

UNICEF CEE/CIS and Baltic States Programme
EVALUATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION
REPORT FROM THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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Skopje

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the Country Programme of Cooperation between UNICEF and Macedonia from 2002 – 2004 a youth project was implemented as a part of the Education Programme. The purpose of the youth project was to improve young people’s health and their opportunities for participation and development. The key objectives were:

- To establish an adolescent friendly family, community and education environment promoting youth development and participation
- To promote adequate information and preventive measures and services for youth with risk behaviour
- To promote life skills among adolescents and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS among the general population and especially among drug users¹.

The initiative ‘What every Adolescent has the Right to Know’ (RtK), launched globally by UNICEF in 2001, became the main tool for UNICEF in Macedonia to empower young people to educate their peers in HIV/AIDS prevention through participatory action research and participation of young people in the identification, design and implementation of a peer communication strategy targeting young people and especially vulnerable young people with HIV/AIDS prevention. It aimed specifically at supporting key Government and NGO partners in providing adolescents with information and life skills for HIV/AIDS prevention through the recognition and implementation of the right of adolescents to have the vital information, services and networks that can help them to make informed and healthier choices. The aim was to be achieved by strengthening youth organisations’ and young people’s capacities in the areas of PAR (Participatory Action Research), communication strategy development and evaluation implementation.

The variety of projects realised and carried out within the framework of the RtK project since 2002 are the key focus of this evaluation of youth participation in UNICEF supported projects.

The purpose of this field evaluation is to determine the levels of youth participation in UNICEF supported HIV/AIDS prevention activities within the RtK project in Macedonia. The evaluation will generate inputs to a larger evaluation on Youth Participation in the CEE/CIS & Baltics Region commissioned by the UNICEF Regional Office in Geneva.

The field evaluation in Macedonia should in addition be seen as a thorough evaluation of the RtK project and its processes with youth participation in Macedonia and could therefore also be useful for other countries that are in the process of implementing interventions within the same frame work or frameworks similar to the UNICEF led ‘What Every Adolescents has the Right to Know’ project.

In addition the evaluation will be used as evidence base to further improvement of young peoples participation in UNICEF supported programmes, projects and activities in the new Country Programme of Cooperation with the Government of Macedonia from 2005 – 2009. Such activities will still have its focus within the HIV/AIDS and Young Peoples Health programme, but with a new approach specifically supporting youth participation in decision-making. It is hoped that the evaluation of youth participation in the design and implementation of activities where young people were both the target group and stake holders will help us and our partners to understand better the mechanisms of youth participation in project activity implementation and thus strengthen UNICEF’s promotion of child and youth participation across all UNICEF supported programmes and activities in Macedonia.

¹ From the Master Plan of Operations between UNICEF and the Government of Macedonia 2002 - 2004

The process of evaluating young people's participation in UNICEF supported project activities in Macedonia began with training workshop in participatory evaluation conducted by Ms. Meg Gawler, consultant to the Regional UNICEF Office of the CEE/CIS & Baltics Region. The training took place in September, 2004 and involved 14 young peer educators age 16 – 18 from the NGO H.E.R.A, who had been involved in the UNICEF, supported activities within the Right to Know project. A Principal Researcher, Mr. Ljupco Risteski from the Institute of Ethnology in Skopje was identified by the UNICEF office to participate in the training and thus be the principal responsible for the actual evaluation of youth participation in Macedonia. Mr. Ljupco Risteski was identified as he had been leading the Participatory Action Research carried out within the RtK project. His past experience with PAR methods and his knowledge about the RtK project proved to be valuable for the training and for the further design and implementation of the evaluation.

The rationale for the choice of methodology, participatory evaluation, and the development of indicators, definition of key questions and data sources and methods of data collection, was linked to the fact that young people were participating fully in the whole process of evaluation. This was done to ensure a greater understanding of the evaluation process of the target group and to work towards ensuring that the qualitative evaluation results would be as objective as possible. It was found that the fact that young people were functioning as evaluators in combination with the chosen tools and methods for data collection ensured a safe and fun environment for the young people during the evaluation. Some limitations to the methodology are pointed out in the report and they mainly have to do with the fact that both the data collection process and the process of analysing the qualitative findings were very consuming for the evaluation team.

Key Results:

This evaluation has generated many findings that are related to both the process of involving young people in evaluation processes and in the process of planning, implementing and monitoring project activities with participation of young people. The most interesting findings are the findings that are directly related to how participation has changed young people. In summary they were found to be:

- *Improved level of knowledge and information:*
Young people felt that they had improved their level of knowledge and information with regards to the subjects discussed in the project activities
- *Meeting other young people of different social backgrounds as well as of different attitudes, values and needs:*
Young people found that meeting other young people from different environments through working together had increased their understanding towards their peers and their willingness to work together in common projects
- *Freedom to express own ideas and develop creativity:*
Young people found that the freedom to express ones own ideas and to develop creative skills were some of the most important achievements of participating in project activities.
- *Active participation in modern societal trends:*
It was found that while most of the young people had not been involved in influencing policies and decision making, their participation in the project activities and the promoting of the project results had given the participants opportunities to influence their immediate environment
- *Change of personal attitudes and values:*
While the evaluators found it difficult to measure change in personal attitudes and values the evaluation did find that especially the engagement with peers from other backgrounds and working together with young people in general had positively changed young people's attitudes towards tolerance, team work and the importance of creating something together.
- *Improved communication among family members, peers and the wider environment:*
It was found that the participating young people had encountered increased respect and trust from adults in their immediate environment that would see them different than before they

were involved in the activities.

- *Making a better use of free time:*
The opportunities for spending free time in fun, active and creative ways were rated as very important by young people especially young people living outside Skopje.
- *Professional orientation (life skills)*
The young people that were directly involved in creative activities felt that they had gained essential practical skills, such as communication skills through theatre, peer educational activities and journalistic workshops, skills in using the web and creating web sites and in drawing comic strips and in graphic design that could be used in their further development and maybe even in future professional career.

Key Conclusions

The key conclusions of the youth participation evaluation are that youth participation is an excellent tool for getting essential messages across to other young people for example when it comes to information, skills and attitude building. Youth participation ensures a learning environment that is fun and creative and gives meaning to the young people participating, when they have the right and opportunities to influence. In addition youth participation makes young people more tolerant and understanding towards their peers and it increases their motivation for participating in society and their feeling of responsibilities and of having an important place in the society.

Conclusions that were drawn concerning the capacities of organisations and institutions involved (the duty bearers) showed that youth participation requires understanding, openness, transparency, responsibility, but also facilitation from the duty bearers side. Youth participation start processes that require strategies that is flexible and adaptable to the young people participating and to their needs and wishes. The challenge for UNICEF and partners involved in implementing projects where young people are participating is to strive towards achieving the expected results while at the same time being true to the processes that the very participation of young people has initiated.

Key Recommendations

When summarising the recommendations based on the evaluation of youth participation in UNICEF supported projects it is evident that youth participation works and that we should continue to engage young people in the design and planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of project activities targeting young people. A key recommendation for duty bearers, that we would like to point out here, is the need for implementing activities where it is mostly needed, for example among especially vulnerable young people and in rural areas, where young people do not have many other opportunities to be engaged and to learn. This also requires that tools and methods implied in the different strategic interventions are adaptable to the young people they are targeting and to their environment. For example, the evaluators found it difficult to use evaluation tools where writing and reading skills were required, when evaluating youth participation of especially vulnerable young people such as young people that are institutionalised as this group often found it difficult to concentrate over a longer period and when met with challenges of reading and writing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Context.....	1
1.1	Child Rights Issues.....	1
1.2	Situation at the Start of the Programme.....	1
1.3	Description of the Programme to promote Young People’s Participation.....	2
2	Evaluation Design and Methodology.....	5
2.1	Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation.....	5
2.2	Design.....	6
2.3	Methodology and Indicators.....	6
2.4	Participants in the evaluation process.....	14
3	Key Results.....	16
3.1	Young Voices Survey.....	16
3.2	How Participation has Changed Young People.....	16
3.3	Capacities of Participating Organizations / Institutions.....	22
3.4	Legal and Policy Environment.....	32
3.5	Effects of Participation on UNICEF’S Programme.....	35
3.5.1	Effects on Achieving Programme Objectives.....	35
3.5.2	Contribution to the Goals of the Medium-Term Strategic Plan.....	36
3.5.3	Contribution to the Regional Strategy on Young People and HIV/AIDS.....	36
4	Conclusions.....	38
4.1	What Worked well and not so well.....	38
4.2	Methods and Processes to Promote Youth Participation.....	42
4.3	Strengthening Participation.....	44
4.4	Recommendations.....	46
4.4.2	Recommendations on the Process.....	48
4.4.3	General Recommendations.....	48
5	Annexes.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	List of Abbreviations.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Terms of Reference and Cost of Evaluation.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Stakeholders.....	56
	Evaluation Framework.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Evaluation Timetable.....	62
	Sampling Methodology.....	64
	Details on the Methodology.....	66
	List of Key Informants.....	74
	List of Documents Consulted.....	80
	Additional Data of Interest.....	81

1 CONTEXT

1.1 CHILD RIGHTS ISSUES

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is located in the heart of Southern Central Europe and gained independence from the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia in 1991. Since this time Macedonia has faced a difficult period of economic transition, and in addition to this, has had to manage the effects of the Kosovo crisis in 1999 as well as a brief internal conflict in 2001. These factors have adversely affected the situation of children and young people growing up in Macedonia. Today the percentage of the population living in poverty is 22.6.

Since the 1990’s the improvements in nutrition, the decrease in under-five and infant mortality rates have been positive developments for children. However, poverty, declining standards of health, access to quality health care, social security, adequate housing, the situation of children of families living in poverty and employment were issues the independent Macedonia had to struggle with and are still struggling with here in 2005. Limited access to quality education, including education in the mother tongue, has been repeatedly described by Human Rights observers as an obstacle holding back generations of children and leading to successive human rights problems. The access of children from minority groups, such as the Roma, to quality and long-term education is particularly limited. While the new law on decentralisation together with the newly initiated EU integration process has created new opportunities for improving the social, economic and civil rights of people in general, the situation of today still presents an ongoing challenge to the full and successful implementation of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), which was ratified by Macedonia in 1993.

As a positive step towards addressing children’s rights in Macedonia an Ombudsperson’s office for Children’s Rights was established in 1999. The Ombudsperson is independent and impartial from the Government and its objective is to take measures and appropriate actions when children’s rights are violated by the system. A National Committee for the Implementation of CRC has been established and a National Plan of Action for the implementation of CRC exists in a draft form. Macedonia has today an active civil society with engaged non governmental organisations, community based- and youth organisations that works to protect and promote the rights of children and young people.

In addition a National Youth Strategy covering the age group from 15 – 24 years was finalised in 2004 by the Government Agency for Youth and Sports in close collaboration with several youth NGOs in Macedonia. The National Youth Strategy is pending to be adopted by the Government and Parliament.

1.2 SITUATION AT THE START OF THE PROGRAMME

UNICEF celebrated its 10 years anniversary in Macedonia in 2004. In 1994 UNICEF began its first cycle of cooperation to support the national immunisation programme and to improve quality education in the country. A specific focus on young people’s situation, their health, development, protection and participation only took shape in 2001 when UNICEF carried out a rapid assessment to gain data about young people that may be especially vulnerable to HIV infection, their behaviours and risk and protective factors. While structures for young people’s involvement and participation in community life, through local youth councils and for sports and leisure activities did exist in the Former Yugoslav Republic – these structures suffered during the transition process after the independence.

Only with the beginning of the new millennium, youth organisations and NGOs working with children and young people began increasingly to focus on the situation of children and young people and their

right to participation. High rates of youth unemployment, increasing disparities and poverty in the young population and less opportunities for ‘ethnic minority youth’ to participate in society, together with the fear for HIV/AIDS spreading in Macedonia has increased the focus on young peoples situation both from Government and civil society, the UN and bi-lateral donors during the last 4 years.

1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAMME TO PROMOTE YOUNG PEOPLE’S PARTICIPATION

In the Country Programme of Cooperation between UNICEF and the Government of Macedonia from 2002 – 2004 a youth project was implemented as a part of the Education Programme. The purpose of the youth project was to improve young people’s health and their opportunities for participation and development. The key objectives in the Master Plan of Operations where:

- To establish an adolescent friendly family, community and education environment promoting youth development and participation
- To promote adequate information and preventive measures and services for youth with risk behaviour
- To promote life skills among adolescents and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS among the general population and especially among drug users².

The initiative ‘What every Adolescent has the Right to Know’ (RtK), launched globally by UNICEF in 2001, became the main tool for UNICEF in Macedonia to empower young people to educate their peers in HIV/AIDS prevention through participatory action research and participation of young people in the identification, design and implementation of a peer communication strategy targeting young people and especially vulnerable young people with HIV/AIDS prevention.

Globally the RtK initiative addressed the core recommendations and responses adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development (ICDP), the UNGASS on HIV/AIDS and UNICEF MTSP with regards to young people. The focus was on³:

- The implementation of a participatory process involving adolescents as active creators of information and knowledge, and generating commitment and motivation for action for development of a comprehensive communication strategy on HIV/AIDS prevention and related issues;
- A holistic approach to programming for adolescents comprising components for programme communication, advocacy and social mobilisation as well as essential complementary elements such as life-skills based education and livelihood skills development for adolescents in school and out of school, and youth friendly services;
- The building of technical partnerships at country, regional and international level, and strengthening the capacity for technical support and enhanced interaction between country and regional offices and partners for addressing HIV/AIDS prevention in youth;

In Macedonia the RtK initiative was supported by Swedish SIDA through a Sub-Regional project with usd 425,000.00 in 2003 and 2004. It aimed specifically at supporting key Government and NGO partners in providing adolescents with information and life skills for HIV/AIDS prevention through the recognition and implementation of the right of adolescents to have the vital information, services and networks that can help them to make informed and healthier choices. The aim was to be achieved by strengthening youth organisations’ and young peoples capacities in the areas of PAR (Participatory

² From the Master Plan of Operations between UNICEF and the Government of Macedonia 2002 - 2004

³ The RtK ‘Principles and Process’ document referred to in the publication HIV/AIDS and Youth in FYR Macedonia – Rapid Assessment and Response (RAR) and Participatory Action Research (PAR) for the project ‘What Every Adolescent Has a Right to Know’ 2002/2003. (UNICEF, Skopje 2004)

Action Research), communication strategy development and evaluation implementation. Activities carried out within the RtK project are the key focus of this evaluation.

Following the global and regional initiatives to commence the RtK, project, UNICEF in Skopje chose the Institute of Ethnology in early 2002 as the lead partner to facilitate the participatory action research element of the RtK project. It was envisaged that the RtK project would consist of three main elements: 1) Participatory Action Research, 2) Analysis and Evaluation, 3) Development of a peer communication strategy.

Five creative workshops were held between September and December 2002 with over 50 youth participants as a forum for PAR especially among vulnerable young people. This was followed up by a larger Participatory Action Research survey among adolescents and parents from different parts of Macedonia and different ethnic groups to determine the information level/knowledge about HIV/AIDS and attitudes among young people and parents towards HIV/AIDS, the relations to substance abuse, peer pressure and parents role in informing about HIV/AIDS. The findings from the creative workshops and the PAR survey were used as an evidence base to develop communication interventions targeting and involving young people with HIV/AIDS prevention through information and skills building using the 10 facts on HIV/AIDS as the main tool for learning, design and implementation of project activities carried out by 5 key NGOs of which three were NGOs already working in HIV/AIDS prevention (HOPS, H.E.R.A and MIA) and two NGOs were working with creative theatre methods (Art Forum and Theatre Youth of Macedonia). In 2004 the piloted project activities were scaled up to ensure a larger coverage and outreach. The focus of the RtK project activities were:

- Creative workshops in Skopje (web design, graphic design and photography and journalism) implemented by the NGO HOPS
- Interactive theatre workshops with institutionalised adolescents in Skopje implemented by NGO Art Forum
- A network of regional theatre workshops implemented by Youth Theatre of Macedonia
- Intergenerational dialogue in communities around Macedonia carried out by NGO MIA
- Peer educational workshops as a support to the above workshops carried out by H.E.R.A
- HIV/AIDS prevention articles written by and for young journalists carried out by the bilingual youth magazine Point.

