

for the
youth field in
Erasmus+



Inclusion & Diversity NOW !

Launch of the Inclusion & Diversity Strategy

7 May 2015, Brussels – www.salto-youth.net/InclusionStrategy/

A fresh wind for Inclusion & Diversity

A new European mobility programme for youth calls for a new strategy to make sure that ALL young people can access these international learning opportunities, also (especially!) those that face obstacles in life. The [new Inclusion & Diversity Strategy](#) wants to create a level playing field so that everybody has equal access to European youth mobility. Discover why you should be working on inclusion & diversity.

Mobility as a tool for inclusion

Many youth and other organisations are carrying out valuable inclusion work on a daily basis. Over the years, the European youth programmes have positioned themselves as a tool that can be used by inclusion organisations to create non-formal educational opportunities for underprivileged young, who are at a disadvantage compared to their peers.

Michael Ward, a young man from the Irish traveller community, testified during the European Youth Week how European youth projects changed his life:

"I heard from a young age that I was a good-for-nothing. So after hearing that repeatedly, I started believing it. I started drinking instead of going to school..."



By chance, a youth worker invited me to go on a youth exchange about citizenship. We produced short films and showed them to the people of the Estonian host village. This was not only fun, it also boosted my self-esteem.

A short-term EVS later, I picked up my life again and went to college. In the mean time I started working for Youth Work Ireland, to give other young people the same opportunities that I had."

There are many other examples like Michael's. At the launch of the new Inclusion & Diversity Strategy, a European volunteer and youth worker from **Circolito** (Mechelen, Belgium) showed how they use circus as a tool to gather young people from different backgrounds around a common activity. Moreover, it boosts young people's confidence to perform in front of audiences.



Inclusive European youth programmes

The European youth programmes have always had an **inclusion vocation**. Whereas life-long learning projects were linked to (formal) education, Youth for Europe, YOUTH and Youth in Action were the programmes open for ALL young people. These programmes set out to provide non-formal learning opportunities and reach out to those that cannot access the formal educational programmes.

Already back in 2001, the European Commission convened a working group with inclusion experts to make the **European YOUTH Programme** more accessible. This resulted in an Inclusion Strategy for the YOUTH Programme (2000-2006) asking

different stakeholders to do extra efforts to support 'young people from disadvantaged backgrounds' (as they were called then) to find their way into European mobility projects. In this period, exceptional costs saw the light, as well as short-term EVS and reinforced mentorship for inclusion volunteers and coaching for youth initiatives.

In 2006, SALTO Inclusion organised a wide consultation with the inclusion field, to upgrade the Inclusion Strategy to the **Youth in Action Programme** (2007-2013), making sure that all 'young



people with fewer opportunities' (the new inclusive term) can benefit from the possibilities it offers. The Inclusion Strategy got the political green light of the Programme Committee for Youth and inclusion was one of the permanent priorities of the YiA Programme. National Agencies appointed a dedicated Inclusion Officer and developed national inclusion strategies to get underrepresented groups on board.

Inclusion & Diversity: 2 sides of the same coin

We need to make European youth mobility accessible to ALL young people. International non-formal learning projects (and the youth work before and after it!) help young people with fewer opportunities to be more included in their communities/environment. But including young people from various backgrounds in projects and society is not enough. We also need to equip young people and youth workers with the competences to **successfully manage and support diversity** of all kind. A positive response to diversity ultimately also benefits young people who are different or have fewer opportunities.

Since 2000, the [SALTO Resource Centres](#) have been developing training, producing youth work resources, supporting National Agencies and providing policy support and advocacy in the fields of inclusion and diversity. Both the SALTO

Inclusion and the SALTO Cultural Diversity Resource Centres focused on getting underrepresented groups on board, but also on the competences needed to embrace diversity of all kinds. This made it only logical to turn the Inclusion Strategy into an **Inclusion & Diversity Strategy for the Youth Field of Youth in Erasmus+ (2014-2020)**.

- www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/
- www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Diversity/

Upgrading the Inclusion Strategy

We largely based ourselves on the good work carried out in the previous programme to develop an Inclusion & Diversity Strategy for Youth in Erasmus+. About **1 out of 4 participants** in Youth in Action had fewer opportunities compared to their peers. Approximately **48% of all YiA projects** addressed the priority of inclusion. And though these figures are quite impressive, with the advent of the Erasmus+ programme an upgrade of the Inclusion Strategy was needed to make sure that we don't only continue to preach inclusion and diversity, but practice it too.



In 2014, SALTO Inclusion, together with the European Commission and SALTO Cultural Diversity, set up a consultation process with inclusion and diversity experts and agencies from all over Europe to listen to their needs and suggestions to make inclusion and diversity work within Erasmus+: Youth in Action **as effective as possible**. This led to a renewed Inclusion & Diversity Strategy for the Youth Field in Erasmus+.

The new "ID Strategy" was **officially approved** at the Erasmus+ Programme Committee of 18 December 2014. It was also the first sectoral topic (youth-specific) to make it to the overarching Erasmus+ Committee. It is also quite

an achievement, that the inclusion focus and the definition of people with fewer opportunities has been adopted for all the other Erasmus+ sectors (see *Programme Guide: Equity and Inclusion*).

At the launch of the Inclusion & Diversity Strategy during the European Youth Week (7 May), **Antonio Silva Mendes** (*Director Youth and Sport, DG Education and Culture, European Commission*) reiterated the importance of the inclusion and diversity work we are doing in the youth field:



"We need to offer excluded and discouraged young people new ways of participation, because if we don't they will find other ways to use their

energy such as radicalisation.

But we cannot do it alone. We need to team up with other sectors e.g. education, sports,... to have a more holistic approach to address the real issues that matter to young people.

