

**UNITED Conference**

**Resisting Violence Against Minorities  
June 30 - July 4, 2000 in Lisboa (P)**

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## 8. UNITED for Intercultural Action

### 1 INTRODUCTION

An answer to the question 'why are we here' was given during the first round of introductions. The delegation of the anti-discrimination office in Berlin-Brandenburg told the participants about the murder of Alberto Adriano, a young father originally from Mozambique in Dessau. Murdered only because he was seen as a 'foreigner', an outsider. If we needed more proof of the sense of working together, we could find it in the events in El Ejido, in Spain, where mob violence broke out in May against the migrant population. The violence was condoned by the police as well as the council of the town. We have only to read the reports of Roma and human rights organisations everywhere in Europe to understand that violence towards Roma is rampant. Last year the UK based organisation Campaign Against Racism and Fascism documented the death of dozens of black and ethnic minority men and women. We need to resist against such intolerance.

UNITED for Intercultural Action brought together **72 participants representing 71 organisations from 25 countries** in Lisboa to speak about ways to resist violence against minorities.

During 5 days participants at the conference exchanged experience and knowledge on methods to resist violence, including education, campaigning and awareness-raising. Resistance traditionally has many forms. The peaceful resistance of Gandhi, the civil disobedience of African-Americans who would sit at 'forbidden' counters in restaurants, teaching Jewish children during the Nazi era when they were not allowed to go to school anymore; these are all forms of resistance. More recently resistance has come up against the treatment of the undocumented or 'sans-papiers'. In our society certain forms of resistance are acceptable, but others are heavily penalised. In France there are already many cases in which citizens have been prosecuted for helping undocumented, by giving them a bed or food.

At the end of our five-day event we have been able to set up lasting links between organisations and individuals that will result in concrete co-operation in the future. Not in the least in the framework of UNITED network campaigns and activities such as the International Day Against Fascism and Anti-Semitism on 9 November, the day of the "Kristallnacht" pogrom in Nazi Germany in 1938.

## 2 RESISTING VIOLENCE AGAINST ROMA

### **PRESENTATION: GITANOS, RROM... YESTERDAY AND TODAY**

#### **Ciprian Necula, Romani CRISS (Romania)**

How many Roma are living in Europe today is not clear as registration takes place only sporadically and is often opposed by Roma themselves. Past experience taught them that registration can have disastrous consequences, such as being easy to find for persecutors. Most scientists agree that Roma originally came from the Indian subcontinent, which is argued on the basis of analysis of the Romani languages. Roma have lived in diaspora for many years and have integrated in different degrees in the surrounding societies, which has resulted in the existence of a variety of cultures, languages and traditions. However there are certain beliefs that are shared, such as the importance of family loyalty and a belief in predestination.

In Roma history there are several important periods of oppression. In the Middle Ages Roma were bought and sold as slaves by the feudal landlords in Central and Eastern Europe. Their status varied widely as some were 'court slaves' and held relatively respected positions, but others were 'land slaves' who were used to do the heaviest work on the fields. It took until the nineteenth century to abolish this slavery, partly under influence of the movement for the abolishment of slavery in Western Europe and the Americas. After the abolition the slave owners were compensated for their financial losses, but the former slaves were left to fend for themselves. They did this in a variety of ways, for example by developing trades such as repairing pots and pans.

The second and most recent period of systematic oppression was the Holocaust. Roma were the only other people, besides the Jews, that was targeted by the national-socialist regime of Germany to be annihilated completely. It is only recently that their fate has become more widely known. Most Roma victims of the Holocaust never received any compensation for their loss. There are only very few monuments to commemorate the fate of an estimated 200.000 to 1.500.000 Roma that died during WW II.

### **WORKING GROUP: DISCRIMINATION OF ROMA**

Imagine a boy and a girl. They are in love. They meet the girl's brother, who obviously approves of the relationship. Then the girl announces that the boy is Roma. What happens? Participants watched a short theatre sketch and discussed what would happen in their country. In Romania many Roma are assimilated. Their neighbours do not know that they are Roma. When people find out about their backgrounds, they react in a hostile manner. Love relationships between Roma and non-Roma are problematic almost everywhere. The Roma societies are often closed and protective societies, which do not easily accept outsiders. By thinking of the prejudice a family of non-Roma could have against a Roma boy, participants could discuss the prejudices that are enshrined in their own cultures in their own countries. They concluded that a solution to conflicts, for example about the relationship between a Roma boy and a non-Roma girl, can only be solved by communication.

The participants exchanged experience about working with Roma and concluded that we should not forget that there are many differences, not only between Roma communities in the different countries, but also between different subcultures in the Roma community.

