

Kick-Off Meeting Sarajevo, 25 – 29 September 2011

REPORT

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aces is an initiative of
ERSTE Foundation



ERSTE Stiftung

coordinated by
Interkulturelles Zentrum

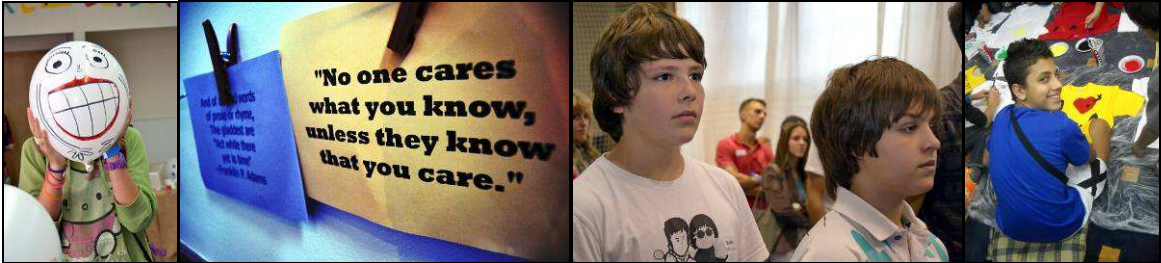


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1. Programme – aces Kick-Off Meeting

Sunday, 25.09.2011	Monday, 26.09.2011	Tuesday, 27.09.2011	Wednesday, 28.09.2011	Thursday, 29.09.2011
Arrival of Participants	<p>9:00 Official Opening (incl. Framework, Code of Contact)</p> <p>10:30 Coffee Break</p> <p>11:00 Pax leave venue</p> <p>12:00 – 15:00: Sarajevo City Rally in project groups</p>	<p>9:00 Energizer and Intro</p> <p>9:15 – 11:00 Bazar of Learning Self-directed learning space with 20-24 stations and interactive input all around volunteering</p> <p>(Coffee Break included)</p> <p>11:15 – 12:45 Project Teams</p>	<p>9:00 Get Started</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Topic Presentation / inspirational movie - Introduction of Workshop Facilitators <p>9:45 – 12:45 Workshops # 1</p> <p>Including 30' coffee break</p>	<p>9:00 Next Steps (PPP)</p> <p>9.30 Closure of the Meeting (including evaluation)</p> <p>10:30 End of Meeting</p> <p>Departure of Participants</p> <p>No joint lunch for participants (lunch boxes)</p>
13:00 Lunch for those who have arrived early	(Lunch included): pax receive per diems	<p>12:45 aces Group Picture</p> <p>13:00 Lunch</p>	<p>12:45 Lunch</p> <p>Leisure Team Offers</p>	
<p>Afternoon:</p> <p>- Registration of Participants</p>	<p>16:00 Coffee Break</p> <p>16:30 Story telling around the fire Pax share impressions (not only project groups but bigger groups)</p> <p>17:30 Country Group Meeting</p>	<p>14:30 – 16:00 Project Teams continued</p> <p>After 16:00: Free late afternoon and evening</p> <p>Excursions will be offered</p> <p>(self-organised dinner in town)</p> <p>Leisure Team Offers</p>	<p>14:15 – 17:15 Workshops # 2 (2nd round of same 11 Workshops)</p> <p>Including 30' coffee break</p>	

2. Aims of the Kick-Off Meeting and Participants

The aims of the aces Kick-Off-Meeting are:

- Bringing together students and teachers from all aces projects 2011/2012 in order to get to know each other and the partner countries
- Working on Volunteering and “Building bridges in societies”
- Taking part in methodical workshops on volunteering, project management and various other topics
- Reflecting on project aims
- Planning further steps for the common implementation of the project in order to feel well prepared for the joint partnership project

Working methods and language

When preparing the Kick-Off Meeting the facilitators and the organisers jointly thought of several keywords, standing for the related aims we had in mind. We hoped that for the participants the event would be

- **connecting:** in the sense that by the end of the week they should feel closer and know more about their project partners and about aces;
- **clear:** by aiming at more info on the topic of the year, clarity regarding the aims of aces and a better picture of their international school partnership project;
- **warm:** thanks to the atmosphere we wished to create at the Kick-Off Meeting in Sarajevo;
- **meaningful:** because of the people they have met, the workshops they have attended, the city they have visited, the Living Books have they talked to,...and, finally,
- **inspiring:** thanks to the new activities, approaches, methods, encounters,...which they might want to use in the schools back home.

The programme was designed and sessions were offered according to these goals: We used a variety of working methods, such as plenary sessions, group work, a city rally, a living exhibition – called “Bazar of Learning” – and workshops.

