



“Various Perspectives, Two Countries, One Picture!”



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Project Summary:

Objective: Following the title of our project, our main goal consisted of showing the *different perspectives* of young people between the ages of 18-25, nationals of the *two countries Venezuela and Switzerland*, who came together in order to exchange their experience on the basis of photos which we displayed jointly in a *photo-exhibition*.

Project implementation: First, during the preparation phase, one coordinator handed out single-use-cameras to 14 Swiss students who participated in the intercultural journey to Venezuela from 31st August to 14th September 2007. The second coordinator travelled to Venezuela in order to promote the project in eleven leading Universities and to prepare the two day camp and the photo-exhibition. Secondly, 40 Venezuelan students, representing eight universities and 14 Swiss students from five universities in Switzerland met in a camp in San Joaquín during the weekend of September 7th to September 9th where we talked about daily life, learned of the characteristics of both countries and finally selected the best 15 photos. Thirdly, on September 12th we together inaugurated the exhibition with the 15 awarded photos in five categories (person, nature, town/village, studies/work, free time activities) in the Swiss foundation “Espacio Suizo” in Caracas. Later on we had a farewell diner where we enjoyed a typical Swiss cheese-fondue.

Fundraising: In order to cover all costs of the project, we were able to successfully increase the budget, receiving 120 single-use-cameras from Fujifilm Switzerland for free. Additionally we obtained special conditions from the companies Lauterschlager and Casa Hellmund for the photo-development.

Project Results:

✓ The principle goal of bringing together young people from Venezuela and Switzerland in order to learn from each other was accomplished. The very positive feedback from all participants proves the successful outcome of our project.

✓ Not only was the intercultural dialogue between the Venezuelan and Swiss participants was fruitful. The fact that students, from various regions in Venezuela, were able to meet other stu-

dents of a completely different social and political background, led to an integral awareness of the different lifestyles in the regions.

✓ Thanks to good contacts and a transparent project management, we were able to establish a balance between the different political orientations in Venezuela that guaranteed a satisfied result for all participants. This despite the current political situation and the practical economic/financial obstacles of implementing the project on a national stage.

✗ With 40 Venezuelan and 14 Swiss participants, the original target of 100 students was not met. This is principally due to the ambitious enlargements of the project from one university to a selection of eleven universities nationwide. This made the coordination and communication more difficult and less personal.

✗ From a retrospect view, the idea of the two day program was not elaborated enough. The personal photos could have been used more as a starting point for further discussions

Implications:

Building bridges: Given the current politicization of the university life and the growing polarization among students regarding political issues, our main achievement lies perhaps in our successful attempt to bring together students from pro-government universities (such as the Bolivarian University and the Military University) with students opposing the governmental policy. While normally there is no contact at all between the different universities, by bringing them together we achieved to awake the interest and curiosity for each others point of views regarding political topics.

Future prospects: Even if the activities ceased with the return of the Swiss students, not only the photo-exhibition in Caracas is a reminder of the intercultural exchange, but also the film shot during the two days in camp, the shared photos and a the mailing list of all participants makes the project ongoing. We will know in the next couple of months if the intention to invite a group of Venezuelan students to Switzerland will be realized.

Personal experience: Coordinating a project with a significant budget in cultural environment, with different linguistical, political and financial parameters, geared to spread a message of peace, was an extremely motivating and inspiring undertaking and thus a very rich personal experience.

→ To sum it up, both participants and coordinators are very content with the outcome and will remember the peace project as a great and unforgettable opportunity to enhance the dialogue between cultures and thereby to contribute to a global consciousness in favor of a peaceful world. "Ms Kathryn Wasserman Davis - thank you very much for making this possible!"

Photos of „Various Perspectives, Two Countries, One Picture!“



Photo selection



Singing...



Coordinators: Tim Fauquex

and



Martin Keller



Final Photo