

**IFM-SEI: For Children's Rights
Strategy and Work Plan 2013 – 2016**

Child Participation	Cooperation and Internationalism	Equality and Inclusion	Peace and Conflict	The group matters	Communication and Ownership
ParticipACTION: Development of approaches for child participation in local decision-making	Promoting cooperative alternatives to capitalism: CooperACTION project and promotion of Fair Trade	ALL TOGETHER: Mainstreaming inclusion in our movement	Global campaign against violence against children	Grassroots support: Promotion of group work, setting up of new groups	Internal communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership campaign • Newsletter and annual report • Merchandise and materials • Communicating volunteering and participation possibilities effectively • Social Media Strategy
Increasing child participation within IFM-SEI at all levels	Setting up and supporting EVS partnerships	Challenging homophobia in all our environments	Exploring reasons for violence and war	Sharing educational approaches used by groups	
Supporting the participation of children and young people in external processes	Initiating partnerships between children's groups	Global campaign on gender equality	Mediation and other peaceful ways of conflict resolution	Producing educational resources to support groups	
	Strengthening exchange and communication within and between regional networks	Challenging right-wing extremism	Children in conflict: Sharing of experiences	IFM-SEI Camp 2016	
	visa mobility	Activities against child poverty			External communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong external presence as child and youth-led children's rights movement • Advocacy on children's rights and participation • Advocacy on visa mobility
		Sharing of experiences on direct work with vulnerable children			
Finances: diversification of funding					

Children's Rights: the core of our movement

Children's Rights are at the core of IFM-SEI and our member organisations. We are well recognised as an expert movement at child rights on regional and national level and take strong actions for children's rights through advocacy and particularly through empowering children to fight for their rights.

We aim to enhance the sharing of experiences between members on children's rights education and will speak out against children's rights and human rights violations. We will take a strong stance against children's rights and human rights violations happening in society. We will feed into political debates and strongly criticise practices such as corporal punishment, child labour and homophobia. Additionally, we will encourage our member organisations to actively engage in lobbying regarding the UN CRC, sharing what is happening in their countries and urging their governments to ratify the optional protocols. We will also facilitate the sharing of experiences regarding children's rights violations in different countries.

Child Participation

Analysis

Being child-and youth led is the main characteristic of our organisation and what makes IFM-SEI unique in the children's rights movement. Our international and many of our member organisations are well recognised by external partners as experts in the field of child and youth participation. According to our self-understanding as an organisation not only for but also of young people, we always strive for the involvement of children in every aspect of our work. This means including children and young people's opinion equally in every step of a project from the original planning via the action itself until the evaluation.

Our members have identified the need to maintain and further this recognition as experts and at the same time to strengthen child and youth participation both externally in decision-making processes and within our movement to become truly child-and youth led organisations. This priority will be the main theme in the Congress period 2013-2016.

Aim for 2016:

- to support children's and young people's meaningful participation in decision-making processes internally and externally

Objectives:

- To use the ParticipACTION project as a spring-board for our participation work and disseminate the results widely
- To implement ways to effectively share and disseminate member organisation's approaches to participation in internal decision-making
- To increase child participation in the decision-making processes of IFM-SEI
- To support children and young people to participate in regional and global external decision-making processes

Working methods

ParticipACTION

ParticipACTION is an innovative and ambitious project aiming to increase the quality and quantity of young people's participation in the democratic life of twelve communities throughout Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America through building genuine and sustainable partnerships between young people, youth organisations and local authorities.

Working specifically with young people aged 15-20, we aim to challenge the misperception that children are only capable of participating in matters directly affecting them individually by involving them in the decision-making of schools and local authorities. We plan to thoroughly research and assess current participation practices, persuade decision-makers of the benefits of youth participation to all parties, train local decision-makers in genuine and meaningful participation and produce a toolkit to support sustainable participation.

Objectives

- To provide the space for young people, youth workers and decision-makers to discuss and exchange experience on the topic of youth participation
- To research, map and evaluate youth participation approaches in decision-making processes in schools and local authorities in 12 local communities in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America
- To share, analyse and adapt youth participation approaches already in existence in decision-making processes in schools and local authorities across Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia
- To develop new participation approaches to better involve young people with fewer opportunities in the decision-making in schools and local authorities
- To initiate genuine and sustainable partnerships between young people, youth organisations, schools and local authorities through the development of long-term participation strategies with commonly defined goals
- To support young people to train local decision-makers and institutions on youth participation
- To apply the learning from local projects to the regional level through developing ideas on how to strengthen youth participation in regional decision-making together with officials from EU and other regional integration processes
- To disseminate the lessons learned in the form of a youth participation toolkit with training activities for young people, youth workers and decision-makers

Sharing of child participation approaches

We will encourage our member organisations and regions to share their methods of internal democracy and child participation approaches. We further encourage our members to set up participatory networks of young people, for example based on the school of democracy of the ABN network.

