

DEMOCRACY

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EQUALITY
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MOTIVATING
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PACE
PEOPLE
INTERESTING
NOI
UNIQUE
ENTUSIASMANTE



Fishbowl Youth



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Democracy, democracy



It all started back in Athens around 508 BC

They were sitting with the king
Someone got up and began to sing

"Democracy is the one for me"

The thing about democracy is
Everyone has a say

Everyone has a voice so they know
Everything is ok

Because of democracy, most of us can vote
And that helps to keep us all afloat!

Chorus:

But democracy had problems
Some of them in schools
Some people sat down and tried to fix it
Because they're all really cool
They came up with a project
Called democracy explored
And it kept us all from being bored

One school from Italy
Two schools from Clare
Came together, their knowledge they would share
About their school systems
And the government too
And then we wrote this song for you!
La, la, la, democracy...
Democracy for you and me!!!!

Written by Enda and Caoimhe

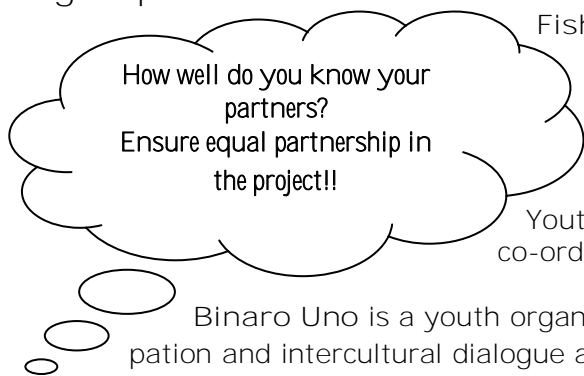
Why this publication?

This booklet is created as a tool for organisations interested in organising a democracy project (1.3) in the Youth in Action Programme. It consists of examples of activities and actions that were organised in this framework, tips and pitfalls to look out for in order to ensure a successful project and key aspects of how a non-formal group can work successfully in a formal environment.

The booklet was created by the leaders of the coordinating NGO's but it reflects the cooperation between participants, youth leaders, vice principals and teachers of the partnered organisations and schools.

The organisations involved

The project "Democracy in Schools" was co-ordinated by two non-formal groups:



Fishbowl Youth is a youth organisation, situated in county Clare in Ireland. We live in a very rural environment, with little to do for young people. The organisation helps young people – mainly 15 to 18 year olds to organise their own social activities, and to develop activities in their area of interest. Besides this the organisation is very active in the Youth in Action programme and has organised, hosted and co-ordinated many international activities over the last six years.

Binaro Uno is a youth organization situated in Rome that aims to promote active participation and intercultural dialogue among people aged 15 to 30 through international youth meetings, and youth led local initiatives. The group has been active for about 4 years, and has been involved within the Youth in Action programme, the European Youth foundation, the 5th municipality of Rome and has contributed to the empowerment of dozens of young people.

And the following 3 schools

Ireland

Scarriff Community College is the local secondary school, catering for 310 Students. The College stands on 20 acres of beautifully wooded grounds located in a rural setting close to Lough Derg and offering the most modern facilities to its students.

Youth Reach is a learning centre providing second-chance education and training. It offers a flexible and dynamic programme of integrated general education, vocational training and work experience.

Italy

Liceo Scientifico Nomentano Rome is a high school in the eastern suburbs of Rome. It is a huge institution that gathers over 1200 students from the surrounding areas. The school has always been open to projects and initiatives to provide the students with alternative forms of education, and to foster their initiative and motivation.



I think I was obsessed; I have never put so much effort into anything else
(quote from participant)

THE PROJECT

The aim of our project was to explore and compare democratic processes in our schools, developing more understanding between teachers and students, thus improving student/teacher relationships, and exploring/developing best practise for participation in schools, while creating peer educators who **would be able to bring the project forward to next year's students.**

The seed was planted about 4 years ago when a number of our members were on student councils in their schools. All these young people involved in the councils were experiencing frustration with what they were encountering. From the lack of any real power and respect to disorganisation none of them felt they were able to make the positive impact on their schools they had hoped for.

From this frustration there came many discussions. Ultimately the young people wanted to find a way to have their student councils be youth lead.

These students were the young people who were involved in the original application and who participated in the first planning meeting in November 2008. They were senior students who knew the changes would not be made in their time at school but who were dedicated to youth democracy for the future of their schools and school councils

OVERVIEW OF OUR PROJECT

The project was based on research that was going to be carried out in all three schools. From this research we wanted to come to an understanding of how the schools are governed and how this governing system is perceived by young people and teachers alike.

Below is a short overview of the project as it was planned and implemented

- Workshops in Schools - general overview
- Advanced Planning visit - planning exchange
- Exchange to Italy - comparing school systems
- Gathering information in own country
- Study visit to Ireland - resolving gathered info
- Questionnaires and Interviews
- Study visit to Italy - comparing results and looking for solutions
- Analysing data and making film
- Evaluation
- Presenting project outcome

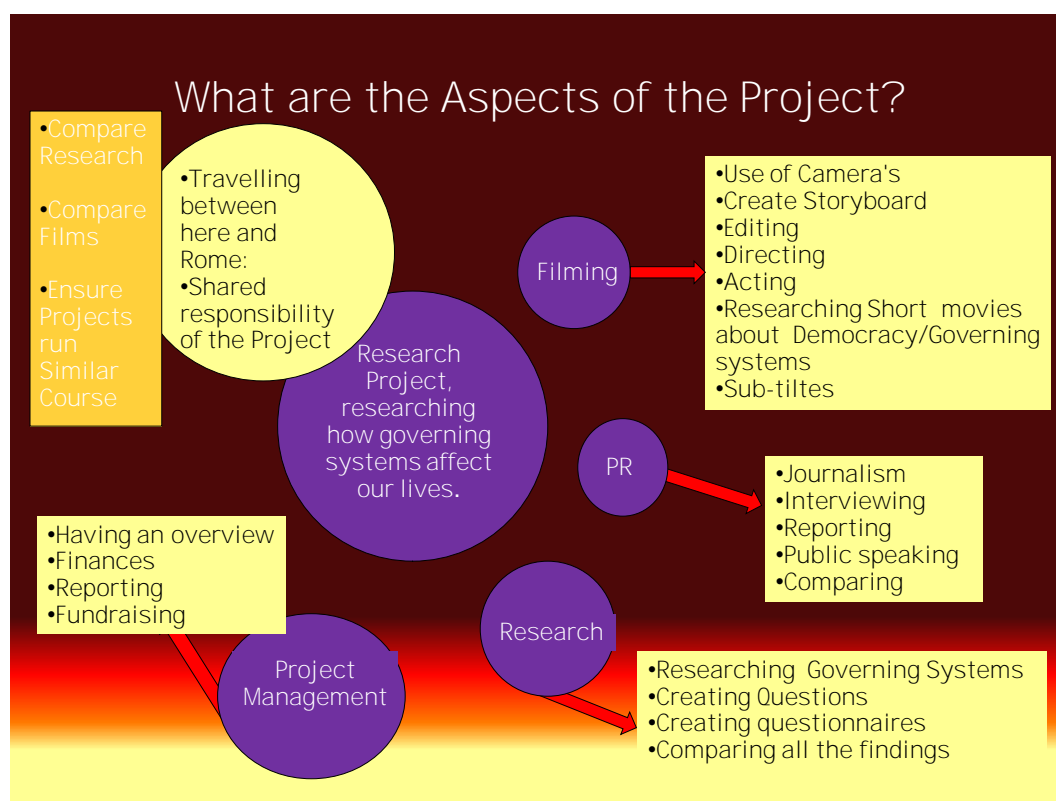
BUT FIRST OF ALL... WHAT IS A PROJECT?

- ⇒ **Characteristics of projects**
- ⇒ **Projects have a purpose:** projects have clearly-defined aims and set out to produce clearly-defined results. Their purpose is to solve a "problem", and this involves analysing needs beforehand. Suggesting one or more solutions, it aims at lasting social change.
- ⇒ **Projects are realistic:** their aims must be achievable, and this means taking account both of requirements and of the financial and human resources available.
- ⇒ **Projects are limited in time and space:** they have a beginning and an end and are implemented in a specific place and context.
- ⇒ **Projects are complex:** projects call on various planning and implementation skills, and involve various partners and players.
- ⇒ **Projects are collective:** projects are the product of collective endeavour. They are run by teams, involve various partners and cater for the needs of others.
- ⇒ **Projects are unique:** all projects stem from new ideas. They provide a specific response to a need (problem) in a specific context. They are innovative.
- ⇒ **Projects are an adventure:** every project is different and ground-breaking; they always involve some uncertainty and risk.
- ⇒ **Projects can be assessed:** projects are planned and broken down into measurable aims, which must be open to evaluation.
- ⇒ **Projects are made up of stages:** projects have distinct, identifiable stages

From Project Management T-Kit 3

THE DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT

In order to implement all the planned activities we had foreseen the following elements incorporated in the project: filming, PR, research and project management. Students could choose one or two of these elements and we organised skill building workshops according to the needs.



Looking at the above a bit closer, it becomes clear that this simple programme worked out to be a very complicated one.

Each section had sub-sections and each sub-section needed a lot of support and input of the co-ordinating organisations.

And... don't forget all the meetings between the leaders, the leaders and schools, peer leaders and participants etc. that were needed to keep the project afloat!

