

Pathways through the convention

by Tena Prelec and Darko Markovic



Jenny Nilsson
Swedish Youth Council

36 *Human rights and youth work*
‘The Belarusian NGO, ‘New Faces’, made a presentation about their work. It’s fascinating how they work with human rights in such a difficult environment.’

Luis Manuel Pinto
European Peer Training Organisation (EPTO)

60 *Youth work and culture/arts*
‘Because I am interested in arts and in riding bikes.’



Sanja Živoder

Croatian National Agency for the Youth in Action (YiA) Programme

19 *The position of youth work in cross-sectorial co-operation*
‘For improved employability of young people we need a cross-sectorial approach.’



Marianne Milmeister

Researcher University of Luxembourg

68 *Youth work and children’s rights*
‘There is now a tendency in Luxembourg to merge children’s rights and youth rights, and since I was not very well informed about the topic of children’s rights I decided to join this workshop.’



Balász Márton

Ministry of National Resources of Hungary – Youth Department

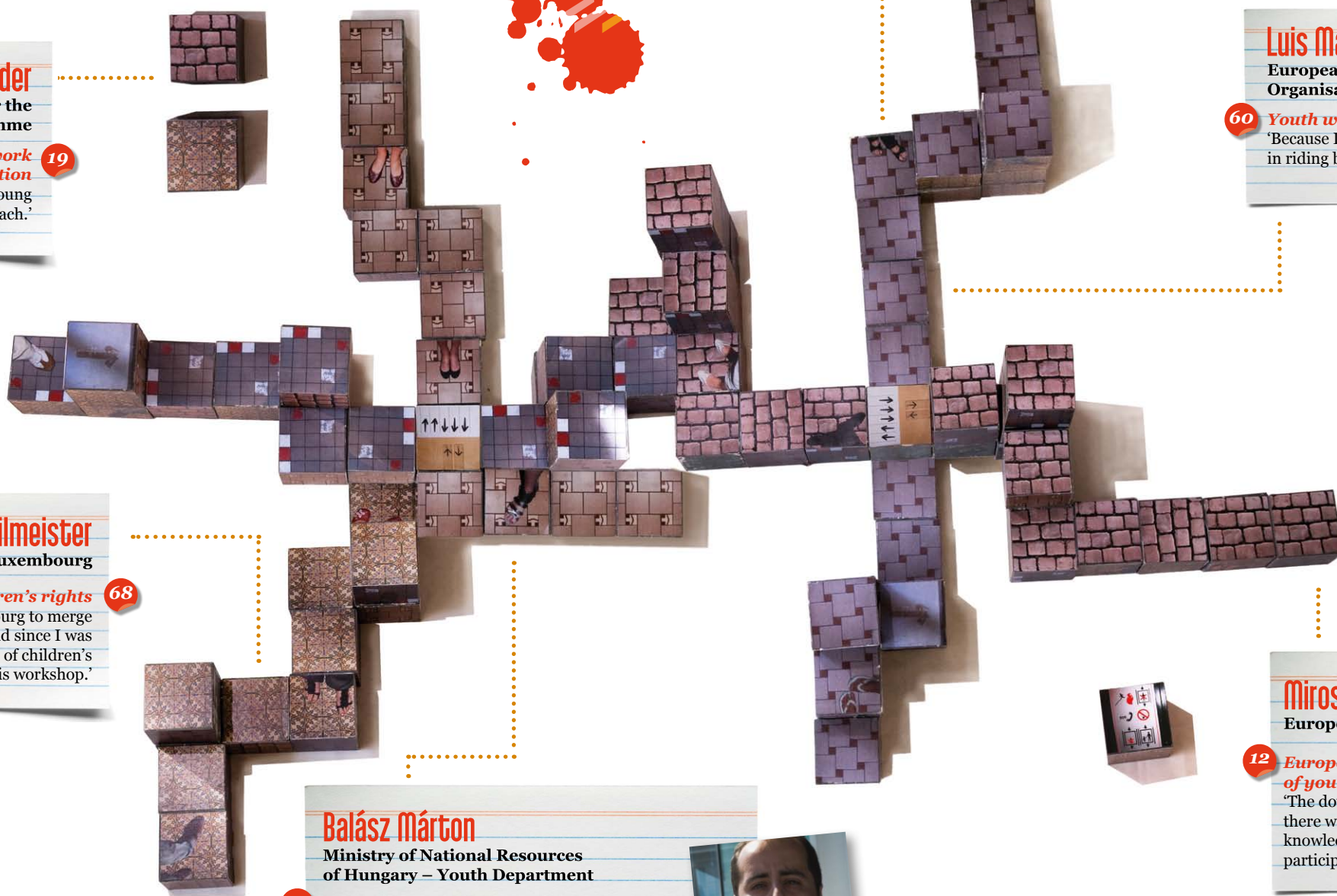
37 *European tools for information of youth workers*
‘I wanted to go to this one because I was very much involved in these processes for a long time.’



