SOCIAL EUROPE

Youth initiatives in the European Community — "Info-Action 1985" Conference

SUPPLEMENT 5/86

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

As part of its contribution to International Youth Year, the Commission of the European Communities organised jointly with the Luxembourg Government a Conference and Exhibition entitled "Info-Action 1985", held in Luxembourg 18-20 November 1985. The theme of the conference was youth information, participation and action, and it drew on work carried out within the framework of the Community's Programme on the Transition of Young People from School to Adult and Working Life. In this context, the Commission has subsidized several booklets such as "Young Scot" and "Ung ABZ" (which give young people information about a range of subjects of importance to them, from housing to cheap travel, from employment to entertainment), and has also supported a series of seminars at which policy makers, young people and youth workers met together to discuss information needs.

These seminars culminated in the Info-Action Conference 1985, which brought together equal numbers of young people, young adults working with young people and policy makers. The young people came from thirty-one different youth action projects covering all the Member States. These projects were either on display or were presented to the Conference in Plenary Session. The Conference heard a variety of speakers, from Mr Fernand Boden, the Luxembourg Minister for Education and Youth and Mr Hywel Jones, the Commission's Director for Education, Vocational Training and Youth Policy, through Mr Allan Mercer of the Scottish Community Education Council and Mr Richard Doherty, Secretary-General of the Community's Youth Forum, to representatives of the young people themselves. Mr Jacques Delors, the Commission's President, sent a message to the Conference pledging the Commission's continued support for projects created and managed by young people.

As a follow-up to the Conference, the Commission intends to continue and expand its existing programme of small grants to <u>initiatives for young people</u> <u>carried out by young people</u>, particularly in the field of information. It has sent out a short brochure to its Member States, to its own information offices, and to youth organisations, which explains that Community financing is still available for youth initiatives, and how to apply for a grant. It is hoped that there will be a wide response from young people, and that the Community will be able to assist a number of young people's projects throughout the Member States. It will also put the projects in touch with each other, and thus begin the creation of a European network of initiatives.

Margaret BRUSASCO-MACKENZIE

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1.	Introduction	1
?.	The view of the Commission	4
3.	Youth initiatives	7
4.	Suggestions by the working groups	23
5.	The views of young people	31

Page

Annexes

Contents

1.	Participants	35
11.	Projects presented in the exhibition	39
III.	Further material available	40

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1. Introduction

In November 1985, the Luxembourg Government, as President of the European Community's Council of Ministers, was host to a European Conference and Exhibition of an unusual kind. As Mr. Fernand Boden, Minister of Education and Youth, in Luxemburg, described it in his welcoming speech :

"This is not an exercise on a theoretical level, speeches by 'experts' to other 'experts'. For once, the activities of young people will be described and illustrated by young people themselves - for the benefit of national and international officials concerned with youth policies."

"Info Action '85" was organised in cooperation with the Commission of the European Community, and was part of the Community's contribution to International Youth Year. Its theme was the participation of young people in organising and presenting the information they required during their transition from education to adult and working life.

This report describes briefly some of the youth initiative projects presented in the conference, and summarises some of the suggestions and views about them which were expressed.

It is prefaced by some reflections, made on behalf of the Commission, in the closing session, on the value of the conference for the develop its policies for young people.

The projects, described in part 1, are a summary of some of the presentations made by young people about the initiatives in which they had taken part.

The <u>suggestions</u> (part 2) are the ideas which came out of the working groups who discussed these projects, and commented in the light of their experience.

- 1 -

Finally, in part 3, are the <u>views of young people</u>, expressed at the end of the conference, about what should happen next, and some of the impressions, given afterwards, of what the conference was like for them.

Follow-up

In 1986, the Commission will be following-up the conference. It intends to continue and expand its existing policy of giving small grants to initiatives for young people carried out by young people, particularly in the field of information.

In recent years, the Commission has subsidised the production of booklets such as Young Scot (United Kingdom), Viaggio (Italy) and Ung ABZ (Denmark), which give school-leavers information on everything from work to job-hunting, to how to get cheap travel. The Commission has also given support for the organisation of a series of seminars at which young people, young professionals in youth work, and policy makers met together to discuss young people's information needs. These were held in a large number of Community countries during 1984 and 1985.

Building on this experience, the Commission will be sending out a short and simple brochure to its Member States, to regional and local authorities, to its own information offices in all the capitals, and to youth organisations and places where young people gather, with a view to receiving applications for grants. The brochure will explain that Community financing is available for youth initiatives, and how to apply for a grant.

In order to assist it in its actions in favour of youth initiatives, the Commission has formed an Ad Hoc Advisory Panel of young people, young professionals and the Youth Forum. This group will meet in 1986, and will inform the Commission on the national and local scene concerning youth initiatives, and will provide feedback on projects. It will help the Commission to monitor youth initiatives throughout the Community, and to begin the creation of a European network of initiatives.

The Commission listened carefully to the opinions of young people during the conference, and these have helped it in the preparation of a new Programme which it will be proposing later this year in the field of Education and Training for Young People.

There is indeed a wealth of evidence to suggest that many young people are themselves eager to take the initiative in launching projects which not only engage their own, often untapped, energies and which help other young people, but also increase their confidence to participate in other ventures, which sometimes lead on to jobs.

