

*"Improving access to youth work for
young people
in situations of social exclusion and
poverty"*

SEMINAR in Flanders 16th-22nd November 2009

Implementation of the Cultural Agreement between Flanders
and Estonia – Lithuania – Latvia

REPORT



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1 Presentations and key-questions

1.1 Introductions

The morning session on Tuesday 17th started with an official welcome and an overview of the programme of the upcoming days.

Lieve Caluwaerts from the Agency for Social-Cultural Work for Youth and Adults – Youth Division introduced the first sessions of the day :

- The cooperation programme between Flanders and the Baltic States : an introduction, the state of affairs and perspectives.
- Introduction to the state structures of Belgium
- Introduction to the youth (work) policy in the Flemish Community of Belgium

In the afternoon session the link was made between the seminar topic and the renewed framework for EU cooperation in the youth field. An interesting input and point of view, to widen the seminar topic to a European policy dimension. Indeed, the renewed framework highlights social inclusion, equal opportunities for all young people and solidarity in its general objectives. One of the eight fields of action focuses on social inclusion : *“the social exclusion and poverty of young people and the transmission of such problems between generations should be prevented and mutual solidarity between society and young people strengthened. Equal opportunities for all should be promoted and all forms of discrimination combated.”* Regarding the study visits during the seminar, it is important to keep this in mind and to discover how organisations in Flanders are implementing this aim.

The seminar topic is also relevant regarding the Belgian EU Presidency : a resolution will be prepared on youth work / youth activities with special attention to the accessibility of the poorest children and youngsters.

1.2 Presentations

Each country introduced some facts and figures related to the seminar topic, based on the questions that were given as homework :

- What do we understand when talking about “youth work accessibility” or “young people in situations of social exclusion and poverty” ?
- What is the situation (of those young people) in the different countries, on national, regional, local level ? Facts & figures.
- What kind of initiatives are there to reach them, to support them, ... ? Governmental and non-governmental ? What is lacking, not existing (yet) in this field ?

- Which processes are going on in the different countries ? Specific target groups in policy plans ?

Some remarks or discussions that were raised afterwards :

Lithuania

Lithuania has the highest rate of youth unemployment in the EU. Organisations and local initiatives involved in this seminar are targeting different groups : vulnerable young people, young people in situations of poverty, disabled children, social risk families, etc. There are not so many (youth) organisations in Lithuania, specifically dealing with this topic. Especially in small towns and rural areas there's a lack of organisations.

Estonia

Regarding social exclusion, in the presentation a distinction has been described between "young people with risk factor" (poverty, social vulnerable families, low education...) and "young people with special needs" (disabled young people, ADHD, high talented youngsters,...). There is no real systematic approach towards these target groups, but mainly a project-based approach.

The concept of Open Youth Centres (OYC) was presented, and the sometimes difficult cooperation with schools (competition, "educative task of OYC", angry parents).

Latvia

The main problems were listed: unemployment, basic needs (food, home, clothing) and geographical isolation (culture, new media,...). There is a lack of budget, competent staff, support, no resources for co-funding, accessibility for disabled persons, and experience in youth work (not a long tradition). But there are interesting processes going on : in Latvia a "study" for youth worker has been developed, taking into account formal and non-formal education, on different levels.

In order to improve young people life's quality by promoting their initiatives, participation in decision-making and public life, during the last years a legal framework for youth policy in Latvia was developed, which meets European Union and the Council of Europe recommendations. Within the last two years, youth policy coordination and planning system has been sufficiently developed. In 2008 was worked out long-term policy planning document Youth policy guidelines for years 2009 – 2018, which has been adopted on 20th of April 2009.

With state financial support 50 coordinators of youth affairs have started trainings according regulation of Youth affairs specialist training – regulates youth affairs specialist training system – necessary skills, competences and knowledge to work as youth affairs specialist according to professions standard.

Flanders

Two interesting and unique approaches were introduced : street-corner-work (in impoverished and deprived areas) and bridging "mainstream youth work" to youth work with disadvantaged young people.

1.3 Discussions

Taking into account the input from the participants, a discussion was set up on the content of key-questions :

- How can we identify who and where the young people in situations of social exclusion and poverty are ?
- Why is it important that we reach them ?
- How can we reach them ?
- Why don't they participate in ?
- How can we increase their motivation and participation in existing youth work structures and activities ?
- What are methods to motivate and stimulate (young) people, youth workers, ngo's and others working directly with young people to reach them ?
- Are the methods proposed in the T-KIT on social inclusion (still) relevant ?

These questions were clarified, translated into a common understanding, to be used during the study visits. Already a lot of debate items popped up :

- Clearly define "vulnerable young people" or "disadvantaged young people" ? A lot of different target groups fit in these. Different target groups need a different approach.
- The thin line between youth work, welfare work, social work, educational work. It's sometimes difficult to see them separately.
- Why is it important to reach them ? From society point of view ("*keep them of the streets*", "*often related to criminality...*") or the point of view of the disadvantaged young people themselves ("*to give them equal opportunities, to strengthen and empower them*")...?
- Do we need specific approaches for these target groups ? Can this be reconcilable with "participation in existing youth work" ? Existing youth work must be open towards these young people. Adaptation, open minded, etc.