Below is a more detailed description of the programme, this programme shows a more realistic flow of the implemented project

Tips from OUR EXPERIENCE

It was hard to support all participants in their different groups, due to many reasons:

- Time restrictions: we are all volunteers with work and family commitments
- It was hard to build relationships with participants, due to the formal mould we worked in. Because of this participants might not have felt secure enough to ask for help
- Outside support did not feel connected to the objective of the project
- Finding the right people with enough time to work with each group

People see things as they are and ask why. I dream things that never were and ask why not?

-George Bernard Shaw

FLOW OF THE PROJECT

1. **Preparation with the core group – meetings, preparing the workshops and research, what is democracy?**
2. **Introduction of the project to the schools**
 - Meeting with principal
 - Defining cooperation terms with the teachers
3. **Introduction of the project to the students**
 - Meeting 1 – intro to our NGO's, and team building.
 - Meeting 2 – deeper into what is democracy, comparison between different governing and decision-making systems
 - Meeting 3 – introduction of the entire project with all its aspects
3. **Starting to work with the group that chose to be participants** – in Italy the entire class was going to take part so they carried on exploring their governing system and the skills they need to make it work
4. **Advance Planning Visit for the Exchange**
5. **Preparation for the exchange and the exchange**
 - Meetings with participants
 - Meeting the parents
 - Preparing workshops for exchange
6. **The exchange**

The exchange was really the preparation of the project non formal methods were used to explore what democracy is, to experience democratic systems, to role-play how we can find solutions to problems and how to implement research

 - We started exploring what system is used in our schools
 - School and school systems were compared
 - Skill building – what skills are needed for this project
7. **Skill building continues in own country**
 - workshops on the different aspects of the project
8. **Meeting in Ireland**
 - Prepare the research
 - What do we need to research*
 - What do we need to ask*
 - How will we ask it*
 - Develop a logo*
 - What will we do with the documentary, how will we structure it?*
 - Visit school and NGO
 - See a local attraction
9. **Research**
 - Finalise the questionnaires
 - Introduce the project to the wider school community
 - Hand out questionnaires to teachers and students
 - Put results into computer
10. **Meeting in Italy**
 - Finish computer input
 - Create flowcharts
 - Work with the results
 - Create "problem trees" to find solutions*
 - Visit school in Rome and experience an assembly
11. **Meetings:**
 - to work with the results
 - type up the work from Italy – was all on flipcharts
 - to finalise the documentary
 - return to the story board*
 - interviews*
 - editing*
6. **Final meeting in Ireland**
 - Prepare the final evening
 - To clarify the outcomes of the overall project
 - Evaluating the project
 - Discussing and preparing follow up
6. **Final evening with local politicians, youth service and VEC**
7. **Prepare final report, finances and booklet**

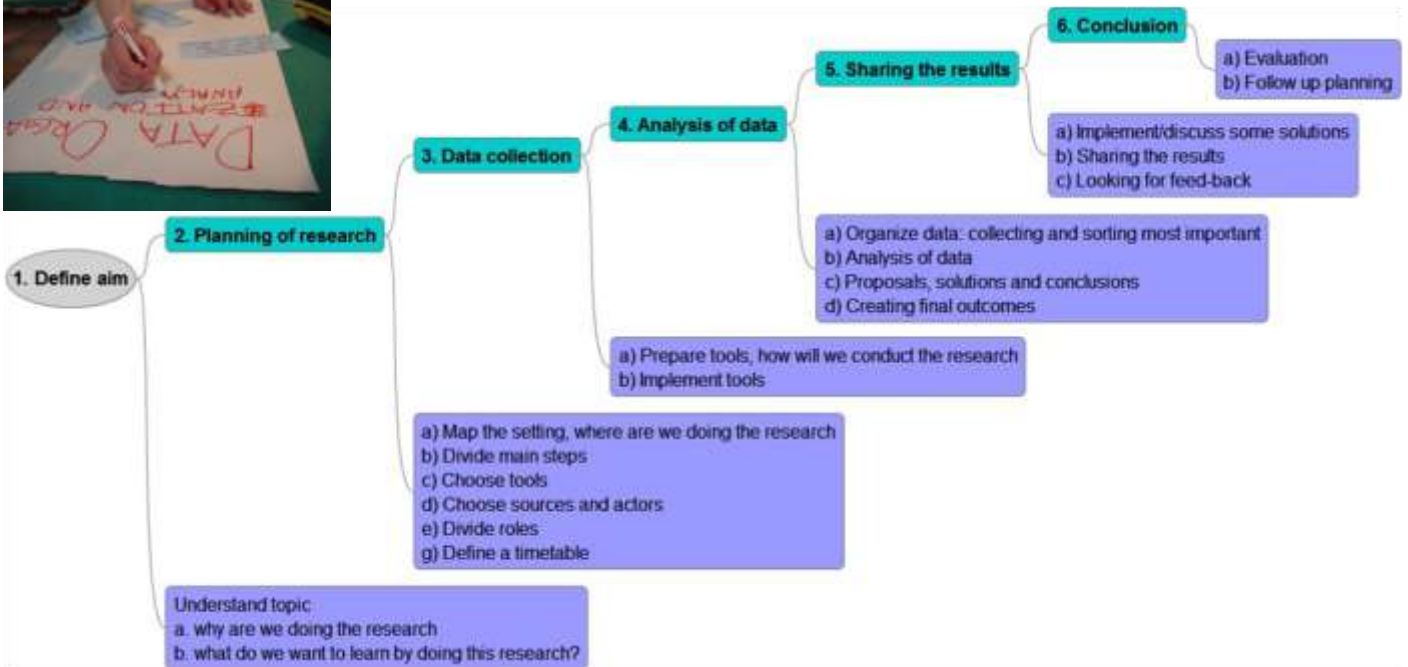
How to keep motivation going over such a long period?

PLAN OF ACTION



Is your project simple? Even a simple plan generally becomes a lot of work!

For the research we developed the following plan of action:



Tips from OUR EXPERIENCE

Although the research was central to our project, we realised that we failed to notice that we were making it too big. It would have been better if we had spent more time understanding the exact aim of the research, look for aspects to research, narrow those aspects down again until left with the basic questions to ask. We created a questionnaire that was too big and had too many questions.

We realised only afterwards that many of these questions were not relevant to researching the governing system, and the overload of questions created a lot of confusion, work and was quite de-motivating for the group

SO... WHAT IS NON FORMAL, FORMAL AND IN-FORMAL LEARNING???

Formal learning is typically provided by education or training institutions, with structured learning objectives, learning time and learning support. It is intentional on the part of the learner and leads to certification.

Non-formal learning is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. However, it is intentional on the part of the learner and has structured objectives, times and support.

Informal learning results from daily activities related to work, family life or leisure. It is not structured and usually does not lead to certification. In most cases, it is unintentional on the part of the learner.

Observation from participating Irish teacher

I think that it is important for the success of any project such as this to have as many people as possible from the school on board. Contact through one person is convenient, especially when time is short and decisions have to be made, but there is little commitment from the whole school unless a number of people are involved, at whatever level.

Something about the workshops during the project

At the outset of the Democracy project one of the first workshops with the Irish participants was to identify the main areas that would require regular input, work and participation. When each of these areas was identified, participants were then asked to choose by preference what area they would like to work in most. (see diagramme page 6)

Through this process small groups formed around a mentor or youth leader who had themselves some experience or interest in this area. In this way the PR group and the film group were formed.

The PR Group

The PR group met firstly to brainstorm and identify the skills that would be needed in relation to this project and how the group would apply these skills to the task. It identified the following skills:

- Public speaking
- Writing and Journalism
- Marketing Strategy
- Communication
- Training

Public Speaking: It was decided that wherever necessary one or two of the PR group members would take responsibility and be the spokesperson on behalf of the entire group.

Writing and Journalism: When written articles were needed all members would be asked to contribute.

Marketing and Strategy: In planning an event such as "The Democracy Evening" the group would meet several times to brainstorm and plan the detailed structure of the event, when, where and how, who to invite, print invitations, design posters, print project information for guests, contact the media etc.

Communication: The group realized that in order to keep up to speed with the activities of the other acting groups within the project and to have news feed and give them PR support, that it would be necessary to develop good lines of communication. In this respect a member of the PR group was nominated to act as the communications person between nominated members from each of the other groups.

Training: To support the activities of the PR group it was decided to ask a local professional person who had a great knowledge and expertise in PR, Marketing and Journalism to give a workshop to the group.

Part of our initial work was also to identify and outline the different media sources that would be useful and available to the PR group. We identified the following sources:

- County newspapers
- Local Radio
- Local Community Newsletters
- Posters and flyers
- School Bill Boards
- A local forum meeting

Tips from OUR EXPERIENCE

Helping the group along takes a lot of time and energy... ensure that the leader or the person taking this on has the time and that he/she realises how much it takes

- Make sure meetings are minuted and members receive copies (*see page 29 for a template that can be used for this*)
- Agree on who does what at the outset
- Each member must take responsibility for their allotted task. If they cannot complete the task themselves they must organize a substitute
- Make contact with news papers early on in the project
- Know how to take pictures that look good in papers or on web sites
- **Ensure people work in two's or small groups, not on their own or in big groups**
- Organise regular meetings to monitor progress

The making of the movie

It was our aim to have a film that represented democracy through the eyes and experiences of the participants. The film was to be a collaboration of what they had encountered through their experience of the research, incorporating key reflections and ideas they had following the research.

The creation of the movie was not an easy process as it needed a lot of support which we could not always avail of. Also it showed up our weaknesses around our equipment, we have high equipment, but at the moment there is no-one who is taking care of it properly. All our movie enthusiasts had moved on and we are currently in the process of building a new group of skilled young people who know how to keep the show running.