The Commission will be taking full account of this movement towards more youth participation in its future plans and actions. Views on the report and news about other new initiatives in this field, would be welcome. The addresses to write to are given on the last page of this paper.



Speaking in the final session of the conference, Mr. H. C. Jones, Director for Education, Vocational Training and Youth Policy, summed up the Commission's impressions of the value and significance of the conference.

In many ways (he said) this conference marks a beginning; in particular, the opening of a new phase in the development of Community policy in favour of young people. I feel we have come a very long way in a short space of time.

The focus of the Commission's interest, when it first became involved in youth initiatives in the area of information a few years ago, was vocational guidance and the challenges faced by schools in preparing young people for adult and working life in a society faced by economic uncertainty. Since then we have seen radical developments in ideas and approaches:

• a switch of emphasis from teaching to learning, from vocational skills to personal development, from the acquisition of paper qualifications and knowledge for its own sake to encouragement of entrepreneurship, personal initiative and creativity;

• a growing perception that the whole of the local community – employers, trade unions, voluntary organisations, manpower agencies, youth and information services, parents – should be involved in a collective effort to pool resources to expand and diversify learning opportunities for young people;

• more and more emphasis being placed on the needs and aspirations of young people themselves and the ways in which they can be given more opportunities to express themselves and take more responsibility over their own lives. These approaches have been reflected in, and strongly reinforced by, the Community's two pilot project Programmes on the transition of young people from education to adult and working life.

Throughout Europe, young people are being called on to be more creative, innovative and adaptable; to channel their energies into reviving the economy, by learning about technology, by creating their own jobs, and making industry more competitive. The irony of this is not lost on young people, many of whom have been waiting for years to find a reasonable job where they can actually use their energies. But it is significant that initiative and independence on the part of young people are no longer necessarily seen, as they have sometimes been in the past, as a sign of revolt against the system. Gradually, institutions are learning that they alone cannot solve the problems facing young people, if young people themselves are not allowed to have their say in the matter.

We are, in fact, witnessing the beginning of a gradual change in attitudes towards young people, treating them more as autonomous actors, rather than as pawns in a game of chess. Although young people have for a long time been seen as an important part of a 'consumer society', they have rarely until now been treated as independent consumers of education, training and other youth services. But the change is coming. The voices of young people - the plural is important, for there are many different voices - have to be heard, whether we are talking about education, training, broadcasting, or political debate.

In the end, this is what this conference was about. It was about enabling young people to inform themselves, to communicate, take action and inform others. It was also about adults and institutions listening to young people.

The conference will be one of many sources of inspiration and encouragement to the Commission, to think how best to promote good policies and practices for young people throughout the Community. The Commission

- 5 -

does not see the conference as a way of rubber-stamping what it wants to do. Quite the opposite. There can be no single blueprint proposed from high on Europe. What we need is a framework which enables young people's initiatives to flourish.

What should be the aims? What should our priorities be now?

First, young people must be convinced that their initiatives are valued and respected. This applies to initiatives of all sizes and scope, from ephemeral micro-projects suggested by groups of pupils in the classroom, to ambitious job creation projects requiring bank loans and institutional support. At Community level we can try to give more support to youth initiatives; and to give them more publicity, and a higher profile in the eyes of the general public. In this way we can carry forward the idea of greater support, including financial aids, for youth initiatives, put forward by the President of the Commission, Mr. Delors, in his message to the conference.

Second, in the coming year, it is clear that we must put the highest premium on projects which involve young people in their design and management.

Finally, we must try to encourage the build-up of a process in which it will be possible for individual initiatives, often very local, to be made aware that they are part of a European family of efforts, to put young people at the centre of the stage in seeking solutions to their problems. This means giving a strong European dimension to the different initiatives, which can serve as a spur to do even better by encouraging and enabling them to learn from each other's experience. European inter-action of this kind should serve to multiply the number of initiatives and progressively change the landscape of European policies in favour of young people.

- 6 -

1. Youth initiatives on show at the conference

Thirty projects were on show at the conference exhibition, and 12 of them were presented for discussion in the conference sessions by young people concerned with them.

They were introduced by Allen Mercer, of the Scottish Community Education Council, In 1980 he had helped set up the "Young Scot" project, starting with a pocket information booklet which has been distributed every year since to all school-leavers in Scotland. This, and two similar projects in Denmark ("Ung ABZ") and Italy ("Viaggio") had been launched with help from the European Community.

Allen Mercer has acted as consultant to the Commission to prepare the conference. In introducing the projects finally selected for presentation, he drew attention to some key points about them.

First and foremost, (he said) they show one thing very clearly : that an increasing number of young people want to create or establish something new, either on their own, or with a group of friends. Generally they do not gain any significant income from what they do, nor any formal or recognised qualifications. But what they are doing is obviously of major importance to them.

Why? For several reasons :

• young people may feel that what is on offer to them in the existing system is irrelevant to their life style and to what they perceive as their future;

• youth unemployment and longer vocational training both tend to lengthen the period of adolescence, so that young people have a greater need to assert their independence and to seek a status which they would formerly have gained by having a job;

• projects are young people's own, practical, response to the deterioration in services provided for them.