The working group shortly spoke about the Council of Europe recommendations about Roma. These recommendations include the acknowledgement of each country that the Roma in their country are a national minority. The rights of national minorities are enshrined in the Framework Convention on National Minorities, which has been signed and ratified by many countries. Participants resolved to ask the authorities in their respective countries about the Convention and the recommendations and to push for the recognition of Roma as a national minority.

### **WORKING GROUP: RAISING AWARENESS ON ROMA ISSUES**

After having spoken already several times on the discrimination of Roma, a working group took place that aimed at translating that knowledge into ideas for action. How can we raise awareness of Roma issues?

Participants mainly exchanged experience on their own projects.

These included:

- 'tolerance education' in schools in Hungary
- promoting the attendance of Roma children in school in Greece
- setting up 'civic education' programmes and creating Roma media and monitoring mainstream media in Romania
- campaigning against 'special schools' for Roma children in Czechia ('special schools' is a euphemism for schools aimed at children with a learning disability)
- projects with Roma women in Spain
- integrating Roma into the political process in Romania.

The different projects have different viewpoints of what awareness-raising on Roma issues means. All projects have recognised the value of involving Roma themselves in the carrying out of the projects. This process of involving the Roma community has not been easy. Participants hoped to be in touch after the conference to keep exchanging experience and knowledge.

The working group spoke about several excellent resource sites on internet, such as:

<http://www.patin.com> and <http://www.romnews.com>

## **3 LEARNING FROM THE PAST: RESISTING AGAINST THE EXTREME-RIGHT**

### **WORKING GROUP: THE EXTREME-RIGHT**

The extreme-right, eg. in the form of organised youth gangs, are consciously creating a dangerous situation for anyone who seems 'different' in some of the countries in Europe. In Eastern Germany 'foreigners' are being beaten up on a daily basis.

In some countries the extreme-right and extreme-left are coming closer to each other, especially where nationalism and 'old style communism' are combined.

In some of the countries mainstream right wing parties are being infiltrated by the extreme-right. Where that does not happen physically, the ideas of the extreme-right are being transmitted through mainstream political parties.

The working group came up with the following proposals to counteract the extreme-right in Europe:

#### *Social*

- o we should encourage the participation of young people in associations, to provide an alternative to skinhead groups
- o associations who are working against the extreme-right should contact each other
- o we should organise solidarity with victims of hate crimes and extreme-right violence

#### *Legal*

- o as victims of violence are sometimes badly protected, this is an area of concern
- o there should be possibilities for sanctions against football clubs that allow people to display nazi banners in their stadiums

#### *Educational*

- o we should organise educational programmes for police and authorities as they often do not know enough to effectively counteract extreme-right activity
- o there needs to be a dialogue between non-governmental organisations and institutions to develop effective strategies against the extreme right

#### *Cultural*

- o we should encourage famous artists to take part in the fight against neo-nazi bands and 'white power' music

### **WORKING GROUP: GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDERED ISSUES**

The extreme-right has traditionally targeted a range of minorities in their hate campaigns. One of those groups has been, and still is, the gay and lesbian community.

No question was too dumb or too impolite in this working group. Two role plays were used to facilitate more understanding of participants about homosexuality. The anti-racism movement may be in favour of equal rights for all, we do not always know enough to effectively incorporate the struggle of 'other minorities' into our own. This is why the working group worked on prejudice and on knowledge of the issues that are most important for organisations fighting for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered rights. The issues that were brought up included:

- legal status of homosexual relationships
- right to adopt children
- teaching about homosexuality in schools

The group considered different levels of homophobia: repulsion, pity, tolerance and acceptance. Acceptance still implies that there is something strange that needs accepting. Real positive attitudes could be: support, admiration, appreciation and nurturing.

The contacts made will certainly help the participants to find partner organisations in the future. As one participant put it: how could we work towards equal rights for one group only? We want a just and open world, for all.

#### **CAMPAIGN WORKING GROUP:**

##### **"INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST FASCISM AND ANTI-SEMITISM"**

The campaign around the International Day Against Fascism and Anti-Semitism focuses on intolerance now and in the past. It takes the occasion of the commemoration of the "Kristallnacht" pogrom in Nazi-Germany to reflect on persecution of minorities nowadays and on ways to counteract such intolerance. For many NGOs November is still a far way off. It is difficult to plan ahead already now. Some of the problems that organisations have to organise activities were discussed. Different organisations had different ways of dealing with lack of money, volunteers and public attention.

Ideas for slogans or themes reflected the wish to link the past persecution of Jews and Roma and the recent outbreaks of intolerance. Building bridges between the different communities was found to be necessary.