- We will offer an online space on our website to share educational approaches to support children's meaningful participation in decision-making processes. This space shall be child-friendly in order to enable and motivate children to share their experiences.
- We will create a Tool-kit of methods how to consult children on different topics taking into consideration different region's realities. Methods could address different topics such as children in schools, families, law, public space, information and internet.
- We will organise a training course for leaders to explore different methods on how to best ensure child participation.

Child participation in IFM-SEI

To reflect on internal participation and enhance real and meaningful participation of children and young people in IFM-SEI decision-making processes, we will encourage our members to enhance children's participation in their internal local and national decision-making processes.

We will furthermore encourage our members to include children and young people in their IC and Congress delegations and will use methods that are suitable for children and adults. We will include a session for new delegates in the agendas of Congresses and IC meetings to support young delegates' participation.

During the international camp, children will be strongly involved in the planning of the camp programme and in the democratic running of the camp. We will adapt approaches used by member organisations to effectively involve a high number of children and young people in the planning of large camps.

Safe and meaningful child participation in external processes

Our strategy in this field will be three-fold:

- 1) Advocacy for increasing safe and meaningful child participation in international decision-making processes through our contacts and networks. We will work to develop child-friendly strategies to share with institutions and partners. These strategies shall include adequate preparation for children participating in these processes.
- 2) Communicating useful participation possibilities to our members and effectively supporting child delegations before, during and after decision-making or consultation processes.
- 3) Supporting member-organisations for the use of resources and/or seminars to train young people and children directly in campaigning to give them the skills to take action on issues that matter to them.

Cooperation and Internationalism

Analysis:

International solidarity is one of our core principles, 'Span the world with friendship' is our motto. There is already great cooperation within our movement seen at the international camps Train for Change in 2010 and Co-Camp in 2011. The global European Voluntary Service project 'Volunteering against Poverty' in 2012 was another good example of cooperation, with 17 EVS volunteers hosted in an IFM member organisation in another region and supporting this organisation for one year. Co-operation is strengthened through the establishment of regional networks but can be strengthened further.

Aims for 2016:

- To support and strengthen partnerships between IFM organisations and local groups
- To promote cooperative alternatives to the capitalist organisation of society

Objectives:

- To promote cooperative and Fair Trade enterprise as an alternative to capitalism and a way to overcome youth unemployment and unfair working conditions through the global CooperACTION project
- To raise awareness of Fair Trade and encourage the use of Fair Trade, sustainable and ethical products in the activities of IFM-SEI and our members
- To ensure our members understand Fair Trade as a concept in the context of our aims and principles including not only fair prices for goods but also higher social and environmental standards
- To set up and support EVS partnerships through coordinating yearly global EVS projects and supporting members in bilateral projects
- To initiate partnerships between local children's groups through a twinning programme
- To strengthen regional networks and communication between regions
- To advocate for visa-free travel and to share information and tips on visa application procedures

Working methods:

The two main strategies for 2013 – 2016 are:

- 1) The promotion of cooperative and Fair Trade alternatives to the capitalist organisation of society
- 2) The support of partnerships between IFM-SEI regions, member organisations and children's groups.

Co-operACTION

The project aims to promote the co-operative model of enterprise to young people at risk of unemployment through education, exchange and practical experience of setting up co-operative social enterprises in 11 local communities.

Objectives

- To educate young people about co-operatives as a positive alternative form of enterprise
- To raise awareness of Fair Trade and its benefits to communities
- To look at different types of cooperatives, and emphasise the importance of democratic participation
- To develop social enterprise projects in 11 local communities across Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America
- To share experiences, challenges and successes between young co-operators around the world
- To encourage and support partnerships between young people and local producers
- To offer an alternative future perspective to young unemployed people and those at risk of unemployment

The project will take place in 2013. Around 50 young people from 11 countries in Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia are directly engaged in the project. Peer educators from each partner will meet in Bogota, Colombia to receive training on co-operatives, Fair Trade and international development in order to facilitate educational sessions with their peers at home. They will also plan the CooperACTION event to take place in Manchester. Local teams from each partner organisation will gather at this high visibility event to share their ideas for co-operative enterprises, discuss how co-operation and democratic forms of business can reduce unemployment and inequality and learn how to develop and implement their business plans. They will receive support and inspiration from professionals of co-operative and Fair Trade organisations and will promote ethical and co-operative business to the wider public in Manchester.