Even so, we followed the plan and a short movie was produced at the end of the project.

SHORT MOVIES WE USED *to introduce the project and as an example of different styles that can be use when making a short movie.*

I Met the Walrus: *An animated film based on an interview of John Lennon by Jerry Levitan in 1969*
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmR0V6s3NKk>

Democracy: *Critical exploration by young people of what democracy means*
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQmFBdwFCAQ&feature=related>

Democracy is... Animation by Lukasz Szozda: *A short animation about the positive factors of democracy*

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Am8Fp1jyok&feature=Playlist&p=2A4A68690DCF2A7B&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=1

Democracy: *another short one make by young people about the positive aspects of democracy*
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=085hUgkgHfY&feature=Playlist&p=2A4A68690DCF2A7B&index=10>

EVERYDAY DEMOCRACY!: *posing a critical question about democracy. It reflects very much our experience in this project*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QR45-VFcVyg>

Tips from OUR EXPERIENCE

- keep ideas for filming simple - a film about what happened on a project will often not be very interesting to other people so find the key points of interest and break them down into their simplest form using other short films can be helpful
- be very particular about what footage is shot, so you do not to end up with hours and hours of footage – it is very time consuming to troll through for editing
- all who use equipment to be trained in using the equipment safely and competently -cameras, sound equipment, computer and software
- make sure batteries for camera are kept charged
- have plenty of back up tapes so no tape needs to be taped over
- clearly label all footage
- ideally have one computer that is used solely for filming so there is no chance of viruses interfering and crashing the computer
- be sure you or someone has the skills to complete the film in the way in which you describe it to the young people
- leave as little to last minute as possible- so many things can go wrong from the burning of DVDs to the sound or vision not being compatible or out of sync to crashing of systems

when using professional people to help with the project, be sure to prep them on what you expect from them e.g. that they **do not only teach how to use the equipment ... but also the way in which you work with a group and what they should expect from the group**

- It would have helped the process, the confidence of the participants, and the quality of the work produced if professional support had been there continuously—instead of sporadic.

Observation from participating Irish teacher

I firmly believe that the students gained a wide variety of valuable skills, such as, organising research, negotiating with others on their team, communicating, social skills (dealing with lack of commitment from others at times, dealing with Italian students unfamiliar with their way of doing things)

LOOKING AT THE GRAPHS - Democratic System - Ireland

These observations were generated during workshops in Italy, comparing the results of the questionnaires

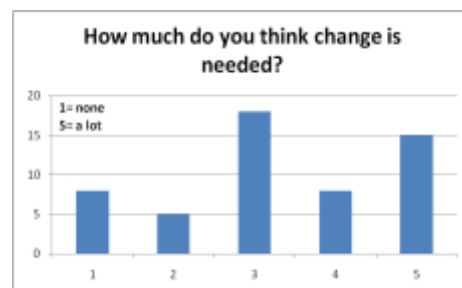
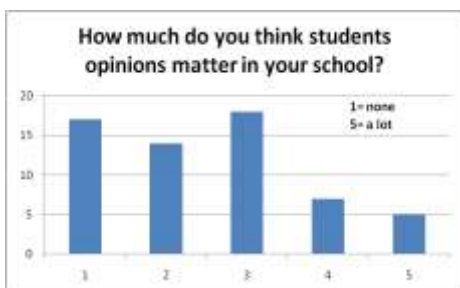
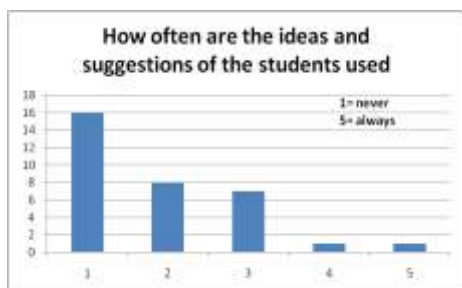
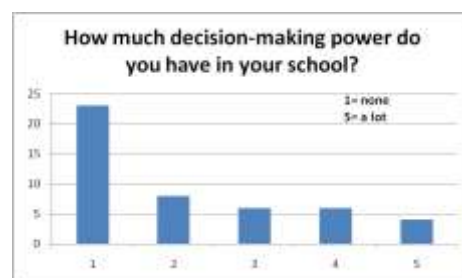
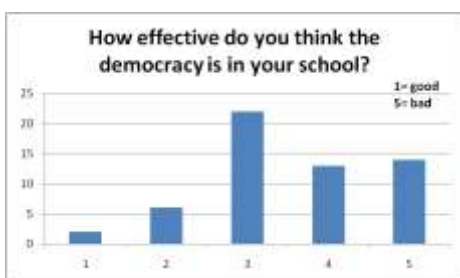
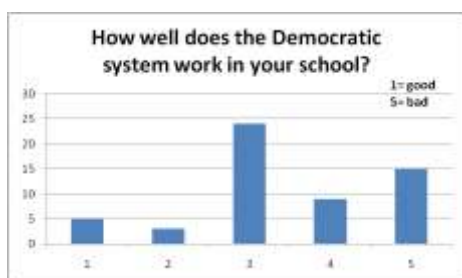
Positive observations

Youthreach

- Decisions are made in a team meeting with us and the teachers
- Team meetings help us decide a lot of tough things and we are treated as equals
- We have a lot of say in what happens
- Direct line of communication between students, teachers and co-ordinator
- If we all have the same opinion, then we have a lot of decision making power
- The VEC are lovely

Scariff Community College

- Irish students feel their opinion matters more than Italian students in school
- We have a voice
- Ideas are passed through students council
- Decision-making is done democratically
- Irish vice-principal has more power than Italian vice-principal



Negative observations

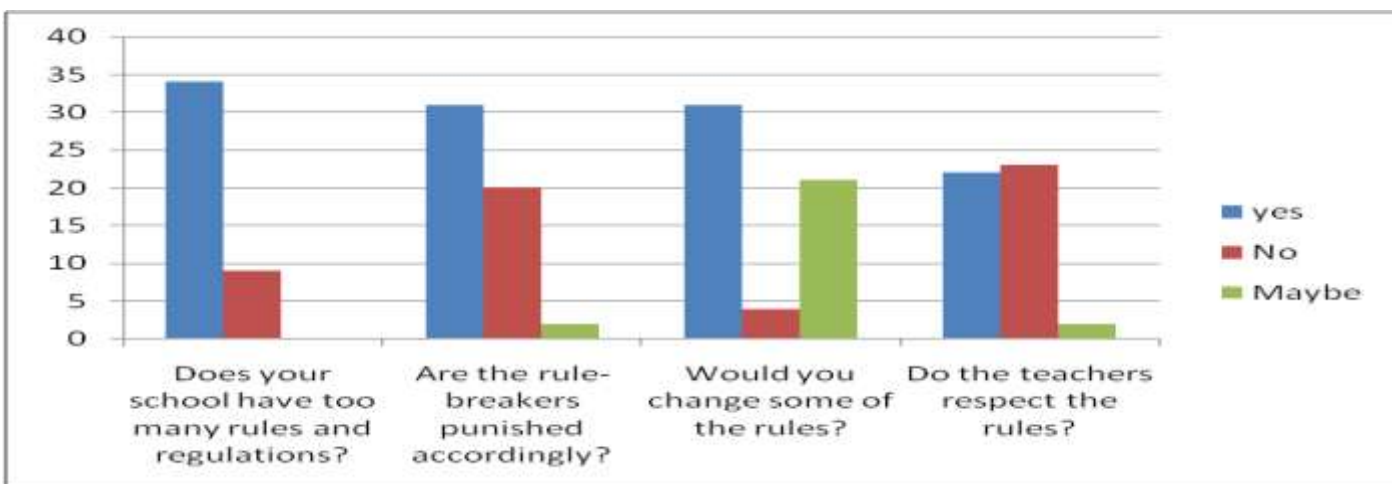
Youthreach

- There is no recourse for us when criticized by teachers

Scariff Community College

- We have a limited input
- We have a small say in our school
- **We don't get to choose our class representatives**
- **We didn't get to vote for our representatives**
- We believe that the democratic system is not good enough in our school
- **Student representatives don't have much power**
- Students believe they have little power
- Our decision-making power is low
- If the teachers have their mind made up, there is no changing them
- Prefects are chosen by teachers impressions of them
- **People don't feel comfortable going to the student rep. as they might not know them**
- Principal has too much power
- Some teachers have too much power
- **Most people don't know who their student rep. is**

LOOKING AT THE GRAPHS - Rules - Ireland



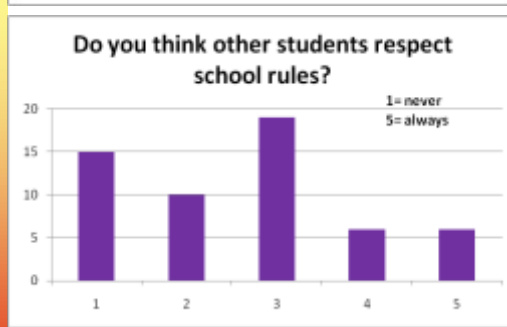
Positive observations

- Teachers feel their authority is respected
- People won't break rules if they are punished
- Rules help to keep order
- Rules provide nicer atmosphere
- Rules bring mutual respect in the school
- Less violence
- We can wear our own shoes
- Uniform give identity less competition
- Breaking rules can be fun
- The rules are to promote equality
- Punctuality rules are relaxed in most cases
- Rules are fair and relevant.