The composition of groups changed depending on the different working sessions. We had mixed groups of students and teachers, country teams, groups according to personal interests, groups involving the project partners only or work sessions separated into teachers'-groups and students'-groups.

The settings aimed at a creative and dialogue-oriented interaction and a fruitful exchange between the participants. Furthermore, they encouraged a self-directed learning process. The common working language was English – with one exception: the meeting of country groups “(f)aces in the countries”, offering space for students and teachers to get to know others from their own country.

aces Tutors: The intention to involve young aces members as assistants of the facilitators had already proved to be a success at the previous events. Following the overall idea of lived participation, three students from former aces projects volunteered to take over this responsible task: Sibora from Albania, Lejla from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Martin from Macedonia. Apart from assisting the facilitators “on and off the stage” and “building bridges” between the organisers of the Kick-Off and the participants, they also supported the orga-team “behind the scenes” and created their own **wall paper**.

Pleasure & Leisure Team: Ilija and his team invited the participants to “travel around the world with them”. On the different continents the participants could indulge in various activities during the free time and in the evenings, including different social games, a drum workshop, painting of African masks, a “mood tent” to “capture the travel experience” and much more. Ilija, Valentina and Ivona,

coming from Montenegro and Serbia, did their best to make it even easier for the students to get to know their peers, to interact and to feel “at home” – and it wasn’t only the students who enjoyed interacting and being creative in the “Pleasure and Leisure World”.

Conference participants

Altogether approximately 270 participants attended the Kick-Off Meeting (see attached List of Participants for details)!

- Delegations from 104 schools involved in the 43 aces projects: 208 teachers and students from 15 countries (from 105 project schools; one school was unable to attend the meeting)
- Special guests from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Romania:
 - Aida Durić, Head of Department for EU Integration and International Cooperation, Ministry of Civil Affairs (BA)
 - Maja Stojkić, Director of the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education (BA)
 - Alisa Ibraković, Deputy Director of the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education (BA)
 - Radmila Jakovljević, Deputy Director of the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education (BA)
 - Žaneta Džumhur, Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education (BA)
 - Lucretia Baluta, Romanian National Commission for UNESCO (RO)
 - Boris Marte and Knut Neumayer, ERSTE Foundation (AT)
 - Mari Steindl, Interkulturelles Zentrum (AT)
- Facilitator team (Hermi Steinbach-Buchinger and Katrin Lüth from AT and Darko Marković from RS), the tutors and their teachers, members of the pleasure and leisure team, members of the orga-team, members of the finance team, Council Members, additional workshop trainers, Living Books
- Team of the aces coordination, including representatives from ERSTE Foundation (AT), Interkulturelles Zentrum (AT) and VČELÍ DOM (SK)
- Several journalists from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Moldova and the Slovak Republic

Conference Venue: Hotel Hollywood, Dr. Pintola 23, Ilidža, 71000 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

A big Thank You

Most of the participants were new aces members, most of them had not been to Sarajevo before. Neither is true for us. However, this was the first time that we had organized an event so far from both Austria and the Slovak Republic – and outside of the Schengen zone, a fact that entailed some unexpected challenges. It is only thanks to the cooperation with and the support of the following organizations that we managed to overcome the challenges and host the participants the way we did in this beautiful and amazing city: **Udruženje INFOHOUSE in Sarajevo, World University Service (WUS) Austria** and **SEEYN, the South East European Youth Network**. Thank you very much for all you have done!



The aces Team poster



Who can spot the aces tutors ?

3. Impressions and Outcomes of the Meeting

Travelling to, at and from the Kick-Off

When organising a meeting like this we always think about a metaphor, a certain image relating to the meeting. And for the Kick-Off 2011 we immediately thought of a “journey” and of “travellers”: Firstly, because learning as such is a lifelong journey and then, secondly, because implementing international school projects has a lot in common with a journey as well: When travelling we go uphill and downhill, we follow roads, but sometimes also get lost or are confronted with unexpected borders. That’s when we’ll have to be ready to find different paths. And mostly it’s precisely these hidden paths that will lead us to secret gardens and the most colourful bazars where we meet inspiring people and learn new things. Also, it’s always better not to travel alone but to be part of a team where the members can rely on each other and benefit from the experience of all, helping us to safely reach the destination. This is the idea we wanted to convey to the participants at the Kick-Off: Our vision was that by the end of “journey at the Kick-Off” the participants would have a lot of positive memories and new tools to take home and that they would feel well prepared for the next and even bigger adventure: the implementation of their school partnership project.

Each day of the Kick-Off had a different focus – a specific “motto” pointing out the different goals of the meeting and this report aims at quickly guiding you through the most important parts.