As a result of the CooperACTION project, we will motivate and support all IFM-SEI member organisations to set up their own co-operatives in order to raise funds for their activities and produce materials. With co-operation between co-operatives being one of the main principles of co-operatives, we will promote this between our member organisations.

Strengthening internationalism

To strengthen the internationalist atmosphere in IFM-SEI, one seminar in the next mandate will have a focus on internationalism. We will discuss what internationalism means to us and what member organisations can do to become more internationalist.

Objectives

- To learn more about the concept of internationalism
- To reflect on what internationalism means for our groups and our movement
- To share how our members create a sense of internationalism within their organisations
- To develop strategies on how to create a strong sense of internationalism among all members of our movements

We plan to publish short videos and information about all member organisations on the IFM-SEI website in order to raise the knowledge about each other and share the reality of our organisations all around the world.

Visa facilitation

Visa regimes are one of the biggest obstacles for international camps, meetings and youth exchanges. IFM-SEI and its member organisations will continue its efforts to raise this issue in international youth conferences and meetings, in regional and national networks of youth work and other youth gatherings. In this context it is also important to raise awareness of the legal status of (young) refugees and asylum seekers in the different states.

We will continue to raise this issue in our networks and co-operate with our partner organisations, particularly in the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (ICMYO), the European Youth Forum and our fraternal organisations and encourage members to campaign for a change of visa regulations on national level. This should include the introduction of a new visa category for children and youth activities. Furthermore, we aim to encourage information sharing between our members on existing campaigns and changes in national or regional regulations. We will share information, instructions and tips on visa application procedures, such as draft visa invitations with member organisations.

Fair Trade

Extremely bad working conditions and unfair trade patterns are one of the main reasons for poverty. Many of our members work with child labourers and with families who are exploited by unfair working conditions. Many members already have a policy on using Fair Trade products in their camps and activities. For our international activities we will encourage our hosts and seminar centres to use Fair Trade products and inform the participants of the importance of Fair Trade to eradicate poverty.

We will develop an educational campaign on Fair Trade, ensuring members understand the link between their consumption patterns and the lives of people in other parts of the world. We will link the Fair Trade campaign to our aims and principles ensuring members are well educated about the wider Fair Trade concept, including fair wages and higher social and environmental standards.

European Voluntary Service

We will continue to apply for annual global European Voluntary Service projects that will be co-ordinated by IFM-SEI and aim to include more organisations from all regions in global EVS partnerships. In these projects, members aged 18-30 from our member organisations can volunteer from 6 to 12 months in another member organisation. We will also offer support for individual EVS and other volunteering projects between two member organisations, such as helping to find a partner organisation, checking the application, mediating in case of problems. As a principle, volunteering possibilities must be accessible to everyone and not require personal financial resources of the volunteers in order to ensure equal participation.

Connect children's groups

We want to support groups to get in contact with groups from other member organisations to share ideas and learn about each other through online and postal contact, study visits, exchanges and common projects. The twinning will be decentralised, but we can offer an online space to find partners and peer support and to share knowledge, skills and ideas for common projects. The membership campaign will be used as a kick-off for twinning groups and the international camp will be an important twinning space as well.

Communication

We will ensure that there are effective spaces for sharing of activities between organisations in our newsletter, facebook group and website and during activities. Knowing what is going on in other organisations and regional networks will facilitate common projects, debates and sharing of experiences between members.

Equality and Inclusion

Analysis:

In the last two Congress periods excellent work has been done on equality and inclusion. The long-term All Together strategy on the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities has been the main pillar of our work since 2007, aiming to include more young people with fewer opportunities in our activities and structures. The strategy has included training courses, the production of resources and study visits. The latest result was Rainbow Resources, a manual for human rights education for children on gender and sexuality rights that is widely recognised for its quality and for being the first manual for children on this topic. However, this work area is still tremendously important because of the social reality we live in. We live in a capitalist society and capitalism is based on inequality. Therefore inequality can be found everywhere in our societies, always coming back to unequal treatment and rights, and access to resources; dividing groups of people from one another, who have a common interest in social change. With homophobia and transphobia still widespread all over the world, women still disadvantaged in many areas and often victims of violence, and an ever increasing gap between rich and poor, we need to continue to be inclusive in our work and fight for equal rights and opportunities for everyone through education. The ongoing economic and financial crisis clearly reveals the exploitative mechanisms and structures of authority and ownership in capitalist societies. Simultaneously it can be observed that the economic crisis is accompanied by an extensive tendency in political dialogue and action towards nationalism and a reduction of democracy.