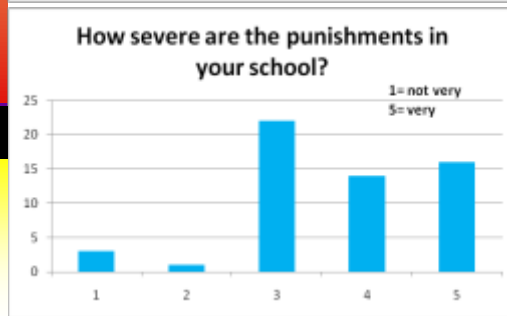
Negative observations

- Irish punishment severe.
- Too many rules
- Teachers talk about students in staff room
- Students don't have a say in what punishments are in place
- some rules not effective e.g smoking
- Detention is just writing not very effective
- Uniform rules are way too strict
 - Wearing of school scarves in school
- Uniform rules are unfair maybe more choices should be introduced
- Teachers don't get punished if they break the rules



Observation from participating Irish teacher

When a project or issue arises in the school, the first people I look to for help are these students. I know that they will know how to analyse the situation and that they will be able to organise their work without supervision. An example of this would be the Youth Parliament.



FROM ANALYSIS TO SOLUTIONS: how to improve relationships with student representatives - Italy

"Problem tree" explained

Problem tree is divided in several phases:

first phase consists in a problem brainstorm related to the topic that was chosen (in this case, meeting between students and representatives)

In this phase all problems that are related to this issues are written on paper as a list.

The second phase of the brainstorm consist in merging or

dividing the issues which were brought up, so to make them clear and specific without any repetitions.

After this phase, comes the actual problem tree making:

the goal of this phase is to put all the problems in relationships of cause and effect. This

produces a tree with the main issues on top, and the specific

reasons for these issues at the bottom.

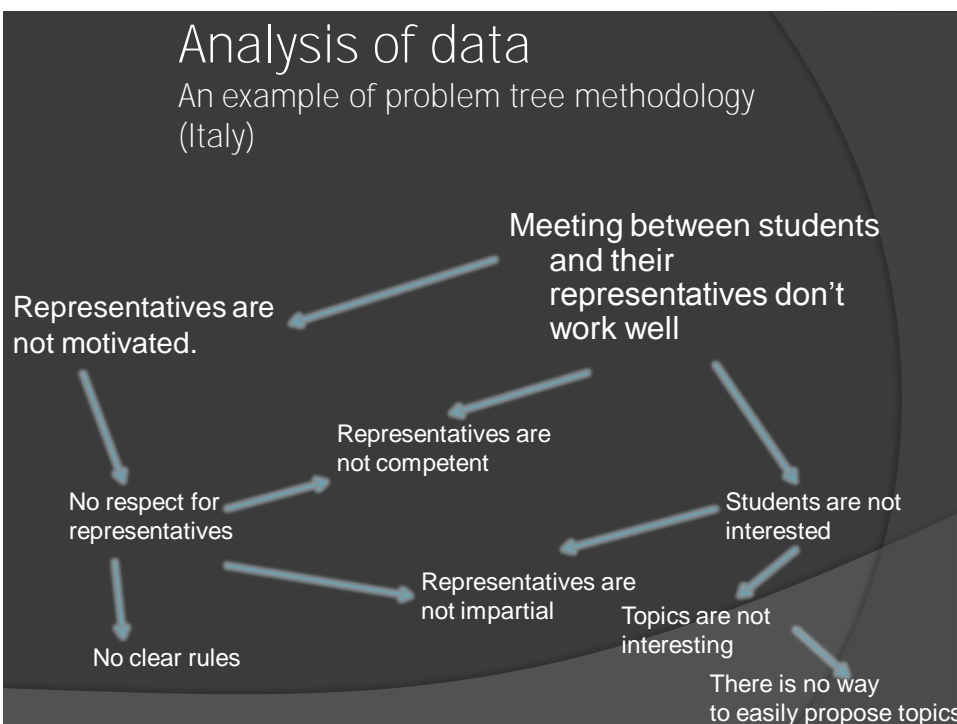
Of course a single problem has many reasons.

Your purpose at this point is to keep developing the tree, adding other issues if necessary, until you reach issues at the bottom that are specific enough to be immediately turned into solutions.

Saying, "representatives are not motivated" is not something that can automatically be turned into a solution, the issue "no clear rules" can be! By creating rules you can solve part of the problems above...

What you get in the end is a tree of solutions, were at the bottom you have your activities, and at the top your objectives.

So for example: "to make representatives more motivated" is a goal.. "to establish clear guidelines and rules for meetings" is a solution that will become an activity, such as a workshops where people will decide rules.



Problem:

The meetings between students and their representatives do not work well

Solutions:

- Create training for student representatives
- Create a box to propose topics and ideas for meetings
- Develop clear rules and guidelines for meetings

From the SOLUTION to ACTION - an example, the newspaper

- It started from an idea and now the Italian school has a new newspaper un by students
- We shared articles with other schools, and it is now growing more and more

My optimism is not based primarily on the successful march of democracy in recent times but rather is based on the experience of having lived in a fear society and studied the mechanics of tyranny that sustain such a society. - Natan Sharansky

FROM ANALYSIS TO FOLLOW UP - Project is nearly over... what now?

On the last day we looked into the follow up of the project.

We combined all the results and looked at what was the most important outcome for us, and then continued with finding a way to bring these outcomes forward into a plan of action.

FOLLOW UP PLAN - Ireland

- Presentation of the project to a larger group of people: parents council, teachers and students
- Further recognition for the project through PR
 - write articles for news papers and news letters.
 - Finish publication
 - Look at the movie again so it is more self explanatory

Clearly the main issue that came out of the research for this group was the lack of any working democratic system in their school.

The student council is supposed to be the vehicle for this, but in reality it is not working. Below are suggestions on how to improve the student council and the role it plays in the school:

- Go and ask who is the appointed teacher for the student council
- Ask own year if they are allowed to represent them as student representatives
- Re-structure student council
 - Ensure it is democratically formed - Student to be allowed to canvass to be elected?
 - Ensure students can make their own decisions without interference of adults
 - Ensure student council meets regularly
 - Should representatives of student council join the parents council?
- Peer training - provide training for student who join the student council
 - Why is there a council?
 - What are the duties of representatives?
 - How to run your own meeting

Reasons for creating a change:

- Improve student / teacher relationships - we can be proactive!
- Improve student / student relationships
- More equality
- Less injustice
- Better atmosphere
- Less feeling of being powerless



Tips from OUR EXPERIENCE

Tips for non formal and formal organisations meeting each other in a project:

Take enough time to work with the schools, to really incorporate them in the process

- Explain what you expect of the school, but recognise the fact that it is hard to know how the project will exactly work before you actually start, even if there is a clear plan of action
- Ask to be introduced to all the staff
- Let all the teachers know what you are doing
- Let the teachers know you are open to feedback
- Have more teachers involved or at least one teacher fully involved
- Find ways for more overall connection between leaders and teachers
- Teachers can be part of preparing workshops
- Teachers could document (film) the process
- Ask school for help where appropriate
- Explain how your organisations work
- Decide before project what roles people will have
- Have one person to be the intermediary between the teacher and the leaders. This person can explain the process, and the activities
- Show the results of the project regularly both to students and to the school community at large

Are you having fun????

It is so easy to forget... but we work so much better when we are having a good time!

FOLLOW UP PLAN - Italy



The Italian group decided to take the graphs they made about their ability to make a change in their school as the basis for their follow up plan (see page 21 for an explanation of this exercise)

The follow up plan in Italy involves work on two main areas, identified as "support" and "motivation":

SUPPORT

During the project, issues were identified around support for the democratic system in the school:

- The structure of the governing system is not clear, and not known by all, especially the students.
- There is no clear information on the financial situation of the school, and therefore on the possibilities for proposals and changes.
- There is no training on how to use the democratic system available.
- Representatives are not clearly informed about the responsibilities and powers of their mandate.
- **No feedback or proposal system on how to get ideas for the student body's meetings.**

The follow up plan involves the following step to solve these issues:

- Provide information on democratic structure in the school – representatives shall be properly informed, and then given the responsibility to clearly inform their class.
- Before elections, instruct all students on the mandate, roles and duties of responsibility
- Provide representatives training on:
 - meeting management
 - management of relationships between students and teachers.
- Have a school-appointed mediator to help in case of conflicts.

MOTIVATION

Another issue identified is about the motivation of students on participating in the democratic system:

- **Time for student's meetings is often wasted and not used constructively, creating a circle where less involvement makes less involving meetings, and vice versa.**
- **The size of the whole student's body united is too big to allow plenary meetings to discuss complex themes and have deep debates.**
- Topics of meetings are not directly related to the interest of the students.
- If there are not immediate and big issues which the student are strongly involved in, there is no motivation to use the democratic system in the school.
- There is lack of confidence in the possibility to make a difference

The follow up plan mainly focuses on giving each student a sense that he/she can make a contribution and help to create changes by:

- showing previous examples of successful changes and initiatives.
- create a motivational video to show in each class.

Observation from participating Irish teacher

The findings from the project need to be communicated to the whole school. There probably needs to be a follow-up project to examine ways of incorporating those findings and insights into the operation of our student council and student representation in the running of the school.

THE FINAL NIGHT - presentation of the project, forum discussion with local politicians

We organised an evening of discussion and presentation based on the Democracy Project. Guest speakers included were Glen Guilfoyle from Clare Youth service, Michael McNamara from Scariff, who has been active in the Middle East and developing countries, deputy Timmy Dooley, Seamus Bane from County Clare VEC and through the use of an interpreter, Professor Gallo, the vice principal of Liceo Scientifico Nomentano Rome.

