

## Summary of Estonian study

### SUMMARY OF THE ESTONIAN STUDY

#### 1. ABOUT THE RESEARCH

The online survey was carried out by NGO Mondo in the period of 19.05.13-03.06.13 and responded by 83 different youth organizations in Estonia. In addition, 19 representatives from 18 youth organizations took part in the discussions of the two focus groups.

The first focus group discussion took place on the 11th of June 2013 in Tallinn, Estonia with 6 participants: 4 members of non-profit organizations or NGOs dealing with leisure time activities of youngsters, 2 student organization representatives and one freelance youth trainer and consultant.

The second focus group discussion took place on the 13th of June 2013 with 13 participants: 2 members of non-profit organizations dealing with youth exchanges, 8 participants from organizations whose main activity field is dealing with the unemployment and leisure time activities of youngsters, one representative of child welfare union in Sillamäe (Eastern Estonia), one member of NGO Foorumteater (Theatre of the Oppressed) and a representative of NGO Ethical Links (global education and youth exchanges with the emphasis on Palestinian culture).

Majority of the survey respondents, as well as participants of the focus group interviews were active in Estonian third sector youth organizations, mostly with the membership of 10- 30 year old youngsters (60% of the respondents). The main focus of their activities was leisure time but also educational activities, information work, local community development and development of children and youngsters. No youth organization present in the focus groups or in the survey had their main focus on gender equality or sports.

The online survey was carried out at the end of May and in the beginning of June which is one of the busiest periods in youth work. Schools normally finish in the beginning of June and it is also the busiest exam period in universities. Fortunately, the participating youth organizations in the focus group discussions and online survey were surprisingly active.

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### 2. SUMMARY OF STUDY FINDINGS

The online survey findings and the focus groups discussions indicate that the **youth organizations have positive interest towards global issues**. 80% of the respondents acknowledge the role they (can) play in global issues and 72% of the online survey respondents were familiar with the term *global education*.

Youth organization representatives tended to comprehend the fact that their activities are somehow linked with global issues - over 1/3 of the survey respondents acknowledged the role that their organization has in dealing with global issues. These respondents listed examples of global issues that they are active in: problems with youngsters (e. g. addictions, education) and lack of tolerance.

57% of the respondents acknowledge that they already work with topics concerning global issues like higher education, health and unemployment, intercultural dialogue, sustainable development, discrimination, human rights and children rights. Their main activities on the listed topics have been awareness raising projects and local activities (information days). 43% of the respondents claimed that that their organization's activities are not connected with global issues.

Respondents of the online survey claimed that **the most interesting topics in global issues are: intercultural dialogue (79% of the respondents), access to education (75%), sustainable development (70%), human rights and discrimination (62%)**.

Only 18-30% of the organizations who participated in the online survey have been working with immigration, refugees/asylum seekers and workers rights. 27% of the respondents were not interested to be active in themes connected with refugees and asylum seekers. 17% of the respondents showed no interest in immigration topic and 16% were not interested in being active with workers rights issue. These respondents explained that their **lack of interest towards the listed topics are due to the fact that they don't know how to combine the more distant global themes to their local activities**. Some organizations claimed that themes like immigration and asylum seekers are not seen as part of their organization's mandate.

The topic of global connections were, however, was handled mainly in focus groups. Participants in both focus group discussions tended to connect globalization with their

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everyday habits and customs like food, electronics, relationships, knowledge and mobility. They also pointed out their intercultural projects and partners.

Also the topic of cultural, environmental and economic impact of globalization was pointed out. The topic of socio-political relations – e. g. fragmentations and the sense of the vulnerability of one's culture, which can be seen as a fertile ground for the rise of nationalistic movements – was far less covered or not covered at all.

The focus group discussions show that the **participating organizations were at relatively different starting points; some of them were beginners and others more experienced in the handling of the global themes.** We can clearly indicate that the subject of developing countries is a new and a distant theme for Estonian youth organizations, while local issues tend to dominate in their work field. The discussions showed that the **youth organizations have a willingness to learn more about different interdependences concerning very practical issues like clothes, food, environment, studying, electronics, relationships, knowledge, mobility etc.**

40% on the survey respondents could comprehend their organization's role in dealing with global issues (for example climate change, poverty). 20% on the respondents did not (or could not) acknowledge their organization's role in dealing with global issues.

According to both the survey and the focus group discussions, **organizations show high interest in developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes connected with global education.** About 82 % of the online survey respondents claimed that their organization is interested in developing knowledge in understanding cultural differences and similarities. However, about 23% of the respondents claimed that their organization is not interested in developing the philosophy of being human and 19% of the organizations were not interested in developing the knowledge of globalization among youngsters.

