



Youth

“Dialogue Through Debate” Project is supported by the European Commission Youth Program

REPORT

Debate Training – “Dialogue Through Debate” Project

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Country: Uganda
City: Kampala
Dates: 06-09.02.07

The training was organized by the International Debate Education Association as part of the *Dialogue Through Debate* Project. It was the second of the debate trainings proposed by IDEA under this project and it focused on introducing the concept of debate and related debate methodologies to a group of youth leaders, teachers and community leaders working with youth through the human rights youth clubs supported by CRY-Uganda across the country.

IDEA would like to thank the leadership of CRY –Uganda, in particular Joseph Ogoror and Ronald Rwankangi for providing their assistance before the training and Grace Agoror and Keith Mutebi for their support and assistance during the training.

The purpose of the seminar was to provide an introductory training in debate to a group of teachers, youth leaders and community leaders working with human rights youth clubs supported by CRY-Uganda across the country and explore possibilities of involving them in the DTD Project. The report will present the context in which the seminar was organized, description and evaluation of the seminar (based on the evaluation forms filled in by the participants) and recommendation concerning development of debate in Uganda and specific steps for the implementation of the Dialogue Through Debate Project.

IDEA’s involvement in Uganda and previous seminars

IDEA first made contact with representatives of CRY Uganda in Rwanda in October 2005 while assisting a group of Rwandan youth organizations in organizing a Peace Camp. The first contact resulted in exchange of ideas on future cooperation between IDEA and CRY Uganda as well as exchange of curricula and continuous email contacts. In April 2006, IDEA-US, Willamette University and Cry Uganda submitted a project proposal to the US State Department for organization of a student and teacher exchange between US and Uganda. In June 2006 IDEA-NL and CRY Uganda (as well as AJPRODHO Rwanda) applied together for a joint project under European Commission Youth Program to support a one year project focusing on training and youth debate trainers, organization of debate activities and events and organization of

a Youth Debate Camp towards the end of the project (tentatively scheduled for the November 2007). Both of the Projects were awarded funding and representatives of IDEA-NL, OSI Network Debate Program and Willamette University visited Uganda for the first time in October 2006. During that time IDEA-NL conducted a brief 2-day training in debate to CRY's trainers.

Debate Training in Kampala (06-09 February 2007)

The seminar aimed at achieving a number of objectives:

- Acquaint the participants with debate and its main components, replicable models and best practices in conducting and organizing debates;
- Provide the participants with a practical experience in employing some of the techniques in order to build their better understanding of and confidence in using these techniques;
- Provide a forum for the exchange of ideas on how to best develop Ugandan youth debate program and involve youth from various regions of Uganda and various ethnic backgrounds into debate activities.

To meet the above-mentioned goals, IDEA trainer (Marcin Zaleski) incorporated a variety of interactive methods to ensure participants' active engagement and understanding of the concepts, techniques, and skills presented. Sessions presented during the seminar included a combination of:

- **Brief Explanatory Overviews:** various debate concepts, techniques, and models were presented and explained through the use of examples. Presentations were brief with plenty of time left for questions and comments
- **Group Work and Presentations:** participants worked in small groups on given tasks and assignments (e.g. particular debate exercises) and presented the results of their work to the rest of the group for discussion
- **Debate:** the seminar concluded with all the participants having an opportunity to participate in debates.

Below is the schedule of the seminar with brief description of sessions and the trainer's comments (in italics).

Description of Sessions

Day I 6th February

Session I

Introduction to the training and ice-breaking

The seminar began in an afternoon and it opened with a an interactive ice-breaking exercise, which provided an opportunity for participants to present themselves to the whole group as well as present their involvement in youth work and expectations regarding the seminar.

Participants worked in pairs, interviewing each other and at the end of the exercise presented their partners to the rest of the group.

The seminar group was very diverse with participants representing CRY's human rights clubs from across the country. Most of the participants were from outside of Kampala and they majority of participants were male. Vast majority of participants had never attended a debate training but a few have known what debate is as a result of their clubs being involved in debate projects promoted by CRY (e.g. The People Speak Initiative in 2005 and 2006).

Session II

Introduction to debate

This session focused on identifying and defining the main characteristics of an educational debate (i.e. controversy, topic, divergent opinions, rational views, etc.) Participants were divided into small groups and were asked to define the concept debate by: listing its components, presenting contexts in which debate takes place, listing what debate is not (e.g. comparing debate with discussion). The sessions finished with a presentation by each group and a debriefing session.

Participants identified the main elements of debate and group work was very effective – each group identifying a number of characteristics of debates following lively discussion. Each group presented their definitions to the rest of the participants. All groups provided interesting examples of debates taking place at that moment in Uganda (mostly political debates).