Sunday, 25 September 2011 – “Get Together”

▪ Welcome and First Contact

When Darko, one of the three facilitators, spoke the very first words: “Dear Diary, the Kick-Off Meeting was...” he not only opened the meeting but also introduced the so-called **travel diaries** to the participants. These personalised notebooks allowed them to capture unforgettable moments, note open questions, useful information or other impressions. After a warm “welcome” by Katrin, an introduction to the metaphor of the meeting by the “tour guide” Rebecca, and a brief activity demonstrating how the participants had travelled to the meeting, everyone was invited to walk around and get into contact with more and more people. Then the large group was divided into groups of eight and ready to perform the **story of “The fire of true friendship”** which Katrin and Hermi had written for the meeting (see annex for details). **Wishes for the group**, such as “a good talk over lunch” or “make plenty of friends” were written on wooden clothes pegs, pegged on the fellow travellers and passed on from one person to another. The idea was: When you find one, read it, consider it and possibly act on it.

Quite a few of the participants speak several languages and were ready to be **language assistants**, supporting those who had difficulties following the programme in English. After dinner, the participants were able to have a rest after their long journey, benefit from the **various offers by the pleasure and leisure team**, meet with their project partners and other participants, decorate their travel diaries or enjoy reading a book from the **aces-library**.



Preparing sound and the movement for the story



Interaction in the pleasure and leisure area

Monday, 26 September 2011 – “Meet Your Fellow Travellers”

▪ Official Welcomes and Presentations... or A Morning in the Mountains

Hermi made it quite clear that every trip needs its song: In the case of the Kick-Off this definitely was Bob Marley’s song “Three little birds” because whenever we start something new – be it a journey or a project with people we don’t know – we probably look forward to it but we also tend to worry. Therefore the magic mantra, that was introduced on Monday morning but sang several times throughout the Kick-Off, was “**Don't worry 'bout a thing, 'cause every little thing gonna be all right.**”



After a short activity in which the participants exchanged details about where they come from, they were introduced to the **tutors Lejla, Sibora and Martin** who shared their expectations, what they wished to offer to the other students and teachers and why they had happily volunteered to be this year’s tutors. One of their tasks on this specific day was to interview the special guests that had travelled to the opening. They were invited to join the fire place in front of the mountain shelter and asked what they had brought with them in the big rucksacks.



As the Kick-Off took place in Sarajevo, we were honoured to welcome **Aida Durić, Head of Department for EU Integration and International Cooperation, Ministry of Civil Affairs (BA)**. She presented a notebook with empty pages to the participants, indicating that a book has a lot to do with learning, but that her pages were empty as it was one's own stories and experiences that counted. Being asked by Lejla, who compared the learning process with climbing mountains, for a recommendation on how to reach the top, Ms Durić illustrated that for her climbing means setting new aims. In this sense the message would be: “Don’t give up, see the obstacles as challenges and not as problems. Sometimes a rest or taking a step back is helpful. And it is fruitful to share with other people. Every success is an excellent try; so don’t give up trying!”

Ms Durić was followed by **Boris Marte from the Board of the ERSTE Foundation** who was interviewed by Sibora. He brought his toothbrush with him and mentioned how special it was for the aces Kick-Off Meeting to be hosted in the beautiful and interesting city of Sarajevo. He stressed that coming to the city where the last war in Europe has taken place is also very emotional as it makes us aware of the importance of mutual respect no matter where we come from and what background we and the others have. For him this is the main message of aces and he encouraged the participants to combat possible different attitudes presented by politicians or others back home. Also, it should be made clear to all that working with people from other countries is enriching and fun! Last but not least Boris Marte announced a big surprise, namely



that from this aces cycle onwards the project schools would all receive more money in order to foster mobility when implementing their project ideas.



Finally, two experienced travellers in the land of aces, **Danica Lacová** (sitting left), executive director of **VČELÍ DOM (SK)** and **Mari Steindl** (in the middle), director of **Interkulturelles Zentrum (AT)**, were asked by Martin to share what one needs in the rucksack when travelling together: Danica Lacová mentioned the „spirit of adventure and tolerance towards new people and things as well as the readiness to

encounter challenges“. Mari Steindl recommended „comfortable clothes and good shoes as well as open eyes and ears to see and hear new things and, finally, patience.“ When explaining to Martin how this special country looked like, Danica Lacová referred to it as „United States of aces“, that could also be called „United Schools of aces“, comprising of both old and new aces schools – and travellers respectively. Whilst the new schools help all to see familiar things with „fresh eyes“, the old schools obviously have useful experiences to be shared with the others and are also crucial in creating the spirit of aces. Mari Steindl pointed out that so far a total of nearly 20.000 students and 2.640 teachers have been travelling in the aces country, making it a very special place thanks to their dedication and commitment. Finally, she stressed that it needed a good travel agency to organise an event like the aces Kick-Off Meeting and that this definitely was the case with the aces partnership of ERSTE Foundation, Interkulturelles Zentrum and VČELÍ DOM.