Each of them offered their take on democracy and answered questions developed by the participants of the project.

The evening was organised and prepared by everyone, both during and after school time from about two weeks before the actual date. It was hard to secure a date with the Italian school and when it was finally confirmed there was very little time left to put it all in place.



Our Italian representatives arrived on Friday evening, the presentation was on the Saturday evening... as you can imagine, it was a race against time! On Saturday the groups needed create presentations, they had to put final touches to the movie, questions for the panel speakers had to be created, a flow of the evening had to be decided etc. in between we also needed to eat and get some fresh air!

We managed to pull it together and it was a very successful evening, even if the turn-out was a bit disappointing.

We started the evening by welcoming everyone and the democracy song was performed by three participants. After that a presentation was given by the young people and the guest speakers individually spoke about their own perspective of democracy.

The presentation was structured as follows:

- We showed a short documentary that was created by the group which explained the intercultural exchange, the benefits of it and how it works.
- A documentary based on this Democracy Project and compiled from interviews with teachers and footage of the activities in Rome and Ireland.
- A Power Point presentation going through the variety of steps and how we reached certain conclusions and carried it forward.
- A forum discussion with our guest speakers
- A general question and answers time
- Tea / coffee and delicious cake

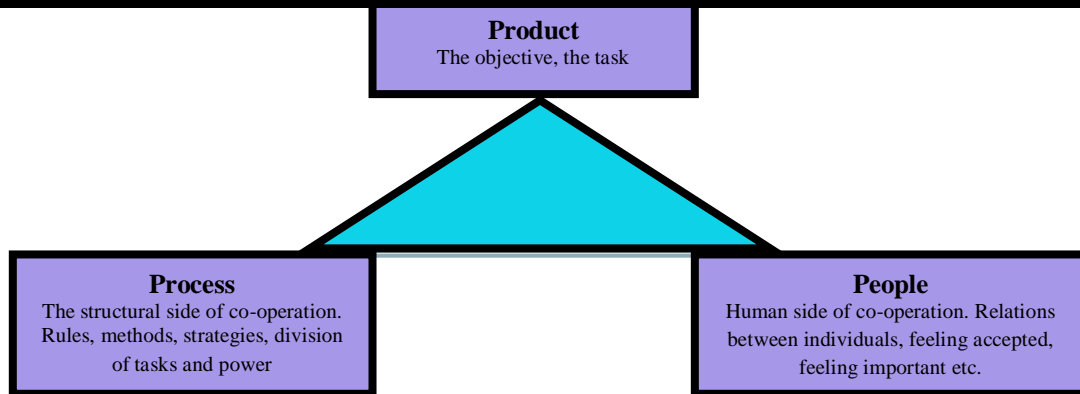


The only way to avoid mistakes is to gain experience. The only way to gain experience.... Is to make a mistake - from graffiti

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

A project this large and with so many partners and aspects to it needed a lot of managing. Both NGO's are experienced in managing international projects, but this one, as any other project, still managed to give us plenty of surprises, conflicts, difficulties and just plain desperation... when it went well it gave plenty of joy, pride, satisfaction, adventure etc. As an underlying aspect throughout the project there was a line of continuous learning.

THE 3 P's



“The project must make progress, it has deadlines to reach and work to be done. The people steering the project need to become an effective team.....” (Lawrie, 1996)

The 3'Ps' triangle symbolises the fact that for a team to become effective, there has to be a balance between the product, the procedure and the people in the team. The triangle symbolises that in an efficient team there has to be a balance between these three poles:

- Too much attention to procedures, too strict rules will kill the creativity and the spontaneity of the people. People will feel less good and this will have an effect on the product (result)
- Too much attention to the people side, too much talking about how we feel, how we like or dislike each other will take the focus away from the result, a project team is not a therapeutic growth group ;
- Too much focus on the product (result) will hinder the team in finding good working procedures and will have an effect on the people side (there is less time to listen to each others ideas, to evaluate the work and the process) Many teams are strongly focused on the product (result). They don't take the time to get

to know each other, to think about procedures on how to work together, to evaluate how people feel in the team mostly because a lack of time. “We only have two days for this pre-meeting...”

At the first sight it looks of course more efficient to put all the attention on the task, the product; if you don't have to take the time to listen to different ideas you have more time to execute the task. But in the longer term listening to each other, taking time for each other will be much more efficient. For example, the real cause of a problem can become clear or really listening to each other can help to motivate that person (listening = giving attention = recognise the person, you are important for this team = motivation to work better)

A dynamic balance between product – procedure – people will help a team function much better in the longer term.

From Project Management T-Kit 3

Tips from OUR EXPERIENCE

During the project we came across many challenges that were at times new for us and but also the old familiar ones did appear of course.

MEETINGS, MEETINGS, MEETINGS!! This was even more important due to the length of the project. Regular meetings were essential for the motivation, to keep focus and to stay in touch.

WHO OWNS THE PROJECT? this project was very much unlike any other project we have done in our organisations previously. The problem being that although the project was instigated by young people, it was carried out and implemented by a different group of young people. At times the NGO's felt that ownership lay by them, and no-one else. This was not a healthy situation, and more non formal workshops would have helped a lot to avoid this.

COMMUNICATION... between leaders, between participants and leaders, participants and teachers between peer leaders and leaders, between the NGO's and schools and between the NGO's, between the media and the project, etc, etc. At times we had to ask ourselves the question: Is this impossible for a voluntary group or impossible which ever way ?

Who will keep an overview of the project? It is very helpful to have one person to do just that!

In a workshop the young people came up with the following :

Product	Process	People
<p>How can you get the best result?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a leader/facilitator • make sure that everyone understands the purpose • Make sure that your work will reach your aim, concentrate on the purpose • Focus on what's relevant • Time management • Split in small groups • Listen to each other • Work together and help each other • Making sure that everyone in the group works • Choose the most relevant ideas and remove the least relevant • Being aware of the groups abilities • Encouraging each other to concentrate 	<p>How can you make the process efficient?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone must work together – do not be lazy • When in small groups everybody must be in agreement and voice their opinions • Facilitation must be prepared for every occasion • Don't let people avoid doing their share of work <p>Divide into small groups: brainstorm and choose the best idea and put it into practise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the aim • Realise a good action plan • Involve everybody • Try to assign tasks to every person • establish clear guidelines • Highlight skills which will be useful to achieve to aim • Hold a meeting at the end to come to a common decision 	<p>How can you make people feel good when you work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let everyone have a chance to speak and show their own ideas and opinions • Give everyone the role they want to take and that suites them best • Avoid useless arguments • Use peoples knowledge/ability • working in small groups • Involving all the people in the group • Allowing elections • Remind them that they did a good job – tap on the back • encourage the team • Have fun

Keep the question "do you want to participate?" open...
 Non formal learning is based on voluntary participation, and this is an essential ingredient!

Tips from OUR EXPERIENCE

- Working with the schools made us feel obliged that we had to keep all participants involved in the project. It would have been good to state at the beginning that we would expect everyone to be fully involved and to have the freedom to let go of participants if they did not show interest or motivation for the project. We did not challenge the participants enough at times
- There were questions around parental support for the project and the lack of it feeding into their mind set. Many parents want their children to focus on their school work as they are now in their final two years in school. This also puts into perspective the difficulties the school in Italy had, as they were not in a transition year and needed to fit the project around "real" school work all the time.
- We never fully broke down the teacher like relationship; again here the role of the peer educators was important as they did work on a more equal basis. The older leaders in fishbowl stayed very much figures of authority and this did not help the project in developing along Non Formal learning principals. It was not easy to build a positive and open relationship with them, and we were surprised to realise that this was the case after working together for over a year.
- Workshops focussing on motivation and exploration of the theme would have improved the overall attitude



I was surprised that it was so interesting, everyone who came –to the political evening - was really impressed - quote from participant

PARTICIPATION

We would like to give some background theory about participation. Participation is central in a project like this. The young people should participate, take action themselves but **often they need the support of the adults around them. In our case the NGO's supported** the young people in creating this project.

But what is participation? The figure of the ladder on the next page shows an example of how we can differentiate between different levels of participation. What is important to keep in mind that there is no project that lives on only one step of this ladder, most projects move from one step to the other, both upwards and downwards. This ladder is not about judging the project, the top being the best. This ladder is about recognising where you and your young people fit.

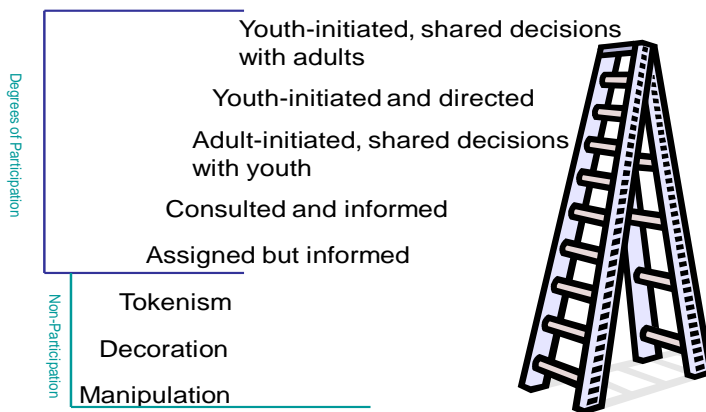
LADDER OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

It is not enough to say that young people do or do not participate. There are different degrees to which youth can be

involved or can take over responsibility, depending on the local situation, resources, needs and level of experience.

