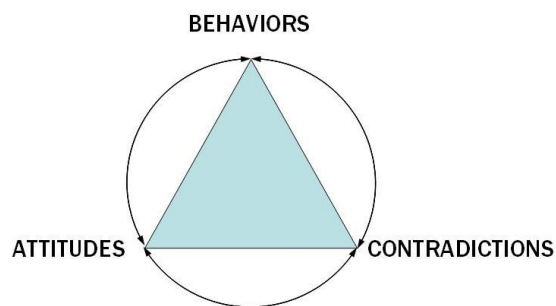
Include only 1 museum per day. At most 2 if youth are really interested in the topic.

Peace and Conflict

There is no human being that has not experienced conflict at least once in their daily living. The difference lies in the way each of us addresses conflict when it arises. Conflict is an opportunity to find a means to come to a new understanding. Even if it is a contradiction within us or with other people, conflict always operates within a relationship. At its core we can understand conflict by how it affects our attitudes and behaviours when faced with a contradiction be it of perceptions, values, principles, interests or positions.

Conflict is a natural state within a relationship between two or more individuals or groups that is characterized by the perception of incompatible values, principles, interests or positions. A conflictual state may be experienced within one individual as well. This can also arise from a difference between how we perceive we are, how we think others perceive us and how we truly are.

Conflict can be broken down in specific attitudes, behaviours and contradictions. We call this model the **Conflict Triangle**. As in each state of existence there is Yin and Yang in conflict too – positive within negative and negative within positive.



We first asked the young people what may be some of those attitudes, behaviours and contradictions that are at the essence of conflict. It was important to allow some time for reflection before rushing to hear answers. They responded the following:

Attitudes: passive, afraid, angry, hurt, ashamed, aggressive, brave, constructive, aware, etc

Behaviours: run, fight, punch, swear, cry, leave, laugh, talk about it, tell a friend, etc

Contradictions: different expectations among children/teenagers and parents, exercising power over someone or some group, discrimination, inequality, social and economic injustice.

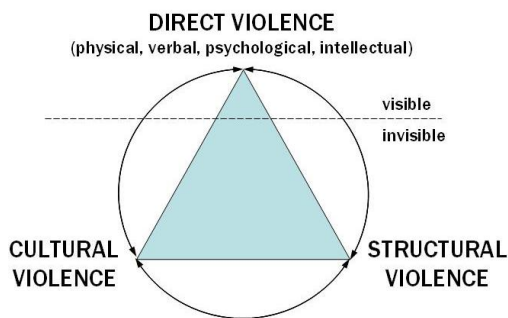
Knowing this, there is the potential in each conflict for each of the individuals or groups involved to act positively and constructively or negatively and destructively. Awareness of our own attitudes and behaviours and those of other parties involved in a conflict is the first step towards a conscious life. It often happens in workshops that the participants only give examples of negative and destructive attitudes, and behaviours. Challenge them to think of positive illustrations as well.

Many times, when people say conflict, they immediately refer to the moment violence occurs. Violence is not an instinctual solution to conflict, human beings are not naturally violent, it is a choice we make in dealing with conflicts. There is no justice in resorting to violence. Always the repercussions are more violence and suffering whether in the short or the long-term.

"I understand violence as the *avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs* or, to put it in more general terms, the impairment of human *life*, which lowers the actual degree to which someone is able to meet their

needs below that which would otherwise be *possible*. The *threat* of violence is also violence." (Johan Galtung, Kulturelle Gewalt; in: Der Bürger im Staat 43, 2/1993, p. 106)

