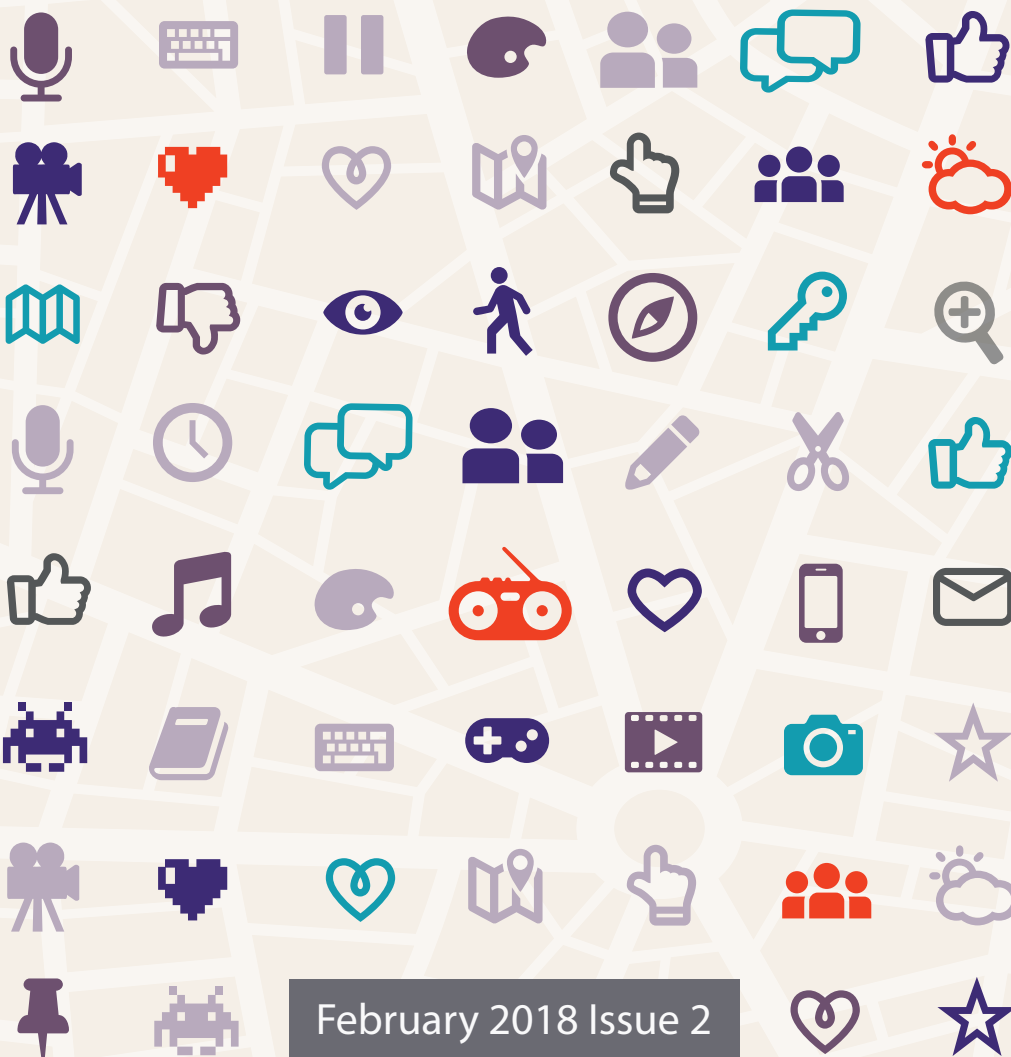




INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF OPEN YOUTH WORK

Learning from practice



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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF OPEN YOUTH WORK
LEARNING FROM PRACTICE

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Dear readers,

Welcome to the International Journal of Open Youth Work. The editorial board is pleased to present the second issue of this journal.

This Journal is the result of the co-operation between representatives from Newman University (UK), Malmö University College (SE), Professional Open Youth Work in Europe (POYWE), the University of Iceland (IC) and Ungdom og Fritid – the Norwegian national youth club organization (NO).

The Journal aims to privilege the narrative of youth work practice, methodology and reality. It is a peer-reviewed journal providing research and practice-based investigation, provocative discussion, and analysis on issues affecting youth work globally. The Journal aims to present youth work issues and research in a way that is accessible and reader-friendly, but which retains scholarly integrity.

The Journal aspires to promote and improve the professional status of open youth work – celebrating and interrogating professional youth work skills, and enabling critical reflection on both policy and practice. Through a shared commitment to critical pedagogy, the Journal enables practitioners and academics to engage in a mutually respectful dialogue that seeks to explore the tensions, dilemmas and contradictions inherent in professional open youth work.

The Journal is built on the concept of co-writing, which means that we are taking seriously the notion of practice informed by theory and theory based on practice. This, we argue, is mutually beneficial to the development of both theory and practice within the field.

This second issue has the title learning from practice. By investigating the criteria for success in best practice, and discussing important obstacles in the practice of open youth work, we hope to show the plurality, but also the commonness in how professional open youth work is organized and driven. We aim for this journal to be a space where one can explore and learn from each other. It is hoped that you will be inspired to adapt the philosophy behind the concept of co-writing and that you might be encouraged to contribute to future editions.

The first article is a best practice example about how youth workers can create dialogue between young Swedes and young arriving refugees. The second article addresses an important discussion about how open youth work perspectives can be adapted and used in a formal school setting. The third article brings us to the Greek town of Patras and an examination of the methodologies used in the project PLOUTOS. Erasmus + grants are important for the field of youth work; the fourth article examines and investigates a strategic partnership within the Erasmus + Programme, and gives important insight into successes and challenges in such projects. The last article in this issue problematizes the key competencies of non-formal learning in youth work in an Estonian context.

Lastly, we want to thank all the contributors, peer-reviewers, stakeholders and others who have helped realize this second issue of the International Journal of Open Youth Work.

Chief Editor, Pauline Grace and Managing Editor, Amund Røhr Heggelund

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The International Journal of Open Youth Work

The Journal is published online once a year and contains peer-reviewed articles, explorations of good practice, methodology, research, policy analysis, book reviews and conference papers. It is aimed at open youth workers, youth work academic specialists, researchers, policy makers and stakeholders.

How to contribute

Contributions to the journal are sought from, academic researchers/scholars, youth workers and stakeholders who are active and/or have a professional or political interest in youth work. The Journal encourages co-writing where academics and youth workers write together.

Scope

Each issue of the *International Journal of Open Youth Work* will have a mix of content, please state which heading your written piece will fall under including:

Research: where researchers and practitioners/stakeholders write together; for instance on projects of action research or theoretically grounded projects aiming to develop youth work or to develop the organisation or management of youthwork.

Articles: which should contain an extended discussion on theoretical and/or methodological (research) issues concerning open youth work connected to the research project being discussed.

Critical Conversations or Provocation: present an article containing experiences of youth work and/or thoughts on youth work in order to highlight and discuss conditions, possibilities and problems in or connected to open youth work in a broader sense. The aim is to create debate or open up for new perspectives.

Good Practice Sharing: present an outline of a new or dynamic piece of youth work practice.

National or European Policy Reviews: present an overview and critical commentary about specific and related National or International policy, with a focus on the impact for practice and young people.

Book Reviews: provide a review of new books and or journal articles that especially focus upon youth work methodology and its broadest subject of interest.

Conference papers: papers should focus upon youth work methodology, research, ideas, innovations, or provocations.

All submissions should have a short abstract of 250 words, 5 key words, and a short biography of the authors of 100 words maximum. The length of all submissions shall be between 2,000-5,000 words maximum including bibliography.

Submissions

All submissions will be read by a member of the Editorial Board, before being submitted to a system of blind peer reviewing by two external assessors one of which will be a youth work practitioner the other an academic. It will then be discussed at the Editorial Board. A decision will be made on your submission.

In citing references please use the Harvard referencing for books and articles. Bibliographical references in the text should quote the author's name and date of publication as follows (Johnstone, 1999). Notes and references should normally be given, in alphabetical order by author, at the end of the article.

Articles not submitted in the appropriate format will be returned to the author before being considered for publication.

Copyright, individual authors are responsible for ideas and opinions expressed in their articles and for obtaining the necessary copyright. Articles are accepted on the understanding that they are not published elsewhere and authors are required to transfer copyright to the publisher of the Journal.

Submission of articles and reviews, manuscripts for publication may be made to any member of the Editorial Board, or directly to the Editors.

Updated 23/01/2018

Editorial board

Amund Røhr Heggelund is responsible for public and international relations in Ungdom og Fritid – the Norwegian National youth club organization. Heggelund has been managing the northern most youth club in the world for several years and has long experience in working with young people, democracy and cultural expression. He is educated in the field of sociology and cultural studies.

Marc Boes started his education as a social worker at the University of Professional Education in 1982. In 1994 he became managing director and later on the CEO of JONG Rotterdam. He was the president of ERYICA from 2006 until 2013. He was co-founder of POYWE (Professional Open Youth Work in Europe) and is now the Managing Director.

Pauline Grace is a senior lecturer and MA Programme Leader of Youth and Community Work at Newman University and has over 30 years of face-to-face youth work experience in the UK. She facilitated in 2010 at the first European Youth Work Convention, which resulted in the first European Declaration on Youth Work. In 2015 she was invited as an expert to give input to the second European Convention. Pauline is a founder and Vice-President of Professional Open Youth Work in Europe (POYWE). She sits on the UK's In Defence of Youth Work (IDYW) national steering group. Pauline is the Chief Editor of the Journal.

Árni Guðmundsson is a lecturer and youth researcher in the Faculty of Sports, Leisure Studies and Social Education and in The Centre for Research in Childhood and Youth at the University of Iceland. Árni's research area is social pedagogy, mainly in the field of youth work, open youth work, youth clubs and youth centres, professionalization in youth work, group work methods in youth work and youth work in the historical context.

Lars Lagergren is a professor and senior lecturer in leisure studies at the Department of Sports Sciences at Malmö University, Sweden. He has long experience of research and development projects concerning policies on, and organization of, open youth work, education and sports. His research interest is the organization of youth work from critical management and learning perspectives.

Contributors

Angela Passa was born in Athens and graduated from the British Council – English language and Literature in 1973. She was one of the founders of the Movement “PROTASI” in 1988. For two years 1992-1994 she studied at the University of Patras (Pedagogic department) relational dynamics in group work for self-development. She has been trained in long term seminars in Greece and Europe in new educational approaches for training in the prevention of addictive substances and behaviours, health promotion in school community, multicultural training in youth exchanges, leadership in youth work, administration and management in NGOs, community education, productive learning methods etc. Since 1993 she has been the Director of the CCO of “PROTASI” (Centre of Creative Occupation) and responsible for national and transnational projects. Since 2000 she has been a member of the Administration Council of INEPS (International Network of Productive Schools and projects). From May 2003 was the President of INEPS and from April 2013 until today the Vice President of INEPS.

Dr. Vasilis Passas is the founder of PROTASI in 1988 and has been the president of the AC for 10 years. He graduated from the Medical School of the University of Athens. He has been trained in the fields of addictive substances and behaviours prevention in many National Institutions such as AKMA, KETHEA, EPIPSY, and in long term seminars in Greece and in Europe in the fields of community education, volunteer work and networking. He started as a volunteer in “PROTASI” and continues like this. He has been the Scientific Director of the Addictive Substances Prevention Center of Achaia for 15 years. He has developed many health promotion projects in cooperation with the public education authorities, the Ministry of Education, the General Secretariat of Youth, OKANA etc. He has participated as a member and leader in many organization and scientific committees for national and international conferences. He was the initiator of the magazine PROSOPO in 1993 and later on of the e-PROSOPO, until now. Today he is the Scientific Director of “PROTASI” and continues to work as coordinator and educator in many national and transnational projects.

Georgia Drosopoulou was raised in Patras. She has studied in the Pantion University of Athens-Department of Psychology and has been a licensed psychologist since 2011. During her training she worked in a school for children with special needs, as well as in the sector of rehabilitation of people with mental disorders. At the same time, she attended a training programme for psychotherapists, which allowed her to be validated as a Cognitive Analytic Psychotherapist. The last 3 years, she has been working at Movement "PROTASI" as a prevention professional and youth worker, after being trained by "PROTASI" in long term seminars concerning the prevention of addictive substances and behaviours, as well as in the leadership in youth work.

Luke Blackham is a qualified youth and community worker, counsellor and a member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. Luke has over 12 years of experience working with children, young people and their families in a variety of settings. His interests include school-based wellbeing, nature-based interventions, pastoral care, youth work and therapy. He is the community wellbeing coordinator at Tipton Green Junior School and currently studying for his Masters Degree in Child Welfare and Wellbeing.

Jessica Smith is a third year Youth and Community Work Student at Newman University. She has over eight years of experience as a youth worker in a variety of settings including: suicide prevention, sexual health, school, centre-based and detached youth work. Her current interests are forest schools and youth wellbeing.

Mårten Jönsson is a youth worker employed by the municipality of Svedala. Jönsson has about 15 years of experience working with youth in school, sports and youth centres in different ways and extents.

Marie Larneby is a PhD student at the department of Sport Science, Malmö University. Her research interests are young people in sports, societal categorizations and power relations. Her forthcoming doctoral thesis is on gender perspectives in school sport.

Ilona-Evelyn Rannala, PhD works at Tallinn University as a youth work management lecturer and at Tallinn City Government as a lead officer responsible for development of youth work. Ilona is Chairman of Estonian Association of Youth Workers.

Anu Allekand, MPA works at the Estonian Defence League with responsibility for the development of youth programmes. She is a guest lecturer at Tallinn University and a Board Member of the Estonian Association of Youth Workers. Anu Allekand has previously worked at the Ministry of Education and Research and the Estonian Youth Work Centre.

Manfred Zentner has researched youth and youth culture since 1997. From 2001 to 2013 he worked at the Institute for Youth Culture Research in Vienna. Since 2013 he has been a researcher at the Danube University of Krems in the Department of Migration and Globalization. His main topics of research are youth cultures, migration, participation and youth policy. Furthermore, he is member of the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR), of the International Sociological Association ISA and of various EU expert groups.

Alexandra Beweis is a youth worker, project manager, trainer and facilitator. She started her career in youth information and was active there for 20 years on local, national and European levels. She currently works as project manager for POYWE -Professional Open Youth Work in Europe and also functions there as Chief Editor for LOGBOOK the European E-Magazine on Professional Open Youth Work. In the other half of her working life she is an active trainer and facilitator in the European youth field and beyond.

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1. The good practice of Young meet young

Mårten Jönsson and Marie Larneby

Abstract

Sweden is a country that welcomes immigrants and refugees every year. During 2015 the number of people applying for asylum was 167,877 of which 70,384 were unaccompanied minors (Swedish Migration Board, 2015). According to Statistics Sweden, Sweden had a population of 9,851,017 at the end of 2015. In the municipality of Svedala, located in the south of Sweden, the project Young meet young (in Swedish Unga möter unga) started in 2015, initiated by youth work practitioners. Svedala municipality had a population of 20,248 in 2014, and 20,462 in 2015. In 2015 the Migration Board designated 98 unaccompanied minors to Svedala municipality. This means that Svedala was responsible of taking care of these unaccompanied minors (Swedish Central Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The aim of Young meets young was to bring refugee youths together with Swedish youths in order to build bonds, help refugees get in to the Swedish society and provide all youths interested in the project with something meaningful and fun to do. The aim of this article is to present and reflect upon youth work practitioners' ideas on good practice in relation to two young project participants' experiences of Young meet young.

Keywords

youth work practitioner, support, trust, youth agency, organizing youth

Youth work in Svedala

Initiators of the project were youth work practitioners (further on 'youth workers') Jasmine Wahlström and Andreas Flygare, colleagues with first author Mårten Jönsson. Andreas and Jasmine both had experience of youth work before the start of *Young meet young* and of education in the fields of youth work, social work and communication. In Svedala they worked with teenagers during leisure time. In Sweden, leisure time refers to the time outside of school and work when people choose what they want to do (or not to do). The municipality provides open youth centres and works with youth projects and group activities. A *youth centre* is a place where young people between the ages of 13 and 18 are welcome to hang out, take part in projects, events or play games during their leisure time. Jönsson and colleagues work co-operatively with schools, police, and other parts of the community in order to offer young people a meaningful leisure time. Svedala base their youth work on a coaching approach, which means focusing on listening and asking questions allowing the youth to reach their own conclusions and develop their own ideas. The idea is that any individual or group has the capability and potential to solve anything they face and that it is important they do this on their own as much as possible.

In this article, *participant* refers to a young individual who voluntarily and actively contributes to a collective process experienced as necessary and meaningful for the individual and for others (keks.se). When 'participant' is used in this text, if not further specified, it refers to any young individual who participates in activities, both refugee and established youth. *Refugee* refers to recently arrived (young) people from a country from which they have had to flee. These refugees were 14 to 17 years of age at the start of the project. *Established youth* will be used to reference youth that are not *refugee youth*. For this article established youth are defined as an individual who has a social network in Sweden, is born or have lived in Sweden for a couple of years, knows the language, is part of the regular school system and in afterschool programme, and NGOs.

Support and involvement in young people's actions

To analyze the initiation, implementation and outcome of *Young meet young*, the terms *support* and *involvement* are used as points of departure. It refers to what kind of support youth workers provide and should provide (or not) in projects as well as to what extent, and in what way, support and involvement in young people's actions are appropriate. According to the youth workers in Svedala, support and involvement is not a fixed position or strategy, nor with a fixed content, in relation to young people.

In contrast, you need to be flexible, responsive, solution-oriented, and use contextual factors as platforms for decisions and directions. Hence, when support and/or involvement is needed, it is provided based on the context. In reality, it is not that easy. Rather, it is about trial and error, evaluating and together finding a direction that suits each situation. We discuss and reflect upon how youth workers' support and involvement in the participants' actions was practiced, what went well and what could be done differently, and how the youth workers' engagement correlated with the outcome of the project.

Getting hold of the story

The project is approached through the voices of youth workers and young participants to illustrate good practice. Using observations and interviews enables a closer insight into peoples' experiences, emotions and point of views (Bryman, 2012). Jönsson conducted three interviews in May and June of 2017, with co-workers Jasmine and Andreas and two young project participants, Kim and Sam (pseudonyms). For the participants, we use neutral pseudonyms since gender is not relevant to this article. Jasmine and Andreas are the youth workers' real names, used with given consent. Additionally, Jönsson's observations made during and after the project, together with experience of the project (as support personnel and co-worker) are used as internal knowledge guiding the interviews and the analysis. Jönsson's double roles – the subjective involvement and objective exploration of practitioners' and participants' experiences – provide important insights to understand and learn more of practitioners' role in projects like this. Through stories about the shared practice in *Young meet young*, we can depict a nuanced and collective story instead of merely individual perspectives. Further on we present and discuss the process of, and what is gained from, *Young meet young*, emphasizing Jasmine's and Andreas's contributions during the process, which form the basis for the good practice.

***Young meet young* – initiating the project**

During Jasmine's first months working in Svedala she had not met any young refugees at activities organized by youth workers, nor at the youth centre. In June of 2015 she met a person working at a HVB-home. HVB-homes are residential care homes for children and young persons. Jasmine arranged for the HVB-home personnel to come to the youth centre with their young residents. It turned out that these young refugees were uncertain about how to find their place in Swedish society. Jasmine got the idea to start a so-called 'sponsor-programme' in which established youths 'sponsored' young refugees, as in creating contact and social network. Using a programme like this, young refugees were offered a place at a given time to participate in a certain activity together with established youths.

Knowing a time, place and activity would reduce some of the uncertainties and anxiety the young refugees felt. It was expected that established youths would help young refugees find their way in Sweden as a process towards being established themselves.

Jasmine talked with her boss and her co-worker, Andreas, about *Young meet young*, got immediate support and Andreas too joined the project. The idea was established with the HVB-home personnel. At the local school, Jasmine informed 14- and 15-year old students about the project's intention and being a sponsor. The established youths could sign up if they were interested. Kim, who applied for the project and later joined, explains why it was interesting:

"I like helping people, I think it's really great. So, I thought, yeah, it will help others and myself get to know new people, learn how to lead and such while I can help someone else get the same. To get friends, and be able to speak and such, the new ones, that is."

After visiting the school, more than 80 established youths had signed up, far more than anticipated. This was a diverse group regarding gender, interests and how long they had lived in Sweden. Simultaneously, five young refugees from the HVB-home signed up for *Young meet young*. Jasmine and Andreas interviewed more than 30 established youths before choosing five to be sponsors. With inspiration and coaching from Jasmine and Andreas, they started planning and executing activities together with the group of 10 established youths and refugees. Jasmine's and Andreas's support and involvement at this point was very hands on, providing options and advice for activities and how to execute them.

From project to association

While the project *Young meet young* got started, Jasmine and Andreas seized the brilliant opportunity to engage the many established youths who did not take part in the group of five established youth and five young refugees. As a result, another group was started in which any young refugee (there were more than the five who were interested in the project) and established youth could join the activities. The established youths were quick to respond, and *Young meet young* had expanded from the first 'closed group' to also, in parallel, entail one 'open activities-group'. Five established youths, not involved in the closed group, became leaders and with support from Jasmine and Andreas they continuously planned and executed activities for anyone to participate in. From then the closed group met every other Friday, and all participants could join the open group's activities every other Friday.

The project originally had an end date in June 2016, but due to the groups' popularity, Jasmine and Andreas decided to keep going. The evaluation of the project showed that both groups reached the same result, but the open group reached more youths. Analyzing the project also showed them that having leaders instead of sponsors enabled more connections and friendships. Andreas and Jasmine asked the youths about turning the two groups into one open group organized by youth leaders. The youth response was positive, and the two groups merged into one open group by the late 2016. From this point the aim of the group shifted from having an integration focus to focusing on organizing youth, leadership and activities open to anyone between the ages of 13 and 18. Activities should always be free for any one participating and economy should never stop anyone from participating. An example of this was procuring athletic shoes and other equipment for participants to loan if needed during activities. At this point Andreas and Jasmine suggested that the youth leaders took on responsibilities within the group. The idea got a positive response and different leaders took responsibility for planning, booking and advertising. Andreas and Jasmine were a little nervous about giving up this control to the leaders, but the leaders quickly showed that they could handle it. Andreas and Jasmine provided courses in leadership, and offered tips on organizing and administrating activities for the leaders in Young meet young in order to help them develop their capabilities as leaders both individually and as a group.

During late 2016 another established youth, Sam, joined saying: 'I saw that it was bowling and I'm a bowling-nerd myself so to speak. So, I tried and thought it was fun. [...] Then I had some more time, so I joined and then I came to more activities'. Sam joined the group initially as a participant and after a few activities, Jasmine and Andreas asked if Sam was interested in becoming a leader. Sam accepted and became a leader for a little over 6 months before going back to being a participant in interesting events.