Roger Hart proposes a model of the so-called "ladder of children's participation", which illustrates the different degrees of involvement of children and young people in projects, organisations or communities.

Roger Hart defines eight degrees of youth involvement, each of the degrees corresponding to one rung of a ladder



Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

Rung 8: Shared decision-making

Projects or ideas are initiated by young people, who invite the adults to take part in the decision-making process as partners.

Rung 7: Young people led and initiated

Projects or ideas are initiated and directed by young people; the adults might get invited to provide any necessary support, but a project can carry on without their intervention.

Rung 6: Adult-initiated, shared decision making

Adults initiate projects but young people are invited to share the decision-making power and responsibilities as equal partners.

Rung 5: Young people consulted and informed

Projects are initiated and run by adults, but

young people provide advice and suggestions and are informed how these suggestions contribute to the final decisions or results.

Rung 4: Young people assigned and informed

Projects are initiated and run by adults; young people are invited to take on some specific roles or tasks within the project, but they are aware of what influence they have in reality.

Rung 3: Young people tokenised (tokenism)

Young people are given some roles within projects but they have no real influence on any decisions. The illusion is created (either on purpose or unintentionally) that young people participate, when in fact they have

no choice about what they do and how

Rung 2: Young people as decoration

Young people are needed in the project to represent youth as an underprivileged group. They have no meaningful role (except from being present) and – as happens with any decorations – they are put in a visible position within a project or organisation, so that they can easily be seen by outsiders.

Rung 1: Young people manipulated

Young people are invited to take part in the project, but they have no real influence on decisions and their outcomes. In fact, their presence is used to achieve some other goal, such as winning a local election, creating a better impression of an institution or securing some extra funds from institutions that support youth participation.

"have your say!" Manual

Looking at our project it was clear that we started at the top step of this ladder, young people came to us and wanted to change something in their schools. They took some initiatives in their school, we supported them. This initiative did not work out well. These young people left school and we started working with a new group. We took on the idea of the previous group and moved a few steps down, we initiated the project with the new group, but we shared ideas and decisions. When we went to the schools we moved a few steps down again! We informed a group of young people about the project, and we assigned tasks to them. This was a very unusual step for us, but the only way that we could see the project move ahead!

While the project was in full swing we went through many stages, at times it was youth initiated and directed, this is when everything went really well. At times the motivation was very low, and during those times the travelling that was incorporated in the project became an incentive to for people to keep going. This could be called manipulation!

During the entire project we worked with 2 or 3 peer educators and they stayed with us on the top of the ladder all the time, leading the rest of the group and the project.

THE “RMSOS” APPROACH - based on five keywords : right, means, space, opportunity and support.

Based on the principle that meaningful youth participation can only take place when the right conditions have been created and all the actors involved in participatory work have been given the responsibility to ensure that these conditions are present. The five keywords, Right, Means, Space, Opportunity and Support, represent the main factors having an influence on youth involvement at local level

Each one focuses on a different support measure, but they are closely interrelated, and **they all have to be fulfilled for young people to be able to participate fully in the activities or decisions** that interest them.

Right

Young people have an implicit right to participate and, as has been already mentioned in Chapter 1, it is referred to as a human right or citizen's right. Ideally, there should be a law at local and/or regional level stating that young people have to be consulted and have the right to participate in issues, actions and decisions affecting them. But even in communities where no such law officially exists, young people have a right to participate. In other words, it is not dependent on local or regional authorities to grant such a right, but it is a fundamental right that all young people have and should demand.

Young people should be active in promoting their rights. In practice, this means much more than influencing local decisions by consultations or voting. It implies that the activities, projects or organisations should promote rights that young people have in all areas of life, and this means not only civil or political rights, but also social, economic or cultural ones.

Means

Life can be more difficult for young people who have insufficient resources in life (financial resources, for example) and who live in poverty due to unemployment or other difficulties. This may mean that their basic needs like food or shelter are not met and they may feel isolated or left out of society as a result. It is natural that, in such circumstances, the priority is to try to look for different ways of obtaining the missing resources and, as a result, young people might lack the time or motivation to participate in the life of an organisation or community.

In order to encourage young people to get involved, therefore, it has to be ensured that basic needs are met. These include sufficient social security, education, housing, health care, transportation, know-how and access to technology.

Space

Young people need physical space to meet, to spend time or to organise their own activities. As far as participation in school activities or other organised curricula is concerned, facilities are usually provided (in classrooms, gyms or youth clubs, for example). But it is much more difficult for young people to find a place to meet in if they are interested in getting involved in non-organised initiatives. That is why we are seeing the Internet being used more and more frequently by young people as a space for exchanging views or even setting up projects with other likeminded people. But this RMSOS factor is not only about physical space, it is much more about the space to participate within the institutional framework of policy making. This essentially means that young people's

views, recommendations and conclusions should have a real impact on decisions that are made. Very often young people are invited to participate in processes, but in fact they have little possibility to influence and shape the final outcome. This is called “token representation”.

Opportunity

In order to be able to participate actively young people need to be provided with the opportunity to do so. This means, for example, that young people must have easy access to information on how to get involved, what the opportunities available are and where they are. When they know what is going on in their local community in terms of youth participation they can make informed decisions about their involvement. It is sometimes the case that young people do not participate, not because they have no interest, but simply because they do not get information about existing opportunities. Secondly, events, decision-making processes and systems need to be youth-friendly. There should not only be space for young people within these processes and structures, but the way they are organised and the way they work should be such that young people can understand them and can fully contribute if they so wish. It therefore has to be ensured, for example, that young people have the opportunity to participate in terms of having sufficient time and supportive structures.

Support

Young people have lots of talent and the potential to participate, but without the necessary support, their involvement might not be as efficient as it could be. They should have access to various forms of support. These include, for example, financial, moral and institutional support at a number of different levels – personal, organisational or at local community level. Ideally, local authorities should provide adequate financial support to cover expenses and structural costs, but it is still the case that in many communities, youth issues do not have priority in terms of local financial management.

Young people also need to have access to moral support and advice. This can be provided, for example, by a person referred to in the revised charter as a guarantor³² or, alternatively, by a youth worker or other professional who has the necessary experience and expertise in working in the field of youth-adult partnerships or in working with young people. Lastly, the institution or community as a whole needs to support and recognise the importance and contribution of youth participation, not only for young people, but also for public authorities and society in general.

It has been already mentioned that all five elements of the RMSOS approach need to be present in order that meaningful participation by young people can take place. If, for example, their right to participate is denied, it does not matter what means, space or support will be provided, they will not be able to get involved. On the other hand, having the right, but insufficient support means that this right cannot be exercised. Although each of the RMSOS factors has been analysed separately in this chapter, one therefore needs to see all the elements as parts of an interconnected system, one that is balanced and operates well only when all the elements function properly.

“have your say!” Manual

Democracy is pretty much what you understand yourself; it is what you make it
quote from participant

The "RMSO" approach used during our project evaluation

During the final evaluation we explained the meaning of the "RMSO" (rights, means, support, opportunity and space) We then handed out the table below and they were asked to create their own graph about the following statement: **"I have the ability to create a change in my school"** They did this individually.

When everyone was finished they shared their graphs in national groups and they then created one that represented the participation in each school.

This exercise brought about very interesting discussions and clarified clearly the weak areas in their involvement in their schools.



5					
4.5					
4					
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3					
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2					
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1					
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	Right	Means/ Motivation	Support/ Training	Opportunity	Space



Democracy must be something more than two wolves and a sheep voting on what to have for dinner.

James Bovard

THE EXCHANGE

The exchange was not applied for in the project, but was a very important event within the project. The exchange was essential for building the group dynamics and to create understanding and motivation.

It was a very intense and hard working exchange and the programme came very close to the programme of a training course.

Many of the results of the workshops from the exchange are in this booklet, the exchange was used to set the stage of the project, to explore what was needed for the implementation and to build the skills to do so.

The effect of the exchange was to be felt throughout the project, and we would advise to always incorporate at least one residential in a project if this is possible.

Here is a short time table of the working days:

	Day 1 Know the subject	Day 2 Analyze the school situation	Day 3 Research	Day 4 Building of skills	Day 5 Youth in Action and evaluation
8.00-900	Breakfast				
9.30-12.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the project • Expectations • Team building activities • Creation of common rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simulation of research: uniforms in school. • Presentation of the researches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School hierarchy and democratic system • Breaking down the research into small steps • Tools, guidelines and roles for each small step 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill building on teamwork • Creating a learning plan • Making our own pasta! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Youth in Action" presentation: overview of the EU program • Planning the next steps in the project • creating a final timetable
13.00	Lunch				
15.00-18.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is democracy? • What is participation? • Simulation of democratic process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills, tools and guidelines for each part of a research • Comparison of schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills are connected to each role? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill building: Project management • Facilitation • PR and Media • Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the project • Cleaning up
	National Reflection groups and Team meeting				
18.30	Dinner				
20.30		Intercultural evening		Intercultural dinner	

Observation from participating Irish teacher

Firstly, I thought the interaction between the Irish and Italian students was a driving force behind all the hard work that they did. I also think that the background organisation of the visits and the work enabled the students to commit themselves completely to the work that had to be done. They could see the value of the work and were enthusiastic in doing it.

COMPARISON OF THE SCHOOLS

During the exchange a comparison of the 3 schools was carried out. This exercise was very interesting and it created a lot of clarity about the differences that exist between the schools.