2 Study visits, 18th – 20th November

2.1 ARKTOS vzw

"Arktos believes in the inherent capacities and qualities of EVERY young person, but also in a world that excludes exclusion."

Arktos is a training and formation centre, focussed on vulnerable young people. They have training sessions for the target groups, and for people working with these target groups, on different themes : education (e.g. about dropouts), free-time (useful leisure time), neighbourhood work (coaching young vulnerable people, living on their own), employment (inflow coaching), welfare.

Staff member Gert Winters introduced the organisation and its activities. Afterwards a visit to the nearby atelier was planned, where young people are learning about mechanics of cars and motorcycles, but also woodcraft, painting, arts, etc. A lot of practical questions were asked : opening hours, cooperation with schools, dealing with troubles, sources of financing, etc.

"A very inspiring visit, with the ideal combination of theory and how it is worked out in practice. "

"An interesting meeting with people who daily work in practise with the youngsters"

2.2 DE FABRIEK

"to meet – to experience – to move – to discover – to enjoy"

De Fabriek is a all-in-one youth centre of the organisation Habbekrats : a place where young people meet, for cultural activities, to do some sports, or to play games, attending a course, or just have a drink or meal...

The lunch restaurant is a social-employment initiative, often working with youth from deprived areas or social vulnerable young people. It provides fair food, for fair prices. The profit they gain from selling meals, is reinvested in the youth centre.

2.3 LEJO vzw

"through experiential working... for more than 30 years Lejo vzw promotes the interests of social vulnerable young people between 15 and 19 years old and

attempts to guarantee the right to have free-time, substantial education and formation."

Coordinator of the team "national youth work" Hannelore Herremans introduced the daily work of Lejo vzw : the structure, the activities, working with volunteers, the target groups and Lejo local centres in Flanders.

After the presentation at the headquarters, the participants split up in 3 groups and went to visit local centres and initiatives in Eeklo, Ronse and Roeselare. We were kindly invited to participate in the ongoing activities...

Again, the local touch, the direct contact with the target groups and the activities they were having on the spot, appeared to be an interesting input in the programme. The informal contact with local volunteers produced some more interesting food for discussion and approaching target groups : Lejo stimulates young people from the target groups (at a certain adult age) to engage themselves as a volunteer in the organisation and thus become an animator for the young generation. Lejo provides specific trainings and coaching for those volunteers.

2.4 THEBE vzw

"Thebe vzw is a cooperation between Youth House "Oké" and Youth House "t Lont". Both are recognised for their work with vulnerable young people and children. Activities are within the free-time and are based on : encounter, training and formation, recreation, information, participation in society and project development."

Mieke Dus and Bernd Smeets from the coordination team guided the participants around in the premises : the youth house, activity rooms, dormitory (used for overnight camps), a bus transformed into an "activity room", etc.

Thebe vzw has its activities in Maasmechelen, situated in the eastern part of the province of Limburg, which used to be a mining-industry area. In former times, when the mining-industry was flourishing, the area attracted immigrant workers from Italy, Spain, Greece and later on from Turkey and the North African countries. The mines are closed for decades now, but still the consequences linger on : impoverished and deprived areas, high unemployment rates, low educated young people, etc.

When talking about Thebe's target groups, we face a mix of cultures, a range of nationalities and backgrounds. A very different context comparing to the Baltic countries. It was interesting to meet young volunteers and hear their vision on the neighbourhood, the activities they organise, the way they work with youngsters, etc.

2.5 CMGJ

"CMGJ (Centre for Social Equality and Youth Welfare) is a provincial support service in the sector of youth welfare. It is a "second line" organisation, which means they don't work initially with the target group of disadvantaged young people, but mainly with youth (welfare) workers and organisations. They provide information, training, support, advocacy, etc."

Staff member Jan Domen introduced the organisation, its vision and mission, activities, methodologies, target organisations, etc. Besides this presentation, Jan also explained the participants some more theoretical issue, on which the organisation's approach is based : Maslow's hierarchy of needs or Maslow's Pyramid (the lower four layers of the pyramid contain what Maslow called "deficiency needs" or "d-needs": physiological (including sexuality), security of position, friendship and love, and esteem; the upper layer contains "self-actualisation" and talks about creativity, morality, spontaneity...).

The visit was found interesting, but quite theoretically (not only Maslow, but also the power point about CMGJ was sometimes a bit chaotic). Of course, CMGJ is working on another level than grass-root organisations.

2.6 JEUGD WELZIJNSWERKING GENK-ZUID (Youth welfare centre Genk-South)

"When a Turkish child falls down, it will cry also...and his mother too."

