



## **Erasmus+ project:**

### **„What about values? Youth Social Work with young migrants/Refugees – WAVE YEU“ 2019 -2022**

#### **What was it about?**

The European wide discourse and the value framework within youth social work for young migrants has to find has changed in the last few years. Distinct nationalism, increasing xenophobia and antidemocratic sentiment in the host population and among political opinion leaders are establishing themselves in almost all member states. European values such as cross-border solidarity and tolerance are negated as well as nationalist attitudes become mainstream. Also not a few of the migrants coming to Europe have little relation to the classical European values. Youth social work has to consider these changed conditions. The aims of social inclusion have to be linked more closely to the consideration and communication of "European values" and democracy building. Therefore a more holistic view and efforts related to the practice of youth social work within a changing migration influenced society is necessary.

In addition to the exchange of good practice on the integration of young migrants at European level, this strategic project pursued an expanded objective: the discussion, analysis and evaluation of offers, methods and strategies of European youth social work for young migrants regarding the impact of "European" values, also the communication of those values. The wider focus is on the possibilities and chances of nonformal education and civic education.

A network of seven Organisations from five different European countries all well experienced in youth social work and/or in organising European funded projects for young people with fewer opportunities cooperated for two and a half years to gain results of good practice in youth social work regarding to the transfer of European values by working on social inclusion of young migrants.

The main target groups have been for the first the practitioners and organisations on youth social work, then young migrants and the hosting society. The main objective of the transnational project was to analyse methods and approaches of youth social work with young migrants in connection with the communication of European values, to surge for relevant and adequate concepts of nonformal education in the practice of youth social work and to determine recommendations as a quality feature of youth social work.

Six transnational meetings have been organised. Three transnational meetings had to be online due to the pandemic. Four of these transnational meetings worked on specific topics like: "European values basics"; "Democracy building and the practice of youth social work "; "Youth social work and the hosting society" and "Nonformal political education in the frame of youth social work - methods and practice".

At the final meeting in May 2022 in Cologne the projects results were presented and recommendations were summarised that can be used to improve the quality of European value based youth social work.

## **Recommendations:**

### **The practice level: youth social work with young migrants/refugees.**

- use playful, creative, visual and non-verbal methods
- “Be low and local” – easy to access, where the young migrants live, in the neighbourhoods, communities, migrant self-organisations
- integrate non-formal civic education into the formal measures and services of youth social work
- reach the target group in language courses: include topics of democracy education and themes related to European values in the curricula of language courses
- recruit young migrants as volunteers and as actors in civic/non-formal education - mutual learning, peer learning
- involve the young migrants in the development of the projects/learning opportunities (was not the case in the WAVE project either)
- involve the local levels of the host society: volunteers, local organisations and institutions, local communities
- choose an inter- or transcultural approach, constantly reflecting on one's own values and those of the target group

### **The organisational level of youth social work**

- more civic education, democracy education and European issues in youth social work organisations and for professionals as part of life long learning/further education
- using European/international network projects in youth social work as part of civic education within organisations
- recruit more staff with migration background
- do lobbying for the rights and participation of young migrants/refugees
- be aware of institutional discrimination – try to take the “intersectional perspective”\*

\*Intersectionality is a perspective that explores the interactions of social markers such as race, class, gender, age, and sexual orientation that shape an individual's or group's experience (Collins, 2000; King, 1988).

### General issues:

- always keep in mind the specific life situation of young migrants, especially young refugees/asylum seekers, insecure residence, housing conditions, ...
- youth social work supports and cooperates with migrant self-organisations
- as a professional/youth social worker be a kind of “role model” for European values but be always aware of producing and showing stereotypes
- non-formal education and civic education are the key approaches to discuss and transfer *European values*
- ensure the participation of young people in the development and implementation of projects also Erasmus+ projects and all kind of nonformal education.

### Partner organisations:

Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Kath. Jugendsozialarbeit (BAG KJS) e.V.; Germany; Düsseldorf (applicant organisation / coordination)

IB West gGmbH für Bildung und soziale Dienste; Germany; Frankfurt

Katholische Jugendagentur Köln gGmbH; Germany; Köln

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AZIONI; Italy; ANCONA

INICIJATIVA RAZVOJ I SARADNJU IRS; Serbia; BELGRADE

Centro San Viator; Spain; Sopuerta

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