The history of youth work in Europe and its relevance for today's youth work policy

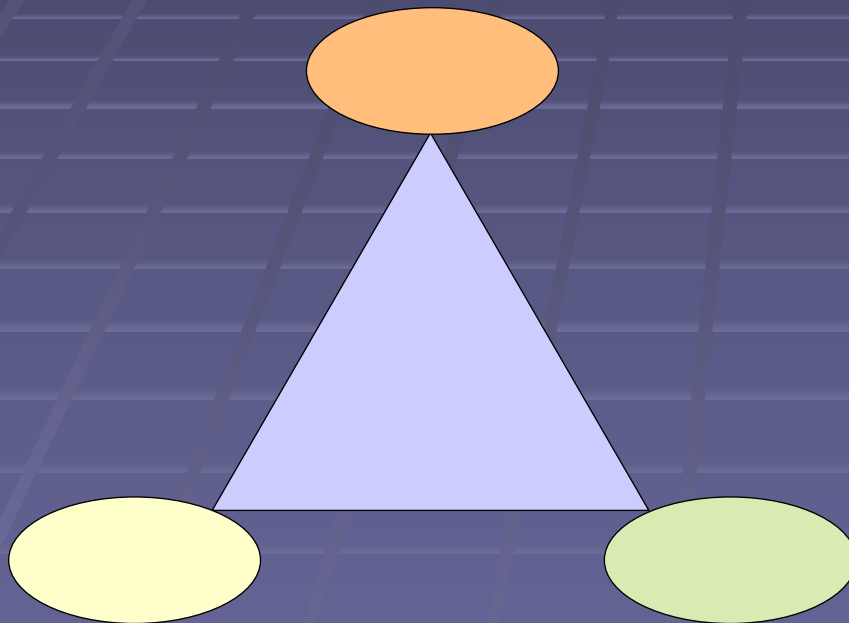Mei, 2008
Blankenberge

The identity of youth work

- Efficiency crisis and/or identity crisis
- Youth work produces active citizens, but is inaccessible for excluded young people?
- Counterproductive policies
  - The policy of 'moving up' (Flanders, Germany)
  - The policy of 'upgrading' (UK)
- Formalising the informal
- What is (good) youth work?
  - Hard and fast youth work concept
  - Convictions and concepts underpinning youth work

Programme

- Introduction
- 7 country reports
  - Flanders
  - France
  - Germany
  - UK
  - Malta
  - Finland
  - Poland

Preliminary Report

- Youth work in context
  - Welfare state
  - The status of youth
- Different perspectives
  - Policy
  - Research
  - Practice
- Report: Griet Verschelden (with Howard, Filip)
- 4 main issues

Preliminary Report

- Youth work as a distinctive practice?
  - **voluntary** attendance
  - **participation** and self-government
  - **from recreation to education**
  - a **personalised practice** focussing on individuals building up **relationships**
- Ideology? Not a progressive evolution from control to emancipation
- Youth organisation, association, movement, service, space, …

Preliminary Report

The social dimension in youth work?

- Youth work contributes to individual social mobility, but is society better off?
- Beyond 1 to 1 relations
- Social change and destabilisation?

Preliminary Report

Youth work theories to counteract instrumentalisation?

- Youth work is dominated by psychological and sociological thinking → Pedagogy
- Youth work is dominated by abstract thinking → Theories funded in practice

Preliminary Report

Re-connecting youth work and social work?

- Youth work is 'social work'
- Youth work seems to be excluded from the social political discussion
- Is youth work:
  - Working together with youth to gain biographical, institutional and political skills (and thus making social provisions/life chances more accessible/useful?)
  - Pedagogical provision in the third milieu?
  - Supporting "youth in action"?

Future

- Blankenberge 2009
- Introduction
- South-East Europe, Central Europe, Russia, Southern Europe, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg
- South Africa, The States
- 2010: Belgian Presidency