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BOOK REVIEW

Council of Europe (2010) *T-Kit No. 11 – Mosaic: The Training Kit for Euro-Mediterranean Youth Work* Council of Europe Publishing; Cedex, 423 pages, ISBN 978-92-871-6577-0

T-Kit No. 11 – Mosaic: The training kit for Euro-Mediterranean Youth Work (2010) is a thematic publication authored by experienced youth trainers and experts and constitutes an excellent resource for non formal educational activities. The tool kit is a laudable achievement in the youth field because it researches and proposes non formal educational methodologies reflecting the realities of young people in the 47 member states of the Council of Europe and the 10 MEDA countries. The task set for the authors was however challenging since the Euro-Mediterranean area is a diverse one. While the risk of falling into generalisation and stereotyping is always present in such an enormous task, this is skilfully avoided in the text. Written by a multidisciplinary team, the T-Kit is an excellent intercultural production which and explores issues that are relevant to the different social and cultural contexts in this region.

This T-Kit provides those involved in youth work and training projects with tools to enable the young people they work with to participate most effectively within the projects they are engaged in. However the text is more than a collection of activities. It also provides theoretical discussion and critical engagement with several important themes and poses some poignant questions for reflection. It aims to enhance the exchange of experience and good practice in the youth field and, to this end, contributes towards the actualisation of the Council of Europe and European Commission Youth Partnership agreement ‘to promote active European citizenship and civil society by giving impetus to the training of youth leaders and youth workers working within a European dimension’. The training focus of the kit is on intercultural learning, citizenship and human rights education and provides youth workers, trainers and project leaders with both theoretical and practical tools to address the common issues faced by young people participating in Euro Mediterranean youth projects.

The text is effectively structured into three sections; an introduction, the themes and the activities. The introductory section addresses the conceptual framework embraced by the tool kit and explains to the reader how the kit is

structured. Importantly it documents the pedagogical approach the kit adopts which is based on experiential, intercultural and participative learning, is action orientated and applies non formal education principles. Non-formal learning is purposive but voluntary learning that takes place in a diverse range of environments and situations for which teaching/training and learning is not necessarily the sole or main activity. The activities and courses are planned, but are seldom structured by conventional rhythms or curriculum subjects (Chisholm, 2005). The text proposes that the main objective of youth work should be to provide opportunities for young people to shape their own futures. The introductory section also provides a useful note on terminology over which there is often confusion in the youth field.

The second section has several chapters exploring the thematic areas reflecting the specific fields of cooperation being developed in youth projects. The structure of these thematic chapters is excellent in that they start off by defining the key concepts employed in the text and locating these within the specific challenges faced by European and Mediterranean societies. The chapters then explore how these issues are related to the life world of young people and on a more practical note, how they may be addressed in youth projects. The thematic chapters provide the opportunity for youth workers to think and reflect and not just 'do, thus emphasising their role as reflective practitioners. The thematic chapters combine theoretical approaches with practical tips on how to integrate the particular issues in youth work activities.

The last section provides a series of activities fitting several themes simultaneously that can be used in Euro Mediterranean youth projects, youth work being a summary expression for activities with and for young people of a social, cultural, educational or political nature. The activities are tried and tested initiatives submitted by experienced practitioners and are such that they may be adapted to suit the requirements any group of young people in any Euro Mediterranean project. Thirty activities are presented in this section. Each activity highlights the relevant themes and the issues addressed in the task. It also documents very clear objectives. All practicalities are sufficiently addressed, such as materials needed, instructions for youth workers, and tips for facilitators, possible variations and suggestions for follow up. The activities stress the importance of processing the activities. The text also includes handouts to be used during the sessions.

On the whole, the text is well researched and written and structured in a user friendly manner. It is very instructive and contributes towards youth work provision. To this end it is a very political text in that it provides the opportunity for real participation, liberation and empowerment of young people. It also attempts to deconstruct what is generally understood by the terms 'European' and 'Mediterranean'. The activities are creatively designed to address through experiential learning different aspects of young people's

life worlds, ranging from family conflict to perceptions of beauty, tolerance of different religious beliefs, attitudes to migration etc. The activities are participant centred, that is, the focus is what the young people may learn from these experiences. They start and end with the participants realities. The activities also link the personal with the political. For example, an activity which does this particularly well is the one titled 'My History' where participants share and discuss their personal histories and how they connect with history in general. There are also several activities surrounding the important area of youth identities.

This training kit does however lack engagement with the current discussions taking place in the sociology of youth and perhaps most notably critical engagement with the concepts of 'youth', 'transition' and 'risk'. Comparative studies increasingly show changes in the sequence and pattern of transition to an extent that the rationale for its use is being rapidly eroded (Mizen, 2004). The concept of youth transitions in a risk society is not sufficiently engaged in within the text.

This tool kit nonetheless provides an excellent resource for the youth worker/trainer working within the Euro Mediterranean region and is a significant contribution to youth work practice methodology.

Chisholm, L. (2005) *At the end is the beginning: training the trainers in the youth field*. Council of Europe Publications, Strasbourg (also available in French)

Mizen, P. (2004) *The Changing State of Youth* Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.