



Viviamo – The Art of Living
World Youth Alliance Europe Summer School
July 2006, Targu Mures, Romania

Project Report

Introduction

In response to the 2006 UN theme of Habitat, the World Youth Alliance (WYA) launched '*Viviamo!*' a global project that responded to the challenges of habitat and development by reflecting its focus on building up training, solidarity and a mutual understanding of the role of culture.

Selected Development Projects for Viviamo 2006:

WYA Africa selected the Nyumbani Village, a self-sustaining community being built to serve orphans and their elderly caretakers who are left behind by the "lost generation" of the AIDS pandemic.

WYA Asia Pacific selected Gawad Kalinga, an organization building communities out of slums in the Philippines using an integrated and holistic approach.

WYA Latin America selected Acortar Distancias, a program that offers street children an integral education ranging from formal learning and art classes to skills training.

WYA North America selected the Katrina Cottage program: an initiative for permanent housing designed for the Gulf Coast environment in the style of local architecture - an alternative solution to the temporary FEMA trailers given to the victims of the 2006 Katrina Hurricane.

The **World Youth Alliance Europe** (WYAE), in partnership with Greek Catholic Metropolitan Caritas – Targu Mures, presented a Summer School programme "*Viviamo – The Art of Living*" which took place in Targu Mures, Romania from the 17th – 28th of July 2006. This report serves to present the method and content, as well as an evaluation, of the European '*Viviamo!*' project.

Background

The World Youth Alliance recognises that the key to shaping societies and policies worthy of the human person is the training of young people in an understanding of human dignity. ***'Viviamo – The Art of Living'*** provided young Europeans with a deep understanding and a true living experience of the power of culture, the effects of ideologies such as Communism on European Art and Architecture and in particular the role and need for beauty. By becoming conscious of the role of Architecture and Art in affirming an authentic vision of human dignity, we can develop concrete policy proposals for habitat and development at a local, national and international level.

'Viviamo - The Art of Living' Summer School provided the training, structure and support these young people needed to be effective agents of cultural change. Through recognising the necessity of reflecting human dignity within the environments in which they live, young people can start to develop an understanding of the human person that will help shape many areas of culture and policy. We wish to highlight the link between living environments and human dignity in response to United Nations 2006 Celebration of the Year of Habitat. That link is made apparent when we study systems that denied dignity and their effects upon the living environment, art and architecture of a nation.

Therefore through initiating ***'Viviamo – The Art of Living'*** in Romania, WYAE and Caritas – Targu Mures were able to provide the young people with a living experiences and concrete examples of the effects of Ideologies, such as Communism, on the heart of a culture and thereby showing the need to articulate human dignity at every level of policy and culture. Today Romania is still deeply affected by the systematic denial of human dignity it experienced under Communism and many difficult social problems remain as the legacy of the communist lie. The best response to the effects of ideologies that suppressed the national consciousness is to foster trust in human potential and teach people the ***art of living*** in dignity.

In conclusion WYAE together with their Partner Organisation Caritas – Targu Mures coordinated a programme that allowed the young people to understand and articulate their human dignity and that of every human person.

'Viviamo – The Art of Living' - Coordinating Team

List of Coordinators and Conference Staff:

- World Youth Alliance Europe - Director – Emilia Klepacka
- World Youth Alliance Europe - Conference Coordinator - Christina Gilfedder
- Greek Catholic Metropolitan Caritas – Targu Mures - Logistics - Father Flavius Mihet
- Greek Catholic Metropolitan Caritas – Targu Mures - Logistics - Dana Mihet

Additional Conference Staff:

- World Youth Alliance Europe – Director of Operations - Philip Hunt
- World Youth Alliance Europe – Proposal Coordinator – Andreea Popescu
- World Youth Alliance Europe – Assistant to Conference Coordinator – Jana Sochorcova
- World Youth Alliance Europe – Assistant to Conference Coordinator – Gabrielle Solanet

- World Youth Alliance Europe – Official Photographer – Oliver Reutter

Lecturers / Speakers:

