

Introduction of 'Europe Goes Local – Supporting Youth Work at the Municipal Level'

A Strategic Partnership of the Erasmus+ youth programme

Young people face most social challenges in their immediate local context. Therefore support for their well-being and autonomy is generally also organised at the local level. In most European countries, the responsibility for youth work lies to a large extent at the municipal level, as this political and administrative structure is closest to the young people. Municipalities help to improve the living conditions of young people in a variety of ways and circumstances. They do so by supporting youth work practices and structures or they carry out youth work themselves.

The National Agencies of the Erasmus+ youth programme and their partners decided to start a long-term cooperation to raise the quality of youth work in particular through enhanced cooperation between various stakeholders and in line with the legal base of the Erasmus+ programme.

This long term cooperation project is called 'EUROPE GOES LOCAL – Supporting Youth Work at the Municipal Level'. It is a Strategic Partnership in the youth field supported by the Erasmus+ programme. It gathers 21 National Agencies (AT; BEFL; BG; CH; DE; DK; EE; FI; FR; HR; HU; IS; IT; LI; LT; LV; NO; NL; PT; SI; SK), the SALTO-YOUTH Participation Resource Centre, the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, the European Youth Forum and two networks: POYWE and InterCity Youth. JINT, the Belgian-Flemish National Agency of the Erasmus+ youth programme, is responsible for the overall coordination of the project. The project runs from July 2016 till May 2019.

1. Aims and objectives of the project

- **Support the recognition, practice and quality development of youth work as part of municipal youth policy:**
- **Strengthen the European and international dimension of youth work at the municipal level:**
- **Develop strategies and measures for National Agencies of the Erasmus+ youth programme to support youth work:**
- **Contribute to the development of youth work as part of European cooperation in the youth field:**
- **Milestones and timeline**

Phase I: July 2016 – June 2017

- Carry out a mapping exercise to gain an overview of youth work at the municipal level, its structures, funding schemes, roles and approaches.
- Organise the launching event in spring 2017 for about 150 experts representing the countries involved in the project.

Phase II: July 2017 – June 2018

The launching event defines the steps of the second phase of project:

- Carry out an in-depth analysis of themes defined during the workshops of the launching event.

- National working groups implement actions in each country in line with the outputs of the launching event.
- External partners and project members join in with thematically linked activities.
- Organise the second conference to discuss the outcomes of the in-depth research and of national-level activities: inviting stakeholders from related fields as an added value.

Phase III: July 2018 – May 2019

- Publish recommendations to support stakeholders to raise the quality of municipal-level youth work: capacity building, mobilising resources; networking and cooperation.
- Hold a conference to disseminate the results of the project (multiplying effect), addressing both primary and secondary target groups, inviting stakeholders of related fields, policy- and decision makers, researchers, representatives of the for-profit sector, international institutions and organisations.

2. Outcomes and outputs

The Strategic Partnership expects the following outcomes and outputs:

- Analytical papers about various aspects of municipal-level youth work stemming from the mapping exercise, as well as further in-depth analyses.
- A collection of good practices and a database of experts, compiled during the project implementation.
- Recommendations addressed to policy-makers and practitioners, active at various levels, to support municipal-level youth work: capacity building, funding including the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework of the European Union; promoting strategic approaches and networking.
- Recommendations to National Agencies of the Erasmus+ youth programme on how to implement Strategic Partnerships.
- A National-Agency strategy on how to make the Erasmus+ youth programme more accessible to municipalities and youth workers at the municipal level.
- Empowered participants of project activities who are committed to develop the quality of youth work in their municipalities;
- New projects of transnational cooperation and partnerships between municipalities in the field of quality youth work.

3. Contact details

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The Concept of the Kick-off Event of the Strategic Partnership

The launching event of the project takes place on 31 May – 2 June 2017 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. About 160 participants will come together to discuss crucial topics that can improve municipal-level youth work. The event will particularly highlight the connections between European and local initiatives.

Aims and objectives of the event

The most crucial aim of the event is to agree on an action plan that will be implemented within the project both at the European and national level.

Setting plans lays on the identification of challenges, stakeholders and existing mechanisms. In this sense, the conference builds on the outcomes of the mapping exercise that reviews the most significant European and national frameworks and practices that determine or influence municipal-level youth work.

National activities are essential in the project life-cycle. Significant impact can only be achieved in the project via the national processes. Space and occasion will be guaranteed for the development of national activities and strategies during the conference.

Themes and agenda

The event will combine formal and non-formal learning methods. Key note speeches will be held during plenary sessions while the workshops will be built on participatory methods. Workshops will also give space to external inputs.

Participants will discuss the following 5 themes during the workshop sessions:

1. **Developing the quality of youth work policy and practice**
2. **Reaching out to marginalised groups**
3. **Integrating European projects in everyday municipal youth work**
4. **Managing municipal youth work**
5. **Finding an adequate and constructive role and position in cross-sectorial cooperation**

Target group

Relevant European level experts and stakeholders will be invited but the majority of participants shall come directly from municipal youth work (municipalities). Each National Agency that participates in the project shall delegate 6 participants who:

- have a key role in municipal level youth work and strategies;
- are willing to follow the whole implementation period of the project;
- might have a multiplier role in the national level activities in the project.