Session

Debate topics

Building on the previous session, the trainer asked participants to list topics, which could make for interesting debates in Uganda- based on their experience with political and social context of their country. The participants were asked to identify topics that would be especially appropriate for discussions with young people.

Following the presentation of the topics by groups and commentary by the trainer on each topic (asking participants if they would like to suggest changes or what potential debates these topics could generate), participants were asked to list the main characteristics of good debate topics.

The list of characteristic of appropriate debate topics presented by participants was impressive and included items such as: “sensitive”, “balanced” “controversial” ‘interesting to young people” “good for public debates” “related to problems in Uganda and/or community”

The trainer built on these responses and introduced an idea of topics that should lead both teams in a debate to discuss specific proposals to address specific problems faced by communities in Uganda (in particular youth). During the same session, the trainer also introduced different functions that the debate could have – depending on a choice of a topic. For example: entertainment (with fun or light topic), education (e.g. when debating what approaches to HIV/AIDS would work best- pointing out however to possible problems related to such a topic) or in fact debating specific proposals. The trainer emphasised a number of times that debate is a flexible tool – and it should not be treated as an end in itself but a means to achieve other objectives.

DAY II 7th February

Session1

Debate topics

The trainer began the session by referring to a dilemma presented in the morning on a popular radio show and asked the participants to discuss the issue in groups and propose solutions to the problem and support each solution with arguments. Building on this example, the trainer asked participants to list topics, which could make for interesting debates in Uganda - based on their experience with political and social context of their country. The participants were asked to identify topics that would be especially appropriate for discussions with young people. The trainer also did a brainstorming session on sources of good topics (e.g. press, radio, community events, etc.)

Following the presentation of the topics by groups and commentary by the trainer on each topic (asking participants if they would like to suggest changes or what potential debates these topics could generate), participants were asked to list the main characteristics of good debate topics.

Presentation of a dilemma from a radio program was a good demonstration of using, stories, media news and reports, quotes, everyday situations for the purpose of coming up with good debate topics and “reasons” for involving young people in debates.

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Session 2

Argumentation

Following this introduction the trainer divided participants into groups and provided them with a resolution (proposed as a possible debate topics on the previous day) and asked each group to come up with arguments for and against the topic (“The right of public figures to privacy is more important than the right of the voters to have information about politicians’ lives”) and asked them to come up with arguments for and against the topic.

Following the presentation by each groups, the trainer introduced the participants to the concept of argument (using examples from each presentation) and presented the structure of an argument (simplified Toulmin;s model) and basic types of arguments.

Using participants own arguments as an illustration of argument structure and argument types worked well too and allowed participants to reflect on the results of the previous assignment.

Session 3

Debate Exercises

The trainer conducted a number of interactive group exercises with the participants including: *chain debate, ethical dilemma and, fallacy exercise* in order to wrap up on the previous sessions as well as to acquaint the participants with teaching tools and methodologies which they can find useful when working with young people in human rights youth clubs or classrooms.

The session was very lively and the trainees were very keen on participation (to the point of being ready to skip the coffee break). The session also provided good material for a later discussion on involving young people in interactive learning exercises.

Session I

Debate format and roles of speakers

Following on the previous session (the chain debate exercise), the trainer asked participants to identify the main characteristics of a debate format (through a brainstorming session). Participants listed the following characteristics: number of speakers, time set for each speaker, time for audience to take the floor (during a public debate), etc. The trainer elaborated on each example.

Later, with the assistance of participants (through a brainstorming session), the trainer developed a chart of speakers’ roles and responsibilities in a debate.

It was particularly important for the trainer to have the participants understand the logic behind the rules of debate rather than see them as arbitrary constraints on

speakers. Although at times the trainer presented debate as a “game” he also set the debate in the context of social and political realities.

The trainer also emphasised that although there are certain debate formats, which are employed during competitive debates, participants could develop their own debate formats, depending on the needs, etc. (particularly for public debate, including radio debates).

Day 3 8th February

Session 1

Affirmative Debate case

These sessions focused on the presentation of the debate cases and linking them to different types of debate topics. The trainer emphasised the connection between a particular topic and strategies which debaters choose to defend given types of resolutions. The trainer paid particular attention to topics that require affirmative teams in debates to present a concrete proposal. The trainer gave examples of debate topics that were discussed earlier when the affirmative team would only be persuasive if it presented a viable solution or a proposal.

Participants were later divided into groups and have been asked to develop a policy case for one of the topics listed by participants on Day 2: Sex education should be introduced to Ugandan educational system.