The projects to be seen at the conference reflected :

• initiatives which enable young people to have more control and influence over factors affecting their daily lives;

• initiatives which involved young people in collating and disseminating information, and led on to decision-making and action on the part of others;

• a great variety of starting points, structures, methods, and media which could be suitable for such initiatives.

It was because of the close link between improving the <u>information</u> available to young people and initiating <u>action</u> by young people that the conference was called "Info Action '85". The projects were grouped at the conference so as to show up the variety of methods in implementing a common aim, and the 12 presented here are similarly arranged.

The 12 projects summarised here thus illustrate the use of :

Print	Luxemburg, Turin, Bocholt.
Local action	Namur, Greece, Dublin.
Video & theatre	Cologne, Denmark, Groningen.
Mass media & new technology	Northern Ireland, Seyne-sur-Mer, Wales.

Certain <u>common factors</u> could be seen. Each project had to face one or more of these issues:

the lack of appropriate information for young people;

• the insensitivity of some existing agencies to young people's needs;

• the need for better dialogue between young people and policy makers;

• the need for training if young people are to translate information into action;

• the need for professionals to support rather than direct or restrict, young people's efforts;

the need for finance.

The conference's suggestions on some of these factors are in part 2.

"We, the young people on our project, have been given the opportunity to learn, decide and act. There are thousands of other young people who have similar abilities to ours, but, for the want of opportunity, their capabilities go unnoticed, not only by themselves, but by others. I feel that a project like ours should not be a rarity but that it should be a common-place occurence to have young people involved in decision making and action".

Peter Nash (IRL) - "Facts and Food" project.



Project 1 : Luxembourg - "Youth Information and Guidance"

Marc Kayser spoke about an International Youth Year information intitiative. The need for it had been established by a <u>survey</u> which had demonstrated both a lack of information, and the difficulties which young people have in interpreting the information which existed.

Young people were asked to write down the questions which were important to them, and a list of the main ones was given to experts. They were then invited to provide the answers in plain language.

The result was the production of a booklet "The rights and obligations of the youth of Luxembourg", with chapters on areas such as :

- young people and parents
- education and training
- social life
- law.

A second publication, will cover the area of <u>sport</u> and <u>leisure</u>. A third phase will be a <u>youth programme</u> on radio in Luxembourg.

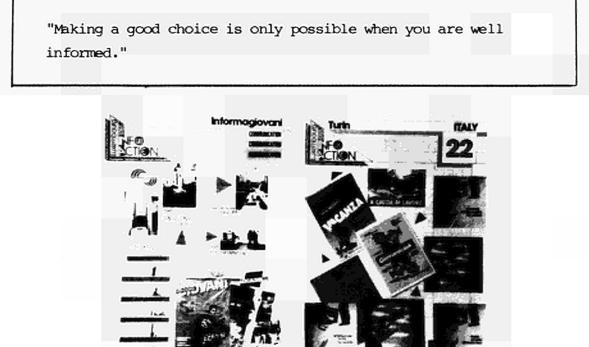
Fernand Sauer described another project aimed at the most disadvantaged young people in the 14-18 age range.

In 1984, the Ministry for Education and Youth, within the framework of the European Community's second Transition Programme, had set up a project "Local action for youth" in five different areas. The project employed a team of young youth workers, or "transition tutors" to develop new opportunities for young people in the local community. It had identified large gaps in young people's knowledge in such fields as education and training. The project was about the kind of training needed for "transition tutors" to help promote action to fill this gap. Project 2 : Turin, Italy - "Informagiovani"

Simonetta Risaio explained that Informagiovani was both the name of a youth information centre in Turin and the name of a magazine which it produced.

22,000 copies were printed every 2 months, and distributed free of charge to 15,000 individual young people, to schools, universities, and clubs, and to commercial outlets such as bars, discos and book-shops. Each edition dealt in depth with a particular issue such as : school, sport, holidays, and careers.

Informagiovani had young people on its editorial board. It was seen as an important channel of communication between young people. For example, groups with interesting ideas, or who wanted to raise issues, or to publicise their work, could use Informagiovani. The magazine played an important role in developing young people's awareness of the centre, in stimulating them to take a more active role in youth information, and in providing a structure which could support youth initiatives.



Project 3 : Bocholt (Flanders), Belgium - "Bocholt youth survey"

Marc Voets described a survey undertaken by a local Youth Council.

A Youth Council had existed in Bocholt since 1972, but with limited effect. In 1984, it approached the local authority for funds to appoint staff, and for training. The local authority agreed that it should look into the needs of young people, and a person was appointed for one year, together with 5 young people on "unemployment programme" jobs. Many other young people were involved, in planning the work and analysing the results.

The survey looked at the needs of the 6-9, 10-12 and 13-25 age groups. After ten months of data collection and analysis, it came up with the following key findings :

• young people over the age of 10 are less interested in organised youth work and prefer to take part in small group activities;

• young people still have major gaps in the information which they need;

• the media's influence on young people's culture is almost entirely confined to pop culture;

schools did not prepare young people for adult life.

The Youth Council intends to respond by producing a free <u>newspaper</u>; by setting up its own <u>information centre</u>; by cooperating with local schools to introduce <u>youth information into the curriculum</u>; and by negotiating with the local media for more <u>coverage</u> of youth issues.

