

Minutes

DISCUSSION GROUP 2

Intercultural challenges for NGOs active in EDC/HRE.

Practices, concepts and strategies for the integration of migrants and other minority representatives in the work of EDC/HRE NGOs

Moderators: Tanveer Parnez and Rami el Ousta (Black and Ethnic Minorities in Scotland)

Participants: Bashy Quraishy (European Network Against Racism), Gavan Titley (National university of Ireland), Maria Hirtenlehner (Network Intercultural Learning in Europe, IZKS Vienna), Eva Sobotka (Fundamental Rights Agency), Michaelis Kakos (University of Leicester), Michael Raphael ("all different – all equal" European Youth Campaign)

Michael Raphael, from the Israeli coalition 'Together against Racism', gave a presentation on Education, Inclusion and Diversity. His aims for the discussion were to define and contextualise the concept of 'social marketing' and to give an example of this from his anti-racism campaign 'all different, all equal'. He also posed the question: Can we apply social marketing to social concerns? He explained that social marketing is a relatively new field that began to emerge in the 1970's and it involves analysing the community and dividing it into segments, thus making it easy to identify what needs to be changed and how. For example, social marketing can help to identify if a segment of society are not wearing seatbelts and it can then be used to question what makes them not wear them in the first place, prompting relevant research to take place. Mr Raphael stated that in order for social marketing to be successful, the consumer has to be really understood. To illustrate this point, he gave the statistic that every day in the USA, 12 billion advertising billboards, 3 million radio advertisements and 200,000 television adverts are dumped into the USA's collective consciousness. As a result, the population has started to tune advertising out and consequently advertisers are forced to become savvier by not only advertising their product, but also going 'under the radar' and touching people's feelings.

Mr Raphael then related social marketing to his 'all different, all equal campaign', which focused on Homophobia, Racism against migrants, Islamophobia, Anti-Semitism and Romaphobia in Europe. He stated that a problem for Human Rights educators is to try and create change when the concepts are so complex and that this is where the idea of social marketing can help. As well as marketing the logo in different languages in order to reach out to as broad a community as possible, the campaign was marketed in areas that young people frequent and exciting images were used to capture their attention. Topics raised in the subsequent discussion included the concern that when employing the concept of social marketing, one must be careful who and what they're asking and in what context, as very different answers can be reaped. Mr Raphael acknowledged this, but also re-instigated the point that when the marketing is carried out effectively it can have profound results, citing an example in Nepal where the employment of social marketing aided the destruction of the taboo against wearing condoms.

Secondly, Maria Hirtenlehner spoke about her work with NILE Project, a project based in Vienna that works in tandem with police officers and migrants with the aim of promoting intercultural understanding. She explained that this evolved because problems were being reported of police officers in Vienna holding prejudices against people of colour. After showing a video of the project's work, the question of how the project was established and also how the police are approached was asked during the discussion. Ms Hirtenlehner explained that it was a long process; the group worked hard to establish contacts and they presented their ideas by producing brochures and inviting police officers to conferences with the aim of slowly establishing discourse. She explained that the annual course consists of seven evenings of five hours each, with twenty-five officers and twenty-five migrants. The aim is to get to know as many of each other as possible. Each evening is dedicated to a certain topic, for example identity, civil courage, discrimination, racism and political correctness in language. As well as discussions, the participants take part in research projects and visit the theatre and cinema if productions dealing with relevant topics are being shown. The question was also asked as to how the migrants become involved in the project: Ms Hirtenlehner answered that there are no public invitations but rather the migrants must know what the program entails, as well as having a secure status and near-fluent German due to the nature of the discussions. A strong incentive for getting migrants to join at first was telling them that they get to train the police!