A recent overall evaluation of the results from the RtK project took place to gather information from Macedonia and other participating countries to the sub regional final donor report to Swedish SIDA. An international consultant was hired by the sub regional project to interview key stake holders such as UNICEF project officers, researchers, NGO and youth leaders and young people who had participated in the RtK project. During this evaluation following cumulative activity outputs were concluded for the RtK project in Macedonia⁴:

- Through a focus on creativity, entrance points were created for engaging young people who never previously dealt with HIV-plus issues. Workshops were held in photography, comics, graphic design, journalism and web design, involving 60 young people, some who were street and working children and/or belonging to ethnic minorities. While training the young people in technical skills, facilitators opened up a space for discussion of issues related to the '10 facts'. Discussions resulted in creative work treating sexuality, discrimination, HIV,

⁴ Final Report to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency SIDA on the project 'What every Adolescent have the Right to Know – RtK' in Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro. Report commissioned by UNICEF, Vivianna Nyroos, an international consultant was hired by the project to conduct the assessment.

vulnerable groups etc. Products included photo exhibitions, a web-site www.imampravodaznam.org.mk / www.righttoknow.org.mk, a magazine, T-shirts, postcards, and an exhibition of graphic productions. Journalism participants published articles in a magazine distributed to 20,000 students in Macedonian and Albanian. Responsibility for activities is now taken over by the young facilitators, and activities will be continued through the establishment of a Youth Center.

- Through interactive theatre methods, about 90 young people in five different institutions were engaged in issues related to the '10 Facts'. Interactive theatre and circus performances were carried out. Due to the special conditions of these groups of young people, much focus was placed on work with communication, interaction and peaceful conflict resolution. Work was also carried out with caretakers in the institutions, who largely have changed from a hostile attitude to welcoming the project. Theatre methods showed to be an effective way of working with these young people, many of who are Roma and for whom Macedonian is a second language. Through theatre, they were able to express themselves in a different way, and discussion about sensitive topics was initiated. As a direct result of the activities, some harmful practices were diminished, such as physical violence, alcohol use and unhygienic tattooing, and young people's confidence when interacting with people outside the institutions is much increased. Internal monitoring found that, as a result of the project, knowledge and skills related to HIV-plus issues have increased considerably among participants.
- More than 1000 young people of different ethnicities were taught theatre techniques, and increased their understanding of the HIV-plus topics during the course of work. *"In the beginning, the gangsters were the ones with HIV"*.⁵ Twenty-five theatre plays were produced. Performances included open air theatre, public workshops, performance at the World AIDS day, a theatre festival, performances in primary schools and street theatre, in all reaching an audience of more than 20,000 people. Some plays had an open end in order to provoke discussions with the audience. 65 interviews to TV, radio and newspapers were given about the project. A youth theatre network has now been established between 15 towns. Support and sponsorships has been obtained from local authorities, the Ministry of Culture, and private donors.
- As a result of research findings that young people would like to receive information from their parents about HIV+ topics, a project was developed where 1000 young people and parents from seven towns participated in sessions for communication between parents and young people. This was achieved after intensive advocacy to get parents involved. Events were organized with happenings and distribution of educational material to inform the communities about the activities. A guide on how to reach improved parent-child communication has been written.
- Events and open house arrangements were organized to show results from the different activities and to attract more public attention. In 2003, Skopje City Park was the venue for exhibitions, a press launch, street theatre activities, peer educative games, videos, a music concert, and distribution of information materials. In December 2004, a final event was held with an exhibition, a theatre performance, a press conference, movies and distribution of promotion materials.
- Continuous training workshops were held for young peer educators in 12 urban and five rural areas, involving young people from ethnic minorities. Sixty trained peer educators then held a total of 90 sessions about HIV prevention, STIs etc. for their peers. Peer educators also provided support to RTK facilitators who were involved in other project activities.

⁵ Comment from a workshop coordinator, interview in Bitola, March 12, 2005

- A document recording the PAR process and results was published with the assistance from UNICEF, for distribution to partners and donors, together with the findings from an earlier RAR (Rapid Assessment and Response) that was carried out in 2001 to better understand the context of vulnerability and the types of risk behaviour in which young people engage⁶.
- Seven interactive TV episodes were developed by young people treating HIV-plus issues, and were broadcasted by the Macedonian National Station.
- Through the involved RTK NGO partners and UNICEF technical support, the Right to Know project was influential in the formulation of a National Youth Strategy finalized in 2004 and submitted to the Government for approval and adoption. The National Youth Strategy has a strong focus on HIV/AIDS prevention among young people, youth at risk and the importance of youth participation in general - all key areas promoted by the RTK project as key areas of concern.

This Evaluation on Youth Participation focuses mainly on the project activities carried out within the RtK project framework in an attempt to analyse the methods used to encourage young participation and the level of youth participation within the project activities.

2 EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this field evaluation is to determine the levels of youth participation in UNICEF supported HIV/AIDS prevention activities within the RtK project in Macedonia. The evaluation will generate inputs to a larger evaluation on Youth Participation in the CEE/CIS & Baltics Region commissioned by the UNICEF Regional Office in Geneva. In addition to the Medium-Term Strategic Plan, UNICEF in the CEE/CIS & Baltics has defined young peoples participation, as a further area of emphasis. The aim of the Regional evaluation is therefore to determine to what extent UNICEF is systematically promoting young peoples participation in its programmatic approaches.

The field evaluation in Macedonia will in addition be used as evidence base to further improve young peoples participation in UNICEF supported programmes, projects and activities in the new Country Programme of Cooperation with the Government of Macedonia from 2005 – 2009.

The main objectives are:

- To determine to what extent UNICEF is systematically promoting young peoples participation in Macedonia
- To better understand the ways in which UNICEF is promoting young peoples participation in Macedonia.
- To provide recommendations for further strengthening of youth participation in UNICEF supported interventions.

Activities to support youth participation will in the new country programme mainly have its focus within the HIV/AIDS and Young Peoples Health programme, where a specific project will support youth participation in decision-making. It is hoped that the evaluation of youth participation in the design and implementation of activities where young people were both the target group and stake

⁶ HIV/AIDS among youth in FYR, Macedonia, 2004. Commissioned and published by UNICEF Skopje

holders will help us and our partners to understand better the mechanisms of youth participation in project activity implementation and thus strengthen UNICEF’s promotion of child and youth participation across all UNICEF supported programmes and activities in Macedonia.

In June 2005 a Special Session on Children in Macedonia will take place with participation of Government, NGOs, Academia and young people. Prior to the Special Session a Youth Preparatory Forum will take place to facilitate the participation of young people in the Special Session. The Youth Preparatory Forum will focus on what should be done to strengthen young people’s participation in areas of their concern in general and specifically in decision making on national, municipal and community level. This field evaluation therefore comes timely as its conclusions and recommendations can be used directly to generate discussions and seek solutions for action at the Youth Preparatory Forum and at the Special Session on Children in Macedonia.

2.2 DESIGN

The process of evaluating young people’s participation in UNICEF supported project activities in Macedonia began with training workshop in participatory evaluation conducted by Ms. Meg Gawler, consultant to the Regional UNICEF Office of the CEE/CIS & Baltics Region. The training took place in September, 2004 and involved 14 young peer educators age 15 – 18 from the the NGO H.E.R.A, who had been involved in the UNICEF supported activities within the Right to Know project. A Principal Researcher, Mr. Ljupco Risteski from the Institute of Ethnology in Skopje had been identified by the UNICEF office to participate in the training and thus be the principal responsible for the actual evaluation of youth participation in Macedonia. Mr. Ljupco Risteski was identified as he had been leading the Participatory Action Research carried out within the RtK project. His past experience with PAR methods and his knowledge about the RtK project proved to be valuable for the training and for the further design and implementation of the evaluation. During the training and the following field evaluation a short film documenting the process was made.

The fact that UNICEF’s target group in HIV/AIDS prevention (young people) participated actively in the whole process of designing the evaluation, implementing the evaluation and discussing/ verifying key results, conclusions and recommendations fits very well in line with a (human) rights based approach to programming where it is a key factor that both rights and duty bearers participate in the full process of programme design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of results. The full participation of young people in the evaluation has fostered commitment and responsibility to the whole process from the young evaluator’s side and has in that way improved the evaluation. The young evaluators were within the same age group as the young people being evaluated and could therefore help to create a supportive environment where the youth participants felt comfortable in talking and expressing their ideas and concerns during the evaluation process. In addition the young evaluators came from communities where the evaluation was carried out and their insight in the local environment also helped to understand the situation of young people and the projects implemented in in these communities.

2.3 METHODOLOGY AND INDICATORS

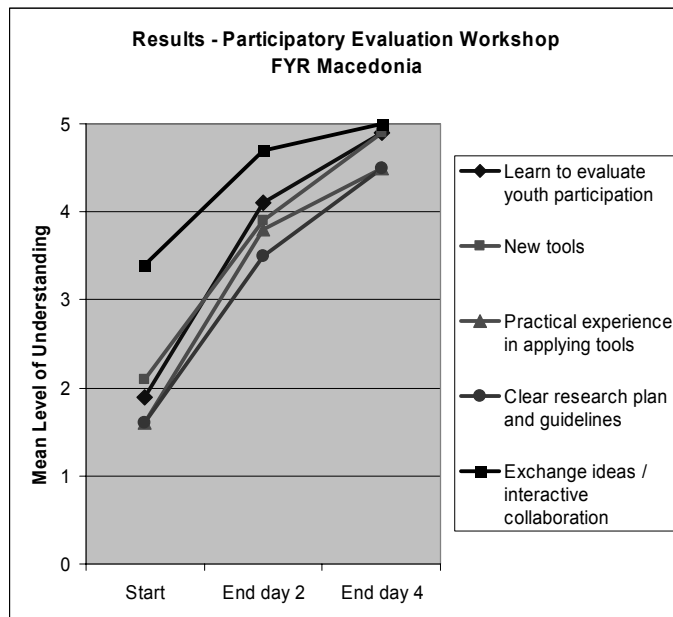
This section explains the methodology used during the evaluation including the training in participatory evaluation where the methodology and indicators were discussed and agreed upon, sampling methodology, indicators and benchmarks, methods tools and techniques for data collecting and analysis, systematization, classification and processing of the empirical materials and discusses the major advantages and limitations of participatory evaluation methodology

Training in Participatory Evaluation

At the training workshop mentioned above in 2.2, the participants were introduced to the most important strengths and limitations of the use of participatory evaluation and to the basic tools and techniques normally used in participatory evaluation. During the training workshop, some of the tools were tested by evaluating a peer group, who had been participants in the RtK project as well. The fact that the participants of the workshop were involved in the RtK project and thus were acquainted with the methodology and the object of the evaluation eased the training and secured the participation of the young people in whole process. The most significant benefit from the training workshop was the fact that the young people through their participation were influential in designing the concept of the basic evaluation framework, in formulating specific research questions and defining indicators, and in identifying possible data sources and appropriate tools needed for the evaluation process. The fact that young people were not just trained as evaluators but also participated in the whole process of designing the evaluation during the Participatory Evaluation Workshop added value to the results of the workshop. As Figure 1 below shows, the youth evaluators clearly felt that they had improved their knowledge and skills in conducting evaluations with participatory tools. Three out of eight suggested key questions were reviewed and discussed and specific research questions were identified together with appropriate evaluation tools. It was also confirmed that the first key question ‘What have been the effects in your country of the “Young Voices” survey?’ could not be evaluated since the Young Voices Poll was not used in Macedonia.

Figure 1 below captures the results of the Participatory Evaluation Workshop.

Figure 1: Participants Assessment of Progress, Sep. 2004⁷



After the initial workshop training with the consultant, the principal researcher finalised the time line of activities for the evaluation in cooperation with UNICEF. It was decided that three other researchers from the Institute of Ethnology, all graduated ethnologists, would assist with the evaluation. These team members were: Davorin Trpeski, Ines Crvenkovska and Vanya Dimitrievski.

In November, a workshop for refreshing the knowledge on participatory evaluation was held with participation of the young evaluators and the evaluation team. During this workshop, the remaining part of the specific research questions, indicators, research sources and tools were

identified. In consultation with UNICEF in Skopje and the young participants a final list of projects implemented by NGOs and other institutions supported by UNICEF was prepared together with a list of all relevant stakeholders in Macedonia with regards to HIV/AIDS prevention and young people’s health and development.

Sampling Methodology

⁷ Collection of Photos from the Participatory Evaluation Workshop in Macedonia, Sep. 21 – 24, 2004, courtesy Meg Gawler

A strategy to determine the research sample was established in a later stage of the process so that a sufficient number of informants including all stakeholders involved would be surveyed. The following two significant aspects were used:

- The sample choice would be chosen in accordance with the basic hypothetical assumption for the expected outcome and focus on a relatively equal representation of all relevant stakeholders;
- The final selection of the research sample would be based on random choice, whereby the evaluators would not predetermine which individuals would be included in the evaluation;

A certain part of the research sample, however, was a representative sampling of key informants, who had been selected on the basis of their ability to provide the most detailed data for certain evaluation questions. (See Annex 7: *Sampling Methodology*) In addition documents related to the evaluation purpose were consulted.

Indicators and Benchmarks

Indicators that evaluate and assess the results are dependent on specific research questions to determine actual involvement of the young people in these project activities; namely the level and type of involvement, and age and gender implications. Due to the fact that the majority of the research questions could not be measured through quantitative methods but only qualitative methods, additional hardship was encountered when processing the data, analyzing and defining the findings. Thus the following indicators are divided into two categories depending on the issue being evaluated:

- Quantitative (less present)
- Qualitative (more present).

Table 1.

INDICATORS
NUMBER OF YP INVOLVED IN PROJECTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Programmes and Projects involving YP supported by UNICEF • Number of YP involved in the Projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of YP involved in the NGO-project activities: H.E.R.A. Healthy Options Project Skopje (HOPS) Art Forum Theatre Youth of Macedonia (TYM) POINT MAGAZINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and types of social and cultural communities involved in (rural/urban)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of laws dedicated to YP
YOUNG PEOPLES PARTICIPATION IN PROJECTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which phases • What activities/responsibilities
MOTIVATION OF YP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enjoy Projects • To stay in Projects • To quit participation in Projects

METHODOLOGIES/TOOLS/TECHNIQUES USED
CHANGES IN:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of YP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes (YP)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour of YP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in Officials in the Institutions towards YP
FINAL RESULTS/PRODUCTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final results / products of YP • Final results / products in the Programmes and Projects • Final results in wider social community (Governmental-legislative changes)
EFFICIENCY OF THE PROGRAMMES (costs/achievements)
EVYP PARTICIPATED IN PROJECTS

Methods, Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

Methods, tools and techniques adapted for participatory evaluation process were used during this evaluation. The tools and techniques for participatory evaluation are handy for use when evaluating youth projects because they are adapted to young peoples level and needs. The young evaluators, assisted by the experts from the Institute for Ethnology, were capable of carrying out the evaluation process without any major difficulties, while young people being evaluated did not feel ‘nervous’ during the participatory evaluation as they might have felt during classic evaluations. Participatory evaluation offers evaluated youth an opportunity to be actively involved in the process of evaluation, and to take actively part in modification or adapting certain tools and techniques if they feel there is a need for it.

The young evaluators obtained their basic knowledge on these tools and their application at the training workshop. The second day they tested them upon a trial group of peers who were actively involved in project activities. Later the researchers and the young evaluators received a manual for the tools and techniques for participatory evaluation from Ms. Meg Gawler, the consultant. This manual was a significant aid to the researchers during the process of familiarizing the young evaluators with these tools and techniques, since the manual served as a reminder during the evaluation process.

During the evaluation process, tools and techniques for participatory evaluation as well as the usual / classic evaluation tools and techniques were used as shown in the table:

Table 2

Tools and techniques for participatory evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Card visualisation • Smiley-face Scale • Testimonials-Stories • Impact drawing • Historical Timeline • Social mapping/community mapping • Trend analysis • Force Field Analysis • Real/Ideal
Usual / classic evaluation tools and techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation Framework • Questionnaires

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Informant Interview • Focus groups discussions
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All of the above mentioned tools and techniques were used during the field evaluation. In the table below, the use of the tools and techniques for each specific question is given.

