

Young Activists for Peace

Youth Exchange: "Young Activists for
Peace – Refugees Welcome"

Sievershausen

August 15- 28, 2016



Daily Reports
by Participants
Sievershausen
15.-28.08.2016

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About the “Young Activists for Peace – Welcome Refugees” project:

War, poverty and desperate living conditions are forcing millions of people to leave their countries and too many of them risk/lose their lives in search of asylum in the EU. For too long, governments have denied to acknowledge the cruel reality of refugees dying in the Mediterranean Sea and are still not able to agree on common strategies to enable asylum seekers to find safer ways out of the civil war in Syria for example. EU governments are more divided than ever in the EU's history. Young people all over Europe are affected and worried about how this crisis will affect their own chances of living in a united and peaceful Europe. Welcoming refugees for many of them is a duty of active citizenship and solidarity, for others unfortunately it is a reason to express racism and hate, and even worse, to threaten those who help and welcome refugees. It is particularly disturbing that young people are easily influenced by nationalist and racist tendencies, discriminating and attacking refugees without ever having had a personal encounter with one of them. This was the main reason for carrying out a youth exchange project on this topic in summer 2016.

About this Youth Exchange activity:

This exchange was carried out in cooperation with the local NGO “Antikriegshaus”, which is part of the German Peace Movement (see <http://antikriegshaus.de/>). The Peace Studies Center Sievershausen was established in the rooms of the Sievershausen Lutheran Church community almost 50 years ago. Those were the times when the Vietnam War escalated. Expansions and further re-organisations followed. Now there are several buildings, surrounded by a nice park, including a guest house and a museum with an assembly hall. Every year an international workcamp is carried out there, and the place really benefits from this international atmosphere. The seminar house offers sleeping rooms for 3-4 people, volunteers will have a lot of space for meetings, cooking, dining, relaxing and for indoor and outdoor activities.

In addition we were in close contact with an accommodation for refugees which are living since years in the neighboring town Lehrte. Most of the refugees living there are age 18-30 and are from countries in West Africa.

Groups of 5 young people from 6 countries (Croatia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Serbia) met and learned about the concept “Friedensstifter (young people become agents of peace)” and about methods of empowerment with sensitive groups. The concept is used in school and non-formal educational contexts. The methodology is based on a set of exercises related to different aspects of violence, conflict and conflict resolution in groups.

Complementary to the pedagogical working units, the main focus was on the situation of refugees in Germany and what it means to be a “welcoming Society”: Participants were invited to visit refugees in their accommodation and to organize leisure time activities with them. They had the chance to get in contact with the residents of the Asylum Centre and to learn about their life stories, difficulties and perspectives. In addition the group made excursions to NGO institutions that support and counsel refugees like the refugee council (“Flüchtlingsrat”). Group and plenary discussions were held on immigration and asylum policies of the EU member states and Serbia and how these are affecting the situation of asylum seekers and peace and unity in Europe.

Program Overview

Day 1 Monday, 15.08.2016

Welcome

Get to know each other, Orientation

Introduction to the topic, presentation of the program and of the participants

Organization Details

Dinner

Day 2 – Tuesday, 16.08.2016

Breakfast

Separating participants in two groups

Visiting the asylum seeker's housing in Lehrte

Organizing questions and workshops in Sievershausen

Lunch break

Getting to know each other activities

Training with Maik Bischoff

Dinner

Day 3 Wednesday, 17.08.2016

Breakfast

Preparation of the activities for the asylum seeker's housing

Lunch break

Training continued

Dinner

Day 4 Thursday, 18.08.2016

Breakfast

Getting to know activities

Training continued

Lunch break

Workshops on escape reasons – with Agnes Sander

Dinner

Day 5 Friday, 19.08.2016

Breakfast

Preparation of the posters for the asylum seeker's housing

Lunch break

Training with Maik

Dinner

6 Saturday, 20.08.2016

Breakfast

Excursion in Hannover

Dinner

Day 7 Sunday, 21.08.2016

Breakfast

Free day

Dinner

Day 8 Monday, 22.08.2016

Breakfast

Workshop on the legal system of asylum in Germany and Europe – with Flüchtlingsrat