- Ana Blandiana – Poet / Writer – Director of Sighet Memorial.
- Professor Czesław Porębski – Philosophy Lectures – Jagielloński University in Kraków, Poland
- Father Matthieu Gosse – Community of St Jean – St Jeans Village, Romania
- Count Tibor Kalnoky – Director of the Film 'The Restorer' and Director of the "Kalnoky Foundation".
- 2 local Architects
- Dana Mihet - Architect
- Mary Halpine – President in Training, World Youth Alliance
- Emilia Klepacka – European Director of World Youth Alliance

Partner Organisation to the World Youth Alliance

'Greek Catholic Metropolitan Caritas – Targu Mures'

Greek-Catholic Metropolitan **Caritas** (Romania), a branch of the global organisation which works to assist those in need, including the elderly, lonely, disabled and those suffering from AIDS.

Greek Catholic Metropolitan Caritas -Targu Mures is a Non-Governmental Organisation which exemplifies consistent, effective and people-orientated work on the grassroots level. Through highlighting their concrete work and achievements as agents of integral development we are developing a compelling proposal for the international community's approach to habitat and development. Furthermore, the working example of our partner organisation provided a concrete framework within which this vision of human dignity was tested and which grounded all of the activities of the Summer School.

***'Viviamo – The Art of Living'* - European Project Proposal**

The World Youth Alliance Europe launched ***'Viviamo – The Art of Living'*** Summer School in May 2006. A cohesive Information Sheet was prepared entitled 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQ) in which the ideas and vision of the project were presented.

The FAQ Information Sheet was able to draw parallel to the primary aims of the World Youth Alliance with that of the Global Viviamo Objectives and thus the United Nation's theme of 2006 'Habitat'.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are you doing?

The World Youth Alliance Europe is inviting young people to attend ***Viviamo -The Art of Living***, its first ever Summer School. This will take place in Targu Mures, central Romania, from 17th - 28th July 2006.

***What is 'Viviamo!'*?**

'Viviamo!', Italian for 'We live!', is a World Youth Alliance (WYA) project focused on improving local habitats around the globe. Around the world we can see people living in situations that are not of their own creation and which limit or repress their ability to develop themselves and contribute to society. Slums, child labour and the exploitation of workers are particularly grave examples of this.

Development of societies cannot be separated from the development of each human person. Development takes place when the talents and creativity of everyone are employed and mobilized to find solutions and to build society. Our Habitat projects are an opportunity for us to look at some of the ways in which the ingenuity of each person is being harnessed to find unique and creative new solutions to large scale problems.

What is Viviamo-the Art of Living?

The World Youth Alliance Europe Summer School ***Viviamo-the Art of Living*** is part of the World Youth Alliance 'Viviamo!' global project.

We must also learn the art of living in peace and solidarity so as to build a better future for our families, our continent and for the world. By building up networks of friendship and solidarity centred on a common recognition of human dignity, we are creating a movement of young people who understand the conditions needed for the formation of free and just societies which foster the integral development of the person.

The concept of integral development implies that we need to develop a policy proposal for habitat and development which goes beyond technical and economic considerations. In order to succeed, we need to develop proposals which reflect fully the real needs and capacities of the human person. This year's UN theme of Habitat is an example of a policy area within which an understanding of the dignity of the human person is crucial in order to construct a concrete policy proposal which is worthy of the human person.

Through highlighting the concrete work and achievements of agents of integral development such as Greek Catholic Metropolitan Caritas - Targu Mures, we are developing a compelling proposal for the international community's approach to habitat and development.

Why a Summer School?

Reflecting the United Nations theme of Habitat for 2006, the World Youth Alliance Europe is launching its 'Viviamo!' Summer School programme in response to the challenges of habitat and development. Our partner organisation involved in the project is Greek Catholic Metropolitan Caritas -Targu Mures, an organisation which exemplifies consistent, effective and people-orientated work on the grassroots level. *'Viviamo – The Art of Living'* provides an opportunity to bring young people to live, work and study together. We recognise that the key to shaping societies and policies worthy of the human person is the training of young people in an understanding of human dignity. Through building networks of friendship and solidarity around a common objective, young people learn the art of living in a manner commensurate with their dignity. In addition, they gain a vibrant understanding and experience of the importance of affirming human dignity at all levels of culture and policy.

