A. Context and motivation

The idea for this project was formulated during a Human Rights themed Contact Making Seminar that took place in Kiev, Ukraine in November 2005. The CMS consisted of an equal number of participants from EU countries and BUR countries (Belarus, Ukraine and Russia). The partner groups involved in this project came together during one of the many activities and discussions that took place during the seminar. After discussing the similarities and differences between the young people that we work with, it became very clear to us that all of our target groups have very little knowledge or no idea at all about what their human rights actually are and are indeed unaware why they have human rights. These important issues made us realise that if we organised a project together it would be of huge benefit to all our young people. It was also agreed that the fact there is a healthy mix of disadvantaged, underpriveleged youth as well as young people from a non-disadvantaged background among our target groups, that the project would prove very succesful and beneficial to all.
The idea of cooperation betweeen countries from the European Union and countries from the new emerging Europe also added to the motivation of organising this project. It would help all participants become aware of their role as citizens of Europe and would help them develop a new understanding of cultural diversity and integration into european society.

Other reasons for deciding to put this project together were:

- There are so many youngsters, in all of the countries involved, that have no idea of their Human Rights, what they are, why they have them, etc.
- Prejudices on “both sides”:
  - EU: everything is perfect – is it?
  - BUR: all HR are violated – how is the situation really?
- Youngsters don’t connect HR to everyday live
- They think their problems are unique, but are they?

Why was Ukraine chosen as a venue for the exchange?

After the “Orange revolution” the citizens of Ukraine realised that they have rights, that they are able to defend them and more importantly, can have a say in their implementation. However, this idea of human rights awareness is still in its infancy in the Ukraine and needs to be developed

deeper than it is now, as the ways of defending HR and their realization in everyday life are far from being professional. Youth, as the most dynamic and vulnerable part of society, demand some clarification, experience and relevant practice in this sphere. Therefore, the participants of this exchange who will arrive from countries with a diverse level of human rights experience will contribute and help in the development and growth of human right concepts among Ukrainians.

Bonnybrook Youthreach, and indeed all the groups involved, are very willing and determined to engage in this project as it will benefit our students enormously by firstly, exposing them to new cultures and new ways of thinking, and secondly by engaging them in a wide range of activities and workshops that will make them aware of the concept of Human Rights. The project will help them become more aware of their own identity and allow them to broaden their horizons as well as establishing new friendships.

B. Preparation

A Long-term strategy of cooperation and preparation between the partners involved in this project was agreed during the CMS in October 2005 in Kiev/Ukraine. The main priority of this was to view the youth exchange as a tool for addressing HR issues, their implementation into reality and how HR awareness can assist in overcoming daily youth problems;

During the CMS, all partners discussed the project proposal in detail. We used our time to iron out any cultural differences which such a project would raise and discussed in depth any burning problems or issues that each partner organisation would have in relation to youth exchanges i.e. child protection guidelines, alcohol, responsibility for their target group etc. We analysed all our specific personal and professional needs and in essence used our time together as a feasibility visit to ensure that our proposal could indeed be carried out successfully. After agreeing on what each organisation expected from the exchange, we divided up a list of tasks that would be shared among the partners in the following way:

- All partners had to consult their own organizations to confirm their willingness to participate in this project;
- Partners from Germany, Turkey and Ireland would consult their National Agencies about the possibility of submitting the application in their countries.
- Partners from Belarus and Russia would search for co-funding to cover the 30% of travel costs as for some of the participants it would be too difficult to cover such expenses.
- All partners are responsible for their individual parts of the application as discussed and divided out during the CMS.
- Irish partner will be collecting all parts into one application form and communicating with the partner from Ukraine with regards to the necessary financial preparation and provisional budgeting.
- Ukrainian partner, as host of the proposed exchange, would vigorously investigate all possibilities and options for the hosting of the exchange, and meet with the local committee on youth affairs, prepare volunteers as technical assistants, etc.

The preliminary phase of the project will be carried out by intense internet communication in order to discuss the responsibilities of the group leaders of each participating country, prepare participants, as well as planning the details regarding the logistics of the project and the preparation of the envisioned workshops.

An advanced planning visit to the venue of the exchange is proposed for July/August 06. This APV would allow all the partners meet right before the event, get acquainted with the venue and available facilities and ensure each organisations satisfaction, iron out any creases that exist in the final programme of activities of the exchange, prepare necessary practical and financial arrangements and share the tasks and responsibilities that would be required during the exchange. On top of all this, the working meeting will be used to prepare the team in detail regarding the specific formation of the participating groups and to prevent possible conflicts and misunderstandings.

The international team for this project has already shown a high degree of organizational talent and sense of responsibility and many of its members have a lot of experience from previous projects. We feel that this will guarantee a successful implementation of the project.

