Civil Society: Trends in working with children and youth

14 – 15 of October 2013, Bucharest

Event's report

About the conference

For two days, education and work with children and youth were debated at Bucharest by more than 100 praticiens in the field. The conference gathered important stakeholders in education in Romania and other European countries, which have enhanced the knowledge and abilities of Romanian NGOs. NGOs' representatives from Romania and other European countries, bloggers, academicians, journalists, together with representatives of European Council met between 14 and 15 of October at the conference **Civil Society : Trends in working with children and youth**. The event was organised with the support of NGO Fund in Romania programme, dedicated to NGOs and financed by EEA and Norwegian grants 2009 – 2014.

The aim of the conference was to share information about best practice projects and to create a platform for networking organizations working with and for children and youth. We also intent to understand what represents innovation in projects carried out in this field.

Concepts regarding educational issues and obstacles nowadays were clarified, especially from the civil society point of view. During the networking workshops were explored the concepts and issues that served, on one hand, to potential partnerships among the participants and, on the other hand, to develop concrete project proposals to be addressed for the NGO Fund.

What happened:

An intense combination of theory and practice during the workshops ment to explore key issues for working with children and youth, that brought together different perspectives of those actors who have the competence and authority to generate a change in this area.

Who inspired us:

Plenary sessions – October 14th 2013

Trends and innovation in working with children and youth

Remus Pricopie, Minister of Education, Romania

"We need an integrated policy of education" - said the Prime Minister who opened the conference and pointed out one of the changes needed in the Romanian educational system. Regarding the school infrastructure, the Minister says: "we are working at prioritize investments and identify the necessary amount in order to have sufficient schools were we have children. Next year, we will have more places at pedagogical high schools in order to cover the existing needs of kindregardens and nurseries."

Tove Bruvik Westberg, Norway Ambassador, Romania

"Education is one of the key areas in the development of Romanian society". The Ambassador made relevant remarks regarding to hate speech and she considers that "Protecting human rights and promoting democracy including the discriminatory speech combatte. The right to free expression does not imply the ability to discriminate through addressed messages."

Ionuţ Sibian, Executive Director, Civil Society Development Foundation

"Education is an area in which the work of nongovernmental organizations might be an important resource for public system. Children and youth, who are mainly addressed, are one of the horizontal concerns of NGO Fund in Romania. White Paper of Romania includes the priorities in education, identified by NGOs and it must be a reference document for policy-makers when they initiate and implement measures ment to influence education and its stakeholders."

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Trends and innovation in working with children and youth

Magda Balica, Researcher at the Institute of Education Sciences

"The first step to innovate is to know, to understand the complexity of the issues and listen to stories less heard." Magda briefly presented some of the challenges faced by the education system in the innovation process. Magda exposed a series of steps good to follow in order to implement innovative solutions in this area. Her presentation is available here.

Anca Velicu, Researcher at the Institute of Sociology of the Romanian Academy

There were presented the latest results of the EU Kids Online study, conducted in Europe. From the data presented, we learned that Romania is above the European average in terms of children's exposure to online pornographic or aggressive messages (bullying). "The more parents are active online, they will be able to support their child's online activities."

Hate speech, children and youth

Hate speech incidence is increasing in the European area, including in Romania - investigating the phenomenon and identifying ways to fightit became immediate needs. The second plenary session focused on Hate speech. Romania is one of the promoting countries of the campaign NO Hate Speech Movement, initiated by the Council of Europe and supported by CSDF. Moreover, fighting hate speech is one of the priorities of the program in Romania.

Daniela Angi, researcher, Babeş Bolyai University.

Started as an initiative of CSDF, within this program, it is conducted the study „Hate speech in the European and Romanian context". At the conference there were presented some of the results of the study, which was done by a group of researchers from the Babes Bolyai University (Cluj-Napoca). Research shows that the most vulnerable group in terms of hate speech in Romania is represented by LGBT people.

Carmen Greab, researcher, Babeş Bolyai University

Hate Speech is characterized as "All forms of expression which disseminates, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, immigrants and descendants of immigrants "[Recommendation 97 of the Council of Ministers]

Ruxandra Pandea, **representative of the Council of Europe**

Online hate speech is anonymous, hidden and irresponsible, it legitimizes, it is high and has fast impact, it is multidimensional and reflects offline hate speech.

Strengthening the capacity of youth and youth organisations to recognize and react against the violations of human rights is a proper way to combat online hate speech and discrimination.

Marian Panait - **national coordinator of NO Hate Speech Campaign in Romania**

Romanian youth are invited to take action against online hate speech. Everybody can join the platform www.nohatespeechmovement.org without registration. It has public generated content, videos/photos content Vimeo, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram can be uploaded. Each user can post reports (pre-moderated) and creating tags (definition, information, theasurus, post-moderated) on hate speech issue.

Workshops – October 14th 2013 :

Active participation, human rights and interculturality

Workshop 1 : Democracy and participation of youth in making decisions

Donata Norkiene, **NGO School of success**, **Lithuania.**

The project „Democratic schools" is funded by EEA grants and it aims to support the children and the teachers to be actively involved in the community. This model will be developed in schools in the future.
In Donta's opinion "Democratic education sees young people not as passive recipients of knowledge, but rather as active co-creators of their own learning. They are not products of educational." system, but rather valued participants in a vibrant learning community.

Liga Klavina, **Center for Education Initiatives**, **Latvia**

Liga talked about human rights and youth participation. Center for Education Initiatives is conducing a project about the integration of roma children. They aim to introduce the principia incluzive in school curricula and to provide opportunities for roma children to be in educational system. The project was taken at the national level through a partnership with the public institutions.
Regarding Roma inclusion, Liga Klavina belives that : "The vicious circle: lack of necessary education, no job, inadequate social security, and the same pattern is repeated in the next generation of the Roma family."

