Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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Preparatory meeting
Mapping of barriers to social inclusion of youth in vulnerable situations

Strasbourg
18th - 19th March 2014

Report

I. Agenda

1. Opening and introduction of participants

2. Adoption of the meeting agenda

3. Presentation of the concept paper by the EU-CoE youth partnership and space for feedback

4. Sharing expectations towards the mapping

5. Definitions and concepts related to social inclusion and vulnerable groups

6. Mapping social inclusion in Europe: What exists? What are the gaps?

7. Designing the mapping process

II. Participants

Laurence Hermand (CDEJ)
Janne Lindström (Advisory Council on Youth)
Rui Gomes (Education and Training Division, Youth Department, Council of Europe)
Natacha Turenne (Council of Europe Youth Department)
Tony Geudens (SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre)
Siyka Kovacheva (PEYR)
Magda Nico (PEYR)
Howard Williamson (University of South Wales)
Marta Medlinska (EU-CoE Youth Partnership)

Hanjo Schild (EU-CoE Youth Partnership)
Gisèle Evrard Markovic (EU-CoE Youth Partnership)
Philipp Boetzelen (EU-CoE Youth Partnership)

III. Feedback regarding the concept and expectations towards the Mapping

Purpose of the initial proposal

The purpose of such a Mapping on 'barriers encountered by young people in vulnerable situations' is to develop knowledge-based resources that can better support initiatives aiming at ensuring young people's access to rights and at providing them with opportunities to equally engage in the society. The term 'vulnerable' (situations, groups, etc.) needs to be further defined and the process does not pretend to be exhaustive for it might not be possible to fully tackle all vulnerable situations that exist and all groups that are confronted with those.

As part of the overall process, two analytical papers should be produced on:

- presenting a single concise framework systematising knowledge on the barriers limiting access to social rights of diverse youth groups in vulnerable situations (i); and on
- analysing good examples of practice in youth work and youth policy in overcoming the barriers (ii)

These analytical paper(s) will be produced to systematise the existing knowledge, identify major knowledge gaps and challenges. Moreover, good examples of policy and practice solutions, mechanisms of supporting young people in vulnerable situations will be mapped. Ideas of innovative approaches will be encouraged, proposing models of the young people's inclusion and actions promoting it. The provisional findings of the mapping will be presented and discussed in the conference on the role of youth work in supporting young people in vulnerable situations in Malta in November 2014.

The expected outcomes of the process are:

- An analytical paper presenting a single concise framework systematising knowledge on the barriers limiting access to social rights of diverse youth groups in vulnerable situations.
- An analytical paper analysing good examples of practice in youth work and youth policy in overcoming the barriers identified.
- Recommendations to youth work and youth policy and suggestions of ways to support the young people from different youth groups in overcoming the barriers described in the mapping.
- Policy brief(s) presenting the final results of the process and their dissemination.
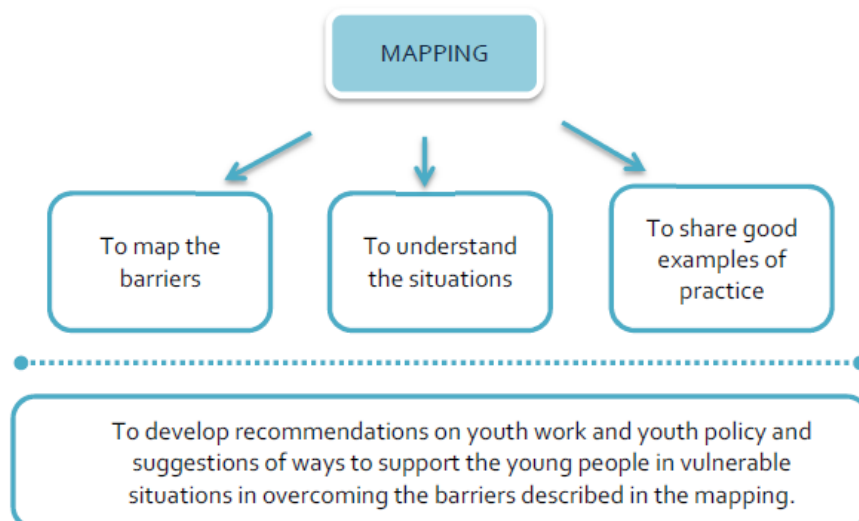
Feedback from the preparatory group

The envisaged mapping exercise needs to take previous similar activities into account such as the Enter! Project[1], and to further elaborate on their results. Strategies of the EU-CoE youth partnership concerning the promotion of the expected results should be mentioned and the anticipated impact of the mapping on youth policy and related recommendations be further explained. The geographical diversity of EU and CoE Member States should be reflected in the outcomes of the mapping study.

A number of questions were raised such as:

- How to define measures of efficacy?
- What are the context(s)/situations we are talking about?
- Generalities vs. specificities: pros and cons of both approaches.
- How to pass on the message and ensure institutional changes to remove barriers?
- How to use the results of the mapping? What does it bring that we don't know yet?
- We need to link inclusion to participation.
- We ought to keep in mind the limits of youth work; youth work cannot deal with everything. What role can it have and how far can it go?

