

ACTIVITY REPORT

SOLIDAR TRAINING ACADEMY 2017

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

Learning how to build inclusive communities

7-8 SEPTEMBER 2017 | IPSWICH, UNITED KINGDOM

Facilitator: **Stephen Skeet**

The Training Academy contained five workshop sessions and one facilitated discussion session on the impact of Brexit with MEP Julie Ward and Volunteering Matters CEO and SOLIDAR Board Member Oonagh Aitken. The workshop sessions covered migrant integration and intercultural education, migration and civic engagement and peaceful coexistence, participation in a training course on vocational training and non-formal education, and empowering vulnerable migrant groups.

The main objectives of the Training Academy were to spur discussion on the future of Europe, share information on SOLIDAR's action looking at how civic engagement and activism at a local level can have an impact on promoting a culture of peace and tolerance, increased knowledge of intercultural coexistence and exchanging member's good practices.



Thursday 7th September – Migrant Integration and intercultural education, migration and civic engagement and peaceful coexistence.

The first day of the Training Academy was opened by Volunteering Matters outlining their mission and approach to working towards building inclusive communities, through co-production of projects, a strengths based approach and a belief that people themselves hold the solutions to their problems. The participants then had the opportunity to introduce themselves to each other outlining their work and their approach to building inclusive communities. Each participant had to present their partner rather than themselves to the rest of the delegation. Participants then worked together as larger groups to outline their expectations for the two days; they outlined a need to hear about the work being undertaken in Ipswich at Volunteering Matters and how this may provide learning, the need to learn from each other about their practices and the opportunity to look at how they may come together in the future to raise the value of volunteering in such projects.

Volunteering Matters then delivered a workshop concentrating on the impact of three of their programmes in Ipswich; Learning Matters, Knowledge Equals Opportunity (KEO), Women

Against Sexual Exploitation and Violence Speak Up (WASSUP). Participants heard in turn the structure of each project, how they were funded, the partnerships that help delivery and the reporting requirements involved. Learning Matters supports 61 learners from 15 nationalities to study ESOL, English, Maths, Arts Award and employability as well as a full enrichment programme aimed at ensuring learners can play a full role in our community. KEO supports parents of children who don't speak English to engage with their school and child's education by ensuring parents understand how the education system works in the UK. WASSUP is a group of young migrant victims of abuse that have created their own training and workshop package and have delivered to 450 school children in the last year. At the end of each programme participants had the opportunity to debate and ask questions on the programme and how they may be replicated elsewhere. This led participants to reflect on the systems in place in the UK to enable some of this work to take place and how this differs across European countries, particularly in relation to Government funding, housing support and asylum processes.

The final workshop of day one brought together participants into five groups to reflect on their own practices and the programmes they have learned about in the previous workshop. The facilitator asked each group to think about their programmes and decide 'what works?', 'why does it work?', and 'what is the ideal?'. Participants were then given a set of art materials to work as a group to physically make a project on their table and then explain to the rest of the group what they had decided, what it was called, and how they were going to deliver it. This saw participants create five distinctive projects concentrating on different areas of support; some were based on education and how that should be delivered, some based on pastoral support required for migrating individuals and others how

to engage volunteers in this space of supporting refugees and migrants to their community.

Friday 8th September: Brexit and its consequences, participation in a training course on vocational education, empowering vulnerable groups.

Day two began with a facilitated discussion between MEP Julie Ward, Volunteering Matters CEO and SOLIDAR Board Member Ms Oonagh Aitken and participants. Participants had a full and frank discussion on Brexit, how this will manifest itself in the next few years, the lack of clarity within British Government on Brexit, how the UK will still need to work with the EU, and issues within the EU itself, such as meaningful representation of views. The MEP was able to stay for part of the day and continued to have discussions with participants answering their questions and concerns.



The following workshop session moved into Learning Matters in which participants took part in an example training course on vocational training and non-formal education. The workshop took participants through the induction and enrolment process with young migrants onto the programme and the academic and enrichment curriculum that is then offered to the learners. The workshop then outlined the employability skills that Learning

Matters delivers as part of their Study Programme which enables young migrants to understand the expectation of employers from employees and the skills they will need to learn to be able to move into employment in the UK when they finish the course they are on.



The two days concluded with reflections on what had been learned. The overwhelming of participants being that the Training Academy would benefit from having been over a longer period with a chance to explore some of the issues on an even deeper basis.

The final workshop concentrated on the empowering of vulnerable migrant groups and looked in detail at the ways in which Volunteering Matters have been able to support girls and women who are at risk or who have been victims of abuse to establish their own training and workshop package to be delivered in local schools. The workshop took participants through the clear and simple workshop targeting "Hard to reach" young people using visual aids and interactive toolkits. It looked at how the project understands the relationship between CSE, gangs, and missing children, and guides them through different forms of abuse and understand the impacts and indicators. Participants learned how we generate youth discussions about their own experiences, situations at school and in their communities. Participants reported that this was a project which could have merit across Europe and were keen to follow up with the project on the impact on young people.