Lunch break

Last details on the material of the workshops

First day workshops in the AWO Accommodation Lehrte

Dinner

Day 9 Tuesday, 23.08.2016

Breakfast

Reflection Group

Preparation for the workshops of the afternoon

Lunch Break

Workshops in the AWO Accommodation Lehrte

Day 10 Wednesday, 24.08.2016

Breakfast

Reflection Group

Preparation for the workshops of the afternoon

Lunch Break

Workshops with asylum seekers in the AWO Accommodation Lehrte

Dinner

Day 11 Thursday, 25.08.2016

Breakfast

Reflection Group

Preparation for the workshops of the afternoon

Lunch Break

Workshops with asylum seekers in AWO Accommodation Lehrte

Dinner

Day 12 Friday , 26.08.2016

Breakfast

Reflection Group

Preparation for the workshops of the afternoon

Lunch Break

Workshops with asylum seekers in AWO Accommodation Lehrte

Farewell Dinner with the asylum seekers

Dinner

Day 13 Saturday , 27.08.2016

Breakfast

Evaluation of the Youth Exchange

Organizing of the departure and the cleaning teams

Lunch Break

Cleaning

Farewell Dinner

Day 14 Sunday , 28.08.2016

Breakfast

Departure

Daily Reports

Day 1 – Monday, August 15th

Groups and participants were arriving during the day. When everybody came and put the things in the rooms we started with meeting each other. We were playing a game of meeting in which every participant should say his or her name and to add an adjective with the first letter of his or her name.

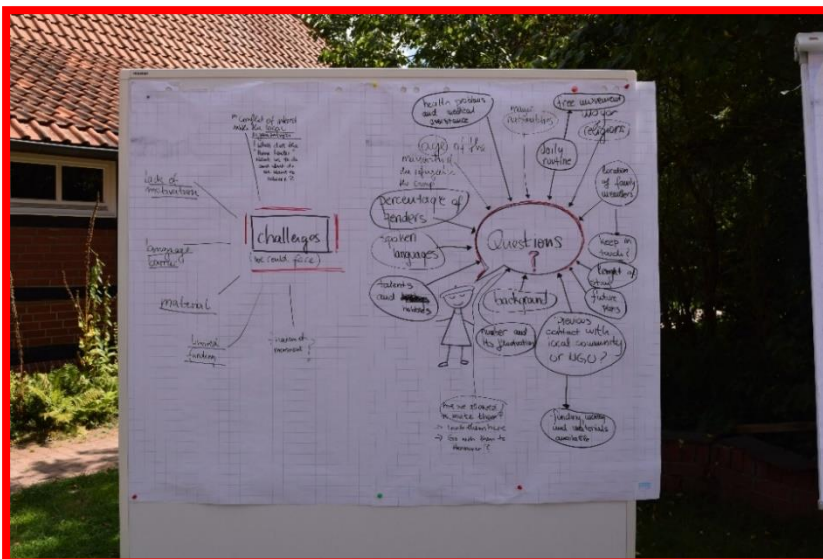


For instance Ante said adventurous and then Ivana said ice cold and so on. After that we made a schedule of activities which we are supposed to do during our stay

here. We made the cooking teams for each meal every day. The group leaders presented us the program of youth exchange and the things we will do during our stay here. After that we went to our beds to sleep because we were tired of travelling.

Day 2 – Tuesday, August 16th

Morning



After the breakfast we separated in two groups. The first one went to the AWO refugee Accommodation in Lehrte where they were talking with a managing person. He gave details about refugees currently living in the house, like number of refugees, their nationality, their daily routine, hobbies and he answered our questions.

Meanwhile, the other group was writing the questions, such as daily routine of refugees, their health problems, their hobbies, what age are they etc. We also wrote some ideas on activities with the refugees like planting, cooking together, making some video together, making graffiti, building a chess field and playing sports games. The group was also discussing what is going to be a challenge so, for example, we mentioned the language barrier, lack of motivation and materials, limited funding and freedom of movement. When the first group came back from a

the AWO refugee house we answered the questions that we wrote down before and discussed about ways of helping both children and adults.

Afternoon

Maik Bischoff presented himself as our trainer for the next few days. Therefore, we first had few name games so he could meet some of us. Afterwards, we had some games in order to meet



each other's habits. Anna, gave us sheets of paper in order to write do's and don'ts on the camp so the following day we would be able to make some rules of behavior in the camp. After a brief break we went outside to play one of the games that had the aim to learn about communication and how important it

is to listen to one another and speak in same language during the youth exchange. We were separated in two groups that both had an opportunity to be in situation to lead, or to listen to a partner and according to it to perform a task. After that we had a small discussion what we've learned from this game/method and how we can use it to function better during the coming 14 days. The next task was about us meeting with one another, so we were split in pairs and we were supposed to interview our partner about most important characteristics, hobbies etc.. Next part of the task was to write the things that matter to us the most in order for others to be able to read it in future days and get to know us a bit better.