Table 3

KP	SRQ	Specific research question	Sources	Tools	
2.	2.1 •	How has participation changed the YP involved in:		Impact drawings and stories	
		1. peer education (H.E.R.A)?	YP NGO coordinators		
		2. creative workshops (HOPS)?	YP NGO coordinators	Impact drawings and stories	
		3. intergenerational dialogue (MIA)?	YP Parents YP NGO coordinators	Impact drawings and stories	
		4. Theatre (TYM)?	YP NGO coordinators	Impact drawings and stories	
		5. Theatre (Art forum)?	YP NGO coordinators	Impact drawings and stories	
		6. <i>Point</i> magazine and media?	YP NGO coordinators	Impact drawings and stories	
3.	3.1 •	How the project which your NGO implements strength its own capacities in sense of: people resources, material resources...	YP NGO coordinators	FFA	
		3.2	What are (your personal) experiences (of your NGO) in co-operation with other persons in the project (or other NGOs) in the programme?	YP NGO coordinators	Interview
		3.3	Use of some innovating methodologies in implementing of projects.	YP NGO coordinators	VIPP
		3.4	Use of YP experiences in the projects	YP NGO coordinators	VIPP
		3.5	Working with YP on strengthening themselves	YP NGO coordinators	Licker Scale
		3.6	What kind of support is most important for strengthening the NGO	YP NGO coordinators	Discussion Focus Group
4.	4.1 •	In what way YP participating in the project influenced other YP and wider community implementing the project (workshop)?	YP NGO coordinators	VIPP	
		4.2	Are there any indicators that show that individuals in the community changed their knowledge, attitudes and behaviour influenced by projects (workshop)?	YP NGO coordinators	Group discussion

	4.3	Any (in)direct YP participation in creating and implementation of MTSP (in the country)?	YP NGO coordinators	Group discussion
	4.4	Are there any possibilities for the YP in the region to cooperate and exchange experiences of local projects on HIV/AIDS? Regional campaigns based on local experiences?	YP NGO coordinators	Group discussion FFA
5.	5.1	How is the policy and legal environment of Young People in Macedonia?	Ministry of Education and Science Agency for Youth and Sport	KII Review in laws
	5.2	Have some of the YP from the projects/workshop participated in some public debates or directly in creating laws or youth strategies in MKd?	YP	Interviews
	5.3	Do certain NGOs participate and influence state authorities in creating legal and policy environment encouraging YP’s participation?	NGO coordinators NGO lidars	KII
	5.4	Forms and ways on how UNICEF implements YP’s initiatives? Suggestions and support to the Government and governmental institutions?	UNICEF	KII Review in documents Real/Ideal
6.	6.1	How many YP participate in each project?	YP NGO Coordinators NGO Reports	VIPP Discussion
	6.2	Which methods and techniques are used in the project to encourage YP to participate actively?	YP MGO Coordinators Institute of ethnology	VIPP KII
	6.3	What motivates YP to join the project?	YP	Scale (adapted type)
	6.4	What motivates YP to remain involved in projects?	YP	Scale (adapted type)
	6.5	What motivates YP to quit participation? Examples?	YP	Scale (adapted type)
7.	7.1	What could be done to improve the responsibility of YP in projects?	YP NGO Coordinators	Real/Ideal FFA Discussion
	7.2	What new ideas have been used to increase the number of YP in the projects?		FFA Real/Ideal
	7.3	What problems have been encountered in the RtK projects, and	YP NGO Coordinators	FFA Testimonials

		what can be done to overcome them?	Institute of ethnology	
7.4	.	What could be done to strengthen youth participation in media promotion of projects?	YP	VIPP Focus group Testimonials
7.5	.	Would increasing project activities result in increased participation, and why?	YP NGO Coordinators	Interview KII Document review
7.6	.	What can be done to strengthen youth participation in rural areas?	YP NGO Coordinators Institute of ethnology UNICEF	Discussion KII Real/Ideal
7.7	.	What can be done to strengthen the participation of EVYP?	YP NGO Coordinators Institute of ethnology UNICEF	Discussion KII Real/Ideal
7.8	.	What types of projects, other than RTK, could be used to promote youth participation in FYR Macedonia?		VIPP Real/Ideal Testimonials/Stories
7.9	.	How could be generated more resources to promote youth participation? (e.g., in kind contributions, human resources, financial resources, etc.)		Real/Ideal

Methods of data analysis

To systematize and classify the gathered empirical materials following methods were used:

Transcription of recorded audio materials:

All audio materials recorded during the field evaluation process were transcribed. All discussions, explanations of the impact drawings, stories and testimonials, as well as focus group discussions were taped on a Dictaphone. There were 29 audio tapes recorded and approximately 500 pages of text which covered the entire contents recorded on these tapes. A selection of the most essential materials, such as statements, given by the informants was included in the analysis of the key questions. All materials were stored at the Department of Ethnology archive in Skopje to make them available for future research into youth cultures, HIV/AIDS issues, etc. All materials gathered with the aid of tools used during the field study/ or outreach research was transcribed and computer systematized. Young participants provided these materials by filling them in on coloured paper cards at workshops. These cards were put on large posters, making it possible to process them further.

Scanning of materials:

Drawings and other graphic materials obtained through the use of certain tools (for example impact drawings) were scanned, entered and systematized into the computer database at the digital archive for ethnological and anthropological resources at the Institute of Ethnology to allow for further processing. There were approximately 150 drawings and other visual materials scanned. A certain portion of the more indicative materials was used to illustrate and support the analyses in the report, while another portion of the material is provided as an attachment to the report.

Processing the photo material:

350 photos were taken during the evaluation process, illustrating the process and some of the results. As the photos were in a digital format, they were stored in the digital archive for ethnological and anthropological resources at the Institute of Ethnology. Some of the photos are used as illustrations in the Report.

Systematization, classification and processing of the empirical materials

The empirical materials collected from the field evaluation were mainly used in the qualitative analysis, and therefore it was necessary to process them via a specific software. The software used was “Atlas.ti 5.0”, a tool especially designed for the processing of text, audio and other materials that eased the data systematization, linkages, cross-research and analyses. The Department of Ethnology evaluation team members worked for over one month to get acquainted with the software to be able to properly use it during the analysis. The youth evaluators were introduced to the software and worked with it at the workshop for analyzing evaluation results in April, 2005.

The “Atlas.ti 5.0” software package allows systematization, classification and processing of all types of materials. One can go through and link all kinds of gathered transcribed materials (texts, scanned documents, drawings, photos, etc.) based on content and problems being searched. A unique unit was created, in which all empirical materials were stored and systematized with regards to their characteristics into several categories: *primary documents, quotations / extracts, codes and memo documents*. This structure allows for a separation of different categories of information and data together with complete quotations during the processing of materials. Significant data can be marked as *codes* created out of the documents. Through summarising *memo documents* the initial research impressions can be indicated. An important characteristic of this software is that it allows for linking the documents and materials in separate networks, like in separate families, according to the criteria determined by the researchers.

Major advantages and limitations of participatory evaluation methodology

The participatory evaluation process has a major advantage when compared to usual /classic methods of evaluation when young people are the objects for the evaluation. The fact that participatory evaluation offers the participants opportunities to be actively involved and to acquire new evaluation technique skills motivates them to easier accept the responsibilities and obligations related to the evaluation process. It was noted though that there was a limited depth in some of the groups’ understanding of the area of evaluation problems most probably due to the age and level of education of these participants. Participatory evaluation tools and techniques are interesting, creative, fun and also very productive. If they are appropriately used, very interesting data can be obtained.

A major limitation of this methodology was the large number of research / evaluation questions, which was intended to cover the young people’s participation, therefore making the use of these tools time consuming. To survey one groups’ work and pose all the relevant questions to the evaluation, more than 5 hours is required. It is difficult to ask young people to allot so much time for this activity, especially because some of them have their own responsibilities at school and at home. This affected the evaluation to some degree.

Another limitation encountered during the evaluation process was the fact that the majority of the project activities in Macedonia had already been completed, which made it necessary to call the young people in specifically for the purpose of the evaluation. In some cases the period of several months between the completion of project activities and the start of the evaluation process also influenced this evaluation process.

The methodology and tools used did not reflect any implications for the gender of the evaluators nor of those being evaluated.

The participatory evaluation methodology used for especially vulnerable young people (EVYP) brought up considerable difficulties when working with them. These young people encountered difficulties when working with tools which implied writing. Therefore, techniques involving visual presentation of the problems (drawing, visualizing problems through body techniques, discussion) were more exploited in the case of EVYP.

2.4 PARTICIPANTS IN THE EVALUATION PROCESS

All stakeholders that were identified during the process of establishing the methodology of the evaluation framework were included in the evaluation. (See Annex 3: *List of stakeholders*.) The majority of the stakeholders were directly involved in the evaluation while various documents were used to support the collection of information from a number of them. These documents were provided by UNICEF in form of narrative monitoring reports covering the process of project implementation.

The attitude of all stakeholders was positive during the evaluation. Without exception they supported the evaluation process. Although other evaluations had been carried out throughout the RtK project period, through PAR and periodic project monitoring by UNICEF used for annual donor reports, many informants pointed out the need for an overall evaluation of the RtK project. The feeling was that up to this point evaluations had been carried out within each specific activity which hadn’t provided an overview of the whole process for the involved stake holders (especially NGOs implementing the project activities). This counted particularly with regards to young people’s involvement and participation in the project activities as previous monitoring and evaluation purposes mainly had been used to identify the level of knowledge concerning HIV/AIDS within the young target groups and not the structure of the project activities. Certain activities carried out over a 3-year period within the “Right to Know” project in Macedonia covered an extensive part of the youth population in more than 15 towns and up until now a general evaluation had not been carried out. It was therefore difficult to encounter information about what had been the results of the project especially with regards to young people’s involvement.

Some of the young people evaluated expressed the need for monitoring to be carried out on a regular and more frequently basis followed by clearer recommendations for improving the process as a result of the monitoring processes.

What was of utmost importance was that all stakeholders considered this evaluation to be an opportunity to review, assess and evaluate the success of all projects and to become aware of their advantages, limitations and errors. Most significantly it was an opportunity to listen to the opinions of others regarding future improvements. The majority of the individuals evaluated also considered it to be an opportunity to express their own ideas and views about how to improve the organisation of future youth activities.

The use of this participatory evaluation methodology and the tools required for it, were supported by the stakeholders. They preferred the participatory evaluation to the usual /classic type of evaluation. The only objections were in regard to the amount of time required to do it, which most often was longer than the usual /classic evaluations.

Levels of young people’s involvement in the evaluation

The evaluation process involved mostly young people who actively participated in carrying out project activities. They fully responded to all posed questions. Certain difficulties appeared when evaluating institutionalised young people participating in the project activities of NGO Art Forums (working with

interactive theatre methods). This was mainly the case when working with tools where the young people had to write statements. Therefore some of these tools were replaced with other tools, mainly drawings

The youth coordinators in the different project activities also cooperated fully. They helped to bring the young people together so that the evaluation could take place. Nearly all the youth coordinators within the different project activities participated in the evaluation together with the young people and were in addition interviewed as key informants.

Participating NGO leaders were interviewed as key informants to provide information about the overall project activities and the way they had been implemented. UNICEF also fully supported the evaluation process and the project officer and assistant to the HIV/AIDS Project were included in the evaluation process.

Contacts were made and evaluation was carried out with certain individuals working in the Governmental Institution, Agency for Youth and Sports, while the Ministry of Education and Science provided requested documents and legislation related to young people's involvement.

Capacity Building

The use of the participatory evaluation methodology, where relatively new tools and techniques were introduced, improved the level of knowledge of the youth evaluators involved in the evaluation. It is evident that their participation in the evaluation process was a good and very positive experience. This was mainly due to the fact that they began to associate themselves with the Department of Ethnology team and often visited the faculty premises during the process. This provided them with the opportunity to learn about the academic environment in Macedonia where people are involved in scientific research. The participation of the youth evaluators fostered an environment where ideas and initiatives to new research projects carried out by involving local communities to a larger degree were discussed.

The youth evaluators mastered the entire participatory evaluation process during their training sessions where they learned to apply the tools and techniques and they are currently capable of leading participatory evaluation sessions with minor assistance from the Department of Ethnology. This specifically refers to the stage of empirical gathering of the materials.

Youth evaluators were also included in the process of systematization and the processing of the materials gathered, but only at the theoretical level. This was mainly due to time limitations in explaining the whole process. Students would in fact require several years of study if to be involved fully in the systematization and processing of data. However, they were fully aware of the procedures used to process the material, and therefore were capable of participating in the discussions of the key results during a workshop held in Skopje in the beginning of April 2005.

The Department of Ethnology as such also benefited from the experience of working closely with the young people during the participatory evaluation process. These experiences were particularly surprising to some individuals from the Department who realized that, by using some of these simple tools, they would be able to gather meaningful and relevant data in a very short time. The section on the benefits and capacity building of the Department of Ethnology will be discussed in more detail in the section ***Capacities of the organizations/institutions.***

Evaluation and feedback of the young evaluators and young people involved in participatory evaluation

The initial evaluation results were reviewed and discussed with the young evaluators at a workshop held in the beginning of April 2005. At this workshop the key results and key recommendations from the evaluation were discussed and agreed upon. This gave a direct opportunity for the young evaluators to gain understanding about how youth activities could be strengthened with youth participation to make activities targeting young people more successful.

It is planned to adapt the evaluation results, conclusions and recommendations in to a report targeting young people, coordinators, NGOs and governmental organisations involved in managing and implementing activities targeting young people in Macedonia. This would mean the publishing of the report in Macedonian language to reach a wider audience. In this way the results and recommendations could be applied to strengthen youth participation in the further organisation of strategies for new projects involving and targeting young people.

In addition, the Department of Ethnology recommend that the manual, together with the tools and techniques for participatory evaluation, be published to facilitate and allow for future more efficient and accurate evaluations of project activities where young people are participating and or being targeted.

3 KEY RESULTS

3.1 YOUNG VOICES SURVEY

The young voices survey was not promoted and used in Macedonia by UNICEF or any of its partners due to the fact that the survey was launched during the internal crisis in 2001. Therefore the survey and its impact is not an object for this evaluation.

3.2 HOW PARTICIPATION HAS CHANGED YOUNG PEOPLE

The below findings are organised in accordance with the key indicators and benchmarks that was agreed during the process of designing the evaluation as explained in section 2. Quotations from the evaluation process have been added in the text to illustrate the results.

Based on all materials gathered during the evaluation, young people showed an exceptional interest and need to involve themselves in various activities and projects aimed at young people. This is especially true for young people living in rural environments or in smaller towns where opportunities to have fun, attend cultural events, share information and educate themselves are limited. The most attractive projects were those that allowed freedom for young people to make their own decisions and express personal opinions and ideas.

1. Yes, a different one (I am different now). And so far, I think I changed my opinion and we became friends, had fun together. And about AIDS, in general, I don’t know, not as much as for new facts that we learned... However, I think this is a better way to find out information than by lectures, talking, talking, talking... (Indistinguishable talk).
Theatre workshop, Art Forum, Skopje
2. Well, it can be said I have a good time here, and enjoy to work in group, to work with people, to meet new people, to adapt yourself to so many different characters, and literally to make something out of nothing and this something to be of benefit for you and your environment. And in the meantime, to have a good time, to hang out with friends, and of course, we want results out of that, don’t we? And we start things because we want to achieve some goals. We don’t start to do anything if we don’t expect any results.

Theatre workshop, Art Forum, Skopje

3. The moment that I was most impressed was during my first debate, which was going on in English language... So, what was of big importance was that the whole audience focused on what I was saying. So, all gave their attention to me and I was very emotional in those moments, but it was important that afterward I learned to freely express my opinions.
Debate Club, Proni, Tetovo (An activity within the Youth Magazine Point)

The young people involved in the RtK projects covered by the evaluation, passed through an intensive team work process, where the maintenance of a balance between interests of individuals confronted with group interests and improvisation with the existing material capacities were constantly asked for. During the project activities (workshops), young participants were encouraged to examine their own attitudes, their communication with the environment and what is of a particular significance for these projects - the way information was received and conveyed.