That is why it is so important to translate this European Inclusion and Diversity Strategy to the local level and make a difference. And whatever we learn from our experience, we need to share it with each other."

Rolling out the ID Strategy

The biggest novelty of this Inclusion & Diversity Strategy for the Youth Field in Erasmus+, compared to the previous Inclusion Strategy for Youth in Action, is the continuous follow-up. An **Inclusion and Diversity Steering Group** will meet



twice a year to measure progress, to initiate actions and to solve problems gathered from the field. As one of the European Commission

consultative bodies, it will ensure the translation of the European Strategy to the local level, as Mr. Silva Mendes pointed out.

The Erasmus+ Programme can be used to address a number of inclusion obstacles, as **Sever Dzigurski** presented. He was one of the researchers carrying out the Mapping Study of Barriers to Social Inclusion (commissioned by the European Youth Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission). This study groups the barriers to inclusion into 5 main areas: **education, work, housing, health and social**. Erasmus+ projects, especially cross-sectoral ones, can make a difference for young people who face obstacles in these areas of their lives.

On a more practical level, SALTO Inclusion and SALTO Cultural Diversity developed a number of **promotion tools** that highlight in a short and digestible format, what support Erasmus+ offers when working with young people with fewer opportunities or when tackling inclusion and diversity in general. A **short leaflet in plain language** and a **video clip** motivate youth and inclusion workers to try international mobility with underprivileged young people.



- Discover them both at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionStrategy/

Steps into the future

The inclusion experts at the launch event (youth and inclusion workers, researchers, policy makers, Youth Partnership, European Commission) sat together to inform the Inclusion & Diversity Steering Group of their most important needs. But the participants were also invited to reflect on how they can bring the European ID Strategy down to their work on the local level. Because, it needs a joint-up approach to make a difference for socially excluded young people.

- Send **further suggestions** for the ID Steering Group to inclusion@salto-youth.net.
Thank you!

Annex: Great ideas for action

For the steering group:

1. Steering group set-up

- Keep a link between the field and the ID Steering Group.
- Invite experts and young people for specific issues.
- Keep transparent documentation of discussions, actions and achievements.
- Create feedback mechanisms from the field to the Steering Group.



2. Programme design

- Combat elitism in candidate selection (safeguard accessibility).
- Find ways to give inexperienced inclusion organisations a chance compared to professional project writers.
- Make the programme more easily accessible (concepts, tools & technicalities, forms, promo-material).
- Make it simpler and easier to understand, need to use plain language.
- Create flexibility in the budget for socially excluded young people e.g. unforeseen costs.
- NAs should understand what is involved in project management and delivery (inclusion projects) to become fully aware of the obstacles/demotivators/risks in the process.
- There is a need for low threshold activities for newcomers (inclusion) on local/national level.
- Extend the language support to short-term EVS.
- The advance payment should be big enough

to be able to manage the project financially (e.g. 80/20).

- Review of the travel costs (distance bands) needed for projects and for youth worker mobility.
- Improve the image of the programme (make sure E+ doesn't only seem to be for the 'colgate smile' kids).
- Create feedback mechanisms on practical project experience on local/national level: from experts, final reports, inclusion officers.
- Share success stories to promote and carry out the ID Strategy.
- Develop national ID strategies: create teams of experienced people, young people, cross-sectoral partners,...
- Also develop more effective cooperation between diverse stakeholders within the youth work sector.

3. Outreach

- Map the organisations that are working on the ground (with specific excluded groups) and make this info available.
- Reach out to these new beneficiaries and also local authorities/governmental institutions. Organise partner-building activities for inclusion newcomers.
- Create a database with 'inclusion organisations' that have the credentials to support inclusion EVS (to ensure young people's 'safety' and appropriate support).
- Build a network of inclusion organisation (e.g. Partner Building Activities).
- Invite young people to relevant training activities (TCA).

4. Inclusion & Diversity

- Improve the impact of inclusion and diversity projects.
- Strengthen possibilities for preparation and follow up before and after a mobility project.
- Find possibilities to co-finance youth work outside/around the mobility project (the support, the other young people who don't go, other staff).
- Make bridges with the other Education & Culture programmes to improve inclusion and diversity.
- Improve naming and common understanding of young people with fewer opportunities

across sectors e.g. Roma.

- Important to have a clear picture of the different needs of the different groups/individuals.
- Knowledge gathering, continuous dialogue with experts who understand the realities on the ground, sharing experience.
- Work on the political level, to promote the strategy, to gain political support.

What can youth/inclusion workers do to support young people?

- Set up youth groups in rural communities and for specific target groups.
- Consultations and feedback between young people and NAs.
- Local, regional, open events to get more socially excluded young people on board.
- Stimulate low-threshold transnational youth initiatives.
- Youth consultations to steer the youth work they want.
- More outreach work and share info about young people's needs between stakeholders.
- Peer education, young people's active involvement and participation: nothing about them without them.
- Look for good examples (personal stories) and use them actively.
- Share experiences and info with newcomers/other organisations.
- Find and share real life success stories.
- Cooperate with other inclusion organisations and sectors (e.g. welfare organisations, org working with disability, local authorities, governmental agencies, schools,...).
- Use ID Strategy as a working document and translate it to local reality
- Share feedback from the local work with the NAs – NAs should encourage it and respond to it.
- Develop innovative tools to bring the programme down to school age young people. Start young.
- Youth workers should have/get/take the time and resources to fully support ypfo in the framework of the ID Strategy.

Thank you!

We would like to thank all stakeholders for their contribution to the new Inclusion & Diversity Strategy for the Youth Field in Erasmus+.

We hope we can also **count on your support** to bring inclusion and diversity to the young people that need it most!



For more information and suggestions:
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