Dixit Johan Paulini, team coordinator of this particular youth welfare centre. Johan succeeded to amaze all participants with his massive presentation, only by spoken word. He expressed a quite unconventional view on the topic of "working with vulnerable young people", saving no sacred cows. People were shifting and shuffling on their chairs and discussions arouse, when issues like "full responsibility for these youngsters, without pampering them : the have the key of the house, they can enter whenever they want !" or "my youngsters make the rules themselves" were pronounced. Of course, it all had to be seen in its context. Maybe it was a bit provocative, but it sure had its effect.

This centre is working very well, a conclusion everyone shared in the end. They really achieved something when talking about "accessibility of traditional youth work for vulnerable young people". They have good cooperation with the neighbouring youth organisations and movements, they have projects together and exchanges. Vulnerable young people are considered "people" in the first place, without labelling them at once.

2.7 UIT DE MARGE

"Uit de Marge" is an umbrella and support organisation on the Flemish level, for youth organisations working with social vulnerable young people. Through youth work, they want to contribute actively to the emancipation of social vulnerable young people and children.

Uit de Marge organised a congress during this seminar, on the subject of "Youth welfare work needs autonomy !" Different workshops were going on, debates and lectures. But because they were all in Dutch language, it was impossible for our participants group to attend these sessions.

We were invited at the congress to have a general introduction on "youth work with vulnerable young people in Flanders". Staff member Jan Deduytsche started with a whiteboard presentation : drawing the history of youth work with vulnerable young people, outlining the initiatives and projects from the early 70's till now and the rise of organisations specifically dealing with those young people. Also an interesting piece of theory was explained : vision on "social vulnerability" as an interaction between the individual and society and failing social bonds (Walgrave – Vettenburg), aspects of vulnerability and being disadvantaged, the approach of "address the problem".

A storm of questions unleashed after the presentation. For example on "measuring the scope" or in other words "how many vulnerable young people are reached with activities or by organisations in Flanders ?". It appeared there are different measuring systems for different towns or cities. But when local figures are merged, global indicators can prove that each year 10% more vulnerable young people are reached. That means Flanders becomes better in reaching them or, for example, poverty increases and consequently the target group expands. Further on, there were questions and discussions about the Flemish school system, integration of immigrants, languages, subcultures, ...

This session was evaluated as very interesting, to the point, informative and stimulating further reflection, a clear statement on the importance of history and backgrounds of social vulnerability. Some plans were already welling up to invite Jan Deduytsche for lectures on the topic in the Baltic States.

2.8 STEUNPUNT JEUGD

Nancy Debacker made a short presentation of the work Steunpunt Jeugd (Service Centre for youth policy) does regarding the theme of diversity and youth work accessibility. She introduced the vision on "think divers", research and study work that has been done in the field of diversity, equal opportunities and minorities. Extra attention went to the "platform diversity", a supportive platform for youth

organisations to empower the position of children and young people. Their action regarding "2010 - year of combating poverty and social exclusion" has been highlighted.

3 Conclusions and learning points

3.1 Introduction of the day

On Saturday 21 November the participants shared their reflections, achieved information and insights, discussion topics and impressions about the last week. The session started in the morning with an "associative exercise" : trying to remember things that happened during the seminar period, by going back into the programme. Close your eyes and see... the content and the fun.

"Belgians, busses, food and drinks, Dworp, presentations, Lieve presentation, driving, traffic jams, curly hair, Arktos, Lejo house, games in the field, Eeklo volunteers, sport field Ronse, nice walk in Gent, churches, huge ribs, sleeping, traffic jams, Maasmechelen, Mieke from Thebe, Turkish lady, toy-mushroom in dormitory, sleep-in in the centre, coordinator with expensive car, own NGO, couches, the story with the knife, Jan @ CMGJ, Santa Claus in Genk Zuid (Johan Paulini looks like Santa), interesting point of view, lot of laughing but also serious conversation, cushions, cookies, story of the coffin, pile of leaves, Mexican resto, long waiting for food, good food, advertises, small party, dancing on the table, CD on repaet, escape the traffic jam is impossible, jokes, parking only for VIP, Jan (Uit de Marge) drawing on the whiteboard, social vulnerability, happy feeling Santa has won, soft floor, chairs, Youth support point, folders, surprise Parking 58 circle, nice view, shopping, rabbit, students in the streets of BXL, 3 religions in one place, gay boys, chocolate, happy to be back, silence in the bar, table soccer, late talk, internet on the street, good sleep, nice breakfast, early morning, satisfied."

3.2 Individual and group reflections

In groups by country, the participants shared their individual answers on following questions.

- What have you experienced ?
- What have you learnt ?
- What touched you ?
- What did surprise you ?
- What did you find strange / normal ?
- What do you take with you ?

They discussed similarities, differences, interesting points, important issues to elaborate, etc. and presented their findings in plenum.

ESTONIA

An overall feeling about this seminar can be described in three words : inspiring, motivating, interesting.