"Introducing young people to youth information was a new dimension to our personal development. It makes us more critically aware, and more conscious of our status and role in the community." Project 4 ; Namur (Wallonia), Belgium - "Qu'on se le dise!"

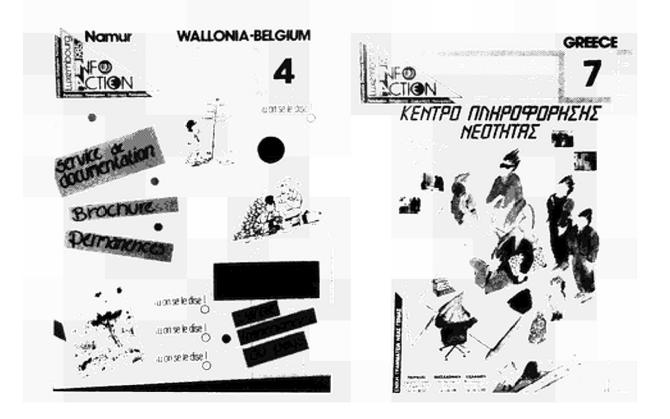
Jean-Louis Istace described the "Qu'on se le dise!" ("Spread the word!") association.

It had been set up by a group of young people concerned about the lack information to help them when they had finished vocational education in secondary school. Because these young people were not "high flyers" existing services did not seem particularly interested in their needs. The nature of the gap was confirmed by a survey of the opinions of 87 pupils in various vocational courses.

The association aimed at :

- the provision of a permanent information service;
- the development of a programme of activities for young people;
- the organisation of seminars on managing small businesses;
- the creation of a print workshop.

To date, it had achieved its first task which was to produce a <u>booklet</u> giving information on a range of different topics.



Project 5 : Greece - "Participation and local development"

Two government programmes, launched by the Under-secretariat for Youth, to promote youth participation, were presented.

Tasos Chividopoulos explained how his school's student union had benefited from government financial and technical support for school-based activities. The government supported the development of student associations because it believed that young people could gain practical experience of participatory democracy by participation in them.

Activities financed in this way included :

- cooperatives
- newspapers and magazines
- cultural groups, environmental groups, youth clubs and centres.

Elphia Bezou described a project in Macedonia, which was part of a programme involving unemployed university graduates in local development in less-developed areas of Greece.

The project involved helping local people to identify their needs and examine the possibilities for economic development, particularly environmental protection and the enrichment of cultural life. The final task was to prepare an action plan, not only to create new jobs, but also to instil a new sense of pride and commitment in these communities.

"I believe a significant change in learning methods is needed, - a recognition that today's youth has potential. After all, we are the planners and leaders of tomorrow." Peter Nash described a Community Development Course which had led to the establishment of a Community Services Centre.

On the results of a survey carried out by the Edenmore Employment Committee, the Irish Industrial Training Authority (ANCO) had financed a course which enabled 20 young people, mostly under 25, to develop the necessary skills to set up and run a <u>Community Services Centre</u>. The course lasted 16 weeks and the participants had been involved from the beginning, in planning and implementing it. Apart from the knowledge and practical skills they had acquired, the group and its members developed new motivation and confidence. They raised £500 by organising a pop concert, and gradually began to plan the new Centre.

The proposal for the Centre was accepted by the Department of Labour and funded through its Team Work Programme. Nine of the original group were employed in the Centre which provided :

- an information office
- a talent bank, i.e. a list of people willing to offer their skills
- a coffee bar (it is hoped that the income from the coffee bar will cover the expenses of running the premises).



Themas Volbeding described a video film project carried out by young people in Cologne.

The project had developed from a long-term research project run by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training. The institute was surveying the views and experience of 20,000 young people on training, careers and looking for work (Ausbildung, Beruf, Arbeitsplatzsuche or ABA).

Some of the young people who answered the questionnaire decided that they would like to make a <u>video</u> to present their experiences to other young people, and to the general public. The group were provided with support and technical assistance by the Youth Film Club in Cologne. The film expressed some of their feelings and concerns - their isolation, frustration, the difficulty they experienced in getting a training place, and the problems of careers and jobs being interrupted by military service.

The process of planning the film, and learning the necessary skills, took some time, and the Commission of the European Community had assisted with a grant towards its financing. The final result has been shown in 150 different outlets associated with the film club. Interest had also been shown by schools, politicians, and the media. The group felt that what they had done could start off a wider debate.



Project 8 : Denmark - "The Start Bus" and the "A House"

"It makes a nice change to see policy makers stretching out their hand towards young people."

(Introductory remarks after a short drama game which led into this presentation).

Tina Reslow and Brian Orsholt explained the Start Bus project which had developed from their activity in the "A House".

