



DJS/ILP(2007)7

Strasbourg, 22 May 2006

Intercultural Language Programme

Language and intercultural learning

Two intercultural courses in Arabic language and culture

2 – 28 July 2007

Rabat, Morocco

and

Cairo/Alexandria, Egypt (TBC)

Call for applications

www.coe.int/youth



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Two intercultural courses in Arabic language and culture 2007¹

The Directorate of Youth and Sport's Intercultural Language Programme

If the Intercultural Language Programme has been a part of the Directorate of Youth and Sport's (DYS) programme of activities since the beginning, it is without doubt because foreign language skills and intercultural competence are essential preconditions for youth mobility and for the development of international activities. The absence of language skills can be a barrier not only to youth mobility but also to the participation of young people, one of the key priorities of the DYS's activities.

Over the years, our intercultural language courses have developed into real training courses integrating language learning, intercultural learning and the discovery of European youth work. The Intercultural Language Programme has become an essential instrument in youth policy development at European level and responds to the specific needs of youth organisations wishing to develop their youth activities at European level.

Intercultural and interreligious dialogue

During their 3rd Summit (Warsaw, 15 and 16 May 2005), the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe declared they would systematically encourage intercultural and inter-faith dialogue based on universal human rights, as a means of promoting awareness, understanding, reconciliation and tolerance, as well as preventing conflicts and ensuring integration and the cohesion of society. As such, they committed themselves to a new dialogue between Europe and its neighbouring regions, including the southern Mediterranean.

On their side, the European Ministers responsible for Youth, meeting in Budapest for their 7th Conference in September 2005, decided that in order to prevent violence motivated by racism and intolerance, governments should promote education for intercultural dialogue as a key dimension of youth policy and youth work policy, and support the development of international youth exchange programmes.

Based on the decisions of the 3rd Summit, a strategy document on the Council of Europe's action in favour of intercultural dialogue was drawn up and adopted at the Conference of Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs (Faro, 27 and 28 October 2005). They rejected the idea of a clash of civilisations and confirmed their conviction that increased commitment to cultural co-operation – in the broad sense of the term – and intercultural dialogue will benefit peace and international stability in the long term, including with respect to the threat of terrorism. They committed themselves to working towards a true and open dialogue among cultures on the basis of mutual understanding and respect.

In addition, the Council of Europe has launched a White Paper on “integrated policies for the management of cultural diversity through intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention”. The idea of this White Paper is based on the idea that intercultural dialogue is one means, amongst others, to contribute to the democratic management of (cultural) diversity within European societies and Europe's relations with neighbouring regions, as well as an important contribution to conflict prevention.

¹ The Secretariat is currently exploring the possibility of organising an intercultural course in Arabic language and culture in Egypt in either Cairo or Alexandria.

Young people and interculturality

Although it is often stated that the history of Europe has been shaped by the exchanges and interaction between peoples and cultures across the Mediterranean sea, what is less obvious at present is to know to what extent and in which ways and in which spirit such exchanges will happen in the future. Young people are often confronted with obstacles to mobility and youth exchanges that are the result of typical forms of xenophobia, prejudice and ignorance about one other. Yet young people are crucial for the future of Euro-Mediterranean co-operation.

As far as the fight against prejudice and xenophobia is concerned, during a seminar on Islamophobia and its consequences on young people (European Youth Centre Budapest, June 2004), the participants tried to identify strategies and approaches to prevent Islamophobia and its consequences on young people and propose measures for political and educational action aimed at increasing understanding and respect for religious diversity among young people. Amongst the recommendations drafted by the seminar, the participants made the following requests: to organise intercultural and inter-faith exchanges; to co-operate to create permanent and sustainable networks; that non formal education be a tool to prevent Islamophobia and related discriminations; actively support networking and co-operation between different communities; to recognise and underline the importance of the contribution of Islam to European civilisation.

Why is the Council of Europe organising these courses in Arabic language and culture?