Day 3 - Wednesday, August 17th

Morning

We had breakfast and then we gathered in the seminar room. Ivana and Gaia presented us



daily games; killer game and secret friend game. Then we divided ourselves into six groups. Each group had to suggest its own ideas for activities which will be provided next week during our visit to the AWO house for asylum seekers in Lehrte. We divided ideas for activities based on age group and gender.

Those ideas were written on papers that we put on the board and presented. We defined the best ideas for activities and took them to another paper. We decided to present our youth group with some kind of non-shouting show, a "little" theatre, but for instance, activities such as piñata, drawing, chair games, dancing were taken as acceptable for children, on the other side



cooking, chess gaming and language lessons for adults. We also made a deal that we are going to ask them first if they want to participate in such activities and make them choose which activities they want to do.

Afternoon

We made a game called "The puking kangaroo" in which we were standing in circle with a person in the center who pointed someone and he and the people near had to make some funny moves. After that we chose a partner and Maik divided us into two different groups and showed us a drawing and he said to a group that it was an old man and to the other group that it was a rat and then we drew that image again with our partner in the other group without talking to each other. It helped us to understand how things change with a different

perspective. Later we talked about discrimination and he gave us a paper where we indicated which kind of discrimination we experienced in life and then we shared it with each other in little groups. After a little break we made the last game of the day with a partner.

Day 4 - Thursday, August 18th

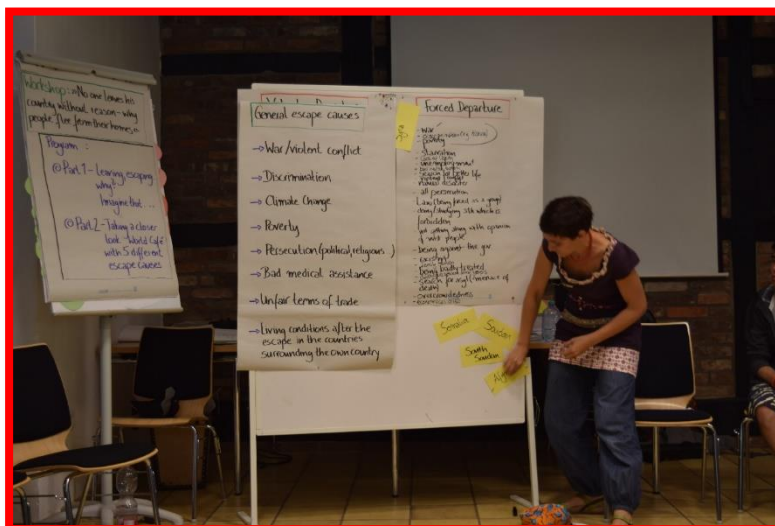


Morning

In the morning, we first talked about the day before and how did we feel. All of us were pretty tired so we played a little game to get some energy. Then we had very interesting and impressive workshop with Maik. Our theme was how to change perspective and try to make the picture how the world

actually looks like. We have been talking about continents and the number of people on the Earth. The main point was to find out how the world society functions. To make it easier we played a game with chairs and the concentration of wealth which everyone enjoyed. After the break, we started discussing about refugees and where are they moving to and from. Everyone discussed and it was really something new for us. Refugees worldwide was also something that we talked about and also we learnt a lot of new things. This workshop helped us to understand the reality, the problems of many people, to realize how they are actually surviving.

Afternoon



After lunch. We had a workshop by Mrs. Agnes as the speaker and the topic was NO ONE LEAVES HIS COUNTRY WITHOUT REASON OR WHY PEOPLE FLEE FROM HOME. First we started with introductions of each other. Then we discussed two concepts, which is voluntary departure and forced departure and the reason in both of them,

we list out the countries under forced departure. After that Mrs. Agnes made a circle and asked everyone to stay inside. She mention some of the reasons for someone to leave his or her country and if a participant agreed with the reason, s/he had to step out of the circle, but if

s/he disagree would remain in the circle. After that she gave information on GENERAL ESCAPE COURSES and listed them one by one and we discussed them.