The students were first asked what they wanted to know about each other's schools, these questions were written on big flipcharts, and grouped into similar questions. Each group of questions was put in different areas in the room and students were asked to answer them in mixed nationality groups. Flipcharts were provided for writing the answers on. The exercise was finished with a general discussion about the differences and similarities.

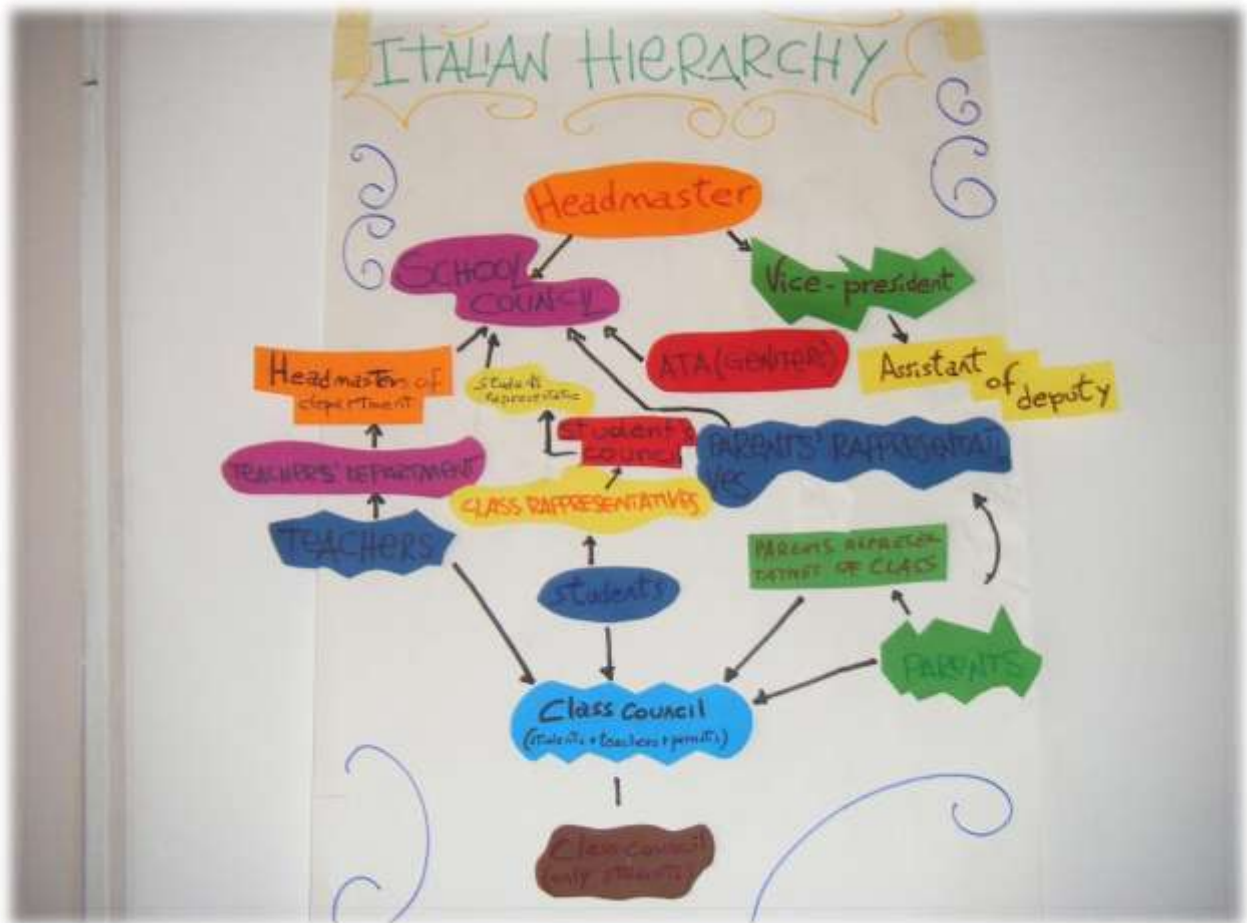
General questions about the schools

Questions	Scarriff Community College	YouthReach	Liceo Scientifico Nomentano Rome
How many lessons per day?	9 Lessons per day	6 but we have some double classes too	Between 4-5.
How many people in a class?	25- 30	13 in school, 5 in my class	20-30
How long are the classes?	35-40 minutes	45 minute classes	55-60 minutes
What is your school timetable?	Monday to Friday 9.00-15.25	Monday to Thursday 9.30-15.30 Friday 9.30-13.00	Monday to Saturday from 8.30 – 13.30. Thursday until 14.30.
Can you leave the premises?	We cannot leave the school till 15.25	We can leave on 11.00-11.30 and 13.00-14.00	We can't leave the school until the end of lessons (until 14.30)
Do you have to change classrooms?	Yes, we must change classrooms. Teachers have their own classrooms	Yes	No we don't have to change classrooms, teachers move from class to class.
Where do you eat your lunch?	In the classroom assigned to you. Or outside or in the hall or the corridors	Anywhere, we cook and clean.	School finishes at 13.30/14.30 there is no canteen. We go home for lunch.
How many teachers? How many students per teacher?	There are 26 teachers – 325 students. Number of students per class is 24	around 7 teachers 13 students	There are about 130 teachers - 1,200 students and. The average number of students per class ranges from 19-29.

Tips from OUR EXPERIENCE

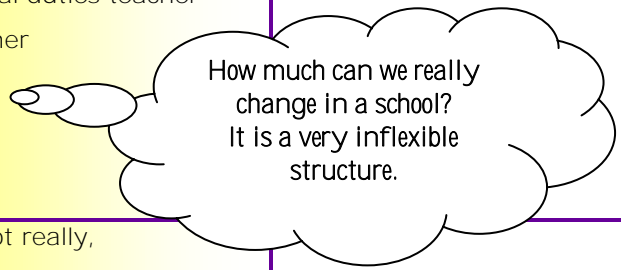
Have you worked with young people in a formal environment before? If not, you could take the following into account:

- Have enough non-formal activities and team building activities to build the team, to build trust and to break out of the formal mould
- Young people know each other very well, but they do not always feel safe with each other.
- Patterns of friendships/interaction are already set, they need to be looked at, understood and sometimes re-structured. i.e. Is everyone in the group respected?
- Create good and open relationship between leaders and participants. We found it very hard to build an open relationship with the young people, as we stayed figures of authority for most of them
- Workshops focussing on motivation and exploration of the theme would have improved the overall attitude
- Set goals with the group and revisit them regularly. Coming from a formal background, they are used to being led, and not to lead.
- Incorporate personal development more deeply



Questions specific for the Democracy Project

Questions	Scarriff Community College	YouthReach	Liceo Scientifico Nomentano Rome
What is the hierarchy in your school?	Principal Deputy principal Assistant principal Special duties teacher Teacher	Teachers Students	Principal Deputy principal Assistant of principal (or deputy) Head department Class co-ordinator Teacher Representative of students council
Are the student's views taken into account?	No not really, no one really listens to our opinions.	Definite yes	Not really but occasionally we're listened to
Do you have a say in the schools?	Not really teachers make all the decisions	Yes	A bit.
Do you have meeting of all the youth "presidents" of the schools in the region	No. Never	No	Yes, at least twice every four months
Do you get to vote for the class council (the right to elect)?	We used to but now we have a class prefect and no elected representative.	We don't have a student council , but a student meeting once a week.	All students have the right to vote their representative who sits in the student council
Do you have a student council? If yes how does it work?	Yes we do representatives from each year meets with some teacher and discuss things that are happening.	No. But we have team meetings.	Yes, we have. Each class elects two representatives and all the representatives have a meeting once a month. They have to decide when the students meetings have to be and the topic that will be discussed.
Do you have student assembly (General students meeting)?	Sometimes we have assemblies but only with our year groups.	No there's only 13 people in Youth Reach	Yes, we have.
What flaw do you see in your school system?	Student council. Lack of student's authority. Lack of democratic decision making. Ideas not taken into account.	No real flaws. Issues are discussed in a weekly team meeting and sorted out.	Money is not sufficient for the project in the schools.
What would you change in your school?	Better relationship with principal.	Don't think any changes need to be made. The team meeting is there for just that	More cleaning. Relationship with headmaster.



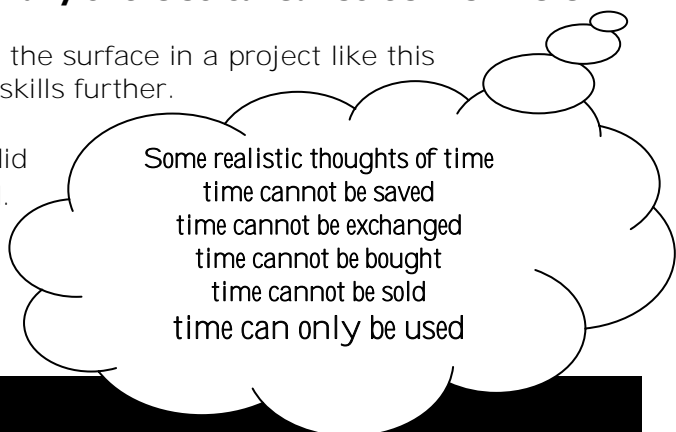
The more I learn about democracy, the less I understand it...
quote from participant

ROLES and skills identified

In order to implement the research we identified roles and the skills needed for these roles. During the exchange we organised skill building workshops to improve the skills, **but we also realised that throughout the project many of the so called "soft skills" were developed on an ongoing basis.**

It is interesting to see how many natural skills come to the surface in a project like this and it is great to be able to nurture and develop these skills further.

