



## “STORIES OF A POSSIBLE EUROPE”

**Panels of citizens working on the theme of cultural dialogue through story telling methods**

*Europe for Citizens Programme - European Union*

[www.possible-europe.eu](http://www.possible-europe.eu)

**Kadis d.o.o.**

**Program of Activities**



## **Introduction**

The Project Stories of Possible Europe where we through personal experience collected stories of intercultural dialog was one of the first that kind in Slovenia. It was a great challenge and experience for trainers and participants of citizen panels.

At first we started with vast promotional activities. In the first wave We informed more than 20 NGO's, youth nets/youth centres, volunteer organizations, associations, centers for social work. We collaborated with v Voluntariat, which is Slovene association and Slovene branch of international peace organization [Service Civil International \(SCI\)](#) for to collect the interesting life experiences coloured with intercultural dialog.

We arranged several workshops, so called citizen panels. Some were organized in our organization others were done in the institutions from which the participants emerged at last there were also different events that covered intercultural dialog. In order to prepare such workshop a lot of effort was put in the preparation of the workshop and to select the interested participants. As it was already mentioned, we made promotional and disseminational activities in several waves.

### **A) First activity**

After the first wave a lot of interest was raised and the 1<sup>st</sup> workshop took place at the end of May 2009. 16 participants worked on the common theme of intercultural dialog expressing it through their life stories. They were from volunteer organisations, students, teachers, social workers ... The workshop was conducted with the focus on structured but at the same time on the relaxed atmosphere where experiences, thoughts and feelings can come to life. First stage was introduction of the participants, their expectations and getting to know each other with working in pairs. After warming up phase the trainer of the workshop read the short story connected with the intercultural dialog. The aim was to reflect the participants of their own experiences. Everybody had the opportunity to express their point of view and to tell his experience that was associated with the narrated story. To be more consize participants were asked to write down the experiences. As starting point their personal experience was relevant, on one hand the description of it and on the other their personal learning from it. For a conclusion their general point of view as learning for others was added to the text. At the end the writers of stories shared them amongst other writers - participants.

## **B) Second activity**

The second workshop was conducted with the help of our trainer – volunteer in Macedonia. She and the rest of her team (pedagogs, educators and photograph) were working in the community of children, teenagers with intellectual disabilities. Together they made a meaningful story of intercultural experiences reflected with the children's perception of our, Slovene country.

## **C) Third activity**

Third workshop which was at the same time locally and politically coloured. The invited participants were young politicians, who already start to take into consideration a broad view to themes which are significant to the society we co-inhabit. The methodology was the same as described for the first workshop but content was emphasized with notion of intercultural tolerance and national identities.

## **D) Fourth activity**

Next workshop was made on the summer camp for talented students, who were very keen of intercultural theme, while their experience vary from Erasmus students exchange to travelling abroad, or their memories of school diversity where they sited together in the classroom with immigrant children. The methodology was based on the movement. They were given the task to theatrically express the event they participated in and was filled with strong emotions. Others after the observation were able to articulate what in their opinion the movement was showing. The reflection was set off and afterwards everybody was asked to write the personal story maybe enriched with the oral inputs from others.

## **E) Fifth and sixth activities**

The fifth and sixth workshop were focused on the interested youth from two different student's dorm in collaboration with their educators. Young people from all Slovenia gather together in student's home where is a perfect place for intercultural dialog, while students are not only Slovenian but also members of minorities living in Slovenia. Workshops were done with introductory story reading. Participants were invited to make pairs and to share three short memories of intercultural experiences. After the sharing, they were prepared to write down with biographical method the story the other was dictating. With such approach the stories were consize and short, containing all the essential inputs arising from the refelction of an individual world of meaning relating to the theme of intercultural dialogue.

The workshop dedicated to expert panel participants was done by very competent individuals from who everyone contributed a great deal of knowledge, cohesion of the theme in the relation to created stories in various forms during citizen panel workshops. From this meeting very meaningful texts arised. Some parts of the workshop were filmed on camera, we also produced interview and analysed choosen texts in order to connect it to the selected topic for Slovene contribution. Slovene main topic was promotion of thinking of others in non-stereotypical way but as fellow citizens and equals. For the purpose of our discussion others were here minorities in Slovenia and especially a good practises with Roma minority was put in front of our attention. More detailed information of intercultural dialog with Roma people minority can be found above in our report.

We promoted and disseminated our project on different occasions (see annex 1), here si to emphasize the final conference called KULT-MEDIA, with theme of raising employability in media amongst Roma people.

### **Achievements**

In the project our aim was to promote the intercultural dialog within EU borders and also across. In Slovenia iniciative like this one is quite rare and we took advantage to bring the idea of interacting and participating in ever closer Europe to the participants through storytelling method in which a lot of reflection was done on their attitude and stereotypes of minorities living in Slovenia. Raising awareness of stereotypes is in our opinion very important issue that has to be taken serious and given some time. The integration of different nations, cultures is less likeable if citizens do not take a deeper look into idea of coexisting with other minorities in environment they share. Speaking in positive or negative way on this topic was precious experience for all involved, while amongst all this thoughts, feelings good practises were put up. Practise of positive effect when we let that all involved parties can learn from each other in equal relationship. Participants were able to reflect on their active role, how can they contribute to respecting cultural diversity, such as taking active part in the events, where different minorities/cultures represent themselves.

### **Impact, visibility and follow up**

For this project impact is as follows:

- Our aim was to involve actively at least 50 citizens, we succeeded with 68.
- Dissemination process was very fruitful wit more than 20 organisations (see annex 1) were informed of our project activities. Leaflets were circulated in various societies,

associations in 6 main libraries in Ljubljana, on the meetings of mediators of cross-cultural mediation (also publication).

- At workshop space for action and dialog was established, participants were properly informed of the European dimension of the project
- In reports a great deal of knowledge and concrete proposals for intercultural dialog were created such as how to raise awareness of possible activities that bring Roma and Nonroma people together.
- We succeed to connect with volunteer organisations and pass the knowledge of conducting workshop with volunteer workers in order to continue the activity of storytelling.
- Materials arising from a process of participation and active citizenship and citizens who created it recognized the intrinsic value of a real experience.
- The idea of sharing life experiences lives on after the project with our (partner's) webpage, web page of the project and web page of European Memories project.

### **Additional information and best practices**

During the project we encountered many positive reactions regarding intercultural theme. It was noted that people, Slovene citizens feel lack of better understanding between them and Roma people, who are directly or indirectly involved in our social lives and democratic engagement. It must be emphasized that some good practices already exist for integration of Roma people with concern to their cultural, tradition languages. Projects like Sof PE can be connective tissue to isolated good practices that cannot reach an effect of widely recognized activities.












Our difficulties were reduced to oppositions from participants with which they expressed their concern about the impact of workshop activities. Their wish was that with the stories also their civil society voice can be heard and all the positive.



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