Workshop 2 : Human Rights Education

Solveig Moldrheim, **Rafto Foundation, Norway**.

Solveig talked about the concept of human rights education, which according to the UN Declaration of 2011, is the responsibility of the state. It is divided into three parts - mechanisms, beliefs and values - and increase the capacity of beneficiaries in terms of democracy and citizenship, also promote empathy and has a direct impact on knowledge and understanding.

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Gintarė Gedrimaitė, National Institute for Social Integration, Lithuania

Gintarė presented a study conducted by the Institute for Ethnic Studies in Lithuania. As a result, exclusion risk groups are: Roma, ex-offenders, people with mental disabilities and sexual minorities. Gintare spoke about the campaign "All different all equal" launched by the Council of Europe in 1995. In this campaign, was composed a team of youth workers who organize an annual series of national events (eg International Day of Tolerance). There was also presended projects like: Human Library (a method created by the Council of Europe, where participants can ask questions to persons who belong to vulnerable groups), Social Cuisine (a map of actors involved in interethnic issues) and Journalism Education Programme (a scholarship program for journalists).

Linda Alzaghari, Minotenk, Norway

Linda presented the main problems faced by Norway in action for ethnic minorities. These include: changing governments and their orientation, the NGO funding which is almost exclusively made by the government without the involvement of the private sector, and mainly assistance to people who are refugees or asylum seekers. The organization works with many stakeholders interested in the topic of integration of minorities and it creates a network of these actors: the media, authorities, public organizations, NGOs, etc. They aim to highlight the positive parts of minorities and to also highlight how important is to integrate them, not to assimilate, the integration and multiculturalism providing a holistic view of things.

Workshop 3 : Intercultural and ethnic minorities

Boglarka Bata, Carpathian Foundation, Hungary

Were presented the main strategic directions of the organization. The ideas that were financed by the NGOs in Hungary can be found on http://norvegicivilala.hu/, where you can find partners for funding in the following calls.

Janette Antal, Norway, volunteer at Youth for Understanding, Hungary

Janette presented the project called Colored Glasses. Through this, there will be organized workshops about multicultural learning in primary schools.

"Through dialogue, we gain new understanding of each other's experiences, perspectives, and needs. Steriotypes and enemy images may be broken down and relationships built."

Innovative approaches in combating hate speech manifestations of children and youth

Workshop 1 : Safer internet for children and youth

Bianca Stănescu, **Bitdefender, Romania**

A study conducted by Bitdefender in the area of online safety shows that the main dangers to which children are exposed online are: bullying, violence, pedophilia, exposure of personal data, viruses, adults-only content and offensive speech. Online dangers also include: illegal websites, hate websites and forums that encourage suicidal behavior. Besides social networks (8.84 %) and file-sharing websites (9.71 %), kids are also interested in online pornography (11.35 %).

Bitdefender Parental Control application limits children's access to certain websites co nsidered dangerous.

Teodora Stoica, Sigur.info platform, Romania

Sigur.info is one of the major online projects in the field. It is a wide project, implemented by Save the Children Romania, which has three components: hotline for reporting illegal content, helpline to support the online protection of children and young people, awareness through resource related to the dangers of the internet.

Most children acces the internet daily or almost daily (86%) and **65%** of them access the internet on mobile devices. About **90% of children state they use at least one social network**, most of them (87%) being Facebook users.

Workshop 2 : The measurement of (in)tolerance in schools

Serban Iosifescu, **ARACIP, Romania**

To deal with hate speech, the topic must be part of: quality standards in education, beneficiaries' expectations and evaluation proceedings.

"As such, prevention of hate speech and intervention in such cases **are not** part of standards, of beneficiaries' expectations, of evaluation proceedings."

Daniela Prisăcariu, ACCEPT, Romania

Usually, the teachers say that there are not LGBT students in class. Then the question arises: all LGBT people in Romania didn't go to school?

The first findings of a survey conducted by ACCEPT shows that respondents believe that: there is no bullying in school, which shows that it is possible for people to be afraid to talk about issues of harassment. It is the first instrument of its kind in Romania. In Romania this topic is still unexplored and therefore deserves attention. We need a way to defend LGBT of harassment, including of hate speech.

Workshop 3: In-place mechanisms for combating hate speech

Dinu Guţu, doctoral, National School for Political and Administrative Studies

Media overstates the hate speech of hooligans ('ultras') on the stadiums, this being one of the examples given and debated during the workshop.

"Sources that produce information about organized supporters exaggerates / enhances the idea of violence and "hate speech" of ultras. It can collective trigger "labeling theory": you characterize me as bully / racist, I will behave as such."

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Open space – October 15th

Ingredients for working with children and youth

Eirik Rise, **the national coordinator of the NO Hate Speech Campaign in Norway (video message)**

"People are resources, they are values, not problems. Many people often think about people as problems….Also, many people think that they should give others their opinion without thinking they are discriminating."

Together our message is stronger.

Nonformal education methods in combating hate speech

The **Laboratory of Nonformal Education** is a concept event in which educational experts are invited to teach practitioners about nonformal education methods and how they can apply these methods in their communities and in direct work with their beneficiaries. In 2013, the event was focused on how to use nonformal education methods in dealing with human rights issues at a general level and on now to combat hate speech through the use of nonformal education methods. Methods like living library, Photovoice, Forum Theatre were experimented by the participants in order to understand better how they can organize them so that they can tackle the human rights issue in their activities/projects.

This conference session reproduced a part of the experiment, inviting specialized facilitators to undertake short demos on nonformal education methods and demonstrate their efficiency in