Often discrimination and exclusion are justified by the need to respect of 'culture' or 'tradition'. For us, there are no reasons that can justify inequality or the violation of someone's basic rights. As IFM-SEI we oppose these developments and promote efforts towards an inclusive society. In order to have an inclusive and equal society, we will strive to continue to develop a democratic and participatory system where everyone has the same opportunities to participate and practice their rights in equal conditions.

Aim for 2016:

To mainstream equality and inclusion in all levels of our movement

Objectives:

- To review and evaluate the first six years of the All Together strategy and to complete a needs analysis with our member to ensure the future strategy remains relevant.
- To support members to challenge homophobia and transphobia in all our environments through educational activities and strengthening of the Rainbow Network
- To challenge the growth of right-wing extremism and the rise of nationalism and develop alternatives.
- To share and develop strategies for the inclusion of socially deprived children, young people and adults in our movements
- To facilitate sharing of experiences on member organisations' direct work with vulnerable children
- To consider the organisation of activities on the reduction of child poverty
- To share approaches and develop new ways to increase gender equality in decision-making processes through a global gender equality campaign
- To challenge cultural relativism as an excuse for exclusion and discrimination within and outside our organisations
- To create a system for equalising the costs of travel between member organisations to ensure full participation in IFM-SEI meetings.
- To ensure all digital materials are translated into Spanish and English as a minimum and that translations into other languages are supported by IFM-SEI.
- To develop resources on a wide range of educational topics
- To provide the space to share methods and practices of internal democracy within IFM-SEI member organisations and within IFM-SEI in order to make our decision-making processes accessible to all.

Working methods**All Together 2.0**

We plan to actively continue our All Together strategy for social inclusion to support member organisations in improving their inclusion work. A steering group will review and revise our inclusion strategy , and a two-stage inclusion training course for young local group leaders will ensure that we keep up the inclusion momentum at local level and that young people with fewer opportunities are fully included at all levels of IFM-SEI.

'All Together 2.0' will have the following objectives:

- To review and evaluate IFM-SEI's past and current inclusion work

- To develop a revised proactive and targeted inclusion strategy for the movement at all levels
- To complete a needs analysis with our members to ensure the future strategy remains relevant and effective
- To train local group leaders in inclusion work and support them through a process of developing and implementing local strategies for the inclusion of children and young people with fewer opportunities
- To create a strong network of young inclusion workers who will be empowered to support others in their organisations in becoming more inclusive
- To implement 10 local inclusion projects to proactively include children and young people with fewer opportunities

The activities to achieve the objectives will be the following:

- 1) **Steering Group meeting I** will combine a thorough evaluation of IFM-SEI's inclusion work and the formulation of a needs-based, proactive and targeted inclusion strategy for the movement at all levels. The group will also prepare in detail the two-part inclusion training course for local leaders and will begin the revision process of Rainbow Resources.
- 2) **Inclusion Training Course I** will bring together local group leaders motivated to pro-actively address inclusion in their groups. The participants will receive inclusion training, will share their local challenges and will develop strategies based on their specific needs. They will also receive training and back-up to create an environment free of homophobic bullying.
- 3) **Local Inclusion Strategies.** The participants of the training course will develop and carry out local inclusion strategies with their groups. They will put into practice what they learned at the training course and will work with their peers to reach out to excluded groups.
- 4) **Inclusion Training Course II.** The participants will gather again to share their successes and challenges. They will work together to overcome obstacles faced and revise and improve their strategies.
- 5) **Steering Group Meeting II.** The steering group will meet to thoroughly evaluate and build on the All Together 2.0 strategy.

Rainbow Network

The IFM-SEI Rainbow Network was officially set up in 2007 and needs to continue its work as a platform for LGBT youth in IFM-SEI member organisations, support the Kurt Löwenstein Education Centre in organising Queer Easter and be active at our international camps. We should also strengthen its visibility in between camps and events on our website and newsletter to emphasise that we fight against all forms of discrimination, including homophobia and transphobia that are still very widespread all over the world.

Rainbow Resources

We have received very good feedback on Rainbow Resources, our manual on gender and sexuality rights education with children that we published in English in 2011. Several organisations are now translating the manual in their own languages, for example into Hebrew, Spanish, German and Norwegian.

Many educators who have used Rainbow Resources in their group nights, at camps or during seminars have given us suggestions for new content or improvements of activities. We therefore plan to revise and reprint Rainbow Resources to include new content, translations and adapted activities. The new activities will particularly focus on tackling homophobic and transphobic bullying. At Queer Easter we will consult widely with LGBT activists on our Rainbow Resources, collecting input and feedback. The All Together 2.0 steering group will collate and edit the input to finalise Rainbow Resources for print in English, Spanish and German.