After the break, we were divided into five groups and each group with a topic of discussion, the five topics were, poverty, political (persecution), climate change, war (violent, conflict), and unfair terms of trade. She also gave examples to each group to follow while discussing, and we should also add any one we know of to the discussion and find the reasons, examples and the solutions to them all. Afterwards we came back together and submitted our points and she talk about them and also gave her opinions. After a short summary and final evaluation which was very positive the work of the day was finished.



Day 5 – Friday, August 19th Morning

In the morning, we were preparing the posters for the refugee camp. All groups made posters for their activities and then Anna with Hiba went to the refugee housing to give the posters to the responsible people there in order to inform them about next week's activities. When they came back they brought good

news for transferred their good impression of the people for the offered activities.

Afternoon

In the afternoon we had a small session with Maik doing the "Walk of Priviledge" role game. Everybody had a role of a person and he or she had to imagine how their life would be if they were this person. Then all stood in a line and Maik was asking questions like "Is your religion accepted by the society? Or can you fall in love with whoever you want? Do you have a proper education?" So if the answer was yes according to your given role you had to walk one step forward from the line and if no you had to stay stable.

Day 6 - Saturday, August 20th

Morning

Breakfast was prepared by the kitchen team and served at 8:30 A.M. We left the house at 10 and walked by foot to the nearest railway station Hämerwald where Anna, one of our co-organizers, bought us our tickets and where we caught the train to Hannover. We arrived at the Zentral Omnibus Bahnhof (ZOB) where we met our other co-organizer Lars in front of the station. He took us down the main street where a lot of the shops are situated. Also in that street was the opera building and a famous clock. After this we caught a tram and went to the local university building, which was a castle previously owned by a wealthy German family. After this we walked through the park beginning from the university building until we reached a street which had a lot of food courts, mostly of Middle Eastern food, where we sat down to have lunch.



Afternoon

After lunch some people stayed in the restaurant and other ones went to the city center. There we separated in small groups, but nobody stayed alone. We agreed the time when we have to be on the train station and some people stayed more in Hannover in order to buy the workshop material for next week and some people went home.

Day 7 Sunday, August 21st

Morning

Sunday was a free day. Some of the participants went to Hannover. Some others decided to sleep until noon. Those who stayed in the house (Sievershausen) ate the lunch together and spent the day by walking around the village.

Afternoon

In the afternoon there was a parade in the center of Sievershausen. That day the village celebrated its anniversary. Those participants who stayed in Sievershausen for the free day went together to watch the parade. We had a lot of fun. People who were participants at the parade threw candies in the crowd so we were collecting little candies. One part of the candies was eaten by us but we took the other part to the refugee accommodation in Lerthe on Monday for the children. In the evening we had a dinner together. Everybody was tired because we made a lot of things during the week. So our night was quite relaxed, we had a great chat together.

Day 8 Monday, August 22nd

In the morning Sebastian and Luara came to visit us and to present us the work of their NGO, called "Flüchtlingsrat".



Firstly they told us the work of their organization, which is a group of experts who helps refugees in different frameworks, such as legal, education and work matters. We focused on different topics during the session: a map of Europe, looking on the different routes taken by refugees, such as the one through Turkey and Greece, the

legal instruments used by the EU and its Asylum system, such as the databases and the legal procedures to seek asylum, we talked about some recent facts and emergencies as the Western Balkan Routes and the EU-Turkey Deal, which is meant to be a program to help especially vulnerable Syrian people seeking for the refugee status and to better organize their journey.

After the workshop we organized the material and the activities for the afternoon at the Refugee accommodation.