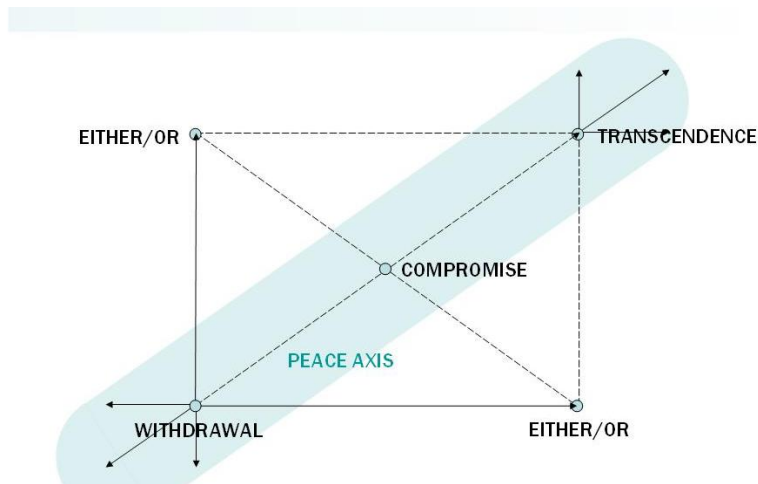
Violence can be understood by recognising its deeper nature. For a graphical representation please see the picture below. We call this model the **Violence Triangle**. Before we gave any hints participants had some time for reflection and then we asked what they thought examples and illustrations might be for each type of violence. Fighting, swearing, rape, burglary, hate-speech, pollution are instances of **direct violence** as we can perceive them using our senses. More elusive types of violence are structural and cultural violence. **Structural violence** can be recognized when there are various institutions or organisations which justify using direct violence or when they employ practices or policies that lead to direct violence towards various groups or individuals. Examples of structural violence are the unequal global system that allows for poverty, hunger, genocide, the military-industrial system which perpetuates war and use of weapons, unequal access of women to decision-making and other power positions. An even deeper sort of violence is that embedded in various cultures which enable discrimination and inequality. This is called **cultural violence**. Some examples are in proverbs that justify using violence against women: "Beat her and she will know why." (Romanian Proverb) Myths and legends of folkloric origin exist in all human cultures that say that only certain people are good and others are evil, only some are right and the others are wrong always. It is important to note that not all structures and cultures are violent, but they may contain aspects which justify violence.



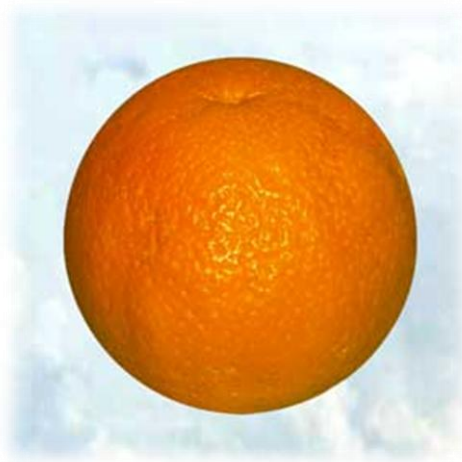
FACILITATION TIPS

Before giving the presentation ask the participants what they think are examples of each type. Give the definition in case they are not aware of the meaning from the beginning. This empowers participants to think for themselves, use their creativity or own knowledge.

End with an uplifting activity or a hopeful note as this specific part may prove heavy for some people.



The Orange Exercise



This exercise helps groups get creative in an easy way. Allow 20 -30 minutes or more for this exercise. The larger group is split in smaller groups of the same number depending on the total number (between 3 and 6). They are posed with a problem: **“You have two children and an orange. Find as many solutions as possible within a limited time period (from 10 minutes up).”**

Once the groups finished each gets to share their findings. The facilitator can reward the ones with the largest number of different solutions and therefore reward creativity.

Using this exercise you can show the different outcomes a conflict may have. We have seen that the same outcome was categorized differently by different people. This helped us show how perspectives vary in

understanding a conflict situation.

With this exercise you can also explore the process of bringing out the responses that each group took. Their different approaches can indicate various strategies of solving problems.

Other questions that bring out relevant issues for conflict transformation may be: What is one nonviolent and one violent solution of your group and why? What was your most creative solution and why? Did everyone have a solution? Did someone have more than others solutions? What assumptions did you make about the problem? Here you can point out that the problem did not mention that the children had a conflict over the orange. It is possible also that the children be in totally different locations than each other and with respect to the orange. The importance of being aware of our assumptions in conflict situations is therefore better highlighted. In the end the final question can be what other observations did you make during this exercise. This opens for unexpected points of view and learning that people may have come to.

We have begun with understanding conflict and now, with the help of the Orange exercise, we are heading into knowing ways to approach conflicts through nonviolent means. Many sources such as books and websites use various terminology. Below we attempt to provide a simple and concise list of definitions for the most used approaches to dealing with conflict.

Violent conflict prevention aims to prevent the outbreak of violent conflict.

Conflict settlement aims to end violent behaviour by reaching a peace agreement.

Conflict management aims to limit and avoid future violence by promoting positive changes in behaviour in the parties involved.

Conflict resolution addresses the causes of conflict and seeks to build new and lasting relationships between hostile groups.

Conflict transformation addresses wider social and political sources of a conflict and seeks to transform the negative energy of war and violence into positive social and political change.