Participants worked in groups preparing their cases and the session finished with each group presenting their case and the trainer and the rest of the participants providing feedback and asking relevant questions.

The idea of debating particular policies or presenting proposals in the affirmative cases (vs. for example, debating given proposition of fact or debating abstract values) was particularly appealing to the participants. They clearly saw it as an opportunity to debate specific issues affecting the lives of their youth constituencies in Uganda. It also seemed a more comfortable approach to debate than simply debating for or against a given proposition.

Session II

Negative strategies

This session built up on the previous sessions from the day before and focused on potential responses by the negative team in affirmative policy cases. Using the model of affirmative case developed with participants on the previous day, the trainer organized a brainstorming session focusing on potential responses that can be provided by the negative team. The trainer also provided an illustrative example from daily life of how individuals apply logic and argumentative strategies to respond to proposals for change.

Participants understood the role of the negative in debate very well and provided good responses to some of the affirmative cases listed during the previous session.

Session III

Following the request of participants, the trainer presented a session on public speaking skills. The trainer mentioned the three main components of speech: *logos*, *ethos*, *pathos* and later showed a series of short speeches on a dvd (speakers included: John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Nelson Mandela, Collin Powell, Dalai Lama, Fidel Castro, etc.) and asked participants to identify the main rhetorical devices used by speakers. Following this exercise, the trainer asked each participant to prepare a short speech (based on one of the previous exercises) and present it in front of other participants. Eight volunteers presented their speeches and the rest of the group (including the trainer) provided feedback.

This was clearly one of the most popular and entertaining session during the training and participants showed good use of as well as ability to identify correctly a number of rhetorical devices.

Session IV

The participants spent the remainder of the day working in the teams of three preparing for debates which were to take place on the following day.

Day 4 9th February

Four debates were organized- with all the participants having an opportunity to debate (as well as judge debates). Debates were in English.

Participants showed a good understanding of all the elements of debate covered during the training as well as their responsibilities as speakers.

Session IV

Planning

The trainer presented a model of debate program including three components: competitive debate (tournaments: local, regional and national), public debates, and training and outreach to new target groups.

Participants were then divided into 4 groups and spent over 45 minutes discussing future activities involving debates. After the discussion in groups, each group made a short presentation of the action plans.

Comments and recommendations

Organization of the seminar

IDEA would like to congratulate CRY Uganda for organization of an excellent seminar. Despite limited human resources CRY staff and volunteers fulfilled their role as a host very well. The venue for the seminar was excellent (outside of Kampala). It is also worthwhile mentioning that all the sessions started on time. In addition:

1. CRY invited participants from outside of Kampala and all the main regions of Uganda were represented.
2. Organizers responded well to the requests of the trainers and participants during the seminar.
3. Organizers provided activities to participants in the evenings

Development of the Debate Program in Uganda

Participants of the seminar showed a lot of dedication to and interest in debate. There is clearly a lot of potential for developing a vibrant debate culture among Ugandan youth and the individuals who attended the seminar could be instrumental in this process. The following are the steps that IDEA would like to recommend to the organization as well as individuals who attended the training (IDEA would also like to assist them in this process):

1. Development of a pool of trainers

This is perceived as the most important aspect of the development strategy. In order to ensure consistency and quality of debate program throughout the country, CRY Uganda should focus on identifying individuals who will be able to transfer their knowledge and experience to others. The trainers' expertise should be diverse and include areas such as: coaching debate, adjudication, organization of public debates, etc. IDEA would be interested in providing a model for such trainings as well as provide *master trainers* (certifiers of trainers). Since CRY Uganda already uses a pool of trainers for training in other programs (forum theatre, conflict resolution) the same trainers can be used for training in debate. The teachers selected under CTAC program who will receive extensive training in debate during the 2 exchanges (USA and Uganda) can also prove instrumental in spear-heading the debate program in Uganda.

2. Development and adaptation of resources

There is a great need for debate resources in Uganda- primarily a basic text on debate (up to 50 pages) which would use relevant local examples IDEA has already started development of such resource and it is crucial that Ugandan curriculum developers and trainers are included in the process (possibly also including references to other methodologies used by CRY)

3. Introducing debate to schools in Kampala.

Traditionally, the base for CRY's activities has been outside of Kampala and while promoting such educational activities outside of capital city is important, CRY may want to consider piloting the program in a few schools in Kampala and/or working with already existing youth structures (e.g. NGOs). Proximity of donors and businesses may assist CRY in promoting the program and assuring its financial sustainability.

