

## General Assembly 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2011, Istanbul.

Present:

1. Debate in Civil Society (Azerbaijan) – Kanan Mammadov, Seymur Huseynov
2. New Communication Club (Belarus) – Alena Stefanovich
3. Estonian Debating Society - proxy given to SDA
4. Levizija FOL - Speak-up Movement (Kosovo) - proxy given to SDA
5. Debate Centre Latvia (proxy given to NCC)
6. Information Education Debate Center (Lithuania) (proxy given to NCC)
7. Youth Educational Forum (Macedonia) – Brankica Georgievska
8. Asociația Română de Dezbateri și Rhetorică (Romania) – Andrei Iustin Mihailescu
9. Association for Creative Communication and Debate (Serbia) (proxy given to MOF)
10. Slovak Debate Association – Marian Porvaznik
11. Debate Association (Turkey) – Çağlar Kurc

We have eleven members present or represented by proxy, therefore we have a quorum.

Also present from IDEA: Joe Zompetti, Yvonne Heselmans, Bradley Gallop, Noel Selegzi, Doutsen Langhout, Veronika Vlckova, Virginija Paksiene, Andrej Schulcz, Logan Balavijendran, David Crane, Manos Moschopoulos, Anne Valkering, Ama van Dantzig

Meeting opened at 9:25, Joe Zompetti presiding, David Crane taking minutes

Minutes from the last meeting were approved.

### **Reports from IDEA NL staff – Yvonne Heselmans**

Yvonne started 1<sup>st</sup> Feb, taking over from Marcin. Annual report, June 2010 – December 2010 to reflect the change in financial year to the calendar year. Books were closed with no deficit or surfeits. Auditors approved the accounts. Next year we hope to get an official audit report in order that we be able to use this in an official Annual Report which we can use for PR purposes.

In 2011 we started the EU Africa project linking with partners in Africa doing public debates and debate training. Also new is a link with Antwerp thanks to our success with DIN in Holland, Antwerp has similar problems with marginalized youth as Amsterdam and other parts of Holland.

I am delighted to announce a conference in Antwerp on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> December and invite the members to a GA following the conference on the 10<sup>th</sup>. The conference will be on meaningful youth participation, in particular their relationship with the police. We will also launch our new web site at the conference.

We have five program lines:

1. Debate in the Neighbourhood, focusing on: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Zeeland, Western France, Antwerp, Paris and maybe even Berlin
2. School program, VMBOs (schools for vocational training) proactively developing programs together with schools
3. Youth Forum
4. Global Debates, started this last year and we hope to organize it again this year
5. Training program for organisations looking for a training in debate

Our financial situation looked precarious but thanks to OSF's support we will manage. We will have to be careful with money for the remainder of the year, though OSF have said we can apply for our grant earlier to carry us through. We were looking at a deficit of €30k but thanks to OSF saying yesterday they would forgive a €28k debt we are in a much better position.

#### **DIN**

DL responsible for DIN and debate in schools, areas where debate is less common. Several trainings since September, one of which was a weekend debate camp between youths from different parts of the Netherlands, many different races, different educational backgrounds. Nominated for an award for this training.

Worked in conjunction with the At Home in Europe project and My City Real World. From January been involved with fundraising and helping on EU Africa project and have travelled to Vilnius and Budapest to do DIN training. Also started a new DIN project in Zeeland, there will also be trainings in Antwerp.

#### **Veronika Vlckova's report**

Worked on the Global Debates, a program designed to reach people we don't have access to usually and to get them involved in taking local actions on issues and involved with advocacy and public speaking practice, as well as debate. This was launched after the GA last year and we are adapting the model put together by the UN in order to better meet our needs. The Global Debates is a year-long project and is designed to stimulate interest in one topic, a topic linked to the Youth Forum, in order that the students who arrive at the Forum are prepared in the topic.

Africa EU exchange program, assisted by Doutsen: five countries from Africa and six from Europe get to exchange views with each other. They were intended to meet once and that happened at the Forum. Project runs from January to December 2011. Training with facilitators from their countries in February and May. They are asked to organise six public events in their locality and four workshops that pass on the knowledge they gained in Feb and May. Most partner countries have organised two public debates, though we haven't been able to facilitate as much discussion between the countries as we would have liked.

