

**REPORT**

# **iReachable?**

## **Actual challenges for youth work**

**14 – 18 March 2016**

**Brasschaat (Flanders)**



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## 1. Background

The seminar was organised in Flanders by the division Youth of the department Culture Youth, Sport and Media and JINT vzw in the framework of the multilateral cooperation in the field of youth between the governments of Flanders, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The topic of the seminar was set in the work programme 2016-2018. The idea was to have a peer-learning seminar with study visits.



The seminar took place in a youth accommodation centre in Brasschaat, in the northern part of Flanders ([www.bielebale.be](http://www.bielebale.be)).

## 2. Topic of the seminar

### Challenge

Youth work brings value to the life of young people and to society as a whole. It helps strengthening their personal development and inclusion in society. In order to assure that all young people who want can take advantage of the benefits of youth work it is important to make sure that youth work can offer something to youngsters from all different backgrounds. In a changing society it is therefore crucial to find new approaches to reach more and more diverse target groups.

### Aim

Discuss and elaborate which new approaches and methods in youth work can help to reach more young people and more young people from different backgrounds to take part in youth work.

### Objectives

- Map the different realities of youth work and how they reach young people.
- Define what obstacles prevent young people from taking part in youth work.
- Identify and share good practices and policies about increasing the outreach of youth work.
- Analyse how the good practice examples can be transferred to different realities.
- Start discussing sustainable solutions on a practice and a policy level that can increase the number and the diversity of young people that take part in youth work.

### Questions to answer

- Who are we reaching? Who aren't we reaching? (migrants, disabled young people, rural young people, young people with learning challenges, ...)
- Why aren't we reaching more young people? Which are the obstacles?
- Which good practices exist to increase outreach?
- How to increase the diversity of young people involved in youth work
- How and which digital tools can help?
- How can cross-sectorial cooperation help?
- What can the government on local and national level do to support?

## 3. Profile of the participants

Maximum 5 participants of each country were invited. The participants of the seminar were professionals or volunteers who are directly working with young people in a youth work context as well as policy makers and civil servants dealing with youth work outreach on a local and/or regional level.

Participants had:

- a concrete experience with trying to reach new target groups (good or bad practice).
- to be motivated and able to spend time to prepare in advance and take part in the seminar.
- to have an interest in discussing the topic of the seminar.
- the ability to share the gained competences to other stakeholders in your country.
- to be able to understand and express yourself in English.

## 4. Programme

Knowing each other	Knowing the realities	Field visits	Solutions	Closing
14 March	15 March	16 March	17 March	18 March
ARRIVAL	Presenting realities of youth work in the different countries	Field visits in Antwerp	Creative & impossible solutions	Action plans / country Links and support between countries  Evaluation
	Lunch		Lunch	Lunch
Intro & getting to know each other expectations Programme aims & objectives	Looking at our good practices and challenges		Finding solutions on different levels. Different perspectives  Realistic solutions, concrete...	DEPARTURES
Dinner	Dinner	Diner in Antwerp	Dinner	
Welcome evening	Evening session	FREE	Final evening	

## 5. Homework

In order to prepare the iReachable seminar in optimal conditions we asked each country group to have a preparatory meeting and collect some information about youth work in their country.

The delegations were asked to do the following:

1. Discuss the aim, objectives of the seminar to make sure it is clear for everybody and share your exceptions towards it.
2. As a group prepare an input to give an overview of youth work in your country. Be aware: youth work is different in the four countries 😊. So, you should include information on what kind of youth work exists in your country, who is involved (amount, diversity, ...) and what are the aim and objectives of youth work in your country. Make sure this is ready before you arrive and send us an outline of what you will present before the start of the seminar. This presentation will be used in a session during the seminar.

The presentation should

- be visually interesting, be creative (as the youth worker you are) and try to make the others remember what you wanted to share;
  - be maximum 15 minutes.
3. Share the challenges youth work in your country has in reaching and working with diverse target groups. Identify which groups are hard to reach and look for the reasons why it is hard to reach them. As a country pick 1 challenge you would like to address and find 1 good practice that is successfully dealing with these issue. Prepare an in-depth presentation on them.

