



Report - Good Leadership in Democratic Organization, Ulcin, June 2003

On June 14-17, 2003 BCYF organized a training session on the leadership theme gathering 24 young people, representative of youth serving NGOs covering all the countries in the Balkans. As part of the agreement with Swedish Youth Council the trainers were from Sweden: Asa Bjerling, trainer and chairperson of SYC and Christina Whallsom, trainer and journalist covering South East Europe for various Swedish magazines.

First day was opened by BCYF staff, executive director and capacity building manager and followed by introduction of participants and trainers themselves as well as their own organizations through various active methods as presentation and games.

The first part of the agenda, following the rest of the day, was dedicated to **the democratic values** as part of the contemporary model to be considered by the leaders. Several theories were discussed and participants had the opportunity to express their opinions. Three main values were identified and described in details by the trainers: equal rights, participation and fair decision making.

I. Equal Rights. Participants talked about equal treatment of organization members and how managers and leaders should behave in a participative management. Participants expressed their opinion about what doesn't mean unpopular decisions, equal within an organization and how the leader and managers should address the needs of the members of the organization. The rules of the organization sometimes cannot apply to all the situations and more communication is needed in order keep the staff satisfied and not make them feel maltreated. Several examples from the participants experienced were commented.

II. Participation. Participants talked about decision making, power control, team work, share responsibility, contribution, right to make mistakes, equal participation of various groups, encourage and support, responsibility, exclusion and neglect. Trainer explained about ensures a secure environment in order to ensure participation and have good group dynamics.

III. Fair decision-making. Participants talked about types of decision making and about hierarchy, accessibility, respect, objectivity, agenda setting, and access to information, transparency, majority and minority decision. Decision-making is about compromising and balance it with creating acclimates of positive energy in the organization. It was also depends on situations and appropriate way of decision-making process leaders choosing.

After those discussions the participants had the opportunity to “experience” some of the situations and identify their own attitudes and skills through various exercises. The second part of the agenda was focused on **group dynamics** and the trainers introduce the FIRO theory of Will Schultz aiming to find out why groups perform better than others, despite the same competence, skills and education background within the different groups. The three pahses are: belonging, role seeking and openness. The leadership type was discussed for each of different phases of a group dynamic.

The second day was dedicated to **conflict management** and its implications for the leadership related issues. The positive part of the conflict was emphasized and how to transform conflicts, prevent the violence and build cooperation by seeking solution for both sides. The trainers introduced the strategies of conflict management as dominate, cooperation, compromise, avoid and adjust. Each of them were discussed with participants and at end of the session an exercise was given to participants to experience their own understanding and attitudes.

Last part of the day was a discussion on **motivation and non-motivation** and how leaders should deal with the “followers”.

The last part, equal half a day, was dedicated to a workshop on various changes that participants can envisage for themselves and their own organization. Methods and SWOT analysis were presented by each participants. At the end the participants made the evaluation of the training event as an open exercise and through evaluation forms.

The open exercise showed the following results:

1. Evaluation of subjects:

First day: Democratic leadership – well received

Firo – very well received
Exercises – were good
Second day: Conflict Management - well received
Exercise – very well received
Leadership Motivation was good
All of them : well received

2. Involvement of participants:

Own involvement spread between ok and very active. Others involvement appreciated as active and very active.

3. Fun. All the participants enjoy the sessions, trainers and the informal time spent together.

From the evaluation the results were the following:

All the participants filled the questionnaires so the analysis is based on 100% response of 24 participants.

The information provided was considered useful and very useful by almost all the participants and for 20 participants most of the information was new. Some of the participants mentioned in private discussion that they learned about the conflict management but from the leadership perspective.

In terms of immediate application of the learning, 22 participants see an immediate use of the acknowledge acquired as well as of the keeping the communication with the other participants. Some of them were interested in cooperation and there were several informal discussions on possible joint actions. An ad-hoc session was organized by one participant from Serbia introducing the public campaign Bunt! run by Youth Council Serbia. Participants were very interested by the subject and the session last for one our in the free time of program.

All sessions were considered valuable by almost all participants. Nevertheless, some of the parts were mentioned several times and those are:

- conflict management related
- group dynamics particular FIRO theory
- reflection on personal leadership and motivation

The one mention as less valuable were identified only by two participants.

The training session met the expectation of 23 participants (one respondent was not sure). The average appreciation was 80% worthwhile and important. The trainers were inspired, effective and very effective in their presentations as well as

transferring practical ideas; their overall appreciation was declared very good and outstanding by 22 participants.

As follow up requested or foreseen by participants were mentioned: more training on similar subjects and more detailed information, materials and books on the subjects, keep a communication of the group, involvement in further programs of BCYF and not only, partnerships and cooperation.

As an immediate result a yahoo group was created by one of the participants from Kosovo and all of the participants registered. Several messages were on information from various countries and BCYF staff two articles on leadership and use the opportunity to promote two of BCYF programs: the coming deadlines for the partnership program and the Balkan Youth Forum in September.