What are the main objectives?

1. To promote the principles underpinning successful projects in the field of habitat or development.
2. To train young people in an understanding of human dignity and the need to reflect this dignity in our culture and policy at a local, national and international level.
3. To build solidarity amongst European youth through intercultural dialogue.

How will you reach your objectives?

Through a morning programme consisting of training and discussion, participants will learn to understand and articulate the dignity of the human person. They will apply this understanding in the context of policy discussions through workshops on human rights language and development issues. They will examine together how this dignity should be affirmed in our approach to bioethical issues, family policy and global health challenges such as HIV / AIDS. Participants will also examine together the nature of human freedom and the impact of ideologies such as communism upon the human person. They will gain a living understanding of the cultural conditions which best facilitate the integral development of the human person.

Afternoon and weekend cultural visits throughout the two-week programme will show participants the importance of culture, art and architecture in affirming human dignity. The cultural trips and discussions, organised in cooperation with Caritas-Targu Mures, will provide a living experience of the power of culture, art, architecture and beauty in affirming an authentic vision of human dignity, creativity, freedom and possibility.

Furthermore, the working example of our partner organisation will provide a concrete framework within which to test this vision of human dignity which grounds all of the activities of the Summer School.

Whom are we targeting?

Young people from ages 18 - 30 are invited to apply for the Summer School. *'Viviamo - The Art of Living'* will provide the training, structure and support that these young people need to be effective agents of cultural change. Through experiencing the art of living in a way that fully affirms the joy, dignity, freedom and creativity of the human person, these young people will develop a true solidarity and sense of purpose. We hope that upon leaving the Summer School, these young people will feel inspired to shape and form their countries and communities.

How will the Summer School form its participants for the future?

The young people will gain an understanding of the need to affirm human dignity at all levels of personal and public life. The Summer School programme will encourage them to **live the different aspects of their intrinsic dignity**: freedom, joy, solidarity, self-gift, work and contemplation. Through the daily living of these ideas, young people will inject a new hope and vision into the culture. Through recognising the necessity of reflecting human dignity within the environments in which they live, young people will start to develop an understanding of the human person that will help shape many areas of culture and policy.

How are you going to select participants?

We will reach many young people through the networks we have established over the last five years of engagement in Europe and identify outstanding candidates by way of personal recommendations from cultural and youth leaders. We will also extend our Summer School invitation to European youth organisations and partner initiatives. The World Youth Alliance Europe invites young people to send in applications for the Summer School by 20th June 2006. Applications are available on our website.

Why Romania?

Romania is a beautiful country of great cultural diversity as yet unknown to many European youth. It is a country where the living environment has been seriously affected by the communist ideology. We wish to highlight the link between living environments and human dignity in response to United Nations 2006 Celebration of the Year of Habitat. That link is made apparent when we study systems that denied dignity and their effects upon the living environment, art and architecture of a nation.

Why Targu Mures?

The World Youth Alliance has developed strong friendships with the local people of Targu Mures through our 2004 Project, Europe4Family. This star-shaped bike ride brought young people to

Brussels by bicycle from the four corners of Europe. One of the routes began in Targu-Mures. Participants from all over Europe were hosted by local families and in addition, greeted by the mayor and local press. We are delighted to go back two years later and work together with our partner organisation Caritas-Targu Mures to host the Summer School at a newly built youth centre in the town. We are also glad to partner again with the volunteers who helped make Europe4Family such a great success.

'Viviamo – The Art of Living' – Programme Structure

The Summer School programme was created in accordance to the main Global objectives for 'Viviamo!':

1. To promote the principles underpinning successful projects in the field of habitat or development.
2. To train young people in an understanding of human dignity and the need to reflect this dignity in our culture and policy at a local, national and international level.
3. To build solidarity amongst European youth through intercultural dialogue.