The group evolved and in May of 2017 Young meet young became an association: the board is made up of nine established and 'former' refugee youths. During the journey to becoming an association, Jasmine and Andreas taught the leaders about democracy, its process, how to conduct meetings and about the different roles in an association. This further strengthens the agency and leadership of the youths in the continuation towards what the group is today. The youths now 'own' more of the group such as economy, activities and general decisions concerning Young meet young, but still with support from Jasmine and Andreas. Initially planning meetings, having meetings, booking activities, etc. were done with more support or hands on approach from Jasmine and Andreas.

Now the support is less but always changing, since the group is constantly changing from one year to the next with new leaders coming in and old leaders taking a step back. Youth workers need to constantly evaluate the group and change their position to provide the best support needed at that moment. From late 2017, Jönsson was available to support the group more actively as well. The support consists of transportation to various activities, providing space for meetings, aiding in organizing, networking, inspiration and supporting if they face challenges.

What happened and what was gained?

The focus during the interviews was to capture what was done to make *Young meet young* what it is today and what has been gained from it. Kim explains what was gained from the project and why:

“Cause I, I had thoughts about helping people when I grew up. Cause it’s always been like when one grows up one can help people [...] I thought I was going to finish school, hang out with my friends and that was it. So, it’s like, I’ve become a better person.”

Kim has realized that a young individual can help people now, and not only as an adult in the future. Realizing one’s own strengths and capabilities offers powerful insight into progress gained from participating in *Young meet young*.

Kim and Sam likewise emphasize how Jasmine and Andreas have shown trust and support for all participants in *Young meet young* – the first closed and open groups, and later on the association. This trust has helped the participants to grow and take responsibility for planning, leading groups, booking activities and more. A very important part, which both Kim and Sam talk about, is the friendship and sense of community that has grown within the group. Kim says it is like a big family and Jasmine and Andreas are like the ‘parents’ in the sense that they are caring, encouraging and provide support when needed. One of the most important contributions to this sense of being a family seems to be the way Jasmine and Andreas have made the youth feel that *Young meet young* is a safe place to be.

All interviewees provided insightful thoughts when they talked about *Young meet young*’s impact on the young refugees who joined the project. Jasmine says that:

“One of the refugee youth was involved in presenting the project to a large group of youth workers. The refugee said that before he joined *Young meet young* he did not know how to find his way in Sweden. He could not find the key to unlock the door to Swedish society. But through *Young meet young* he has got friends, learnt more Swedish, got more confident and he had never thought he would stand and talk in front of such a large group of people.”

Kim, who has been an active youth throughout the whole project and now a part of the association board, shared this example of how some young refugees progressed from participants to becoming leaders:

“The guys who are leaders now, started as participants. And that shows a great development. Because they can talk, they learnt how to be a leader and just overall confidence. Which they weren’t in the beginning cause then one doesn’t know the language, doesn’t feel safe and such. Which they do know, or they tell me they do.”

Jasmine and Andreas argue that youth workers have to show our youths the way. Youth workers need to work in order to help youths to participate, take responsibility and be active in making things happen in their leisure time. We cannot only ask our youths what they want to do, it is a too big and frightening question to some. Perhaps they are not used to being active agents in deciding their own time? Possibly they do not know what is possible and allowed to engage in within the community, especially if they have met failure before they would much rather say nothing then risk failing again. As youth workers we cannot sit and wait for ideas and suggestions from our youth – we have to be pro-active, but without forcing.

Concluding reflections

Jasmine's and Andreas's arguments are an important part of being a youth worker. When working with youth, you cannot be neither too laid back nor too eager. Jasmine's ability to analyze the present, identify a need and a possibility is what started the entire journey of *Young meet young*. It went from being a project with consistent support that purposely decreased and changed over time, to an association based on youths' agency and competencies with peripheral support. This kind of work starts with analyzing the community and the youth you meet, but also to identify possibilities ahead, and is a big part of youth work. The difficult part is understanding what support and involvement a certain group or individual need at any given point. The combined work experience in the field of youth work, and the education Jasmine and Andreas have had, was essential to

enable the right support at the right time. Understanding how groups and individuals work, and being able to read the signs of this, is paramount when it comes to working in this manner.

The coaching approach of Jasmine and Andreas aids in understanding individuals, providing the opportunity and ability to find their own way. Another important key is the solution-oriented focus that Jasmine and Andreas have, not focusing on potential problems but the positive, which creates a positive environment. We argue that an environment like this, in which there is little focus on obstacles and mostly on solving various obstacles, inspires youth. If they develop a solution-orientation attitude, it can provide a sense of belief in themselves – *whatever comes ahead I can deal with it*. This was important and came to the fore in the project: there was a need to engage and integrate young refugees in the society in addition to engaging young people in general in the municipality. So, why not engaging them in a joint project? *Young meet young* would probably not be as fruitful without the engagement of established youths as leaders. Had youth workers been the only leaders, *Young meet young* would not be what it is today. We can never underestimate the importance of involving the youth in activities *for* the youth. They will always have a better knowledge about what other youths are interested in and be able to relate to one another in a way that a youth worker cannot. This makes a huge difference because, as an example, an event that is planned, executed and advertised by youth workers might not have the same attraction to a youth as an event planned by other youths with whom they might have more in common, and maybe even are friends with.

What the established youths tell us about the successful factors of *Young meet young* is that trust is the key, Jasmine and Andreas *trust* the youths – a trust that results in personal strength, confidence and a sense of appreciation. A solution-oriented focus develops trust, since it shows a belief in the individual's capability to solve problems. Creating an environment where youths feel safe, seen, and appreciated, is of significance. It aligns with the flexible and dynamic evaluating approach in that if change was required it was implemented, and thus possible pitfalls that could lead to failure were avoided. *Young meet young* became a place where youths felt safe and trusted to be, to do what they want, knowing they can handle it and that there is someone to support or push them – if, and when, they need it. This is specifically what Jasmine and Andreas have done and is what makes *Young meet young* an example of good practice.

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2. Open Youth Work in a Closed Setting: Applying key elements of Youth Work in a school

Luke Blackham and Jessica Smith

Abstract

Traditional youth work in the UK has seen cuts to its services due to austerity measures. Many youth workers have found themselves in posts where they are not given the title youth worker but are using the principles, processes and skills of a youth worker. This article seeks to investigate how youth work principles and processes can be applied to a school setting, to increase wellbeing. The authors reflect on their experiences using youth work approaches within the school in which they currently work. In addition, they discuss the tensions and the benefits of informal education in a formal setting and how outcome measurement can inform and support interventions.

Keywords

youth work, outcomes, wellbeing, education, process, pastoral, principles

Introduction

This article will explore how the principles and processes of youth work (informal education) can be applied to a school (formal) setting. It will also discuss the impacts a youth worker can have in regard to pupil wellbeing, when operating in a school pastoral role. It will consider the need for using a variety of methods for measuring outcomes and how this can complement an informal education process. The work presented comes from the experiences of youth workers practicing in an English school setting. It reflects on the work that they have engaged in over the past year since the school wellbeing hub was initiated. Influences have been taken from European settings, which have supported the development of the work. The authors will focus on how elements of youth work principles and practice in an English school could benefit and develop school pastoral care systems. The authors hope that readers will reflect on their own practice and consider if and how youth work can be applied to school settings and how the lessons learned within the school regarding outcomes and a collaborative relationship between formal and informal educators could be used in more traditional open youth work settings.

Why is a youth work approach in a school context beneficial to pupil wellbeing?

The authors of this paper are currently engaged in school-based youth work, where an open youth work approach is practiced. The position of the authors is that open youth work is an important component of working with children and young people (C&YP). However, there is the recognition that whilst the emphasis is placed on the relationship with C&YP, there is a need to provide support that enables those who access the service to achieve their goals; do well socially, emotionally, physically, spiritually and, academically. The workers seek to address the need to monitor and assess the work to ensure that there is a positive impact on the lives of the pupils. Much of the theory used to inform the work is psychosocial, which has enabled the workers to implement an approach that meets the needs of the school community. Using psychosocial frameworks has shown to increase wellbeing in C&YP as the theories take a wider socio and political view, rather than just focusing on individual problems (Howe, 1997). Social pedagogic practice, and related theories, have also influenced the development and continued progress of the work. Social pedagogy is used as it is holistic in its approach and is concerned with the overall wellbeing of individuals and communities (Cameron and Moss, 2011) resonating well with a youth work approach (Hatton, 2013). Regarding youth work itself, the authors consider youth work as a method that is influenced by a variety of social, educational, political and psychological theories that help support young people in developing their

sense of self and engaging in the wider world.

In the UK it is common for those with a youth work background to find themselves in a pastoral role (NYA, 2013), but this role does not always accommodate an informal educative process due to the ethos of UK schools, and in England in particular. For example, first name terms are often discouraged due to this being perceived as counter to school culture and practice. School pastoral services often have a formality to their referral process and offices are designated solely to staff, rather than open access for pupils. The authors of this paper are developing a pastoral service that has a more open access approach, with a youth centre on site for pupils, which is open at lunch times and evenings to support community wellbeing. In the UK, pastoral care in schools is described as being concerned with the personal and social development of pupils (Best and Lang, 1995). Youth work fits in well with this description and is similarly defined as such by the National Youth Agency (2017). Due to these distinct aims of the work with young people, it is clear why youth workers take on pastoral roles and can influence school wellbeing.

A report by Morgan, Morgan and O'Kelly (2008) in Northern Ireland revealed that, youth workers in schools have a positive impact. Workers focus on personal and social development, pupils are able to differentiate between youth workers and teachers, and the Education Board sees youth work as complementary to the formal education process. This reflects the experience of the authors. Over the last year, the workers have gained feedback from young people and parents regarding their activities. This, alongside outcome monitoring tools, has shown that emotional and mental wellbeing within the school has increased. Whilst the term 'wellbeing' is vague and is often hard to define (Amerijckx, and Humblet, 2014), there are five concepts that should be considered when seeking to improve the wellbeing of children and young people. These concepts were explored by Axford (2009) and are:

- 1) Needs
- 2) Rights
- 3) Poverty
- 4) Quality of Life (QoL)
- 5) Social exclusion

All of the above can impact pupils in the school. The school itself is situated in one of the most deprived areas in the UK and was hit hard by the austerity cuts in Britain (Beaty and Fothergill, 2014). It has seen reductions in services targeted to welfare. These reductions have impacted on quality of life, the

ability of services to meet the needs of the young people and increased the likelihood of social exclusion. With a reduction in young people's services, there are fewer choices when it comes to the support children and young people can access, directly impacting on their rights to access this type of support (Unison, 2016). From the work done over the last year the authors believe that it is possible to implement youth work practices within a formal setting and that the approaches used are beneficial to pupil wellbeing.

How youth work principles and processes are applied to the school setting

The authors are aware of some of the tensions that arise when considering an informal education process in a formal educational setting, for example, the dilution of youth work's core values such as voluntary participation (Sercombe, 2010), but also recognise the benefits of having youth workers in schools as identified by Morgan et al (2008). When the lead worker began developing the wellbeing hub in the school, he did so with a clear view that informal education should complement the formal education process, but his professional identity (and that of other workers) as a youth and community worker would not be compromised whilst doing so. The work was developed in order to meet the needs of individuals and groups both for targeted and general interventions, with opportunities for open access. Often in the UK, school youth interventions are targeted (NYA, 2013). With the decline of traditional youth services, more and more targeted support is being driven, particularly in regards to supporting mental health. A recent report by the House of Commons Education and Health Committees (2017) highlighted the need for education to play a larger role in the mental health of young people. This report takes into account the recent cuts made by austerity and the impact this has had on mental health. It also looks into the importance of whole school approaches to wellbeing and discusses the need for balance between academic achievement and promoting wellbeing. However, the report does not go into detail as to how to promote wellbeing, but rather indicates the use of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. It points to the need to embed the importance of wellbeing within schools by senior leadership teams, ideally creating an ethos of whole school wellbeing for all staff to be a part of. Within the school the authors are referencing as an example, it was felt that losing the open access aspect of youth work would diminish the creative possibilities and create stigmatisation for those referred for targeted work, which would also impact on the young peoples' wellbeing. With that in mind the lead worker "eased himself" into the school community and allowed the relationships to develop naturally, drawing upon Kerry Young's (2006) ideal,

that the relationship is key to good youth work. The process followed was one that was inclusive for young people and fostered an environment of voluntary participation, insofar as this was possible in a school setting.

The key elements of youth work within a school setting

Initially, young people were invited to the wellbeing hub to talk with the worker about his role. He was readily available on the playground, and small group work/projects were offered during break times to support the development of a positive rapport between the worker and the young people. The challenge was establishing the role of a pastoral/youth worker as an informal agent rather than an authority figure. Taylor (2009) called into question whether or not youth work in the UK was itself under attack by the neo-liberalistic agenda. Treating young people as a problem and siding with the state's decisions on how to solve the "youth problem", becoming less about the relationship-led process and more about the outcomes of the work. Due to this concern, emphasis was put on the development of meaningful relationships with all members of the school community, not just with those identified as in need of support either by parents, staff or social care agencies. Meaningful relationships in this context are defined as a relationship that is participated in voluntarily and seeks to benefit the wellbeing of the young person and or community involved. The work draws from the fivekey elements that define youth work as described by Jeffs and Smith (2008:277):

- 1) Focusing on young people
- 2) Voluntary participation
- 3) Fostering association, relationship and community
- 4) Being friendly
- 5) Looking to the education and welfare of young people

Tony Jeffs and Mark Smith are regarded as important thinkers in UK youth work, with a variety of key texts written on informal education. Their work has been a strong influence in the way the authors of this paper have developed their practice in general. When developing wellbeing support in the school, the workers have purposefully chosen to engage in the work by drawing upon the above. The rationale for using this definition is that the five elements represent youth work in its most congruent form and, provides a strong foundation on which to build and structure the work with the pupils in the school. These elements also ensure that the informal approach to the work is maintained. The challenge for the workers was applying these elements to a school setting in order to meet the needs of those accessing the wellbeing hub.

Applying the five elements in a formal setting

Focusing on young people in the school's context means understanding their lives as a whole and not just their day-to-day activities within school-time. Much of the work is influenced by the ecosystems theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979) who explored how a variety of influences including; family, friends, culture, and life transitions impact people's lives. When working in a school context, the youth workers seek to acknowledge all of these influences and work with the young people holistically, keeping in mind the variety of areas that can impact on their wellbeing. In this way the workers can offer genuine impact altogether, rather than simply improving their time in school.

The element of voluntary participation presents a challenge in a school setting; the school employs the worker, so whilst the post is intended to benefit the young people, clear voluntary participation has been impacted by the regimented system in which we are working. Ord (2009) recognised the importance of voluntary participation in youth work but argued that the focus should be on 'enabling participation' rather than relying on it to happen instantly. Therefore, when applying youth work principles to a school setting, the workers' first priority is the establishment of a person-centred relationship as described by Rogers (1958) where the young person is central to the process and is seen as having an innate resource for growth and change.

The youth worker works alongside the young person and ensures he/she is happy to talk, and understands that talking is their choice. This often translates to "not jumping in with the main issue"; it means getting to know the young person as a whole rather than seeing them as a sum total of their problem. The importance of this approach is that it does not see identity or problems as 'fixed', but fluid and ever changing (Goffman, 1959). Thus, the worker is constantly aware of the development and changes of the person they work with and not limited to the perceived issues. By acknowledging the challenges of voluntary participation and the limits that can be placed within a school, working to enable participation in a proactive way is just as important, as opportunities can arise through facilitating circumstances that support active participation.

When considering the fostering of association, relationship and community, the workers develop groups, either targeted or open access. To ensure meaningful engagement, the targeted groups are developed alongside participants. As such, the workers identify key aims for the project, but the direction and design is led by the young people.

Not all group members are chosen by staff, a young person may also be the one identifying other classmates. Here the work begins to use the common third concept of social pedagogy (Hatton, 2013) to support the work, as this provides a way of working that enables the worker and the group to engage in an activity and learn together, rather than the people being the subject.

The idea of 'being friendly' is central to the process within a school. This way of being supports the development of positive relationships with the workers throughout the school and allows relationships to develop that would not have otherwise, without a referral. The term 'being friendly' may not resonate within the school system as it is vague and can be interpreted loosely. Therefore, the workers adopt the social pedagogic concept of the three P's; the Personal, Private and Professional (Smith, 2012) and in regards to being friendly, operate on a Personal and Professional level. The personal and professional selves are utilised when working with the young people to develop a relational approach and the private is kept as such. By working in this way, the youth workers are able to offer a friendly approach whilst clearly maintaining professional boundaries and being clear about their role in a school context.

Finally, regarding the welfare and education of young people, the workers are continuously engaged in promoting these concepts throughout their work. Batsleer (2008) characterised youth work as engaging in conversation and dialogue, and through the medium of communication, supporting young people in having a voice and finding solutions to the problems they face. For the authors of this paper, conversation is central to their work. They see both casual and meaningful conversation as the starting point to their work. It is through conversation that they are able to develop meaningful relationships within the school context, it is through dialogue that they are able to support the education and welfare of young people and the community in which they reside. However, this still needs to be proven as an effective way to support young people and demonstrate the value of the work when in a school context.

Treasuring whilst measuring

One of the main challenges presented was measuring the impact of the wellbeing worker's role. As the school had created this role there was an expectation that the post-holder would support young people in their academic attainment and help reduce disruptive behaviours alongside improving general wellbeing. This was to be achieved by supporting any emotional or behavioural issues, or general welfare needs. In many ways this insinuates 'control' rather than voluntary participation or the fostering of

democracy - democracy being a key component to the youth work process (Jeffs & Smith, 2005). However, there are many definitions of what control looks like and much youth work practice has elements of control that are necessary for good practice. So, when working within the school context the workers have adopted a 'control in practice' approach as discussed by Jeffs and Banks (Banks, 2007: 105-106). This approach seeks to promote voluntary participation and value the young persons' voice, whilst also helping those involved understand the need to follow certain rules and adhere to set boundaries. When measuring outcomes, consideration had to be given to the power imbalance that this may cause. In the article entitled "Treasuring but not measuring: personal and social development" Taylor (2017) points out what could be considered an absurd idea, the actual measurement of a persons' confidence. Confidence is in a constant state of flux, and across one person's life course, they can experience many changes in their levels of confidence. Taylor noted that a person is always in a state of becoming, something with which the psychoanalyst Carl Rogers (1961) would agree. However, what was not addressed in this was a person's internal locus of evaluation. A person with poor self-esteem or low confidence is often haunted by the need to receive approval from others (sadly, in this authors opinion, a state most people are or have been familiar with) and has what is known in person-centred counselling as an external locus of evaluation. A person with a healthy internal locus of evaluation however, does not seek external validation and knows that they are worthy and can weather low confidence storms. This is the aim when working with young people, and the measurements taken are used to see the changes that are occurring in the moment, not what may or may not happen in the future.

Measuring benefits both the youth worker and the young person, it ensures both parties can see the change or lack thereof, and if that is the case, change the course in order to meet the young persons' needs. Ultimately measurement tools offer a valuable insight into the immediate impact of the intervention. However it is important to recognise, we may never know the long-term impact of our work over the life course. It is from this view point the work in the school operates, various methods are utilised, quantitative measuring tools are used - from Outcome Stars (2017) to Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Well-being scales (2006) - and qualitative feedback from young people and parents. The qualitative input is valuable and needs to be taken in order not only to support the outcome tools, but also provide the young person's narrative. The narrative is vital to this process as it provides the young person's voice and story. Goffman (1959) used the idea of dramaturgical perspective, meaning; people are constantly reinventing themselves and developing their character.

Therefore looking at the quantitative scores in isolation will only provide a snapshot of a past state of being. By hearing the young person's story we are able to follow how they made the changes and where they consider themselves at the present time. This way of analysing changes gives the workers a wider perspective and greater understanding of those worked with, and their journey of change. A qualitative evidence base supports not only reflective practice but also places value on the stories of the workers and the young people. This position was explored well by Slovenko and Thompson (2016) who argued that if youth workers could develop a robust qualitative evaluation system then the profession would benefit through drawing on a thematic evidence base.

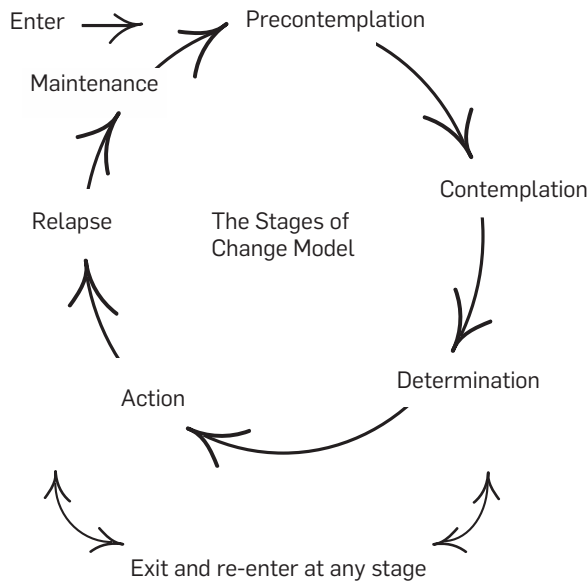
Ultimately the focus of the work is determined and directed by the young person and their voice valued from beginning to end. Ord (2007) advocated the idea of an authentic curriculum for working with young people. In many ways the work developed within the school has taken into consideration some of Ord's writing, specifically regarding the need for the workers to articulate the value of the work they do. As well as youth workers being able to draw from various theories and apply them accurately to the work they engage in, in the current climate they must prove the value of what they do and this is achievable by measuring the work with young people or the "distance travelled". Distance travelled is a term suited to the work done within a school context and it denotes a process rather than just a straight outcome. Below is a short case study that demonstrates the impact of measuring distance travelled.

Jamal and the distance travelled

Jamal was referred to the school's wellbeing hub due to displaying aggressive and disruptive behaviour in school. This behaviour was not new and the school had been experiencing this for a number of years. The relationship between Jamal's parents and the school was not constructive and a breakdown in communication had occurred. This eventually resulted in a fixed-term exclusion. Upon his return, Jamal was invited to the wellbeing hub and given the opportunity to reflect on what had happened to cause his exclusion. Together the worker and Jamal explored his previous school experiences and his difficulties in managing his anger. The worker and Jamal agreed their targets for success and a plan of action. This plan of action included mentoring and elements of cognitive behavioural approaches. By the end of the process, Jamal's behaviour had improved at school and at home. The teacher responsible for behaviour in school was able to measure distanced travelled through behaviour reports, which showed a decrease in disruptive behaviour, his mother reported she saw a difference in him at home

and he appeared happier. The wellbeing scores used showed an increase in wellbeing from the start of the work to the end. This did not mean that Jamal's behaviour was perfect or that he was always happier, but it did show that changes occurred since the interventions took place.