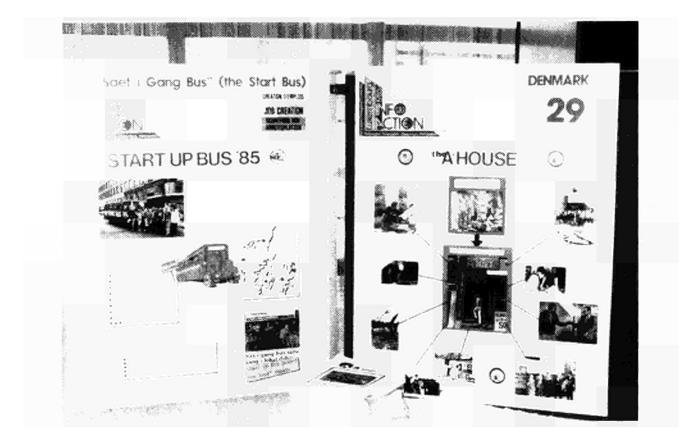
The "<u>A House</u>" is a centre for, and run by, the young unemployed in Copenhagen. Many activities are based in the House :

- unemployed people can get a meal, read, paint, repair bikes, make clothes or print handbills;
- information and advertisements about jobs are exchanged;
- plans are made to create work by, for example renovating old property;
- it provides the base for many campaigns on unemployment and poverty and the needs of groups such as the handicapped.

The <u>Start Bus</u> was developed out of this activity during International Youth Year. People from the "A House" drove a bus to 12 towns in Denmark. The bus acted as a touring theatre, and a forum for debate. In each town, a programme of plays, concerts and other activities was organised. The group also met other young people, organisations and politicians, to discuss International Youth Year and the effects of local youth programmes. The aim of the Start Bus project, which ended in September 1985, was to :

- promote local projects concerned with youth information and education
- to develop spare-time and cultural activities;
- to help provide jobs and housing for all young people.

"Minorities must be helped to participate. This participation isn't helped by professionals who look for structural or bureaucratic solutions."



Project 9 : Groningen, Netherlands - "The Border between Black, Grey and White"

Gretha Bierlaagh described a video production project, assisted by Rob Kievitsbosch, a youth worker, Siep Faber a film maker and Nanko van Buren from the Organisation for Disadvantaged Young People.

The project was about the problems of the growing number of young people who have no formal qualifications and cannot find a job. The only way in which she and her friends could earn any money was by working in the grey or black economies, which, while illegal, was better than doing nothing.

With the help of the three adults, her group of friends had been able to make a <u>video</u> called "The Border" about their situation. One of the most important things they wanted to explain was how rigid government policies exclude them from work, and even from training courses. If the disadvantaged, and in particular minorities, were to participate fully in society, policies must be flexible and open to local variation and interpretation.

Video was the medium chosen to communicate their problems to others, because written reports seemed to have no impact. Representatives from education and employment ministries, the legal profession, and welfare services, had been asked to give their reactions to what they saw on the video, in the hope this would provoke a debate.



Project 10 : Northern Ireland, U.K. - "YIPLINKS"

Rodney Green described a partnership approach to the provision of youth information in Northern Ireland.

The Standing Conference of Youth Organisations in Northern Ireland (SCOYO) was developing a partnership approach to the provision of youth information. Young people and the mass media were actively involved, as well as the statutory and voluntary youth organisations.

Young people had been involved at all stages in the development of the project. They had been consulted through the Northern Ireland Youth Forum (of which he was the secretary) and would be taking part in the management and operation of the project which would provide a central <u>youth information resource unit</u> to support a number of Youth Information Points throughout Northern Ireland.

The BBC, and local commercial radio stations, would use the services of this central unit to develop their <u>youth programmes</u>. It was clear already that there was considerable potential for the use of young people in recording, producing and presenting material. The unit could also provide advice for media initiatives to promote direct action on the part of young people.

"We believe the delivery of youth information should be a partnership between young people and adults."

Project 11 : Seyne-sur-Mer, France - "Radio-Emploi"

Jean-Pierre Giannoli and Jean-Christophe Mengozi described a local radio project in southern France.

The project had developed from the work of the Mission locale and the local radio station (Radio Latitude Sud, formerly Radio la Seyne).

The role of the Mission locale (local task force for the development of services for young people) was to introduce the idea of "social communication to the local radio. Forum-style <u>broadcasts</u> were begun, managed entirely by young people, on a wide range of subjects including job creating, leisure activities, housing, drugs, prison, etc. Young people could telephone the programme to ask for information or to give their opinions.

The response of young people wanting to contribute to the programme was enormous, so an independent <u>association</u> was created. This now had 120 active members and many more young people acting as occasional reporters on any subject which they thought other people needed information about.

The association was set up by young people working in collaboration with the regional council of La Seyne, the regional department of cultural affairs, advertising agencies and the national Employment Agency (ANPE). A project for the creation of a <u>private television</u> channel was now being considered.

"When they are faced with choice, young people may seek advice or counselling. The adults' role is clear. They will be invited into a partnership, using their experience to help young people implement what they have chosen to do." Bethan Lewis described the production of a youth information booklet, and a computerised information store.

In Wales, an attempt was being made to provide a comprehensive youth <u>information service</u> for young people. The production of a youth information <u>booklet</u>, partly modelled on the "Young Scot", was the first stage. About 80,000 copies had been produced, in both English and Welsh, and distributed through schools, youth clubs and youth training schemes.

The design and final editing of the book was in the hands of 25 young people, drawn from each County in Wales. They were involved in all the decisions about what should go into the booklet, and the style and language of the publication.

An edited version of the booklet is now available on <u>floppy disk</u>, based on a computerised version of the information collected for the booklet. This part of the project was also carried out by young people, taking part in computer training programmes sponsored by the Manpower Services Commission.