Conclusions - What we have learned and appreciated

- There are **different** challenges, backgrounds and problems in Flemish youth work regarding vulnerable young people, compared to Estonia (e.g. immigrants, the three communities, the state structure of Belgium)
- Strategy and methodological approach is necessary in youth work, but it may not become a fixation at the expense of the activities themselves. More focus is needed on **"the fun of youth work activities"**.
- **Do not complicate** things unnecessarily, when they can be done simple. Especially towards vulnerable young people, activities must be clear cut and not stuffed with sophisticated jargon.
- A very interesting issue to follow-up and learning point : the **volunteer recruitment approach** of Lejo vzw (target group youngsters are trained to be a volunteer).
- Another learning point : **peer education** in youth movements, youth organisations in Flanders, creating a "habit" of youth work, raising a new generation of youth workers who carry on the values and attitudes of youth work (continuation and dissemination).
- **Equality**. Youngsters and youth workers shake hands when entering the youth centre : being on equal base, act of friendship, connection youngsters-team volunteer. This doesn't mean there is no difference or hierarchy ; youngsters help with daily jobs, receive **responsibilities**.
- **Engagement, motivation and express confidence** are important characteristics for a good youth worker.
- **Reach the families** / parents through working with youngsters and involve them in the organisation.
- **Send clear signals** to junks, youngsters & alcohol,...
- **Labelling** young people at schools ("you are stupid, lazy,...) : this also exists in Estonia. This should END.

New ideas to develop

- A new youth NGO for non-formal and experience-based learning, to bring innovation into youth work and to elaborate youth work from the real needs of young people.
- "Youth Centre on wheels" : a bus travelling around the country, to present to people what a youth centre and youth work really is, to talk with local governments, to attract ALL young people with creative activities, to prevent rural area exodus of young people by showing them things worth staying for, breaking the isolation of young people in rural areas, etc.

- School system in Flanders : possibility to attend school till 15 years old and afterwards combining school with working. That would be good in Estonia, it doesn't exist.
- Creating an internet platform, with post of all activities, exchanges, ideas, results, follow, gather and share ideas... This is an idea to combine youth work in different countries, all Baltic Countries. But to start this network on national level (strong base for the platform) and then grow. There is a huge need for this in Estonia.

LATVIA

Conclusions & learning points

The main conclusion is : everything is connected, there is a chain reaction between approach, methodology, activities.

- Through this seminar, a new interesting approach towards voluntary work has been shown : to consider **voluntary work** more like a resource, for a youngster to do some kind of action.
- The **individual approach** to young people : they are more like individuals, no holistic approach, intensions should be according to **their needs**. So first get an answer to 'what are the needs' and then create the offer.
- Showing an **example** (not only shaking hands, being polite, ...) : the youth worker is like a role model for the youngsters. People who work with youngsters should show enthusiasm.
- A main conclusion from the teachers" / school social worker's point of view : *"I have to ask what the children themselves want, what they like. Now I only use academic background based on **"I know already what they need...** . To pull information out from the child, not to push in ! And sometimes being able to take a risk, not to know exactly were it will result into."*
- **Creativity** in your work. Usually in Latvia we have a clear strategy, aims, etc. but no real creativity to the target group (in activities, approach). Think outside the box. Better understanding of the target group, the environment, the world the young people live in.
- To provide **professional support** : support young leaders, teachers, social workers, volunteer who works with vulnerable young people. In Latvia there are no big youth (support) organisations where you can gather, get some methodologies, discussions, training courses, etc. We can do more if we cooperate (e.g. between professionals), share knowledge.
- Important to plainly **describe and define the target groups**. Different target groups need different approach.
- Theory of Prof. Vettenburg and Walgrave : interesting theory to reflect about and to take into account in daily work with disadvantaged young people. The **interaction between young people – school – society**, and the breaking up of social bonds linked with juvenile delinquency.

- In Latvia many organisations are “**overprotecting**” children. The approach of the youth welfare centre of Genk Zuid was very inspiring regarding this.
- Building **trust**, in yourself and towards volunteers and target groups.
- Work on **the cross-generational** level : involving not only young people, but also older persons. This issue is a society issue, that is not only in young hands.

LITHUANIA

A lot of interesting topics were touched during the seminar :

- Youth **policy plans** on national and local level would be interesting for Lithuania. To raise awareness to the government. (there are strategic plans, but no real policy plans). Especially to pay more attention to the inclusion of “youth work with vulnerable target groups” in the policy.
- Every youth centre in Flanders has a **youth work specialist** who knows methodologies, activities, has experience in youth work, etc.
- Youth organisation **structures**: a main administration + local branches, local subdivisions (e.g. Lejo, Headquarters in Ghent, local divisions all over Flanders).
- More support is needed for **young teachers** in their work with disadvantaged young people : training, cooperation with the youth NGO’s ?
- The theory of “1000 Chances”.
- Kids learning to **play** : to play is important, but they don’t know anymore how to play ! (input from youth welfare centre Genk South).
- Young people may choose what they do in the centre (**shared responsibility**)
- **Communication** between parents, schools and youth work organisations
- **Context analyses**, in detail : to check if the project is necessary, do young people want this ?
- Gostrange.be (poster in Maasmechelen), exchange, information, ideas.