Based on an exchange on the above, participants of the preparatory group agreed to the twofold objective of the mapping which consists of:

- Understanding the structures/mechanisms that generate vulnerability, their impact, and consequences on individuals/groups at risk of exclusion and/or in vulnerable situations;
- Exploring good examples of practice allowing youth policy and youth work to learn from more and less successful approaches around Europe.

Specific attention should be given to the following elements:

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[1] Council of Europe youth department (2013): [Enter project report](#)

- The existence of multiple or accumulated barriers faced by young people in vulnerable situations;
- The sensitivity and implications of using certain terminologies, the risk and possible negative implications of labelling individuals from so called 'vulnerable groups' (hence the more appropriate use of 'in vulnerable situations');
- The existence of unknown 'factors' hindering social inclusion and related experiences;
- The existing perceptions and prejudices within societies and their potential impact on excluded members of the society (eg. discrimination leading to a lower self-esteem);
- The risk to end up focusing more on young people in vulnerable situations than on the barriers to inclusion;
- The balance between focusing on society ('structure') on the one hand side and young people as specific subjects (of exclusion) on the other hand side ('resilience', 'agency', 'coping').

IV. Definitions and concepts related to social inclusion and vulnerable groups

Some time of the preparatory meeting was dedicated to agreeing on a common conceptual framework and approach regarding terminology.

Terminology

The above (III) already tackled the issue of terminology and related implications came about several times during the preparatory group meeting. Whereas it was said that youth policy makers are generally interested in establishing a relationship between the risk of exclusion of individuals and their de facto affiliation with specific groups of the society, a majority within the preparatory group preferred to tackle the 'vulnerable groups factor' through the inclusion of specific examples in the mapping (in the form of narratives). Rather than linking social exclusion of members of society to the affiliation with specific [vulnerable] groups, the mapping should follow a more innovative approach by focusing on risk factors and related barriers to social inclusion for a variety of young people. As a result of the discussion it was agreed to change the title of the mapping to *Mapping of Barriers Encountered by Young People in Vulnerable Situations*. The title pays tribute to the potential instable nature of vulnerability and avoids locking a great variety of individuals into a fixed category.

Domains and dimensions of social inclusion/exclusion

Social inclusion happens with regard to specific domains from which individuals are temporarily or permanently excluded. The following domains were retained from the group discussion: **Work, Education, Housing, Health, Citizenship** and **Culture.**
Exclusion from each of these domains can be of different nature and degree and touches upon a variety of dimensions (e.g. the economic dimension which can be linked to different domains such as housing, work, education, etc.). The preparatory group also agreed upon **values**' as a cross cutting element. Values would not only shape the understanding of the different domains (e.g. breadth of citizenship, focus of education, etc.) but also ensure consistency and coherence with the possible 'solutions', ways out and recommendations that will be drawn from each domain-related analysis.

V. Mapping social inclusion in Europe: What exists? What are the gaps?
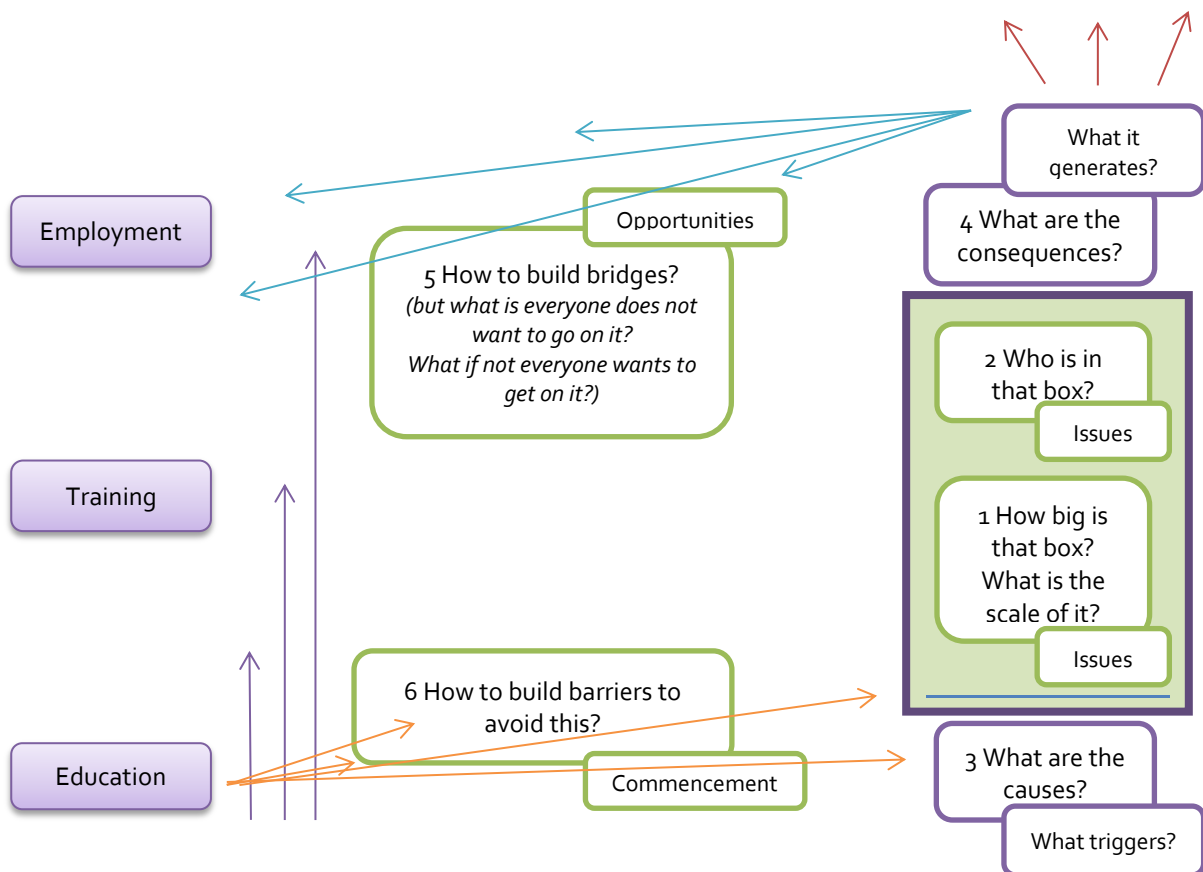
Given the amount of time required for a thorough exchange on this point, it was agreed that all meeting participants would share relevant information via E-mail after the meeting.