The data stored will soon be available "<u>on-line</u>" to users with a BBC-B micro-computer and a modem link.

Local youth information data bases throughout Wales will be developed also.



4. Suggestions by the Working Groups

Message from Mr Jacques Delors

Before splitting into working groups, the conference received a message from Mr Jacques Delors, President of the European Commission. He welcomed the opportunity the conference provided for young people to put accross their problems, and their ideas. He thought the need to develop a dialogue between young people, and particularly the young unemployed, and the adult world was urgent. As he saw it, the problems of the world today would not be solved by economic and technical change alone : a change of attitude was the key.

Mr Delors said the European Community had already helped launch some of the projects presented at the conference. For the future, he mentioned the possibility of the Commission giving greater financial support for such projects and funding links between them in different countries of the Community.

In the five working groups, conference participants were able to review 12 projects presented at the conference, and the other 18 projects represented at it by young people, and briefly summarised in the conference papers. Each group included young people, workers professionnally engaged in working for and with young people, and government officials, in roughly equal numbers.

The results of their reflections can be arranged under a number of key headings, concerning :

The role of information The importance of the local approach The role of the professional worker Factors for success in youth initiatives Policy implications The role of information

1. Young people should, as of right, have access to information relevant to their future lives, in particular such aspects as jobs, leisure opportunities and their social and economic well-being.

2. The means needed to provide, and keep up-to-date, this information should be assured on a permanent basis, in order to guarantee its quality.

3. Information, in itself, does not change the social or personal situation of young people. It is only through action, by and for young people, with the back-up support needed, that young people learn to act on their own situation, in order to develop and change it. But having the right information is a vital element in enabling this learning process to begin, and to be successful.

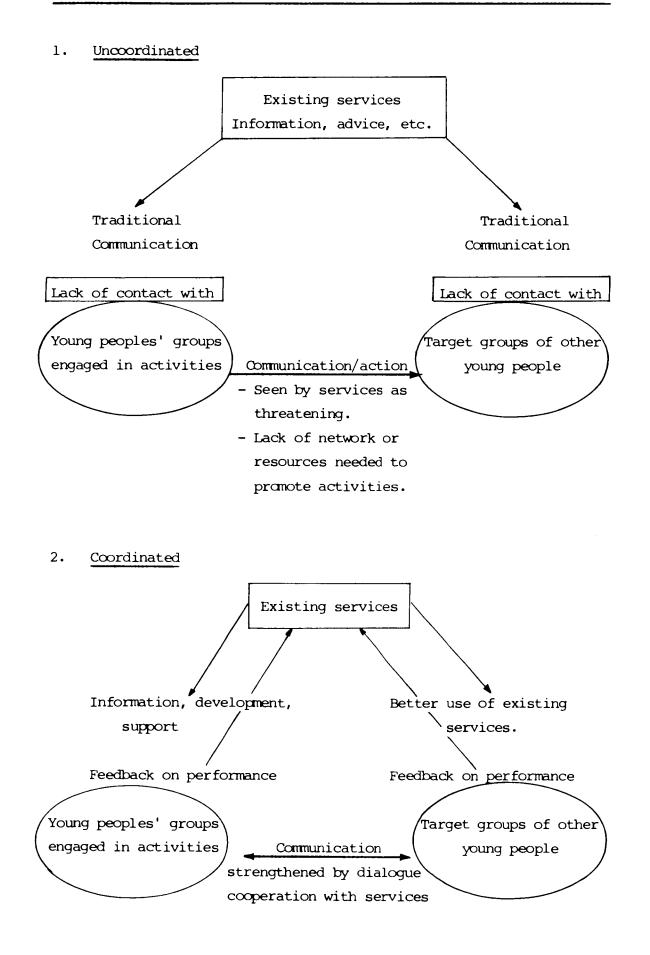
The importance of the local approach

1. Projects should start on a local level. This enables young people to be reached more easily, and the project to deal with a concrete need or situation.

2. A local approach also makes it easier to develop a cooperative method of working with other agencies, and for them to be influenced by the project.

3. The "Missions locales" (France) provide an excellent example of a local coordinated approach, into which youth initiatives can be integrated. The benefits of linking youth initiatives to existing services were illustrated, by one working group, in the diagram on the follow-ing page.

4. Coordination at the local level was very important. The various services provided for young people, i.e. education, youth, employment, etc. should, perhaps, be integrated, within a department of youth affairs. This could reduce confusion, and provide more opportunities for young people to be involved.



The role of professional workers

1. Professional workers have a very important role to play in youth action projects.

2. Teachers, youth workers, etc. should grant young people more autonomy, and act more as tutors, facilitators, and stimulators.

3. There was an important role for other experts in developing young people's skills in areas such as video, broadcasting, management, publicity, etc. Such individuals need to be sympathetic to the needs and interests of young people, and their criteria and standards adapted to the level of young people's interests and capacities.

4. Above all, schools, and broadcasting, were singled out as needing to be more open to initiatives led by young people themselves.

Factors for success in youth initiatives

Rather than try to define criteria for the development, or support, of youth initiatives, the conference listed characteristics and factors which made for a successful project.