The key findings on how participation in the UNICEF supported projects has changed young people are discussed below in accordance with the following statements:

- Improved level of knowledge and information
- Meeting other young people of different social backgrounds as well as of different attitudes, values and needs
- Freedom to express own ideas and develop creativity
- Active participation in modern societal trends
- Change of personal attitudes and values
- Improved communication among family members, peers and the wider environment
- Making a better use of free time
- Professional orientation (life skills)

a. Improved level of knowledge and information

The need for an improved level of knowledge and information concerning HIV/AIDS and related issues in young people was the primary reason to why UNICEF supported the youth activities within the RtK project. In addition an important reason was that the RtK project presented a major motivation for young people to participate in the project activities.

All the projects covered by this evaluation consisted of four basic components that were the learning tools used in the RtK project:

- Acquiring knowledge and communication skills (theatre, photography, graphic design, peer-education, debating, journalism, cross-generations communication, etc.)
- Acquiring knowledge about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections and blood borne infections and knowledge about risk factors related to HIV/AIDS
- Independent research to update participants' level of knowledge and information
- Communicating and expressing the first components

These four components present the complete cycle of the work in each project activity within the RtK project. The first three components are related to improved level of knowledge and information of the young participants, whereas the fourth component implies improved level of knowledge and information of the wider audience, which are the recipients of the messages conveyed by the young participants.

... or education on what we learn about AIDS and all those things that we provide the audience with (unclear), therefore there is a whole, it is whole. All things are together. Therefore, I didn't just show up on the stage to talk about AIDS before I had learnt something about AIDS.

Theatre workshop, TMM, Gevgelia

Here they meet (the participant of the workshop, n.b.) the non-governmental... organization H.E.R.A and study their... learn from this organization. Learn from it, cooperate with, update of... are being introduced to so many new things... They also share with their friends, either errors or new ideas.

Peer-education, H.E.R.A., Stip

Young participants were constantly assisted and directed by adult coordinators during the project activities. During the implementation of RtK a team from the Institute of Ethnology was involved in monitoring the work of the different project activities (the workshops). Young people gained knowledge about certain specific skills (for e.g., theatre, photography, strip, peer-education, debating, video production, etc.), practiced their application and received basic introduction to HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections and blood borne infections and risk factors related to these diseases. They also independently upgraded their skills and knowledge, in consultations with experts in relevant fields, used additional literature, searched the internet and asked their peers.

There was a discrepancy among different groups in the levels of their previous knowledge about issues handled at the workshops. Key factors for this discrepancy were different participants' age, place of living, different societal backgrounds and different living conditions. These factors were also reflected in the different level of prior knowledge among individual participants at the same workshops. Participants of workshops, which were implemented in settlements of more passive parts in the Republic of Macedonia, or participants coming from bigger town settlements, who fall into the vulnerable groups of young people, started to work with minimum or entirely without any background knowledge on HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections and blood borne infections and risk factors. Through their participating in the project activities, they benefited from basic and accurate information about the issues raised and thus upgraded their knowledge about the ways of transmission of HIV/AIDS and how to prevent oneself from HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections.

Young workshop participants, who already had some background information and knowledge about HIV/AIDS and STIs focused their interest on studying risk factors in a wider context and on issues related to development and growth of young people. More distinctive topics were those of violence (verbal, mental, physical), prejudices and stereotypes, education, family, migrations, current social-political situation and the reason to why many young people are disinterested and passive.

The young people participating in the different activities also had opportunities to meet and discuss with other young people participating in other project activities within the RtK project. Based on these meetings activities were planned for and developed to stimulate a wider target group and were also used to further develop the ongoing workshops and activities. These activities, bringing young people together across different project activities will be described in more detail further on in this text.

b. Meeting other young people of different social backgrounds as well as of different attitudes, values and needs

Meeting other young people from different social backgrounds and with different attitudes, values and needs was found to be very motivating and to influence the participants in a positive way by helping to change their perceptions of their peers with the opposite gender, from different backgrounds, ethnicities, different parts of Macedonia, from other sub cultures and religions.

Examples:

1. Theatre workshop (September - November 2004, Art Forum NGO, Skopje)

Participants: Group of young people, the majority at the age of secondary schools students, from the "11 Oktober" Children’s Home in Skopje and a group of students from "Josip Broz - Tito" highschool in Skopje and a boy at the age of a secondary school pupil from Kavadarci, who studies in Skopje.

The students of "Josip Broz - Tito" gymnasium stated that their idea about the children from Children’s Home was based on prejudices, such as “they are home children”, “different than other children”, “left on their own”, “criminals” etc., before their involvement in this workshop.

On the other hand, the youth coming from Children’s Home considered the students of "Josip Broz - Tito" gymnasium to be ‘arrogant’, ‘narcissistic’, ‘selfish’, etc.

During their work together, faced with common wishes, needs and efforts, they had an opportunity to get to know each other and to bridge the gap that the initial prejudices and ideas about each other had created.

“...it was my exceptional pleasure to meet children from the Children’s Home. Although I live in the building across from theirs, I had never had the opportunity to... I had never talked to children from the Home, and honestly, I have to say, my opinion then is completely different from my opinion now.”

2. Seminar on training for children’s right research - Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (‘Molika’ hotel, Bitola; May 2003, Institute for Ethnology, Skopje)

Participants: at the age of secondary school pupils: Gostivar - Albanians and Macedonians; Prilep - Roma and Turks; Sveti Nikole - Macedonians; Skopje - Albanians and Macedonians. The groups from each city were mixed in gender.

At the beginning of the seminar, it was noticeable that there was bias among the participants coming from different towns and being of different nationalities, except for the group from Gostivar, which was consisted of peers who already met before. However, during work and free time they got to know each other, prejudices were overcome and there was a space created for open and honest communication.

c. Freedom to express own ideas and develop creativity.

The right to freely express one’s own ideas and to develop one’s creativity were fostered through the RtK project especially because it allowed for and imposed a need for a strong involvement of the participants in all stages of the project implementation. The ‘Right to Know’ project in Macedonia, involved young people who made proposals to and took part in implementation of its activities from the very beginning of Right to Know. The ‘Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices’ research project on children’s rights also involved young people from its very beginning. Later those young people independently carried out the field study research, and participated in the data analysis process.

During the evaluation, the Smiley-face Scale analysis indicated that the majority of the young participants developed their self-confidence, leadership, independence, creativity and became more aware of freely expressing their ideas, of working in a team and of tolerating and understanding their peers from other environment than their own during the various project activities.

We know that the majority of the students of our schools... In their heads buzz names of school subjects like history, chemistry, physics, geography, etc. Students have good theoretical background of them, but they don’t have opportunity to apply... to prove their knowledge. If they have a chance to involve themselves in other organizations and to meet other people... then their life will change, because they’ll have chance to demonstrate their knowledge. I, myself, experienced a change in my life when I got included in PRONI and it was then that I was given a chance to use what I had learned in school... and to present it through...

Participant of Debate Club, Proni, Tetovo (activities linked to the Youth Magazine Point)

I learned a lot out of this organization or Debaters Centre and I gained a lot because now I am capable of talking more freely with other people, to express my opinions.

Participant of Debate Club, Proni, Tetovo (activities linked to the Youth Magazine Point)

Most impressive thing for me was that we can freely ask anything we like, to say what we think as well as get explanation for what is not clear.

MIA – Project activities in Resen

Opportunities to freely convey personal ideas and to gain communication skills at workshops were found to be especially encouraging for the young participants’ creative development. This was for example the case with the creative workshops implemented by NGO HOPS within the ‘Right to Know’ project. Here participants planned and organized two youth magazines themselves, Patoteka 1 and Patoteka 2, and together presented the results of their work at several public events. The theatre plays of the theatre workshops implemented by NGO Youth Theatre of Macedonia throughout the whole country are a similar example.

"..I have understood more from one word that was said from the stage than from many words said when the performances were made before. This means that the message of the play was understood. Such comments existed before and from other people. This type of play was appreciated more than too much talking" (*Theatre workshon. TYM. Tetovo*)

An especially strong example that should be pointed out is the workshop for graphic design carried out by HOPS. During this activity the young participants have gained a substantial experience in the area of communication and social marketing. Some of the more experienced participants began to take on leadership responsibilities and became youth coordinators and passed their knowledge on to new members. Some of the participants involved themselves in other initiatives and projects at their school, community or place of living. Evident effects of involvement of young people in such projects was the fact that they even became initiators of new, independent projects in their communities, with the intention to engage their peers in extracurricular activities and help them grow interested in their community.

d. Active participation in modern societal trends.

The very involvement of young people in these projects, wherein they had the right to freely express their attitudes and ideas, implies that they participated in the development of modern societal trends at the same time. While only a few participants in the projects being evaluated were actively included in the initiatives for creating appropriate youth policies, the remaining participants indirectly contributed to it through their participation in activities within the workshops, or as it were mentioned previously, through their involvement in other projects and initiatives in their community. Again the work that went on in the development of Patoteka 1 and 2 which ran under the motto ‘Youth Revolution’ and ‘Revolution of the Conscience’ were found by the young participants to serve as an initiative for inspiring and stimulating more active involvement of young people in all spheres of societal life. It also served as a call to all young people to take bigger responsibility for themselves and their actions.

e. Change of personal attitudes and values.

All above mentioned benefits from the young people’s participation and listed examples are connected to each other and can be seen as real outcomes of the processes through which the young people passed during their engagement in the workshops.

... I learned that they should be helped out. I knew it before, however... I became a more humane person. By giving my hand I want to help everybody to educate them selves.

NGO MIA, Resen

The experiences gained by participating in these projects caused a change of personal attitudes and values of the majority of regular participants. However, it was quite difficult to determine the extent of these changes during the evaluation. The change of personal attitudes and values could be registered more through the change of their attitude towards their environment as discussed below.

f. Improved communication among family members, peers and the wider environment.

The experiences gained by participating in the workshops and change of personal attitudes and values influenced and caused change in attitude of the participants towards their environment. The MIA non-governmental organization works on developing activities aimed at inter generation dialogue, namely encouraging communication between parents and children on topics about HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health of young people.

Well, there was a parent, an older one, who came here. Her daughter was 18-19, and when we started talking, she was, so to speak... silent all the time. She didn’t engage herself in our discussion, and only at the end started to talk: “Well, now it’s easier for me to say in front of all of you... to tell you this... (to her parent, n.b.) to tell you that... Usually, I didn’t avoid these issues at home, but only tried not to open this kind of talk, nor to respond.” And later on at the sessions that we held, she said: “It’s again easier for me to say what I think here in front of all, than to go to her room to say this or that.”

NGO MIA, Bitola

A key informant, who was one of the principal implementers of the ‘Right to Know’ project from its very beginning, informed during the evaluation that she was once mocked by her teacher in front of the whole class. This teacher doubted her capabilities and constantly punished her. However, when her teacher realized the determination of his student and the results of her work in the RtK activities, he changed his attitude towards her and started to point at her as a good example.

The majority of the participants of these projects developed their communication skills, became popular among their peers and started to attract new members who wanted to be involved as well.

g. Making good use of free time.

Through the evaluation process it became evident that one of the most important factors that motivate young people to involve themselves in projects are associating themselves with others and making new friends. The RtK project has been very attractive because the young people that participated were offered an opportunity to fill their free time in a good way, to get out of their home and to learn something that they might be able to use it in future.

h. Professional orientation/Life skills.

Many participants in the RtK project activities have continued to use their knowledge and skills gained through the project afterwards. Several participants of the creative workshops continued to work in the area of video production, graphic design, web design and drawing. Some participants decided to continue their education at the university level where they would be able to make use of their knowledge gained through these projects, and this knowledge they also used when they took the entrance exams.

It is evident that an increase in the level of knowledge and information and in the development of skills has contributed to the capacity building of the participants and through those participants, capacities of organizations, institutions and the wider community are also strengthened.

3.3 CAPACITIES OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS / INSTITUTIONS

The Macedonian evaluation team specified six additional specific research questions during the evaluation of the key research question: ‘How have the capacities of participating NGOs/institutions been strengthened?’ These questions are the same as in table 3 and the full table can be found in section 2.3:

Table 4:

3.	3.1	How the project which your NGO implements strengthen its own capacities in sense of: people resources, material resources...	YP NGO coordinators	FFA
	3.2	What are (your personal) experiences (of your NGO) in co-operation with other persons in the project (or other NGOs) in the programme?	YP NGO coordinators	Interview
	3.3	Use of some innovating methodologies in implementing of projects.	YP NGO coordinators	VIPP
	3.4	Use of YP experiences in the projects	YP NGO coordinators	VIPP
	3.5	Working with YP on strengthening themselves	YP NGO coordinators	Licker Scale
	3.6	What kind of support is most important for strengthening the NGO	YP NGO coordinators	Discussion Focus Group

Several NGOs and institutions dealing with education and scientific research work were included in the field evaluation. As stated earlier the evaluation data identified the following NGOs, which had collaborated in the RtK programmes supported by the UNICEF Office in Skopje:

HOPS
H.E.R.A
MIA
TMM
ART FORUM
POINT Magazine

Institutions dealing with education and science that provided additional support were the following:

Institute for Social Sciences
Institute for Pedagogy
Institute for Ethnology
Institute for Philosophy

How did the project which your NGO implements strengthen its own capacities in sense of: people resources, material resources?) and what kind of support was most important for strengthening the NGO?

For all the NGOs involved in the UNICEF supported RtK project it counts that their central offices of are located in Skopje. The most significant benefits that strengthened the NGOs’ capacities during the process were gained in the following ways:

- Working with local communities in different regions of Macedonia and creating conditions for strengthening their own capacities by opening local offices in other towns away from the Capital
- Networking between the NGO offices based in Skopje with other local offices of the same NGO in other towns in the Republic,
- Networking between participating NGO's based in Skopje and other NGOs and community based organisations dealing with similar or relevant fields of work,
- Creating national networks (for example of peer educators and through theatre activities.)

The majority of the participating NGOs in Macedonia began the project activities in Skopje and its immediate surroundings carried out their projects, supported by UNICEF, only in Skopje and its immediate surroundings when they had started their work. After completing the pilot stages of the RtK project, the NGOs began to work on encouraging local communities and providing conditions for their involvement in project activities. By the time of the finalisation of the project activities in fall 2004 a majority of the NGOs (H.E.R.A, MIA and TMM) carried out project activities in most of Macedonia. The majority of the NGOs implemented the project activities their own specific way, dependent on their own specific approach and target groups.

HOPS being one of the leading organisations in HIV/AIDS prevention and harm reduction in Macedonia do not seek to strengthen its own capacities through creating local offices in a network with the central office in Skopje. Instead they encourage local communities to create and build their own capacities, so that local organisations are based on the needs and problems of the local communities. This was precisely the way how H.E.R.A, Rondo and LIM-PID organizations in Skopje, Opcija – Ohrid in Ohrid, were founded. Presently, HOPS supports local projects in Gostivar, Kumanovo, Stip and Kavadarci. In addition, HOPS with the support of UNICEF and the projects that was carried out in collaboration with UNICEF, developed additional areas of interest based on the creative workshops implemented in Narodna Technika in Skopje. While the creative workshops in Narodna Technika are no longer funded by UNICEF, HOPS is seeking other funds to keep running the activities within the establishment of a Creative Youth Centre.

The NGO H.E.R.A is unique because of their approach of creating networks for peer educational work. They work on strengthening and streamlining methods of peer education and on creating networks of young peer educators that can function in the whole country. H.E.R.A used the Skopje based Boarding School "Zdravko Cvetkovski" where youth from the whole of Macedonia stay during their studies in Skopje, as a base for identifying young people and recruiting them as peer educators in H.E.R.As activities within the RtK framework. After completing their formal studies and the peer education training courses, these young people would become peer educators and convey their knowledge to the local level – their places of living.