Every journey requires safety instructions. Thus, Hermi presented the **Code of Contact** with its six rules: 1. Be open to meet other people. 2. Live diversity. 3. Participate actively: talk and listen. 4. Respect the material. 5. Appreciate what others give. 6. Appreciate what you give. Several exercises allowed the participants to actually “play the rules”: In order to symbolize the appreciation of the others, the participants clapped on the shoulders of their fellow travellers. Most of the time it is important that we “dare to share” and talk with others. However, at times we just have to pay attention and listen.



Finally, the aces Council was called on to the stage. The **Council members** are eight people who all give something special to aces. They have an advisory role with consultative status. The Council does not make decisions but can point out blind spots and give recommendations to the aces management. Apart from attending the Council meetings one main task of the Council members is to listen to the concerns, ideas and wishes of the representatives of the aces projects. For this reason four of the Council members, namely Danijela, Tadeja, Tomáš and Zoltán (from left to right) were invited to the Kick-Off. They explained why they contribute to aces on a voluntary basis, how they intend to support the aces students and teachers and how they can be approached.



Robin, “Living Book Ljubica” & the “ Code of Contact”



Playing the rules: “Hands up” stands for “Time to listen”

▪ Sarajevo City Rally

The city rally was designed as an activity that should enable the participants not only to bond with their project partners but also to get to know Sarajevo and talk to its citizens. At the “Tourist Office” the project teams were handed out instruction kits, including the Sarajevo City Rally Passport for each member and the first task for the team, leading them to one of the five meeting points in the City. In the tram the group had to think about “a name for their team”, “a portrait of the team” and five things they had in common. The variety of tasks reached from “Sit down on a bench in one of Sarajevo parks, close your eyes and listen for 5 minutes. What can you hear?” or “Without buying or stealing, bring 3 things from the city – something pink, something soft and something shiny,” to “Take

a photo which has all these things in it: an impressive building, a person who was born in Sarajevo, a baby carriage, a dog, 3 tourists and your whole group.” For every accomplished task the team received a stamp in the Sarajevo City Rally Passport and a new task leading them to the next meeting point. Four of the meeting points were: Begova mosque, the cathedral, the old orthodox church and the synagogue, giving a picture of the different religions in the town and of how close to each other the places of worship had been built. The final meeting point was the Baščaršijski sebilj, the famous wooden fountain in the centre of Baščaršija square. After having had a team photo taken, it was time to enjoy lunch and get some sweets from Badem Butik.



Back in plenary, the participants mixed with other people in order to share their **Sarajevo stories around the fire**. After sharing the impressions in a group of six randomly mixed people, the participants came up with a word or story that summed up the experiences of all and was written on a stripe of paper. These stripes of paper were swapped several times and exchanged between the different groups (see annex for details).

▪ **Country Group Meeting – (F)aces in your countries**

The evening activity offered the chance of meeting people from one’s own country in order to not only get to know each other but also to share a chat in the respective mother tongue.



The task for students and teachers in the country group was to:

- benefit from each other’s experience and do an energizer or name game
- introduce themselves to each other and briefly present the projects
- have a picture of the group taken – including a poster with the name of the country (on the left the group from Croatia)

Tuesday, 27 September 2011 – “Towards new (ad)ventures”

Despite the free afternoon Tuesday was a highly intense day with several totally different but also exciting activities.

▪ The Bazar of Learning

The **energizer**, an **enormous firework** created by the participants, opened the living exhibition, a self-directed learning space with 23 stations and interactive inputs all around the topic of volunteering. The large group was divided into approximately 46 groups of 5 people. Every group received a map of the bazar on which a specific starting point was highlighted in yellow (see annex for details). All other stations could be visited according to the interest and the pace of the group. The stations provided a combination of serious inputs and fun activities related to the topic, but in any case all participants had to engage actively and take notes in their travel diaries.

The activities were highly diverse. A few examples: The “**Gallery of Ancestors**” displayed pictures and short descriptions of role models of volunteering, including Henry Dunant (Red Cross) or Linus Thorvalds (Open Source Movement) and a mirror where the participants could see themselves. At the station “**Motivation for Volunteering – Why do you do it**” the participants were invited to fill in a short test, to reflect on different purposes and to self assess the own reasons for volunteering. The learning dimension of volunteering was discussed at the station “**Volunteering=Learning?!**” whilst “**The Smell of Volunteering**”, where the participants were invited to guess the different smells in small containers (coffee, sweat, cleaning detergent...), offered a particularly playful approach to the topic. “**My school**” encouraged the participants to explore and define possible volunteering activities in every day school life and the message station “**Taking Care of the Caretaker**” aimed at finding out and respecting one’s own needs if one gives a lot. One of the highlights definitely was the opportunity to talk to the “**Living Books**” in order to understand the motivation of volunteering and to get an impression of the variety.