Youth initiatives have been successful particulary when :

• they bring about participation by young people who are not normally involved with agencies and organisations, whether voluntary or statutory;

they make youth issues visible, and make authorities aware of them;

• they develop solidarity among young people in solving common problems;

• they use the reality of the lives of young people as their starting point;

• they are able to respond to situations as they arise, because it is when young people are motivated that they want to act;

• they promote personal development, concern and responsibility among young people;

• they promote opportunities for young people to be involved in creative, rather than consumer, roles;

• they promote the development of social skills through young people being involved in self-determining groups;

• they promote the integration of young people into society through removing the "mystery" surrounding organisations and administrative structures; and by promoting a critical understanding of society, on the part of young people;

• they involve young people in a process of self-assessment and in the formulation of their own objectives;

• they help to overcome apathy, through providing motivation.

Youth policy and young people

1. A coordinated youth policy should be developed in each Member State. This was seen as a long-term goal, as was the development of a coordinated policy in the Community.

2. Young people should have a role in determining how youth policy was formulated. This meant tackling the difficulties in the way of promoting an effective dialogue between young people and policy-makers, such as :

• the difficulty of establishing contact and communication with civil servants

• the remoteness of the "representatives" of young people, who are formally consulted by politicians on youth issues, but depend on information at second or third hand;

• the variety of opinions held by young people, and the variety of their needs.

New policies for the European Community ?

The working groups also considered the characteristics of supporting action by the European Community in this field, whether via financial aid or otherwise. It was agreed that such support should be guided by the following criteria :

- flexibility, so that the needs of different groups could be met;
- emphasis on local projects;
- support of action, not simply the provision of information;

• fast response to applications; no unnecessary bureaucratic procedures;

• the involvement of young people in the decision process about the allocation of funds;

an adequate budget;

The aims of the European network of youth initiatives were identified as :

to promote research and information exchange between projects;

• to distribute such information to the general public, particularly through the broadcasting media and by highlighting projects from other countries;

• to encourage the sharing of experience among young people and adults involved in the projects through seminars, and the development and use of youth exchanges between Member countries. Comments by the Rapporteur-général, G. Welbers

In the final session, Gerhard Welbers, Rapporteur-général of the conference, was invited to comment on the conclusions of the working groups, from his perspective as coordinator of the team of experts assisting the Commission in the implementation of its second Transition Programme on the transition of young people from school to adult and working life.

Mr. Welbers' main points were as follows.

The accent in this conference was not so much on information itself, as on how to improve the opportunities of young people for formulating and expressing their own needs and interests themselves, rather than leaving this to other people. In practical terms, this meant pursuing a further question; what can, and must, happen to enable young people to develop such initiatives themselves, and to take responsibility or co-responsibility in this way?

Information has a part to play in this process. But much more important are involvement, participation, initiative and creativity. In other words, learning.

But it is not only a learning process for young people. It is also important that adults, authorities and institutions, should learn and adapt. Much has been heard in this conference about the changes needed in the role of teachers, of tutors and youth workers.

For young people, the ability to negotiate one's own interests is a key part of this learning. This ability is one which has to be learnt, and practiced as early as possible - and preferably in school. Schools provide opportunities for participation, joint decisions and negotiation, which are not yet sufficiently used. It should be part of the role of teachers to make these opportunities visible to young people. All the projects which have participated in this conference have several things in common :

• the determination to help young people to make their own decisions;

• the will to influence decisions which concern young people and which are frequently taken over their heads;

• the will to put pressure on decision-makers to recognise the participation of young people as a general principle in the distribution of resources and opportunities.

In other words, youth action programmes are about properly recognising young people as partners, in many ways and at different levels.

The concern to develop partnership refers not only to the dialogue between young people and the authorities; but also to the solidarity between those who face particular disadvantages and those who are more lucky; and between those who have work and those who do not; and between those who know how to cope with the system and those who do not understand it.

In these discussions, there seem to be signs of a new climate. Young people have their own views, on their own affairs; and they are prepared to take on their own responsibilities. Policy-makers and administrators can become partners in this. Where the opportunity for engaging this partnership is missed, where the offer is not taken up, one should not be surprised if confrontation and protest result, or apathy.

5. The views of young people

The young people taking part presented the following points in the final session as their views on the future :

• a much larger event should be held within the next 18 months, which would enable many more young people to participate. It could lead to simultaneous conferences, events, etc. run by young people, in each Member State, which would show the Press and the general public exactly what young people were doing;

• a central information bank should be set up, which would keep, collect and up-date information on youth initiatives throughout Europe;

• long-term youth exchanges should be developed, involving a number of Member States, to provide young people with the opportunity to work in youth initiative projects in other countries;

• young people should be involved in the setting up, and administration of, Community backing of youth initiatives;

• the European Youth Forum should be brought to the attention of more young people, to give them a more active voice in the decisions made on their behalf by the European Community;

• politicians, newspapers and television should be encouraged to communicate with young people in a language which they can understand.

Murdoch Foley, presenting these points, ended with the challenge :

"You have heard what the young of this conference had to say. You now have the info. Let's see the action!" Mr. Richard Doherty, Secretary General of the European Youth Forum, commented that the European Youth Forum, which already gave young people a strong presence in the Community, was very interested by the Commission's declared intention to give more support to youth initiatives.