To enable the Summer School programme to achieve the Viviamo objectives two areas were identified:

1. ***Training***. Lectures from guest speakers on the themes of Policy and Culture.
2. ***Cultural trips***. Living experience and concrete examples of the '*art of living*'.

1. Training

Through a morning programme consisting of training and discussion, participants were taught to understand and articulate the dignity of the human person. They applied this understanding in the context of policy discussions through workshops on human rights language and development issues. They examined together how the dignity of each person should be affirmed in our approach to bioethical issues, family policy and global health challenges such as HIV / AIDS. Furthermore, participants also examined together the nature of human freedom and the impact of ideologies such as Communism upon the human person. In addition they gained a living understanding of the cultural conditions which best facilitate the integral development of the human person.

2. Cultural Trips

Afternoon and weekend cultural visits throughout the two-week programme provided the participants with a tangible experience of the importance of culture, highlighting Architecture in particular, in affirming human dignity. The World Youth Alliance believes that the environment in which one lives effects their perception of our human dignity.

The cultural trips and discussions, organised in cooperation with Greek Catholic Metropolitan Caritas -Targu Mures, provided a living experience of the power of culture, art, architecture and beauty in affirming an authentic vision of human dignity, creativity, freedom and possibility. Furthermore, the working example of our partner organisation demonstrated a concrete

framework within which to test this vision of human dignity which grounded all of the activities of the Summer School.

***'Viviamo – The Art of Living'* - Training and Cultural Trips**

Speakers

The World Youth Alliance and Greek Catholic Metropolitan Caritas – Targu Mures invited inspiring speakers and lecturers from throughout Europe to participate in the Summer School. These carefully selected speakers assisted the participants in the understanding and knowledge of the power of culture, art, architecture and beauty in affirming an authentic vision of human dignity, creativity, freedom and possibility.

Themes of talks:

- ***Philosophy*** – to provide an ethical and philosophical understanding of the human person. To gain a living understanding of the cultural conditions which best facilitate the integral development of the human person.
- ***Renovation and tradition*** – to demonstrate the need to retain a cultural identity and person centred living environment.
- ***Architecture*** – to discuss the philosophy of Architecture, the impact on those who encounter it and the implications of space, function and material.
- ***Totalitarianism and Ideology*** – to experience and study the effects of ideologies, such as Communism, on all areas of culture.
- ***Policy*** - to create a policy proposal for habitat and development which goes beyond technical and economical considerations, the World Youth Alliance believes that there is need to develop proposals which reflect fully the real needs and capacities of the human person.
- ***Human rights and United Nations system*** – to understand development, habitat global health issues including HIV/AIDS and maternal health.

Throughout the 2 weeks of ***'Viviamo – The Art of Living'*** participants were given the unique opportunity to receive specialised guidance from a vast range of speakers. In addition the Summer School provided an environment where the young participants were able to interact with the speakers and discuss, in depth, the issues and themes of ***'Viviamo – The Art of Living'*** and therefore gain a greater understanding of the dignity of the human person.