Youth Forum 212 participants, 54 countries, including new countries have haven't participated before (Sierra Leone, Ghana, Kenya, thanks to the EU Africa project). The second upward influence on numbers has been the Global Debates as the winner got a prize of entrance into the Forum, this brought entrants from Chile and Mongolia. We were also able to get participants from Japan and Malaysia. Sixty seven coaches and judges, separated into three groups – beginner, intermediate and advanced – and given focus training. This has proven to be a success. The training continued throughout the Forum, shadow judges were also used to help move people through the process of adjudication.

Our evaluation has now progressed into a debate rubric that evaluated debaters at the start and end of the Forum which is designed to measure how they have progressed. This is the first time we've run this. We will use this for our own evaluation and will give it to the students. We also had a lot more coverage of the event and a lot of great videos, the debates have also been streamed – all of which has appeared on our site.

There will be a few changes for 2012, one of which is the move outside Europe to Mexico. We will put a call out for bidders for 2013 by October, Azerbaijan have already put in a bid in after their unsuccessful bid for 2012. We have already decided on a theme for 2013, which is the Role of Media in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Macedonia, Antwerp and Malaysia are interested in 2013.

Leon in Mexico will host 2012, it is one of the safest cities in Mexico. Air fares will be more expensive, but we are hoping to get a discount from the national carrier. We hope to do local fundraising sooner in order to offset the high travel costs. If GA members know they want to come get in touch with the embassy in Mexico to seek their support. The former president of Mexico is supporting the Forum and the final may be held at his ranch, this official support could encourage embassies to offer financial help. OSF have offered us a grant of \$100k which will go towards fee waivers. The Forum theme will be Securing Liberty. Books are available to help with this. Motions will be revealed in the Fall (or Autumn as us proper speakers call it).

The participation fee will not be raised and may even go down. Alternatively, the money available for fee waivers may increase. Host is trying to get sponsors for national delegations. Priorities will be teams from Africa and Asia. GA members should look to find Mexican companies doing work in their country/area and approach them for sponsorship. If these are found, contact IDEA for help getting them on board.

Affordable flights get booked up in March and April. Do the selection procedure early. Registration will open on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb.

LB: discussion point: How do we facilitate teams coming from conflict areas, ie Israeli's and Palestinians, engaging each other? Is this an issue? Do we do anything about it? The areas we could restrict are stopping them debating against each other (before the Break), keeping them separate in the tracks and MTT.

NS: Forum was started during the Balkan wars and we had Serbs and Croats debating and staying with one another then. We have had violent conflict every year since the Forum started and we have never had a problem. The Forum is about resolving differences with words not weapons.

JZ: This should be something the GA thinks about prior to the meeting in December and make a decision about whether the standards should be changed then.

NS: Proposal – add to the standards a statement saying “We will make no accommodation for political conflict at the Forum.”

**DC: Action – distribute site launch notice to GA members**

NS: OSF has decided to commit more to debate. Mr Soros is concerned about the lack of civic/civil discourse in the world and there will be an announcement in September of a \$20m investment in debate, focussed on university age students. The soft launch of the grant application process is on the soros.org site now, \$250k for a consortium of universities, \$50k for sole universities. There will be a call for new debating events too. Hoping to give \$1m in grants before the end of the year. GA members are encouraged to find universities to apply for these grants, if these universities want to contract with members to deliver the debating services that is not a problem. GA members are also encouraged to apply for grants for new debating events, they need to be filling a gap, but money is available. There is also a small grants program for combating racism and xenophobia in Europe, which could be used for themed debates. Some criticism within OSF is that IDEA doesn't focus on areas of interest to OSF. The hope is that this will be a long-term investment in debate. GDPPC will launch in September.

**Election of board members**

Andrej Schulcz is up for re-election. Joe Zompetti has reached his term limit, David Crane is not seeking re-election due to his position as Executive Director of IDEA UK.

There are two other people up for election: Lazar Pop Ivanov (active member) and Maja Nenadovic (non-active member).

IDEA statutes require that prospective board members receive at least half the number of votes available in order they be elected. Eleven organisations were represented at the Forum and, therefore, the minimum number of votes needed to be elected is six.

Each candidate received at least the minimum number of votes and so was duly elected.