What we didn’t like / differences :

- No (strict) law on alcohol for youngsters
- School hours are too long
- in Lithuania there is not such a diversity of cultures
- Lack of volunteers
- No streetworkers in Lithuania

4 Recommendations

Taking into account the conclusions, findings and learning points of the seminar, the group of participants has summarised some recommendations that can be useful for the Ministries of Youth Affairs in the different countries.

Regarding a future cooperation between the Baltic States and Flanders, building on the outcomes and conclusions of this seminar on "improving access to youth work for young people in situations of poverty and social exclusion", recommendations for possible aspects to explore further on or content to discuss more deeply are :

- 1) Wider recognition of non-formal and experience-based learning.
Non-formal and experience-based learning should be used as one of the main approaches in working with disadvantaged young people. Providing tools and methodologies, exchanging good practices of NFL approaches in working with vulnerable youth.
- 2) The cooperation between youth work organisations and schools, regarding the approach towards disadvantaged young people.
Learning from each other, exchange of methodologies, approaches (non-formal and formal learning, experience-based learning, ...) and good practices.
- 3) Social welfare centres and youth centres – structures to run a centre, organisational management.
Learning from each other, exchange of methodologies, approaches and good practices. More time for volunteers to be active in the centres (other obligations to fulfil, no continuity, random working hours...)
- 4) To invite experts on the topic of disadvantaged young people from Flanders to the Baltic States for lectures on specific aspects.
E.g. on measuring systems and indicators in the field of youth work with vulnerable youth.
- 5) Exploring subcultures
Learning about subcultures, backgrounds, properties, communication, research, etc.
- 6) Youth work with disadvantaged young people : leisure time activities.
Sharing tools, methodologies, types and examples of activities. Creativity in activities. How to keep young people interested en enthusiastic.
- 7) Youth work with vulnerable young people in rural areas.
How to develop, good practices, specific approach, countering urbanisation, etc.

8) Creating opportunities for mobility of young youth workers from the grass-root level – abroad experience.

In order to empower them, to inspire them, to give them the opportunity to learn new approaches and activities, in order to disseminate to youth and volunteers in own country.

9) Building bridges between government and young people.

Participation in the policy development. To get to know the real needs of young people.

10) Measuring results of youth work with disadvantaged young people

Exchange and discussion about measuring systems, indicators, etc. Why measuring ? Measuring youth work is an important issue to show people, governments, etc. how youth work works and what it can achieve.

Comments & questions

- YIA provides possibilities for the issue on “youth centres & organisation management”, e.g. involving EVS volunteers & projects (for longer periods). Youth in Action Programme is known and used among the participants.
- Is a YW a social worker ? Part of the job is indeed social work, especially in the field of working with vulnerable youth. This must be recognised (it’s not always valued as it should be). Sometimes hard to find the line, the limit : how far can you go in this social work ? How far do competences of the youth worker reach ?

The topic of “Youth & schools” emerged very often during the seminar. Some extra comments or remarks were added.

- All the youth organisations this week showed a “kind of cooperation” with schools. A youngster is partly in school and partly in youth centres, but the person is one : so there has to be contacts and alignment between the two.
- Cross policy – especially in the sector of working with disadvantaged young people. Links with the health sector and welfare sector are also important. Working together and alignment of policy must be stimulated.
- Cross-sectoral working : important to have a clear and overall view on the child, the young person.

The topic of recognition of youth work and non-formal learning has been mentioned during many visits and discussions, and has clear links with many recommendations. Some added remarks on this topic :

- The new **EU Youth strategy** mentions a description of youth work. This is the first time happening, in an official European Commission communication.

"Youth work is out-of-school education managed by professional or voluntary 'youth workers' within youth organisations, town halls, youth centres, churches etc., which contributes to the development of young people. Together with families and with other professionals, youth work can help deal with unemployment, school failure, and social exclusion, as well as provide leisure time. It can also increase skills and support the transition from youth to adulthood. Despite being 'non-formal', youth work needs to be professionalized further. Youth work contributes to all fields of action and their identified objectives."

(Communication from the Commission – "An EU Strategy for Youth...")

- During the **Belgian EU Presidency** : a Council Resolution on youth work / youth activities with special attention to the accessibility of the poorest children and youngsters. (Recognition of youth work will be an important issue in this resolution).
- "The European **Portfolio** for youth leaders and youth workers" : it provides youth leaders and youth workers in Europe, volunteers or professionals, with a tool which can help them identify, assess and describe their competencies based on European quality standards. The DNA of a youth worker (based on the issue of recognition). Use it to become a better youth worker ! (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Resources/Portfolio/Portfolio_en.asp)
- More on achieved competencies and how to certify them : The **Youth Pass** - for participants of YIA projects (<http://www.youthpass.eu>)
- **EuroPass** (describes the European CV) : recognizes you are a professional, the language portfolio, tackling the issue of "what you learned outside school". Recognised by European Commission and Council of Europe.