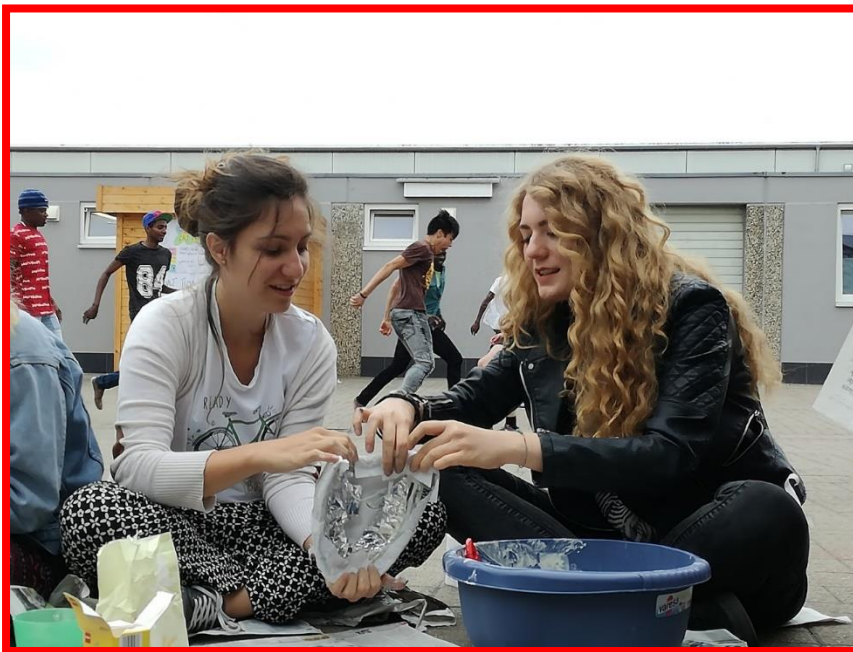
Afternoon

Firstly, we prepared the materials for the workshop. Then, we made the acquaintance of refugees and talked with them about the goal of activities. We organized 3 activities together with refugees in the accommodation: Playing soccer, making masks and painting. A soccer match was organized with refugees during about 2 hours, before that in order to warm up the group played basketball. 12 people between 18 and 30 years old took part. These activities began slowly as we first had to get to know each other and figure out what would be of interest for the other side.

Meanwhile in another workshop, refugees and volunteers painted a wall of a room. A big tree and a map of the world was drawn, a lot of the children were interested in these activities. At the end many masks were made as many woman and children participated.

All in all the activities of the first workshop day were successful, the participants felt pleased by the course of the afternoon and could relate well to the people in the accommodation.

Day 9 Tuesday, August 23rd



Morning

In the morning we had a small reflection in the seminar room about last day's activities in the accommodation and about problems and how to solve them the next days. We realized that people in the camp were more interested in getting to know us and less about the workshops.

Children group organized themselves better and created a programme with different activities for the day in order to motivate children. Then we made a plan of cleaning teams and we cleaned the house for about one hour before launch.

Afternoon



In the afternoon we went to the camp together. It was very easy to start the activities, because people were waiting for us. We made 3 different groups. The first was preparing masks with the children and women. The second was playing football and was doing some other sports activities. The last group finished the painting and made games together. After that there was a small party with the people from the accommodation who wanted to attend.

The children and adults painted together on the wall. We had a really nice time. We left the AWO accommodation at 6 o'clock. As we had established intensive contact with the people in the accommodation it was getting harder and harder to leave.



Day 10 Wednesday, August 24th

Morning

In the morning we had a discussion about the previous day in the AWO refugee accommodation: everyone compared their experiences and feelings as to find a better and more prepared way to deal with the afternoon programme. We discussed the boundaries it is necessary to set when volunteering, and presented the activities we had done the day prior. The painting group was progressing steadily and everyone was really into it: many people had come to leave their marks on the wall. The sport group also had many young people come and play basketball and football, whereas the crafts group had been progressing in making and painting masks, mostly with the participation of women and children. Every volunteer felt the day had gone really nicely, and that the activities went on steadily and with profit and satisfaction. Once the evaluation ended, the different groups got together to discuss the activities for the afternoon.

Afternoon

In the afternoon, we went to the AWO accommodation once again and did activities with the people there. In the beginning, it was more difficult to bring people to activities, it was in fact less crowded than other days. Maybe because we were less organized than other days. Women and children did bracelets and used hot potatoes to make drawings. With young men we played sports as volley ball and basketball (to make a break of football). As we did less creative workshops than before, we took more time to speak with them about their lives here in Germany, about their activities and the resources they have, and some of us thought they look



not so satisfied and that they really enjoyed our visit because it was an occasion for them to see other people. Finally, we started playing theatre with our participant Mojtaba's screenplay and we played two sketches together with all who wanted. Others were watching and turned out to be really

funny!

Day 11 Thursday, August 25th

Morning



The day started with the usual feedback of last day's activities in the camp and impressions of the last day. Then the Hungarian and the French group presented the situation of refugees and asylum seekers in their countries which was very interesting and got the group into a big discussion. Then the different groups got together to gather their material needed for the last workshops.

Then we had lunch.