Negotiation is a process to reach a mutually acceptable agreement in a conflict.

Mediation is an extended version of a negotiation process as it involves an accepted individual or group which acts as a multipartial actor and supports conflict settlement.

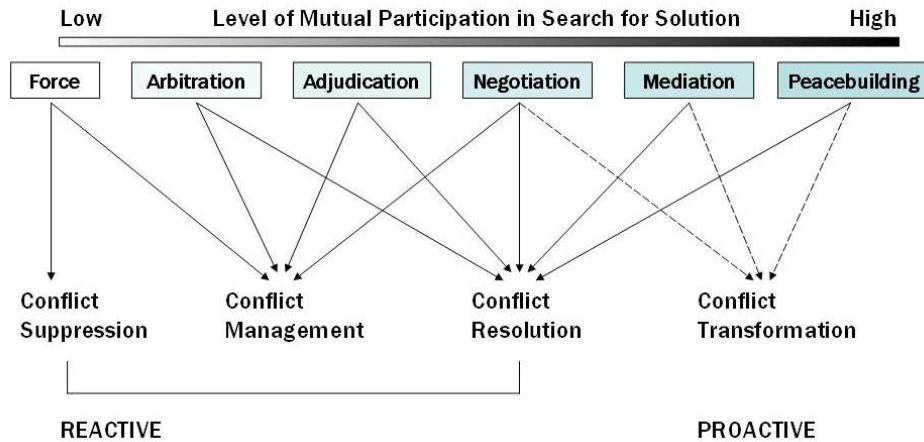
Arbitration takes place in the courts environment, the official justice system of a country, and is a technique that involves an arbiter or a group of arbitrators as well as possibly an institution, an arbitral tribunal, and whose decision the parties agree to abide by in solving their conflict.

Adjudication is also connected to a country's official justice system and the parties obtain a resolution in their case with the help of a judge who acts according to the laws of the country.

Reconciliation is a process through which the relationships between conflicting parties are brought closer and bettered, friendly relationships are re-established.

A framework for understanding how these processes are interlinked can be seen in the figure below.

Adapted from Hiskias Assefa



The Statues Exercise

This exercise is a method of role playing for the purpose of understanding analyzing conflicts and sustaining creativity in finding solutions as well as empowering people to change the situations in their lives where before they may not have felt able to deal with. Such an exercise may last up to 3 hours depending how many groups present.

Randomly assign in 4 – 8 people per group ensuring diversity along various lines. Each group is free to chose a problem or a conflict and create a statue using their own bodies and different accessories they find necessary in order to depict an image of the conflict, a moment of that specific problem. This phase should be given enough time (approximately 25 minutes or more, check if all groups are ready). Each group may find their own space to prepare.

Once everybody is finished gather all the group and ask who would like to start.

The audience has the first task to find out what the conflict is about. The group is not allowed to move during that time, unless the positions are really uncomfortable. Photos may be taken at this part of the group from all angles. Once the audience discusses and arrives to a scenario, the group is asked to reveal the true meaning.

The second task of the group is to intervene into the statue and modify it such that a solution is proposed. They may modify behaviours of the existing components of the group, but also they may introduce new actors or props.

The cycle repeats until all groups get to present.

Dos and Don'ts in Conflict Transformation

<i>Dos</i>	<i>Don'ts</i>
Dialogue	Debate
Listen actively	Talk incessantly
Re-humanise	Dehumanise
Empathise	Antagonise
Take time	Rush
Involve all actors and stakeholders	Exclude people or groups

Communicate	Hide/forget information
Coordinate	Act on your own
Ask questions	Make assumptions
Watch your language. Be careful of the words you are using	Impose own definitions and language
Find partners	Make enemies
Cooperate	Compete
Acknowledge our common, basic humanity	Stereotype or create/perpetuate enemy images
Practice multipartiality – look at issues from all perspectives	Practice unilaterality – look at issues from single perspectives
Forgive and heal	Hold a grudge
Take responsibility for your feelings, thoughts, words and actions	Blame and shame
...	...

Peacebuilding

Conflict transformation can be applied at different levels of conflict, however, in order to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of this process we need to go beyond the level of each conflict and look at the system which created the conflict. Peacebuilding is the process that tackles the system for dealing with conflict in a society. It works to create and strengthen constructive mechanisms of dealing with conflict.

