



Programme

European Expert Meeting for youth workers

Rotterdam • 17th - 19th March 2010 • the Netherlands



Empowering youth work

Placing youth work in Europe as evidence based practice

Youth work on the European agenda

In November 2009 the European Council of Ministers of the European adopted a new framework for future co-operation in the youth field 'Investing and Empowering'. Its main ambitions for 2010 to 2018 are to create more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and at the labour market, and to promote the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people. The European Commission and national governments foresee a strong role for youth work to reach these ambitions. Also the Council of Europe has recently adopted its youth agenda 2020 on the future youth policy of the organisation at which challenges in the youth field towards stronger participation in society are aimed for. The development of quality youth work and its recognition and multilateral youth co-operation are considered to be key methods and instruments in this strategy.

It is with reason that youth work is high on the European agenda. Youth workers play an active role – more than just pedagogical – within the context of a varied set of youth provisions and within its decision-making chains. In the European context the common ground is that youth workers work with children and young people in a non-formal (education) setting. In other aspects the diversity of youth work and the youth worker within Europe is a fact: in background, position, capacity, tasks and responsibilities. Realizing this diversity, what are the shared questions and answers for the Expert Meeting?



Focus of the Expert Meeting

What are the defined roles, competences and backgrounds? Where are the good practices and how do youth workers share their knowledge about the methods that have proven to work? What are the lessons learnt and how is the evidence spread? How do youth workers influence policy makers at local, national or even at European level? Is youth work recognized as a broad (pedagogical) youth provision? Should it focus more on solving problems with young people (at risk) in society? How can youth workers strongly position themselves within the European countries? And how can local youth workers contribute to the European strategy ambition?

By tackling these questions the meeting should provide knowledge, tools and assets for youth workers to further strengthen their position at local, national and European level and to identify the strong points – unique selling points – for youth work all over Europe. Sharing best or bad practices and finding common grounds about proven effectiveness of those practices will be the meeting ground. The results could be a starting point for youth workers to create a stronger European network to better use their influence and share their knowledge. The expert meeting also contributes to the debate on developing a better recognition of youth work in Europe. This will be further explored at European level during the ‘EU Presidency Conference on Youth Work’ from the 7th-10th of July in Ghent, Belgium. With the expert meeting we want to contribute from the perspective of youth workers themselves.

For whom?

Around 50 experienced youth workers will be the expert participants. They have a good practical experience in working with children and young people directly. They also have a strong experience with (lobbying towards) policy and decision making structures. Also people with a youth work background and now working in public administrations or (applied) research in the field of youth are invited to send in their applications. All participants should be able to present in English a best or bad practice from their own experience in the field related to the topics of the expert meeting. The participants should be able to follow up on the results within their own settings.

By whom?

The expert meeting is organised by the Netherlands Youth Institute (www.nji.nl) and Foundation Jong (www.stichting-jong.nl). The programme outline is prepared in close cooperation with representatives of the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth, Project team Belgian EU Presidency Youth, JINT (National organisation for international activities for Young people in Belgium), the Finnish Youth Research Network, the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) in the UK and Bundesweites Netzwerk Offene JugendArbeit (BOJA) in Austria.

Programme Wednesday 17th March 2010	
12.00 - 13.30	Welcome and registration
13.30 - 13.45	Introduction and welcome <i>Mr. André Rouvoet</i> (to be confirmed) Dutch Minister of Youth and Families
13.45 - 14.00	Youth work in the Netherlands <i>Mr Kees Bakker</i> Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Netherlands Youth Institute
14.00 - 14.30	Youth work in European context <i>Mr Hans Joachim Schild</i> Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth
14.30 - 17.00	Unity in Diversity Finding our common grounds Working in subgroups on questions and themes, exploring and defining our common grounds as youth workers.
17.15 - 18.00	Plenary Discussion: Presentation Finding our Common grounds
19.30	Dinner

Programme Thursday 18th March 2010	
	This day will be an (inter)active day, working in smaller groups in working sessions, based on presentations by participants. We provide two rounds of working sessions. Participants can attend different themes (am and pm).
09.30 - 12.00	First round working sessions Themes (see outline of the working sessions) – Influencing policy makers – Positioning Youth work – Sharing practices/Methodological working
12.00 - 13.30	Lunch and networking
13.30 - 16.00	Second round working sessions Themes see above.
16.00 - 16.30	Break, tea and coffee
16.30 - 17.30	Plenary: Tips and Tops Reactions and reflections as output of the working sessions
19.00	Dinner