## **IDEA Network**

It is important to remember that there is more than one organisation that can use the IDEA brand and that IDEA is expanding significantly over the next few years. IDEA is the implementing partner of the Debates and Global Civics and a lot more money will be flowing through the organisation. Therefore, it is very important for OSF to know that the governance of IDEA is in order.

The IDEA Network currently consists of NL, US and UK. Bradley Gallop has been the lawyer since the beginning. The number of entities will be expanded with offices opening in Macedonia, Hong Kong, Mexico, South East Asia and Brussels. Brussels will be called IDEA Central. Each of the entities will have some network functions.

Central will provide strategic and governance responsibilities, as well as legal. Each of NL, US, UK and OSF can nominate up to two members to the board of Central – which will usually be the Executive Director and the President of the board. The board can appoint new members as new entities develop.

Each entity will remain an independent legal entity and will make its own decisions. The Central entity will sign an agreement with each independent entity that states the rights and responsibilities each has in relation to Central. If an entity does not meet its obligations the ultimate sanction of Central will be to remove the right to use the IDEA name, brand and resources. It will still exist as a legal entity but can't call itself IDEA, or use its logo, website or network.

In essence we are a network of independent entities that has a common mission, vision and values. Each entity will have its own budget.

At the GA meeting in Antwerp we hope to review and update the IDEA NL statutes. How does the entity meet the members' needs and what is the value of the entity? Also, who should be members and what that means is important. These are questions to be addressed in the statutes. IDEA NL should also consider how, or if, it should expand its network to other regions globally.

The point is to ensure quality across the network and to provide resources for the separate entities.

To reiterate: no one is suggesting that the membership structure of IDEA NL should change. IDEA NL is a network of networks, just as IDEA Central will be. We just need to decide what the relationship is between the members and the entities.

Open for questions.

YEF: what will be the roles of the other entities?

BG: IDEA US will be primarily responsible for the press and US based funding. The current ED of IDEA US has expertise in Asia, so he may be the key resource for the activities in Asia.

IDEA UK for the moment is responsible for the website and external communications. Additionally, IDEA UK has Marcin who speaks Russian, so they will most likely continue to work on Russian based programs.

SEE Macedonia will be responsible for regional activities, especially in local languages, and growth of debate in the region. They will also be tied into the media activities of the overall network.

But all of this is in flux, it isn't set in stone. The other offices will have more of a regional focus, such as China and Southeast Asia office and Mexico and Kyrgyzstan will have regional foci. If they offer additional resources they could function more broadly for the whole network. We are trying to maximize resources.

The intention is for people outside the entities to see us as one IDEA, the names UK, US etc will be used internally.

YEF: Will IDEA NL members need to share anything with other entities?

BG: Only NL has members currently (though SEE may in the future). The entities are not intended to compete for members, an organisation could be part of SEE and NL.

Any changes to the statutes need to be announced to the GA two months in advance of the meeting when they are to be discussed.

An email will be sent out to all GA members to invite them to become part of the working group.

BD: YEF is interested in becoming part of the working group.

YH: It is important to define what the role of the different member groups within NL – members, associates, partners.

ARDOR: Can we have a couple of weeks to think about this and come back to you?

AS: This is just the opening discussion and it will be on-going so there will be plenty of time to contribute as time goes on.

BG: The changes to the statutes need to be decided by Antwerp.

ARDOR: Very important that communication be good between the various IDEAs. It is also important to be clear about the role of each of the organisations.

- BD: We should communicate with other members when applying for grants.
- AS: I circulated a questionnaire to all members and responses to this could help us address concerns.
- BG: The new IDEA entity in SEE will be established in addition to the existing Macedonian membership organisation, YEF.
- YH: We need to give members more input in order they be better able to perform their function as GA. We should also look to involve members in partnerships around projects. We also want to extend our governing body and our membership network. We consider our members to be very important to our work.
- JZ: Fifteen minute break. Please think about the role of members in relation to the network.
- DiCS. IDEA good for publicising events and activities we do nationally. Problem is our communication is bad. Azerbaijani organisations cannot pay to organisations outside the country without a certificate of payment.
- NCC: Should be more communication amongst the members of IDEA, including exchange programs, events involving different countries. We need to find out what other organisations are doing.
- BD: We would appreciate a mailing list for all members, the Big IDEA is good but we need a way of sharing information between members.
- JZ: Add a badge for IDEA members and if they are voting members.**
- DA: New member so not quite sure what to add
- SDA: Great opportunity for member programs to be a member of IDEA, without the support of IDEA it is hard for the individual organisations to exist.
- ARDOR: Countries adopt their own standards to suit their own purposes. Could we have more input into the standards. Member organisations should be able to contribute to them. We feel that IDEA is above us and that we don't have a role in inputting to the standards.
- NS: Anyone can suggest a change to the standards, it just needs to be submitted to the President of the board a month before the GA.
- NS: Membership should be a privilege for those who want to govern IDEA. We should be able to remove organisations who don't meet our standards.