Cosmic Date



My picture of volunteering

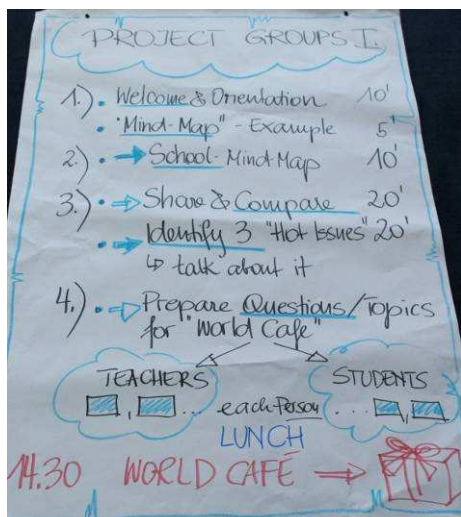


What is volunteering?

▪ Project Teams I – Travel Management for the implementation of the project

The aces projects formed the heart piece of the overall programme. All project teams had been chosen by an international jury to be part of this year’s aces cycle. Most of the project teams (two to three schools from different countries) hadn’t had the chance to discuss their project in detail before the Kick-Off. Therefore, the first project team meeting in the late morning was the official start of the actual cooperation and an opportunity to discuss open issues and come up with new ideas in order to even improve the project.

The first thing one needs for a journey is a map and the mind map is a very special map that is created by those who actually use it. It is a method to brainstorm words, ideas and other items that are linked to the respective keyword or central idea – in our case the implementation of the project and four different aspects to it. In a first step the representatives of the project schools had to create



such a map by writing down possible open issues or whatever was important to them and linked to the following four aspects: "Teachers", "Students", "Activities" (content) and "Organisation". In a second step, the delegations were invited to share the outcome with their project partners and to come up with more specific topics they wanted to discuss after lunch. The document "Challenges and possible sources of conflicts during an international school partnership project", offering recommendations for a successful project implementation, was handed out to all before they jointly left for the **aces Group Picture**.

▪ **Project Teams II– World Café for teachers and for students**

After lunch, the students and teachers were divided into two separate groups and introduced to the **World Café**, a method that encourages active participation of all. Everyone had to find a table dealing with one of the four aspects as discussed in the morning where he or she would be able to bring up the topic of interest and discuss it with the other people. One topic that seemed crucial to quite a few groups was, for instance, how to ensure motivation and participation of all back home. In some cases clarifications were also needed regarding the legal framework. And for some it was helpful that Tine and Rebecca, on behalf of the aces project management team, as well as the tutors and the council members were present to give advice regarding practical issues or to share stories about their own project experiences.

After all teachers had joined the room with the World Café for students, Robin Gosejohann, Filip Radunović and Jovana Trifunović from ERSTE Foundation handed over the aces-cameras to the students at the Kick-Off who always are considered to be the representatives of their entire class. The cameras are meant for the project and are intended as a means to capture the "best moments" of the "journey of the implementation of the international school partnership projects".

▪ **Excursions and free afternoon**

On Tuesday afternoon most of the participants joined one of the **five optional short guided tours** through the old town of Sarajevo, the various multicultural places in Sarajevo as well as to the nearby greenery and to the Sarajevo War Time Museum (see annex for more details). In the evening they could enjoy a traditional dinner in the centre, go for a swim in Hotel Hollywood and chill out in the pleasure and leisure area.

Wednesday, 28 September 2011 – "Daring, Sharing, Caring"

After watching the promotional movies for volunteering that had been created on Tuesday within the framework of the Bazar of Learning, it was time to meet some people who "dare, share and care" a big deal and to find out what they, the workshop facilitators, had to offer.

▪ **Workshops all around Volunteering and Project Management**

The workshops were hosted by trainers from very diverse backgrounds. In most cases the same workshops were offered twice (morning and afternoon). In some cases, the workshop in the afternoon had a different focus or even was completely different. However, the participants had the opportunity to attend two different workshops.