Nonviolence, Empathy and Creativity

Basic to the transformation of each of the aspects of conflict: attitudes, behaviours and contradictions, are adopting an attitude of empathy, a nonviolent behaviour and creativity in finding solutions to the contradictions. Along centuries of human development we have found creative solutions to meet our basic needs. Many of these we now take for granted. It is an exercise of understanding of transformation and transcendence to think what problems did our ancestors solve with various mechanisms and tools that we have today.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

“The reconciliation is a process that is:

- Finding a way to live that permits a vision for the future
- The (re)building of relationships
- Coming to terms with past acts and enemies
- A society-wide, long-term process of deep change
- A process of acknowledging, remembering and learning from the past
- Voluntary and cannot be imposed

The reconciliation process is not, however:

- An excuse for impunity
- Only an individual process
- An imposition to/alternative to truth or justice
- A quick answer
- A religious concept
- Perfect peace
- An excuse to forget
- A matter of merely forgiving”

(International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Reconciliation After Violent Conflict A Handbook, http://www.idea.int/publications/reconciliation/upload/reconciliation_full.pdf)



There is nothing more powerful than a person talking from experience. In our group a Columbian young woman shared a touching and very real story of deep trauma, suffering, forgiveness, healing and reconciliation that she has lived in her life.

She pointed then to the power of our thoughts, words and sounds on our surroundings with the help of the research from Dr. Masaro Emoto. A video served as educational resource, but due to copyright reasons it cannot be included here. A brief search though on the internet reveals the work of Dr.

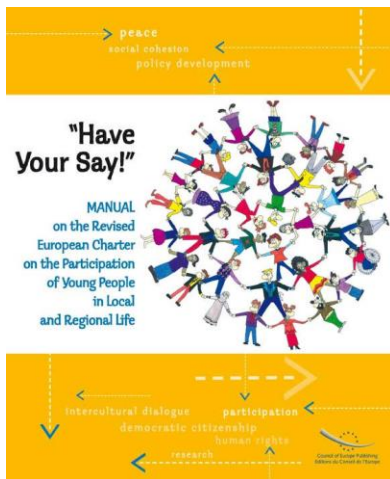
Emoto and a few other scientists that researched the effect of words, feelings, thoughts and sounds on the molecular structure of water. And let's not forget that we are 80% water in our bodies. Their findings should make us more humble and aware what we put out in the world and on each other as fellow human beings. Particular findings on forgiveness and saying I'm sorry were also part of the presentation. We ended with a guided meditation.

Participation and Problem Solving

“Youth participation is the active engagement of young people throughout their communities.” (Wikipedia)

“The right of young people to be included and to assume duties and responsibilities in daily life at local level as well as the right to influence the processes of their lives democratically” (Council of Europe)

“Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engaging in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society.” (Preamble of the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life)



Youth participation is important because

- it makes a positive difference,
- it makes young people heard,
- it stimulates development of new skills,
- young people gain more confidence in the process,
- it also helps adults recognize young people’s talents and potential,
- it creates space to use talents and strengths for the benefit of community or organization,
- it stimulates responsibility for actions and decisions,
- youth understand how democracy works and how it should work in real life,
- it helps adults understand the needs and the point of view of young people,
- it develops adults’ skills so that they can work efficiently with young people,
- it creates opportunity for adults to share their knowledge and experience in a non-patronising way, and
- it makes the decision-making process more representative.

Young people may participate in different areas:

- Economic participation – relates to employment and work in general, to economic development, eliminating poverty, building a stable economic situation in a society, a region or for young people as a group;
- Political participation – relates to authorities and governments, public policies, exercising power, the influence on the distribution of resources at different levels;
- Social participation – relates to the involvement in the life of a local community, addressing local problems and challenges;
- Cultural participation – relates to different forms of art and expression.

Their participation can take the following forms:

- Voluntary work
- Peer education
- Non-formal education
- Being active in an organization or club
- Taking part in elections (both to vote and to be elected)
- Youth councils, parliaments, fora, boards and other structures
- Projects and activities

- Campaigning activities
- Activating in discussion for a
- Being part of new social movements
- Boycotting and demonstrations
- International meetings
- Using the internet to gather information, express views of influence decision-making processes

Finally, these are some of the challenges to youth participation methods and processes:

- The belief that it's someone else's job
- Lack of information and lack of other necessary resources
- Meetings that are too long
- Accessibility for disabled people
- School commitments
- Belief that nothing will change
- Young people who participate are not representative
- Different values and habits
- Different time schedules
- Different communication styles
- Different levels and types of experience
- Lack of skills

After such a presentation we felt the need to stimulate some meaningful conversations along the types of activities that the youth have been involved in, what sort of problems do they think are most important and what sort of changes would they envision for dealing with those problems. Towards that outcome we used a dynamic process of dialogue called the World Café.