This clearly offered many opportunities, and could be a tangible instrument for a wider, more encompassing, Community policy for young people. If it had adequate mechanisms of control, participation and co-management in its decision making, and with adequate resources, such an initiative would indeed be very welcome.



Probably most of the young people participating in the conference had mixed feelings about it. The formality, the problems of simultaneous interpretation, the large numbers present, even in the working groups, and some confusion stemming from the conference's multiple objectives, all presented certain difficulties.

Among the comments sent in after the conference (not only by young people) were the following.

"I found out that the problems of the Dutch, the Danes, etc. are very similar to ours. That is why I feel the need to get to know these different projects on the spot. Therefore I want to support Murdock's demand for more exchanges in the EEC. I was very impressed by the general consensus and interest in the European idea. At this conference, politicians could learn a lot from the young people and use the young people's potential." Roland Jung (D)

"After talking with other young participants I realised that we were all in the same position. It was the first time that we had stayed in a big hotel... We had to prove to the politicians that we had ideas and a lot of enthusiasm.... I felt like a guinea pig being examined in a laboratory.... Luckily there was the a working group for young people and the resulting speech. From that moment I believed in the conference". Catherine Lainé (F)

"More could have been achieved if both peer groups had been divided in discussion and then united in action." Vincent Hutton (IRL)

"I think bringing together young people, project workers and policymakers was an important first step towards an understanding of the needs of young people. It was a good idea to have a working group for young people at the end of the conference." Jorgen Lund (DK) "The experience of presenting a project at such a large conference helped to build up my own self-confidence and self-awareness towards talking to and dealing with people who speak a different language." Rodney Green (N.I)

"I think Luxembourg was a worthwhile experience, but it was a beginning rather than an end. Some ideas about the future are in my mind" Peter Döring (D)

"In my opinion a similar conference is needed in the future to see how the projects have progressed and benefitted from Info Action. Info Action '85 has done a lot of good for youth projects with the EEC." Sandra Daly (IRL)



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Projects presented in the exhibition

1.	Luxembourg	- "Guidance de la Jeunesse"	Luxembourg
2.	Ireland	- "Facts and Food"	Dublin
3.	France	- "Stage d'insertion	
		profe ssionnelle et sociale "	St. Denis
4.	Belgium (Wallonia)	- "Qu'on se le dise!"	Namur
5.	United Kingdom	- "YES - Youth Enquiry Service"	Strathclyde
6.	France	- "Tuteur-informateur"	Valence
7.	Greece	- "School-Based Participation "	
8.	Belgium (Flanders)	- "Ever heard about	
	-	Participation?"	Kortrijk
9.	France	- "Touche pas à mon pote"	_
10.	United Kingdom	- "YIP Links"	N. Ireland
11.	Belgium (Wallonia)	- "Les jeunes du Shopping	
		demandent une maison"	Tournai
12.	Ireland	— "Ogra Chorcai"	Cork
13.	Germany	— "Aschaffenburger Jugend	
		Wohngruppe"	Aschaffenburg
14.		- "CIDG - Youth Programme"	Voghera
15.	J N N	- "Bocholt Youth Survey"	Bocholt
16.	Netherlands	- "The Border between Black,	
		Grey & White"	Groningen
17.		- "ABA-Video-Gruppe"	Cologne
18.		- "Parlare Giovani"	Forlì
19.	Dermark	- "Coordinated Information	
		and Guidance"	Hvidovre
20.	Netherlands	- "International Youth Media	
		Festival"	Amsterdam
21.	Germany	- "Schüler-Azubi-Radio"	Schifferstadt
22.	Italy	- "Informagiovani"	Turin
23.	United Kingdom	- "Young Scot"	Scotland
24.	Germany	- "Schwibbogenplatz" Projekt	Augsburg
25.	United Kingdom	- "Canllaw/On Line 85"	Wales
26.	Ireland	- "Initiatives Award"	West Cork
27.	Greece	- "Young People & Local Developme	
28.	Netherlands	- "Living-Working Plan"	Rotterdam
29.	Denmark	- "The Start Bus"	
30.	Germany	- "Ökomobil"	Pullach
31.	France	- "Radio-Emploi"	Seyne s/Mer

For project addresses, refer to the participants' address list in Annex I.

Further material available

In addition to this report an "Info Action '85 Video Tape" has been produced as a record of the conference and the exhibition. The tape (on VHS) lasts 12 minutes and includes extracts from some of the videos which were shown during the event.

The 'Info Action '85 Catalogue", produced for the conference, describes all the projects in the exhibition. It also lists interesting publications and audio-visual resources which can be obtained from each project.

For those who may wish to know more about the detailed proceedings of the conference, full texts of many of the speeches are available.

The background to the conference, and the approach on which it was based, are described in "Youth Information '85", in the same series as this report. It is available in all Community languages, from IFAPLAN.

The "Info Action '85" video, the conference catalogue and the texts of speeches have been produced in English, French and German and are available from :

Secrétariat de la Conférence Tel° (352) 478 84 36 INFO - ACTION Service National de la Jeunesse 1, rue de la Poste B. P. 707 L - 2017 Luxembourg

If you have views to express on this report or would like to send us news about new initiatives in this field, please write to :

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