

Welcome to E-Magazine no.7

Volunteering was the main topic when YC³ held workshop in Kaliningrad, Russia. At the meeting the attendants gave their input on the EU Consultation on the promotion and validation of non-formal learning and took part of a new youth project in the South Baltic Region.

The seminar was held at Radison Blue in Kaliningrad, Russia, the 21st of February 2011. Around 50 youth representatives from Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Russia and Lithuania participated at the seminar.



The seminar participants were greeted welcome by Mrs. Galina Grechenko, director of Agency for Youth Affairs of Kaliningrad Region. Voluntary work has a great value, both for personal development but also for the world economy she said.

EU CONSULTATION

At a workshop the participants gave their input on the *EU Consultation on the promotion and validation of non-formal learning*. The purpose of the consultation was to gather input on whether further action is needed to emphasize experienced acquired from work and life, and further what could be done to do so.

The participants were very engaged in the discussions and agreed on that employers and formal learning institutions in their country/regions does not put enough emphasis on knowledge or experiences gained from informal settings. Experiences gained from informal settings are important for people's development and as a complement to, but however, cannot replace formal learning. The participants also agreed on that validation of non-formal learning could be important for everyone but mostly for marginalized people at the

risk of social exclusion, young people and people performing some kind of voluntary work. Further actions should be taken in consideration, e.g. awareness raising, exchange of good practice and maybe develop a knowledge "passport" to document non-formal and informal learning, to further validate non-formal learning.

WORKSHOP ON BEST PRACTICE

After lunch a second workshop was held to emphasize best practices on volunteering work in the represented countries. Presentations by representatives from Sweden, Lithuania, Denmark, Poland and Russia were held and discussed by the participants.



In the end of the day Johan Sandevärn from Region Blekinge presented the latest updates in the process of applying for a new youth project in the South Baltic Sea Region. The project, currently called Mentorship & Entrepreneurship, will counteract youth unemployment in the South Baltic Sea area at a political and a practical level e.g. through a mentorship program including internship, inspirational conferences on entrepreneurship, a web based course in entrepreneurship, and exchange of best practice. The application will be handed in to the 7th call to the South Baltic Programme 29th of April to 17th of June 2011.



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At the Kaliningrad meeting ERB Youth Board selected a new chairperson. We thank Elise Wåhlin for her work and asked her about her experience from her one year at the position.

Elise, the seminar in Kaliningrad aimed at the validation of non-formal learning and the importance of voluntary work. What do you think about the importance of validating non-formal learning?

I think it is very important that knowledge from voluntary work get some kind of credit. I am not entirely sure how this can be done, but I think there is a lot of knowledge that never gets any credit.

What has the time as chair-person in ERB Youth Board meant to you?

It has meant a lot! I have learnt so much, from organizing seminars and meetings to how to influence politicians in different ways. And perhaps most important it has given me so many friends from the Baltic Sea area!

How will you use the experiences and do you think others will find them relevant?

I use my experiences from this time every day. I am politically active in the municipality where I live and there will soon be a group aiming at developing contacts with twin towns which I hope to become a part of. And I really hope others will find this relevant, I have so many ideas of how this work could be developed. There are so many things to learn out of this work.

Has something been especially good?

This is a hard question, there are so many things. The social times where you connect with others, influencing EU for real and getting so much recognition from EU for the work we have done.

Has something been hard?

Yes, technical problems have been very frustrating. We always had a strong will to make a difference but sometimes the technical problems has sometimes stopped this.

How do you think that we could involve more youth into voluntary work?

I don't have a good answer for this, but if I had, more people would be involved. But I think that if people see that the knowledge from it gets recognition when applying for a job or school.

What happens next?

Hopefully I will be part of the group in my municipality to develop the work with our twin towns (many of them are situated in almost the same area as Yc³ and Youth Board). Other than that I will be part of Youth Board for some more time and during that time try to find someone to replace me with.

IRMANTAS NEW CHAIR PERSON

Irmantas Sujeta from Lithuania was elected the new chairperson of ERB Youth Board.

Irmantas, what do you think about your upcoming year at the position as ERB Youth Board chair person?

Becoming Euroregion Baltic Youth board chair person is for me a big responsibility because I have to improve Youth Board internal and external work. I know that we can work better so that youth could involve themselves more and there could be bigger awareness between ERB and YB. I believe that after one year I and my colleagues will be happy to be part of a better Youth Board.