When working in schools, considering the distance travelled allows the youth worker to demonstrate a broad range of changes due to intervention, allowing for regression as well as progression. Whilst changes in behaviour are possible, relapses are part of growing up and continuing the learning journey (distanced travelled does not always mean you do not end up not being able to revisit an old place). This is what Prochaska and DiClemente's stages of change model (1982) explored.



Prochaska and DiClemente (1982) identified six stages of change as shown above, beginning from pre-contemplation and ending in relapse back to pre-contemplation. The aim of working with young people is to ensure they have the skills, awareness and resiliency to move out of the behaviours more quickly should they relapse.

Despite the cries for outcomes in youth work interventions, there are no current agreements on how youth work interventions should be captured in schools as demonstrated by the *Youth work in schools in Wales: Full report* (2016) and the *National Youth Agency: Commission into the role of youth work in formal education* (2013). A more robust system would help in further development of youth work in schools on a larger scale as outcomes/measurements help schools to demonstrate the benefit of such work to formal education and give youth workers another means to voice their value as a profession. The debate regarding outcomes and relevance to youth work continues to be ongoing with no conclusion amongst professionals at this point. Perhaps the question needs to be changed from its deficit position of “Should we use outcomes to prove our value as workers?” to a more constructive “*How can outcome measurements support us in our work and benefit those accessing youth work-led initiatives?*”

Working holistically and professional collaboration

As a youth worker operating in a school setting in England, the formality of the environment can appear counter-intuitive to core youth work principles. However, working in this environment and seeing the formality of the school system work alongside the informality of applied youth work has demonstrated how these two systems, juxtaposed, can complement each other for the benefit of the young people. The processes are vital in offering education from both ends of the spectrum, complementing each other because when teaching professionals and youth workers are in real partnership, there are more opportunities to support the wellbeing of C&YP. On the surface it is simple to view teaching and youth work as two different professions with little in common, treating them as binary rather than complementary. Smith (1996) recognised this false dichotomy, which depicts youth work as separate from schooling, despite its close relationship with school from its early development. The educationalist, John Dewey (1897), wrote, “Education is life”, and it is important to remember that education encompasses a wide range of experiences. By collaborating more closely in the interest of C&YP, professionals from schools and other areas are able to increase information sharing and gain a wider understanding of the needs of those we are working with. This in turn supports a wider holistic practice.

Professionals can miss opportunities for information sharing that can benefit the developmental process for C&YP. This can sometimes be due to a lack of understanding of how different professions operate, as noted by an NYA (2013) report into youth work in schools. Youth work has often been misunderstood, and the professions' importance to the wellbeing of young

people in the wider educational context undervalued (Harland and Morgan, 2010). However, youth workers are deeply involved and the youth work process can be considered therapeutic (Blackham and Grace, 2017). Through a more thorough understanding of other professions, a richer, more collaborative partnership can occur between youth workers and teachers (Morgan, *et al*, 2008). By increasing our communication across professions, we are supporting young people together, thus providing a variety of interventions.

By looking at both sides of the education spectrum, the impact and outcomes have the potential to significantly increase. By acknowledging and respecting the different processes of informal and formal education, C&YP can benefit educational attainment and wellbeing through the creation of a holistic practice that is on-site when they need it.

In the school referenced above, there is a good understanding of the need to increase wellbeing, and the processes in place enable consistent communication between all professionals within the school and outside agencies. Using this system as a model for working, could see this successfully replicated in other school settings and school-based youth work become a professional norm. Youth Workers often work in inter-professional relationships with a variety of professions including social workers, probation officers and police, with positive outcomes.

The approach used is not isolated to this school setting, and in fact is utilised in pockets across Europe. For example, in Stockholm, Sweden, the authors observed that professionals working within a youth club had strong links with local schools, as well as other agencies. The school had a good relationship with the youth worker so she was aware of the programmes C&YP were accessing in school and could provide complementary support through the centre, and provide more information. The link between the youth worker and the school enabled constructive dialogue, building stable relationships through a holistic, youth work-led process. Rather than a turnstile approach, moving young people on quickly, or seeing them only once a week at the open access youth centre. The youth worker worked closely with the young person and kept the relationship and dialogue consistent. Both this school and the referenced school in England demonstrate a positive connection between the formal and the informal, in the outcomes for young people and how they feel about the wellbeing hub.

In the current climate where youth workers are expected to adhere to expectations implemented by neo-liberalistic agendas, we often find

ourselves in hybrid positions, managing hybrid agendas (Seal and Andersson, 2017). Therefore, it may be prudent to consider working in partnership with schools as another way of engaging with young people. Young people's lives should not be determined by one profession. With the skills that the youth work profession has to offer, working in schools could compliment open access youth centres and provide a continuity of support between the settings. Becoming involved in schools will also benefit the holistic approach to supporting C&YP, as youth work provides a perspective that is different from social work, teaching and counselling. Youth work has demonstrated that it can collaborate well with other professions and settings such as schools, bringing with it experience that benefits other practices. Schild and Williamson (2017) noted the benefits of youth work collaborating with other professions and suggested that by 'building bridges' and engaging in cross-disciplinary interventions, professionals could see the development of projects that serve the broad and complex needs of C&YP.

There are, of course, relevant concerns regarding whose agenda is being worked to, and whether the youth work profession would suffer an eroding of its identity with the voluntary principle under threat. However, experience has shown that there is a real possibility of having youth workers successfully placed in schools. It also allows for community development, as the youth workers are able to engage in a variety of activities with young people to develop citizenship, as well as supporting parents in becoming involved in this area of their children's lives. Youth workers can play a key role in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecosystems and support the development of a mesosystem that interlinks well with school, home and community life.

Conclusion

The work undertaken over the last year in the school has provided insight into how a youth work process can help to successfully deliver and frame this work within the formal setting. Having an open access approach alongside targeted support has shown youth work to be beneficial to pupil wellbeing. Using more traditional and open youth work approaches has made pastoral care in the school welcoming, and developed a more cohesive school community. Using outcome measurements appropriately has enabled youth workers and pupils to reflect on the process, show areas of improvement, and gauge the work to suit those who engage with the wellbeing hub. Senior leadership teams and teaching staff have noted the difference that this work has made to the school and the collaboration between youth workers and teachers has allowed a greater holistic approach to pupil wellbeing. Parents of pupils who have accessed the wellbeing hub, or have been supported

themselves, have expressed their own appreciation of the work being done and noted the benefits of the approach used. A more robust study is now needed in order for the workers to gather evidence of the impacts and to establish a model of working within schools. A model that truly enables a youth work-led process, is rooted in informal education, and remains congruent to youth work principles, whilst being complementary of the formal education setting.

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3. PLOUTOS – Pedagogical learning through the Operation and Urging of Teams for Overcoming Social exclusion

Angela Passa, Georgia Drosopoulou and Dr. Vassilis Passas

Abstract

An ongoing challenge according to the political, financial and social crisis that Greece entered approximately in 2012, is the coexistence with moving populations, moreover and deeper with issues concerning any kind of social exclusion. The pedagogic learning of coexistence among young people in a country with very poor experience in it, lead the Youth Centre of Movement 'PROTASI' in Patras, Greece, to elaborate and establish the project PLOUTOS through the operation and urging of teams (group work) of young people between 7-16 years old. The project started in 2014 and continues today. The article focuses on the background situation in youth work locally, the adaptation of philosophical and methodological approaches that were used in the previous work of the Youth Centre to the "new needs", the results of the first 2 years of implementation of PLOUTOS, and the perspectives for the near future.

Keywords

animator, youth work, group work, prevention of addiction, creative occupation, volunteer work, social inclusion, coexistence

A. Background situation in youth work in Greece

An attempt to examine the background situation in youth work on a national level in Greece could be really challenging, due to the fact that the field of youth work in the country has never been an autonomous subject of research. As a consequence, one comes across with a total lack of relevant literature. What's more, in Greece, there is no official framework concerning youth work.

However, youth work has been formed around various social practices in the country since the 19th century and has taken some more or less stable characteristics until now. According to Dora Giannaki (2014), the history of youth work in Greece could be separated in three periods: 1900-1947 (first), 1974-2000 (second), 2000 until now (third).

Starting from the establishment of the Greek state in 1830, there was no organized service for young people. Some orphanages that were established for the orphan children of war were created by private initiatives or charities. In this first period, we could say that youth work was limited to the frame of religious youth organizations, as well as scouting youth organizations.

During this period, the state itself started taking some important initiatives concerning children with special needs or families of Greek refugees expelled from Asia Minor in 1921 (school of special education, national orphanage, nursery etc.).

Another movement of young people during this first period and after the Second World War was built around political organizations. The intense political incidences of the period created a very fertile soil for the young people to participate in such organizations. They had the opportunity to fight for their political demands, to develop their social network and participate in cultural activities.

The end of the Greek civil war and the infliction of dictatorship in Greece that ended in 1974 characterize the second period. Along with the restoration of democracy in the country in 1975, the new constitution included some legal foundations according to which the state had the responsibility to protect youth.

In accordance with this, the next important landmark concerning youth was the foundation of the General Secretariat for Youth. The main purpose of the General Secretariat was to coordinate the different policies concerning young people, as well as to focus and to develop leisure activities.

In that period, many youth activities and initiatives were established in several Greek cities as parts of volunteer Organizations for active citizenship, women's and children's rights, cultural clubs in neighborhoods, environmental unions etc.

The third period brings us up to today and it is definitely a hard period deeply influenced by the political, financial and social crisis that Greece has entered some years ago. The contemporary structures concerning young people are community groups, NGOs and local authorities.

The professionals occupied in such structures, even if they work as youth workers, are most often graduates of social work, social sciences or educational sciences. The new reality that Greece is confronted with today reveals the dramatic insufficiencies of the state to develop policies for the social welfare. Regretfully, the current situation makes it difficult for promising initiatives to arise – initiatives that have been already necessary, even before the crisis, such as a cohesive framework for youth work and youth workers, an effective coordination between public authorities and other youth associations and an investment in research on youth issues.

B. Philosophical and methodological approaches in the youth centre (c.c.o) of movement 'PROTASI'

The profile of 'PROTASI'

A successful initiative of active citizens that blossomed in the 80's was Movement 'PROTASI', a Non-Governmental Organization, which was established in 1988 by volunteers working in primary drug prevention in the local community of Patras and the prefecture of Achaia. The aim of 'PROTASI' is to train the local community (teachers, social workers, parents, students etc.) in active citizenship for the primary prevention of substance misuse and passive habits, and the social inclusion of young people. 'PROTASI' has great experience in theoretical and energetic training (community education) and belongs to many local, national and international organizations and networks. Part of Movement 'PROTASI' is the Center of Creative Occupation (C.C.O.), which aims to train children in primary prevention of addictive substances and behaviours, and other social issues (health education, protection of the environment, social inclusion); and motivate them to become active and assertive citizens in the creative occupation groups and workshops in their leisure time. The target group is from 4 - 18 years old.

The role of prevention

Leisure opportunities, especially those promoted by commercial entertainment, increase anxiety (because of the variety of many choices), do not aim and thus do not contribute to children's communication. This often makes family relationships difficult because there is a contradiction between the desires of kids and the desires of their parents. This usually promotes standards (cross-curricular relationships, beauty, lifestyle, etc.) that are largely unrealistic and are led to join an entertainment system that uses them as passive consumers. Such a way of socializing favours addictive behaviours and negative attitudes (substances, violence, hooliganism, internet). Under these circumstances, children are not encouraged on their way to a mature, independent personality, but they move in a climate of insecurity, anxiety, indecision, low self-appreciation.

For these reasons, prevention is always oriented both at an individual level and in a group (peers). In parallel, it is also intended to offer alternative, positive ways of using leisure time with a substantial benefit for adolescents on their way to self-realization (Bartko and Eccles, 2003).

Purpose of Creative Occupation Groups

The purpose of the Creative Occupation groups in the CCO is to provide opportunities for children and adolescents, through alternative proposals, to make use of their free time for their personal development and creative expression, against passive addictive behaviours. Based on Carl Rogers (1970) and his theory of the five characteristics that identify a fully functioning person, open to experience, existential living, trust feelings, creativity, fulfilled life, the basic objectives in the CCO are approached in the following ways:

- Initiation of Creative Occupation groups offers kids the opportunity to develop their personal and social skills (improvement of communication, acquisition of self-esteem and expression of emotions, self-organization and self-management skills).
- Active involvement of children in both group and collective activities to train them in cooperative processes.
- Children get familiarized with volunteering and the value of active citizenship.
- Parents are encouraged to get involved and trained to improve their role in the family.

Target group

- 1) The final target groups are the creative occupation groups of children and adolescents (4-18 years old).
- 2) Interim target group is the parents' group.
- 3) Another intermediate target group is the teachers of the schools that children are attending.
- 4) Intermediate target groups should also be considered key people, members of the local community (those who shape the neighbourhood conditions such as the municipality, clubs, church, services, etc.)

Intervention through the prevention processes in all the above groups is a holistic approach that covers all the life stages of the children (family, school, leisure, neighbourhood). The development of this all-round intervention creates conditions for potentially increasing effectiveness of prevention programmes.

The role of the animators-youth workers

The pedagogic team, or the group of animators, consists of individuals (volunteers or professionals). They are people with high commitment to the project, with good education in the animation of children, with as stable opinions as possible, familiar with the prevention philosophy and the philosophy of 'PROTASI', and with pre-existing experience in volunteer work. They must be able to act as role models as the basic principle of Movement 'PROTASI' is that "we train mainly with what we are and not only with what we say".

"The relationship between a teacher and a student, trainer and trainee is the one that will act as an incentive for volitional and transactional energy. The relationship that is created is the one that brings the student close to the educator, who will frame, illustrate, explain and interpret the verbal, but also the non-verbal messages among them" (Kosmopoulos, 2009).

The way the group of animators works is crucial to the success of the goals for children groups. After 24 years of experience in youth work in the CCO, it has been proved that group work is a science with many theoretical and practical investments.

Pedagogical approach of the youth work in the CCO of 'PROTASI'

The apparent ultimate goal of each group of kids is to produce the project that has been decided and put into the contract of each group. However, the animator facilitates the realization of the intermediate objectives that are mostly intended for the individual but in a group process. These are:

- The formation of a mature, structured personality with delimitation, consistency and responsibility, leading the kid to independence and autonomy in conditions of interaction and co-evolution.
- Self- awareness and development of self-esteem.
- Encouragement of initiatives, acceptance of the other, respect for diversity and solidarity with others.

All these can happen within an environment of communication, cooperation, democracy and expression of opinions and emotions.

A basic key to the success of these goals is **the group work** through which certain conditions are developed and properly used by the animator to train children in life's attitudes, skills and behaviors.

A second basic key is **the learning-by-doing method** that guarantees the effectiveness of the effort invested by the kids in the group work (Dewey, 1916). The work, task, or project, is not an end in itself, but it is a "key" that, in the hands of the animator, creates conditions for process, and creates opportunities that will advance the intermediate goals.

Another important tool is the process of configuring **the contract** in each group (Sakkas, 1995). It is obvious that we can only promote pedagogical goals if the children participate voluntarily and if they learn how to coexist on a democratic basis (Neill, 1960). In this way they can perceive their strengths, their difficulties and their abilities. The basic prerequisite for the successful implementation of the contract is the conscious, meaningful participation of children to take responsibility.

C. The project PLOUTOS: an answer of 'protasi' to the new needs

PLOUTOS (Pedagogical learning through the Operation and Urging of Teams for Overcoming Social exclusion) was realized by Movement 'PROTASI' which was partly funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway under the EEA

Grants Greek NGO project 'We are all Citizens'. The Bodossaki Foundation was the Fund Operator of this project from October 2014 until April 2016.

Background situation in Patras

Patras has, during the last century, been a city with many factories, a very active harbour, a rich cultural and social life, and a very good economic status for the average citizen. The active harbour of Patras started in the mid-1990s and since the beginning of the 21st century has become the arena of many disputes and fights, particularly with the arrival of Afghan immigrants, as well as Somalis and Sudanese, to the area (Kiprianos, et al, 2003). An intensive period of dialogue ensued among politicians, citizens, migrants, police, and NGOs concerning community tensions. The social problem of economic migration resulted in the polarization of citizens and the newly-arrived communities, and the development of disputes. Meanwhile, the closure of factories, unemployment, labour impoverishment, and social decline, led to difficulties in addressing the social problems that arose.

During recent years, many children all over Greece are facing poverty and isolation problems due to their parents' unemployment and due to insufficient psychosocial support for domestic violence or parental loss, mental health problems, problems of school violence, substance abuse and problematic use of the internet and lack of opportunities for creative activities (Kokkevi, et al, 2016).

Purpose of the project

The fact that there is no Youth Centre in the city made the PLOUTOS project an innovative approach that met the needs of many kids by contributing to primary prevention (healthy population of kids) and secondary prevention (vulnerable groups of kids). The prevention of addictions, as well as any harmful behaviour by children because of their mental and physical health, is the main purpose of Movement 'PROTASI'. The PLOUTOS project enriched and systemized the work into primary and secondary prevention of addiction from substances, behaviours and delinquencies. The day-to-day operation of kids in groups, of personal development, and creative occupation, has provided support to kids who:

- a) had no economic resources and opportunities through their family environment,
- b) were vulnerable to degrading behaviours and addictions,
- c) were facing social exclusion due to special conditions (immigrants, disabled).

In experiential and interactive ways, with modern pedagogical approaches, the acquisition and improvement of personal and social skills, and counselling and psychosocial support, kids were sensitized and aware of issues related to the rhetoric of hate, racism and xenophobia, tolerance and Intercultural understanding, acceptance of diversity, democracy, solidarity, protection of the environment and other values. Children were additionally familiarized with those issues through their participation in the INEPS network that 'PROTASI' is connected with since 1996.

Results of the project

The project PLOUTOS, aiming at the prevention of contemporary threats which undermine the future of young people, especially after the socioeconomic crisis in Greece, focused on the development of an exemplary pedagogic project for the creative occupation of kids 8-16 years in a safe and supportive framework.

PLOUTOS started with the training in youth work and prevention of 20 young unemployed social workers, psychologists, and teachers, for 107 hours. At the end of the seminar two of them were hired to work in the project POUTOS as youth workers.

The project contributed effectively to primary prevention but also to the secondary prevention objectives. The project provided psycho-social support and social inclusion for kids with special disorders (autism, learning difficulties, ADHD). Daily, both populations co-existed in the youth groups and workshops in mutual benefit. In parallel, the project supported the family environment of kids through training and consultation procedures at individual and group work level. At the same time it supported the vulnerable kids and their families by sending them to professionals (doctors, lawyers, teachers, pharmacists) who offered, for free, their services through the TANK, a network of volunteers that was rebuilt and enriched by 'PROTASI' in the frame of the project. With the support and cooperation of the volunteers of 'PROTASI', the project realized a number of cultural events with and for the kids. By the end of the second year the project had surpassed its ambitions.

More than 1185 kids, parents, and teachers accessed the Centre and used the various available services (345 kids participated to the groups and workshops of the project, 206 kids, parents, teachers accepted consultation and training support in individual and group sessions, 614 kids and parents were informed and sent to the TANK, 20 unemployed young professionals were trained in youth work).

More than 3426 people were informed about the services of the project, 1420 educators, mentors, and youth workers, participated in presentations and workshops concerning the project in Greece and in Europe. 230 citizens offered volunteer support to the project (<http://www.weareallcitizens.gr/projects>).

The project PLOUTOS offered a good chance to 'PROTASI' to realize its vision based on the community needs, keeping its autonomy, philosophy, principles and values. The perspectives that opened up with this project, gave a great push to movement 'PROTASI' to continue with more experience and knowledge about what had already been done for many years. The project PRO-NIA succeeded PLOUTOS with the same philosophy and methodology for the school year 2017-2018.

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4. Finding common ground without losing your own. Results of the project “Mapping Professional Open Youth Work in Europe”

Manfred Zentner and Alexandra Beweis

Abstract

This article will describe the process of mapping professional open youth work for the benefit of better European cooperation and lobbying. As a starting point there was the feeling of several youth work practitioners in Europe that a common understanding of the methods, and a concise definition of professional open youth work, are essential for a clear profile and thus lobbying for the sector. We will analyse the involvement of the different partners coming from nine countries, with different approaches to open youth work, and different professional and organisational backgrounds, and investigate the integration of their respective positions in the final product. The article is based on the description of the process by the project manager and qualitative interviews done with the project partners on their involvement and satisfaction with the product and the process.

Keywords

international cooperation, project management, principles, organisation, youth work

Introduction

There have been various attempts to find common ground in youth work in Europe, mainly coming from European institutions and policy level. The approach was often inclusive trying to cover the whole range of different youth work practices, fading out differences and particularities among the diverse forms. This was well intentioned as it aimed at showing and respecting the diversity of youth work in Europe. But this approach also prevents specific forms of youth work from developing a clear profile and thus a common voice and impact on a European level. Professionals working with young people in an open youth work setting felt increasingly underrepresented in the European discourse on youth work and therefore, after the 1st European Youth Work Convention in 2010, gathered to create a new European network for their specific field and thus created POYWE – Professional Open Youth Work in Europe.

In 2014, POYWE was ready to undertake its own projects and the new Erasmus+ programme provided a new tool – the Strategic Partnership that allows cooperation between interested organisations in a long-term process on a specific topic and also encourages cross sectoral approaches. Thus the "Mapping Professional Open Youth Work in Europe" project was born, which aimed at mapping the profession by creating a common definition, a mission statement and a set of working principles that could serve the field as a reference point and create tools for storytelling to showcase methods, concepts and ideas of professional open youth work.

This Strategic Partnership was formed by bringing together practitioners and academics from nine European countries to develop a common understanding of the practice of professional open youth work. The interest level was high and so some organisations even had to be turned down initially, as the programme limits the maximum number of partners to ten. In the end, the following partnership, striving for a geographical and sectoral balance, embarked on this journey:

POYWE – a European umbrella organisation of professional open youth work as coordinator;

bOJA – bundesweites Netzwerk Offene Jugendarbeit – an umbrella organisation in the field of open youth work in Austria;

Ungdom og Fritid – a national, non-profit organisation which organizes over 600 youth clubs in Norway;

n.e.t.z. - the network of youth clubs and youth centres in South Tyrol/Italy;

Stichting JONG – a provider of professional youth work in the area of Rotterdam in the Netherlands;

Udurga Zamisli – a youth work organisation based in Zagreb that specialises in the inclusion of disabled young people and is interested in developing the area of professional open youth work in Croatia;

Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ – an Agency established in 2011 in Malta to promote the interests of young people and provide support to youth organisations;

HUMAK University of Applied Sciences – a big provider of youth work education in Finland;

Institute for policy research and analysis – a development agency involved in youth research and youth policy in Lithuania;

and

Newman University that runs Bachelor and Master degrees in youth and community work in Birmingham in the UK.