In order to be able to take part in intercultural and inter-faith dialogue, to promote international understanding, and to fight against all forms of racism and xenophobia, young people today must develop their linguistic competencies, in particular those needed for youth work and international co-operation. If genuine communication and co-operation are to exist, language teaching should also contribute to an active, critical understanding of each person's own culture and of others' culture.

In organising these courses in Arabic language and culture, the DYS hopes to promote the setting up of links and networks amongst young Europeans wishing to learn the Arabic language which is the language of so many of the Mediterranean countries, and young people of Arabic origin in order to promote intercultural and inter-faith dialogue, as well as to fight the prejudices which result from ignorance of others.

Learning a language differently: more than just a language course:

The DYS intercultural language courses, as well as providing for the development of language and intercultural competences adapted to youth work, encourage an interest in areas other than just language and combine also history, politics, culture, ideology, geography, religion and everyday life in another country. This is the intercultural side of the courses. These courses therefore allow participants to undertake multicultural and multiracial exchanges and to attempt to develop this international understanding and co-operation.

This is achieved through:

- classroom sessions using a variety of materials and activities relevant to youth work and the participants' needs and interests; these sessions provide for practice in the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as for developing knowledge of grammar and vocabulary;
- periods of individual study for practising specific skills and consolidating learning;
- workshops and activities on intercultural learning and international youth work;
- contact with local youth organisations to discover youth work at local level, and ;

- a programme of visits.

The various course elements aim to provide:

- communication skills in the target language adapted to youth work activities, as well as with the skills to continue learning the language afterwards;
- intercultural learning, which happens whenever a group of people from mixed cultures and linguistic backgrounds come together, but also through interaction with the local community thanks to activities organised with local youth or cultural associations for example;
- a better understanding of others.

The success of the course depends on participants' initiative and the responsibility they take for their learning.

The aim of the Intercultural Language Programme is to enable members of youth organisations to become more active in international youth work by promoting intercultural dialogue, international understanding and improving their language and communication skills in the context of European youth work.

For these courses in Arabic language and culture, the specific objectives are the following:

- to provide participants with general and specific classic Arabic language knowledge and skills or develop existing ones for those who are not beginners (using themes and terminology linked to youth work);
- promote intercultural and inter-faith dialogue between young people of different backgrounds;
- enable participants to discover the political, social and cultural life of the host country;
- familiarise participants with the different aspects of youth work at local, national and international levels;
- enable the development of joint projects and promote the setting up of networks between European and Moroccan/Egyptian youth organisations;
- encourage youth mobility, intercultural behaviour and multilingualism in youth work.

Applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that classic Arabic is not the language spoken in everyday life in Morocco and Egypt. Therefore, the exchanges with the people of Rabat and Cairo/Alexandria will not necessarily be in the language learnt during class, hence it is preferable to know French (NB English is spoken in Egypt). However, the participants will use the language learnt during classes to understand newspapers, publicity hoardings, posters, etc. There will be beginners classes in the local Moroccan/ Egyptian dialect.

Who are these courses for?

The intercultural language course is an opportunity for youth organisations to provide training to their members for the development of international youth work, and in particular to develop youth projects with Moroccan/Egyptian youth NGOs. Therefore, candidates have to be nominated by an organisation which wishes to establish co-operation or contacts with Moroccan/Egyptian associations, and which will justify their choice on the basis of the importance of the candidate's participation in the intercultural language courses for the projects or activities. The applicant must be involved in these activities and have a role to play in the international development of the organisation. The participants chosen should be aware of the importance of their participation in the intercultural language course for the development of their organisation and for its plans for co-operation with Morocco, Egypt and with Arabic-speaking countries, especially in the framework of Euro-Med co-operation.

Participants must provide their nominating organisation with a report within two months of the end of the course.

Profile of candidates:

Initiative, active participation and commitment are the key requirements from participants for these courses.