Miroslaw Krzanik

European Students’ Forum (AEGEE)

12 *European tools for funding of youth work*
‘The downside in this workshop was that there were huge differences in the level of knowledge of the topic among the participants – I found this disturbing.’



Pathways through the convention

Sanja Živoder

Croatian National Agency for the Youth in Action (YiA) Programme

3 Employment, entrepreneurship and youth work

I chose employment and entrepreneurship because in the new Youth in Action guidelines there is a much bigger emphasis on these topics – and since I am working in the national agency it is essential for me to have a sound knowledge of them. There were great examples; I enjoyed the workshop very much. Still, in my national reality they are not at all easy to put in practice.

38 Youth work and information for young people

Number 38 was too full, so I had to go to number 33, to which I initially subscribed. Still, after staying a while I tried my luck again and went back to 38 – and got lucky this time, so I stayed there. I chose ‘Youth work and information for young people’ because in Croatia there are many islands and it’s very difficult to distribute youth information on them. I really enjoyed the workshop: the example from the Balearic islands was fascinating and extremely useful – I would like to try and make it work in Croatia as well.

Professionalism of youth workers

For me this workshop confirmed the fact that the issue is not at all solved: everybody wants youth work to be organised but there is no agreement, there are two factions. Plus, there are very different realities in different countries.

Youth work and culture/arts

The project we were presented dealt with community work in the poorest neighbourhood of Ghent: they use innovative techniques to involve young people, such as hot air balloons. It was amazingly interesting to me, especially because I used to live in a very poor neighbourhood with a lot of people from minority groups.

Marianne Milmeister

Researcher – University of Luxembourg

11 Social media and youth work

I chose this because we have a project starting about new media and young people. We had a long discussion about what you should and should not do through social networks. It was really useful!

15 The impacts and the effects of youth work

It was interesting to me to explore what youth work can achieve and how it can be measured. As research in the social sciences is always less well funded than other sectors, it is all the more important to assess such questions. It is very difficult also to measure the impact of research – but unfortunately we did not discuss this very much.

31 The socio-economic scope of youth work in Europe

I chose this because I thought it would be about funding, but it turned out to be different from my expectations. The research focused on the value of youth work, socially and economically. To be honest, the topic was confusing; we did not manage to discuss it well because we did not quite understand our task.

The focus message of the workshop seemed to be: if all the volunteering done by youth had to be paid by the government we would need enormous sums of money. The speaker thus stressed the economic worth of youth work.

51 Sustainable support and funding for youth work

I skipped this workshop as I had to solve a problem at my work.

GETTING LOST

*I was not lost in the conference (programme) but I was a bit lost in the building!
I liked very much the Upside Down-Inside Out part – it was a great idea to have these interactive workshops that helped us to find our way through the convention as it took me a lot of time at the beginning to find my way through the whole building!*

Balász Márton

Ministry of National Resources of Hungary – Youth Department

It was difficult for me to take part in every session: since Hungary will take the next presidency, my delegation had to participate in a lot of talks and negotiations throughout the convention. The opening was already very powerful and created great expectations: to me it showed how many people were present, and it was also a pleasant way of recognising several faces I had met during the years I was active as a youth worker.

1 Impact of youth work: international youth work as a tool to involve young people of the immigrant community?

For me, the importance of this convention is that it deals with international youth work, that’s why I was particularly interested in this topic.

The impact and the effects of youth work

At all levels of youth work, there is always the question: how much of an impact can we have? It’s really difficult to give a straight-forward (immediate/precise) answer to this, because youth work has a long-term effect. It was really interesting.