The diversity of the partners alone ensured that the project was an exciting international, intercultural, and interdisciplinary process.

Process

Declaration of Principles

Of course, we did not start from a blank sheet of paper. There was a lot already around at national and European levels. Studies conducted at international level in 2009 and 2014, highlighted the diversity in youth work. The study on socio-economic scope of youth work (Partnership EC-CoE, 2009) focused on case studies of 10 countries while the research of 2014 (EC, 2014) produced an overview over all 27 Member States of the EU. Both studies pointed to the diversity and richness of various approaches to youth work in Europe. Furthermore, the efforts undertaken in the two European Youth Work Conventions, 2010 and 2015, to find common ground were one of the starting points. A range of national definitions, curricula and quality papers was another. Critically, one of the main starting points for this group was the opinions and ideas of the young people themselves.

To find and specify commonalities in youth work, and come to a common understanding, we had to analyse the existing material, compare national realities, listen to the young people and youth work students, and find also the courage to clearly name what we are not.

The first step therefore was to collect all existing material that partners found relevant and of course the task tempted all partners to immediately recommend direct translations from their own principle documents or from parts of the European material that they contributed to or to which they could best relate. This is a very understandable impulse since, especially for their own documents, a lot of thinking, discussion, and effort had already been invested there. Plus it seemed easy and effective at the first glance. The project management organisation, POYWE, collected and read all the documents and found some contradictions, diversity in wording, and recommending which documents to reject. To be legitimate, this common ground had to be built word by word and discussed sentence by sentence.

The process started with focus groups conducted by all partners in their settings – some with young people directly or with students aspiring to become youth workers. In one case the discussions focused on what young people expect from professional open youth work and what their experiences were; in another case it focused on the aspirations and expectations of students of their future profession. The project management organisation gathered the results from all countries and prepared an overview report for all partners. These results were one of the main pillars of creating our own definition and principles.

In one of the first face-to-face partnership meetings a card sorting exercise was introduced, asking the partners to bring over 100 terms taken from all the gathered documents in their own order and context; they then prioritised them in accordance to their relevance for the field. This was the second pillar in starting to draft a new document.

The project management organisation took those results and drafted a first text, which was sent to all partners – then negotiations started and took over a year and several online and offline meetings. It took around 15 versions of the document that the project management created following the feedback and changes to each version of the partners. This involved condensing diverse wording to a common idea, finding compromises and creating alternatives where the negotiations got stuck. Some general lines were clear quickly and easily, but then following an Austrian saying the devil proved to be in the details, because then not only the common European English started to show

its local colours, but also concepts, beliefs and the two worlds of formal and non-formal education had to be brought down to a compromise. In the end there was an agreement on a common English version – also driven by the fact that the project was drawing to an end. Then it took almost a full day to agree on a title for the document – Charter or Manifesto were too strong for some partners, Guidelines too weak for most. In the end we settled on Declaration of Principles and since 2016 we have published this document and have presented it in various settings. The partners agreed though that only translations will make it really accessible for youth workers on the ground and committed to provide them – so far Croatian has been done. German and Dutch are on their way, but already now we see that translations will raise new questions and nuances. In the end, this is what we aimed for – a living document that is used on local, national and international levels to inspire and create debate about a specific field of youth work.

Mapping and Storytelling

Finding a common vision of Professional Open Youth Work in Europe within our partnership was one aim of the project; the other ambitious goal was to show and tell the outside world what our field of work is all about. To achieve this the project included the creation of a new E-Magazine on Professional Open Youth Work and a platform that included a video channel for youth workers to tell their stories and webinars for debate and exchange of ideas.

The partners actively decided on the structure and scope of the new E-Magazine and together named it LOGBOOK. Each partner then contributed – at least with brainstorming – to the main topics of the three editions within the frame of the project and an article about the state of the art of professional open youth work in their country. In each of the editions three articles of those were published under the title “Spot On” and together those comprise an important part of the mapping. Some partners volunteered to be on the editorial team of LOGBOOK and contributed by writing articles, doing interviews and finding relevant authors for our topics.

The video channel was meant to give room for the stories of youth workers and each partner was to present one video from their country there. We organised a video seminar to support and enable this and this proved very helpful, because apart from the technical skills we all learned, we also agreed there on a common format. Not all partners managed to provide a video themselves, but together we managed to have at least one video per participating country and so this has also contributed to the mapping.

Evaluation

For any successful transferability of the method of cooperation it is important to evaluate if the approach, the process and the result fulfilled the expectations of the partners – especially if the project really was participatory. For the evaluation two qualitative methods were chosen a participant observation at the final project meeting and qualitative online interviews.

Methodology

For the preparation of the evaluation, and as its first step, the evaluator visited the last meeting of the project in Vienna to introduce the concept of the evaluation and decide on the technicalities (preferred format of interviews, timing). At the same time this meeting served also as the start of the evaluation to allow the external evaluator to get acquainted with the process as well as the method used. Therefore, the author was able to get first-hand insight into the dynamics of the cooperation. The presence of any observer always interferes with the group dynamics, and it can never be guaranteed that a group will react identically with or without any new participants – even if they are only silently observing the procedures.

In the second phase, all partners, except the project managing team, were invited one year after the final meeting, and after all developed outcomes were produced, to a short qualitative online interview. The aim of the interview was to enable all partners to give feedback regarding the methods of cooperation in the project and to assess how strong their own positions were reflected in the results. The online interview was conducted via e-mail. In each partner institution the participant at the last meeting was contacted via email and received questions regarding 5 topics on the cooperation in the project, their personal involvement, their contentment (or otherwise) with the outcomes, and their presentation. The interviews distributed by the evaluator with an introduction reminding the interviewees of the project and explaining that the answers would be read only by the evaluator, and that all would be anonymised. Care must be taken to ensure the questionnaire reaches the correct person; in at least two cases the interview e-mail had to be forwarded to the person, since they were no longer available at the registered mail address. The timeframe for answering the mail was set at three weeks but was then extended for another two weeks because the inquiry took place at the end of the summer. In the end seven of nine contacted organisations provided answers to the questions, which is a very positive response rate. But especially in qualitative research, since it is never clear if there is any personal dissatisfaction with the project that might have withheld participation in the

evaluation. In this paper verbatim quotes are ascribed to a certain online interview by reference to the interview number (I-1) to (I-7).

Evaluation outcomes

The final meeting of the project was run by the Austrian partner and moderated by the managing organization of the project. Main topics for the day of the observation were the presentation of final adjustments on the principles of open youth work, the title of the document and decisions on further steps for the dissemination of the results. At this meeting the moderation showed a clear dedication to achieve results: preparing the ground for a unanimous agreement on the achieved outcome as the final result, including its presentation. This was reached by reminding the participants of the numerous alterations to the original text as well as of the realised changes following the interventions. Even though the moderation appeared for the evaluator rather strict, and with little encouragement for further amendments, all participating partners seemed to be very pleased with this way of dealing with the topic. No objections were raised, and no negative emotions were expressed non-verbally – obviously the participants representing the partner institutions and different approaches to youth work found their own ideas reflected in the text and their concerns respected, and they were content with the fact that a common solution was found.

The decisions on further steps for dissemination were decided in a far more relaxed atmosphere: the participants were invited to bring in ideas and present plans about how the partners wanted to make the outcomes public in the partner countries. The people in the room participated eagerly, presented plans and took up ideas from the other partner institutions.

The first topic of the evaluation e-mails focused on the project per se, its structure, planning and organisation. Overall, the project was claimed as a positive example of international cooperation between partners coming from different backgrounds and representing diverse ways of defining professional open youth work. The interviewees agreed that the “project was well organised and effectively managed” (I1). The mix of face-to-face meetings and regular online video call meetings, in combination with a well-organised information and exchange system, was seen as positive and essential for state-of-the-art international cooperation projects.

The second question focused on the personal involvement of the interviewee and their experience of opportunities to get their own opinion and standpoint included. This question focused not on individual vanities within the project but on the creation of an equitable exchange, involving

discussion and informed decisions between peers.

The whole process was described as "open and participative" and still "open to change and [...] receptive to new approaches and ideas" (I-1). The discussions during the meeting, even when they were fundamental, were "very democratic and balanced" where "all the partners had a chance to influence the course of discussion, as well as the deliverables" (I-2). It was also mentioned that the moderation of the process allowed any partner to get involved when they wanted or felt it essential. As one of the interview partners described it from the own position: "I felt very much included and involved. I felt it was entirely up to me, if I wanted to contribute more than I did ..." (I-5).

On the other hand, the difficulties of a quite intense common creation process were also addressed, as it pointed to the fact that not all participants are always at the same position, coming from different backgrounds, from diverse organisations with different sizes and different standing in their respective country, and having unequal levels of experience. "There were moments of clashing cultures, moments of misunderstanding, [...]" (i-4) described tensions during the project, which might be inevitable in international projects with transdisciplinary elements. From the answers, it was deduced that even though discussions might even become fundamental, the mutual respect was never lost, and the strong organisation and moderation kept the partners focused on the aim of a common output still enabling all involved not only to say something but feel heard.

But even if active involvement is possible and encouraged it might not be reflected in the outcomes and results. Therefore, the next two topics of the evaluation concentrated a) on the personal satisfaction with the accomplished outcomes of the project and b) on the integration of the position and approaches of all partners in one of the main products, the "declaration of principles of open youth work".

It showed that all partners were in general very satisfied with the outcomes of the project.

The "Declaration of principles" has the highest acceptance and is described by the interview partners as "a good document, concise, short but full of information and with a clear message" (I-2) "significant and useful" (I-1) which is often used in various settings from general and targeted information to training and university teaching. The satisfaction is even higher since the process of creation enabled the inclusion of so different, and sometimes

conflicting, approaches and definitions. This satisfaction points to the pride of having created a product not only of high quality, but where planned usability and impact was reached.

The E-Magazine *LOGBOOK* was ranked highly the interviewees, since it allows exchange and is a very good resource for information and is seen as a grassroots tool. It was especially liked as an uncomplicated way of dissemination, reaching many youth workers; and its interactive character made it popular with the target group. On the other hand, it was also hoped “that there will be more colleagues who want to contribute in future editions and that it will get more international attention” (I-3) and “that it will stay a tool in the time to come as it is very, very good quality” (I-2). These last statements refer to the vulnerability of any living outcome of projects that need an ongoing, elevated level of energy from the organisers.

Less satisfaction was expressed concerning the platform for videos and webinars. This seems to be because the interview partners did not use the opportunities themselves. It is obvious that the feeling of ownership for the platform did not reach the partners to the same degree as for the Declaration and for *LOGBOOK*.

Regarding the reflection of their own opinions in the flagship outcome of the project, the Declaration of principles, all participants see their opinions included, which does not imply complete agreement with the whole document. The answers recall the process of creation, the “long way to reach this agreement” (I-6) that “was governed more by dialogue than cheap compromises” (I-7). And so “it was a cooperative endeavour and cannot meet the particular expectations of any one contributor” (I-1).

Critique concerns mainly the length of the document that is perceived as “rather extensive” (I-3), which on the other hand “seems to be unavoidable in European projects like these” (I-3). Improvements might have been reached if “greater scrutiny and more comprehensive editing” (I-1) were applied.

One interviewee focussed on the general direction of the Declaration. In this answer it is pointed out that in many countries “Youth work targets young people who have different kinds of social problems” but this does “not apply to all users of youth work” and thus the Declaration might reinforce a “social stigma of being a user” (I-5).

All in all, the answers show that the various approaches of the partners were successfully included in the common document, at the expense of length.

The question regarding the dissemination of the results and the implementation of the project reflects national diversities. But especially the use of the LOGBOOK as a means of information and communication between the national project partner on the one hand and youth workers in the respective countries on the other hand show that all partners are still positively inclined to the project and its resulting products.

Examples of Experienced Challenges

The main challenge of this project was of course to find a compromise that everybody could find their place in but clear enough to add some new input to the European discourse. Thus trying to avoid the usual way out of getting so vague that „it does not hurt anyone “ was one of the main responsibilities of the project management.

Every country involved had their own history, and concepts, and current challenges resonating in the process; thus whilst some things were easy to agree on, others were fiercely discussed. How does the ideal of openness translate into action – is it only about low-threshold offers and no required membership or is there more to it? Targeted youth work has had difficult effects in some countries, but what if on the other hand some young people need tailor-made offers for being able to connect to us? Can we say that we work with marginalized young people or is that already excluding and questioning the principle of voluntary participation? Do we all have to invite young people into our boards, like they do in Norway, for meeting the aim of participation or is the idea of co-creation also valid on other levels? Can we seriously say that we create safe spaces when we work with groups of young people at risk of becoming criminal on the streets? This gives some idea of concrete topics that were discussed and, since many of those were closely linked to the "raison d'être" of the field in their self-image, it was not easy to let go of some parts or to integrate some other concepts that might be contradictory to the specific national situation.

And then of course there was the word 'professional'. A word that can mean so many different things and tackles almost a primeval fear of social work and youth work in particular that depends largely on the passion and engagement of volunteers: are we downgrading them if we talk about professionals as in contrast to volunteers? Can young people rightfully expect something more or different from paid staff? If we see youth workers as educators in a non-formal setting what does that mean for training and education, but also self-awareness and reflection? The young people we talked to in all countries clearly put a lot of trust in those adults that interact with them within the youth work setting – a trust that has to be established,

re-earned every day and used in a professional way to support those young people in their growth and independence. We are talking about professional youth workers, meaning people that have an education, commit to ethical standards, reflect on their interventions and the quality of their work, and get a fair salary befitting a responsible task. We did acknowledge that there are thousands of volunteers that are also trained, reflective, and responsible, and organisations that take care of that, but we set out to describe a profession and had to be true to that goal.

Conclusions and transferability

The experience of this Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project “Mapping of Professional Open Youth Work in Europe” and the results of the evaluation are not only important for the partners in the project but allow transfer to other international projects and partnerships. One major area of learning concerned the quality of the outcomes and the common feeling of ownership of (the process and the result) of the project. A second area of learning is on successful project management; and a third concerns the sustainability of the developed outcomes.

Often, international projects are established with the declared aim of developing common outcomes. One of the challenges lies in the creation of a common feeling of ownership among all project partners which are regularly coming from different national realities and often even from different fields – especially in strategic partnership projects. This asks for the ability of the project management in generating a setting where all partners can work together with mutual respect at eye level. This might not be surprising for youth workers, since facilitating exchange and establishing dialogue is also a main element of youth worker competences (Salto Youth 2016: 24) and is also evident for researchers working in the field of transdisciplinarity (Scholz and Steiner, 2015). Thus, a participatory environment for cooperation is established, where the needs and wishes as well as the concrete circumstances and different backgrounds of all partners are accounted for.

But at the same time the project management must keep the over-all outcomes of the project in focus. It therefore has to be clear, steering, and also sometimes demanding, to set the targets and define the tasks of the individual partners. This is also a big support for the partners that they can rely on the fact that “someone else” keeps an eye on the overall picture. Furthermore, the project management must also take care of timelines, finances, information and control of the deliverables to keep the administrative obligations of the partners as small as possible.

Therefore, the project management has to have experience in international moderation as well as administration but also a well-developed content strength. An understanding of the international needs as well as appreciation of the regional, national or individual needs, wishes, expectations and given frame conditions are essential qualities of the project managers. Also, the identification of the benefits of the common tasks for the individual partners lies in the scope of the project management.

With these tasks fulfilled, the process can be run by all partners with a mutual feeling of ownership and responsibility for the results that will reflect the opinions of everyone involved.

Besides the co-creation of the outcomes of the given project, often a sustainable cooperation or the further ongoing creation of a product is a target in internationally funded projects. The main challenge lies in the sustainability of the process after the funding has ceased. One has to plan this phase very carefully and there is no guarantee that it will run successfully after the end of the original project. For example, the production of the E-Magazine *LOGBOOK* can be a model of good practice for other projects. Here it is obvious that one of the partners, in this case the managing partner, took over the responsibility to keep the sense of common ownership alive.

It is always the risk that with the end of the funding no resources are available to keep the "living" outcome alive and enable integration into the normal work of the partnership. Therefore, continuous networking and lobbying for the product is needed, at least in the first phase after the project has ended, to establish common ownership of the created product among at least some of the original project partners. Nevertheless, after the product is created and has demonstrated sustainability, this creation then has the power to become the main driver of any further co-operation.

Finally, for multi-partner international projects it is advisable to establish a strong, and at the same time, interculturally sensitive project management that has both experience in administration and is knowledgeable in the content field of the project. For the sustainable implementation of outcomes and results of the project in the newly established partnership, it is sensible to plan the necessary resource needs for the period beyond the funded project.

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5. Key competences of non-formal learning in youth work: based on the example of Estonian open youth centres

Ilona-Evelyn Rannala and Anu Allekand

Abstract

Non-formal learning and its key competences are an important concept used to explain and even justify youth work. Estonian youth work has traditionally leaned towards an educational role emphasising youngsters' personal development. Although it has progressed significantly in its forms, structures, regulations, training and professional competence since the restoration of independence in 1991, its conceptual basis remains ripe for discussion. Little has been written on this issue to date, nor has significant research been carried out about non-formal learning in youth work. This article will attempt to frame and contextualise Estonian youth work and to examine the objectives and outcomes of non-formal learning in the work of open youth centres.

Keywords

youth work roles, non-formal learning, key competences, open youth centre, hobby activities, camps, Estonia

Framing and contextualising youth work in Estonia

The development of youth work in Europe has generally been associated with focusing attention on the social welfare of children and youngsters, supporting their studies or offering them recreational activities. At the same time, youth movements and the active participation of youngsters in society have also formed part of progress in this sphere (Coussée, 2010). Estonian youth work developed in the same manner in the early 19th century, but youth movements and support for learning (including characterbuilding) and cultural activities – for example through churches, charities and voluntary and other organisations – were more strongly represented (Taru, *et al*, 2015, pp 26-36).

When it comes to history, Estonia – along with the other Baltic States occupied by the Soviet Union – is unique: here youth work was influenced ideologically and was at a standstill for several decades. Many of the specific types of youth work practised before occupation, such as youth organisations and camps, were carried on, but they were moulded to suit the communist ideology and message. Also, belonging to a pioneer or communist youth organisation was usually compulsory for youngsters, and there were no alternatives. Youth camps also sought to shape 'decent and loyal Soviet people', which meant that character and discipline training were integrated into the camps. As a further alternative, hobby schools for youngsters emerged which added some value to youth work during the Soviet era. Many of our colleagues from old Europe will not be familiar with the nature of these institutions. Hobby schools, which still exist alongside schools and youth centres, were places for intensively pursuing specific interests and had curriculums for different hobbies together with a rather structured learning process. However, attending hobby schools was and is voluntary, which is why today they are categorised as educational establishments in the field of youth work and mostly discussed in the context thereof. A line nevertheless needs to be drawn between studies at a hobby school and hobby activities at a youth centre. For example, a young person could take art classes from September to May at a hobby school, supervised by an art teacher, and earn a certificate after completing the course. At the same time, a young person could go to an open youth centre and take some creative art classes supervised by a youth worker, who may well be talented and creative and taken art courses themselves. Hobby activities have no curriculum and no awarding of certificates, although there has always been an expectation that the learning process should be planned and coordinated. Hobby activities at youth centres today are planned according to the interests of the attendees

and the skills of the youth workers – or where the budget allows, professionals for hire. Hobby activities at youth centres usually last for a shorter period and are easily changed if the youngsters express other interests. In a sense, such activities represent a way of trying out different hobbies and finding the 'right one', which can then be practised at a hobby school more intensively. Most of the hobby activities offered at youth centres are free, whereas classes at hobby schools never are.

Returning to the topic of the development and conceptualisation of youth work, we must admit, as many other authors have before us (see e.g. Cooper, 2012; Taru, *et al*, 2015; Walker, 2016), that it is a very challenging task. Defining and envisioning youth work are closely linked to the social context and are therefore in constant flux (Ord, 2016). Trudi Cooper (2012) has, in her own words, "positively and at the same time sceptically" analysed the four best-known models of youth work, which help to both define and envision its role: two models from the UK (Butters and Newell, 1978; Smith, 1988), one from Ireland (Hurley and Treacey, 1993) and one with her own authorship from Australia (Cooper and White, 1994). Considering the different histories and socio-economic environments of countries, but also the different aims and methods used to develop these models (Cooper, 2012), conclusions on similarities between them cannot be hastily drawn. Also, none of these models can be simply tailored to the Estonian system. Still, we looked up the words most commonly used to describe the roles of youth work in these models (in some cases modified by Cooper, 2012) and by using the Tag Crowd web tool we created an illustrative word cloud (see Figure 1). Characterbuilding (and adjusting to society or certain norms) and 'reforming' on different levels are the most frequently mentioned roles. Personal and social development, enabling, empowerment and activism follow closely behind.

Figure 1. Roles of youth work mentioned in youth work models (based on Cooper, 2012)

activism adjustment advocacy change
character-building
community emancipation empowerment
enabling healthy lifestyle **reform**
personal development rescuing
revolutionary treatment welfaring

Does a clear, simple role of youth work even exist nowadays? In terms of youth work models, we believe that there are two important aspects in Estonia, as follows:

1) Supporting the positive development of youngsters, which is in line with the definition of Estonian youth work: “Youth work is the creation of conditions to promote the diverse development of young persons, which enables them to be active outside of their families, to gain formal education acquired within the adult education system and to work on the basis of their free will” (Youth Work Act, 2010). But what is the aim of supporting the positive development of youngsters? By looking more closely at the Estonian Youth Field Development Plan 2014–2020, where one of the measures is to increase the inclusion of young people and improve their employability, it can be argued that youth work also aims to meet the expectations of society and to support the growth and development of well-functioning, active citizens. This of course leaves room to discuss the following question:

2) To what extent does youth work prepare youngsters for their role in society, empower and emancipate them, help them think critically and work with them to effect social change, where needed (Taru, et al 2015, pp 26-36)? Participation was already clearly highlighted in the Estonian Youth Work Strategy 2006–2013, and in the light of lowering the voting age for local government elections from 2017 onwards it would be our assumption that empowerment and working towards social change are important roles in

Estonian youth work as well.

