

European Network for Democracy-Workshops
Non-formal and informal learning opportunities in international cooperation
Cultural diversity and tolerance “hands on”

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In the triannual project “**European Network for Democracy-Workshops Non-formal and informal learning opportunities in international cooperation Cultural diversity and tolerance hands on**“, we have organized with non-formal and partly formal educational processes, common problem-identifications for European questions in collaboration with protagonists from civil society of the participating organisations:

We have

- Qualified young people for being multipliers (in a European pool of about 40 people) in the context of activating European citizenship.
- Developed and applied educational material as well as experienced intensive method diversity, especially in the field of intercultural learning and social hegemony, cultural diversity and tolerance, solidary economy and democratic educational processes, European understanding and preconceptional aware educational work, migration and globalisation in a European contexts
- Conducted two two-week democracy workshops in Budapest and Barcelona, in which all participants have been enabled to gain experience in cultural diversity and political tolerance in a European context
- Formed a “gentle” European network between the participating Partners and their respective organisations and between the East-,South and Westeuropean regions, which is characterized by differential organisational and structural preconditions.
- Organized, during supervision groupmeetings, teamer-qualifications and the qualifactions in the two-week democracy workshops, regular sustainable non-formal (political) educational processes for young people (in the sense of “peer group education”)

With the attempt and the first steps to form a stable, long-lasting cooperation and develop networks with our partners, especially from Middle- and Easteurope, we contributed to the European integration process.

Within the framework of the **democracy-workshops and their theme: Cultural diversity and tolerance “hands on”** we and our European partners developed a basis on which young people with multicultural, multiethnic and multireligious backgrounds can meet, discuss and develop projects together; which advocates diversity and tolerance and enabled non-violent conflict management.

An exchange of experience on a daily-life basis among young people from East-,South and Westeuropean regions, which focused on the European diversity as a common and developing value, was organized within the scope of “democracy-workshops”.

In the democracy workshops, it was not our sole goal to mediate and acquire knowledge and competence, but also to promote the exchange and constitution of relationships and friendships among the participants.

Against the background of rising youth unemployment and precarious labour conditions in the East and the West, we setup chances for orientation in the democracy workshops for young people. The cultural plurality, which was perceptible among the young people in the thematic workshops as well as in daily routine, raised not just communicative, manifold demands to the young people. It was impressing to get to know, that social and political developments, that influence adolescent living environments on a transnational basis, take place in all participating regions. The increasing dissolution of traditional communities in all participating regions raises new demands to adolescents and adults:

Tolerance, Empathy- and Konfliktability, to cope with different cultural Systems. In the frame of the “democracy workshops”, everybody got to know, that intercultural learning and the Acquisition of intercultural competence today embraces the dimension of general education.

A European identity can only arise in a collective discussion, with shared questions and topics; with the experience, that the common problems can only be solved by common acting. The idea of democratic awareness and the insight, that European culture, **cultural diversity and tolerance are no static values and positions, but rather alterable and influenceable and therefore shapable by young people** was developed with the processes in the context of the “democracy workshops” and the contemplation about common options for action. And, because these values are coined very differential in the respective societies, because they are based upon different cultural and social conflicts, they have to be put to discussion and have to be worked with in a European context.

With the “democracy workshops” we triggered these processes of European understanding and also mediated the perception, that these values and their political contents are subjected to a consistent change of interpretation and have to be negotiated time and time again by “democracy workshops” and other decision-making and opinion-forming processes.

The „democracy workshops“, which are designed and conducted by an international pool of teamers and the young participants of the corresponding partners, are an offer of non-formal education in an European context. The programme of the “democracy workshops” have been adapted to the local conditions and according to empirical values and oral analysis’ changed during the process. Intercultural workingmethods, which promote the involvement of all participants, **cultural diversity and tolerance, coined the projectreality**. The initiation and evaluation of intercultural learning-processes with an open output – to us a feature of non-formal education.