We will make the layout files available to all organisations who would like to translate Rainbow Resources. The Rainbow Team will also support members in preparing Rainbow activities for children.

Combating right-wing extremism

We will work to support members at all levels to explore and combat the causes and effects of right-wing extremism and political violence. We will organise co-ordinated actions to highlight the danger of right-wing extremism all over the world as well as creating a space to share examples of these actions and other educational methods against right-wing extremism.

Seminar

We will hold a seminar on strategies against exclusion through right-wing extremism. The seminar will raise awareness of both the visible manifestations of right-wing extremism (right-wing parties and violence) as well as the more covert and extremely worrying rise of racist and extremist attitudes in the middle of our societies. We will equip participants with knowledge and non-violent tools to stand up against right-wing extremism.

Objectives:

- To explore the roots and manifestations of right-wing extremism in Europe
- To consider the impact of right-wing extremism on individuals, organisations and communities
- To share strategies to stand up against right-wing extremism without violence
- To identify the challenges in standing up against right-wing extremism and consider how to overcome those challenges
- To use forum theatre as a tool to support young people as individuals and youth organisations to stand up against right-wing extremism
- To explore street art as a means to counter right-wing extremism
- To learn about different forms of street art with experts in the field and carry out a street action against right-wing extremism
- To develop strategies for our organisations to pro-actively react to right-wing extremism

Promoting gender equality

We will organise a global gender equality campaign focusing on children and young people in the period. The campaign will comprise regionally developed activities connected through IFM-SEI as well as a review of IFM-SEI's and our member organisations' own structures and practices. We aim to support our member organisations in critically assessing their practices and considering how best to improve. The review will include reports from each member organisation on the gender balance of persons in positions within their organisation. On the global level, IFM-SEI will register data on gender balance within IFM-SEI structures (presidium, control commission, leading groups, and also participants at international training courses etc, and as well, wherever possible data on the structures inside the member organisations) and on speaking time at meetings and activities.

We will continue to educate to combat gender stereotypes for girls and boys, challenging the traditional roles they are expected to play and promoting self-confidence of young people. We will promote feminism (equality of opportunity, outcomes and rights) in all our work.

Child poverty activities

We will share approaches to including children living in poverty in our groups and activities. Members will share how they reach vulnerable children and keep them connected over a longer period.

We will use the documentary on child and youth poverty developed in 2011 by the Volunteering Against Poverty project to enhance society's awareness on poverty and unemployment and put this issue on the media's and politician's agenda. We will support member organisations wishing to translate the educational pack on child and youth poverty into their languages and in using it.

We will strive to ensure the voice of IFM-SEI is heard within bodies that deal with child poverty (such as UNICEF) as a leading child and youth-led organisation. We will develop activities that focus on the eradication of poverty in all its forms (economic, social and environmental) and also work towards the eradication of extreme wealth.

Peace and Conflict

Analysis:

IFM-SEI has a long history of peace education and conflict resolution with children and young people. We believe that peace is much more than the absence of war and we are committed to working with children and young people for a more peaceful future. We aim to educate children and young people about the causes of conflict in general as well as specific conflicts in the past and today. In the past we have worked with our members to look at alternative approaches to conflict and challenged the generally accepted view that war is the answer.

IFM-SEI in the Middle East Region has been working to develop a peace project between Israeli and Palestinian young people for many years and our member organisations in the region are closely cooperating with each other.

Violence is still very present in our societies – children are victims of armed conflicts, of corporal punishment; they watch violence in the media and get to know violence as a solution. We need to show children, young people and educators that a world free of violence and war is possible.

Aim for 2016:

To develop approaches to peaceful conflict resolution, making clear that war and violence is never a solution.

Objectives:

- To develop a campaign on violence against children, using education to show children, parents and teachers that violence does not lead to respect and better learning
- To explore the reasons for violence and war
- To educate members on mediation and other peaceful ways of conflict resolution
- To facilitate sharing of experiences between members who work directly with children affected by armed conflicts
- To empower communication about peace and conflict

Working methods**Global campaign on violence against children**Objectives

- To raise awareness of all kinds of violence against children (corporal punishment, child abuse, sexual abuse and others)
- To develop tools for children, parents and educators to prevent violence against children
- To explore tools and methods for educators to be able to support children at risk

We plan to run a global campaign against violence against children that will include the following elements:

- Educational methods for educators, parents and children that will encourage them to stop using corporal punishment, report when they see it happen and introduce ways to establish a positive learning environment in the classroom and group activities
- Arguments against corporal punishment
- Tips on how to interfere when you see violence against children happening in schools, family homes or public spaces
- Alternative strategies for constructive dialogue between children and adults
- A seminar on combating corporal punishment and overcoming cultural arguments for corporal punishment
- Training on mediation

Tackling the culture of violence

We aim to organise a seminar with the aim to work with peer educators to increase the quality and reach of education against violence in children's and youth groups.