## 6. Expectations

Following expectations were expressed by the participants:

- Concrete “answers” on how to deal with your specific challenge.
- A list of key elements that contribute to a good practice regarding outreach.
- An action plan including a number of concrete steps on what to do when returning home.
- To exchange the knowledge between different practices and approaches
- learn about youth work in other Baltic countries
- learn new methods on how to attract and engage young people.
- sharing of past experiences
- create a support network of information
- To identify the strengths and weaknesses of Lithuanian youth work in the context of other countries;
- To get new knowledge about the practices that exist that might increase the outreach of young people in the youth work in Lithuania;
- To discuss and elaborate which methods in youth work can help to reach more young people from different backgrounds to take part in youth work;
- To find out new effective methods how to involve youth into the activities for a long period of time and reach sustainable results;
- To find new arguments in favour of the development of open youth work and informal education to change the attitudes of local authorities.
- Looking for good practices
- Making new contacts
- Share the own experience and expertise
- Learn from how they deal with youth work in different contexts in other countries
- Looking for answers on some specific questions: Do you know little triggers that can help on grass-root level? Is there existing target group specific youth work in other countries and how do they fit in the youth work sector? What are the pitfalls if you take specific initiatives? How do you deal in practice with the topic of diversity?

## 7. Flow of the seminar and main outcomes

### 14 March 2016 - Arrival day: Introduction

At the beginning of a 3-day journey it is important to get to know each others name. So we set of with the challenge to learn the names of everybody in a dynamic way. We took it a step further and during a sunny walk in the forest we got to know more about each other. Just before the coffee break the participants were challenged to cooperate during a short teambuilding exercise where they had to balance their chairs while walking around the circle.

After the coffee break we took a deeper look at the plan for the seminar. We reviewed the aim and the objectives of the seminar and the participants received an overview of the programme. Taking this framework into account everybody reflected on what were their expectations for the week towards themselves, the team, the other participants and the content.

We closed the day with some music and drinks at a relaxing welcome evening.

### 15 March 2016 - Working day: Different youth work realities and good practices

In order to be able to discuss how we can improve the outreach of youth work in the different countries it is crucial to have some notions of the reality in each country. Therefore, the national groups had the chance to present the youth work reality in their country.

The participants who were not presenting had to identify which aspects were similar, which were different and which aspects of the youth work reality of the other countries intrigued them.

The afternoon started with a group reflection on what is outreach, which led to a word cloud which reflected the opinions of the participants on this topic.



Following this, each country had the opportunity to present a good practice project related with outreach.

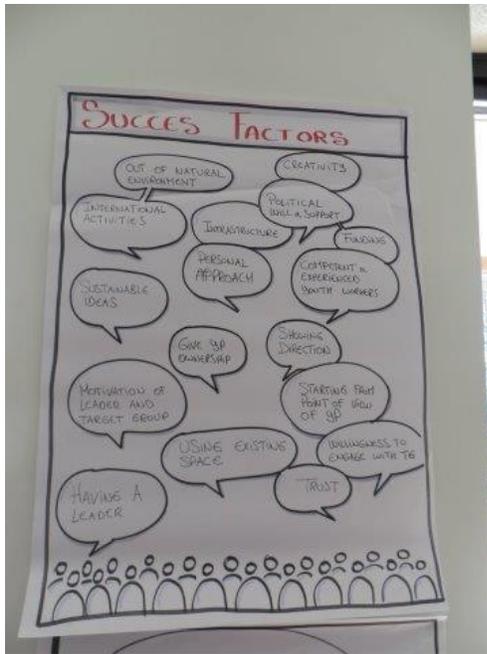
**The Latvian delegation** had 4 good practice examples. The first one is the job shadowing day where young people can follow a professional on the job for one day. The second is Ghetto Games which is a movement of street culture who are organising events for young people by providing opportunities to participate in different activities. They also presented the ZZ championship which deals with technologies, media and products that are attractive for young people. Lastly, they shared a project (Karosta Kids) aiming at reaching Russian speaking youngsters and offers activities to improve the life skills of the youngsters.

**The Estonian delegation** presented the Footprint Programme. This project is targeted to 'NEET' youngsters and has the aim to develop and improve social competences, support their personal development and help them to enter the labour market or continue their studies.