The concept of learning or education as a system is socially constructed. Therefore, if we 'justify' youth work through non-formal learning (du Bois-Reimond, 2003; Kiilakoski, 2015), it is part of the same social construct. It can complement formal learning, provide added value to it or be viewed as an alternative that stands separately: there are integrated and isolated approaches to non-formal learning. The concepts of learning and education have of course changed over the centuries, and the division of learning into formal, non-formal and informal are discussions (constructions) from the 1960s, as is the umbrella concept of lifelong learning (Norqvist and Leffler, 2017; Romi and Schmida, 2009). Rather a lot of value is placed on this latter concept in Estonia, but debate about the position of non-formal learning via youth work rages on: is it an alternative that stands apart, or is it an invaluable part of the learning process that should be counted when assessing learning outcomes at school? Different opinions – among which young peoples' own arguments are publicly expressed in the Manifest of Estonian Youth (2017) – are especially important: young people are highly motivated to learn in non-formal settings, use non-formal methods, find connections between knowledge and everyday life and carry out activities together as part of the learning process, and they want to see time dedicated to non-formal learning being valued rather than wasted (*Eestimaa Noorte Manifest*, 2017). Then, of course, there are arguments from teachers, youth workers, politicians, parents, researchers, et al. who, through these discussions, are contributing to the construction of modern youth work and education in Estonia.

To conclude at this point, youth work in Estonia has progressed from educating and uniting young people in the early 19th century and decades of ideology thereafter to offering safe recreational environments for youngsters in the post-Soviet, financially struggling and somewhat tense Estonia of the 1990s and today to the concept of supporting personal development through non-formal learning (Youth Field Development Plan, 2014). In this sense it could be said that the educational role of youth work is very important. On the other hand, there is no reason to draw conclusions just yet: Estonian youth work has progressed significantly in its forms, structures, training and professional competence since the restoration of its independence in 1991. Which concepts are used and why, and how these concepts are understood and practised, are questions that still need to be answered. Youth work is as diverse as it is dependent on its social (including historical) context. We believe that youth work, which is more flexible because it is less formal, is constantly being reconstructed, and it is

therefore harder to reach consensus regarding its principles or roles. The identity of youth work may lie in its changing character, which in turn makes it vulnerable (Coussée, 2016) and sometimes rather isolated.

Non-formal learning in youth work

Non-formal learning, as already mentioned, is a kind of 'justification' for youth work in the context of European Union policies and framework (du Bois-Reimond, 2003; Kiilakoski, 2015). The definition we use here is as follows:

Non-formal learning is purposeful but voluntary learning that takes place in a diverse range of environments and situations for which teaching/training and learning are not necessarily the sole or main activity. These environments and situations may be temporary, and the activities or courses that take place may be staffed by professional learning facilitators (such as youth trainers) or by volunteers (such as youth leaders). The activities and courses are planned, but are seldom structured with a conventional rhythm or curriculum subjects. They usually address specific target groups, but rarely document or assess learning outcomes or achievements in conventionally visible ways.

(Chisholm, 2005)

It should be mentioned that the concept of non-formal learning in youth work stresses the same aims as mentioned previously: personal development; employability and through that adjustment to society; active citizenship; and participation (Bergstein and Taylor, 2009). Non-formal learning outcomes are best described using eight key competences (Otten and Ohana, 2009):

1. Communication in the mother tongue
2. Communication in foreign languages
3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology
4. Digital competence
5. Learning to learn
6. Social and civic competence
7. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
8. Cultural awareness and expression

With the research outlined in this article we seek to describe, in connection with the key competences, the objectives and learning outcomes of non-formal learning carried out at Estonian open youth centres as part of one project. Based on the results, we aim to bring new knowledge to the discussion of the role of youth work in Estonia today. We are also interested to find out whether youth work through non-formal learning supports the development of 'soft' skills. The weak points acknowledged by Estonian education, despite achieving very good PISA results, are connected to obtaining soft skills like communication, team work, the ability to learn and form an argument, etc. Non-formal learning within youth work could perhaps add to formal education here.

Research background

Arguably the most widely recognised form of modern Estonian youth work is the work done at youth centres. These are mostly institutions administered by local authorities, or the local authority outsources the services from a non-profit organisation. In Estonia, youth work is organised by the local authority and funded from the local municipality's budget. Local authorities differ in size and have different budgets that results in rather uneven possibilities for pursuing youth work around Estonia, but youth centres of some sort do exist in most municipalities. Estonian youth centres are gathered under an umbrella organisation: the Association of Estonian Open Youth Centres (AEYC), which unites 154 youth centres (Association of Estonian Open Youth Centres, 2017). In total there were 263 youth centres in Estonia in 2016 (Martma, 2017). To present a clearer picture we should add that the population of Estonia is just 1.3 million.

In 2015, the AEYC orchestrated a project called 'Implementation of a Support Programme for Children at Risk through Youth Centres'. The project was funded via the European Economic Area programme 'Children and Youngsters at Risk' in an open call entitled 'The Ability of Youth Organisations and Youth Work Organisations to Involve Children and Youth at Risk Has Improved'. The main goal of the project was to boost the inclusion in youth work of youngsters with fewer opportunities from rural areas of Estonia (Association of Estonian Open Youth Centres, 2016). The authors of the article were involved in analysing the results of the project and writing up the report but did not participate in creating the data collection instrument or collecting the data. With the permission of the AEYC, the authors use some of the results of the project in this article to further analyse the objectives and outcomes of non-formal learning in Estonian youth centres.

Data

During the project, the AEYC team compiled a survey in order to assess the results of the project. The survey was completed by 66 youth centre workers in the first period of the project (January-April 2015) and a further 65 youth centre workers in the second period of the project (May-August 2015) all over Estonia. In total, 86 youth centres took part in the project. The survey was undertaken by youth workers employed by the project – one representative from each centre. The names of the youth centres were sought, although the identity of the workers was not: only their position was checked (head of youth centre, youth worker or project leader). To guarantee the participants' anonymity, the researchers received data without the names of the youth centres. The project team collected the data via an electronic form, and there were 102 questions in total concerning project activities. However, in this article we will be focusing on two questions that describe the objectives and learning outcomes of hobby activities and camp activities at youth centres during two project periods, and questions about organisational aspects. The questions were the following:

1. What objectives were set for the camp activities?
2. What did the youngsters learn most from the hobby activities?
3. How many youngsters participated in camp activities during the reporting period?
4. How many youngsters participated in hobby activities during the reporting period (by age group: 7-11, 12-15, 16-19 and 20-26)?

The first two were open questions, with the youth workers providing free-form answers. 13 responses were given about the objectives of camp activities and 105 were given concerning the learning outcomes of hobby activities during the two periods. All of the youth centres – i.e. 66 in the first period and 65 in the second period – responded to the question regarding the number of participants. All of the open answers concerning the research topic of this article have been marked with a number differentiating between the two aforementioned periods.

The answers regarding objectives and study outcomes were analysed qualitatively according to the previously formed categories, which were based on the key competences of non-formal learning presented within a theoretical framework. First, both authors read through the responses

separately the responses separately and coded them, keeping in mind the skills listed in the key competences: communicative skills; mathematical, scientific and technological knowledge; digital competence; learning to learn; personal, intercultural, social and civic competence; initiative and entrepreneurship; and cultural awareness and cultural expression. The responses that the authors could not label under key competences were initially categorised under 'Other'. The text was then read for a second time and the codes checked. After this, the authors met and compared the coded texts to ensure the credibility of the research, discussing their interpretations where needed, clarifying certain points and making changes. The discussion resulted in dividing the category 'Other' as follows: first, we singled out nature education (including survival skills in nature and preserving nature and the environment); secondly, we separated topics related to maintaining healthy lifestyles as recurring answers; and finally, 'Other' remained a category, albeit a smaller one.

The quotes presented in the article are marked as period and number of answerer (e.g. P1, A20).

We will also present general statistics about the youngsters who took part in the camp and hobby activities organised by youth centres during the project period.

Research findings

Hobby activities at open youth centres in Estonia

A significant number of youngsters participated in hobby activities at youth centres during the four-month periods: 1535 took part in the activities offered by 66 youth centres from January to April; and 857 in the activities of 65 youth centres from May to August. The second period coincided with summer, when spending time indoors is less likely to appeal to youngsters, which could explain why there were fewer participants. (During this period 17 centres offered no hobby activities, whereas in the first period there were only five such centres.) On average, every hobby activity was attended by 18 youngsters during a four-month period. The average number here is mostly illustrative and does not allow us to make generalisations. Youth centres all over Estonia participated, but the regions are differently populated and centres' opportunities in terms of space and number of employees vary.

The answers to the open question "What did the youngsters learn most from the hobby activities?" revealed that the main focus of hobby activities, as explained earlier, is familiarisation with and pursuit of a particular hobby.

Obtaining specific skills and knowledge in music, dance, handicrafts and art were highlighted most frequently; sports were mentioned slightly less often, mostly extreme sports. This leads us to conclude that cultural awareness and cultural expression are the most prominent key competences that can be learned by participating in hobby activities at youth centres. Surprisingly, cooking and home economics were mentioned just as frequently. These should help youngsters in living independent lives, according to the survey respondents. We nevertheless categorised these competences as 'Other'.

Responses describing the achievement of learning outcomes were mostly combined in terms of the outcomes. In addition to culture-related or other specific knowledge and skills, social skills were often mentioned, as well as personal growth and the development of communication skills. The key competence of initiative and entrepreneurship was somewhat less prominent, while that of mathematics, technology and the digital field was mentioned least often.

"We came to the conclusion that food can taste good even on a low budget. You always have to give it a try to find out whether something tastes good or not. We were told about the ingredients and the calories in the food, about what's necessary and beneficial for growing bodies. We learned to work together, to divide up the tasks and to clean up after ourselves." (P1, A29)

"The youngsters learned to search for recipes, plan their budgets and prepare dishes of different levels of difficulty. They learned to be considerate of others, to work together and to plan their time." (P1, A42)

"We learned that if you set goals for yourself, you can achieve them – you only need resources, both financial and human. You can apply for funding via different projects yourself, but you have to go through with the activities and usually write up a report." (P2, A47)

Digital competence was rarely pursued in the hobby activities at the youth centres (only a few responses), and health and nature were limited in terms of their popularity.

"The youngsters learned about the work of rescuers: how to save someone who's drowning and what to do if there's a call-out." (P1, A44)

The key competence of learning to learn was not touched upon at all at the youth centres; nor were intercultural or civic competence mentioned. At the same time, competences like techniques for relaxation and concentration were mentioned in a couple of responses.

Camp activities at open youth centres in Estonia

In the first period (January-April), 64 youngsters participated in camps organised by youth centres. In the second period (summer), 82 children took part in the activities. The number of participants shows that in the first period, camps were organised in eight of the 66 youth centres, and in the second period in 11 of 65 centres, but some representatives of the centres with camps left the questions about the objectives of the camps unanswered.

The youngsters who participated in the camps belong to the younger age groups: 72 aged 7-11 and the remainder aged 12-15.

What objectives were set for camp activities? Similarly to the hobby activities at youth centres, camp activities are mostly aimed at improving personal and social competences. Initiative, entrepreneurship and social competence follow closely behind. Unlike the objectives and learning outcomes of hobby activities at youth centres, camp activities are also meant to broaden horizons and develop tolerance in the context of intercultural competence.

"The objective of the camp activities was to develop the youngsters' social skills. Significant attention was paid to developing communication and manual skills, as well as creativity and organisational abilities. Many of the activities were put together by the youth workers, but the main goal was to have the young people join in and get them to take initiative in organising the activities." (P1, A2)

"The activities were aimed at developing social and communication skills, socialising in a bilingual environment (Estonian and English), pursuing team work and supporting independence via adventure education." (P2, A10)

"With the activities we'd planned we wanted to... boost tolerance in a multicultural group and give the kids the chance to connect with one another." (P1, A1)

The camp activities also turned attention to gaining specific skills – creative ones, including handicrafts and cultural activities – that can be categorised under the competence of cultural awareness and expression. Nature education and caring for the environment, as well as health, were more important here than with hobby activities. There are two aspects at play here: on the one hand, youth camps in Estonia are mostly held outdoors during summer; while on the other hand, traditional camp activities as a whole were labelled and known as ‘a healthy and developmental vacation in youth work’ in the formation period of modern youth work at the beginning of this century.

“The goal of the camp was to offer interesting activities via active holidays that are useful and necessary for kids – nature, creativity, moving around and having a rest.” (P2, A9)

Key competences like mathematical skills, basic scientific and technological knowledge, digital competence and learning to learn were not touched upon at all in the camp activities. Communicating in a foreign language was highlighted somewhat more often.

Discussion

Looking at participation rates, hobby activities at open youth centres are relatively popular. Such activities are designed to develop specific skills, including cultural competences like music, dance and the arts, but these activities are not delivered as part of a curriculum (like at hobby schools) and are timed for the shorter term, accepting participation on a pop-up basis if the young people are so inclined. In addition, youth centres pay attention to teaching vital skills like cooking and home economics. Youth workers explained that parents do not always teach their children these skills, which tallies with the aforementioned thoughts from the Estonian Youth Manifest (2017), in which young people express their desire for more real life-based learning in non-formal settings.

The camp and hobby activities organised at youth centres focus on developing personal and social competences as well as communication skills, promoting entrepreneurship and taking initiative. Based on the results of this project and bearing in mind that the project was targeted at youngsters with fewer opportunities, we can claim with some reservations, that the ‘bouquet of soft skills’ – which, according to Estonian educational scientists (see Eisenschmidt and Heidmets, 2017), is missing at schools – exists in youth work via non-formal learning.

However, based on the results of the research, the objectives and learning outcomes set by youth centres pay little attention to mathematical competences (even though competences are mostly defined by analytical and problem-solving skills), intercultural competences and civic competences. Analysis, discussion, problem-solving skills, understanding intercultural differences, tolerance, civic activity and the ability to contribute to debates are indispensable skills in an ever-changing global world. The activities of youth centres are primarily defined and organised in two different ways: 1) an open space where contact is made, information is shared, advice is offered and preventive work is carried out; or 2) activities which need special preparation – hobby activities and clubs, events, camps and outreach (Association of Estonian Open Youth Centres, 2013). As such, the question arises: are these vital competences included at all in the work of youth centres? In the light of these results we can argue that empowerment, activism and working together with young people towards social change may not be youth work roles that are practised in Estonia today. Instead, the focus seems to be on supporting personal and social development, with the main goal of doing well in future life and adjusting to society. Considering the historical context, this is not surprising: adjusting to society and its norms was the main goal of ideologically driven youth work in the Soviet era, and these values may still prevail today – not only in youth work, but in society generally.

Although Estonia enjoys prominence as an IT nation, insufficient attention is given to developing digital skills at youth centres. On the one hand, we all tend to believe youngsters are more familiar with the digital world than we are; on the other, we mistakenly hope that these skills are well taught at school (Leppik, et al 2017). Moreover, there are insufficient financial and human resources in youth work to cover these topics thoroughly. Hobby activities at youth centres are mostly organised by youth workers themselves, building on their own strengths and talents (pursuing these traits in further training, of course), but if there are sufficient financial resources, activities are supervised by hired professionals. Youth work budgets cannot compete with the pay cheques of media and IT specialists in the business sector, so this problem is understandable. However, youth workers could, for example, start by introducing safe Internet use and critical information searches as part of digital competence.

Nature and health education should also be separately highlighted. Promoting healthy lifestyles as introduced in the Figure 1 above, can be one of the youth work roles as well. Again, it is mostly supporting adjustment into the society – upbringing healthy citizens, who will do well in future.

Healthy lifestyles could of course be categorised as a personal competence, but we have decided to treat it in this research separately. The reason for this is the aforementioned subdivisions of youth work in the national strategy that governed youth work in Estonia from 2006–2013. Healthy and developmental vacations for young people comprised a subdivision of youth work, and the new national development plan for youth from 2014–2020 considers health a top priority in youth work as well. At the same time, the health issues of young people are raised and discussed in Estonia generally: not enough exercise, addiction to smart devices, unhealthy eating habits, obesity and growing consumption of alcohol and other narcotic substances (Aasvee, *et al* 2016). Limited exercise and smart device addiction have led Estonian youngsters to drift away from nature. A recently published Master's thesis (Saar, 2015) claims that young people today – possibly including many Estonian youth workers, who themselves are quite young – are afraid of nature and tend to avoid it. This is a new situation in Estonia, as people here have been at one with nature for centuries: they go mushrooming, pick berries and go hiking and camping. In light of this knowledge, the fact that hobby and camp activities at youth centres turn attention to nature education and offer real experiences in nature is no doubt welcomed and appreciated. It should be noted that developing hobby activities in nature is also a national priority.

Last but certainly not least, we wish to highlight results showing that learning to learn as a key competence is not touched upon in youth camps or hobby activities at all. This raises many questions that are beyond the scope of this research but require further investigation. Primarily, do youth workers themselves give meaning to the learning processes involved in youth work? Is setting, analysing and achieving learning outcomes and objectives a conscious, everyday process in youth work? Are youth workers skilled enough to teach young people to set goals for their learning or analyse the process? Do they assist reflections of learning? If non-formal learning is the justification for youth work (see Kiilakoski, 2015) and it aims first and foremost to support youngsters' positive personal development, then the youth worker in this case serves as a guide and supporter of learning, and learning to learn should be one of the central skills to work towards. Based on this research, it appears that in debates on the importance of non-formal learning in youth work, Estonian youth workers themselves do not seem prepared to accept this concept at the level of practice yet. There may be several explanations for this, which require further research. One explanation could be connected to the rapid development of youth work after the Soviet era, which concentrated mostly on providing a safe

environment and valuable leisure time and infrastructure for youth work: basically, opening youth centres all over Estonia. It should be mentioned that the training of youth workers in Estonia at the level of applied higher education focused solely on a leisure approach for the first decade as well. As such, youth workers may have neither the understanding nor the skills required to facilitate the non-formal learning process. Good results in formal education in Estonia (PISA) and extensive public discussion thereof do place formal learning on a pedestal – this is in a way supporting the approach of isolation between formal and non-formal learning described above. Appreciation of non-formal learning is not all that evident yet, which together with a lack of skills may hold practitioners back. But there is a need for non-formal learning and youth work to complement formal education in Estonia. This need has been expressed by young people and education researchers, and our own research confirms that non-formal learning in youth work can add to formal education by focusing on social and personal competences; entrepreneurship, communication and initiative-taking competences; health and nature education; and everyday life skills. Definitely there is also enough space for Estonian youth work through non-formal learning to support the development of critical thinking, and the civic and intercultural competences of young people. The youth work role of empowerment towards active citizenship might be well written into the Estonian youth policy documents, but is not yet evident in practice.

Conclusions

Our research showed that open youth centres in Estonia carried out traditional youth work activities for youngsters as part of the 'Implementation of a Support Programme for Children at Risk through Youth Centres' project: camps and hobby activities. The main objectives and learning outcomes of these activities were connected to the following key competences of non-formal learning: cultural competences; developing personal and social competences; communication skills; promoting entrepreneurship; and taking initiative. It appears that youth work through non-formal learning is contributing to the development of 'soft' skills, which are lacking in Estonian schools. Therefore youth work can add value to formal learning. Youth centres also pay a lot of attention to everyday skills, in this way supporting young people in coping with their everyday lives: cooking, household skills, health, safety, spending time in nature, etc. Based on the results of the research, the objectives and learning outcomes set by youth centres pay little attention to mathematical, intercultural or civic competences. Therefore, with the need to study this topic further, we conclude here that the empowering, emancipating or social change-facilitating role of youth work in Estonia is not clearly evident

despite the principles and goals stated in strategic documents. In the light of Estonian youth work mainly being a supporter of the personal development of young people through non-formal learning, the findings which showed that the key competence 'learning to learn' was not a focus of youth work practice raises many questions and challenges for further research and training of youth workers in the country.

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5. Key competences of non-formal learning in youth work:
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Conference papers

- 01 Digital youth work, where are you headed?
Suvi Tuominen, Finland
- 02 Grasroots self-organisation of youth workers: why and how
Henk Geelen, The Netherlands
- 03 The Council of Europe international reviews of national youth
policy and the place of youth work
Howard Williamson, The UK
- 04 Integration of Refugees through Youth Work – Mission Possible?
Justina Garbauskaitė-Jakimovska and Laura Bačinskienė

1. Digital youth work, where are you headed?

Suvi Tuominen, Verke / City of Helsinki Youth Department, Finland

Digital youth work, where are you headed?

Digital youth work keeps up with the times and changes accordingly. It grows, adapts and adopts various trends and thoughts, which is why many descriptions of the practices and definitions of digital youth work become obsolete – some faster, others not so fast. This reflects the fact that digital youth work is energetic and dynamic. So what is actually meant by digital youth work at the moment? How does it differ from virtual and online youth work, or does it?

With technological advances having changed the way in which young people use the Web, youth work that utilizes the web has reached a turning point. It is therefore no longer appropriate to distinguish digital youth work from face-to-face activities, or treat it as a separate method or branch in youth work. In fact, digital youth work should not be defined solely as youth work done *online*, but should cover all forms and methods of youth work. In the future, it would be best if no distinction were made between youth work based on digital technology and other forms of youth work, while the digital media should become a standard part of youth work in the same way as in young people's lives in general.

According to the EU Expert group on digitalization and youth, digital youth work:

- means proactively using or addressing digital media and technology in youth work.
- is not a youth work method – digital youth work can be included in any youth work setting (open youth work, youth information and counselling, youth clubs, detached youth work...).
- has the same goals as youth work in general, and using digital media and technology in youth work should always support these goals.
- can happen in face-to-face situations as well as in online environments – or in a mixture of these two. Digital media and technology can be used either as a tool, an activity or as content in youth work.

According to Screenagers International research report, in 2015 the most common use for social and digital media in Youth Work was communication and information purposes with young people and colleagues. In fact, many youth workers found it difficult to grasp what 'digital media' might mean outside the social media. ICT usage was often unidimensional in purpose, and that the fuller, more creative, potential of social media had not been realised on a wide scale across the youth sectors.

If youth work fails to embrace the use of technology and social media there is a risk of becoming outdated and irrelevant to young people who use youth work services. Youth work has the opportunity to fill the gaps that sometimes occur within the home and school in supporting young people to understand technology and the risks that might be involved.

When developing digital youth work, it is important to understand the central, diverse and ubiquitous role played by the digital dimension in the everyday lives of young people. When you understand this and various phenomena related to the digital culture of young people, it is easier to begin integrating the digital dimension with your own work. At best, digital youth work is seamlessly integrated with other forms – and the goals – of youth work within an organisation.

Verke has published national guidelines for digital youth work in Finland in October 2016. They are a set of principles and measures that should be taken into account in organisations when they are developing their digital youth work. The guidelines have been formed after much collaboration with practitioners and researchers. The guidelines can be downloaded at: <https://www.verke.org/material/guidelines-for-digital-youth-work/?lang=en>

In the presentation, the concept of digital youth work will be explained, the Finnish guidelines will be presented (and shared as print) and some practical examples of digital youth work will be given. The presentation gives input on strategic development of digital youth work.

