

Position Paper on Involving Youth and Children in Development Education and Awareness-raising

Working group on Children and Youth of the DARE Forum¹

Our Vision

Youth and children have an increasingly important potential and role to play in development education and awareness-raising, not only as target groups of what is 'taught', but as promoters and leaders of development education and awareness-raising in their own right through peer education and leadership.

This position paper is based on the following considerations

- 'Children' can be considered as those less than 18, and 'youth' as those up to 30 years old.
- Youth and children are an important sector of civil society in Europe, representing almost one fifth of the population²
- Development is a shared responsibility for us all and needs active and engaged citizens, especially youth and children³
- Youth and children are very active learners with regard to development education and have great potential to be agents for change in society.

Background information

In a time of economic and political change in Europe, youth and children are more and more often brought face-to-face with the opportunities and challenges of living in a globalised and unequal world. Young people today, more than ever before, are faced with varied life choices which impact on and are influenced by the lives of other people all over the World.

Youth and children also have access to a wide range of sources of information about the unequal world we live in. Given the reduced access of many young people living in Europe to employment and educational opportunities, and the precarious existence of many youth and children in Europe from marginalised groups, youth and children can often feel vulnerable and unable to keep up with fast-paced changes.

Youth and children do care about the world around them and how their own lives are governed. Given that 2011 is the EU Year of Volunteering it is worth noting the valuable contribution of youth and children to volunteering, and the wonderful learning opportunity being a volunteer provides to those involved. Youth and children engagement in campaigns such as Fair Trade, Make Poverty History and the most recent uprisings in North Africa show that young people can engage and take action on justice issues. **We see youth and children as having a crucial role to play in tackling injustice and in learning via development education opportunities.**

¹ The Working group on Youth and Children of the DARE Forum was established in May 2010. It focuses on Youth and Children's role in development education. Members of the group are members of the DARE Forum who have a specific interest on this theme.

² As of 2007 http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Youth_in_Europe

³ See DARE position paper '[Development Needs Citizens](#)', 2011

However, while engagement means taking action, it also requires a critical understanding and ability to make connections between local and global issues. Youth and children now access information and learning not only at school, but through non-formal learning opportunities such as youth work as well as social media, their own experience, personal contacts and interest.

The vision of youth work is for all youth and children to be confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens; and to be active, included, respected and responsible. Development education in youth work aims to support youth and children to increase their awareness and understanding of the interdependent and unequal world in which we live, through a process of interactive learning, debate, action and reflection. It challenges perceptions of the world and encourages youth and children to act for a more just and equal society at a national and an international level⁴. **We see youth work and non-formal education as having a crucial role to play in development education by stimulating and nurturing the interest of youth and children in global justice issues.**

Therefore, the DARE Youth and Children Working Group highlights the following principles:

- Ensuring that the perspectives of youth and children, and organisations which work with them are inform policies and practices within development NGOs and development education organisations
- Promoting the relevance of development education to child and youth organisations and the importance of bringing a global perspective into their work
- Promoting the voice of marginalised groups, including youth and children from the Global South living in Europe.
- Encouraging social change, and youth and children's active role in a learning process that is empowering, builds capacity and is founded in a child and youth-centred approach.
- Promoting the involvement of youth and children in all aspects of development education programmes - planning, carrying out and evaluating projects/programmes
- Ensuring ownership by youth and children of educational processes and their perspectives on development education which are paramount for all educational programmes and curricula
- Ensuring youth and children's perspective in national and international/European strategies of development education
- Recognising the broad variation within the EU member states on how to involve youth and children in development education and share good practice and principles
- Promoting life-long learning and quality development education programmes throughout life, starting in childhood.

⁴ From NYCI www.youthdeved.ie

General Recommendations:

To all involved in development education with youth and children:

- All organisations currently involving and intending to involve youth and children in their development education programmes should avail of appropriate training on youth and children's participation for staff, volunteers and management
- Always consult with and involve youth and children in the planning, implementation and evaluation of development education activities to encourage a 'bottom-up' approach
- Build capacities of youth and children to lead learning via peer education methodologies
- Share and collect case studies of good practice on youth and children's participation in development education
- Ensure that development education projects involving youth and children promote critical literacy and understanding of the issues, especially in media educational programmes and in line with the Code of Conduct on Images and Messages

Specific Recommendations:

To the European Commission:

- Implement the recommendations of the DEAR Study⁵ (DEAR in Europe ~ Recommendations for future Interventions by the EC: *Final Report of the Development Education & Awareness Raising Study*)
- EC funding programmes should highlight the importance of doing development education in programmes related to youth, children and education, for example, Youth in Action etc.
- EC funding for development education should be more accessible to organisations working with youth and children e.g. make youth and children participation a priority area within development education funding lines; simplify application and reporting processes; and allow organisations to apply for smaller, more manageable amounts in development education projects in recognition of more limited capacity among smaller organisations.
- Development Education should be set as a Annual priority theme for the Youth in Action programme, plus the call for proposal for the Action 3.2 - 'Youth in the world: Cooperation with countries other than the neighboring countries of the European Union'
- We welcome the 'Commission Staff Working Document on EU indicators in the field of youth' http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/doc/sec401_en.pdf - and encourage the EC to continue to review and promote indicators, particularly in Youth in the World, Youth Participation and Volunteering.

To the European Parliament:

- Committee on Development and Committee on Culture and Education should state and promote the right of youth and children to access non-formal educational opportunities and learn about development and global justice issues.