**The Lithuanian group** shared 2 good practice projects linked with peer-learning. The first project aims at facilitating peer learning among youth workers while the second one focusses more on peer-learning in groups of young people

**The Flemish participants** presented Cultureghem as their good practice idea. They organize activities for the local community, that mostly take place in one and the same open marketplace (ABATTOIR) when it isn't being used as a marketplace. It has the aim to boost social inclusion, educate about health and well-being and strengthen the sense of community ownership. The project includes a bar, an indoor playground for children and a moment where people can cook healthy food.

Afterwards and based on the presented good practices, the group tried to identify some success factors. Such as:



- Creativity
- Political will and support
- Sustainable ideas
- Funding
- Giving young people ownership
- Personal approach
- Motivation of leader and target group
- Showing direction
- Start from the point of view of young people
- Using existing space/infrastructure
- Personal approach

In order to loosen and stretch our minds we organised a relaxed evening based on the Flemish sketch-show "What If". In this show the makers imagine how society would look like if something was completely different than it is right now.

The participants were divided in small groups and each group was provided with a situation. After some preparation time they showed their small sketches to each other. The topics we provided them with were:

- What if Jesus was a youth worker?
- What if youth work was done for old people?
- What if youth work was very formal?
- What if youth workers were stars in a musical?



## 16 March 2016 - Field visits: Input from reality

In order to get some real life examples we set out on day 3 to discover three good practice examples of Flemish youth organisations that work with outreach. In the end of the afternoon we also had an input about outreach from a staff officer of the organisation Demos on a more theoretical level about the topic of diversity and youth work. After each presentation the participants had the chance to ask questions and have a small discussion.

### PAJ

PAJ is an umbrella organisation of a number of youth organisations that work with young people with a migrant background. They support different migrant youth organisations to reach, activate and participate in a broad project with impact on society. They want to improve the quality of the work of their members by providing training and advice when needed.

Website: <http://www.paj.be/about-us>

PAJ provides its expertise to increase integration in society and promote inclusive youth work. Many organisations have questions about how to deal with youngsters with a migrant background and how to involve them in regular youth work.

### BETONNE JEUGD

Betonne Jeugd is a youth organisation from Antwerp that works with young people from a difficult socio-economical background that don't connect with the 'regular' Flemish youth work. They have a hard time in the education system and have few professional options.

Betonne Jeugd wants to create new opportunities and safe environment for them. There is juridical and psychological support but most central in their work is that young people help and support each other. They can talk with each other about their difficulties and suggest solutions. The idea behind is that young people help young people.

Website: <https://betonnejeugd.be/>

### JES (City Lab)

JES supports young people in different cities in Flanders (Brussels, Ghent, Antwerp). In the centre we will visit they mainly focus on discovering and developing competences of young people. The youth workers help to make young people aware of their talents and provide them a platform to further develop them. In addition, they provide support when it comes to education, training and employment.



The centre is a home where young people can have fun, experiment, meet other young people and discover their strengths. In the centre young people can discover different activities like music, sports, training.

They create an informal context where trust is an important factor to create a rich learning environment. The starting process is always the needs of the young people.

Website: <http://www.jes.be> - <http://www.debranderij.be/> - <https://www.facebook.com/JESvzwAntwerpen>

## DEMOS

Demos is a knowledge centre that focusses on renewing and deepening the participation of young people from a disadvantaged background in youth, culture and sports. They start from the viewpoint with whom they work and they strive for an open, inclusive and democratic society.

They invest in dialogue and training, but also in research and symposia.

Website: <http://www.demos.be/>

Kris Devisscher tried to find some answers on the questions:

- Who are we reaching? Who aren't we reaching?
- Why aren't we reaching more young people? What are the obstacles?
- What good practices exist to increase outreach?
- How to increase the diversity of young people involved in youth work?
- How and which digital tools can help?
- How can cross-sectorial cooperation help?
- What can the government on local and national level do to support?

Participation-research shows that the same 'groups' are less represented within sports, culture and youth work. A classification of 'target groups' recognizes and acknowledges certain fault lines in living conditions and creates workable categories for policy, practice and research. But at the same time it does injustice to the complex reality of diversity.