'Viviamo – The Art of Living' – Programme

Monday 17th July	
Theme	Introduction
Afternoon	Presentation of World Youth Alliance Presentation of Partner Organisation: Greek-Catholic Metropolitan Caritas Ideas and activities; explanation of WYA Charter Introduction to WYA method of work & Declarations
Key Texts	WYA Charter and WYA Declarations Anna Halpine: Human Dignity and Totalitarianism
Evening	Meeting Host Families
Tuesday 18th July	
Theme Morning	Totalitarianism & Ideology The legacy of Communism Visit to Sighet Memorial
Afternoon	Tour of Maramures
Key Texts	Viktor Frankl: Man's Search for Meaning
Wednesday 19th July	
Theme Morning	Freedom Human Freedom and the Philosophy of the Human Person Lecture, Workshop & Discussions
Key Texts	Viktor Frankl: Man's Search for Meaning George Weigel: Two ideas of Freedom Introduction to thought of Karol Wojtyła
Evening	Film Evening
Thursday 20th July	
Theme Morning	Beauty, Art and Architecture Aesthetic value and experience Understanding the role of culture in teaching the art of living according to one's dignity Lecture, Workshop & Discussions
Afternoon	Tour of Targu Mures with local architects
Key Texts	Luis Barragan: Acceptance Speech Joseph Pieper: Only the Lover Sings Paul Johnson: Rules and Ravages of Ideological Art
Friday 21st July	
Morning	The Art of Living Practical Work: The need for beauty in living environments
Afternoon	Family: bedrock of a free and just society The relational dimension of the human person Vocation, freedom and self-gift
Saturday 22nd July	
Theme Morning	Human Rights & United Nations System History of UN, UDHR and UN Charter Ideas that shape the creation of the International Institutions

Key Texts	Mary Ann Glendon: Universal Human Rights Jacques Maritain: Man and the State, Chapter IV John Paul II: Centessimus Annus
Evening	Dinner with Host Families at Youth Centre Cultural Party: Traditional dances, music, poems
Sunday 23rd July	
Theme	The Role of Culture Leisure – The Basis of Culture
Monday 24th July	
Theme Morning	UN Conferences of 1990s Population - Cairo, Cairo +5 Women's Rights - Beijing, Beijing +5 Children's Rights - World Summit for Children
Key Texts	WYA Esperanza Reports, letters, notes and press releases
Theme Afternoon	Outline of European Union Introduction to EU & Recent Issues of Concern
Key Texts	WYA Letters, Press Releases, Briefings, Ammendments
Tuesday 25th July	
Theme Morning	HIV/AIDS, Development & Maternal Mortality
Key Texts	Ugandan HIV/AIDS policy UNFPA MDG response Plowing the Sea - Michael Fairbanks & Globalization and Development
Theme	Ideology & Solidarity
Key Texts	Vaclav Havel: The Power of the Powerless Building a Free Cuba – Havel, Göncz, Walesa Norman Davies: God's Playground Azar Nafisi: Reading Lolita in Tehran - extracts from book
Afternoon	Presentation of Partner Organisation initiatives: understanding cultural conditions which best facilitate the integral development of the human person
Wednesday 26th July	
Theme All-day	Habitat and History Cultural Trip: Sibiu and Sighisoara Visit to medieval fortresses which are currently inhabited: Exploration of Romanian patrimony; the local habitat within a historical perspective
Thursday 27th July	
All-day	Cultural Trip: Brasov, Peles Castle
Friday 28th July	
Themes	Cultural and Educational Engagement Concluding discussions: habitat and development; art, architecture, beauty, policy and culture Next steps: partner organisations; cultural projects; training programme; capacity building
Afternoon	Thank you Presentations, Free Time & Departures

'Viviamo – The Art of Living' - Success of the programme

Introduction:

The World Youth Alliance Europe selected 30 bright young Europeans to participate in 'Viviamo – The Art of Living' and provided an environment in which these participants could live, work and study together. In line with the Viviamo Global Objectives, WYAE trained the young Europeans in an understanding of human dignity through a diverse and enriching programme of lectures and cultural trips. Through building networks of friendship and solidarity around a common objective, the young people were given the opportunity to learn the art of living in a manner commensurate with their dignity. In addition, they gained a vibrant understanding and experience of the importance of affirming human dignity at all levels of culture and policy.

Participants:

The young Eastern and Western Europeans participants, each with their own culture, area of study and perspective, committed themselves to 2 weeks of 'Viviamo – The Art of Living'. The Summer School provided them with the training, structure and support that these young people need to be effective agents of cultural change. Through recognising the necessity of reflecting human dignity within the environments in which they live, young people will start to develop an understanding of the human person that will help shape many areas of culture and policy.