Extracts from project documentation:

Within the RtK project and until now we have trained 30 volunteers from different cities in Macedonia who live in the boarding school "Zdravko Cvetkovski" in Skopje to become peer educators. These peer educators conducted 60 peer educational sessions among adolescents in their own towns and villages. Actually peer education as a method is PAR (participatory action research used within the RtK project), because our trained peers have the opportunity to participate actively in the organization and preparation process in creative ways and in the process of follow up. In this follow up process our trained peers have met several times with the same groups of their peers discussing different issues, and in this way we are creating a comfortable atmosphere to get feed back related to their needs.

This activity is a big success. Its best achievement is the involvement of young people from rural areas, and their desire to continue the work there and share the knowledge and skills with their peers. During our visits in the villages we have learned that the young people there seek information and knowledge regarding sexual and reproductive health with a special look upon HIV/AIDS/STIs issue. We were shocked to know that they are so shy and feel uncomfortable talking about those issues that they could not even look us in the eyes. They told us that this was the first time for them to have been given an opportunity to talk openly about sexually related issues with someone, especially young people at their age, with whom they could speak in a friendly and sincere manner.'

(Project document: *Implementing "What every adolescent has a right to know" project throughout peer education activities by H.E.R.A. - Skopje*).

The MIA non-governmental organization, for the purposes of carrying out their project activities, the majority of them being supported by UNICEF, has established a *youth national network* with sub offices of the organisation in many towns of Macedonia. Some of them were carrying out project activities within the RtK framework. These were MIA in Resen, MIA in Strumica, MIA in Bitola, MIA in Sveti Nikole) and MIA in the village of Rostuse. The implementation of the project activities within the RtK project contributed to substantial strengthening of the capacities of the local communities and organization of the national network.

TYM (Theatre Youth of Macedonia) covered in the beginning of the project period 10 cities around Macedonia under the RtK project by engaging young people in developing and staging theatre plays on HIV/AIDS and related issues⁸. In the further stages of the implementation their outreach increased to 15 towns and cities. To run the project activities TMM has established branches or local offices in each of these towns. These branches are founded in collaboration with local Houses of Culture, theatre school circles or other available capacities. Strengthening capacities of local communities is particularly evident in places of limited youth activities, where no cinemas or theatres exist. The organization of TMM's activities and its network throughout Macedonia substantially influenced the process of strengthening local communities' capacities.

Art Forum is an NGO that also uses theatre as a creative tool for carrying out social changes, with the difference being that their target group is aimed at especially vulnerable adolescents living in institutions ('11 Oktomvri' Children's Home, 'Ranka Milanovik' Institute for care and education of children and youth, 'Sveti Naum Ohridski' Special secondary school, Tetovo Correctional Home, '25th May' Public Institution for children with educational and social problems). During interviews within this evaluation and previous project evaluations ART FORUM has stated many times that the most significant benefit for the organisation of participating in the RtK project is that they succeeded to increase their capacities, particularly their human resources through participation by including new youth coordinators from the target group they are working with. ART FORUM sees this as one of their key organisational strengths and they are proud of the fact that they succeeded to train several young participants from their target group, who later became youth coordinators capable of independently carrying out workshops and sessions with their peers.

The young journalists of Point Magazine (bi-lingual youth magazine targeting both ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian youth) were not actively involved in the beginning of the RtK project when the magazine was only used as a forum for spreading information about the different RtK projects written by youth participants of the RtK project. In fall 2004 the youth journalists of Point Magazine were instead engaged directly in writing articles to their magazine (bilingual) on issues related to HIV/AIDS, young people's development and participation. One article was written and published in Point about the youth participation evaluation workshop seen from the eyes of one of the participants – a young journalist from the Point Magazine.

Main financial sources for the activities of the majority of the non-governmental organizations working within HIV/AIDS prevention were provided by donors and international organizations (this refers to the time period of the last 10 years). The majority of NGOs said that they worked on strengthening human resources and material basis (offices, equipment) in order to be able to continue their work. The financial means provided by international organisations strongly helped out this process.

With the support of international organizations, the NGOs in Macedonia were encouraged to activate programmes for making national strategies on vital issues of young people's life. Therefore, when

⁸ From project documentation: "Right to Know" - Social Mobilisation Campaign on HIV/AIDS Prevention through Theatre, April 2003-February 2004 and Project Proposal Framework - Theatre Youth of Macedonia, 1.6.2004-31.12.2004).

these strategies and other legislative segments will pass and a new organizational structure will be established, certain NGOs will also be able to use national funds for their activities. While the NGOs believe that this would be a good solution they still all believe that they will need support from international organisations in many years to come to be able to carry out project activities.

The Institute of Ethnology (IE) is a high educational and scientific research institution, which is involved in the implementation of youth project activities, being supported by UNICEF, since 2001. The IE have mainly been involved in Participatory Action Research linked to the RtK project but have also evaluated young peoples knowledge, perception and attitudes towards their rights again using participatory action research .

As a result of the work performed through the youth activities and by other NGOs, the members of the Institute for Ethnology who were directly involved in the implementation of the projects feel progress in more than one way. Not only the members, but also the Institute as an institution feel benefited because of several factors:

Prior to IE’s involvement in project activities, based on statements of members interviewed during the evaluation, we can say that the Institute of Ethnology was mainly engaged in academic research using classic research doctrines and classic approaches to basic research problems.

Through participating in UNICEF supported youth projects, IE had an opportunity to present its work in more details and to exchange experiences with other high educational institutions and scientific research organizations.

Also, it should be noticed that some members of this Institute, and a number of students, graduates, post-graduates and Ph. D. candidates, concentrated their interest and research focus on actual issues related to young people. Hence, the IE has already started to deal with more relevant ethnological and anthropological issues related to young people’s everyday situation. In addition, the employees of IE who participated in a number of seminars and training sessions on Participatory Action Research were given an opportunity to update their expert and scientific qualifications through gaining more knowledge that also involved topics on methodologies and tools, which used at appropriate target groups under certain conditions provide more relevant results that classical methods.

As it was mentioned above, all field study materials from different projects being carried in Macedonia by the support of UNICEF were systematized and stored in the Archive at the Institute for Ethnology. These materials are available for employees of the IE as well as for other scientific workers who are interested in them.

The evaluation materials indicated a significant progress in capacity building of schools as being institutions and professors as being individuals, who were involved in some way in carrying out project activities. It was noticeable that the school administration and management developed a positive attitude towards youth who participated in project activities by allowing them to use school premises for carrying out certain activities. Furthermore, the level of youth self-confidence increased by being permitted to conduct educational sessions without the presence of an adult or a school employee. Teachers who were involved in project activities (as coordinators of the theatre youth of Macedonia) demonstrated an evident change in their attitudes towards these kinds of activities as well as towards the use of creative methodologies and tools, which were different from classic teaching tools.

What has (your personal) experience (and those of your NGO) regarding your collaboration with other individuals and NGOs within this programme been like?

Based on the evaluation of the ‘Right to Know’ project, several important findings can be pointed out due to the fact that all NGOs and other institutions mentioned above participated in its implementation. The RtK project was extensive and required close cooperation between the partners.

From the beginning the RtK project was implemented by 5 key NGOs. It was implemented in Skopje and 15 other towns and villages in Macedonia. All participating NGOs and institutions had a common platform, only its implementation was through different means of expression. Problems related to coordination, linkage and networking of the activities of each NGO within the project showed up because of the complexity.

Based on the evaluation empirical materials, particularly the self-reflections, it can be said that the cooperation among individuals and NGOs was carried out at several different levels, regarding its type and quality:

- among participants
- participants and youth coordinators
- coordinators
- among NGOs and institutions
- among UNICEF, NGOs and institutions

The majority of the informants included in the evaluation considered their collaboration among themselves to be solid within their workshops.

“...Well, we had a high level of collaboration and there’s... we tolerate each other. We help, consult each other enabling a bigger productivity and functioning of the workshop. Well, the collaboration goes excellent. As we know, all members are of the same generation, age and therefore, the communication is going well. We help, complement, consult each other and therefore, a success is possible.” (Stip, H.E.R.A, Peer Education and TYM, Theatre Workshop 21.12.2004)

However, there was a noticeable objection from some of them concerning the level of mutual respect and tolerance towards each other during the project activities. Based on the self-evaluation data, with the question: *‘To what level participation in projects has developed your personal sense of...’*, the tolerance was assessed with an average mark of 4.1 as showed in below table. These results can only be indicative as the participants being evaluated were not asked to explain their ratings in depth. A more in-depth evaluation through for example focus group discussions or ‘one to one’ interviews would further help to clarify the reasons for the ratings.

Table 4:
TO WHAT LEVEL PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECTS HAS DEVELOPED YOUR PERSONAL SENSE OF:

	Self-confidence	Leadership	Independence	Creativity	Freedom of expressing ideas	Team work	Tolerance
Average	4 . 4	3 . 4	4 . 2	4 . 4	4 . 7	4 . 5	4 . 1

(See paragraph *‘Working with young people on strengthening their self-confidence and leadership’*, page 31, for further explanation of methods and sampling.)

The cooperation between young people in the projects and the youth coordinators was assessed to function well. In general, in the materials the friendly relationship between the young people and the coordinators was pointed out, although, there were certain young people that suggested that at times a

distance between young people and the youth coordinators was needed to establish order and communication.

“And, is there any collaboration between the participants and the coordinators? (Question from evaluators) “Yes and this collaboration are at a high level”. (Kocani, H.E.R.A, Peer education participant, 10.12.2004)

“And I want to thank Biba (Coordinator of Art Forum) because when I wanted to give up attending this workshop, she insisted that I should return. Thanks. (Skopje, Art Forum, Theatre Workshop in “11 October” Children’s Home, 21.12.2004)

The cooperation among workshop coordinators, in accordance with the structure of the ‘Right to Know’ project, was supposed to connect creative workshop activities according to their needs. The collaboration among workshop coordinators was manifested at meetings at the project level where practical implementation of the activities was discussed and possible creative solutions were looked for.

The cooperation among different NGOs and institutions, included in carrying out the activities within the RtK project was also of high importance for the success of the project activities. Linking and collaboration of all stakeholders was done at two different levels: programme (conceptual) level and practical (implementation) level. Good examples from the project to be stressed were again H.E.R.A., as they developed excellent collaboration with schools and Culture Houses, and ART FORUM with their collaboration with institutions responsible for taking care of children and adolescents without parental care. It is especially interesting that ART FORUM managed to bring together two groups of young people (‘mainstream youth’) from the “Josip Broz –Tito” high school and the adolescents from the “11 October” Children’s Home. This cooperation resulted in the setting up of two very successful theatre plays where young people from both groups actively participated.

Empirical materials from the evaluation indicated that there was little substantial collaboration and linkages between workshops of different NGOs within the ‘Right to Know’ project at practical (implementation) level. All stakeholders emphasized this in the evaluation as one of the major weaknesses as well as one of the most important examples which taught them how things should not be coordinated. This had to do with a weak coordination on project level (among different NGOs) which at times caused disagreements while carrying out the project activities. It was found that if better planning had been in place to govern the project dynamics with a planned timeline of activities and an agreed structure for cooperation across NGOs, problems and disagreements between the different NGOs could have been overcome easier which would have reflected down to activity level.

In an effort to overcome these problems and linking the different (conceptual) activities a separate unit was designed in agreement with the different NGOs, namely the ‘Creative Workshop’ (within the structure of the HOPS activities) with the purpose of coordination, giving an opportunity for the coordinators of a majority of the workshops to meet, discuss and agree on how better to support each other. In this forum main conceptual directions were worked out, which led to practical solutions. While the Creative Workshop forum was assessed as exceptional, it was also said that not all representatives of the different workshops across the project was involved. In addition the coordination body based in Skopje didn’t focus on helping to coordinate the different activities in the field as it only concentrated on coordinating activities that were carried out in Skopje.

A project coordinator was therefore responsible for helping to coordinate all activities of the different NGOs regarding the planning and implementation of joint activities also in the field. This part of the

coordination was assessed as less successful during the time of implementation. It was found that the project coordinator position didn’t add value to the process as the linkages between workshops in different NGOs remained one of the weakest points of the project, especially with regards to activities in the field. The majority of the individuals evaluated were not able to provide any detailed data about joint project activities in the field most likely because the cooperation among different NGOs and workshops of different towns in Macedonia didn’t function well.

It can be concluded that while coordination within one NGOs central office and the same NGOs field activities were well coordinated, the NGOs didn’t have the capacity or motivation on central level to foster a better coordination between project activities carried out by the different NGOs in the field.

The collaboration between UNICEF, the NGOs and other participating institutions that were partners in the project was assessed as being good at central level as it ensured a constant collaboration and communication among all included key stakeholders in the project activities. It should be mentioned though that the frequent replacement of UNICEF project officers and assistants in the UNICEF youth programme did affect the overall coordination of the implementation of activities and at times slowed down and complicated the implementation of the RtK project

How did the use of ‘Innovative Methods’ in Implementation of the activities work?

Youth Participation in Research and evaluations:

During the implementation of the majority of the project activities, the basic and most important methodology, which was used and insisted on in all project stages, was the *active involvement of young people*. The methodology of Participatory Action Research carried out by Institute of Ethnology was an essential tool in the RtK project that supported and enforced the participation of young people. The Institute of Ethnology also carried out an evaluation of “Children’s Rights – Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviour” for UNICEF and here the methodology of *research through direct and active observation* was applied with a group of adolescents with different ethnic backgrounds. The Field Evaluation of youth participation in UNICEF supported projects used for this report was carried out using the methodology of participatory evaluation, similar to the PAR methodology.

It is evident that the general tendency of the participatory research used in the process and its evaluations was enforcing and re-enforcing the *active involvement of young people* in all stages of the project activities especially within the RtK project. To ensure a successful implementation with young people participating, tools and techniques were adapted to the target group and the purpose of the research and evaluations. In each mentioned research activity young people were trained to use some of the innovative techniques and tools to support their participation.

Basic tools and techniques of PAR in the RtK project:

- Trial questions
- Brainstorming
- Brain writing
- Mapping
- Analysis of the stakeholders
- Venn diagrams
- Time lines
- Matrix of priorities
- Life lines
- Spider web
- Ideal/Real
- Myths/Facts
- 4 pictures for HIV/AIDS

Examples of Connecting Creative Techniques and Use of Innovative Tools and Techniques:

As mentioned earlier, the implementation of the project activities of the “Right to Know” project was carried out through specific and creative workshops, such as: photography workshop, comic strip workshop, workshop on new technologies (web design, internet), workshop for graphic design, workshop for a video magazine, theatre workshops, music (hip-hop and R&B) workshop, journalistic workshop, workshop for peer education, workshop for printed materials, workshop for

developing intergenerational dialogue (parents and children).

The creative techniques used in the work of each workshop were very practical and appropriate for the research. Through this type of methodology, young participants had an opportunity to share their knowledge with their peers, to learn more and at the same time, to gain livelihood skills that can become a source of employment in the future. Examples are given below, describing how creative techniques and research methods and tools were combined to accomplish the objectives of the activities.

Photography:

Photos are very practical for visual recording, registering a certain event, situation and object. This allows for a further insight and analysis in the research process. In fact, photography complements and eases the process of observation.

A short photo-story or photo-strip can be made for a certain given topic by using photographing as a technique.

Example:

When participants started at this workshop, individually or in groups, they were offered to select certain themes that they would work on. Then a characteristic example could be singled out for the theme worked on "The Image of Young People", namely a haircut or a manner of beautifying the body. During outreach work, many young people who decorated their body in a specific way were photographed and short interviews about their knowledge and attitudes about lifestyle of young people, about their need to be special, about HIV/AIDS were done with them. Later those photos were fit into one story with a common message and were exhibited. *(Coordinator of Photographic Workshop under NGO HOPS)*

Exhibited photos allow in addition for information gathering from the reactions of the audience. Photos can also be used in combination with the previously described tools, for example Problem tree, Ideal/Real, Life line, Time line, Venn's diagrams, Mapping, etc.

Theatre/Role Play:

Theatre is a very interesting technique, which also can be used for the purposes of a research because it involves role play, namely consciously taking other identities on with an intention to attract attention and initiate or provoke a reaction, change. Effects can be at individual, group or a wider societal level.