4. Using the existing structure of human rights youth clubs across Uganda

Debate can become one of the main methods of working with young people through the existing youth clubs. Since the clubs are active and in many locations constitute the main form of youth involvement and participation, the potential for using debate for CRY is enormous.

5. Linking debate to conflict-resolution methodologies

CRY has developed methodologies focusing on conflict resolution (understood broadly: e.g. conflict in the family, community, region) and it would be important for CRY and IDEA to explore synergies between debate and conflict resolution (in Ugandan context- both local and national).

6. Promoting debate in East Africa

CRY has great connections with other youth programs and organizations in the region. CRY and IDEA should explore possibilities of promoting debate in other countries of the region: primarily Kenya and Tanzania

Annex

27 evaluation forms were returned after the seminar. The below sections are a compilation of participants' responses.

EVALUATION FORM

Congratulations on completing this training session. We would like to ask you a few questions in order to ensure that we receive your feedback and to ensure that future sessions are as good as they can possibly be. Thank you very much.

1. What was most useful about this training? Why?

Opportunity to acquire skills through the training

Development of public speaking and argumentation skills through the training

Debating skills

Argumentation skills and crafting debate proposition (especially adapting it to needs of specific targets or context)

Learning practical skills of debating as well as debate formats

The art and science of argumentation

Advocacy and public speaking skills

Since I am still a secondary school student, the debate skills I have learnt will help me in my studies (especially language and literature)

How to teach argumentation and debate skills to others

This training allowed me to gain more knowledge and skills. The trainer was "spot-on".

The facilitation and examples given

Public speaking, argumentation and cross-examination exercises

The most useful thing was direct involvement with the facilitator and the opportunity to practice what I have learnt

Debate practice

2. Please identify one thing from this training that you are likely to use, and explain how.

Exercises and team-work

Dilemmas and linking debate to real life examples

Public speaking exercises

Organizing debates and public debates in community

Teaching students how to ask good questions

Debate formats

Public speaking

Open forum (chain debate) exercise

Listening skills

Training model and facilitation

Rhetorical devices (pathos, ethos in particular)

Public debates

Argumentation

3. What was least useful about this training? Why?

Speed of teaching was a bit fast- more time needed

Not enough entertainment because the training took most time

Debate program development session

4. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements by circling the most appropriate answer (read each question carefully):

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
It was too complicated.	14	9	2	2	0
It was appropriate to my country and culture	0	0	6	14	7
It didn't cover anything new to me.	10	10	3	2	2
I will use the techniques covered.	0	0	1	11	15
It fit the goals of my organization	0	0	2	17	8
It was too easy, not challenging enough	8	13	4	1	1

5. Please rate the following sessions based on their usefulness to you:

	Very Useful	Useful	Not sure	Not Useful	A Waste of Time
Day 1, Session 1: Introduction to debate	12	13	2	0	0
Day 2, Session 1: Debate Topics	17	7	3	0	0
Day 2, Session 2: Argumentation	18	6	2	1	0
Day 2, Session 3: Debate exercises	13	12	2	0	0
Day 2, Session 4: Debate formats	13	11	3	0	0
Day 3, Session 1: Practice affirmative	12	12	3	0	0
Day 3, Session 2: Negative strategies	12	9	5	1	0
Day 3, Session 3: Preparation for debates (public speaking)	17	8	2	0	0
Day 3, Session 4: Preparation for debates	14	10	3	0	0
Day 4, Session 1-2: Practice debates	14	10	3	0	0
Day 4, Session 3: Program development	12	12	3	0	0

6. What is your overall satisfaction with this training?

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not sure	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
11	16	0	0	0

7. What is your overall satisfaction with the facilitator?

Very effective	Effective	No Opinion	Ineffective	Not at all Effective
18	9	0	0	0

8. Please give us any other comments or suggestions for improvement.

The training was very useful!

This training has been very motivating and encouraging!

We should follow-up on this training for more motivation to learners and conduct such trainings in conflict areas.

The trainings should be facilitated like this one we enjoyed.

More trainings like this should be organized because people from more areas need debating skills.

Having a debate manual as a reference would be useful.

Possible funding could be useful to organize debates in the communities.

Printed handouts for trainees would be useful for reference.

Always come and train more people!

It is my prayer that such debate trainings should be enhanced both in public and schools in order to change lives of many in the society.

Next time such trainings should be organized in all parts of country.

The training should be longer to cover more skills.

Such trainings should be offered to other groups, maybe woman groups.

The venue was good but far from town.

It would be good if such training was incorporated into youth camps.

Preparation for debate and debate should be given more time since it is a gist of all the training. I loved the entire proceedings- thank you IDEA and Marcin!

Debate training should also be organized in languages spoken by local communities.