Michaelis Kakos from the University of Leicester gave a presentation on Citizenship, Education and Organisational Identities. In his presentation he covered various theories on citizenship education and also discussed how this is relevant to the work of NGO's. Firstly, he defined citizenship as consisting of status, practice and feeling, namely

what your passport states, your involvement in the community and how you feel about these. He stated that citizenship can be gained through need (birth, education, political needs within the community) or choice (identification with the culture). He also explained that identity and culture are constructed through interaction, which turns them into a social reality, for example NGO's that have an agenda interact with communities in order to realise their aim. 'Education for Citizenship' is also greatly concerned with identity and the construction of the 'other'; once the 'other' has been identified, this segment can be thought about critically and in turn de-constructed by NGO's to figure out how to approach them. However, Mr Kakos stated that a problem of NGO's is that there is not enough criticism of them, for example there is no attempt by students to criticise their agendas. In the subsequent discussion, it was commented that Mr Kakos is distant from the NGO world as he is an academic; Mr Kakos replied that this gap can also be positive as in order to construct a theory, one has to be above and separate from the material. He also stated that an academic is also representative of a citizen and member of a community and that being an academic is only one part of his identity.

Rami el Ousta from the Black and Ethnic Minorities Infrastructure in Scotland (BEMIS), gave a presentation on Empowering Democratic Participation through NGO's, in which the main premise was that NGO's should be pro-active, rather than reactive, in society. Rami el Ousta explained that they should influence and lobby the government to introduce policies, encourage and empower ethnic minorities to have a voice and be pro-active in promoting democracy and Human Rights. He stated that these three in combination is the best way to ensure active democratic civic society. In order to put these theories into practice, the policies need to be deployed from a national to a local level and be continually monitored and evaluated. Mr el Ousta also spoke of the challenges facing active democratic participation, such as institutional racism and exclusion such as in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry in Great Britain and a lack of effective implementation of national policies. He also stated that the media plays a destructive role and expressed his belief that the European Parliament should pass a policy stating the media should always take a Human Rights stance. Mr el Ousta then gave strategies for NGO's for effecting Democratic Active Citizenship, such as by empowering the diverse voluntary sector and developing engagement strategies. In the discussion, it was noted that countries all over Europe are experiencing the same problems and it was suggested that we should look to the USA, which advocates 'positive action' through encouragement, rather than 'positive discrimination', with clearly remarkable recent results. The discussion ended with Mr el Ousta remarking that interculturalism is when everybody in society has equal rights and equal opportunities.

Maria Hirtenlehner and Susanna Gratzl from the NILE project introduced the self-screening system, where members of NGO's can test how intercultural their organisations are. Before she introduced the screening system, Ms Gratzl explained that it is very important that every organisation makes a regular review of its services to check that it meets the needs of citizens and that there is access for everybody. She also touched upon the hindrances to the access of public services for immigrant citizens, such as the lack of interpreters and a lack of trust in institutions and suggested ways for these to be overcome. The self-screening system includes questions such as 'what is your organisation's vision on intercultural issues?' and 'has your organisation developed a policy based on the mission statement?' During the discussion, the question of how the test is evaluated was asked and Ms Gratzl explained that the test is self-evaluated. It was also commented that the questions in the self-screening test could be used to see how local government is related to diversity, as well as for finding blind spots in organisations.

Lastly, Bashy Quraishy spoke about the intercultural challenges that NGO's face in the field of Human Rights and Citizenship Education. He firstly noted some often used words within the field that he feels ought not to be used, for example 'migrant', as it groups many different peoples together and 'integration', for which he suggested the word 'participation', as efforts should come from both sides. In order for NGO's in this field to be successful, he stated that they need to define clearly what they mean by 'multi-culturalism', as in his opinion a problem in many countries is that there is a majority white government telling minorities on the periphery to integrate, without giving direction or making an effort themselves. He also suggested that they need to be aware of their own limitations and that they should respect the privacy of the people they are working with by not starting discussions about religion, rather learning about the minorities before they start working with them. Mr Quraishy then gave clear steps for working most effectively with minorities, including making integration mutual, keeping in mind the ethnic and religious diversity among migrants and urged the NGO's to empower migrants to stand on their own two feet, by quoting the proverb: "don't give fish to a hungry man. Teach him to fish first". In the subsequent discussion, the issue of speaking about personal and religious issues was raised, with many people believing this to be an important tool for understanding each other, to which Mr Quraishy replied that a serious current problem is that "integration depends on how much space majority society is willing to give" and at the moment there is no mutual space because the religions of minorities are perceived as dangerous. Lastly, he urged NGO's to be target-oriented, for example are they working with migrants who have been in the country two weeks or five years? He finished by saying that some people have no desire or need to integrate and most importantly, they need people to integrate with.