Verke has worked since 2011 to develop digital youth work on a national level in Finland. Verke provides training to youth workers, does surveys about their digital media use and provides materials about digital youth work and young people's digital culture. Verke's latest publications (in Finnish) are called "Towards Digital Youth Work" and "Youth Work throws a Lan Party".

2. Grassroots self-organisation of youth workers: why and how

Henk Geelen, Secretary/treasurer Bvjong, Maastricht, January 2017

BVjong is the independent, grassroots, bottom-up, democratically and formally organised National Association of Professional Youth workers in the Netherlands (NAPYN). Its main statutory goal is advocacy of youth work as a valuable and formally accepted profession. The work in the association is done on a voluntary basis of (board) members, being youth workers themselves, mostly on a national level.

Investment in international work is on the agenda of BVjong, because "intercultural learning in an international context" and worldwide solidarity regarding vulnerable young people and youth workers themselves are important. Therefore, BVjong is a member of the Dynamo International Street Workers Network (DISWN) and participates in international projects and conferences.

This paper is an integrated abstract of two more elaborated reports about strategic advocacy planning in the Netherlands and in Europe, results of DISWN's Erasmus project STREAT. These reports can be downloaded from www.bvjong.nl and www.socialstreetwork.org.

1. BVjong

What is BVjong?

BVjong is the national association of professional youth workers in the Netherlands. It was born at the national Youth Work Conference in 2003 (450 participants), organised by bottom-up social movement (LOJIK) of researchers, national experts, provincial consultants, local institutes and individual workers, to put youth work back on the agenda. Ten workers, more or less unorganised, presented the idea to start a self-organisation. All workers present were enthusiastic and a small project group was formed. BVjong started as a formal association in 2004.

There are about 2500 (estimated) professional youth workers in the Netherlands, about 150 (changes every year) of them are individual members of BVjong, paying a fee of Euro 25 annually. The association, now 13 years old (BVjong –"jong" means "young"-) is run by youth workers themselves on a voluntary basis, sometimes facilitated by their institutions. Between three

and nine people are on the board, elected by the members present at the annual General Assembly (GA), mostly organised in the beginning of every year. Other members are active in temporary working groups. At the GA, activities and the budget from last year are evaluated, and the workplan and budget for next year are discussed and voted on. Generally, the formal part of the GA is relatively short, the national meeting is thematic with relevant workshops, some central presentations, etc..

Why BVjong?

BVjong members believe strongly in the importance of a professional workers organisation to influence social youth policy (different from unions who concentrate on material conditions such as salaries, etc.). A strong, proud, formally and informally accepted profession (as doctors, teachers and lawyers) has certain characteristics (see also POYWE's blog), among others, summarized:

- a well developed "body of knowledge" (conference contributes to this),
- constant research about effects (*International Journal of Open Youth Work* and the International Research Network contribute),
- a description of competences,
- formal and lifelong education and training,
- a self-organisation of workers (like BVjong),
- a professional code of ethics and conduct,
- formal registration of workers, and
- a system of evaluation of practices to stay professional.

By being a workers' organisation with statutory goals to further develop and strengthen the profession, one of the characteristics mentioned above, BVjong has achieved some good results in the past and is involved in new developments at a national level to reach its goals. They are described and summarized in chapter 2.

Statutory goals of BVjong

Being principally an advocacy association of workers, the statutory goals of BVjong are:

1. Guarding, strengthening and stimulating children- and youth work in the Netherlands, as well as representing the interests of the profession in general and improving the conditions under which the profession may be exercised in particular;
2. The association tries to achieve these objectives by, among other things:
 - increasing the knowledge and skills of the professionals, with particular attention towards its members, through training programmes, discussions, exchanges of experience, operating a website, issuing publications, and using social media;
 - identifying and promoting the interests of the profession to governments and other relevant stakeholders;
 - acting as interlocutor on behalf of the profession on (national) welfare and youth policy;
 - improving the image and status of the children and youth workers.

2. Best practices (of BVjong's work)

In this chapter we summarize some of the most recent examples of our advocacy work. We include "victories" as well as difficulties and challenges. They are part of the set of characteristics of a strong profession as mentioned in *Why BVjong*. They are basic; for most recent and future advocacy activities summarized in our workplan in chapter 3 and recommendations in chapter 4.

The competences of the youth worker in 2008 (Van Dam & Zwikker, 2008; only in Dutch).

In 2007 BVjong took the initiative to describe a profile, and a set of necessary competences for youth workers, founded on the knowledge about youth work available in theories and practice at that moment, and relevant research. The publication *Competences of a Youth Worker*, published in 2008, describes extensively the core of the youth work profession. What should a youth worker need to know (head)? Which ethics and motivation should they care about (heart)? How many and which skills does a youth worker need

(hands). Do competences vary at different levels of education? An assistant youth worker needs fewer skills than the coordinating youth worker and some skills also apply to many other occupations in the care and welfare sector. In practising youth work, professional tradeoffs always have to be made. It is necessary to find the right balance in choosing approaches, methods and solutions. Choices, dilemmas and tensions can be addressed in the following areas: dealing with diversity; balancing between involvement and detachment; choosing between symptoms and structural work; choosing between a network switch and individual intervention; encouraging autonomy and safety; coping with limited resources; coordinating versus controlling; switching between different parties; setting clear behavioural borders; handling of confidential information.

With the right skills, knowledge and ethics, the youth worker will find a professional balance. They will also know what they are doing as a professional, why and how. They can explain why and how they practice their job to young people themselves, to other colleagues, to parents, community members, other stakeholders, like the police or teachers, politicians, etc. The work was described well and that was, and still is, a big profit. The profile was an excellent basis leading to the further development of youth work.

Due to the changes in policy, growing insights, research, new challenges for youth workers, new social issues, changing youth cultures, international exchange with colleagues, the description of the profile of, and competences for a youth worker as professional, should be renewed. Up till now, no specific effort has been taken by BVjong. We are engaged in several developments towards quality youth work and social work in general. A new publication from BVjong is needed.

Professional Code Youth Work: an ethical standard for youth work (Niko de Groot, BVjong, 2014)

At the request of BVjong members, who have been analyzing the position of youth work at that moment, BVjong asked the Ministry VWS in 2013 to subsidize the development of a Professional Code for Youth Workers. The request was approved. Based on an international and national literature research and some workers meetings, a draft was discussed with the members of BVjong at the GA in January 2014. With a few remarks the code was accepted. Being a member of BVjong means that the worker agrees with its content, and are willing to discuss it with colleagues, the institutes they work in, partner organisations, other stakeholders and local governments. BVjong does the same at national level. Because of its importance the code is summarized below.

BVjong's Professional Code is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). In summary there are 3 starting points and 10 more specific (ethical and behavioural) rules. Summary:

- a. Participation: Children and young people have a right to express their opinions. These opinions should be taken into account, particularly when decisions are being made that affect their lives;
- b. Interests first: the interests of young people always come first. Maintain a focus on these in dialogue with stakeholders and involve young people in this dialogue where possible;
- c. Non-discrimination: Regardless of race, gender, religion, disability, national, ethnic or social background, all young people have the same rights.

Headlines of the professional code

1. The professional youth worker works with individuals, groups and the community and acts as a 'neighbourhood pedagogue', engaging with the social environment of vulnerable children and young people (up to 23 years old).
2. The worker works with and for most vulnerable children and young people and focuses on identifying talents and increasing opportunities.
3. The worker respects every youngster regardless race, nature, gender, handicap, religion, ethnicity or social origin.
4. The worker acknowledges and advances the opinions of young people and acts as an advocate of these opinions.
5. The worker is conscious of their professional task and acts as a role model and co-educator.
6. The worker is actively involved in the development of the policy of the institute in which they work, and acts in a collegial way.
7. The worker engages in efficient and effective cooperation with stakeholders and partner-organisations.

8. The worker responds to undesirable behaviour and signs of this behaviour consciously and professionally, when working with children and young people.
9. The worker shares information with other people if this is in the best interests of the child or young person.
10. The worker contributes actively to the quality of their profession and commits to the continuous development of its expertise and professionalism.

Working towards professional registration

BVJong is currently developing, together with other national stakeholders, such as various associations in the youth field, BPSW, MO group and unions, a professional registration for social workers, including youth workers. This is an important issue. Here are some reasons:

- Professional Registration contributes to craftsmanship;
- Professionals show that they stand for the quality of their work;
- Professionals adhere to guidelines and a professional code and are called to account for it;
- Professional Registration requires increased involvement of employers;
- In short: It stimulates professionals and employers to invest in professional competence.
- And, it is necessary by law: children and young people who receive help from registered youth professionals (in general) can count on good and controllable help and support.

The work has already been started. There is a Professional Register of Workers in the Juvenile Probation sector, for specialized youth care workers, and soon also for social workers (including youth workers). The development at national level cannot be stopped. There is no specific Law for youth work, but it is a legal document that takes into account social work in general. There is a lot of discussion between youth workers: it is not a bottom-up development, the question is of youth work as a specific form (pedagogical task, concentrating on youth) of social work in general. BVJong

tries to uphold the specificity of youth work in national developments, using their own set of competences, ethical code and being a workers organisation. The discussion goes on.

Status BVjong.

Due to several reasons, both internal (difficulties finding active members and sufficient fees) and external (existence of a broader workers' organisation and developments towards implementing youth work in social work in general, and by that the loss of the specific character of youth work), in-depth discussions were held within the board to present at the next GA three options for the future organisation of BVjong:

1. Stay an independent but stronger grassroots organization,
2. Change into an informal network/movement of workers, or
3. Merge into a broader workers organisation with a different culture.

This is an important decision to make. For the time being "revitalization" of BVjong is at stake, successfully.

The role of youth workers in preventing and radicalization/polarisation.

In 2015, BVjong finished a publication about the role of youth work in preventing and tackling radicalization/polarisation. A publication that was created on the basis of the experiences of 35 young workers during two expert meetings in Venlo and Gouda. That is the method BVjong uses to develop attention for actual social problems, also concerning youth work: organize meetings to join and collect practice stories from the workers at the base, in the field. The BVjong publication has received many positive responses and was also offered to the Secretary of State for Social Affairs, Mr Van Rijn.

In December 2015, BVjong's report, about Youth Work and Radicalisation, was presented to Mr. Van Rijn, Secretary of State for social affairs, by Niko de Groot (consultant, project coordinator BVjong) and Ahmet Almis (Chairman of the Board, BVjong) This was followed by a roundtable discussion with the minister about developing a nationwide plan for the prevention of radicalization and polarization. These discussions are ongoing. BVjong remains a partner. This is one of the results coming from the advocacy work of BVjong.

BVjong also organised an international workers meeting in the Euregion Meuse-Rhine (Aachen, Eupen, Liège, Hasselt, Maastricht, Sittard-Geleen,

Heerlen-Kerkrade, with guest colleagues from Molenbeek/Brussels). On the 25th of November 2016, 60 youth and streetworkers met in Maastricht, followed central lectures, attended workshops, discussed relevant topics and differences in situations and approaches, but also discovered similarities in ethics and methods. The conference led to further international cooperation between youth workers from the three countries, also supported by DISWN.

Conclusions summarized: Youth workers can make a very good contribution to prevention by identifying polarization and radicalization among young people; by empowering young people and their parents; by proper information in the neighbourhood; by removing the breeding ground (sense of discrimination, working on appropriate work and good education). It is important that the youth worker has the ability to be an effective outreach worker, that safety is guaranteed in the network approach, and that they are well trained in the detection of polarization and radicalization.

The role of youth workers in the reception and integration of (young) refugees.

At the beginning of 2016, there were over 42,000 refugees in the Netherlands. A large proportion of whom came from Syria. Another large refugee group comprised people from Eritrea. A significant number are children and young people (mostly men) between 18 and 29 years with little or no proper education and/or work experience.

In our 2016 GA the following challenges for youth workers were mentioned: create work experiences and/or jobs; complement schools and youth care with a youth work approach; invest in talents, increase self-esteem; build bridges between cultures, overcome cultural differences; use games, sports, arts, music for non-formal education; empower girls in particular (as a vulnerable target group); emancipate and increase resilience; education about knowledge of the Dutch legal system; education regarding of protection facilities; inform young people about the Dutch society in a non-formal way; introduce and increase support from young Dutch peers.

As a key recommendation for youth workers: be pro active, take your role and make yourself important for the refugees and the local community. Claim your place when it comes to integration of newcomers. Make clear what the added value of youth work is. Develop local projects and search for additional resources from the local municipality, national government and/or the EU. Work together with the COA (Central Organization for Asylumseekers).

International Work

BVjong has, since 2008, been a member of the Dynamo International Street Workers Network, a worldwide (48 countries from 5 continents) non-formal grassroots network of workers and institutes working with vulnerable and deprived children. BVjong chose to participate in this international network because of the quality of their Charter (goals, ethics, analyses, organisation, etc.) and the culture of its practice. It was close to the standards and nature of BVjong, more than for example the YES-Forum or POYWE (which was founded later; BVjong/DISWN were present at the first international conference, the start of the organisation in Vienna). These organisations are seen as partners in the international context regarding strengthening youth work.

See for methodological handbooks, articles and activities of DISWN www.socialstreetwork.org / www.travailderue.org.

See also <http://www.streetworkinstitute.org/lms/?lang=en> for the Open Educational Resource center, a product of the project STREAT. We think that an overview of all international networks and associations, and their activities regarding youth work, would be useful. See chapter 5 for a summary of EU recommendations regarding DISWN, youth work in general and street work/detached youth work in particular.

BVjong was, and is, represented at several EU-conferences regarding Youth Work, both general and more targeted on specific themes. Cooperation with the International Research Network and regarding the *International Journal of Open Youth Work* is desirable, subject to the energy and time of BVjong's members being available.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS BVjong NL

Youth work

We recommend that national and local governments and stakeholders strengthen the role of youth work at all levels:

- To be involved in the neighbourhood, based on meaningful, trusted relationships with target groups,
- To concentrate on vulnerable and socio-economically deprived youngsters and their surroundings,

- To prevent difficulties in growing up by using all talents and potentials,
- To educate towards democratic citizenship,
- To target work on radicalization/polarization,
- And to assist in the integration of new citizens, especially young refugees.

We further recommend that national and local governments and stakeholders improve the position of youth workers and the quality of their work by:

- development of professional registration in the fields of youth care and social work,
- actualization and elaboration of competences and the professional code,
- improvement of formal education at different levels and possibilities for life long education,
- supported by action research and evidence-based practice.

BVjong

We recommend all youth workers, members and stakeholders to strengthen BVjong as a bottom-up organisation of workers by:

- improvement of communication between (non)members and with stakeholders,
- an active invitation and search for more (paying) members,
- recruitment of new board members and active members in project groups,
- stimulation of regional and thematic meetings of youth workers
- and acquiring more financial means to realize BVjong's statutory goals.

5.Recommendations DISWN EU

1. There are 23 European countries participating in the network. The Network needs to be strengthened and its resources need to be ensured. This will also enhance the National networks in each of the partner countries. It would also highlight the significance and the role of Street Work in helping those in the most vulnerable positions.

We recommend that the EU value and facilitate our European street workers network by allocating new resources and ensuring the further development of our informal bottom-up network by creating new programmes beside Erasmus+. There needs to be programmes enabling the development of the work.

2. There needs to be an action plan to address the specific social problems and phenomena arising from the changing society.

We recommend that the EU, in the framework of European Social policy and Youth policy, recognizes and facilitates Social Street Work as a valuable and important tool for prevention and combating the new social problems in Europe:

1. Radicalization / Polarization / Extremism
2. Immigration and its consequences such as trafficking, child abuse etc.

3. The formal status of Street Work should be strengthened and furthermore recognized. This should be done by means of legislation and the funding of Street Work.

We recommend that the EU recognizes Street Work as a valuable profession by approval of a professional code (a code of ethics and conduct) for Street Workers.

4. We recommend that the EU should further invest in programmes that reinforce street work as a means to enhance social cohesion, combat poverty and defend children's rights.

The European Groups accept the existing advocacy actions of Dynamo International towards the EU regarding children's rights, poverty, social exclusion, and in particular DISWN's proposal regarding social protection.

3. The Council of Europe international reviews of national youth policy and the place of youth work

Howard Williamson, University of South Wales, UK

Abstract

March 2018 is the 21st anniversary of the start of the Council of Europe international reviews of national youth policy. Over those 21 years, 21 countries have been subject to an international review. Three 'synthesis reports' have been published on the reviews (Williamson 2002, 2008, 2017) endeavouring to capture the key messages arising from each cluster of seven. These have considered, inter alia, the broad themes emerging from individual reviews, indicative of a framework for thinking about youth policy at a European level. There is now a strikingly comprehensive and complex mosaic of themes that, arguably, should have a place within any dialogue about 'youth policy'. The latest 'synthesis report' brings even more themes and issues to the table. In the paper, a short summary of the history of the international reviews of national youth policy will be provided, followed by a discussion of some of the key emergent issues, including the place of youth work in general, and open youth work in particular, within broader frameworks of youth policy.

Introduction

March 2018 heralds the 21st anniversary of the start of the Council of Europe international reviews of national youth policy. Over those two decades, 21 countries have been subject to an international review. They divide into three groups of seven simply because three 'synthesis reports' have been produced, seeking to capture some of the pertinent themes and issues in relation to both process and content over a number of youth policy reviews (see Williamson 2002, 2008, 2017).

| The first seven | The second seven | The third seven |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Finland | Lithuania | Latvia* |
| The Netherlands | Malta | Moldova |
| Sweden | Norway | Albania |
| Spain | Cyprus | Belgium |
| Romania | Slovakia | Ukraine |
| Estonia | Armenia | Greece |
| Luxembourg | Hungary* | Serbia |

** The international review of youth policy in Latvia actually just preceded that of Hungary. Both took place in 2007. However, the planning of the international review of youth policy in Hungary had started considerably earlier (in 2005), while that for Latvia did not start until January 2007.*

The catalyst for the international reviews was a proposal by the government of Finland to emulate Council of Europe international reviews of national cultural policy. The Finnish Minister of Culture volunteered Finland to be the first country to have a Council of Europe international review of national youth policy. This set in train a sequence of reviews though, until the first 'synthesis report', each took a different form and focused on different issues. Broadly, however, each country was required to produce its own 'national report' to provide some understanding of youth issues and youth policy that would serve as a foundation stone to inform the deliberations of an international review team. The international review team was typically composed of two nominations from the statutory bodies of the Youth Directorate (now Youth Department) of the Council of Europe – the CDEJ comprising governmental representatives, and the Advisory Council, comprising representatives of youth organisations – and three youth researchers or 'experts', supported by a member of the Youth Directorate secretariat. The CDEJ nominee was the chair of the international review team, and one of the youth researchers was the designated rapporteur. The international review team routinely paid two visits to the country under review, usually exploring national structures and remaining in the capital city on the first visit, then considering regional and local delivery and travelling to a number of towns and villages during the second visit. The report produced by the international review team was subsequently presented to the Joint Council of the Youth Directorate (the CDEJ and the AC) for comment and ratification, and then published. The synthesis reports have drawn fundamentally on the published international reviews, though they have also

considered material within the national reports (where they exist, because not all countries ended up producing them) and other data and information that is publicly available.

Rationale

Initially, the purpose of the international youth policy reviews was not particularly clear. Indeed, the first few reviews had to think very much on their feet, making the most and the best of the programme of visits that had been constructed by the host country. Later on, a more negotiated position based on more clear expectations was established.

However, it gradually became apparent that the international youth policy reviews had, at their heart, three distinct though complementary core objectives. First, they were intended to provide constructively critical feedback to the hosting authorities through the application of a stranger's eye to its youth policy. Second, it was hoped that they would draw useful examples of 'best practice' from the hosting country that could be disseminated to other countries in Europe, for at least debate if not for replication. And thirdly, a more cautious aspiration was that the reviews would slowly develop a framework, though certainly not a blueprint, for thinking in a more overarching way about 'youth policy' throughout Europe.

All three rationales had their vulnerabilities. International review teams were always at risk of the criticism that they simply did not understand the history and evolution of aspects of youth policy in a particular country. Such criticism was often pre-empted through the team concluding its presentations of an international report with the request to 'forgive the mistakes, but consider the issues'. In some countries where youth policy development was in a fledgling state, it was often difficult to find examples of good practice to convey to a wider audience that might counterbalance expressions of concern and criticism. And any perception that the international reviews were to do with establishing some kind of European-level structure for youth policy was met, inevitably and predictably, with caution and sometimes opposition.

Nevertheless, the Council of Europe international reviews of national youth policy came to be an accepted and established methodology for the provision of Council of Europe support measures to its member States in the field of youth.

And as the ideas behind the international reviews were refined and lessons learned from existing reviews, an increasingly convoluted process was

established, often taking up to two years from conception to conclusion (the first international review, of youth policy in Finland, had taken little more than six months).

The process

The Council of Europe international reviews of national youth policy are a mixture of diplomacy and scrutiny. They are reviews, not monitoring or compliance exercises. They do, however, still require some tough talking, sometimes confrontation, though ultimately they are concerned with collaboration and making a contribution to advancing the circumstances of young people both in the country that has been reviewed and across the wider Europe.

To that end, the process of organising and executing a review has been steadily refined. The initial practice – of the hosting country preparing a national report and organising a programme for each of two visits, and then the presentation of the international review to an international audience (the Joint Council of the Youth Directorate in the Council of Europe) – has been supplemented in a variety of ways, strengthening the process both internally and in terms of relationships with external stakeholders.

Following a request by a country for a review, there is now a preliminary visit to clarify expectations and priority issues and concerns that may have triggered the host country's request. These constitute the main focus of an international review's deliberations, though the international review team always reserves the right to add issues and concerns of its own.

The composition of the international review team is itself a challenging process, seeking as it does to strike an appropriate and credible balance of age, gender, geography, experience and expertise. Two members, as always, are nominees from the statutory bodies but they are not always nominated in a timely way and some second-guessing has to take place. The co-ordinator and the representative of the secretariat, though they may change over time, are relatively fixed within the process; only they may have been involved in more than one review. The remaining youth researchers or youth experts in other ways are invited to take part and selected through various networks and contacts. One is asked to be the rapporteur, with the responsibility for taking the lead on the production of the international report.

Not all countries have in fact produced their own national reports and some have not done so at the appropriate time. Various proxies for a national report have had to be used, sometimes just the research endeavour of members of

the international team.