We were divided into three groups, and I chose ‘Development of evidence-based youth work’. This is especially interesting in the case of Hungary, which has a National Youth Strategy, adopted fifteen years ago. Within it, there are two-year

action plans. These are good because after this period we can assess what we need to change for the next time.

45 Professionalism of youth workers

Professionalism of youth work is an extremely important topic. In Hungary there is a two-year higher level certificate that you can earn in 40 universities throughout the country. Still, it is not yet equal to an official degree.

56 Youth work in leisure time, for all and in diversity

I chose ‘youth work in leisure time’ because I needed to relax after all this!

We visited an LGBT youth centre. It is not common in Hungary to have a club like this; it was good to see how they do it here. And it was definitely a lot of fun!

Jenny Nilsson

Swedish Youth Council

My choices were mostly related to the topic of social inclusion, as I work with people with disabilities.

7 Social inclusion and youth work

People with disabilities are very often left out of society.

There was a lot of talk about accessibility. This is a really important topic. People think that accessibility means just physical accessibility, but it actually means a lot of other things as well. Accessibility can be accessibility to information, or expression, or many other different things. For instance in my case – I am deaf and for me this represents a big barrier.

53 Recognition and visibility of youth work

We discussed how we can be visible – this is a crucial topic as well. The discussion was really good and productive.

68 Children’s rights

I chose this topic because it’s essential to human rights. It is important to speak about them.

LOST??

Indeed, the building is really cool but it is tricky to find your way in it.

Pathways through the convention

Luis Manuel Pinto

European Peer Training Organisation (EPTO)

Impact of youth work: international youth work as a tool to involve young people of the immigrant community?

1 We have been wondering for a long time if it's really helping in creating a new society. A very interesting example was presented here.

Training of youth workers and innovation of methods

26 I thought that EPTO had a lot to say about this topic and I wanted to give our perspective.

Our organisation is made up of youth working for youth. There has been a lot of internal discussion about the issue of ageing activists. We solved it by having them stay on as support and a source of expertise, but they cannot take any official position or have voting rights.

39 Fundraising in youth work

For obvious reasons.

43 Professionalism of youth workers

In this case as well, I thought that EPTO had a lot to add to the discussion.

We (EPTO) have been thinking about the life cycle of the volunteer experience and how can you transfer those competences into professional skills. We developed a project about it.

LOST??

I felt lost many times, both physically and intellectually. Sometimes what I was hearing were just empty words.

Miroslaw Krzanik

European Students' Forum (AEGEE)

28 Sustainable support and funding for youth work

It is hard to get to a common point of view on this topic. It also emerged that funding of youth work outside the EU is even harder than inside.

People mostly focused on their national realities, not thinking in a European framework – this creates differences in approach. In my opinion, the more funding is centred at European level (EU/CoE), the better effects we will have in terms of European integration.

39 Fundraising in youth work

The focus was very much on national methods of funding, whereas I would have preferred to hear about European-level funding.

A Belgian representative of AEISEC gave us good examples of how youth work, when truly implemented by young people, can survive in terms of funding. We were shown that the work done by youth is also interesting to companies, and does not need to depend completely on institutional funding. It was a good incentive to be proactive and search for new sources of funding.

53 Recognition and visibility of youth work

I always had the feeling that youth work is not really recognised. Especially in eastern Europe, where I come from, it is seen as just having fun; nobody sees the work we are doing. It is important to challenge this misconception.

Youth work in leisure time, for all and in diversity

I think that the easiest way to approach young people (and get them interested in further activism) is to support them in their free time.

59

We visited a youth centre where professional volunteers were working with children, especially during the summertime, when the youngest are often left alone. I liked it very much: something like this should be supported in every country in Europe. Here in Flanders you can really see and feel the support that the government is giving, it is really different from Poland.

LOST??

I definitely got lost at the beginning, when I saw hundreds of people around me, many of whom were much older than I.

Tips for surviving the YOUTH WORK CONVENTION

- Drink lots of water!
- Be in good shape!
- Prepare for intense networking.
- Be open-minded!
- Just be there and enjoy it!
- Don't make pre-assumptions about it.
- Have fun! Enjoy yourself when meeting people.
- Approach it with hope and you'll always get something interesting out of it.
- If you drink a lot of coffee, bring magnesium pills to avoid shaky hands!