Magdalena, Poland, aged 23

Q. Did you, as a young person of the 21st century, feel concerned about these themes?

A. I did feel concerned but the Summer School made me feel responsible and recognise myself as a steward.

Q. Which was your favourite theme?

A. The most interesting for me was the lecture given by Prof Porebski. It made me rediscover human dignity (a broader understanding of it.)

Romanian participant, aged 21

Q. What was the most important thing that you learned when discussing this theme?

A. That you need to be attentive for in every moment you exercise your freedom by choosing things and you need to choose wisely.

T.F, Romania, aged 20

Q. Do you think the cultural trips complemented adequately the themes discussed?

A. Yes, the discussions helped us understand better some of the things we have seen or we have heard during our trips or what we have read about.

Q. Was the programme a good intercultural experience?

A. Yes, it was great to meet so many foreigners all at once and discuss interesting topics realising that we have common interests.

Christina, Scotland, aged 23

Q. What was your favourite theme?

A. Coming from an artistic background I would have to say that I loved the discussions on the role and need of beauty as an affirmation of our human dignity. Furthermore through the realisation that the environment in which we live affects our perception of our human dignity we can promote policies regarding habitat and development that are centred on the person and promote the integral development of a person.

Siziana, Romania, aged 26

Q. Which was your favourite theme?

A. It is very hard to choose. Maybe that beauty, arts and architecture as an expression of human dignity.

Romanian participant, aged 20

Q. Did you think the place was appropriate? Did you feel immersed in the local culture?

A. The place was appropriate because of the mentality of the people in Romania. Romania is still very affected by the 'restrictive freedom' of the communist era.

Elisabeth, Serbia, aged 23

Q. Do you think the cultural trips complemented adequately the themes discussed?

A. I think that the cultural trips were especially important to give us a common experience of the culture and a place for common discussion.

Lectures and Cultural Trips:

'Viviamo – The Art of Living' provided the young Europeans with high quality speakers who shared their richness of experience, knowledge and understanding of the dignity of the human person at the level of policy and culture.

In order to provide the young people with a deep authentic appreciation of the dignity of the human person lectures were given on the philosophy of the human person and the concept of freedom by Professor Porębski, a lecturer at the Jagiellonian University and Tischner European University in Kraków, Poland. Through further discussions and exercises on the definition of 'dignity' the participants, staff and speakers were able to establish a strong foundation of solidarity and intercultural exchange.

Throughout the two weeks the young people examined together how this dignity should be affirmed in the environments in which we live. Though lectures of the power of culture, the philosophy of Architecture and the role and need of beauty the young people were able to understand their contribution to society and inject a new hope and vision into our culture through living different aspects of their intrinsic dignity: freedom, joy, solidarity, self-gift, work and contemplation.

The participants also examined together how this dignity should be affirmed in our approach to bioethical issues, family policy and global health challenges such as HIV / AIDS. Participants also examined the nature of human freedom and the impact of ideologies such as Communism upon the human person. Though the cultural trips and practical work they also acquired a living understanding of the cultural conditions which best facilitate the integral development of the human person.

Through experiencing the art of living in a way that fully affirms the joy, dignity, freedom and creativity of the human person, these young people developed a true solidarity and sense of purpose. Therefore, the young people gained an authentic vision of the human person and the importance of affirming and articulating the dignity of the human person at all levels of policy and culture – from the grassroots levels to international institutions.

Response of the Participants

The response and enthusiasm of the young Europeans who participated in the Summer School was evident and many wrote moving testimonies of the Summer School experience. Many had never had the opportunity to enter in such great depth in to the issues of communism, art, architecture, solidarity and international policy.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the two weeks spent in Targu Mures for 'Viviamo – The Art of Living' was a time of enlightenment for many and an opportunity for great personal growth for all who took part. Through experiencing the art of living in a way that fully affirms the joy, dignity, freedom and creativity of the human person, these young people will develop a true solidarity and sense of purpose. Through recognising the necessity of reflecting human dignity within the environments in which they live, young people will start to develop an understanding of the human person that will help shape many areas of culture and policy.