⁵ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/DEAR_Final_report

To the EU Member States:

- Implement the European Youth Strategy in full involving a cross-Ministerial approach ensuring policy coherence⁶ in this regard (between Ministries of Youth and Children, Education, Foreign Affairs and so on)
- Promote opportunities such as volunteering, education and employment (including youth exchanges and European Volunteer Service) with regions outside Europe
- Funding for development education with youth and children should be more accessible (as above in EC section)
- Recognise and support the role of non-formal education including youth work to provide youth and children with the space to learn and critically engage with global justice issues.
- Promote dialogue between young people and decision makers to influence policy-making

To the Council of Europe and North-South Centre, in particular:

- Ensure that there is a focus on the involvement of youth and children in the implementation of Global Education initiatives and share good practice between members:
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe_youth/Priorities_2012_en.asp
- Promote the role of non-formal education in the Global Education Guidelines
<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/ge/GE-Guidelines/GEgs-app1.pdf> .

To NGOs staff working in public engagement:

- Promote the participation and leadership of youth and children in development education programmes, rather than only seeing youth and children as a 'target group' of your action.
- Create and agree on common standards, parameters and tools for a clear measure of the impact of projects on youth and children.

To the European Youth Forum (EYF)

- Promote the role of development education in youth work to all members of the EYF.
- Advocate for support for development education and global youth work via the European Union.

To the management and staff of Children and Youth Organisations

- Provide a space to youth and children you work with to learn about globalisation, inequality, and unfair structures on a global level, and how those issues impact upon youth and children's lives locally, as well as providing them with opportunities to take action.
- Recognise the valuable role and contribution of development and development education NGOs in providing expertise and experience in learning about global justice issues

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⁶ 'Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) aims to tackle root causes of global poverty in fields like trade, migration or climate change, going beyond aid policy and development cooperation', 'Development Needs Citizens', DARE Forum 2011.

Annexes

Statements supporting our initiative from relevant Institutions

1. The European Consensus on Development: the Contribution of Development Education and Awareness Raising

This document makes explicit reference to youth work, youth workers and the importance of including young people's voices in global learning and development education and includes a specific reference to the EC in Art 44.

"To integrate and include development perspectives and actions in support of Development Education and Awareness Raising in relevant European Commission programmes, in particular in programmes applicable to youth and education".

2. European Youth Strategy 2010-2018

"The following fields of action are proposed under the aim of improving young people's access and full participation in society:

- health and sport: to prevent and treat obesity, injury, addictions and substance abuse, promote the adoption of healthy lifestyles among young people and encourage collaboration between youth workers, health professionals and sporting organisations;
- **participation: to increase young people's participation in the civic life of their communities as well as in representative democracy, provide support to youth organisations, encourage the participation of non-organised youth and provide better information services for young people.**

The aim of **fostering mutual solidarity between young people and society** incorporates the following fields of action:

- social inclusion: to prevent the social exclusion of young people, the relevant actors such as parents, teachers as well as social and youth workers should be mobilised;
- volunteering: to support volunteering by young people, more opportunities, including cross-border, should be developed, obstacles removed and recognition of the value of non-formal education enhanced;
- **youth and the world: the existing youth networks and tools should be used to involve young people in global policy-making."**

3. Council of Youth Ministers Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the field of youth

This resolution names specific possible initiatives for the 8 fields of action for the European Youth Strategy, including:

- **Social Inclusion:** Support the development of intercultural awareness and competences for all young people and combat prejudice.
- **Youth and the world**

Aim: Young people's participation in and contribution to global processes of policy-making, implementation and follow-up (concerning issues such as climate change, the UN Millennium

Development Goals, human rights, etc.) and young people's cooperation with regions outside of Europe should be supported.

Initiatives by Member States and the Commission within their respective spheres of competence

- Raise the awareness of young people about global issues such as sustainable development and human rights.
- Provide opportunities for young people to exchange views with policy-makers on global issues (e.g. via participation in international meetings, virtual platforms/fora etc.)
- Foster mutual understanding among young people from all over the world through dialogue and by means of supporting actions such as training courses, exchanges, and meetings.
- Encourage young people to participate in "green volunteering" and "green" patterns of consumption and production (e.g. recycling, energy conservation, hybrid vehicles, etc.).
- Promote entrepreneurship, employment, education and volunteering opportunities with regions outside of Europe.
- Promote cooperation with, and exchanges between, those active in youth work on different continents.
- Encourage young people to participate in development cooperation activities either in their country of residence or abroad.

4. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) recognises the voice of young people, and their role in informing their education

Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provides:

"1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

2. For this purpose the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law."

Children and youth can be reached through formal education. Inclusion of development education into national school curricula varies from one country to another. So far, children and youth have not been included in the processes of forming national strategies or school specific curricula. Indeed, general comment 12 of Convention on the Right of the Child deals with the right of the child to be heard. The general comment takes into account the importance of hearing child in different settings and situations. The comment says that "education authorities have to include children's and their parents' views in the planning of curricula and school programmes". It also emphasises that "[s]tates parties should consult children at the local and national levels on all aspects of education policy." Indeed, **including children and youth in forming DE policies and implementing them, enforces ownership and promotes implementation of DE.**⁷

⁷ Convention on the Right of the Child, General Comment 12 (2009)
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/comments.htm>



5. DEAR Study (DEAR in Europe ~ Recommendations for future Interventions by the EC: *Final Report of the Development Education & Awareness Raising Study*)

These core recommendations of the report⁸ describe:

- a. the proposed overall objective of the EC's work in development education and awareness-raising (DEAR);
- b. the proposed role of the EC in meeting this overall objective;
- c. the proposed principles which the EC applies in implementing this role;
- d. the proposed description of what conceptually is meant by development education and awareness-raising within the EC;
- e. the proposed major applications of these concepts supported by the EC.

⁸ To read the full report and recommendations go to:

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/DEAR_Final_report