One idea for a concrete action that was proposed was the organisation of a special church service to commemorate the Roma who perished during World War II. Participants also reflected on the possibility of giving the campaign a more positive outlook.

#### **4 RESISTING VIOLENCE AGAINST REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS**

##### **PRESENTATION: WORK OF NGOS IN EUROPEAN BORDER REGIONS**

**Mar Correcher Rigau, Juventudes Socialistas Espana (Spain)**

**Miguel Pajares, Foro para la Integracion Social de los Inmigrantes (Spain)**

**Helmut Dietrich, Forschungsstelle Flucht und Migration (Germany)**

Mar explained the situation in Spain. Spain at first glance seems to be an unusual place for violence against immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. In school Spanish children are taught that Spain has hosted many different cultures and has a mixed culture as a result. And of course Spain has been a country of emigration for a long time, so the need to move from your country to another is not unknown. However, there is a distinct trend towards intolerance.

Spain has become the gate-keeper for Europe at its southern border. The border has been made more and more difficult to cross. People continue to cross anyway, as the economic differences between Africa and Europe have not lessened. Europe is still portrayed as an economic paradise where people can live in liberty.

Two small Spanish enclaves are located in Northern Africa; Ceuta and Melilla. These enclaves are the closest piece of Europe for many Africans, but as they are not physically connected to mainland Europe the road also stops right there. People are stuck and can move no further. Until recently refugees had found a place to live in a camp in a park without appropriate facilities. Authorities have now yielded to the idea that the problem is not going away by itself and have built a more humane shelter in a temporary residence centre for immigrants.

From time to time the Spanish government gives permission for a group of immigrants to go to the mainland and be 'legalised'. The Alien's Law that was approved by the last government clearly gave that possibility as well. However, that law is being reviewed and the new draft takes away the option of legalisation.

Miguel is working with a variety of organisations in the Foro para la Integración Social de los Inmigrantes in Spain. He explained that the current Alien's Law is very important, not only for Spain, but for the rest of Europe as well. The law could be used as an example for other countries. It is not perfect, but it is unique in the sense that it gives the possibility of coping with clandestine migration in a realistic way. It gives the possibility of 'legalisation' for all who can show that they have been residing on Spanish territory for two years. In the current law all inhabitants of Spain have certain rights to basic social provisions. In short it mitigates the existence of 'first class' and 'second class' citizens. Non-governmental organisations in Spain will fight against the review of the law and a change towards a much more restrictive policy, but they need all the solidarity they can get.

Helmut works in another area of Europe: the Czech-German and the Polish-German border. There are certain parallels between the situation in Spain and in Germany. These countries have become the watch-dogs for an ever more restrictive migration policy. These policies have an effect on public opinion, which is becoming more and more aggressive towards anyone seen as a 'foreigner' or an 'immigrant'.

Until now much of the struggle against racism has concentrated on repression in Germany. Helmut feels that repression will not be the answer.

Helmut took us on a journey in our imagination. Let's say we are under a dictatorship in Portugal (not that much of a fiction not so long ago) and there is no work in the country. There is a barrier erected all along the frontier, so it is almost impossible to get out. We ask a good friend to help us, as he knows a way to smuggle people out of the country. The plan unfortunately is aborted and we look for other ways. Our friend finds someone who will transport us, but for a lot of money. We arrive illegally in Germany. We cannot legalise our situation. We cannot work for legal wages. We have to hide from the police. If they arrest you, there is a law that you can be put in prison for 3 years and the acquaintances that helped us cross the borders can be arrested and put in prison for 10 years.

Of course this is not imagination. It is the situation of many who flee their home country and enter Germany through Central and Eastern Europe.

The reaction to the increase of people seeking a safe haven in Germany has been one of militarisation and repression. The new enemy after the Cold War is no longer a state, but an individual: the refugee, the migrant, the 'illegal'. After 1989 over 10.000 extra policemen were stationed at the border. It is the highest concentration of police anywhere in Europe. If EU citizens illegally cross a border, they have to pay a small fine. If a Romanian or an Angolan does the same, he can get up to 3 years in prison without any trial. Only smugglers are given a trial, not 'illegals'. There are very little basic fundamental rights that are not violated in the case of 'illegals', they have no right to an appeal, to legal defence,

to a phone call, to medical and social help. When there is a readmission agreement with the country from where they enter Germany, they will be rejected immediately without the right to speak to family and friends that may be waiting in Germany.

The concept of defence of the borders has changed from 'borderline' to 'border area'. This change of concept has had as a result that local people are involved in checking the border. They can phone a special phone number to denounce suspected migrants. This idea of 'us' and 'them' and the police guarding the difference creates a dangerous mindset. This 'security' concept creates fear between neighbours. We need to ask ourselves if this is what we want. If not, we need to resist.