The World Café

Around tables equipped with flipchart paper, markers and crayons, we grouped the people in smaller groups. The method recommends to have a maximum of four people in one small group to stimulate opening up for conversations and allow more time for all to bring in their perspectives as well as letting the talk flow freely. It is in the setting of a café so people are allowed to bring tea and coffee in. Each table is made richer by snacks and sweets if you can spare. Music should be started and the space between tables needs to be wide enough to allow for privacy and for people to hear each other without disturbing others.

World Café Guidelines



The discussion takes place in rounds of 15 – 30 minutes. Each round may have a different question that is posed to all tables. After each round the components of the tables change except for a person who is designated to stay behind as the Ambassador or Table Host. The role of the Ambassador is to briefly summarize the discussions previously held.

The formulation of the questions is crucial to the success of the activity. They should be simple, in accessible language, relevant to the outcomes intended, inspiring to the audience, positive and open-ended.

Doodles, mind maps, scribbles are highly encouraged. This practice actually is proven to stimulate the creativity side of the brain and to support learning and interaction.

The café is concluded with a plenary where the collective knowledge is gathered on flipchart.

Such an activity lasts 3 to 4 hours.

LESSONS LEARNED

Start such an activity either at the beginning of the day or after a lunch break to have the time to prepare the setting.

Have no more than 4 people per table.

Get a visual graphic designer / artist to complete the experience and portray in a richer way the knowledge that emerges.

Closing and Moving Forward



Much to our sadness the end of our gathering did come and we hoped to have reached our intentions, but of course we had to check. So within the initial age-groups and supported with our beautiful body maps of the ideal participant we requested all to evaluate to what extent what they put at the beginning of the week actually came true. Using a sad face ☹ and a happy face 😊 and sticky notes for comments and suggestions they all set to become active evaluators of our programme.

We also set ourselves some promises and intentions for going forward that we each wrote in a letter to ourselves and that came back to us after 2 months. Did we each live up to our dreams for us within the two months? Each will have to consider for themselves.

We also took the time to draw attention to the fact that all activities happen in relationship with other people.

In order to plan follow-up activities, participants were asked to use the following two sentences to spark their thinking:

1. I have a friend / I know someone who needs my help:
2. I have a friend / I know someone who can offer help in the project:

These two sentences were used:

1. to identify a project that the participant wants to work on, and
2. to identify resources which will help him or her in achieving one's aims and successfully conduct the project.

Each individual shared their ideas and received feedback and sometimes further tips and suggestions - first in pairs of two and then in the larger group. The various ideas that came about for going forward kept being discussed among the people who teamed up around them. In hindsight, I see now new projects on the horizon waiting to receive the support needed.

The various global youth platforms that were present, Children of the Earth and United Religions Initiative, also managed to attract some future interest on the part of the young people and they will follow with them as the opportunities arrive. Children for Children: Children for Peace still works with the young people in the area of Baia Mare and Cluj-Napoca engaging them in new learning opportunities and also preparing a UK visit as well as a second edition of the European Consciousness Through Actions for Peace. Let's wish them all good luck and May Peace Prevail on Earth and May it Begin with Me.

"This peace summer school had the strength to motivate me to live in a better way, more beautiful, to enjoy the really important things, to strengthen my relationship with God and to tie friendships with wonderful people. I liked the diversified nature of our group. I met people of different ages, religions and cultures, and for me it was probably the best experience so far.

Amid the rising tensions worldwide and the constant conflicts between people, this camp was wise to

raise awareness of an often forgotten concept. A concept called Peace. Therefore, I am grateful for this peaceful idea, which I think was useful for every participant. I truly believe that this was a new beginning for my life and I thank all those very inspiring people. ”

(Iulia, Romania)

“This programme was an amazing experience. I loved that the group was so diverse: we had not only participants from different ages, but also different religions, different cultural traditions and we succeeded to create a very special space where we shared from all our hearts, our whole experience and we had the opportunity to learn very useful tools and skills necessary for peace work. This experience changed my life and Romania will remain in my heart forever.”