Objectives:

- To introduce and share experiences on gender-based violence
 - To introduce the participants to the Council of Europe publication 'Gender Matters', familiarising them with the content and activities in order that they can effectively run activities with children's and youth groups on this issue
 - To consider possible adaptations to the methods for more effective use with children's groups
 - To discuss and exchange on the topic of corporal punishment of children and reflect on the cultural acceptance of violence towards children in our society
 - To consider how best to introduce the topic of corporal punishment in children's and youth groups and reflect on the Council of Europe's campaign 'Raise your hand against smacking'
- To develop educational activities to work with children on the right to non-violence

Violence and conflict resolution

We plan to hold a seminar to achieve the following objectives:

- To explore the reasons for violence and war
- To analyse war as a universal human situation from all aspects
- To share experiences on how best to resolve conflicts in our groups
- To educate participants on mediation and other peaceful ways of conflict resolution
- To discuss how our organisations can work towards a society free of violence
- To use different identities of people as aspects in peace & conflict education. This may include multicultural education, meetings of people from different countries etc.
- To raise awareness in international bodies about children's rights and child participation in conflict areas.
- To share information about forgotten conflicts (for example Western Sahara and Mali) and provide communication channels to official bodies, that the organisations cannot reach by themselves
- To find a way how IFM-SEI can remember the cases of genocide and abuse of children's rights and implement those in our educational programmes and activities.
- To collect educational materials and tools about peace and conflict education and publish them in the handbook. This should include also programmes for children on how to deal with the causes of conflict
- To organise a campaign about children in conflicts (child soldiers, victims etc.).
- To offer IFM-SEI as a platform for meeting of different sides of conflict.

Sharing of experiences

Some of our members work in countries heavily affected by armed conflicts, of which often children are the main victims. We will facilitate a sharing of experiences on how best to work directly with children affected by armed conflicts, possible challenges and how to overcome them to support these children.

The group matters

Analysis:

The core of our work are groups at grassroots level: in Falcon groups around the world education for social change is happening – children and young people experience solidarity and cooperation, they acquire skills and competencies, they express their opinions, take action and have fun. Nowadays group work is often considered as old-fashioned by grant-givers and the media, compared to ‘more exciting’ project work. IFM-SEI should support member organisations in promoting and strengthening group work and in setting up new groups through sharing experience and approaches. We can also support our groups through educational resources.

In the last five years, we have developed a series of educational resources: on the MDGs as result of the Peers without Frontiers project, on inclusion in the framework of ‘All Together’, Rainbow Resources on gender and sexuality rights education, a handbook on action against climate change and methods to explore capitalism and poverty. The methods have been tried out during the successful international camps ‘Train for Change’ and Co-camp and have been widely used by groups in our member organisations and other partners. Our new website includes a toolbox to share educational resources. We want to continue this sharing and developing of methods through camps, seminars and print and online resources.

Aim for 2016:

To support the grassroots level of our member organisations through the promotion of group work, sharing of experiences and offering educational resources to support educational work in groups on key issues of IFM.

Objectives:

- To support the setting up of new groups through sharing of experiences and offering expertise to small organisations
- To facilitate a sharing of educational approaches on different issues, including on outdoor education
- To reflect on why group work is important to us in IFM-SEI seminars and events
- To develop and disseminate educational resources in several languages
- To organise an IFM-SEI camp in 2016
- To promote group work through a global campaign

Working methods:

Sharing of experiences

Many leaders from our organisations have said that sharing of experiences is often the most useful method to find solutions for challenges in their grassroots work. We include sharing sessions in the programmes of all our activities on different topics that are identified by participants. Organisations contacting IFM-SEI with specific challenges can be put in contact with other organisations that have faced similar difficulties and found solutions to overcome them.

In 2013 we will hold a European Falcon Network Seminar on setting up new and inclusive groups. The experiences shared during the seminar and the ideas developed will be widely shared through our website and we are committed to continuing working on this issue.

We will also have an online space where members can ask questions about group work to their comrades from around the world. One possibility will be to arrange international mentor/mentee tandems that can help support each other. We will also look for child-friendly (and interactive) ways to use the IFM-SEI website as platform for connecting with other groups.