### **WORKING GROUP: NEO-COLONIALISM**

The working group defined neo-colonialism as the misbehaviour of Western countries regarding migrants and the way migrants are viewed. Neo-colonialism also encompasses the actions of Western countries in the rest of the world on an economic and political level. Neo-colonialism refers to the unequal position of the West and the way this position is used to force other countries to do as they are told. The view of the other countries translates in the view of migrants in Europe. They are very closely connected.

A few examples that summarise the results of such a neo-colonialist view of migrants:

- a work permit without residency rights prevents migrants from really contributing to the host society
- not using the expertise of migrants is wasting human capital
- readmission agreements (such as through the new Lomé Convention) that link migrants' work abroad with the economic policies of their original countries. European governments are working together with non-democratic governments in 'Third World' countries to more effectively deport those migrants they do not want anymore.

This view of migrants wastes a lot of potential and puts a lot of stress on migrants who are already in a difficult situation.

Some of the recommendations of the working group were:

- We should change the administrative structures to give more opportunities to 'newcomers' to integrate.
- We should give possibilities for 'newcomers' to get an education to develop this source of human capital.
- Non-governmental organisations should develop a multi-faceted view of lobbyism. Lobbyism should not only be focused on politicians, but also on the general public.

Being part of the society where you live cannot be made dependent on your citizenship! Equality of rights for all is of utmost importance.

### **WORKING GROUP: FREE CIRCULATION / FREE INSTALLATION**

The right of free movement cannot possibly be confined to goods and capital alone. Where goods and capital travel, people will follow. Migration is a fundamental right, as defined in the UN human rights texts. In campaigning for the freedom of movement for all we should discern two levels. Firstly we should work for free circulation and free installation inside Europe. This would entail



campaigning for legalisation of 'illegal' migrants. This would mean as well that we campaign against deportation and against detention centres for migrants and refugees. Secondly we should campaign for freedom of movement on a global scale. We should try to sensitise the public opinion to the fact that migration is a result of global problems, that are partly created by our own governments. Our countries need to recognise that they are immigration countries already, or that they will become an immigration country in the near future. This background should be clear to those who are working with migrants and refugees in their job, such as the immigration service personnel.

## **5 MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES: EDUCATION AGAINST PREJUDICE**

### **WORKING GROUP: CHILDREN AND PREJUDICE**

Society as it is now is dominated by institutions that create prejudice. The school system transmits prejudice to schoolchildren. Some suggestions were made to counteract this transmission of prejudice.

- Children should be seen as perpetrators and victims at the same time.
- We need urgent action on education, the European anti-racism movement has not discussed this properly yet.
- We should create a forum for experts and community leaders to produce guidelines for education against prejudice.

Participants urged the European organisations present to take up this issue and consider organising a conference or other activity especially around education against prejudice.

### **WORKING GROUP: ETHNIC CONFLICT AND MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES**

It is an illusion to think that Europe has any state that is not multicultural. Through the movement of peoples during the preceding centuries, all of our European states harbour different cultures. The way other cultures are seen is different in Western and Central and Eastern Europe. In some societies an open hatred exists towards other cultures, almost a war-like situation. In other countries people are frightened by the influx of other cultures. What these situations have in common is the lack of education of the general public. In societies that live in war, or almost in a war, separating communities can not be the answer. However, the existing hatred should not be denied. It should be recognised and dealt with. The aim should not be a multicultural society, that is only what exists already. We should aim for an intercultural society in which communities interact. A basis for such interaction is the exchange of information. Assimilation is not an answer either. Societies should not aim to wipe out differences, but should aim to work towards 'diversity-management' and integration.

People who are living in societies with different cultures often have a double identity. Their position may prove to be key in integrating different cultures into one society. We should consider the special problems of young people living in two worlds. Some of the good practices that were explained were exchanges between young people and governmental programmes to stimulate the

integration of newcomers. This last method was not acceptable to some of the participants, when it is forced on people by the state.

### **WORKING GROUP ON GOOD PRACTICE: SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD**

Show Racism the Red Card is a project that takes the passion for football as a unifying factor between different people. The project supports the running of special programmes in schools or other educational settings with a video. It shows famous footballers explaining how racism influenced them and their sport. The video is accompanied by a package of education material which stimulates discussion.

Professional football has often been associated with racism. But racism is even more dangerous for the amateurs, who are not protected in the changing rooms and at the bus stop. They suffer a lot of abuse every time they play.

Participants of the working group discussed on a quote from the video, which was taken from the philosophy of Malcolm X: "racism should be fought by all means necessary". Although everyone agreed that black people should stand up for themselves, there was disagreement about how far someone may go in self-defense.