After listening to the presentations, recommendations and final discussions, **Mr. Jan Vanhee** (Flemish Government, Agency for social-cultural work for youth and adults, youth division, team international Youth Policy) added some interesting thoughts :

"What to do when you have left Dworp ?"

The Council of Europe is organising training courses on a regular base. These courses are very interesting. On the topic of life long learning, there is quite a substantial offer and many calls for trainings. Also when talking about tools: on the Council's website, the youth portal, there's a lot of information and documents you can find.

It's important to become a better professional, a better youth worker. This also counts for social workers. A youth worker sometimes can be a supporter, a friend, an educational worker, a social worker... A youth worker has to possess many competencies, he / she has to upgrade him/herself regularly.

In the aftermath of this seminar, it is important to disseminate the results and being a multiplier, to write articles about it and inform fellow youth workers about the obtained knowledge and insights.

"The Magic Triangle – creating policy"

This is a vision on policy making. In the triangle there are 3 strategic partners at the corners and in the middle are children and young people. In one corner you can find the government, people who are working in the youth field. In the second corner there is the youth sector, the youth NGO's, who are creating projects and dealing with the target groups. The third corner represents the sector of researchers, who are inquiring the youth field and society, to provide arguments for the youth sector and the government about the importance of youth work. Cooperation in the triangle is indispensable, there is no partner possessing monopoly power.

The triangle produces "evidence based policy" : policy must be based on knowledge, starting from " what are the demands, needs of children & young people ? What do we know about them ? " Children and young people are in the middle.

It's a good thing to connect with others and not to feel alone in your work. On international as well as on national level. It is important to come together, on voluntary base, regularly, to share findings, learning points, etc.

Jan Vanhee is active in the sector of "combating poverty" for 26 years. As a gift for the participants, he presented the photo book entitled "Courage", a book about people and children who encounter poverty but no longer accept. This nice gift, together with the invitation to keep in mind that children and young people are always in the middle.

5 Concluding synthesis about the key-questions

“Vulnerable young people” or “disadvantaged young people” are hard to describe in a comprehensive way. These are broad terms, speaking about a range of young people who may have very different backgrounds, problems and challenges. “Young people in poverty” can be defined and described by facts and figures : poverty statistics and indicators, unemployment rates, work situation of the parents, etc. Many aspects may underlie social exclusion : educational status, social class, living standards, discrimination of people with disabilities, racial discrimination, minority discrimination, sexual orientation, etc. Having “poverty and social exclusion” in the seminar title, this emphasises that the issue of concern is both low income and other factors relating to severe and chronic disadvantage, and that these are closely connected. Because of those many different aspects underlying social exclusion, the target group is very wide and diffuse. In impoverished and deprived areas, the target group of young people in situations of poverty will be more prominent, but this does not mean that social exclusion does not exist in more prosperous areas. Due to the economic crisis and in times of recession, poverty often also strikes middle class families. Focussing on young people in situations of social exclusion and poverty, some answers to the “why is it important to reach them” question were discussed during the seminar. From different points of view we hear different arguments : “*to keep them off the streets, to keep them off the illegal track*”, remain quite often the cliché. “*To give them equal opportunities, to strengthen and empower them, to assist them improving their life situation, to motivate them to participate in society, as active citizens, etc.*” are more valuable opinions.

Non-formal and experiential learning should be used as one of the main approaches in working with vulnerable young people. Every young person has capacities and talents. Youth work has to accompany vulnerable young people in finding their own way in life, providing tools to strengthen their capacities and to fully develop their talents. Another task is to raise awareness about taking up responsibilities. Give young people the opportunity to grow in the organisation and to become a volunteer themselves. They know best the real needs and requirements of vulnerable youth.

Different target groups need different approach. It is important to tune activities to the characteristics of the target group and to the young people’s own interests. How to reach them often demands an integrated approach : cooperation with schools, civic society organisations, social welfare organisations. In a lot of cases we can notice a lack of interest in the activities, an indifference towards youth work. Often those young people don’t feel attracted or they assume that youth work is not meant for them. Therefore existing youth work should be more open minded, play an active role in attracting them and discard stigmatising, labelling and overprotecting. The question is not so much to adapt all activities in their basic form, but rather to pay special attention and give extra support to vulnerable young participants within the existing structure of the youth organisation and the activities. In this sense, also give the youth workers enough time and space to prepare thoroughly their activities. Give

the youth workers responsibilities, but also support (e.g. by trainings, local, national and international). Although most of the participants knew about the T-KIT on Inclusion, it seems to be rarely used in practise. A practical training on how to use this T-KIT could be interesting.

6 Evaluation

"It is a unique chance that we have met, so we have to use these contacts and continue the work we have done during this week. It is not yet a finish."

"The seminar has been so motivating. When we will be back in our country, we are motivated to start immediately implementing the things we've learned."

The participants filled in an evaluation questionnaire, scoring the items from 1 (very bad) to 5 (excellent).