Role play was a part of the methods used in the preparing process of the theatre performances within the "Right to Know" project. It presents a very practical tool for finding out the levels of knowledge of the participants about themes which were worked on, about stereotypes, beliefs and perceptions. At the same time, identifying with the characters being played contributes to breaking stereotypes, to conflict resolutions, honesty and making friends with other participants.

Theatre methods can successfully be combined with other tools, such as: Brainstorming, Ideal/Real, 4 pictures for HIV/AIDS, etc., wherein instead of presenting those on paper, the majority of the tool can be directly played (acted) as a short play or still pictures.

The final theatre performances of RtK carried out within the activities of TYM and ART Forum present the entire work process and gained knowledge, and at the same time that knowledge is transferred to the audience by provoking their reactions. However, theatre can be used in research purposes in a different way, as in the following examples from ART FORUM that works with the methods of 'Forum Theatre' standing for incomplete theatre play, which ending is created by mutual cooperation between actors and audience:

Provocation, role play before an audience that just happened to be there, an audience that is not aware that takes part in a previously designed play. The accidental passer-by is put into a position of an active actor. Besides provoking audience, this techniques help out to recognize stereotypes and attitudes of a wider group on certain issues, such as: HIV/AIDS, homosexuality, street children etc.

(Extract from Project proposal framework RTK 2004, ART Forum, Skopje)

Comic strip:

The development of cartoons (comic strips) was used as a method within one of the creative workshops implemented by HOPS within the RtK project. It was found that a good insight can be obtained about attitudes, values and beliefs of the participants through this very practical technique in combination with all other mentioned tools. By presenting their work and discussing it within the group, the participants are led to think about their own personal attitudes to the subject of the comic strip. Thus the comic strip proved to be an excellent medium for touching a wider target group.

Really important characteristics of the majority of the used techniques and tools within the RtK project to involve young people in participation are their flexibility and adaptability and ability of development. Suggested tools allows for free and easy adaptation towards various situations and improvisation in conditions when there are no sufficient basic means for their use. The use of these tools also enables progress in the way that young participants through the process of using the mentioned tools can create new and useful tools for their activities.

Using the experience of the young people in the projects

A major strategy from the beginning of the project activities of the “Right to Know” project was to encourage the creation of basic nucleuses of young people who already had experience in carrying out project activities. A second strategy was that these groups should be formed in accordance with the interests and affinities of the young people and those joining them, thus, creating groups of interests. Therefore, the need for forming a creative body (described above) was assessed during the process of monitoring the projects. This creative body began to operate as Creative Workshop, where opinions of young people based on their experiences from the involvement in the projects were discussed and used in the further process of implementation.

“... I think that we learned a lot from them. Especially from those studying medicine, or from pupils of High Medicine School. We pictured some things differently. –No, professor, this is supposed to be this way, or that way. I learned a lot from them...”

(Tetovo, TYM, Theatre Workshop, 11.12.2004. Interview with a workshop coordinator, a professor teaching Macedonian language and literature with communication).

Working with young people on strengthening their self-confidence and leadership

“...So what motivates us to become involved in this project is, first, the wish to make new friends among our peers. And, to increase our self-confidence, because, we are at the age when we are not so confident regarding our involvement. And, the high degree of tolerance, to increase our tolerance and what is most motivating for me is building our personality by finding out new things that influence our life, that is, to contribute to our personal growth (not so clear) as everything that we learn influences... to develop our personality. (Evaluation from Stip, H.E.R.A, 18.12.2004)

By using the tool of ‘Lickert's’ Smile Scale, young people were provided with an opportunity to evaluate themselves on seven important categories, virtues and skills that were determined as basic goals, which all project participants should strive for.

Unfortunately, the data gathered after the completion of the majority of the projects being evaluated could not be compared, due to the fact that at the start of the projects a self-evaluation was not performed by using this tool. Therefore, there is no opportunity to make a comparative insight of the development and progress of the results during the project activities.

The weakness of this tool can also be that that the participants assessed themselves with higher marks, perhaps because they were not inclined to admit their true level of how much they possess these virtues and skills, especially when they were asked to do this in presence of others. Also, certain participants did not distinguish research values gained through their participation in the projects from values gained by influence of other factors.

Since the results presented were provided by self-evaluation, they should be regarded with certain care. They might not reflect the real situation. That is why these results should be taken as indicative results and further could be explored through other data sources and through other evaluation methods.

The self-evaluation was made in order to realize the situation regarding the following important personality characteristics and skills: **self-confidence, leadership, and independence, and creativity, freedom of expressing ideas, teamwork, and tolerance.**

The total results for each issue are provided below. The results are summarised based on the ‘Smile Scale’ gathered in all workshops where the evaluation took place.

Table 4: TO WHAT LEVEL PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECTS HAS DEVELOPED YOUR PERSONAL SENSE OF: (same table as on page 26)

	Self-confidence	Leadership	Independence	Creativity	Freedom of expression	Teamwork	Tolerance
Total	4.4	3.4	4.2	4.4	4.7	4.5	4.1

The table presentation indicates that young people assessed themselves with rather high marks. In most cases marks are higher than 4, which meant they believed they had acquired very high or the highest level of values and skills.

The highest mark was given to the freedom of expression, meaning the freedom that young people felt they had experienced when they expressed their ideas during the projects activities.

Teamwork was given second highest value, which also confirmed the quality offered to the young people through creative work and use of the PAR methodology.

The marks for self-confidence (4.45) and creativity (4.44), which were also confirmed by other empirical material interviews, impact drawings, and focus group discussions showed that use of tools and creative techniques helped the growth of young people’s self-confidence.

Young people’s feeling of independence was marked with 4.22, which was a high level, although when compared to other parameters it could be concluded that they still felt certain lack of confidence and need support from the wider community and other relevant individuals involved in the project activities.

Tolerance was marked relatively low in comparison to other parameters. This information is rather indicative, especially when we add it to our findings from other parts of the empirical evaluation material, where they often brought up examples of intolerance and disrespect. Above all, we consider that this fact indicates that tolerance being a category that one can learn it was still not satisfactorily grasped. Most probably this is due to the fact that young people are still used to only listen and observe, and the moment they are given a chance to express themselves, they are not able to keep the order, to give way to the person already speaking, to listen, and then to reply.

Leadership received the mark value of 4.43. Based on the results, an initial conclusion would be that more attention should be paid to building capacities for leadership at those individuals who possess affinities and qualities appropriate for that, in programme and project activities. However, bearing in mind the fact that the notion of leadership and being a leader have negative connotation in our environment, we consider that young people who assessed themselves showed some self-censuring and did not want to show themselves as leaders in front of their peers. The relatively low confidence in own own leadership skills can reflect the common perception in Macedonia towards leadership and leaders.

Based on the self-evaluation of the young people, conclusions can be also made about the level of their self-estimation dependent on in which NGO and project they carried out their activities.

Table 6: Results of self assessment on young people’s participation in different NGOs

	Self-confidence	Leadership	Independence	Creativity	Freedom of expression	Teamwork	Tolerance
TYM	4.4	3.4	4.2	4.7	4.6	4.2	3.5
H.E.R.A	4.6	3.4	4.2	4.3	4.8	4.8	4.3
MIA	5	4.5	3.7	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.1
Point Magazine	4.4	4.2	4.5	4.9	5	4.8	4.5
HOPS	3.5	3.1	3.6	3.9	3.9	3.3	3.5
Art Forum	4.6	3.5	4.7	4.3	4.8	4.7	4.6

3.4 LEGAL AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT

The activities that were the objects for the evaluation of youth participation within UNICEF supported projects didn’t directly involve young peoples participation in projects that aimed to improve an enabling legal and policy environment in Macedonia, merely because UNICEF have not to date supported such activities in the country. Anyhow it was decided that the assessment of the legal and

policy environment in Macedonia for young people and their participation would be carried out through four *specific research questions* based on the evaluation framework to present an idea of the legal and policy framework and identify whether the project activities supported by UNICEF can have said to influence the environment directly or indirectly.

a. *What is the Macedonian legal framework like with regards to young people’s participation?*

The Government of Macedonia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1993 and have since then participated in several conferences and meetings such as the UNGASS on Children in 2002 and the Sarajevo Conference in 2004 for Children in Europe and Central Asia, where commitments were made to fully implement the CRC and where participation of children and young people in decision making with regards to issues of their own concern was stressed. When it comes to specific youth issues in Macedonia, a National Youth Strategy has now been developed with a broad participation of youth NGOs and the Agency for Youth and Sports. Some of the NGOs implementing the RtK project were actively involved in the making of the National Youth Strategy that was finalised in 2004. The National Youth Strategy focuses on young people aged 15-24 and cover all issues related to the development (education, vocational training and employment opportunities for young people), wellbeing and protection of young people. It also has a section specifying the rights of young people with special needs and one on health prevention mainly focusing on access to HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health information and education.

A separate section in the National Youth Strategy (paragraph 6) refers to the participation of young people in decision making with the goal of stimulating and encouraging the active participation of young people in all social processes and in the processes of decision making on national, municipal and local levels. The National Youth Strategy was developed in line with other similar youth strategies in the CEES following models being implemented in the European Union.

While the National Youth Strategy still hasn’t been legally adopted it creates a good framework for promoting young peoples rights and their participation in decision-making processes in Macedonia. Within the HIV/AIDS and Young Peoples Health programme in the CPAP 2005 – 2009, UNICEF plans to pilot projects on municipality level that helps to set up structures in the municipal governments for the promotion of participation of young people. It is believed that this evaluation will add value to the process of formulating such specific activities.

b. *Are there any young people among those who had participated in the workshops/projects that also participated in public debates or directly in creating laws or strategies aimed at youth in the Republic of Macedonia?*

The evaluated project activities had a broad based focus on developing communication skills of young people mainly in relation to issues related to HIV/AIDS. While the activities focused on increasing the knowledge, attitudes and skills of young people so they can protect themselves from HIV/AIDS, some of the young people informed during the evaluation about their engagement in other activities not directly supported by UNICEF. These activities focused on the promotion of youth participation in decision-making. Particularly the Debate Club in Tetovo and the European Youth Parliament of Tetovo was mentioned as good examples. These activities sought to support youth leaders and improve young people’s communication skills through debates and discussions of issues with relevance to young people’s situation in Macedonia. In most of the evaluated project activities the evaluation indicated that the young participants had no opportunities (or didn’t know of any opportunities) to be involved directly or indirectly in the formulation of policies and legal frameworks.

Other evaluation data indicated that young participants in other settings and localities had no opportunities to be involved directly or indirectly in influencing on policies that might affect them.

c. Have certain NGOs and other institutions participated in or influenced governmental authorities in the process of creating laws and policies related to youth issues?

The Institute of Ethnology, which has been directly involved in providing expert and educational support of youth activities in the last three years, is also acquainted with certain issues, which are important for the improvement and outlining of legal frameworks for youth policies in Macedonia.

Most of the key NGOs (H.E.R.A, MIA and HOPS) that participated in the RtK has their focus on youth health issues, particularly HIV/AIDS prevention. These NGOs were influential in the conceptualising, passing and implementation of the National Strategy for HIV/AIDS very much based on their experiences in working with and targeting young people with HIV/AIDS prevention specifically through the RtK project. A Rapid Assessment and Response followed by the PAR activities of the RtK project helped in addition to create evidence base for the formulation of the National Strategy for HIV/AIDS 2003 – 2006 that mainly focuses on prevention among young people and especially vulnerable young people.

In recent years, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, having recognized the current youth problems, to a large extent influenced by and in cooperation with the NGOs and other relevant institutions related to youth problems, founded a separate Ministry for Youth and Sports which later was renamed as the 'Agency for Youth and Sports'. This governmental institution was set up to directly deal with solving young peoples problems and in improving their situation including the legal and policy framework for young people. At present the Agency for Youth and Sports doesn't function as a separate state agency, as it has been included under the responsibilities of the the Ministry of Education and Science.

At two expert meetings, organised by the Youth Council of Prilep several NGOs which actively participated in the RtK project, such as MIA, H.E.R.A and HOPS together with representatives of the Institute for Ethnology, were invited to present their project activities within RtK and the research findings from RAR and PAR (within the RtK) to give suggestions to the development of the national youth strategy.

At these meetings, the HOPS, H.E.R.A. and MIA talked about their specific experiences and methodologies when working with youth, while the Institute for Ethnology representatives informed about some results with regards to the use of the participatory action research methods and the creative work of the young people in the RtK projects. They also informed about their findings of the work with EVYP, emphasizing that this category of young people needs more attention and therefore, specific approaches should be defined to ensure that their rights also are protected in the National Youth Strategy.

d. Forms and ways on how UNICEF implements YP's initiatives? Suggestions and support to the Government and governmental institutions?

Through the RtK project UNICEF in Macedonia have promoted the participation of young people in the design and development, implementation and monitoring of specific project activities related to HIV/AIDS prevention. The use of RtK tools as a framework has encouraged the freedom of participating young people to define the best ways of communicating about HIV/AIDS to their peers. UNICEF believes that young people themselves are specialists when it comes to defining their own problems and solutions to these problems. By creating and supporting projects that supports the participation of young people and by showing the results, UNICEF can promote and advocate for a further strengthened participation of young people, not just in specific project activities, but also in larger frameworks where young people with their participation can influence on policies and structures that have an impact on the situation and growth of young people in Macedonia.

3.5 EFFECTS OF PARTICIPATION ON UNICEF’S PROGRAMME

3.5.1 Effects on Achieving Programme Objectives

As stated in section 1.3 of this report the Country Programme of Cooperation between UNICEF and the Government of Macedonia from 2002 – 2004 a youth project was implemented as a part of the Education Programme. The purpose of the youth project was to improve young people’s health and their opportunities for participation and development. The key objectives in the Master Plan of Operations where:

- To establish an adolescent friendly family, community and education environment promoting youth development and participation
- To promote adequate information and preventive measures and services for youth with risk behaviour
- To promote life skills among adolescents and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS among the general population and especially among drug users⁹.

The RtK project implemented from 2002 – 2005 was designed to support all three of these activities with its focus on young people and their environment with regards to youth development and participation. A tool within the RtK project frame, 10 facts about HIV/AIDS was used as the basic framework for spreading information about HIV/AIDS and its prevention among young people and especially vulnerable young people.

With regards to the first objective related to an improved environment for youth development and participation, the results of the evaluation specifically pointed out that young people who had participated in the project found that meeting with other young people from different social backgrounds, with different attitudes values and needs had been motivating and had influenced them in a positive way by creating a greater understanding towards different groups of young people in Macedonia. The evaluation of young peoples participating in project activities focusing on intergenerational dialogue carried out by NGO MIA, also showed that the needs and problems of young people was being met with a greater understanding and willingness through the activities from their own side and from the side of their immediate environment, the parents.

With regards to the second objective, the focus of the RtK project mainly aimed at improving the knowledge and information about HIV/AIDS and risk and protective factors related to protection from HIV/AIDS among the youth participants. The evaluation showed that project activities in different settings and environment had been developed in accordance to the level of knowledge and information already available for the young people. The fact, that young people participated in the implementation and monitoring of the activities through PAR and creative workshops, made it easier for implementers to adapt the material to the situation of the target groups. Where young people had little or no knowledge of HIV/AIDS the focus was on ensuring access to basic information and on building protective skills. This was especially the case for the work of NGO Art Forum with adolescents in institutions. Where young people already had some knowledge of the issues the focus was more on risk factors related to HIV/AIDS and on other issues related to the development of young people such as violence, prejudices, and stereotypes and the current social and political situation affecting young people.

Concerning the last objective, improving the life skills in young people and especially vulnerable young people all activities evaluated showed that the participation of young people had improved their life skills but also their livelihood skills in some cases. It was especially found that by encouraging young peoples rights to express their own ideas and develop their creativity through participation in

⁹ From the Master Plan of Operations between UNICEF and the Government of Macedonia 2002 - 2004

the different project activities had developed the majority of the evaluated participants self-confidence, leadership, independence and creativity. In addition working in teams had helped to increase the understanding and tolerance among young people to their peers from different environments and social backgrounds. For the young people participating in creative workshops (photo and graphic workshops, journalism and web design) implemented by HOPS at Narodna Technica it was evident that they also gained technical skills in the area of social marketing and communication and that some of them who participated now are in the process of creating their career helped by the skills they gained through participation in the RtK project activities.