With the exception of one review (Malta) there have always been two visits to the host country. These initially comprised four working days, saturated with meetings with little time for reflection and discussion. More recently, they have lasted for five working days, the last of which was given over, at the end of the first visit, for the international review team to engage in some preliminary consideration of its perspectives and to provide some immediate, tentative feedback to the host authorities. At the end of the second visit, the final day provided an opportunity for the international review team to construct a provisional outline for its final report, to support the deliberations of the rapporteur. Through such additions to the process, the international reviews became a much more reflective and collaborative effort, both in relation to the host country and within the international review team itself.

The rapporteur, together with the co-ordinator, has led the production of a draft international report, which was then circulated for feedback and elaboration to the rest of the international review team and the endorsement of the chair. A revised preliminary draft has then been sent to the hosting Ministry for information and comment just one week before a *national hearing*.

The national hearing, to which it is expected that all those who engaged with the review should be invited, together with anyone else the Ministry wanted to attend, has provided a first opportunity to present the findings of an international review. This was an innovation after the first seven reviews. It has not always been an easy experience and indeed it is probably the moment when, because it takes place with a semi-public and sometimes rather critical audience, tensions between the host authorities and the international review team are at their most pronounced.

After further revisions to the international report, taking account of both formal feedback from the host country's government and more spontaneous commentary and feedback from those attending the national hearing, the international report is presented to an international hearing, in front of the Joint Council of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. The international hearing usually runs smoothly, though it is not solely a rubber-stamping exercise and the hearing at times incorporates some cut-and-thrust debate. Once formally approved, however, the process of publication can ensue, though this can also take some time, as proof-readers and copy editors scrutinise grammar, presentation and meaning.

In theory at least, there is one final stage to the process, which is a 'follow-up' after two or three years. Conceived as a mechanism for considering the extent to which the international review had contributed to revision and evolution of a country's youth policy, this has rarely been put into practice and there is no established or agreed procedure for undertaking it. A follow-up of the international review of youth policy in Belgium, that took place in 2011, is still being discussed. This may shed light on how such 'follow-up' activity should be conducted.

The framework

The first seven international reviews of national youth policy produced a framework that initially governed, and subsequently guided, the international reviews that followed. Though this framework has seven distinctive elements, the content of each has remained elastic and has, indeed, expanded as new issues, ideas, themes and tensions have emerged in subsequent reviews. Nonetheless, the framework itself has stood the test of time as a useful reference point for exploring the idea of 'youth policy'.

1. Conceptualisations

Both 'youth' and 'youth policy' are concepts open to wide interpretation. Indeed, conceptualisations of 'youth', not always exclusively but usually predominantly based on age parameters, play a major part in determining the focus and boundaries of 'youth policy'. Some 'youth policy', as a result, remains restricted to the teenage years, focused essentially on education and learning both inside and beyond school, and on leisure-time provision. Youth policy that seeks to respond also to the needs of 'young people' (young adults) within an older age range has, inevitably, to address matters concerning, for example, employment and housing, too.

Conceptualisations of 'youth' therefore directly influence the breadth, range and depth of prospective 'youth policy', though what counts as 'youth policy' is always subject to debate. Though it took some time, my own argument has been that all countries have 'youth policy', whether by intent, default or neglect. Moreover, there is dedicated opportunity-focused and problem-oriented youth policy, wider policy that impinges (both positively and negatively) on the lives of young people, and inadvertent or accidental public policy that, unintentionally, affects young people. All of this produces both theoretical and empirical 'youth policy' jigsaws of some complexity. Youth policy is rarely clearly defined and is often very ragged at the edges. Too much professed and proclaimed expertise on youth policy fails to acknowledge this messiness, arguing instead that some discrete and 'youth policy', are usually a weak shadow of the realities that

have multiple overlaps and blurred boundaries. Young people are rarely completely angels or devils any more than any particular youth policy can be depicted as exclusively positive or punitive.

The international review teams had to struggle with such variable conceptualisations, not just between themselves and the countries under review but also amongst themselves. One of the great strengths of the international reviews has been the diversity of team membership that has brought many different, and sometimes competing, social, cultural, and political perspectives and experiences to the table.

2. Enabling features

The paper production of youth policy is relatively straightforward. Young people in most countries face or present similar challenges and offer similar potential; what differs is the scale of these difficulties and resources, and the economic capability and political will to do something about them.

None of this necessarily requires legislation but it does require some level of (human and financial) resources. Some countries, however, for historical and constitutional reasons, do demand legislation. Otherwise nothing is permissible.

It is therefore important to discover what kind of 'enabling features' – notably, though not exclusively, legislation and budgets – exist to make youth policy happen. It could be something more ephemeral or charismatic, such as the announcement of a 'year for youth' or the appointment of an influential politician to be responsible for youth. It is this infrastructure that constitutes, in the round, the 'political championship' for youth policy. Without it, the rhetoric of youth policy remains just that.

3. Structures for delivery

Though political championship remains at the heart of the 'dynamics'¹ for youth policy development and delivery, there need to be systems for moving political aspiration towards some grounded reality. It is these systems that translate and interpret policy into practice, and it is these systems that often perpetrate – both intentionally and inadvertently – policy corruption and 'leakage', whereby political intent never achieves its practical effect.

¹ Williamson (2008) presents a cycle or clock depicting the 4/8 'D's that constitute the dynamics of youth policy development. They start at the top with the essential political championship: Decision and Drive, and then move clockwise through decentralization to Delivery, then difficulties and Debate, before moving back towards the top with dissent and Development, and then direction and Decision and Drive. The cycle can in fact start or stall at any point, accelerated or obstructed by different factors.

Young people do not usually ask, or for that matter care, how services are delivered or opportunities provided. In that respect, structures for delivery do not matter. What matters is the quality, reach, relevance, meaning and effectiveness of whatever is provided. Those were some of the issues explored by international review teams, taking account of the structures responsible for it.

4. Domains of youth policy

Delineating some of the parameters of 'youth policy', at least tentatively, should be reasonably self-evident, yet it is a remarkably contentious exercise. From the very first international review of national youth policy, there has been dialogue and dispute about what constitutes the legitimate territory for youth policy. In that first review, of Finland, the inclusion of family policy and criminal justice policy, insofar as it affected the lives of young people, was questioned. Youth policy, it was argued at the time, firmly from a Council of Europe Youth Directorate perspective, was essentially about education and personal development or, put another way, about schooling and youth work. And this was despite the fact that, at the time, for example, the Social Affairs Directorate of the Council of Europe was significantly preoccupied with questions around youth justice and the Human Rights Directorate with issues around gender equality, particularly how school textbooks presented subjects in more gender neutral ways. Neither set of issues appeared to penetrate the Youth Directorate.

Gradually, however, the 'domains' that were acknowledged as contributors to youth policy expanded. Initially, there were the domains of education (both formal and non-formal), training and employment, health, housing and justice. It was also recognised that social policy areas such as family policy and social security policy affected young people, if only by neglect. In later policy reviews (notably of Malta, Cyprus, Armenia in the 'middle seven' and Albania and Greece more recently), the role of both religion and the army shaped and obstructed youth policy development through, for example, blocking initiatives promoting sexual health education or removing large populations of young people (primarily young men) from other youth policy opportunities through requirements that they undertake military service.

What became clear was that, beyond the official rhetoric supporting 'cross-sectoral' youth policy formulation and implementation (which largely does not happen), the interplay of different institutional forces within a particular society often determines both the constraints and possibilities for that youth policy evolution.

5. Cross-cutting issues

Though there may not be a great deal of evidence of the 'transversal' youth policy making about which commentators routinely wax lyrical, there is considerable evidence that some issues, both imported from the youth field itself and generated from inside particular countries on account of their distinctive needs, do traverse different youth policy domains. This applies in a variety of different ways, from information provision to provide young people, at least theoretically, with the capacity to make more autonomous and informed choices on matters from occupational choice to health lifestyles, to the promotion of entrepreneurship in the context of mass youth unemployment, to which some national governments have no other response.

Other 'cross-cutting' issues have included a commitment to 'nation-building' (particularly apposite in the post-state socialist countries of the Baltic and the Balkans), the need to combat both internal migration from the countryside to the cities and out-migration altogether, a desire to strengthen gender or race equality, and an overarching approach to youth participation.

As with youth policy domains, there is never an exhaustive list; as more populist and nationalist political parties gain power in European countries, one can envisage cross-cutting issues such as the pervasive promotion of 'patriotism' holding greater sway.

6. Foundation challenges

Just as an overarching infrastructure, including legislation and budget, is arguably a critical pre-requisite for transforming youth policy rhetoric into some form of reality, so some foundation challenges have to be met if the reality of youth policy is to maximise its effect – in the right places, with the right groups of young people, in the right way, at the right time. These foundation challenges are at least threefold.

First, there is the existence of youth research, some form of knowledge base regarding the 'social condition' of young people in the country concerned. While a country such as Finland is replete with myriad studies of youth – many of which are expensive long-term qualitative studies of subcultural youth groups, as well as more routine empirical surveys or more theoretically-informed analyses of youth movements or events – other countries have very little 'youth knowledge'. One of the four cornerstones of the European Union's White Paper on Youth (European Commission 2001) was a 'better understanding of youth'², yet many countries both within and seeking to accede to the European Union still have a relative poverty of

2 The others were youth participation, youth information and youth voluntary activities.

information about their young people. Yet without such a knowledge base, and indeed research capacity, it is difficult to know how to inform the direction of youth policy and later to evaluate it.

Second, there is the *training of youth professionals*. This is not just about youth workers but also about all those who may be required to work with young people: youth employment advisers, careers counsellors, youth health specialists, youth justice workers, youth information providers, and so forth. Across Europe, such training is, to say the least, patchy. The international review teams came across a great deal of youth-related occupational activity, where the post holder had stumbled into it through political patronage or accidental positioning, rather than through training and application. Conversely, there was also considerable unrecognised professional expertise at work in the youth field, whether through training in other sectors or through self-development and participation in more ad hoc training initiatives. One exceptional illustration of this was the Mayor of a small town in the south of Moldova whose commitment to youth participation took the international review team by surprise. It transpired that, many years earlier, he had taken part in a Council of Europe training course on youth participation!

Third, there is the *dissemination of good practice*, both within and between countries. International review teams recurrently came across inspiring youth projects and programmes – sometimes in spite of rather than because of prevailing youth policy – developed and delivered by committed individuals who had learned from, and been inspired by, others in their country and beyond. In many countries, however, structured opportunities for such exchange of ideas were limited; sometimes they were actively blocked, on the grounds that the ideas involved were tolerable in isolation but politically difficult to accept as a broader policy direction. Sexual health education was the most prominent illustration of this, but more active, experiential learning and the strengthening of the voice of young people were others.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Few of those in the youth field – whether young people as recipients or activists within youth policy, paid and voluntary workers, administrators, officials or politicians – dispute the need for some level of monitoring and evaluation of the allocation of resources and the impact and outcomes of the programmes supported. There is more tension and dissent around questions of timing, proportionality and consequences. In many countries, international review teams constantly heard about the overbearing

bureaucracies that governed, for example, the registration of youth NGOs, the funding of projects and support for National Youth Councils.

In contrast, there were also numerous stories of resources being directed towards particular youth policy initiatives largely at the whim of politicians, with very little accountability whatsoever. The only fear was that other groups or programmes would be favoured in the future.

An absence of monitoring and evaluation, as the major arbiter of future funding decisions, was more the rule than the exception. It is, of course, generally accepted that independent scrutiny of policy and practice is rarely the only, or even the most significant, influence on youth policy decision-making, yet without any of it, the door is left open to extremely arbitrary, whimsical, unpredictable and erratic youth policy development.

Evolution and Analysis

The international reviews of national youth policy were not themselves exercises in monitoring and evaluation. They were reviews, reflecting on what the international review teams saw and heard, advancing perspectives on a range of issues, and thereby stimulating debate on those issues within the hosting country and amongst the other member States of the Council of Europe. They did not offer categorical conclusions but sought to ask questions and to illuminate some of the tensions within youth policy and practice that those more closely involved perhaps overlooked or took too much for granted. On occasions, the international report acknowledged differences of opinion within the international review team itself, though only once³ did this create a formal division within a team. For example, only the Greek member of the international review team in Finland really grasped the significance and commitment made by young people to military service; the Estonian member of the international review team in Ukraine understood Ukraine's emphasis on 'patriotic education' very differently from others; and, in Albania, two of the researchers/experts with very different political persuasions routinely interpreted the thinking behind Albania's youth policy development in very different ways.

Not that these things mattered very much during the first seven international reviews of national youth policy. An international team visited twice and departed, leaving the rapporteur to produce a report alone.

Rarely were any significant changes made. It was, indeed, the seventh international review, of youth policy in Luxembourg (where some other members of the international review team did not support the content and argument advanced by the rapporteur), coupled with the production of the first synthesis report drawing up a youth policy 'structure' emerging from the first seven international reviews (Williamson 2002), that led to a more collaborative and collegiate approach in constructing the international report.

The new approach allowed for the international review team to draw together its collective analysis under the seven headings outlined above. Sometimes there was little to say; sometimes the international review team wished to dwell at length on some of the issues. But each heading was addressed in turn, and it was this framework that gave the next seven international reviews their shape and form.

By the time of the fourteenth review, however, and the second synthesis report (2008), the elaboration and expansion of that structure, with a host of new domains and cross-cutting issues in particular, a new approach was required. The new approach adopted a '3+3' arrangement, though this was not cast in stone. Hosting countries were asked to delineate their top three priority youth policy issues, to which they would like the international review to dedicate most of its attention. These issues informed much, though never all, of the programme for the first visit of the international review team. However, the international review reserved its right to address three other issues that it became alerted to.

There was always the option to deviate from this '3+3' position – to add, for example, shorter commentaries on other issues or, as in the case of the international review of national youth policy in Belgium, to adopt a quite different approach⁴. The trios of themes addressed from each side during the past seven international reviews of national youth policy are presented below:

⁴ While not reviewing three (or four, if Brussels was included) parts of Belgium separately, it was felt that it would be best to provide substantial chapters on the Flemish Community, the French Community and the German-speaking Community, and then to use the illustration of youth employment to discuss how the Federal system operated at 'community', 'regional' and 'national' levels.

Review Team theme

Governmental priorities

| | | Based on synthesis 1 framework | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| | Youth and youth policy Context Delivery | Key domains Education and learning Employment Health | (cont.) Sports Family/welfare Youth justice | Cross-cutting Youth participation and citizenship Youth information | (cont.) Elites and outsiders Social inclusion Urban-rural | Support Research Training Dissemination International | |
| | Youth organisations & political representation | Key domains Non-formal learning Transitions to work Entrepreneurship | Other Health Social protection Youth justice Sport & leisure | Transversal Transnistria Migration Urban-rural | | Support Research Training Dissemination Evaluation | |
| Changed procedure 3 + 3 themes | | | | | | | |
| Latvia 2007 | | | | | | | |
| Moldova 2008 | | | | | | | |
| Albania 2009 | The law | Delivery mechanisms | Youth participation | Youth information | Leisure-time activities | Youth crime and justice | |
| Belgium 2011 | Flemish Community | French Community | German-speaking Community | Dealing with Youth unemployment (a case study both vertically and horizontally) | | | |
| Ukraine 2012 | Youth employment | Health | Patriotic education & citizenship | Youth engagement & participation | Vulnerability, risk and exclusion | Conceptual debates & cross-cutting | |
| Greece 2013 | Youth employment | Military service | Youth engagement | Governance of youth policy | | | |
| Serbia 2014 | Education & employment | Information, access to rights & visibility | Participation | Social inclusion | Health and safety/ security | Mobility | |

It is likely that this model of engagement with member States of the Council of Europe will be broken down and adapted in a number of ways in order for the Youth Department to develop more flexible and responsive methodologies for providing useful support measures for 'youth policy' development (see Postscript).

Youth work

The idea of 'youth work' carries very different meanings across Europe. It can refer to the autonomous, self-governed work of youth organisations with both more generic and more thematic areas of interest and responsibility. It can refer to the outreach, detached and 'street work' activities carried out by projects and organisations that are often associated with the international umbrella NGO Dynamo. It can be open youth work, organised by volunteers or by paid professional 'youth workers'. It can be more targeted youth work, focused on particular groups of young people or connected, differentially, to wider youth policy agendas, including formal educational achievement, the pursuit of healthy lifestyles or reductions in youth offending. It can be much more besides. Even the voluntary principle that almost sacredly underpins the youth work relationship with young people is sometimes called into question. Youth work is usually presumed to be educational and to contribute to young people's personal development, though histories of youth work also testify to its roots in social work, social inclusion and delinquency prevention⁵. Youth work is often depicted, in the same breath, as non-formal education or non-formal learning, to distinguish it from schooling. In the preparatory document for the 2nd European Youth Work Convention, making an attempt to identify the 'common ground' of the many disparate forms of youth work, I draw on other brief but apposite definitions of youth work, such as 'facilitating agency' and supporting the development of 'navigational capacities' (see Williamson 2015⁶). But debate continues to rage as to what precisely defines the principles, policy and practice of 'youth work'.

According to the 2nd European Youth Work Declaration of 2015⁷, the essential challenges for all forms of youth work in the 21st century will be to adapt to an increasingly multicultural Europe and to engage with the proliferation of social media that not only absorbs the time and attention of young people but also poses significant risks as well as opportunities. That Declaration also suggested that the 'common ground' for all youth work consisted both of securing spaces for young people's autonomy and expression and of constructing bridges to support young people's steps to the next stages of their lives.

⁵ Volume 6 of the History of Youth Work in Europe series, to be published in 2018, will explore the social work roots of, and relationships with, 'youth work'.

⁶ See also Similarities in a World of Difference: https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Documents/2015_2nd_European_Youth_Work_Convention.pdf

⁷ http://www.alliance-network.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/The-2nd-European-Youth-Work-Declaration_FINAL-2015.pdf

The international reviews of national youth policy observed attempts to do these things in very different ways – through the financing of youth organisations, the establishment of youth ‘resource’ or ‘information’ centres, the promotion of projects, the co-ordination of local youth initiatives (taken by municipalities, and local, national and international NGOs), accessing philanthropic and European funds⁸ according to their criteria, and more. But the ‘youth work’ within these approaches was sometimes difficult to spot, even if it should have been easily recognisable as such (particular as measures were often supported by various forms of ‘youth worker’ training, through institutions, structures, projects, national youth councils, EU national agencies, consultancies and ‘expert’ interventions – on matters including, for example, human rights, youth participation, experiential learning, funding applications and project management).

International review teams were often perplexed about the nature of youth work in the countries whose youth policy they were reviewing. This should be no surprise. As successive documents and reports have testified, latterly the 1st European Youth Work Declaration of 2010⁹, youth work is characterised by enormous diversity – in focus (in terms of ‘target’ groups), method, setting or context and, perhaps, issues being addressed. Open youth work is but one of many approaches to the delivery of youth work. At the other end of the spectrum, arguably, is something called ‘European’ youth work, concerned heavily with human rights, peace education, combating racism and xenophobia, social inclusion, and other transnational issues of our time (latterly, specific ways of approaching the question of ‘radicalisation’, and the refugee crisis).

Members of international review teams came from different youth work traditions, or none at all. For some, any ‘youth work’ was new to them; for others, steeped in particular traditions, different forms of youth work were almost invisible to them. Terminology also got in the way of understanding. Youth work is, very often, aligned with ‘non-formal education’, a concept that is anathema in, for example, Greece, where the only form of ‘education’ is schooling. Slovakia was criticised for having no ‘proper’ understanding of non-formal education. In Cyprus, it was alleged there was no real youth work going on, precisely because youth work in the Republic of Cyprus draws heavily on the British youth club tradition of youth work rather than the project work that more characterises the ‘European’ tradition. Nor should it be forgotten that, in the former Soviet and state socialist countries of eastern and central Europe, there was a very strong tradition of a particular form of state sponsored ‘youth work’, through hobby education and summer camps in particular, largely in the interests of

⁸ For example, at the time, the Soros Foundation (Open Society Foundations), the European Union YOUTH, Youth in Action and Erasmus + programmes, and the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe.

⁹ Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention, Ghent, July 2010

ideological renewal. Whatever our interpretations of that provision, it committed vast resources to young people in their leisure time.

The 21 international reviews of national youth policy can, admittedly rather crudely, be divided into three groups in terms of the longevity, strength and diversity of their youth work traditions.

The state of 'youth work' in the 21 countries

| Established | Evolving | Embryonic |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Finland | Estonia | Spain |
| The Netherlands | Lithuania Romania | Moldova |
| Sweden | Malta | Armenia |
| Luxembourg | Slovakia | Moldova |
| Norway | Hungary | Albania |
| Cyprus | Latvia | Ukraine |
| Belgium | Serbia | Greece |

NB. Each column is not in any hierarchy of development; it is simply in the order they were part of an international review

There may now be some consensual 'common ground' on which all forms of youth work stand, but there is relatively little common ground in either the scale or approach to youth work in the countries whose youth policy has been reviewed by the Council of Europe. Moreover, even those countries with relatively well-developed traditions of youth work provision – such as Finland and Belgium – have been in the process of reviewing that provision in different directions. Some support for youth work has contracted; elsewhere, such as in Estonia, Malta and Serbia, there remains strong commitment to strengthening youth work. During Slovakia's recent Presidency of the European Union, its youth event was focused on innovative forms of youth work.

Beyond those countries with established or (positively) evolving forms of youth work, even those countries with only embryonic indications of a youth work element within their youth policy can point to a dedicated caucus of independent youth work trainers and advocates, eager to advance the cause of non-formal learning (and its associated methodologies) in their respective countries. Many have refined their own understanding and skills in relation to youth work through their association with Council of Europe training courses and European Union

youth programme funding. Invariably, during the international reviews of national youth policy, the international review teams encountered people like this whom they knew, and reported on their motivation and achievements accordingly.

Conclusion

The Council of Europe international reviews of national youth policy have not necessarily run their course, but a more varied and tailored package of support measures on youth policy is now likely to be provided by the Council of Europe. It is, therefore, perhaps timely to take stock of the contribution that has been made, over two decades, to youth policy development within the countries of the wider Europe. Much will, in the future, be traced back to them as the catalyst for shaping an understanding of the dimensions and content of youth policy, and the place of youth work within it – including open youth work in its myriad forms.

Postscript

This paper was first written in January 2017 as the basis for a presentation at the conference that launched the *International Journal of Open Youth Work*. It was subjected to some minor amendment a year later, for publication in Volume 2 of the Journal. During that time, not only was the third synthesis report (Williamson 2017) published, but various developments took place within the Council of Europe in relation to youth policy support measures offered by the Youth Department and to developments relating to youth work at a European level. Of greatest significance in terms of this paper were:

- The re-thinking by the Youth Department, in part in the light of the reviews, of its own conceptualisation of youth policy. This was re-framed within the central goals of the Council of Europe (human rights, democracy and the rule of law) and encapsulated the core expertise of the Youth Department: youth participation, information, inclusion, access to rights, youth work and mobility.
- The adoption, by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, of a Recommendation on Youth Work, in May 2017.
- The establishment, by the Joint Council on Youth within the Council of Europe, of an ad hoc high-level task force on youth work to take forward the issues outlined within the Recommendation on Youth Work in anticipation of a 3rd European Youth Work Convention, to be held in Germany in 2020.