Programme Friday 19th March 2010	
09.30 - 11.00	Youth workers act European Working in two groups on the following questions: How to go from here tot a European context? What can we do and what do we need in order to strengthen youth work in a European context?
11.00 - 11.30	Coffee/tea break
11.30 - 12.15	Plenary wrap up – Key messages and outcome – Proposals for strengthening European youth work
12.15 - 12.45	Linking the outcomes to the European Youth workers conference in Ghent July 2010 By a representative of the Belgian EU Presidency
12.45 - 13.00	Closure of the Expert Meeting
13.00 - 14.30	Lunch

Outline working sessions

Unity in Diversity

The great variety of backgrounds in youth work in Europe is our starting point. Where do we come from as a professional (education, profile, motivation and expectations) and where does our organisation come from (history, aims, target groups, context and its 'raison d'être')? What are various career backgrounds and what does this mean in the identities as a youth worker towards children and youngsters? What do youth workers share? What are the strong points and what do youth workers want to achieve? What are the assets and how can youth workers anticipate on changing needs of children and young people in a rapidly changing society in Europe the coming years?

Influencing policy makers

Very often the 'chain of influence' is as follows: society → policy → youth worker → young people. A lot of youth workers experience tension between their day to day reality, the high expectations of young people and the high demands from decision makers and society may have towards their (problem solving) capacity. Youth workers see the challenges and needs of society and young people from practice based experience. This 'silent' knowledge can be made more explicit. How can youth workers be more effective in influencing decision makers at local, national and European level?



Positioning youth work

It 'takes a village to raise a child' and youth work is part of the social and pedagogical learning and living environment of children and young people. Recognition of youth work as part of a coherent infrastructure of social and pedagogical provisions for young people is necessary to identify its competences and the skills needed and assessed. But where does youth work start and finish? What does youth work take on board and where are its limitations? In other words, when does a youth worker say no or should say no? What is the position of youth work in relation to other provisions like schools, childcare, youth care, sport or the police? In what way does youth work need to cooperate with these provisions? What is specific in the youth workers approaches and methods in relation to other professionals like e.g. teachers, childcare and children centre workers, youth care and social workers, police, community and street corner workers? What does that mean for defining a common set of competences and skills for youth workers?

Sharing practice

What works and how do we know it works? Is there evidence based youth work practice? What are the good and bad practices we can learn from? What can we learn from existing working methods, training of youth workers, influencing policy makers or successful cooperation with other actors at a local level. We want to challenge the participating experts to bring and share their best (evidence based) practices.

Youth workers act European

What is the role of youth workers with respect to the European developments in the field of youth? Positioning youth work within a transversal or cross-sectoral approach to youth policy is maybe ambitious, but not impossible. How to make this feasible, what do youth workers need and which strategies could be made operational at European, national and other relevant levels? How can the results of this meeting contribute to the implementation of the European youth agenda's? What is needed to develop a stronger European network of youth workers?

Practicalities

When and where

The meeting starts the 17th of March 2009 in the early afternoon and finishes the 19th of March after lunch. The meeting itself is in the Hilton hotel in Rotterdam, the Netherlands (one hour by train from Schiphol airport in Amsterdam).

Financial arrangements

You – or your organisation – will have to provide your own travel arrangements to and from Rotterdam. Board and lodging will be arranged and paid for by the Netherlands Youthinstitute with financial support from the Youth in Action Programme in the Netherlands, Foundation JONG/ the city of Rotterdam.

How to participate?

Applications can be done by filling in an online Expression of Interest to participate in the expert meeting. This Expression of Interest should be supported by the applicants' own networks, structures or organisations or by decision makers at local, regional or national levels. On the basis of the received Expressions of Interest a selection will be made for final participation in the expert meeting.

The Netherlands Youth institute, the Foundation JONG and our international partners will select the applicants on the basis of their Expressions of Interest in order to create a balanced participation within the variety of backgrounds, knowledge and participating countries.

Registration and information

At www.nji.nl/expertmeetingyouthwork you will find an online registration form to express your interest. Completed forms need to be sent in by January 31st 2010 the latest.

You will be notified whether your participation is confirmed in the second week of February 2010 at the latest.

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