Short descriptions can be found on the following pages. Detailed information (downloads) on each workshop and method is shortly available on www.aces.or.at/materials&tools → **Methods**

Workshop 1: Travel guide – Project Cycle

Trainer: Katrin Lüth, free lance facilitator of learning, trainer for personal and group development, intercultural learning, Austria

A project is like a trip. Like a traveller, when you embark on a project there are aspects to consider: You might want to talk to experienced travellers, read a travel guide to be prepared, plan with other travellers. This workshop was a meeting place for project travellers who wanted to exchange and gather information and tools for their journey ahead.

Some of the sections in the guide to the project cycle were:

- * Orientation – preparation, partners, aims
- * Getting there and away – the important phases of beginning and end
- * Sights – main project parts to consider
- * Dangers & Annoyances – conflict & demotivation
- * Eating & Drinking – keeping the team motivated

Workshop 2: Play to learn

Trainer: Jasmina Musić, Teacher, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Games are one of the oldest means of entertainment. Besides being fun and entertaining, games can help us to learn a lot about ourselves and others. They help us to develop various social skills, to accept differences and to connect with the members of our various social groups. Through the games we can practice problem solving and finding common solutions. By playing we are able to gather some energy and relax after tiring work.

In this workshop the participants played and learned about various types of games (introduction games, games for better group cohesion, moving and relaxing games, problem solving games and similar). Moving, laughing, running, shouting, acting, making people feel good; all this enabled them to learn about themselves and others and to apply the acquired knowledge back home.

Workshop 3: “Sit&Stroll – What’s that? A new town? Let’s play it!”

Trainer: Hermine Steinbach-Buchinger, agentur steinbach.at, Austria

In this workshop the participants discovered a new town with their friends. They searched for the ‘pattern’ of the city, felt the rhythm of the town. They saw the little things around them and discussed the big picture. They connected the dots, open-eyed and open-minded. They had a picnic in a park, talks in the streets and made soap bubbles at the river side.

Sarajevo? Sarajevo! A playful journey of 3 hours: using colours, sounds and all sorts of creative approaches. An inspirational tour for other trips in foreign cities.

Workshop 4: Share your project – social media for your project communication

Trainer: Jona Hölderle, Pluralog, Germany

In this workshop the participants had a look at the possibilities social media can provide them to promote your project. Most young people use social media in their daily life, but how can you use Facebook, Twitter and other social media to motivate your team and to involve a broader audience? After a short input, the group worked together on strategies they would be able to implement right after returning home from the aces event.

The session in the morning was designed for people with facebook and twitter users, the one in the afternoon for those with little knowledge.

Workshop 5: Would you rather meet an angry bear or a determined teen in a dark alley?

Trainer: Nathan Spees, Youth Taking Action for the Earth Programme Coordinator, WWF-Austria

It’s all too easy to see a problem and to say, “that’s just how it is!” and expect either nothing to

change or others to fix it rather than to stand up and decide to make a change yourself. But what would happen if more people would heed Ghandi's words and "be the change you wish to see in the world?" Why not get involved and be part of the solution!

In many places around the globe, from Alaska to Europe, teens are doing just that and determining the course of their future and the health of the Earth. During this workshop, the participants explored the topic of teen empowerment, leadership, motivation and environmental action. They looked at some examples of how teens are making a difference in the world and how THEY could be the one they had been waiting for!

The session in the morning was designed for students only, the one in the afternoon for teachers only.

Workshop 6: So, what did you learn while volunteering?

Trainer: Darko Marković, Inn.Side – people and training, Serbia

Volunteering is not only about providing helping hands to people in need and contributing to your local community, it is also – a learning opportunity! Indeed, through volunteering you may gain new knowledge, develop skills and reflect on your attitudes and values.

During this workshop, the group explored how learning happens in voluntary service and what the creative methods and tools exist to support it.

Workshop 7: "Taste it, bite it! Take a challenge!"

Trainers: Neda Kajfež, EMAS trainer and Kristina Pahor De Maiti, youth representative and Gold award holder; Združenje Zlatniki, Gold Award Holders Association Slovenia

As a volunteer you make a real contribution to a better world. You make a difference to other people's lives and your community. So you are a kind of local hero!

Imagine that there is a tool that helps you to get the recognition for your effort. What's more, it can help you to turn your free time into the time of your life and help you to achieve your personal best. It sounds great! And it really works too!

In the workshop the participants found out what The International Award for Young People is all about. They were introduced to the proven framework for testing the own limits, trying something new, realizing your potential, making new friends. They found out more about the amazing adventure and tons of fun you can experience if you decide to take part in a range of activities, all leading to the achievement of an Award.

Workshop 8: Volunteer in a fundraising team

Trainer: Brîndușa Albert, Foundation for a Dignified Life, Romania

The workshop focused on fundraising methods for students and teachers who have great projects but don't have funds or not enough funds to develop them as they wish. By means of non-formal education (games, drawing, pantomime, etc.) the participants created, together with the trainer, a picture of how volunteers can organize a fundraising event themselves or will be encouraged to just participate in one.