In each of the partner organisations there will be at least 2 preparational meetings with the selected participants. During the first meeting, the participants will be informed about the details of the project, will get information on the seminar topics, about the YOUTH programme and the hosting country. During the second meeting the participants will get general information on human rights and will prepare and discuss the photos they will have to take about the situation of human rights in their environment. (These photos of exmples of human rights in action/or lack there of, will form an integral part of the programme of activities). The participants will therefore be motivated to actively take part during the whole project, as they will know that participants from the other countries are also preparing themselves. During the actual exchange, all the participants will have the chance to further develop their ideas and learn more about the theme of Human Rights.
Once all of the partner organisations have selected their participants, we will get them to initiate email contact and interact, as well as sending information about their countries, organisation etc. This will allow them to get to know each other before the exchange thus aiding in the breaking down of the cultural barriers that will exist between them.

C. Involvement of young people

The project will encompass 30 young people (5 from each partner organisation) between the ages of 17 and 22 and they will all, from start to finish, be involved in the implementation of the

exchange. The project aims to encourage, as much as possible, that the young people themselves take responsibility and command of the activities which will be done during the exchange. The main beneficiaries of this project will be as follows:

- A mix of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged youth between the ages of 17 and 22. A large proportion of the disadvantaged youth are early school leavers from a low socio-economic and at risk background, a large proportion whom display behavioural and emotional problems stemming from unstable, dysfunctional upbringings.

- The staff of each partner organisation through improved skills in inter-agency networking and exploring new methodologies with regard to Human Rights education

During the exchange the selected participants will receive general information on human rights, albeit in an interactive and interesting way. They will be encouraged to share their attitudes/knowledge about the issue and discuss the situation that they are aware of in their own countries. The group will then set about completing various tasks. Prior to the exchange they will take several photos about where in our daily lives we can face human rights violations. This will form the basis of a workshop where all participants will view, discuss and compare the Human rights situation of their own countries.
The participants will also discuss some of the possible ways to present their cultures (traditions, food, songs, everyday life, people etc.) during the intercultural evenings.

During the youth exchange the group leaders will mostly play the role of moderator/facilitator and try to create an atmosphere and conditions in which the youngsters will be able to act on their own, open themselves up and learn from each other. They will be given opportunities and space for planning and organizing different activities at the youth exchange (evening programme, workshops, etc).

Other points worth mentioning are:

- Contact of behaviour will be drawn up for all participants.
- Participants from Ireland, Germany, Turkey, Belarus, Russia and the Ukraine will commence email contact with each other to organise activities and help with their language skills.
- All students will be involved in the evaluation of the project.

- All countries will look at the possibility of including participants from ethnic minorities i.e. gypsies, travellers etc.

During the exchange, all the participants will make a commitment to actively take part in all events and be fully responsible for themselves and their partners. The hosting organisation's students are assuming full responsibility for the preparation of the activities for the exchange.
All the young people from the six countries will also be assuming responsibility for the preparation of the evening meals.

D. Theme

The overall theme of this project is Human Rights education. This theme however is a very complex and interesting one and will involve all participants looking at, among other things;

- What are my Human Rights?
- Why do I have them?
- How can I use them?
- How can I defend my Human Rights? How are they defended in general?
- The gap between Human Rights on paper and in reality.
- The differences in the implementation of Human Rights - how are situations in the different countries?

E. Objectives

Below is a list of our aims and objectives for this youth project:

Aims:

- Tolerance.
- Mutual understanding / learning.
- Overcoming national stereotypes.
- Self-development of the youngsters.
- Raising awareness about Human Rights.
- Addressing different "discrimination issues".

Objectives:

- Basic knowledge of Human Rights for all participants.
- Involving the youngsters in the preparation of the exchange, e.g. taking pictures of a situation related to HR in their everyday life in their own countries, etc.
- Exchange of 4/5 youngsters per country from different social, economical and cultural backgrounds
- Identify everyday problems and find common ways to deal with them – leading hopefully to individual solutions
- Produce leaflets, a film, etc. to distribute after the exchange and involve the public, the local communities, etc.

It is hoped that by carrying out this project and by working with our selected theme that the personal development of the participants will be enhanced through not only the exploration of Human Rights but also by;

- Creating awareness of cultural differences.
- Creating awareness of the ever present abuse of Human Rights.
- Replacing apathy with hope.
- Empowering the participants to overcome the barriers of social exclusion.
- Improving inter-personal skills, increased decision making and problem solving abilities.
- Increased knowledge of cultural differences and life experiences.
- Increasing confidence, self esteem and self awareness.

F. Activity programme

Please see online programme timetable

G. Impact at local level

As each partner organisation will have their selected participants working hard on the construction of the project and preparing for it, they will all undoubtedly share the information about the project in their organisations, among their friends and peers and with other young people who are a part of the local community. Moreover, the participants will have to take pictures reflecting the situation related to human rights in their everyday life within their countries. This will have an impact at a local level for them as they will be out and about working actively in the community.