Reflecting on the benefits of group work

During seminars and IFM-SEI events we will discuss why group work is important to us on and how group solidarity can be an alternative to capitalist everyday life. We will debate how our camps and activities can be more inclusive for children from socio-economic excluded families and other focused groups such as LGBT youth and children and youth with disabilities.

We will publish the results of these debates, including our main arguments for group work and ideas for educational activities on group solidarity.

The group matters campaign

We will develop a campaign to promote group work within our member organisations. The campaign will include:

- A logo and posters to raise awareness of the campaign
- A section on the IFM-SEI website where groups can introduce themselves with pictures, video and text
- Sharing of ideas on how to set up new groups, reach more children and young people and recruit and motivate volunteers for the organisations
- Support of member organisations to fundraise for international group exchanges

Advice and expertise

Small organisations with specific difficulties can contact IFM-SEI to ask for advice. We will point out possible support and give advice from our experience.

Training

We will design our training courses and seminars in a way that they are accessible for local group leaders without former international experience or a position in the leadership of organisations. All training courses and seminars are planned with the grassroots work in mind – we want to support participants in planning how to take back what they have learned and improve their grassroots work.

Educational resources

Since 2011 our website includes a toolbox for educational resources that is easily searchable. It includes all resources produced by IFM-SEI and member organisations can upload useful resources as well. So far only few member organisations or individuals have uploaded resources to the website and in the next Congress period we will continue to encourage youth workers to share methods that they find useful in their work. We will also upload results from projects and seminars to the toolbox.

We plan to continue the publication of high-quality educational resources that result from our projects, such as on child participation and youth cooperatives. All publications are published in at least two languages and we encourage member organisations to translate them into their own languages.

IFM-SEI camp

We will organise a global IFM-SEI camp in the coming Congress period that will take place in summer 2016. The camp will bring together several thousand children and young people from a maximum of IFM member organisations from around the world. Children and young people will be choosing the theme and subthemes of the camp programme and an international team will prepare a programme of activities based on peer education. Children and young people will also take a leading role in the management of the camp.

The camp will enable direct long-lasting friendships between children from our groups, will be a space for children and leaders to share experiences and to organise common actions to achieve social change.

In preparation of the IFM Camp we will collect, develop and use methods that connect children and youth groups beyond and despite language barriers (keeping in mind that different age groups need different approaches). We will also arrange international penpal groups who can get to know each other already before they meet at the camp.

Communication and Ownership

Analysis:

Through our newsletters, handbooks, the annual report and merchandise IFM-SEI today can be recognised through our clear visual identity. As a next step, we aim to increase the awareness of IFM, its aims, activities and possibilities to get involved within the local membership. At the same time, we need to keep up the good partnership with and recognition by external partners to support our advocacy work.

Aim for 2016:

To further develop IFM-SEI's communication strategy to ensure better ownership and shared responsibility over the international and to improve external recognition.

Objectives:

- To launch and implement the IFM-SEI membership campaign
- To continue to offer merchandise and publish regular newsletters, reports and update the website
- To communicate participation and volunteering possibilities effectively to the membership
- To develop a social media strategy
- To maintain and strengthen IFM-SEI's external recognition as a child-and youth led children's rights movement
- To advocate for children's rights, child participation and visa mobility for international youth work

Working methods

Membership campaign

The membership campaign aims:

- to increase the ownership of IFM-SEI by individual members at grassroots level
- to raise awareness of the benefits of membership of IFM-SEI
- to encourage partnership with groups of other member organisations
- to create a sense of internationalism for individual members at grassroots level

It may include the following elements:

- IFM-SEI T-shirts that stimulate discussion on what IFM-SEI stands for
- A short simple video clip to promote IFM-SEI show what IFM-SEI means for its members
- A board game to introduce the values and activities of IFM-SEI to children

- A set of group activities that encourage partnership between groups and raises awareness of our international

Newsletters, website and annual report

We regularly publish news from our international and member organisations on our website and in our three-monthly newsletter and will continue to encourage members to send us short articles and photos from their activities and to distribute the newsletter widely to their members. Our facebook group serves as a space where also local groups can easily share their activities, look for contacts and stay in touch after IFM camps and seminars.

The annual report is used to improve both internal and external communication. We produce a high-quality, attractive annual report to share our work more widely every year before the International Committee Meeting or Congress.