Afternoon

The afternoon started at 3 in the refugee house with a group of people creating bracelets for everybody and one other group preparing piñatas for the last day with children.

The theater group continued the acting training / theatre play with the help of Mojtaba while the sports team wasn't that productive because of the heat. Then we returned back home at 6.30 pm and the kitchen team started to prepare dinner.



Day 12 Friday, August 26th

Morning

In the morning we had a French breakfast with crepes! We had a discussion about what we did in the camp the day before and think about what we will do in the afternoon with the people at the refugee accommodation. It was suggested from the group to buy ingredients at the city of Lehrte and prepare a goodbye meal with the people there. Then we had some free time until lunch.

Afternoon



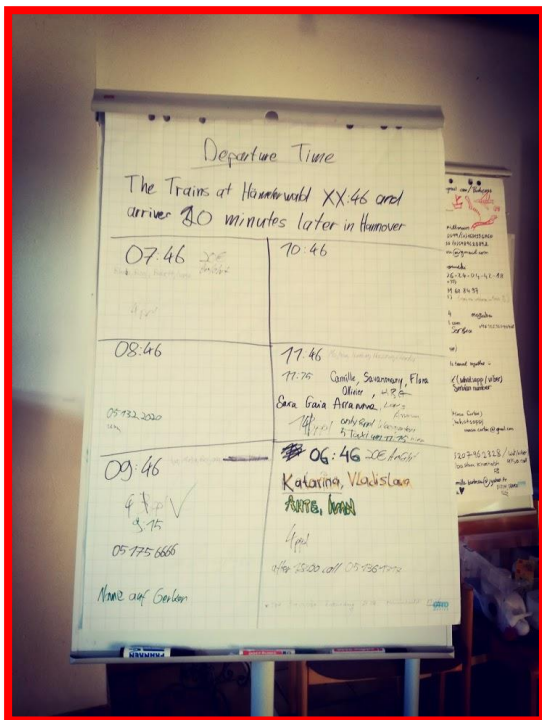
The afternoon at the refugee camp started with a big surprise for us. When we arrived except the Serbian group and two Croatians who came later because of the heat, the people from the camp had prepared for us a big thank you lunch with sweets fruits and drinks. They told us how thankful they are about the days we spent together. Then we made a group photo and we continued with activities. The theater team continued the preparation in the park next to the camp while the others were playing water balloon fights taking advantage of the

summer weather. Later people did a photo-shooting in a photo-booth with the material they had prepared the previous days. People started presenting dances from Iraq and Sudan and for closing the small theater plays were presented in the big yard of the camp while children were breaking the piñatas to take the sweets. Goodbye time arrived and everybody accompanied us until the bus station to go back home. Emotions were high and tears combined with smiles took us back home.

Day 13 Saturday, August 27th

Morning

In the morning we had a discussion about what we did in the accommodation the day before: the last day with the people in the accommodation was very intense and emotional. We did an evaluation about the youth exchange and write different things on a sheet of paper: what we do not like, what we keep with us and what we can think about.



It was remarkable how many participants said that this experience had changed their life particularly the way they were seeing refugees.

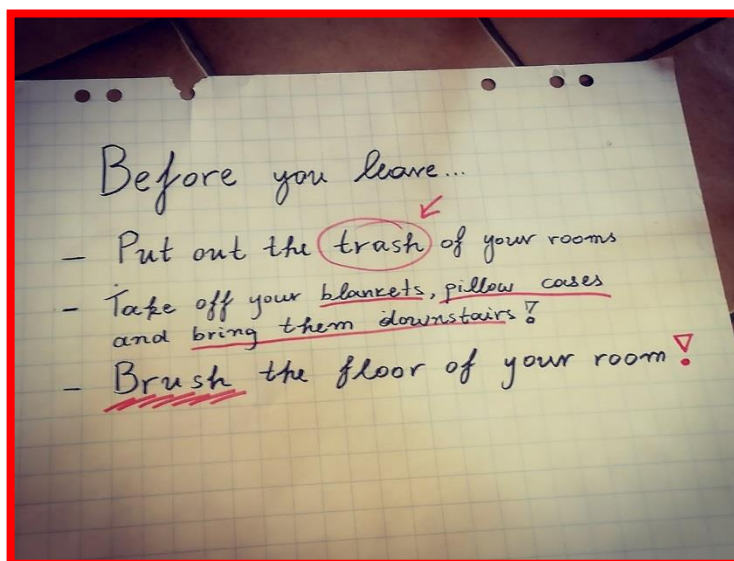
We also discussed what each group would do as follow up when returning home the next day. And last but not we talked about what we had learnt in this youth exchange and through the training and were provided with information on how the YOUTH PASS tool will be used so that later on we would get the official youth pass certificate.