According to the survey respondents, the most unpopular competencies in global education are the following skills and attitudes: improvement of intercultural communication (9,5% of the organizations were not interested), decision making (7,8 % not interested), 16% of the respondents claimed that their organization is not interested in developing environmental responsibility among youngsters.

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Thus, it could be concluded that global issues are not something often talked about in the regular information channels accessible to young people – **Estonian youth and youth organization members are not accustomed to think about global issues or to link local issues to global problems.** It takes extra support and time to look into these themes together with the youth.

One opportunity to address global problems was seen to be raising awareness by organizing information events. This is something that youth organizations feel comfortable in doing, as they have plenty of previous experience in this. In the focus group discussions, further experience in international project team came out. Most of the organizations who participated in the focus group discussions said that they are working on several intercultural projects (workshops, trainings, seminars) with partners mainly from Europe, South-America and Asia.

According to the online survey, organizations are interested in developing their knowledge on global issues but they would like to learn how to link global themes (especially the more distant issues like refugees and asylum seekers topic) to their local context so that youngsters would find the global education topics interesting. Some of the organizations claimed that the local themes are priorities.

57% of the respondents claimed that they are interested in organising a seminar on global education together with their team, members of the organisation and volunteers. Respondents (43%) of the survey who were not interested in organizing a seminar on global education explained that they don't comprehend the meaning of global education and therefore could not organize an event on this topic. These respondents also claimed that their organization does not find suitable people or active youngsters to involve in a seminar on global education. Several organizations pointed out that they don't find time and finances to organize more events than they already have planned. **Most of the respondents said that they don't have the knowledge needed to organize an event on global issues.**

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### 3. CONCLUSIONS

The results of the survey and the two discussion groups show that **youth organizations are open to global issues but prefer to be more active on themes more common and practical as education or intercultural differences.** Youth workers and organizations find the cultural impacts of globalization and intercultural dialogue to be the most interesting subjects on global education and they show willingness to run activities connected with these topics. The results clearly indicated that **there is a need for training opportunities to support youth organizations putting more focus on global issues.** 91% of the respondents said that they would be interested in taking part in (or sending a member of their organization to) a training seminar on global education. Only 9% of the respondents said that they would not be interested in such trainings mainly because lack of time and knowledge of global education. Few respondents claimed that they don't exactly know how their organization could benefit from a training seminar on global education. These results indicate the need for a common understanding of global education concept.

The focus group discussions revealed that youth organizations have experience in intercultural relations through dealing with international projects. Youth workers are more motivated in developing their knowledge, skills and attitudes on global education especially when they have personal experience in international projects and an existing network of contacts abroad.

We can claim that the subject of developing countries is a new and a distant theme for Estonian youth organizations, while local issues tend to dominate in their work field. Therefore there is a need for discovering the global connections in every day youth work were Estonian and Western-centered issues dominate. In future trainings we need to address the specific topics related to developing countries as a distant issue in Estonian youth organizations' activities.

To make global learning more appealing for youth workers, it is very **important that youth organizations would have the ability to link their local themes to global issues.** This would also make the youth organizations more engaged in global learning process. According to the survey and the discussions youth workers would like use creative and interactive methods in their future global education activities.

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### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the future training activities, more emphasis should be put on problematical and conventional Western-centered point of view towards global issues which was also present in the focus group discussions. Furthermore, as a training need, social issues, such as equal rights and opportunities, and political influences of globalization, should be introduced. The main reason for that is that the youth engaged in this survey and focus groups felt those subjects to be rather distant from their work.

Then again, general cultural influences of globalization were familiar to the youth, and they expressed a wish to continue their activities in this sphere. There is also a willingness to learn more about interdependencies and very practical themes like as clothes, food, environment, studying, electronics, relations, knowledge, mobility, etc. In future trainings, we should provide youth organizations with creative and interactive methods which can be used in different contexts (indoors and outside, big and small groups). Social media as the main information channel for youngsters is a very important aspect to engage the target group to the activities of the project.

The trainings should also provide topics with links to people's every day lives (youth in the world, common problems in education and unemployment) and consumption. In the future trainings, we could also try to offer different possibilities to solve the problems.

To sum up, there is a need to support the capacity of the youth organization to be active and learn more about social-political issues and equality. The survey as well as focus group interviews reflected a positive interest towards global issues by the youth organizations. This readiness manifests mainly as interest towards understanding cultural differences and similarities. This could be foreseen as majority of the youth organisations plan recreational and free time activities to youth. Youth organizations are interested to learn more about practical themes as clothes, food, environment, studying, electronics, relations, knowledge and mobility. It acquires extra time and knowledge for the youth organizations in Estonia to explore more distant themes like refugees, immigration and asylum seekers.

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