The activities in the framework of the football project only make sense when they are part and parcel of wider anti-racism activities. Show Racism the Red Card is very conscious of this need. Participants agreed that using football in the fight against racism is very useful. They wondered how women could be more a part of this. The video as it is only shows men.

### **WORKING GROUP ON GOOD PRACTICE: HOME FOR PEACE AND NON-VIOLENCE**

The working group concentrated on the efforts of the organisation "Home for Peace and Non-Violence". A video illustrated their work. The work of Home involves people as individuals and engages them in solving refugee problems. Home works a lot with refugee artists. They have the possibility of being creative and working on their own problems. The discussion in the working group also centred around the situation in Afghanistan as an illustration of how the international community sometimes ignores a dangerous situation, when it is not politically opportune to speak about it. The group concluded that the integration of refugees depends both on the ability and willingness of a refugee to integrate in the surrounding society and the willingness of the surrounding society to let 'strangers' in.

### **CAMPAIGN WORKING GROUP: EUROPEAN-WIDE ACTION WEEK AGAINST RACISM**

Racism was defined by participants as a product of discrimination and discrimination as a product of prejudice. This idea was integrated in ideas for campaigning.

The role of the media was discussed. Should we use the mainstream media or create our own? The participants concluded we need to work with them, not only to promote our activities, but to educate them on issues connected to racism as well.

Participants considered past efforts and concluded that the situation is widely different from country to country.

Participants suggested that all organisations could give short reports of the local situation regarding racism to UNITED, who then could distribute this information. The material that organisations produce should be made available, to copy and translate for use in other countries.

The internet could be used to organise a chat between all the organisations that are involved in the preparation of the anti-racism week in March 2001.

UNITED's campaign material was appreciated. Participants hoped to be able to have new material to use next year.

## **6 SELF-ORGANISATION OF BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITIES**

### **PRESENTATION: 'SANS-PAPIERS' IN PORTUGAL**

#### **Mouhameth Seck, Olho Vivo (Portugal)**

Portugal is on the brink of developing a new foreigner policy. The government is moving away from a purely restrictive policy towards a policy in which migrants are selectively admitted to the country. As everywhere in Europe, Portugal needs migrant workers, but is afraid to admit migrants permanently. A work permit without residency rights does not give a migrant the rights to family reunification, it means that families are split up. Mouhameth, who has been working with Olho Vivo in Portugal since some time explained how these policies only seem to make life easier for migrants. People who are in Portugal now seem to be accepted only because of their work force, while there are good reasons for people to come to Europe. Work is only one of the factors. Europe has a responsibility for part of the problems that exist in Africa, Asia, Latin America etc. If Europe promotes the idea of Human Rights everywhere in the world, we need to take a look at how well Human Rights are respected in Europe itself. The position of migrants and undocumented is not in respect of basic fundamental rights.

Mouhameth works especially with the undocumented or 'sans-papiers'. He forcefully reminded us of the need to see people as people and to fight for equal rights, even for those without the official right to stay. The movement for equal rights needs to be also a movement of the people involved, not just for them.

Undocumented people need to be supported in their struggle. They are already forming their own organisations in many European countries. If migrants and other Europeans unite, we should be able to make a difference!

Mouhameth proposed to organise a one day general strike in Europe, in support of migrants and equal rights.

### **PRESENTATION: FIGHT FOR EQUAL RIGHTS - POLITICAL POWER**

#### **Ashok Viswanathan, Operation Black Vote (Great-Britain)**

Operation Black Vote aims to introduce the view of black voters in Britain in three ways. The first is by getting black people to register to vote. The second is by lobbying politicians to represent the ideas of black communities in Britain and the second is by promoting young black people to take part in political life. This campaign has been very successful in the last years.

In Great-Britain there is a system in which politicians are voted for a specific county or district. These politicians depend very directly on the votes of their

constituents. Operation Black Vote organises meetings of the politicians, of all parties, with black communities from the area the politicians represent. Through organising such meetings, the impression politicians get of the community is that it will be actively involved. This makes the community more powerful. At a community meeting politicians come to listen and to explain what their ideas are to solve the problems of the people who attend the meeting. People can make up their own minds about voting. But it does not stop there. Politicians are regularly asked to come and speak with the community after they are elected. The other scheme that Ashok Viswanathan spoke about introduces young black men and women to politics by arranging interesting internships. These young men and women are selected for their knowledge of issues that are key in the black communities in Britain, not because of a prior involvement in politics. The methods used by Operation Black Vote are mainly targeted at black and ethnic minorities who already have the right to vote. However, the organisation has been working with other organisations in Europe of minorities who do not have that right yet. Operation Black Vote has developed a methodology of influencing politics in a way that reinforces the idea of democracy and citizenship. It is especially interesting to contrast this way of influencing politics in a generalised way, with initiatives that promote voting for specific candidates because of their ethnic background.

