

Strengthening Political Youth Organizations

Online Phase I: 30 August – 26 September 2010

Online Phase II: 04 October – 06 November 2010

Gummersbach: 07 – 19 November 2010

What makes a liberal political youth organization successful? On the one hand it is necessary to run and manage the organization efficiently and professionally – especially, because resources are usually limited and the work is based to a large extent on voluntary engagement. The seminar will provide a platform to share experiences and to develop new and creative ideas. Subjects to be discussed will be the organizational structure, development of liberal policies, motivation and recruitment of members, relationship to a mother party / mother organization, finance and legal framework / legal restrictions of the organization's work.

However, the overall goal of a political youth organization is a political one. For having political impact, it is necessary to develop a political strategy and to be clear about the organization's (political) goals. Some fundamental strategic understanding and practical skills on strategy development will also be a substantial part of this seminar.

A) Target Group Description

The seminar is designed for young representatives of liberal political youth organizations. Participants should be active members of these organizations (activists, board members or leaders on local, regional or (inter-)national level) and have knowledge about their organization and at least some experiences with political work.

Participants should be interested in the subject from a personal, practical and political point of view rather than from an observing or academic perspective.

Youth organizations can but need not to be affiliated to a political party. The organizations should be already in existence or, at least, be in a concrete founding process.

All participants are kindly asked to bring along some materials (campaigning materials, posters, stickers, brochures etc.) and written information (statutes, political program/platform, etc.) on their respective organizations.

B) Concept and Goals

After the successful first run of the seminar in 2009 it has been redesigned as an online seminar in 2010.

During the four weeks of **online phase I** participants will find an opportunity to introduce their own organization and to discover similarities and differences of the organizations present. In online forum discussions we will share experiences and opinions on important questions like relationship to a mother party (if applicable), terms of membership, finance, policy development and others.

By reading provided texts and exercises we will find a common understanding of the essentials of liberal thinking and differences to other political mainstreams.

Finally we will also collect and discuss examples for new, youth oriented ways of communication by use of the internet.

As usual, participants' contributions, including an individual essay on a given subject, during online phase I will be evaluated and the best performers from the different regions will be invited to participate in the online phase II and the on-site seminar in Gummersbach. Online phase I

will, nevertheless, also be a meaningful completed online seminar for participants who did not qualify for phase II.

Online phase II will be a preparation for the event in Gummersbach, first of all. Content-wise participants will cover regional youth organizations and have a closer look on some policy ideas of different youth organizations.

The **seminar in Gummersbach** is designed as a two-fold event: In the first part of the program we will focus - again - on fundamental questions of how to professionally organize and run a liberal political youth organization. In contrast to the online seminar phase I we will go beyond exchange of experiences and try to develop concrete recommendations to improve the work of our youth organizations. The approach will be more dialogue oriented.

In the second part of the program participants will learn fundamentals of strategic thinking and strategic planning (especially campaign oriented). This part is designed as a skills training, participant oriented and very close to practical applications.

Subjects to be covered and related learning goals are:

PART 1:

1. **Organization, structure, and statutes**

Participants know basic facts about the political youth organizations present at the seminar.

Participants are aware of the different options of how to organize a political youth organization. They recognize that the structures have to fit with the local environment and that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution. However, they discover that there are some recommendable principles of organization and the need for efficient but also democratic and transparent structures.

2. **Programmatic work / policy development: Liberal profile, issues to deal with and decision making process**

Participants recall fundamental values and principles of Liberalism from the online phase of the seminar and their concrete meaning for their political work. They know examples and applications of these principles based on the work experiences of their fellow participants.

Participants know how the formation of opinions and the decision making processes within an organization can be organized. They feel the need and realize the importance of a democratic decision making process also for the programmatic area.

3. **Recruitment and motivation of membership**

Participants discover that there are similar problems of rising interest and attention of the youth for political questions and activities in many countries. On the basis of their experiences (also discussed in the online seminar) they develop new ideas and concrete concepts on how to motivate new activists, new members and re-motivate passive members of their organizations.

4. **Relation towards mother party / mother organization [if applicable]**

Participants know about different models and approaches on how to form a relationship with a mother party / mother organization. Taking also the results of the online phase I into account, they see that there are close or loose relations. They sum up advantages and disadvantages of these different concepts and develop a guideline regarding 'youth organization – mother party' relations.

5. **Funding and Finance**

Participants exchange knowledge of and experiences in how to organize the financial affairs of a political youth organization. They are aware of the importance of an independent budget for the work of their

organization and recall the respective online discussions. They know different options of raising funds for their political work and develop recommendations including new ideas and approaches to generate these financial means.

6. Legal framework, government restrictions, security issues etc.

Participants share their experiences with legal constraints, government restrictions and similar problems in their political work. They know a number of strategies on how to deal with and how to overcome such difficulties.

7. Experiences from German and other (international) liberal political youth organizations

Participants know about experiences from German liberal political youth organizations related to some selected topics of the seminar.

They know that there are international (e.g. IFLRY) and regional (e.g. LYMEC, YLDA, OALY, ...) liberal political youth organizations/networks existing and how they can participate in and benefit from these organizations. [-> Regional youth organizations will be covered by online phase II also. In completion to this the subject should be covered during the excursion and/or by invited speakers and/or by inputs of selected participants]

PART 2:

8. Fundamentals of strategic thinking and strategic planning methods

Participants know fundamentals of strategic thinking and realize that a strategic approach is important for their work. They understand that the formulation of concrete goals is a prerequisite for successful working, and, in particular, campaigning. They have an overview of different planning techniques.

9. The method of ‘Conceptual Planning’

Participants have basic knowledge of the strategic planning tool ‘Conceptual Planning’. They understand that one has to adhere to a certain logical sequence of steps when a successful and feasible strategy has to be developed.

10. Application of planning tools in a practical context

Participants can apply their methodological knowledge on practical and relevant cases in their own scope of experiences. They feel motivated to structure their future work in a strategic way.

Closing Date for Nominations: 16 August 2010

Languages: English, Spanish