(Karoline, Germany)

“It was a very great experience to share in a European youth programme as a Swiss citizen. Great spirit among all the genders and the young members. This was a remarkable time for all of us in Romania.”

(Patricia, Switzerland)



Acknowledgements

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A special thanks goes to Rodica Pop whose determination and work has allowed youth to come into their own power and carry out the activities.



Rodica Pop is President of Children for Children –Children for Peace Foundation since 1995. She is Best Teacher of Romania 2010. This year she has been awarded a Special Recognition from International Committee of Museums Romania. Her own family's town Seini has designated her Honourable Citizen of the Year 2011.

Activity Track Record

- INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR “CHILDREN AND XXI CENTURY ” Baia Mare 4 editions : FIRST edition 1996; The second 1997; The third. 1998; The fourth 1999
- Youth exchange GENEVA-Switzerland , 1991.
- Youth Exchange DYMOCK- ANGLIA, 1993.
- The young people have the right to speak in PARLAMENT, ZAKOPANE - POLAND 1994.
- The 50-th Aniversary of UN CHARTA , SAN FRANCISCO- USA, 1995.
- Euro-Asia cultural activities., MANILA, PHILIPINE, JANUARY 1996.
- The World Summit for Children - San Jose-Costa Rica, JULY 1996.
- The Philipinos in Romania, Baia Mare, OCTOBER 1996.
- The Food SUMMIT – Roma, NOVEMBER 1996.
- The World Summit for Children -TAIPEI- TAIWAN, JULY 1997.
- European youth Forum - Bucureşti, APRIL 1998.
- Crossing Borders, , Baia Mare, IUNIE 1998. Romania and Holand.
- World Youth Festival Lisboa
- EXPO 98 , AUGUST 1998- Portugalia.
- The Romanians in Holland - MAY 1999
- The World Summit for Children - SAN FRANCISCO – USA,IULIE 1999
- European Children Festival NYREGYHAZA, HUNGARY –JUNE 2001
- Young General Assembly – The II nd Edition. SWAZYLAND- AFRICA DE SUD - IULIE 2001
- Culture Olympiade –UNESCO DANEMARCA - NAESTVED August- 2001
- UN for People PERUGIA- ITALIA October –2001
- The Youth Volunteers Summit TOKIO - JAPONIA, December 2001
- Ecotopia.- IRLANDA August 2002
- 2003 London =E:Critical Museology- management course for museums
- Oxford- Socrates =TEACHER REFRESHER COURSE.
- 2003 the 6 of AUGUST-Baia Mare ”The Peace Poll Ceremony to Comemorate the Hiroshima Moment”
- ITALIA –LUCCA =XIII Conference of “Textile European Network”
- SCOPIJE –Macedonia –Long Learning Festival
- India –Hyderabad=YES Regional Forum
- 2004 October YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SUMMIT MEXICO 2004.
- 2004-2007 ACCU PROJECT –Access to the Cultural Heritage < CULTURE 2000 PROGRAMME
- 2009 Tallberg Forum Sweeden

About the Author



Corina Simon worked with PATRIR (www.patrir.ro) full-time between September 2005 until February 2010. She had already finished her BSc in Computer Science at the Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science, Babes – Bolyai University, Cluj – Napoca. After that period she has been active as Member in the Council of Directors of PATRIR and Associate of the Department of Peace Operation. During the active years in PATRIR she coordinated the Cooperative Peace Project in Moldova–Transnistria at PATRIR and the Secretariat of the Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments of Peace (www.mfp-dop.org), an international network of individuals and organizations promoting the concept of Ministries for

Peace and Departments of Peace in governments world-wide. Corina was a member of the team concerning Romania’s international development cooperation policy in relation to Republic of Moldova and the coordinator of an initiative to bring together peacebuilding organisations in the Black Sea region, the Black Sea Peacebuilding Platform. Her work as a trainer and facilitator has been enriched as part of the Save the Children Norway project in Uganda and Guatemala for supporting youth participation in peacebuilding. Corina participated in a consultancy for the Commonwealth Secretariat on operational guidance notes for good offices and violence prevention together with other experts in the field. In Romania she is a member of the Romanian network of development professionals called ARCADIA. She is also affiliated with the Children of the Earth since February 2008 supporting youth actions for peace and sharing of information. Currently she has been selected as Member of the Board of Directors for the newly incorporated Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace (www.mfp-dop.org).

Contact the author: Corina Simon, corinasimon@gmail.com

Contact the organizer: Rodica Pop, rodicapop_2005@yahoo.com