VI. Designing the mapping process

With a view to operationalizing the definitions related to vulnerability and social inclusion for the mapping process, two different approaches were proposed by Howard Williamson and Magda Nico.

The first one (Fig. 1 below) proposed by Howard Williamson, trigged a number of questions and favoured holistic and systemic reflexion on the process of exclusion-inclusion. It was therefore highlighted as a very good way to not only present our work but also to spark reflection.

Fig. 1 Approach to the mapping process

Employment

Training

Education

Opportunities

5 How to build bridges?
*(but what is everyone does not want to go on it?
What if not everyone wants to get on it?)*

6 How to build barriers to avoid this?

Commencement

What it generates?

4 What are the consequences?

2 Who is in that box?

Issues

1 How big is that box? What is the scale of it?

Issues

3 What are the causes?

What triggers?

Explanation

The left hand side shows the supposedly normal path of young people. It comprises the phases of Education, Training and Employment. The box on the right hand side represents those who are excluded from the "regular" pathway. The key questions to further determine the nature of those in the box (of exclusion), the reasons for them to be in the box and the impact it has on them are as follows
1. How big is that box? What is the scale of it?
2. Who is in that box?_
3. What are the causes?
4. What are the consequences (including life time consequences)?
With regard to avoiding or remediating this situation, the following questions apply:
5. How do you build barriers to avoid getting into the box?
6. How to build bridges to help getting out of the box and back to the mainstream?

Another scheme (Fig. 2 below) was proposed by Magda Nico and slightly modified by the preparatory group. The scheme accounts for the double edged character of the obstacles to social inclusion consisting of barriers on the one hand side and the exposure to exclusionary practice (e.g. discrimination) on the other hand side. Requirements of specific 'vulnerable groups' and specific national contexts should be taken into account when proposing policy/youth work interventions and should not be taken as the starting point of the mapping of obstacles. The scheme visualises the approach of narrowing down the risk factors from the general social domains to specific policy approaches taking into account a number of further criteria. The scheme has been considered by the group as particularly suitable to the work with regard to the analysis to be performed.

Fig. 2 Simplified scheme of the mapping process

	What? Domains	Risk factors/barriers (with regard to each domain and domain elements identified)	Recommendations for targeted interventions by youth policy and youth work (with regard to each risk factor/barrier identified)	Good examples of practice
Low access to	Work Education Housing Health Citizenship Culture			
High exposure to				

* Note with regard to '*high exposure*': should this scheme be used for the analytical papers, it is recommended at first not to focus on 'high exposure' as in many cases this is just the direct consequence of the 'low access to'. It may though be useful to cover the aspects not directly addressed in the "low access" part, e.g. high exposure to discrimination.

Regarding the expected mapping research the following requirements were discussed:

- Research teams should be multidisciplinary and be composed of experts from a number of different domains (incl. practitioners);

- Good examples of practice need to match the mapping of barriers (points of reference) while showing practice applied in a specific context and possibly concerning specific vulnerable situations;

- The scope of delivery should be of two good examples of practice: 'good' examples to follow or 'bad' examples, to be learned from, per domain as a minimum;

- In principle, the time frame of the study and resources available for it imply a limitation to secondary sources;

- A list of existing European programmes and research projects should be part of the mapping;

- Young people in vulnerable situations should be involved in the mapping, for example through the support and mediation of youth welfare NGOs.