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4. Integration of Refugees through Youth Work – Mission Possible?

Justina Garbauskaitė-Jakimovska and Laura Bačinskiėnė

Abstract

In recent years, migration has put a huge pressure on many European countries. There is an emerging reflection on how to ensure a faster and more efficient integration of the immigrants. The youth sector has the challenging task to develop mid- to long-term responses to help the big proportion of migrants, who are young people themselves, integrate in their new communities and participate actively in public life.

The research was undertaken in order to provide related evidence for enhancing youth work practice, to better understand the current reality, and the potential of youth work in a coordinated intervention of social integration of refugees in new communities. The aim of the research was to examine the possibilities of integrating refugees through youth work activities in Lithuania and Latvia (research countries). The research comprised of the overview of existing research on integration of refugees as well as in-depth interviews and focus groups that were conducted with young people who are attending open youth centres, young people who are members of youth organizations, experienced youth workers, as well as the refugees who are currently staying in either Lithuania or Latvia.

Keywords

youth work, refugees, integration, opportunities, challenges

Summary of the research

In recent years, migration has put a huge pressure on many European countries. There is an emerging reflection on how to ensure a faster and more efficient integration of the immigrants. The youth sector has the challenging task to develop mid- to long-term responses to help the big proportion of migrants, who are young people themselves, integrate in their new communities and participate actively in public life. Some activities under the Erasmus+ Programme are already focusing on integration of young refugees. One of the projects, financed by this Programme, “**Together: refugees & youth**” (TRY) aims to create a special programme in which youth workers would include refugees in their work. Special attention is given to the situation of Lithuania and Latvia. The project has two-way orientations. The way the youth would get a chance to develop in a multicultural environment – thus building up their tolerance and increasing multilingualism. Another, the refugees would integrate into the society, since the youth would help them with the local language, culture, traditions, etc. In order to implement the TRY project successfully, research is undertaken, to provide related evidence for enhancing youth work practice, to better understand the current reality, and the potential of youth work in a coordinated intervention of social integration of refugees in new communities. The aim of the research is to examine the possibilities of integrating refugees through youth work activities in Lithuania and Latvia (research countries).

Refugee Statistical Data Overview

Over one million refugees and migrants (1,015,078) made the perilous journey across the Mediterranean into Europe in 2015. The majority (850,000) crossed from Turkey to Greece through the Aegean and Dodecanese seas¹⁰. The situation in 2016 is similar – 289,374 arrivals by the sea, 3,173 dead/missing¹¹. This movement constitutes one of the largest movements of displaced people through European borders since World War Two. In 2015, 59.5 million people were displaced around the world, an increase of 8.3 million since 2014. Globally, one in every 122 humans is now either a refugee, internally displaced, or seeking asylum. Since early 2011, the primary reason for this acceleration has been the war in Syria, now the world’s single largest driver of displacement. On average, every day last year, 42,500 people became refugees, asylum seekers, or internally displaced, a four-fold increase in just four years. Meanwhile, decades-old instability and conflict around the world, for example in Afghanistan and Somalia, means that millions of people remain on the move or – as is increasingly common – stranded for years on the edge of society as long-term internally displaced people or refugees. There are thousands of forced migrants arriving every day on Europe’s shores and most of them are young. In the first seven

months of this year, 67 percent of them were between the ages of 14 and 34¹².

Existing research on refugees in Europe

Studies that are conducted in Europe are usually focused on the attitudes towards the migrants and refugees (recently reporting that 54 percent of Lithuanians are keen to accept refugees¹³), the conditions of living and integration, and the factors that are standing in the way or helping it. The policies are overviewed and evaluated, and often criticized. There are also studies that make recommendations directed towards the issues of young refugees. One of those is the study on integration of young immigrants that was conducted by FutureLab Europe (2015)¹⁴. We found the following recommendations the most relevant to the youth field:

- Work with mixed groups (migrants and non migrants) should be implemented.
- NGOs should encourage civic and democratic participation of migrants. Trainings on civic participation, meetings with local deputies, excursions to city halls etc. should be further developed.
- NGOs can involve migrants as project leaders. More projects dealing with the integration of third country nationals should prepare and encourage migrants to become project leaders, as they are often the most appropriate persons who can help other migrants to understand both the culture of the country of origin and of the host country.

Legal Basis

Numerous legal documents are introduced at the European level, as well as on national levels, that differ in the terms of content and form. Yet all the documents comply with the main principles of Human Rights and guarantee access to the territory as an important part of the right to asylum that is in line with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Latvian Asylum Law, adopted in 2009 and last amended in 2013, establishes the asylum procedure and reception conditions for asylum-seekers, as well as some of the content of the protection granted. It guarantees equal rights for refugees and persons with alternative status to information (Art. 34), while the rights granted to the respective groups

12 This percentage refers to the number of the people from ages 14-34 who applied for asylum in the EU28 in the first 7 months of 2015. European Union's Eurostat database, available at <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

13 Survey „Kiek Lietuva yra nusiteikusi padėti pabėgėliams?“ http://www.civitas.lt/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Kiek.Lt._nusi-teike.padeti-pabegeliams_santrauka.pdf

14 FutureLab Europe, April 2015, available at http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_5495_fle_publication.pdf

differ in regard to residence status (Art. 36), social benefits (Art. 37(1)(2), and family unity (Art. 38(1)(3).

The Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners No IX-2206 ("Foreigners Law") has only a few articles of relevance to the integration of refugees. First, it stipulates that the state of Lithuania shall provide conditions for foreigners holding a residence permit to integrate into the political, economic and socio-cultural life of the state in accordance with the procedure established by laws. Second, it provides for the allocation of state funds for the implementation of a national policy in the area of refugee integration alongside the resources provided by international organizations, EU structural funds, humanitarian aid foundations, and NGOs.

Youth work and refugees

According to the reports from 27 European Union countries, "Youth work is also defined by its broader more societal aims which are participation in democratic societies, prevention and social inclusion and cohesion."¹⁵ One of the core and thematic priority areas identified across government youth policies and funding programmes is targeting disadvantaged young people¹⁶. As young refugees are falling into the category of being disadvantaged, and are qualifying as young people, they are becoming a concern of youth policy that is targeting different areas of social life. Young people with migrant backgrounds are one of the target groups that are not sufficiently reached by youth work. According to the report on youth work by the European Commission, "Participation in the activities of organisations that work with young people is linked to the (peer-) culture and the image of the organisations working with youth. Certain forms of activities tend to be associated with youth from certain socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Some country reports note that the more 'traditional' and long established forms of youth work struggle to reach out to the target groups that do not share the same cultural references as the majority population. This is, in particular, highlighted when it comes to young people with migrant backgrounds or different ethnic origins (noted in country reports of French speaking community of Belgium as well as the Flemish speaking community, Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, Poland, Spain, and UK-Scotland)"¹⁷. This is the reason why youth organizations and youth centres should review the activities that they are proposing and critically evaluate the suitability of the activities to vulnerable groups (as refugees) as well as the accessibility to more various groups.

¹⁵ Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council on youth work, Brussels, 18 and 19 November 2010.

¹⁶ Dunne, A., Ulicna, D., Murphy, I., Golubeva, M. (2014). Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/study/youth-work-report_en.pdf

¹⁷ Dunne et al (2014).

Examples of Best Practices

TURKEY. Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) projects are covering almost all the refugee problems, including integration. ASAM provide language classes to refugees and give them the chance to express themselves in Turkish and socialize with local people.

GREECE. The support to the First Reception Service (FRS) screening centre operations at Fylakio is helping the Greek authorities to manage the influx and improve reception. NGOs are running reception centres. As well as basic welfare, the centres offer education activities, psychological support, medical care and legal assistance.

IRELAND. A hierarchical international protection system is now emerging in Ireland – resettlement from outside of the EU, relocation of asylum seekers from within the EU (both in the new Irish Refugee Protection Programme, IRPP), and the older system for people seeking asylum (part of which is Dispersal and Direct Provision (DP)).

BELGIUM. Convivial main activities: a global and tailor-made guidance of refugees in their research of solutions to their needs throughout the settlement and integration process; specialized services that adapt continuously to the needs of refugees; a combination of individual and collective support systems; a structure co-created by refugees and Belgians which still involves refugees at every level.

NORWAY. The aim of Norway's integration policy - enable newly-arrived immigrants to participate in the labour market and society as quickly as possible. Refugees and family members, between 18 and 55 years, have the right and obligation to participate in the Introduction Programme. The Main Components of the Introduction Programme: Norwegian language training; social studies; measures to attain skills for labour market participation/continue education. Since 2003, the Norwegian government has contracted IOM to develop and implement the Norwegian Cultural Orientation programme (NORCO).

AUSTRIA. "Refugee Buddies" programme - locals engage voluntarily at a variety of organizations, and meet regularly with one refugee, in order to establish personal relations. The programme "Mentoring for migrants", has been extended to highly-qualified refugees. The Austrian Federal Train Service (ÖBB) started the "Diversity as Chance" ("Diversität als Chance") project and offered 50 unaccompanied refugees between 15 and 17 years old apprenticeships. Open youth centres in Austria are actively working with

young refugees by involving them in daily activities.

FRANCE. All refugees must attend “Living in France”, a single civic orientation class (6-7 hours) focusing on the values of the French Republic (secularism, gender equality, fundamental freedoms, and education system) and the organization and functioning of the French State and institutions.

DENMARK, FINLAND, NORWAY and SWEDEN have developed holistic integration models, which encompass legislation, funding, and institutional structures where immigrants and refugees have access to mainstream services, social support and education after recognition and can access help as any other citizen.

CZECH REPUBLIC. The campaign „Express your solidarity with refugees!” is promoting tolerant debate around refugees. It calls on citizens not to be silent and publicly denounce racism and xenophobia.

POLAND. Successes include the establishment of a volunteer network to teach Polish as a foreign language in schools and a self-help group for female immigrants.

HUNGARY. The „Welcome Migrants“ project is producing short documentary clips featuring four well-known public figures welcoming a migrant in their home for a week.

GERMANY.¹⁸ Local sport clubs have been responsible for organizing activities for immigrants since 1989. The aim of the programme “Integration through sport”.

MACEDONIA.¹⁹ Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA) is implementing a project “Legal Assistance and Representation of UNHCR’s Persons of Concern”.

SWEDEN.²⁰ The Wallenberg Foundation is implementing support education and training activities for young people and refugees from disadvantaged areas. The initiative includes summer schools in scientific subjects, intensive courses in Swedish, and tutoring for students who have recently arrived.

Empirical Research

Implementation of research was done by 2 researchers: overview of existing research and data; and organized in-depth interviews and focus groups.

¹⁸ More information available at http://www.integration-durch-sport.de/fileadmin/fm-dosb/arbeitsfelder/ids/images/2014/Flyer_Programm_ENGLISCH.pdf

¹⁹ More information available at <http://www.myla.org.mk/index.php/en/news/238-myla-annual-report-2015>

²⁰ More information available at <http://www.efc.be/news/wallenberg-foundations-launch-initiatives-support-integration-youth-refugees-education-training/>

In-depth interviews were conducted with the following groups:

Representatives of the organizations that are working with refugees on a daily basis. Two types of organization were chosen: state institutions and NGOs. The aim of these interviews was to examine what kind of strategies, programmes and long-term projects are implemented, what elements are successful, which are not, what challenges are faced, how they are dealing with them, etc. Eight interviews were conducted:

- 2 representatives from state institutions in Lithuania;
- 2 representatives from state institutions in Latvia;
- 2 representatives from NGOs in Lithuania;
- 2 representatives from NGOs in Latvia.

Youth workers, working in youth centres in different regions of Lithuania and Latvia. Youth workers were selected according to their working experience (not less than 3 years of direct work experience with young people). The aim of these interviews was to collect opinions and proposals: on if and how young refugees could be involved in youth work activities; the types of activities that would be feasible; and the readiness of the youth workers to take over new activities or to adjust old ones. Six interviews were conducted: 3 with youth workers from Lithuania and 3 with youth workers from Latvia.

Young refugees. Aim – to investigate the opinions and points of view regarding involvement in/ through youth work and youth activities. Young refugees were asked for their opinions about the proposed activities. A Questionnaire for young refugees was devised based on the proposals of youth workers, youth centre users, and youth NGO representatives. This gave more focus on proposed activities and helped identify which activities might be interesting for young refugees. Six interviews were conducted: 3 with young refugees in Lithuania and 3 with young refugees in Latvia.

Focus groups were organized with 2 different groups: youth centre users (14 - 21 years old) and young people from youth NGOs (17 - 29 years old). Four focus groups were organized in total (2 in Lithuania and 2 in Latvia). The aim of the focus groups was to learn how the young people approach the integration of young refugees into the activities of youth centres and NGOs. Young people were asked to describe their usual activities, to brainstorm for ideas about how the young refugees could be integrated into societies, and if/how

they could be included in common actions.

Representatives from public institutions and NGOs

People who are working or used to be working (more than 10 years of experience) in one of the few institutions or organizations dealing with refugees were interviewed regarding the work that is done. The interviewees presented their experience in working with refugees and explained what is being done by their organizations. The common themes that were appearing the most were the integration problems of refugees because of the stereotypes and prejudice that are vivid in Lithuania and Latvia, the language barrier, lack of financing, time, and human resources.

Both the public institutions and NGOs have a lot to do with the documentation, formalities and basic integration of refugees: providing legal advice, social assistance, ensuring health care, the possibility for the children to attend kindergartens or schools, solving issues or conflicts appearing in schools, are monitoring if the children are attending school, and dealing with their integration into the labour market, etc.

Social integration of refugees Basic criteria for successful social integration of refugees are their motivation to stay, which is influenced by several factors. When asked if there are some extra activities or programmes for young people, the interviewees acknowledged that there are no such programmes and the refugees are less divided by the age groups, but more according to gender: special activities are organized for moms with kids, some arts and crafts, cooking activities. Sports activities were mainly organized for male refugees who are the majority (in Latvia) of the refugees in general. The interviewees stated that the success of integration and creating social ties are a lot more frequent among young people.

Youth workers' approach

Experienced (at least 3 years of experience working directly with young people) youth workers from Latvia and Lithuania were interviewed regarding the possibilities for including refugees in the activities provided by youth centres. During the in-depth interviews the following themes were covered: the activities of the youth centres, the activities that the youth centres could offer the refugees, preparation that is needed for the youth workers in order to work with a different target group, opportunities and challenges that the youth workers see in the integration of young refugees.

The youth workers from Latvia and Lithuania were asked about the activities that are usually implemented in the youth centres that they are working in.

A variety of activities was presented: hanging out and communicating; board games; Foosball (table football); watching YouTube videos; watching movies; celebrating birthdays and holidays; cultural evenings (telling stories about the country, culture, customs, singing songs, dancing, cooking traditional dishes); cooking; quizzes; sleep-overs; crafts; robotics; programming; creating websites (learning how to do it); playing musical instruments; breakdance lessons; sports (football, volleyball, basketball); trips; experiential hikes; camping; orientation games.

As the interviewees were asked which of the regular activities would be suitable for refugees, the most common answer was “all of them”. It was also stressed that working with young refugees should begin with simple socialization activities like board games or sports, which then lead to learning more about the needs and interests of young people and address those needs in the future.

In general, youth workers took the idea of working with refugees positively, some said that if not the youth workers, then who else could take over this mission to contribute to the integration of refugees into society. Others mentioned the educational potential of people with different background joining the youth centre as “there would be new topics to discuss with young people: diversity, tolerance, stereotypes.” To sum up, youth workers are claiming that the best way of integration is to treat the refugees as any other young people who are coming to the youth centre. Youth workers are a little bit cautious that new attendants of youth centres could result in new challenges as well as the ability of each and every youth worker to take on working with a more diverse group and seek for more targeted training.

Young People's Approach

Young people were interviewed in focus groups: 2 groups were formed from young people aged from 14 to 21 years old who are attending youth centres; other 2 groups were formed from young people aged from 17 to 29 years old who are members of youth NGOs. The main themes that were addressed were the following: stereotypes and prejudices about the refugees; the role of media in forming public opinion about refugees; activities of youth centres and youth organizations; exploring possibilities to include refugees in the regular activities or organizing new ones; the interests of young people; and the possibilities of cross-institutional cooperation.

The main issues raised by young people did not differ in regard to their age group or their organization (youth centre or youth NGO). The opinions and proposals of young people from Lithuania and Latvia also did not differ

significantly. For these reasons we are presenting the findings from all 4 focus groups that included 35 young people aged from 14 to 29 years.

Activities

Young people were asked what could refugees do in their youth centre or their organizations and three types of participation were distinguished:

1. Young refugee as a **service user**. Representatives from youth NGOs suggested attendance at events organized by their organizations or to come for consultations regarding adjusting to a new city, knowing the opportunities for studies or work. Representatives from student unions mentioned that "with refugees there probably would be as much work as with Erasmus students" and the refugees have the right to be represented as any other student. Since none of the youth NGOs (that were interviewed) are focusing their work on integration of refugees (yet), they did not propose any special activities that would be exclusively for young people of refugee background, but are considering the refugees as any other foreigner.
2. Young refugee as a **resource** because of the difference. Young people both from youth centres and youth NGOs were very fast to indicate that it would be very interesting to know more about the cultures of refugees and to involve them in events as special guests or, if the refugees would decide to join the NGO, to have him or her use their knowledge and experience to help other refugees, or to organize special events for them.
3. Young refugee as a **member or co-worker** of an NGO or an attendee of a youth centre. Young people stressed that their organizations and youth centres are open, and they would be glad if more people would join them in the regular activities. As young people presume that the refugees speak English or will know some Lithuanian or Latvian, they can easily join the organizations and be accepted.

Similar to the youth workers, young people mainly mentioned that all the regular activities of the organizations or youth centres are suitable for all the people and refugees could join according to their interests: "when we're talking about refugees, we're talking about a group of people, but we are forgetting that they have different characters, likes and dislikes. These are the aspects that need to be taken into consideration before planning the activities." ." Young people discarded the idea of organizing activities exclusively for refugees and pointed out that youth organizations or youth centres are a great platform to start integration in a new country by finding

friends, learning about cultures, norms, daily life. Young people have mainly positive attitudes towards refugees, they do understand the difficulties that the refugees are facing and are keen on meeting them, learning about countries and cultures that are unknown to them. At the same time there is an open question about cultural differences that needs to be addressed.

Thoughts from refugees

Lists of proposed activities were provided to the refugees (6 respondents) via the social workers that are working with them directly because of the current circumstances that were also described in the previous interviews or focus groups – refugees are presented negatively in the media and refugees do not trust people from outside as their words are often misinterpreted. A list of activities was provided from proposals gathered from interviews with youth workers and focus groups with young people. Respondents could choose which activity they would like or dislike.

The following activities were chosen as interesting to the refugees:

- Hanging out and communicating;
- Board games;
- Foosball (table football);
- Watching movies;
- Cultural evenings (story-telling about the country, culture, customs, singing songs, dancing, cooking traditional dishes);
- Cooking;
- Crafts;
- Creating websites (learning how to do it);
- Playing musical instruments;
- Sports (football, volleyball, basketball);
- Trips;
- Participating in events;
- Getting consultations and relevant information on topics that are interesting.

The 18 to 27 years old refugees offered an alternative view of activities. It is presumed that some of the activities were not chosen as interesting because of too short a description or a lack of clarity regarding what is included in a certain activity. Sports activities were popular as well as cooking or trips.

It is important to note that the refugees would like to be invited to join the youth centres as they are aware of public opinion and do not feel too

confident to simply appear at a youth centre or youth organization. Their willingness to join the activities offered depends on their situation: if they are single, do not have psychological problems, are already studying or working, have no problem with housing, etc. "First they need to do everything to survive" – say the interviewees, who are working with the integration of refugees. Participation in proposed activities has to have a clear added value for their integration in order to support their motivation to be active.

Recommendations

1. A closer cooperation between youth NGOs, youth centres and the organizations that are in charge of the socialization of refugees in the country needs to be encouraged. While the "organizations in charge" are wamped with documentation, legal aid, formal requirements and lack of refugee background into activities where they could meet and socialize with locals. Using already existing activities young people could contribute to building up the social ties between refugees and the local community.
2. Youth organizations and youth centres are welcome to approach organizations that are working directly with refugees and discuss possible cooperation. Youth centres and youth NGOs can bring added value to already existing integration measures.
3. Two-way integration models have to be implemented. There are two groups of beneficiaries: those who are refugees or asylum seekers and those who are members of the local community. NGOs should be working towards enabling local communities to be more tolerant. It is important to keep in mind that cultural differences, respect, intercultural learning and integration questions should be addressed in work with young people as the need for refugees "to live by the norms of the countries who are accepting them" was expressed intensively. The topic is sensitive, so it would be necessary to discuss integration, assimilation and explore what these words mean to young people.
4. Youth organizations should join other actors in the field and provide services for young refugees, such as psychological or academic consultations. It is important to involve a target group of proposed services in constructing such services in order to meet their needs.
5. Open youth centres, focusing on the social work with young people, are contributing a great deal to the integration of socially vulnerable groups in different cities and towns; they can be one of the key actors in the socialization of young refugees. Before starting work with them, each

element must be well thought out. It should start with the simplest activities, giving them time to do nothing, not to exert pressure or have high expectations.

6. Youth centres and youth NGOs, before starting work with the social integration of refugees have to assess their own capabilities, resources, etc. Organizations should not depart from what they do the best. “Hunting for finances”, where additional funds are allocated can lead to distortion of institutions.

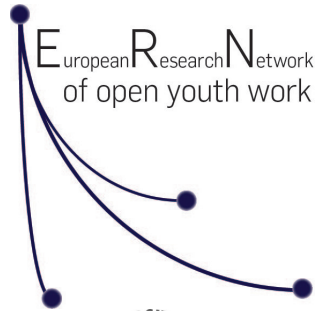
7. Youth workers need to receive training on working with young people from refugee background and including them into activities with local youth. The training should include intercultural learning, human rights education, diversity, work with groups, conflict management, and interfaith issues.

8. The organizations that are already working with refugees should cooperate with youth organizations in putting effort into influencing the media coverage of the topic of refugees.

9. Youth workers should take into consideration that even though they do not have to “put out the fires” and start working with young refugees now, they should be dedicating the time and start preparing young people for interaction and living with others.



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