During the exchange the local community of Crimea (the area of the Ukraine where the project will take place) will be directly influenced. It is planned to arrange an exhibition of the above-mentioned pictures right on the street and invite local community representatives to have a look at them. During the exchange there will be field tasks, visits out to see exhibitions and interviews with local people to name but a few. This will ensure direct contact with community members living in the neighbourhood of the venue and surrounding areas. In order to widen the scope of activities it is agreed to rent a boat and visit nearby places to distribute leaflets containing the basics of human rights, to not only locals, but also people from different countries who reside there or who are visiting.

We will ensure that representatives from the media will cover the activities and communicate with the participants. We are planning to have the project highlighted in the local newspapers and also on television. We are also going to pursue the idea of a public debate on human rights during the exchange. From this evidence it is clear that the project will have a huge impact at local level.

Beneficiaries of the project:

The Participants: Youth from diverse economic, social and cultural backgrounds.

The Organisations of the participants: All of the group leaders work with colleagues, other members and/or volunteers who implement various programmes and activities directly targeting young people.

The group leaders: 1 to 2 group leaders from each organisation will be involved in the project. This will provide them with huge experience and contribute to their skill level and ability to perform their duties.

Interculturelles Zentrum (Austria): As organiser of the CMS in Kiev the participants of this exchange have been encouraged to disseminate the project results with this organisation, as they

are actively involved in large scale projects involving CIS countries (more specifically targeting Russia, Ukraine and Belarus).

In some specific cases the formal education sector will benefit from the project as some of the group leaders/participants are working or studying in the universities. For instance, the group leader of our partner from Russia is working also as a teacher in University.

H. Intercultural dimension

The official language of this multi lateral exchange will be English. However as there will be participants who have a very basic level of English, all participants will be encouraged to communicate slowly and clearly and by using non verbal forms of communicating. This will be to show our youth that it is not so hard or impossible to communicate with people from other cultures. By doing this we will ensure that all participants get to share in the “we feeling” of the group.

The idea of this project is centred on the idea that best way of acquiring new knowledge occurs through the method of ‘learning through experience’ and through direct contact. This is the reason why our multilateral exchange project has become a very important aspect of our work. This project will undoubtedly foster intercultural dialogue by bringing together young people from 6 different countries and completely different backgrounds.

The main aim during the whole project is to expose our young people to an intercultural learning process. By them being involved in meeting and communicating with participants from all over Europe, it will no doubt influence their perception and awareness of their active roles in European society. Furthermore, the participants should learn that “the willingness to learn from each other” is a condition for “acting together”, which is more and more important in Europe. Moreover, it is very important for us to increase our participants acceptance and tolerance towards other peoples “strange” perspectives and to challenge their own ideas and attitudes. The main part of intercultural learning, therefore, is to realise that different opinions and points of view are not a negative thing but instead something that can lead to fostering an attitude of understanding and tolerance among the people of Europe.

The central theme of this project is raising youth awareness on human rights in every day live. However, as the participants will be exposed to 9 days of intensive personal contact with people from different countries and from a different background, they will ultimately see that those who are different from themselves are equally important and valuable human beings. Furthermore,

they will see that the participants from the other countries and from other social and economical backgrounds can have the same problems as they themselves have.
The discussing of the issues that were outlined as themes of the exchange will broaden the scope of the intercultural learning process and further add to the development of mutual understanding, tolerance and the fight against racism.

I. Follow-up and evaluation

During our exchange project, we will have time each morning for any questions or concerns to be brought up. This will allow us to address any problems, ensuring a more successful HR project.
There will also be a mid-exchange evaluation in order for the youth to reflect on their experiences so far, and collaborate to eliminate any problems that have come up. At the end of each day we will allow the youth time to reflect on the days events and discuss what they have learned and their opinions of it. This will be supplemented by having the youth fill out forms, surveys etc. We will have all participants in the project do a 'before and after' questionnaire so as to gauge the exact learning outcomes of the exchange and to measure its success. The youth will be required to self-evaluate their knowledge, skills and tolerance towards other cultures. Through this, we will be able to ascertain where the youth feel they have grown and developed as a result of the project.

The youngsters who will be involved in this project will make a presentation of the results of the exchange to their youth group and possibly to their local communities and media. This will be aided by the reports, brochures, interviews etc that will be created during the actual project itself. This will allow the youth to have a formal platform to share their stories, photos, experiences etc not only within their own organizations but also with the wider community. Time will also be given at the end of the exchange for the youth to discuss possibilities of developing new project ideas, partnerships and new youth projects.

We will create a memory book for all participants. This will have personal information about all the participants in the project, their comments about the exchange and photos with. This will encourage the youth to keep in contact with each other and will hopefully lead to new projects and continued collaboration.

Staff from each of the organisations will communicate after the exchange to evaluate the project and discuss results, keeping in mind a) the original objectives b) the unforeseen and unexpected elements of the exchange and c) the lessons learned