1. Accomodation

- Score : between 4 and 5
- Some remarks on the central heating (in some places it was not working very well).

2. Food

- Score : 5
- Also vegetarian people scored this item with a 5

3. Transport

- Score : 5
- Good comments on the transport in 3 mini busses : 3 small groups, talks and reflections in the buss after visits.

4. Daily programmes

- Score : between 4 and 5
- Well prepared, variety in visits, combination workshops / debates and study visits is excellent, start early in the morning, ...
- More time in one organisation, one youth centre.
- Visit to a school (with vulnerable young people) / social work centre ?

5. Trainers team

- Score : 5
- Good that trainers also took part in the discussions and debates, they were always there,

6. Group atmosphere

- Score : between 4 and 5
- Often people gathered together in "national groups", at the beginning of the seminar less informal contacts between different nationalities, more time to get to know the others...

7. The seminar in general

- Score : almost 5 for all
- Experience, variety, interesting study visits,

8. Recommendations for the future

- More Flemish participants
- More attention and time for daily reflections (now in the buss on the way back or late in the evening, because of the busy programme till late afternoon)
- Keep up the good work !
- Include a study visit to a school (with vulnerable young people)
- Spend more time in one Youth Centre / organisation, to get to know better, in detail, if possible in programme.

7 Annexes

7.1 List of participants

Name	Country	Organisation	Function	Email
Ieva Lasmane	Latvia	Social Service of the Ogre County	Social Worker	ievse@inbox.lv
Natalija Pilipa	Latvia	Social Service of the Riga City Vidzeme County	Social Worker	natalija.pilipa@gmail.com
Gunta Dimitrijeva	Latvia	Jekabpils County Municipality Council	Project Specialist	gunta.dimitrijeva@gmail.com
Ilona Zagorska	Latvia	Baldones Secondary School	Social Teacher	ilonazagorska@inbox.lv
Edita Paulauskaite	Lithuania	Dept. Of Youth Affairs - Ministry of Social Security and Labour - Rep.of Lithuania	Chief Specialist of Youth Policy	editapaulauskaite@yahoo.com
Ina Balcaityte	Lithuania	Raseiniai Social Service Centre	Social Worker	inabalcaityte@gmail.com
Jurgis Asmonas	Lithuania	Klaipeda Municipality	Trainer, subcultures specialist, consultant	info@ambr.lt
Neringa Dauksiene	Lithuania	Pakruojis District Police Commissariat of the Siauliai County HQs	Head of Prevention Division	neringa_dauksiene@vrm.lt
Priit Parro	Estonia	Raasiku Middle School	Coordinator extra curricular activities	priit.parro@gmail.com
Sergei Ovchenkov	Estonia	Kopli Youth Centre	Youth Worker	sergei@taninfo.ee
Siiri Liiva	Estonia	NGO Puka Open Youth Centre	Volunteer Youth Leader and Board Chairman	siiri.liiva@gmail.com
Triin Oldekop	Estonia	Marjamaa Open Youth Centre	Youth Worker	triinoldekop@hotmail.com
Viktooria Hrabrova	Estonia	Sindi City Government	Social Work Specialist	viki_h@msn.com
Brecht Soenen	Flanders	ProMayo	Coordinator	brecht@promayo.be
Ronald Keersmaekers	Flanders	JINT vzw	YIA team	ronald.keersmaekers@jint.be
Kurt Uyttersprot	Flanders	JINT vzw	Team internation Youth Policy	kurt.uyttersprot@jint.be

7.2 Overview of the programme

PROGRAMME SEMINAR

**16 – 22 November 2009
In Flanders**

*"Improving access to youth work for young people
in situations of social exclusion and poverty"*

*Activity 1 of the Work Program 2009-2011,
within the agreement of the youth subcommission –
cooperation between Flanders and the Baltic States*

Date	Activity
Mon 16/11	16.00h – 19.00h Arrivals, airport pick-up, installation, practical arrangements
	20.00h Dinner
	21.00h Official Welcome + informal meeting evening
Tue 17/11	7.30h-9.00h Breakfast
	09.30h <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction in the programme • Cooperation programme between Flanders and the Baltic States : introduction, state of affairs, perspectives • Introduction to the state structures of Belgium • Introduction to the youth (work) policy in the Flemish Community of Belgium
	10.45h Coffee Break
	11.00h Getting to know each other – activities
	12.15h Lunch
	14.00h Speaker's Corner : the theme of the seminar in relation to the new EU Cooperation Framework for Youth. Introduction by Mrs. Lieve CALUWAERTS (<i>Flemish Government, Agency for social-cultural work for youth</i>)