#### **WORKING GROUP: NETWORKING OF NGOS WITH 'SANS-PAPIERS'**

The working group on networking of NGOs and 'sans-papiers' exchanged their experience of working together. Non-governmental organisations often lack experience and knowledge to work with 'sans-papiers'. However, the undocumented in Europe can not win their battle on their own, they need allies. NGOs that want to work with the 'sans-papiers' movement should take into account the vulnerable position of 'sans-papiers'. When they go on a demonstration they run a much bigger risk, as they might be arrested and deported. 'Sans-papiers' often work for a boss who exploits their vulnerable situation. Setting up and maintaining an organisation and campaigning for political rights often becomes impossible after a while, when a 'sans-papiers' needs to earn money to live.

A big problem at the moment is that people are deported without anyone knowing of their arrival. People are being kept isolated from the host society and NGOs have no possibility of contacting them. Campaigns against deportation rely heavily on neighbours and schoolmates of the people that are threatened with deportation. If people are not allowed to have contact to these 'normal people' campaigning becomes more and more difficult.

One of the most important tasks of more 'accepted' NGOs is to spread knowledge on the reason why there are 'sans-papiers' in Europe. They should both speak about the reason people have to leave their countries and the reasons why they do not get the right papers or why they sometimes lose the right to stay. People are often made 'illegal'. They often come to Europe in a legal manner.

The working group spoke about campaigning for regularisation and about the proposal Sek made to promote a one-day strike in support of equal rights.

### **WORKING GROUP ON GOOD PRACTICE: COMMUNITY RADIO**

The working group took the example of Radio Robin Hood in Finland and discussed the possibilities and problems of setting up community radios. Community radio is an excellent tool to heighten the awareness of communities, to empower oppressed groups and to create a platform to discuss issues that are sometimes neglected by more mainstream media. Important characteristics of such radios are independence, non-profit making status, community ownership and control and community participation. Unfortunately this kind of media has a problem with getting sufficient resources, both human and financial. Possible solutions to this continuing problem were suggested: training in intercultural management, cooperation with mainstream media, developing social projects, finding funding from local government, asking membership fees, renting air time or studio time, etc.

It was felt to be important to focus on specific groups, such as migrants, refugees, disabled, gays/lesbians, young people.

Community radios were felt to be particularly valuable in developing programs such as equality programs, education, training of trainers and intercultural awareness.

### **WORKING GROUP ON GOOD PRACTICE: ADICE IN ROUBAIX**

Roubaix is a small town in the North of France. It has a very large percentage of population with a migrant background. Since the mining and textile industries have gone into a slump, there is a lot of unemployment. The local authorities try to counteract this. ADICE (Association for development of citizens and European initiatives), the organisation presenting their project, has developed ways to involve young people of migrant origin in their work. They try to help people to find a job more easily. The working group discussed the moral dilemma of choosing to help people fit better in the system or changing the system. It may be more helpful for people in the short term to fit into the system. But we could ask ourselves if the system will ever fully accept the participation of especially black and ethnic minorities. If not, then we should consider how to change the system itself.

ADICE has researched the factors that stop young migrant women to get the jobs that they should have according to their age and education. The idea is to widen this idea and do the same kind of research in other countries as well.

### **WORKING GROUP: VIOLENCE AGAINST MINORITY WOMEN**

An unscheduled working group on violence against minority women took place. Participants exchanged the experience they had had in their work with violence against minority women. There are different kinds of violence that affect minority women: in their families, in the society or community where they were born, in the majority society in Europe. The last kind also includes state violence, such as the strict rules for family reunification that do not allow women to be independent from their husbands after migrating to a country. The position of women in Afghanistan was explained by an Afghan participant. In Afghanistan women do not have the right to study, to work, to receive medical assistance, to go out unaccompanied or to show themselves and their faces.

One of the questions that was discussed was: "Do we have the right to judge someone's traditions". Participants wondered about the reason why tradition so

often is used at the convenience of men. Women always should have the right to decide about their own futures, regardless of their religion or tradition.

Education will be key to prevent or combat violence against women. This education should be aimed at men, at women and at children. Men should be an integral part of the fight for equal rights for women too. The working group also spoke about violence against lesbians.

The group could not discuss much on the topic of gender related reasons for fleeing, about women refugees and about trafficking of women. But the group would promote this topic for another working group, at another conference.