After that an evaluation for the group leaders followed and at the end we all exchanged wishes for the future through the warm back paper game.

Then we organize different teams to do the cleaning, the departure programme and the cooking ingredients for our last night.

Afternoon

The Italian group decided to make homemade pizza so we started preparing the dough and the ingredients. The whole group together cooked and then ate together the last dinner. Then after some drinks everybody went to bed because the next day some people were



departing really early in the morning.

Day 14 Sunday, August 28th

Morning

After breakfast, the people who were left out the house did the last cleaning and the group leaders did the last communication with the local partners for the remaining details.

Then the last group departed to the Hämelerwald Train Station!

Conclusions (as mentioned by participants during the final evaluation round)

The results of the Youth Exchange in Sievershausen were very positive as both participants and organizers stated at the end of the activity. Participants were grateful for the opportunity to learn about concepts of conflict resolution and peace building education such as "Friedensstifter / Peace Maker" and apply them in future activities as well as in their professional and personal lives.




The practice transfer of the learning contents was particularly successful because the participants were at the same time in the role of learners and in the role of youth workers/leaders having to prepare methods and programs for the workshops conducted in the refugee accommodation. Participants felt more and more responsible and motivated to be part of this experience and even developed a sense of ownership.

The visit to the AWO Accommodation Lehrte for a whole week was a big learning experience but also brought up the question whether conducting workshops with refugees for such a short period of time is really making a difference. On the other hand it was highly appreciated by participants that they had the opportunity to establish personal relationships, talking with them rather than about them. It was also seen highly valuable that the group was visited by the refugee council and could get to know the point of view and actions of local activists.

Finally the youth exchange was a great opportunity to make new friends no matter whether they had refugee background or not by living and working together and share experiences with young people from so many different countries and such a variety of social and cultural contexts! This experience proved once again that peace can be achieved by working together!

We would like to thank all participants, partner organizations as well as all supporters for their good cooperation and highly valued contributions!

Annex 1 – Final Evaluation by participants

	Points received				
	4	3	2	1	0
					
My learning growth	38%	52%	10%		
Motivating atmosphere	20%	57%	19%	4%	
My opportunities to participate	73%	23%	4%		
Opportunities for practical application of course`s content	14%	62%	24%		
Time management of a learning process	24%	52%	19%	5%	
Topic selection of learning content	29%	52%	19%		
Methodical structure of the workshops	33%	48%	19%		
Materials (texts, presentations)	38%	33%	24%	5%	

Annex 2 – Participating Organisations

ITALY	YAP ITALY	http://www.yap.it/
FRANCE	SOLIDARITES JEUNEUSSES	http://www.solidaritesjeunes.org/
SERBIA	YOUNG RESEARCHERS SERBIA	http://www.mis.org.rs/vss/pages/sr/naslovna.php
CROATIA	HELP	
HUNGARY	ARTEMISSZIO	http://artemisszio.blog.hu/

Annex 3 – Articles, Links and Social Media

Facebook group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/243194122722936/>

ICJA official facebook page post

<https://www.facebook.com/ICYE.Germany/?fref=ts>

Short Film from Mojtaba Teimuri

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85s_n1KPOIQ

Social Media Posts from Yap-Italy

<http://www.yap.it/news/323/31/Corso-di-formazione-a-Berlino-YAP-Young-Activists-for-Peace-Welcome-Refugees>

<http://www.yap.it/news/329/31/Scambio-giovanile-sulle-tematiche-di-migrazione-in-Germania-18-26-anni>

<https://www.facebook.com/campi.volontariato.yap/photos/a.526888617338023.142480.220805661279655/1339854589374751/?type=3&theater>

<https://twitter.com/yapitalia/status/735500149926039552>

Article by Frank Ehiabhi – Artemisszio Participant

http://artemisszio.blog.hu/2016/09/12/young_activists_for_peace_from_a_refugee_participant_s_perspective

Article by Blanka Marton - Artemisszio Participant

http://artemisszio.blog.hu/2016/09/06/young_activists_for_peace_welcome_refugees_bezamolo_az_ifjusagi_csererol

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