## **Member events**

### *Information Education Debate Center - Lithuania:*

European Structural Funds, €260k – integrating debate methodology into formal education system, started Jan 2011 – finishes Dec 2012. 60 public debates, 26 trainings, 2,000 classrooms, three national debate tournaments in Lithuanian and English, as well as books.

Holding an IDEA Exchange in Vilnius – March 30<sup>th</sup> – April 1<sup>st</sup> 2012. General topic will be about the Brain Drain. Youth Forum for high school students in the last week of August in Russian. For around 30 teams.

### *ARDOR - Romania*

Several projects related to online debating which have been very successful, one of which had more than 500 participants that stayed in the project for more than three months. Conferences with prominent speakers and prizes such as a subscription to the Economist have encouraged participation. Have put together a high school debate course for all high schools. Interested in creating a DIN project.

### *Debate Association - Turkey:*

Focussing on high schools, completed two national tournaments. Debating is extra-curricula – schools can contact our organisation for help organising debate teaching. Looking at schools outside the big cities.

### *Youth Educational Forum - Macedonia:*

Gone through major restructuring, now have training for non-formal education, youth policies and youth education. No debate in Macedonian schools, we recruit people and start debate clubs, 14 new ones in 14 cities in recent years. Wanting to run trainings in schools to give debate a more formal setting. Want to create competitive environment within the schools themselves. Have a university project over the past two years with five BP clubs in different universities. Planned activities Macedonia open November 2011, registration opens Aug 31<sup>st</sup>. Have an annual summer activity, this year is our third. Have a debate track, a BP track and a Karl Popper track.

### *New Communication Club – Belarus:*

Depend on government education budget. We do a training for teachers to introduce them to teaching debate as a methodology to teaching other subjects. Organised a couple of trainings and this has got regional educational authorities interested in doing more. Have two annual tournaments in Minsk, students from Russia, Lithuania and Ukraine attend. One national debate tournament and two university debate tournaments (Feb), one open tournament.

### *Debate in Civil Society - Azerbaijan:*

Have 15,000 members, 65 debate clubs, 60 schools, 31 universities. All materials, standards, coaching etc translated into local languages. Operating in nine regions currently, hoping to open two more in September. Aug/Sep planning four summer schools – 180 participants. Each year national debate forums in Winter and Spring,

2,600 attendees – students and teachers. Topic was migration as it was the topic of the Youth Forum. Always use IDEA logo and promote IDEA.

*Slovak Debate Association:*

Program for high school students, each region has four tournaments, one national tournament. About 30 clubs. Two English tournaments, small in fall, in spring international tournament, 20 teams from eight countries. Have program for elementary school pupils, two tournaments for 13-15 schools. Four university clubs, but mostly university students are trainers/coaches. Are co-operating with Delegation of European Commission, doing trainings for other NGOs, mostly involved with human rights.

*Association of Debate Clubs – Czech Republic:*

AS: Have a debate across the curriculum initiative which extends across three years. Have a year-long competition, participating in EU Africa, have a Roma programme too.

*Estonian Debating Society:*

AS: debate is in their national curriculum. Have a high school and university program. Have a Russian program, work in Finland too.

NS: With regards to debate in the curriculum. OSF supports IDEA publications and has funding for new books that members think will be helpful. These books are almost always in English but can be translated. If there are other publications that people want let us know. We also have Controversia, a debate journal that comes out intermittently.

NS: Giving books away is a legitimate way of accounting for cost-share with the EU or the US State Department.

**Meeting concludes**