## 7 AND....

### **PRESENTATION: HOW TO GET FUNDING AND HOW TO WORK WITHOUT...**

**Paula Assubuji, Heinrich Böll Foundation (Germany)**

**Arno de la Tour, Intercooperação e Desenvolvimento (INDE) (Portugal)**

**Sinisa Volarevic, Grupa 484 (Yugoslavia)**

Paula Assubuji of the the **Heinrich Böll Foundation** introduced their work. The Foundation is linked to the Green Party in Germany. In Germany there is a system in which political parties get money from the government to work on political education and the development of political opinions. The Greens used to give this money directly to projects. Their policy has changed however and now the Heinrich Böll Foundation builds political partnership and co-operation. The idea is to exchange experience and gain knowledge, not just to give money. Some activities of the Foundation include social education programmes, political meetings, information/study trips, political network building and training for activists and multipliers. Paula is the person in charge of projects connected with migration. She spoke also about the changing 'funding climate'. It is getting harder to find money for local initiatives. States have a tendency to fund bigger organisations who grow even bigger as they receive more funding. Smaller organisations disappear.

**Grupa 484** is a small NGO that has worked for years in a very unstable situation. It was created in Belgrade as a response to the influx of refugees during the war. The group was created by activists of the Belgrade Anti War Action. They started to help 484 refugee families, which is the origin of the name. The organisation has had to specialise in working with very little or no money and has had to be extremely flexible to accommodate the changes in political climate. The group is self-organising, the people that the group works with are also involved in the projects. Ordinary people get help to take charge of their own lives and their own problems.

In Belgrade the phenomenon of NGOs is relatively new. Until the 1990s there were no NGOs. The first NGOs were peace initiatives. These organisations are viewed with suspicion as people do not know what civil society is or could be. NGOs started to work without funding, without knowledge or experience about simple project management. The number of donors in Serbia is extremely small. There are a few more international donors that are active in Kosovo, but not in Serbia itself. The work of NGOs is made even more difficult by the lack of political

stability. There are no appropriate laws dealing with the creation of independent organisations.

NGOs work between this particularly volatile political situation on the one hand and donors who want long-term planning on the other hand. Budgeting is impossible in a country where the inflation is as high as it is in Serbia. Flexibility is absolutely key. This flexibility is needed from the donors as well. The strategy of Grupa 484 has been to have many projects at the same time with each a very small budget. This allows for financial flexibility. They have built a co-operation with foreign NGOs that raise money in their respective countries.

When there are no funds at all, the group has built an internal capacity for mobilising voluntary work. They have found that including people themselves makes another source of voluntary work available. They have appealed to the local community to help in every way they can, however small. And they have contacted donors to ask them to deflect some money from projects that were already sponsored to new activities. This happened for example when large groups of people came from Kosovo after the bombings.

Arno de la Tour from **INDE** presented a short course in grant application. He started by stating which questions are essential to answer when you are preparing to ask for money:

- who are you?
- what do you want to do?
- can the donors trust you?
- do you have a reliable accounting system?

The first question is obvious. If you want to explain to others who you are, you should be very clear on that yourself. The second question is about what kind of funding you want. There is a difference between trying to find money for a project or for your organisation or to create a paid job for yourself. This last option is not shameful, sometimes it is not possible to continue to perform a task voluntarily and you need to find the money to convert it into a paid job. The application you make should include a clear description of your activity. You should be realistic about what you can do. If possible, you should take 'trends' into account. If there is a lot in the papers about a specific kind of problem that is part of your project, put emphasis on that specific kind of problem.

Surprisingly donors are often looking for projects. There are many foundations that do not have enough projects and need new ones. In this case it makes sense to get to know the people in charge. They may find it harder to say 'no' to someone they know. You have to be careful about the image you portray in all contacts with a sponsor.

If in any way possible, you should aim to use more donors for a project. This provides a safeguard against becoming too dependent on one particular sponsor. In fact, many donors, including the European Union require co-financing.

In the discussion that took place after the presentations participants discussed the role of international solidarity, especially when there is not much of a civil society in the country where an NGO is active. The organisations in Serbia, for example, are constantly harrassed by the police. Their books have been confiscated by the financial controllers and their activists are being arrested on a daily basis.

NGOs should think about where there is an overlap between their goals and the goals of the funder. They should also reflect on the evaluation of their project, to ensure a certain quality control.

#### **WORKING GROUP: UN WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM**

The UN World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance will take place in September 2001 in South-Africa. It will be preceded by several regional preparatory conferences. The European conference is called "All Different-All Equal: From Principles to Practice" and will take place 11-13 October in Strasbourg, preceded by an NGO Forum 9-11 October. UNITED is closely involved with the preparations and especially with the InterConference, creating a chance for those unable to afford to take part to contribute and follow the proceedings through the internet.