Social Media Strategy

Social media should have a priority in the development of our communication. We will develop a social media strategy to increase our visibility in social media such as facebook and twitter. We will actively use facebook and twitter to inform and interact with individual members at grass-root level. We will use social media to inform about activities both in IFM-SEI and the member organisations, as well as policy work of the organisation and other relevant youth and or organisational information. We will put special emphasis on promoting the IFM-SEI online toolbox through facebook and twitter and will encourage members to share videos showing good practice on the local level.

Merchandise

Additionally, we will produce merchandise for members to encourage a sense of belonging. We will produce merchandise that is useful and designed for children. All products will be produced on the principles of Fair Trade and sustainable development.

Communication between and to members

Internal communication is essential to the smooth running of an international movement. We will enhance internal communication in the following ways:

- Continue to publish volunteering and participation possibilities on our website and in facebook
- Encourage member organisations to translate information into their languages
- Widely distributing the membership campaign materials
- Face-to-face networking through sharing sessions in IFM-SEI activities and meetings
- Consider having a database of people interested in international work to facilitate finding project partners and developing bilateral and multilateral contacts.
- Empower member organisations to produce short introduction videos (1-2 minutes), of their organisation that can be used within children groups to share the IFM-SEI world.
- Establish a discussion space for sharing ideas and discuss topics among IFM-SEI members.
- Include those who are not able to come to statutory meetings via online mechanisms.

- Conduct research among our member organisations about possibilities of using online tools on daily basis and reflect those in internal communication.
- Continue working on overcoming language barriers between organisations by translating basic information about IFM-SEI in the languages used by the international. It is the responsibility of each member organisation to provide necessary support to the Secretariat.
- Produce educational materials for children that don't require language skills and show children the global community of IFM-SEI.

Strategic approach to external representation

In the period 2013-2016, we will ensure continued active involvement in key international processes, particularly in relation to children's rights and the youth field.

We will have two main approaches to external representation:

- Children's Rights: Working with and participating in children rights networks
- Global youth work: Ensuring the presence of all our members in national youth councils and regional and global youth platforms

Our members have identified child participation, poverty and visa mobility for youth activists as main areas for our advocacy work. We will work together with our partners in the children's rights and youth movements to take action in these areas. We have already asked our partners in ICMYO (International Meeting of Youth Organisations) to work together to develop an advocacy strategy on visa mobility for young people coming to youth exchanges, seminars and conferences and will continue to discuss possible strategies and take the necessary actions.

We will use the documentary on child and youth poverty developed in 2011 by the VAP project to enhance society's awareness on poverty and unemployment and put this issue on the media's and politician's agenda.

The presidium and the secretariat will enter in a dialogue with the newly founded Progressive Alliance in order to check further possibilities for cooperation.

Finances

Analysis:

The financial situation in the last Congress period has been very good, with an increase in staff from three to five including EVS volunteers. But the situation is not stable as this increase in our budget was only thanks to the success in securing project grants. At the same time membership fees decreased heavily due to cuts in national budgets during the economic crisis. The administrative grants of the European Commission are also not guaranteed in the future because of changes to the Youth in Action programme.

Finances need to be a priority in the work plan as all our activities rely heavily on a stable financial situation, despite a big pool of very motivated volunteers.

Our financial strategy is two-fold:

1) Membership fees: IFM-SEI faces the on-going problem of unpaid membership fees. The administrative and financial burden this places on the central organisation means that investment of time in solving the membership fees problem is an appropriate and necessary response. In addition, an imbalance has been identified with regards to membership fees. The reliance on three or four large, western European organisations is worrying and unsustainable and priority will be given to developing a more effective division.

2) Diversifying our sources of income and decentralising fundraising. IFM-SEI relies on two main income sources, European youth funding structures and membership fees. Diversifying our sources of funding will relieve some of the pressure on the organisation.

Aim for 2016:

To develop a sustainable financial strategy that ensures stability for the coming years, and makes the best use of our financial assets.

Objectives:

- To diversify our funding sources and be less dependent on project funding
- To better motivate member organisations to pay membership fees through increasing communication and discussion on the benefits of being member of IFM-SEI
- To agree individual payment plans with organisations facing financial difficulties

Working methods:

Involvement and ownership of IFM-SEI

Encouraging a greater sense of ownership of and identity with IFM-SEI will help to develop a sense of responsibility to fulfil membership obligations. Through a variety of strategies detailed throughout this work-plan, we hope to encourage a stronger feeling of identity with IFM and stimulate a common sense of responsibility over the international.

Researching new funding possibilities

We will constantly research new funding possibilities other than the Youth in Action programme and the European Youth Foundation and will motivate our members to do the same.

Fundraising support

We can support member organisations in their fundraising efforts through checking grant applications and forwarding calls for proposals suitable for our members.