Applicants must:

- be actively involved in youth work, in an association or a youth network, preferably at international level, or committed to taking on responsibilities at international level;
- represent or work for a YNGO wishing to set up projects with Moroccan/Egyptian YNGOs and/or Arabic-speaking countries, especially in the framework of Euro-Med co-operation;
- preferably but not necessarily have some knowledge of classic Arabic;
- considering it is the most widely used European language in Morocco, preferably have a basic knowledge of French (English is most widely used in Egypt);
- be between 18 and 30 years old;
- be well informed about their local organisation and the international/national sending organisation. Participants should be able to present their organisations and activities to the other participants;
- be highly motivated to benefit from the course by participating in all activities and to contribute to the development of the programme and to the group process;
- be willing to work in a group, to take initiatives and to share with others.

Applicants must either be co-operating with Moroccan/Egyptian NGOs or have proposals for co-operating in the near future with Morocco/Egypt. Details of this co-operation, whether current or future, must be provided in the application form.

Before leaving for Morocco/Egypt, participants should provide the Secretariat with a list of associations in Rabat/Cairo/Alexandria or their surrounding areas with which they would like to meet to discuss their projects. The Secretariat and its partners will see if it is possible to organise meetings.

All these conditions are strictly applied.

Selection criteria

The DYS will make the selection of participants based on their reasons for applying, their linguistic needs in order to develop youth activities, as well as the description and objectives of their co-operation project. Gender and geographical balances will be sought, as well as a balance between the different experiences, previous cultural experiences, the organisations, as well as the project proposals.

How to apply:

Applicants must be active in a youth organisation/structure.

The youth organisation/structure in which the applicant is active must be connected to one of the following youth organisations/structures:

- an international non-governmental youth organisation;
- a national youth council;
- a national agency of the YOUTH Programme of the European Union;
- CDEJ (European Steering Committee for Youth), a ministry, municipality, government, local, regional or national authority.

ONLY these organisations/structures are able to propose applications.

Applications not presented by such an organisation/structure are not eligible.

The applicant must return her/his completed application form to the organisation/structure nominating her/him in time for it to make a selection and propose 2 candidates by order of priority.

The organisation's/structure's 2 priority proposals must reach the Secretariat, **along with a recommendation letter for each applicant, by 18 March 2007 at the latest.**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No applications will be accepted after the deadline.• Illegible or incomplete application forms will not be accepted.• Applications without recommendation letters are not eligible.• Applications not presented by one of the above mentioned organisations/structures are not eligible. |
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Selection criteria:

On receipt of the applications put forward by the youth organisations/structures, the DYS will make a selection based on the following criteria:

- priority given by the organisation;
- the applicant's youth work responsibilities;
- the project for co-operation with NGOs from Morocco/Egypt and/or Arabic-speaking countries, especially in the framework of Euro-Med co-operation;
- relevance of the applicant's projects and activities to the DYS' priority areas.

Conditions of participation:

Travel expenses: travel expenses must be covered by the **participant and/or her/his organisation/structure.**

In order to encourage the participation of disadvantaged young people, the DYS has created a special fund to *partly* cover travel expenses of young people who cannot afford to pay the costs of the journey. This fund is limited and can only assist a limited number of participants. If

participants think they may be eligible for help, on receipt of confirmation of her/his acceptance for the course, participants must submit a request to the Secretariat, justifying why s/he should be considered for the grant. This request **must** be accompanied by a letter of support from the sending organisation.

Enrolment fees:

Board, lodging and tuition fees are covered by the Council of Europe and its partners in the host country. Participants must be aware that they will have to cover these costs themselves if they are absent from any part of the course without good reason, approved in advance by the course team.

Participants must pay an enrolment fee of **100 Euros** at the beginning of the course.

While all expenses (board, lodging, educational costs) for full participation in the courses are covered by the Council of Europe and its partners, no pocket money for other activities is available. Participants should find out about local costs and make sure they have enough pocket money for their own expenses and extra curricular activities.

Your attention is drawn to the fact there are very few places for a high demand. Therefore, once selected to participate, **the candidate must commit her/himself to attend for the whole duration of the course.** If, for any reason, the candidate is unable to take up the offer of a place, s/he must immediately inform the DYS Secretariat and the sending organisation. This is also the case for applicants placed on the waiting list.