The working group discussed the NGO preparations for these conferences, that have not yet started in some countries. This is very unfortunate since the outcome has been prepared for the largest part already beforehand. Strategic coordination of the NGO lobby is very necessary.

More information on the official conference and on the internet conference or 'InterConference' that will be taking place simultaneously can be found on [www.icare.to](http://www.icare.to).

#### **WORKING GROUP: RESEARCH ON THE AMSTERDAM TREATY**

One working group concentrated on the Amsterdam Treaty and its repercussions for the rights of minorities in Europe. On the one hand there is of course the new Article 13, which creates certain possibilities for community legislation against discrimination. On the other hand there are very restrictive ideas of migration and asylum politics.

The working group especially considered the concept of European citizenship and citizenship rights. Third Country Nationals should have European citizenship rights, which should guarantee them at least the fundamental human rights. Any harmonisation of migration and asylum policies should be carefully examined to see if it is actually harmonising on the lowest common denominator. Harmonisation should improve the rights of migrants, not deteriorate them even more. The most important issue at European level in this framework is the right to family reunification. This right is being reduced to a favour given to a selected group of migrants. NGOs should work for a more positive view of family reunification. Integration will be promoted by the possibility for migrants to live as full citizens, with the same rights as other citizens.

#### **SOCIAL EVENTS / PROGRAM IN TOWN**

With the help of the local partners a possibility was found to visit a project in town and eat there. The food was typical Cap-Verdian, but the atmosphere was purely 'football' as the finals of Euro 2000 were watched on the television in the restaurant. Other social events included an info market, intercultural snacks and an intercultural evening with amazing contributions by almost all participants.



## **OPEN FORUM: AFGHANISTAN AND GERMANY**

Participants had a chance to take the floor and share their concerns on the last day of the conference. The situation in Afghanistan and in Germany were presented.

Participants were told about the tragedy of Afghanistan. One of the participants was a recently escaped Afghan refugee who summarised the situation in the country with a few well chosen words aimed at involving everyone present in raising awareness of the regime and the reason why people leave from there.

On several occasions during the conference, participants had been alerted to the imprisonment of Harald Glöde in Germany. Harald has been jailed for belonging to a so-called 'criminal organisation' on the word of one witness. No proof has been provided as yet, but Harald has been in jail since December 1999. The anti-racism movement believes the arrest had more to do with his activities in support of 'illegals' than with a real suspicion.

## **THANKS TO**

We owe a lot of thanks to Rede Anti-Racista, SOS Racismo and INDE who helped organise the technical facilities of the conference. This conference was prepared by an international preparatory group, that included Solidarité Sans Frontières (CH) and Youth Action for Peace (RO) and the above mentioned organisations. This conference was sponsored by the European Union. We also thank the Instituto Português da Juventude for hosting the conference and the Heinrich Böll Foundation for making the participation of Central and Eastern European participants possible.

## **8 UNITED for Intercultural Action**

UNITED for Intercultural Action

European network against nationalism, racism, fascism and in support of migrants and refugees

Racism, nationalism, fascism, discrimination, asylum policies... all of them have a European dimension even though they often look like pure national issues. Reports from all over Europe demonstrate the increasing dangers facing migrants, refugees and ethnic minorities. Often these dangers are increased by undemocratic intergovernmental decisions like the Schengen Treaty. Strangely enough, racist and fascist organisations have strong European links from Portugal to Russia, from Sweden to Italy. Fortress Europe needs to be fought at local, regional and European levels - it cannot be fought on one level alone.

Linked through UNITED, hundreds of organisations from a wide variety of backgrounds, from all European countries, work together on a voluntary basis. They base their cooperation on common actions and

shared activities on a mutual respect.

UNITED is and will remain independent from all political parties, organisations and states, but seeks an active co-operation with other anti-racist initiatives in Europe.

Through the UNITED network organisations meet each other, work on common actions and share information. Europe-wide action weeks, campaigns and such are planned and discussed on UNITED conferences. Like-minded organisations find each other on such conferences and work together on specific projects on specific topics. The workers in the secretariat are in constant contact with the network organisations, ensuring that information and proposals for action are transmitted rapidly. Information is received from more than 2300 organisations and mailings are sent out to about 2500 groups in Europe.

If you want to get involved... Discuss the ideas and aims of the UNITED network within your organisation. Let us know that you would like to join or receive information. And add us to your mailing list!

More information you can find at [www.unitedagainstracism.org](http://www.unitedagainstracism.org) or write to [info@unitedagainstracism.org](mailto:info@unitedagainstracism.org).

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