He identified two main aims in youth work policy, largely shared by the youth work sector:

- Create more and more equal opportunities to participate
- Create opportunities for different youngsters to meet each other, to improve social inclusion and solidarity, learn how to deal with diversity

The main strategy with ‘A-type and B-type youth work’ fails. That is a paradox and a dilemma.

In looking for the answers and finding ‘a way out’, he pleads for a shift of perspective: ‘from the centre to the margins’ and for separate strategies at different levels.

	<b>Strategies for more equal opportunities</b>	<b>Strategies for more social inclusion</b>
<b>Strategies at the organizational level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consolidating existing projects and initiatives with a more structured approach</li> <li>• evolve from a target group policy to a diversity policy</li> <li>• create viable models for supporting local groups / departments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encourage outreach work, build bridges and form alliances, stimulate exchange</li> <li>• play workers learn to deal with racism and discrimination</li> <li>• increase the number of projects such as the ‘dialogue coaches’ to increase acquaintance, dialogue and solidarity among young people</li> </ul>
<b>Strategies at a sectoral level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• detecting gaps in the youth work landscape</li> <li>• encouragement of social entrepreneurship in the youth work sector</li> <li>• recognition and support for organizations in the margins of youth work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• representation from various organizations / voices in the sector consultation</li> <li>• connection, dialogue and solidarity between various organizations in shaping the Flemish youthwork policy</li> </ul>

The day ended with a very nice dinner in Antwerp. After the participants had some free time to walk around before returning to Brasschaat.

### 17 March 2017 - Working day: Looking for creative and possible solutions

To get some concrete challenges to work on we provided the participants with the ‘Problem tree methodology’ After having defined their concrete challenge the participants look for the root causes that lead to this challenge. They tried to go as deep as possible by finding other root causes of the ones they had defined initially. The top of the ‘problem tree’ will be filled with consequences that appear a result of the challenge. In this way each participant or group of participants got a clear and in-depth overview of the challenge they were dealing with.

Following the assessment of the challenge we had to find possible solutions. In order to think out-of-the-box the ‘SCAMPER methodology’ was introduced. With this brainstorm-method, based on 7 questions (Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Magnify, Put to other uses, Eliminate,

Reverse) participants had to think about original/creative/interesting solutions and find new ways for their issue.

After having collected a wide variety of ideas they selected a small number of interesting outcomes that they could implement in their reality. The selection was based on 2 factors:

- How big is the impact?
- How original is the idea?

### 18 March 2018 - Departure day: Action Plans and Evaluation

It ain't over, until it is over. And it is only over when things actually have changed. In order to change we need to implement what we have learned in our own realities. To support participants in achieving this goal they got some time to plan future actions. Some of the action plans can be found in the annex.

We want to continue cooperating after the seminar as well. The participants made a number of suggestion on how they can achieve this continued cooperation.

- Secret friends
- Have a "butt kicker"
- Make sure the follow up includes the same people
- #iReachable hashtag
- Facebook group
- A google drive group
- Meet with the participants of the next seminar.
- Online action to-do-list
- Meet at the beach in Lavia



To assure the continued quality of the seminars in the framework of this cooperation we provided the participants with an evaluation form. This allowed the participants to provide feedback on the organisational and the educational aspects of the seminar.

## 8. Evaluation

The feedback from the participants was very positive. They liked mostly the flow, methods and dynamics.

Overall the field visits were most positive and the 2 "new" methods of the problem tree and Scamper were mentioned most.

As improvements there is no 1 thing sticking out, beside the telephone and Wi-Fi connection which comes back a lot.

In terms of program there are some things mentioned but each thing isn't mentioned more than once or twice so good to know but not representative for the group.

It feels like they are all quite optimistic in terms of follow up and spreading what they got from the seminar with their colleagues.

## 9. Participants list

Surname	Name	Country	Organisation	Function	E-mail
Lieve	Caluwaerts	Belgium	Department Culture, Youth, Sport And Media - Division Youth	Policy officer international youth policy	lieve.Caluwaerts@cjsm.vlaanderen.be
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