3.5.2 Contribution to the Goals of the Medium-Term Strategic Plan

The MTSP 2002-2005 established five organisational priorities for UNICEF worldwide. These are:

- (a) girls’ education;
- (b) integrated ECD;
- (c) immunization “plus”;
- (d) fighting HIV/AIDS; and
- (e) improved protection of children from violence, exploitation, abuse and discrimination.

In the CEE/CIS & Baltics Region UNICEF added one more goal to the MTSP focusing on promoting the participation of young people. Through the work of UNICEF in Macedonia the goal on fighting HIV/AIDS was specifically used as an entry point for young peoples participation since 2002. As the RtK project also focused on issues related to stigma and discrimination and thus brought young people together from different environments and across ethnic, regional and religious lines, which in itself fostered a greater understanding between the different young people participating, the goal with regards to improved protection of children from violence, exploitation and discrimination was indirectly used as an entry point for participation. This was especially the case for the work carried out by the NGO Art Forum focusing on improving communication and negotiation skills of institutionalised young people and working on bringing these young people together with their peers outside institutions.

While UNICEF did not previously support the promotion of young peoples participation in decision making and in public life in general, the CPAP 2005 – 2009 will work with Government and civil society partners to set up structures for young peoples participation in influencing on issues affecting their lives and in decision making on national, municipal and local levels of Government. It is hoped that this evaluation of youth participation in UNICEF supported projects in Macedonia will help to shape future activities aiming at promoting young peoples participation in public life in general.

3.5.3 Contribution to the Regional Strategy on Young People and HIV/AIDS

The youth participation projects evaluated in this report was, as stated earlier mainly linked to HIV/AIDS prevention by using methods of Participatory Action Research to define young peoples knowledge levels and design interventions and communication strategies targeting young people and involving young people in the design, implementation and monitoring of the activities

While the project activities carried out within the RtK project did not directly focus on the below mentioned MTSP for fighting HIV/AIDS, both the RAR carried out prior to the Right to Know project and the participatory action research survey was used as evidence base for the formulation of the National Strategy on HIV/AIDS in Macedonia. At the same time NGOs working within the RtK project were very influential in the formulation of the National Strategy on HIV/AIDS and are influential in the implementation as well mainly within project activities now funded by the GFATM. Both the RAR and the PAR provided gender and age disaggregated data for the assessment and analysis of the HIV/AIDS situation in relation to young people and their knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. As Macedonia is a low prevalence country national strategies has not yet been developed

with regards to prevent parent to child transmission and to ensure protection and care for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

From the MTSP on ‘Fighting HIV/AIDS’:

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) all UNICEF country programmes have conducted a gender- and age-disaggregated assessment and analysis of the HIV/AIDS situation ..., and have developed country programme strategies ...;b) national policies and strategies have been approved and action plans are being implemented to reduce the risk and vulnerability of young people ...;c) national policies, strategies and action plans are under implementation to prevent parent-to-child transmission of HIV ...; andd) national policies, strategies and action plans are developed and implemented to ensure protection and care for children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS |
|---|

The key results to be achieved by 2005 in accordance with the UNICEF Regional Strategy on Young People and HIV/AIDS are:

1. An increased percentage of adolescents have adequate knowledge of HIV/AIDS prevention which they put into practice.
2. An increased percentage of schools have teachers who know how to teach quality life skills-based education and have taught it in the last year.
3. National policies and strategies to ensure the integration of youth friendly services into the public health system are developed and knowledge and skills of service providers are increased.
4. Situation analysis on EVYP (covering young injecting drug users, young people selling sex and other marginalised young people) completed and targeted interventions underway.
5. Young people participate in the development of HIV/AIDS policies and program.
6. Mother and Child Health services are providing the complete range of Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS services.
7. Work has begun on the development of National Policies and Strategies to ensure the provision of a comprehensive package of care and support.
8. The country will have mapped the situation of HIV positive infants and the capacities of care providers and will be developing a plan of action to ensure protection care and support of orphans, abandoned and other vulnerable children.

It is only feasible to discuss whether youth participation affected and or strengthened the first, fourth and fifth expected results as these are the key results relevant to the situation in Macedonia – a low prevalence country - and relevant to the work UNICEF supported during 2002 – 2005, namely the already discussed project activities under RtK.

While both the RAR that took place previous to the implementation of the RtK project and the PAR survey carried out within the RtK project attempted to measure the level of knowledge and young peoples perception of risk and safe behaviours, both among young people in general and especially vulnerable young people in particular – no overall evaluation to measure changes in knowledge levels within the UNICEF supported RtK project has been carried out to date by UNICEF or its partners. As described in section 1.3 an overall assessment of the project took place in early 2005 to generate inputs to a final donor report to SIDA. This assessment didn’t measure changes on outcome level, changes in knowledge level in relation to HIV/AIDS and protective factors, but on output level in relation to the expected project activity results. Anyway the assessment found that through the different activities carried out within the RtK project it is estimated that almost all young people in Macedonia has been reached with HIV/AIDS related messages through the different communication interventions designed, developed and implemented with participation of young people.

What the youth participation evaluation did point out was that all young people participating in the activities received a basic introduction to HIV/AIDS and related issues, worked with these issues through the workshop processes and at the same time gained specific skills and worked with their attitudes through the creative workshops. In addition they practiced their application of skills and knowledge through the different developed channels of communication (such as peer education, theatre, and creative workshops and youth journalism). In addition the evaluation pointed out that due to the dynamic style of the project where young people were participating, the individual project activities were able to adapt to the already existing levels of knowledge where the project worked and thus adapt the communication activities to their peers in the different settings.

Both the RAR and the PAR had youth participation in the research as described earlier in the report and both assessments came to function as key evidence base with regards to both young people and EVYP in the following development of the National Strategy on HIV/AIDS and the formulation of the project proposal to the Global Fund which today functions as the key HIV/AIDS prevention and care programme implemented by the primary recipient the Ministry of Health with leading AIDS service NGOs, most of them partners in the RtK project, as secondary recipients.

4 CONCLUSIONS

WHAT WORKED WELL AND NOT SO WELL

The basic and most important methodology used and emphasized in the majority of the project activities is the active involvement of young people in all phases of the project. To support this, the methodology of PAR (Participatory Action Research) was used during the “Right to Know” project. The methodology of research carried out by the Institute of Ethnology during the evaluation of “Children’s Rights– Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviour” was direct and active observation. In addition the evaluation on youth participation in UNICEF supported projects used the methodology of participatory evaluation.

In accordance with the aim of actively involving young people in the project design, implementation and monitoring, special and adapted tools and techniques were designed and used to implement the projects. During the implementation of project activities, young participants were trained to use the innovative methodologies, techniques and tools.

Based on the empirical materials and results gathered during the evaluation, young people showed an exceptional interest and need for involving themselves in various activities and projects aimed at their peers. These projects were found to be particularly attractive and vital for young people living in rural environments or in smaller towns where opportunities to have fun, attend cultural events, share information and educate themselves are limited. The most attractive projects were found to be those where there is freedom for the young people to make their own decisions and express personal opinions and ideas

Benefits from active participation of young people in the youth projects supported by UNICEF were, as discussed in the results section, found to be:

- Improved level of knowledge and information
- Change of personal attitudes and behaviour
- Meeting other young people of different social backgrounds as well as of different attitudes, values and needs
- Freedom to express own ideas and develop creativity

- Active participation in modern societal trends values
- Improved communication among family members, peers and wider environment
- Making a better use of free time
- Professional orientation (life skills)

Through the implementation process of the evaluated projects, the capacities of the involved organizations, such as UNICEF, NGOs and higher educational institutions with regards to their cooperation around youth participation were found to have improved and increased.

The collaboration among UNICEF, NGOs and other institutions in project planning, implementation and monitoring, was also found to be good and sustainable through the constant cooperation and communication among the organizations and the workshops and the initiatives for common activities. However it was also found that during the practical implementation of the activities certain communication difficulties were registered which affected the practical coordination of the implementation of the activities especially in project activities that took place outside Skopje.

The designed programme activities of UNICEF and NGOs for improving the linkage and mutual collaboration between the governmental institutions, on one hand, and the non-governmental institutions and young people on the other hand, indirectly aimed at improving the legal and policy environment in Macedonia with regards to young people. As pointed out in the Results section the RtK project did not particular focus on the policy and legal environment but some of the young people participating in RtK were also learning to participate and influence the policy and legal framework through the Debate Club and European Youth Parliament in Tetovo. In addition key NGO leaders participating in the RtK project together with the Institute of Ethnology were influential in the formulation of the National Youth Strategy and in the National Strategy on HIV/AIDS through their participation in conferences for the formulation of these strategies.

It should be pointed out though that the evaluation also indicated that most young people participating in the UNICEF supported projects felt that they had no opportunities to be involved directly or indirectly in the creation of youth policies. This is partly because the RtK project in itself didn’t focus directly in strengthening young people’s participation in decision making.

The success of the projects evaluated depends on several factors: space, time, material resources and human resources. It was found that many project activities had to postpone or slow down their activities because of lack of working space and facilities where the youth activities could be carried out. This primarily implies: lack of space in general, not enough space, premises with difficult access, lack of heating, poor heating, poor ventilation, poor hygienic conditions, permission to use premises only in inconvenient time of the day, etc.

Local research teams in Skopje, Prilep and Gostivar working on the “Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices“ research project on children’s rights continuously encountered the difficulty of lack of space and were forced to look for alternative solutions that affected the quality of the work. A number of workshops of the “Right to Know” project also encountered this difficulty. The participants of the Theatre Workshop in Resen are for example forced to take a taxi to get to their workspace, because it was positioned far from their place of living. Poor hygiene conditions could also be noticed in some of the workshops because the participants did not take care of the space or due to the fact that the place they were in was already in a poor condition before the activities began. This was for example the case with the state run local ‘Houses of Culture where theatre workshops were carried out, as these houses are poor financial situation without any opportunities for investing renovation. Poor heating for winter and lack of air condition in the summer months were faced by the majority of the workshops which had a negative effect on the number of attending participants to the workshops. In addition a number of the activities used premises of other organisations or institutions and had to share them with other activities and therefore forced to adapt their hours of work. This conclusion reflects well the overall

situation of Macedonia when it comes to lack of space where young people can be engaged in different kinds of leisure and extra curricular activities both in the capital and specifically outside the capital.

The organization of time can be looked at from two points, individual and group. Project activities are carried out by participants, who need to reserve time and at the same time they have their own everyday responsibilities. It should be kept in mind that the largest number of participants are at the age of 14-18 and therefore, have school responsibilities, which represent a major priority for them. Many participants withdrew from the project activities because of their responsibilities at school, while participants who became employed withdrew because of their responsibilities at work. The hours these young people dedicate to the projects are part of their free time, except for those rare situations during seminars or other big events where they have to miss school days, provided that they got permission from their teachers.

The ‘group time’ depends on all individuals included in the workshops and projects: participants, coordinators, NGO leaders and donors. Some times, because of the limited time of some participants or because the deadlines were not taken seriously, the deadlines for implementation of a planned activity were often prolonged. Situations when the donor implied short deadlines for the finalisation of activities also put pressure on the participants in the project which affected the results. Other situations encountered were when workshops participants were prepared to present their final results but it didn’t fit into the donor schedule which again affected the enthusiasm of the participants. It was found that all these situations placed additional pressure on all participants in the project that affected the expected activity results.

Material resources are indicated as being the most important factor for the existence of the projects and their continuous work. Limited material resources, their delay, poor quality or mistakes made when ordering them affected the participant’s mood, work quality as well as deadlines of implementation of activities, etc. This finding was mainly linked to the creative workshops carried out by HOPS (especially the photo workshop and graphic design workshop) as they required specific project supplies)

The poor working conditions caused by factors mentioned above uninspired certain participants, who gave up their participation in the projects. Those who continued had accepted that improvisation had to be a method and a way to accomplish their personal and common goals. That way they succeeded in developing their own inventiveness and resourcefulness and confirmed the fact that intended objectives can be achieved by persistence and common efforts.

What completes all these factors is the human factor. The capability and readiness of individuals to encounter challenges that show up during working processes, flexibility in solving misunderstandings and problems, as well as respect and tolerance between all coordinators and participants substantially alleviate work, but was hindered by factors mentioned above earlier that affected the results and in some cases discouraged all people involved. Some individuals involved in the projects or related with the project used their capabilities or power or personal contacts to achieve personal goals not taking into consideration real needs of the project and other participants. From the other hand, there were also individuals who make extra efforts to strengthen project sustainability.

Successes and weaknesses of the evaluated project activities can be summarised into following key categories:

Organizations:

Advantages

- New experiences gained when working with young people
- Innovative techniques and methods gained when working with young people

- Increasing the number of members of NGOs
- Strengthening own capacities by involving young people, who are full of enthusiasm and capable of transferring their knowledge among their peers
- Promotion of their work to a larger and wider target group
- Improved their rating /popularity among young people

Weaknesses

- Did not succeed to develop mutual collaboration at a higher level
- Were preoccupied with protecting ‘their interests’, very frequently by neglecting the true project goals and needs of young participants.

Workshops:

Advantages

- Motivating a larger number of young people to actively involve themselves in activities
- Improved level of knowledge and awareness about issues and problems that directly or indirectly influence their personal growth
- Transferring knowledge among their peers in their communities in a most appropriate and acceptable manner for the community
- Exceptional work results evident through final activity products
- Gain of knowledge and skills which influence or can influence their professional orientation in future and can be a basic or additional way of earning money
- Opportunity to develop communication skills and to improve communication with the environment
- Equal chances to freely express ideas, attitudes and values of the participants
- The very existence of the workshops and their activities implies active involvement of young people in societal trends. Through certain activities young people are provided with an opportunity to take part in creating youth policies at local and national level
- Opportunities to make a good use of their free time through friendship and work
- Change of attitudes and values that influence risk behaviour of young people
- Young participants through their work serve as positive examples to others and inspire the wider community

Weaknesses

- Limited material resources discouraged a large number of the participants
- Weak communication between coordinators and the management afflicted participants
- Donors’ pressures and the limitation they placed on part of the items caused dissatisfaction and disappointment
- Poor collaboration among workshops despite continual initiatives for intensifying their collaboration
- Frequent changes in participants’ number
- Irregular meetings
- Poor sustainability of the activities
- Prolonging final deadlines
- Not fulfilling or incomplete fulfilment of undertaken responsibilities

From the evaluation it is clear that the programmes and projects that support and encourage active participation of young people bring freshness in young people’s everyday life in Macedonia and that the activities carried out produced significant result. It is clear that these programmes are designed by experienced experts with exceptional positive orientation, however, the success of their

implementation depends on the conscientious and preparedness of all those who take such responsibility on themselves.

Through the evaluation it was found that the coordination and overall management from the donors side (UNICEF) with the involved partners tend to deviate due to bureaucracy or shifting priorities of the donor, which again reflected down to the level of the young participants. As one workshop coordinator said during the evaluation: *“The project works well at the level of practical implementation, but when young participants noticed that something was wrong with the coordination it also affected them.”*

This observation concludes that projects with active participation of young people needs to be handled in a flexible and open way so they can be adapted to the needs and wishes of the young people during the process. This can obviously be in conflict with higher levels of project management where it is required that agreed results are achieved and activities implemented as agreed.

4.2 METHODS AND PROCESSES TO PROMOTE YOUTH PARTICIPATION

While establishing the most important components that have an effect on successful promotion of young people's participation, one can recognize the key influence of: **use of appropriate research and implementation methodology**, and **type and quality of the implementation processes of the projects**.

Definitely, *the methodology of research through active participatory* (all phases like conceptual creation, implementation, monitoring and project evaluation are taken in consideration), **provides complete, high-degree, current** and most importantly, **satisfactory level of young peoples' involvement in carrying out a project**. Therefore, the problem of quality and levels of young people's involvement should not be sought in the change of methodology of research through active participation, but it is the **improvement of quality use of the methodology and its actual use** that should be worked on.

While issues about what methods and processes promote and encourage young people's participation were being evaluated, *specific research questions* were developed, and according to the opinion of the evaluators and youth evaluators these questions were appropriately indicative for further planning. The first question refers to defining the number of participants, and the other 4 specific research questions focus on evaluating motivation of participants, as to take part in or quit participation in the projects.