On the other hand time was always a problem, so we did not manage to facilitate as many workshops as needed. This was mostly visible in the PR and the filming as both these groups needed specialised training, and this training could have been improved on if time would have allowed it.



Roles	Skills
Chairman in meetings	Needs to have authority Needs to be: good time keeper Able to differentiate between important and non important discussions
Secretary	Needs to be able to: write fast, listen carefully able to follow the communication able to differentiate between important and not important issues
Interviewer / Spokes person / P.R.	Needs to be: a Communicator, polite, good listener, interactive and sociable speak clearly, use good grammar informative and informed about the topics Confident, flexible, eager to succeed
Researcher	Needs to: Know what you are trying to research Be able to use technology i.e. excel Able to explain what and why you are researching
Photographer / Filming	Needs to be: able to take pictures, good at using camera know how to use video recorder know the reason for filming or taking pictures able to explain why you are taking pictures Fast, at the right moment in the right place Creative
Editor	Needs to have: organisation skills editorial skills planning skills summarising skills to be able to define relevant aspects
Artist	creative artistic know how to use art materials
Writer Typist	fast at typing and writing able to read other's hand writing

Observation from participating Irish teacher

I thought I could have been utilised more, as I was really just 'riding shotgun'. Later, in Rome, I played a part facilitating the work of the students as they analysed various situations. I felt more comfortable in this role.

FACILITATION AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS

What is the role of the facilitator/leader?

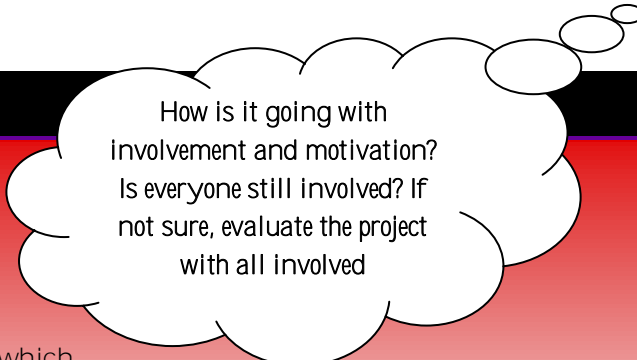
A facilitator is an individual who's job is to help to manage a process of information exchange.

In short, the facilitator's responsibility is to address the journey, rather than the destination.

The role of a skilled facilitator is to create conditions in which a group can work together effectively to get a task done efficiently. The facilitator does not provide "expert" answers to problems the group faces. Rather, he/she provides a process which enables the group to develop its' own answers out of its' own collective expertise or to guide them in the right direction to find answers.

Essentially, the effective facilitator functions as a catalyst for group productivity. The end result is two-fold. First, the group gets its' task done efficiently. Second, the group learns how to work together effectively

A professional facilitator gradually transfers these skills to the group itself, so that in the future they can be just as effective and efficient without outside facilitation.



How is It going with involvement and motivation?
Is everyone still involved? If not sure, evaluate the project with all involved


From OUR EXPERIENCE

Role of a facilitator or leader was very important for this project. A lot of the facilitation was done by the peer leaders.

During the exchange we explored the important aspects of facilitation below are some of the outcomes of this session

A Facilitator enables the following:

- Making the process pleasant for the people.
 - Making the process efficient.
 - Getting great results.



Are you clear about what participation means???

Practical skills needed

- allowing people to participate
- allowing each person to have their say
- don't lose track of the aim
- divide people into small groups
- try to assign tasks to every person
- we have to vote if there is no consent
- give clear guidelines
- realise a good action plan
- facilitator should be objective
- keep in mind the purpose of whole project or exercise
- time management
- organising skills

Social Skills needed

- be polite and respect all the people
- acknowledge peoples effort
- respect all opinions
- **pay attention to everyone's ideas**
- let everyone speak freely and show his/her own idea
- encourage people to use their talents
- must be prepared to be calm
- involve everyone in the activity
- don't let anyone impose over someone else
- avoid useless arguments
- encourage the team and make sure that everybody understand the purpose

Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time"

Sir Winston Churchill

GUIDELINES for meetings with institutions and authority figures

For the project we envisaged that the young people needed the skills to interacting with figures of authority, and during the role-plays this became even clearer. We designed workshops in order to build skills for this purpose. This was a three-part process

- role-play, they interviewed their teachers about a tricky subject
- workshops analysing the previous session
- creating guidelines for meeting with institutions and authority figures

Preparation:

- Arrange the meeting (make an appointment, etc.)
- Try to get some information about the people you're going to meet
- Set a clear objective for the meeting
- Plan the questions
- Be sure you know the answers to the questions they could ask you
- Discuss roles (example: one speaks, one takes notes)
- Make some research to provide facts and statistics as support
- Have an idea of possible/ideal outcome for the meeting
- Bring representatives of both boys and girls, and make sure they have equal opportunity to speak
- Think about your dress-code, be presentable and well-mannered
- In two words: be prepared!

During the meeting:

- Have clear introductions
- Always make eye contact
- Use appropriate vocabulary
- Be confident in your presentation
- Be ready to think on your feet, stay relaxed, don't create uncomfortable silent moments
- Be precise and concrete, especially about technicalities
- Prepare and bring with you notes and written presentations, and know them well!
- Speak clearly
- Be polite

After the meeting:

- Evaluate the meeting
 - ◊ what went well, what went wrong?
 - ◊ did we reach our goals?
- Put together all the information you acquired
- Draw conclusions



Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

GUI DELINES for managing meetings

Step by step:

Appoint a chair person

His/her tasks are:

- Ensures the meeting follows the agenda points
- Ensures proper participation of the all group members
- Ensures decisions are made democratically
- Keeps the time

Appoint a secretary

His/her tasks are:

- Writes down all the important decisions
- Writes down all the tasks and the person who will do the task
- Asks for clarification if something is not clear

Read last minutes from previous meeting:

- Write down matters arising from the minutes, issues that still need to be discussed

Write the agenda – both chair person and the secretary write

- Write down the agenda points, do not discuss at this time!

Discuss the agenda points

Make decisions – secretary, write these down!!

Decide on who will do what task. – Secretary, writes these down!!

Template that can be used for meetings:

Date:

Present:

Matters arising:

-
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

Agenda:

-
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
-

Tasks

What:	Who:	When:

CONCLUSION

The project is finished now... it was definitely a long road to get here! We started with a feasibility meeting in October 2008 and we had our final meeting, during October 2010! It has been the biggest challenge our organisations have been involved in, and although it was a very positive experience, we are not sure if we would ever implement a project this large again. It is good to remember that even a simple idea often brings a lot of work to implement, so our main advice would be: KEEP IT SIMPLE!!

We are sure if we would ask the participants they would say, absolutely, do it again!! YES!! It was a very special and incredible experience for all involved.

Undertaking this journey and looking at democracy from so many different angles, with so many different people, and implemented in such different ways, we had to come to the conclusion that democracy is not as straight forward as we thought it was at the beginning of the project. As one of the participants during the evaluation said: "the more I learn about democracy the less I understand it!"

What also became clear is that democracy needs people feeling responsible and interested enough to understand, implement and guard it, and that people need to be educated in order to be able to do so.

Being prepared to question commonly accepted beliefs is at the centre of this, to do the questioning one needs courage and a firm belief in the legitimacy of it. For instance not that long ago the **democratic system did not allow women a right to vote, now that seems medieval to us... maybe in the future we find it very strange that young people were not allowed to vote!**

Over all the participants have recognised the weaknesses in the system and come up with very helpful real ways to deal with them and work with them.

The participants did learn a lot and objectives were met, but there is still the question of how much do they really understand democracy or do they understand it any better?

We had hoped for a deeper understanding and motivation after the project.

A key element which we did not work through thoroughly enough was the lack of awareness of what it means to be an integral part of a democratic system. Because it was in many ways a new concept, to have equal rights and responsibilities within a school, the students could at times not see the point or the possibilities of such an opportunity.

Many, if not most seemed to be happy to leave things as they were even when they said they would like to see things being done differently. A craving and determination for change was present in the minority.

Part of this can be put down to a type of disbelief mixed with fear of saying what they really thought but over all it was not wanting to have the work load or the responsibility that would come with equal rights.

This is a very interesting concept and one which any group taking on a democracy project should explore early on so that both the participants, the teachers and leaders can say what they think, and what they seek to achieve.



Last but not least, we would like to thank everyone who actively supported the project, **from parents to teachers and workshop facilitators. From youth and peer leaders to TD's, youth services and VEC. From husbands and wives to son's and daughters!**

And let us not forget all the hours that everyone involved put into completing, at times, very tedious jobs or having to deal with computers crashing every 5 minutes!

Thank you all!!

As we attempt to embrace our vision of true democracy it is important to remember the many injustices that have been enacted in its name throughout our history.

It therefore befalls us, and places this demand and challenge to each one of us, as individuals and as a society, that as we attempt to carry the banner of democracy, we must do so with courage, care and vigilance in a spirit of equality and fairness for the rights of others. A true democratic system must prove itself to be Inclusive by demonstrating its ability to represent and give voice to those who have no voice.



Receiving our Certificates....

References and resources:

Project Management T-Kit:

http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/Publications/T_kits/3/tkit3.pdf

“Have your say”! Manual:

http://book.coe.int/EN/ficheouvrage.php?PAGEID=36&produit_aliasid=2303lang=EN

Leargas website (many links to different resources):

<http://www.leargas.ie/>

Salto website (a good place for many resources):

<http://www.salto-youth.net/>

Our own website:

<http://www.fishbowl-youth.org/>

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