	<p><i>and adults, youth division.)</i></p> <p>SESSION 1 - Presentations : facts and figures about young people in situations of social exclusion and poverty in the different countries + discussions: preparation in national groups</p> <p>16.00h Coffee Break</p> <p>16.30h SESSION 2 – Elaborating the key- questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we identify who and where the young people in situations of social exclusion and poverty are ? • Why is it important that we reach them ? • How can we reach them ? • Why don't they participate in ? <p>(in international groups)</p> <p>Presentation in plenary + discussion on differences and similarities. Coming to a common understanding on 'social inclusion and poverty' Link to the field visit + instructions</p> <p>18.30h Dinner</p> <p>20.00h Intercultural evening</p>
Wed 18/11	<p>7.30h-8.15h Breakfast</p> <p>8h15h Departure to Leuven</p> <p>09.30h-11.30h Visit to ARKTOS vzw Valkerijgang 26 3000 Leuven 016 29 57 74 016 29 59 19 info@arktos.be www.arktos.be</p> <p>Meeting with Mr. Gert WINTERS (staffmember)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the organisation • Visiting the training centre

	<p>11.30h Departure to Gent</p> <p>12.45h Lunch in Gent : De Fabriek (Habbekrats vzw) Raffinaderijstraatje 4 9000 Gent Tel. +32 (0)9 233 52 22</p> <p>14h – 15h Visit to Lejo vzw Antwerpsesteenweg 701 9040 Sint-Amandsberg (Gent) Tel. +32 (0)9 233 21 54 info@lejo.be www.lejo.be</p> <p>Meeting with Mrs. Hannelore HERREMAN Coordinator Team National organised/recognised Youth Work</p> <p>15h – 17h Visiting local initiatives of Lejo vzw :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 1 : Eeklo • Group 2 : Ronse • Group 3 : Roeselare <p>18h30 Dinner in Ghent</p> <p>20h-20.30h Daily reflection : what did we learn today, what do we take with us, what might be interesting for our work, toolbox,...</p>
Thu 19/11	<p>07.30h-08.15h Breakfast</p> <p>08.15h Departure to Maasmechelen</p> <p>10.00h-11.30h Visit to Thebe vzw Oude Baan 203a 3630 Maasmechelen tel. +32 (0)89 76 35 13 www.thebe.be info@thebe.be</p> <p>11.30h Lunch in Maasmechelen</p> <p>13.00h-14.30h</p>

	<p>Visit to CMGJ vzw (Centrum voor Maatschappelijke Gelijkheid en Jeugdwelzijn = Centre for Social Equality and Youth Welfare) Boslaan 27 3600 Genk Tel. +32 89 84 50 04 info@cmgj.be www.cmgj.be</p> <p>Meeting with Mr. Jan DOMEN (staff member CMGJ vzw)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the organisation : regional supporting service, activities, target groups, etc. • Introduction to Youth Welfare Centres <p>15.00h-16.30h Visiting a local welfare centre : Jeugd Welzijnswerking Genk Zuid (Youth Welfare Centre Genk South) Kastertstraat 45 3600 GENK 089/36 43 93 genkzuid@gigos.be</p> <p>16.30h-17.00h Daily reflection : what did we learn today, what do we take with us, what might be interesting for our work, toolbox,...</p> <p>18.00h Dinner in Genk</p>
<p>Fri 20/11</p>	<p>7.30h-8.30h Breakfast</p> <p>8.30h Departure to Antwerp – Provinciehuis Koningin Elisabethlei 22 2018 Antwerpen</p> <p>10.00h-12.00h Visit to the Congress of Uit de Marge Meeting with Mr. Jan DEDUYTSCHÉ (staff member Uit de Marge)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the organisation • Information about the Congress • Attending the awards of the yearly "CERA-Award Flemish Youth Welfare Work" <p>12.00h-13.00h Meeting with Mrs. Nancy DEBACKER from Steunpunt Jeugd (Support Point Youth)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the organisation • Theme Diversity, Youth Work Accessibility

	<p>13.00h Lunch in Antwerp</p> <p>14.00h Cultural Visit : city of Antwerp</p> <p>18.00h Dinner in Antwerp</p> <p>19.30h-20.00h Daily reflection : what did we learn today, what do we take with us, what might be interesting for our work, toolbox,...</p>
Sat 21/11	<p>7.30h-09.00h Breakfast</p> <p>9.00h Towards an outcome : "Toolbox with models and methods on improving access to youth work"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the daily reflections, what we learnt, what we kept in mind, what is interesting for our work • Prioritizing and clustering of topics and aspects • Reflections on the T-Kit : relevance of the proposed methods, relations to our findings from the past days <p>12.15h Lunch</p> <p>14.00h</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input for a toolbox : methods and models on improving access to youth work • Drawing the conclusions of this seminar <p>16.00h Coffee Break</p> <p>16.30h Meeting with Mr. Jan VANHEE (<i>Flemish Government, Agency for social-cultural work for youth and adults, youth division, team international Youth Policy</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of his experiences in relation to the seminar theme • Presentation of the seminar results by the participants <p>17.30h Evaluation, individual feedback, group feedback and sharing learning points</p> <p>18.30h Dinner & farewell party</p>
Sun 22/11	<p>07.00h - 08.00h Departures</p>

7.3 Pictures