Moreover, the participants themselves had the opportunity to share with the others their own experience in this respect or their new ideas which they plan to put into practice.

Workshop 9: Change the world & start with the wo/man in the mirror. Public space activism – volunteering of another kind

Trainer: Barbara Sieberth, freelance trainer, Verein Kopfstand, Austria

Volunteering can have many faces. You may know volunteering in social work, in an international context (eg. European Voluntary Service EVS) or as helping out in the local community. But there's more out there for those who want change the world in front of their doorstep. For those who do not accept that money rules our world. For those who want to have fun and do something meaningful for

others in their community at the same time. How?

Public space is open for every active citizen. Let's use it to support a local issue (like "We want more biking in our city"-bike decorations) or to lighten up the day of people around us ("free hugs" or "umbrella taxis"). Maybe there's too much grey in our city – so let's plant some flowers ("guerrilla gardening") or show the city that parking space can also be a "green park" space ("park-ing day").

In this workshop, the participants discovered various actions that have been taken by young people all over Europe. In a second step, they came up with an activity they wanted to try out in Sarajevo – and DO IT. Fun – meaningful – and voluntarily!

Workshop 10a: Workshop 10a: Can posters change the world? Loesje creative text writing

Trainer: Torben Grocholl, freelance trainer/Loesje Austria

Loesje is simultaneously a worldwide collective of people who want to make the world a more positive, creative place and a girl from the Netherlands. Local Loesje groups write and spread posters all over the world, signed by the girl Loesje, with **texts** about everything that happens in society.

Loesje texts are mostly positive and funny, and at the same time critical, aiming at stimulating the viewers to see things from new perspectives, and take action in their own lives. During the workshop the participants took part in a creative group process of making short texts (one-liners) by using a special creative text writing method that has been developed by Loesje. No previous experience was needed and all participants could include topics they would like the group to write about. For more info please check: www.loesje.org

This workshop was offered only in the morning.

Workshop 10b: FlipchArts

Trainer: Torben Grocholl, freelance trainer/Loesje Austria

Are you bored with power point presentations? Do you want to create more powerful presentations with the simple means of paper and pen? The overall aim of this session was to deconstruct the myth that you have to be artistically talented for creative and eye-catching flipchart design and to get inspired by various ways of using it for your presentations and/or work with groups. This happened through short inputs, trying out basic techniques and materials, sharing experiences, practising, experimenting, doodling around and exploring your creativity.

The workshop probably not transformed the participants into great artists but possibly helped them to overcome their inhibitions to use the flipchart as an attractive and interactive medium in your school, work, projects, etc.

This workshop was offered only in the afternoon.

Workshop 11: The Voice of Volunteering

Trainer: Siniša Stanivuk, Youth Peace Group Danube (YPGD), Croatia

How can volunteering in divided societies create an opportunity for community development?

Can you volunteer in spite of division and an insecure environment? How can you promote volunteering in divided and dysfunctional societies? Which knowledge, skills and attitudes do you need? What are advantages and disadvantages of volunteering? How can community support your volunteering and developmental ideas? Volunteering = challenge for learning, personal growth and active participation.

These are only a few questions that the group tried to explore in a non-formal and cooperative learning adventure. The workshop provided real examples from the field and aimed at inspiring the participants to apply these new inputs/insights/experiences in their aces projects.



■ Project Teams III



In this final round of project team meetings, the project teams had time to reflect on their workshops and to come up with one personal learning moment as well as one aspect the group should consider when implementing the own partnership project. Then, the participants were asked to think about their project work in more details – the next steps, possible meetings, etc. – and to come up with a work plan including responsibilities and deadlines for the various tasks (please see the annex for details).

As this was the last official time together in this team, the participants were also invited to say goodbye and were honoured for their great work by the facilitators and the tutors.

■ The Party

In the evening everyone dressed up to get ready for the party. The pleasure and leisure team had turned the new restaurant into a very special aces room with enough space for those who wanted to hit the dance floor and the others who preferred having a drink and a chat at one of the tables. The very brave ones even dared to sing Karaoke, whereas the chill-out area was open for those who rather felt like playing social games or alike.



Thursday, 29 September 2011 – “Tired and happy”

Still being a bit tired from the party the participants seemed to be happy to **review the Kick-Off Meeting** and reminisce about their memories by seeing some of the photos that had been taken of the impressive

journey. Then, it was time to look ahead and receive the last information needed for the next journey, namely the implementation of the international school partnership projects.