How many young people have participated in the projects?

The number of young people directly participating and of those who indirectly were influenced by the projects represents an indicator that should measure an increase over time concerning relevant parties that take part in the implementation of the activities. However the use of specific methodology for involving young people in the different types of creative activities, presents an additional factor of limitations. The number of participants of nearly all specific workshops directly correlated with the type of activities, material resources, and time, space and quality of services. For example the theatre workshops can not include more young people than the play script allows for the identified roles and the related activities. The number of involved young people in theatre workshops dealing with EVYP is also limited because of the difficulties of working with them when they are in a larger number. Creative workshops that dealt with web design, journalism, graphic design, photography etc., were also limited in direct variation to the number of participants and available technical requisites for successful carrying out of the activities (number of computers, cameras, and other equipment for photo processing).

In the internal monitoring reports from the different project activities there is some indication of how many young people were directly involved in the project activities during 2004. The below table shows approximate number reported from the NGOs.

Table 7:

NGO-Workshop	Town/village	Number
HOPS	1	60
ART FORUM	5 institutions	90
TYM	15	1000
MIA	7	1000
H.E.R.A	12 towns + 5 villages	2000
POINT Magazine		20

When taking into account the presentation and distribution of the results of these activities (web site, posters, flyers, exhibitions, theatre shows, Point Magazine, Patoteka 1 and Patoteka 2 magazines, peer educational sessions), it can be concluded that a population of more than **100 000 young people** was covered during the last year of the project implementation

Motivation to join, to participate and eventually to quit participation in projects

Motivation is the most important category for young people, and the success of the projects depends on it. Motivation should always be worked on to motivate as many as possible young people in the projects and a continued encouragement of young people to stay in the projects should also be in place. In the table below a summary is given of the basic qualities that motivated the young people to join, to stay and if discouraging moments occur, to quit participation in projects:

Table 8 (What motivates young people?)

TO JOIN	TO STAY	TO QUIT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting new people and making new friends • Enjoyment of creative work • Interest for collaboration and work on projects • Wish to be useful to the wider societal community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship among young people • Gain new experiences • Maintain an interesting level of approach • Opportunity to be directly involved or take part in practical skills • Obtaining new information • Gain new skills and qualities that can give young people a new status in the society • The work results are encouragement to continue the project activities (magazines, shows, posters, etc.) • Opportunity to freely exchange their ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If workshops occupy too much of their free time • Inadequate organization and vague/ unclear communication • Incompletion of intended activities due to administrative problems or other problems • If workshops and activities become boring • Because of financial problems that worsen or slow down carrying out activities • Bad infrastructure regarding work conditions (premises and heating and hygiene in there) • Uninspiring and inadequate engagement of the participants and the coordinators • The most discouraging thing is the insincerity/dishonesty of the key stake holders for example project managers, NGOs and donors.

As the table shows the smallest number of statements are in the column referring to the motivation of the young people to involve themselves in projects. This is expected because young people are poorly informed about projects prior to the very involvement in them.

The column stating the elements of motivation for young people to stay in projects are of high importance and should be exploited whenever strategies for future activities are created. These results should be used to provide recommendations for future work.

The columns listing the issues that discourage young people or that indicate what could discourage them are the most important for this segment. They point out weaknesses in the project implementation process, and should therefore also be considered when planning future projects with youth participation.

4.3 STRENGTHENING PARTICIPATION

For the evaluation of young people’s participation in project activities, or more precisely the identification of how to improve and strengthen participation, nine *specific research questions* were developed at the workshop when the evaluation framework was created. Question 7.1 – 7.7 was used to define how youth participation could be strengthened. (Below table is from section 2.3 table, 3.)

Table 9:

7. What could be done to strengthen YP’s participation in your Country Programme?
7.1. What could be done to improve the responsibility of YP in projects?
7.2. What new ideas have been used to increase the number of YP in the projects?
7.3. What problems have been encountered in the RTK projects [see list in question 2], and what can be done to overcome them?
7.4. What could be done to strengthen youth participation in media promotion of projects?
7.5. Would increasing project activities result in increased participation, and why?
7.6. What can be done to strengthen youth participation in rural areas?
7.7. What can be done to strengthen the participation of EVYP?
7.8. What types of projects, other than RTK, could be used to promote youth participation in Macedonia?
7.9. How could more resources be generated to promote youth participation? (for e.g., in kind contributions, human resources, financial resources, etc.)

Question 7.1:

One of the most frequent and noticeable objections of the young participants in the projects is related precisely to the issue of **responsibility**. It is interesting that it is explicitly evident in their attitude towards **self-criticism**, as in their statements they point at the irresponsible way of behaving of their peers within the projects, primarily in regard to coming late at workshops, frequent non-attendance those results in loss of work continuity and worsens teamwork, flippancy at work, etc. Young people identify irresponsible ways of behaviour as one of the most central factors of causing difficulties in the project activities

Based on the findings of the evaluation materials, it can be concluded that young people’s participation in these projects and their experience of encountering difficulties due to irresponsible way of behaving of their peers in practice represents one of the best ways to gain awareness of it, and one of the most consequential way to realize that particularly in case of teamwork, irresponsible behaviour worsens the work process and results in less productive work.

As an outcome of the findings on experiences so far, a large number of young people evaluated considered that a priority should be responsible behaviour of young people during the organisation of future projects. They recommended that activities should always be interesting, and young people who

would decide to participate in them, should agree on a detailed plan of their activities in advance so it would be clear for everyone who participate in what part of the activities.

Also, they recommended a continual monitoring of the activities by coordinators and other key stake holders in the project. The majority of the young people emphasized that they are more motivated to continue with project activities after completion of certain project cycles with final products (performance, successful education, newspapers, exhibition, event), or after positive reviews by wider audience. Therefore, they emphasise the need for a larger media coverage and promotion of the youth activities. In the table below several opinions on what should be done to increase young people’s responsibility are provided.

Table 10: ‘What could be done to increase young people’s responsibilities?’

1. Encouraging young people to achieve results and success, is a motivating element for continuing activities
2. Media presentation of the results of the activities – is encouragement for more responsible behaviour of young people
3. A higher level of NGO’s involvement
4. Monitoring of the implementation process of the project activities
5. More young participants in the projects, more competition among them
6. Presence of a Supervisor
7. Good activities plan and schedule, according to participants’ priorities and wishes
8. Informing those who are responsible / in charge (principals, professors, parents)

Question 7.2:

Young participants had their own ideas and proposals to how **the number of participants can be increased** as an outcome of their experiences so far. These ideas are classified below:

- As much as possible increase of **media coverage towards the fact that there is an opportunity to be involved in projects through youth campaigns**. Young people suggested that media promotion of project activities, depending on the type of the community, communication characteristics and access to certain media, should be diverse. Therefore, promotion through media should consider the different target groups (young people living in towns, young people living in villages, young people in school or out of school). Young people recommend that local celebrities should be included in these campaigns.
- Encouragement of young people to get actively involved in projects should be based on the principles of **presenting positive examples, success and results**.
- Snow-bowling – Using project participants to attract new participants. At this point, presentations of final workshop products should be singled out as being a particularly successful example. At these presentations the participants had an opportunity to present their accomplishments to their peers and also the informal way of working allowed for presence of participants’ friends during their work in the projects.
- Use of new/innovative methodologies, tools and techniques. Young people, expressing their wishes and experiences, and felt that the methodology and tools used during the working process should allow young people for **education through fun, games and teamwork**.
- Opportunities to as **much as possible freer, creative expression of their ideas**.
- Frequent review of what are the real needs of young people in local communities and based on these findings to plan future activities

- **Encouragement of as many as possible projects at local level.**

Question 7.3:

This *specific research question* refers to problems encountered during carrying out the “Right to Know” project and ways how to overcome them. As the majority of the evaluated individuals are participants of this project, we believe that the stated data cover this question in several chapters so far. (See Annex 7.3 for details of the empirical materials. What problems have been encountered in the RTK projects, and what can be done to overcome them?)

Question 7.4 - 7.6:

The findings to the question on how to strengthen young people’s participation in projects through *media promotion* and *in rural areas* is covered in the part related to the challenge on how the number of participants could be increased. Young people believe that the media is of exceptional significance as to providing information and strongly influence the level of awareness, attitudes and behaviour. They believe that it is important that media provide accurate, verified and comprehensive information so the target group can be reached with certainty and so the messages will be understood well.

As for **rural areas**, evaluated individuals believed that the situation is a rather specific one regarding the access to/from media; so media appropriate to this population should be selected. For the projects to cover rural areas, special strategies and special methodologies should be developed, in accordance with the needs of the young people there. It should be taken into account that the largest number of young people evaluated comes from urban areas; therefore, their suggestions might not match the wishes and needs of the young people living in rural communities. The perception from the evaluated young people towards young people from rural areas were that they are less informed and do not possess background information to the majority of the issues worked on in the evaluated projects. They have no or little insight to the possible ways of approaching these issues. As this was the opinion of the young people evaluated it is necessary to further carry out research to verify and specify the situation, needs and wishes of young people in villages and rural areas, and then create a separate strategy and methodology for working with them.

Question 7.7:

Strengthening especially vulnerable young people’s participation is an important segment that needs special attention. While the evaluation results indicate that a significant portion of attention was paid to this challenge in the project activities it was also found that additional research among especially vulnerable young people is needed. The NGOs involved in working with EVYP found that it requires a special approach due to these young peoples often distrust towards their environment because of marginalisation and stigmatisation. The best way to work with EVYP was found to be through activities that do not ask for concentration over a long period or that are interesting and interactive, so that the group can focus on the work for a longer time period. Most recommendable are sport games, theatre games or street theatre and activities that build skills in the EVYP that can enable them to provide for the future and that can make them more accepted by their peers and the surrounding environment.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.4.1 Recommendations on Indicators

Following table states the most meaningful and feasible indicators that were used in the evaluation and it give recommendations on how to make the best use of the work with these indicators.

RECOMMENDATIONS	EXPLANATION
<i>No of Participants:</i>	Having in mind the specific approach of the

<p>To constantly monitor and follow the number of participants, to inform on all changes of the number of participants and establish the reasons for the change of their number</p>	<p>NGOs and the features of certain target groups, the number of participants should not be a main indicator. This is especially true when it comes to the work with vulnerable groups of young people.</p>
<p><i>Coverage / outreach:</i> To widen the project activities in small urban environments and villages. The definition of project activities and methodology, to adapt it to the needs and wishes of the local young people.</p>	<p>The flow of information and possibilities for the population in smaller cities and in the villages are extremely limited, and thus more work should be done on the development of basic capacities</p>
<p><i>Qualitative indicators (measuring motivation attitudes and behaviour related to participation):</i> To use form/tools for monitoring and evaluation that will show all phases and/or levels of participation of the young people in the frames of the projects.</p>	<p>Along with quantitative indicators, the qualitative should also be used. This is especially important for defining the benefits of those activities that include a smaller number of participants.</p>
<p><i>The situation, needs and interests of the target group:</i> To use tools and techniques and creative work that will continuously motivate the participants.</p>	<p>Coordinators of the workshops should be prepared to estimate the interest of the participants on certain topics, issues and tools, and to find the most appropriate way for practical utilization. It is recommended to consult experts and relevant institutions on issues that lie beyond the domain of the coordinators.</p>
<p><i>Time line of activities in place and followed:</i> To follow the precision in the implementation of the planned activities (time frame) as well as the quality of implementation</p>	<p>Fitting in the time frame is one of the key indicators for reaching success of the realized activities. A special indication should be put upon the process of realization.</p>
<p><i>End results/Final products:</i> To explicitly show the final results</p>	<p>Final results are an important factor for establishing the success of the projects; however they should not be a key indicator, since the main accent should be put upon the process the participants go through during the implementation. Some workshops did not have final products due to the specific activities and target groups, but the changes that the participants went through during the process justify the reasons for implementation.</p>
<p><i>Cost benefits:</i> To justify the expenses to be estimated by comparison of the expenditures and results</p>	<p>When estimation on the success of the projects is made through justifying the expenses, one should have in mind the different aspects, the quality of the process and the final results. Justifying of the expenditures is rarely proportional to the quantitative indicators on the basis of which it is most often estimated.</p>

4.4.2 Recommendations on the Process

The recommendations on the process refers to the process of monitoring and evaluation of programme and project activities with specific attention paid to participatory evaluation:

RECOMMENDATIONS	EXPLANATION/
Evaluation to be done in all phases of implementation: at the beginning, during the implementation and before it is finished, using the same methodology and tools.	This approach enables an easy comparison of data and assessment of the changes that happen during the implementation. One should bear in mind that the long-lasting projects should be evaluated more often during their implementation. The projects where the phases repeat themselves should be evaluated according to the same principle for each phase.
It is not recommended to evaluate the projects after finishing the activities, especially after a long time.	This approach hinders contact with the major part of the participants, and not much data can be considered valid since the memories of participants fade. (the evaluation in youth participation took place shortly after UNICEF stopped to finance the activities)
Not to conduct evaluation of all key and specific research questions using only one target group, due to the timing of the evaluation session.	If we want to do the evaluation properly, we should take into account that the large number of questions developed during the design of the evaluation prolongs the field evaluation. While all questions were equally important it is a time consuming process when the participatory evaluation tools are used. Therefore it is recommended to take into account different questions for different groups, but to be careful that all questions from the questionnaire are covered. Some of the key questions though need to be worked out with all groups.
The tools and the methods should be adjusted to the specific evaluated group	The tools and methods, for the same questions, should be adjusted to the specificities of the group being evaluated. It was not always possible to analyze the same questions with the same tools, within different evaluated settings and groups. Example: With some groups it was difficult to use tools where the participants are expected to write.

4.4.3 General Recommendations

The general recommendations below refer specifically to the further promotion of and work with young people’s participation in Macedonia. However as they are based on the general lessons learned

they are also useful for other projects in Macedonia or outside Macedonia when it comes to promotion and work with youth participation in projects involving and targeting young people/

RECOMMENDATIONS	For whom
To continue with enabling project activities in which young people can actively be involved in their realization through creative work	UNICEF, Government/Government institutions responsible for young people
To continue using the methodology of Participatory Evaluation/PAR and to develop it through forms of creative work	UNICEF, NGOs, Research Institutions as partners
To continue with using the methodology of Participatory Evaluation/PAR and to develop it through specific forms of work with EVYP	UNICEF
To create conditions of competitiveness and competition between NGOs included in realization of the projects as competition can raise the quality of implementation of projects.	UNICEF
To support NGOs concentrated in Skopje to work upon building of local capacities of communities and decentralization of responsibilities and obligations	Government institutions, UNICEF, NGOs
To implement project activities in small urban environments and villages where it is mostly needed.	UNICEF, NGOs
To support the development of local capacities and higher independence of local groups and organizations	UNICEF, Government institutions, NGOs
To continuously monitor the process of implementation of project activities, using relevant tools of monitoring the processes and gathering of data	UNICEF, NGOs, Research Institutions that cooperate during the implementation of projects
To do continuous evaluation (at least at the beginning, middle and end – before the end of the project) using the same methodology and the same tools and techniques. This enables a comparative analysis of results of the evaluation and better insight into the changes that happen.	UNICEF, NGOs, Research Institutions that cooperate during the implementation of projects
To publish: - Manual on utilization of tools for Participatory Evaluation/PAR on the language of the local community that implements the project	UNICEF, NGOs, Institutions that cooperate during the implementation of projects
To publish the result of evaluations, during the project and also at the end of it, together with recommendations for better solutions of the problems, as well as improved information to the participants in the project activities	UNICEF, NGOs, Institutions that cooperate during the implementation of projects
To strengthen the joint planning of project activities by involving both rights and duty bearers as it would ensure a higher degree of transparency, that again would increase common understanding and agreement on responsibilities	UNICEF and all involved rights and duty bearers

and motivation of all stake holders (including rights bearers)	
To provide better space for youth activities especially in rural and remote areas	Government
To provide training or guidelines for coordinators of project activities in planning, facilitation and problem solving and in working with young people in general to ensure high motivation towards the idea of the project.	UNICEF, training institutions