▪ The Next Steps

Tine Gamper, one of the project managers of aces, informed the participants of the most important details regarding the implementation of their international school partnership projects: the transfer of school grants, the final project reports, the documentation of the project work with the interactive website tools, project visits of the aces team, the upcoming events and the available support of Interkulturelles Zentrum and VČELÍ DOM. For details on the next steps please see the annex.

▪ Hands up!

When “volunteering” we definitely have to use our hands most of the time. This is why we chose a hand to measure the satisfaction of the participants: Every participant received a copy of a hand and had to answer the following questions:

1. What was the most inspiring moment for you during the Kick-Off? (thumb)
2. How did the Kick-Off contribute to getting to know your partners? (forefinger)
3. On a scale from 1-10, how motivated do you feel now to implement your project? Please explain. (middle finger)
4. What is your understanding of volunteering after the Kick-Off? (ring finger)
5. What would you change in the future Kick-Off Meetings? (little finger)
6. What are the most important learning outcomes that you will bring back to your school? (palm of the hand)



Short Summary of the outcome: Unfortunately some of the participants had to leave earlier. The vast majority, however, seemed to be really pleased with the Kick-Off Meeting.

For about a third of them the “workshops” were the **most inspiring moment** (41), others mentioned “meeting new people” (11), the “bazaar” or the “tour guide around the city” (7 each). 7 people enjoyed “every moment”, others mentioned “friendly people” (6), “getting to know the project partners” or the “aces team” (5 each). Furthermore, some enjoyed “getting ideas how to implement the project” (1), “the camera for the project” (1), “the energy of the students” (1) or “meeting so many people who have the same idea” (1) etc.

It also seems that the Kick-Off **contributed a lot to getting to know the project partners**. Quite a few indicated that this was because they had “plenty of time to be together” (16) or that when “sharing the rooms they talked about the project” as well (6). Furthermore, it “helped understanding the partner better” (7) and some even stressed that now “we are almost friends” (7). Other individual statements were e.g. “we smoked together and talk, talk, talk” (1), “we clarified and finalized our project steps” (1) or “it was more helpful than I thought” (1).

On a scale from 1-10, the vast majority (69) would give 10 points to indicate how motivated they feel. Quite a few of these indicated “I am really motivated” (19). Other statements were e.g. “It gave answers to my questions” (1), “I’ll do my best because I am inspired” (1), “Your motivation is catchy” (1) or “It gave me new ideas and goals and the confidence to achieve them.”(1) Similar reasons also were mentioned by those who gave 9 points (38): They also feel “highly motivated” (10), “have the support of everyone” (1), are motivated by “the team” (1) or “the enthusiasm of the student” (1). Some mention that they are “motivated but need a lot of help” (3). 16 participants gave 8 points: Two of them mentioned that they are “a bit worried about the outcome”. Others indicated that “additional support from colleagues at home would be needed” (1) or that “it is the first project” (1). 8 participants indicated 7 points without a reason and only one person indicated 6 points, the reason: “I am tired

now and so I am not really motivated and also it was not so inspiring for me.”

The **understanding of volunteering** also has changed. For some it is “deeper than before” (2) and the “perception is wider” (1), it is “more than helping poor people” (1). Instead it is – amongst other things – “giving and getting” (1), “cooperation, communication, help” (1), “dare, share, care” (1) or “dare, share, do” (1). It is “when you spend your time, invest your talents and effort to help the community” (1) and “something all of us should do” (1).

When being asked **what they would change about future Kick-Off Meetings**, the vast majority (60) wrote “nothing”. Several would opt for “more days” (11), others would have preferred “spending a bit more time with the project partner” (4), “more time for the city rally” (2), “more than 2 workshops” (3), or “more free time” (5). Others mentioned “more participants from each school (3)”, “the party” (2), “more time for the bazaar” (1), “less dances” (1), the “hangout area for teachers” (1), more “practical tasks” (1), “too many energizers” (1), “more music”(1) or “more time for informal meetings”.

As to the **most important learning outcomes** the following were mentioned amongst others: “almost everything is possible, you just have to go for it” (1), “try to simplify, not to complicate the things in order to get better results” (1), “the spirit of mutual understanding, the belief that international projects offer a great opportunity for personal development” (1), “fun should be included in voluntary work” (1), “how to motivate students and advertise your project” (1), “team work” (3), “it taught me to accept people and their ideas” (1), “ideas for workshops and games” (1), “inspiration and energy” (1), “positive way of thinking” (1), “how to organise conferences” (1) or “I must learn English” (1).

All in all it seems that we managed to achieve our goal and that the Kick-Off Meeting really was “**connecting**”, “**warm**”, “**clear**”, “**meaningful**” and **inspiring** at least for most of the participants.

