

## **Youth Partnership**

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



# **Symposium “(Un)equal Europe? Responses from the youth sector”**

**30 May – 2 June 2016**

**European Youth Centre Budapest**

**Zivatar utca, 1-3**

**1024 Budapest, Hungary**

## **Final report**

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12 June 2016

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All of these friendly and hardworking people helped not only to make the symposium a reality, but also contributed vastly to the event taking place in a positive and jolly atmosphere which made all participants welcome. Thank you all!

*“Let's create work and communities of support helping young people to fix broken lives through words, sports, education and love. There is no you and me, or the other that lives on a different side. It's we and it is us, and through conversations like these we can slot the pound/euro/forint to give us a little change.”*

*(Amerah Saleh, Opening Poem of the Symposium<sup>1</sup>)*

## Introduction

The symposium “(Un)equal Europe? Responses from the Youth Sector”<sup>2</sup> took place at the European Youth Centre Budapest, Hungary from 30 May to 2 June 2016 and brought together more than a hundred youth workers, policy makers, and researchers, who were offered a chance to listen to expert input on the topic of inequalities as well as to debate the possible solutions and examples of good practices both with the experts and among themselves.

The symposium was yet another initiative of the Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union in the field of youth<sup>3</sup> focusing on social cohesion and social inclusion, and in line with past events, such as the “Expert seminar related to the mapping of barriers to social inclusion for young people in vulnerable situations”,<sup>4</sup> “Beyond barriers: conference on the role of youth work in supporting young people in vulnerable situations”,<sup>5</sup> or “Beyond barriers: a youth policy seminar on social inclusion of young people in vulnerable situations in South East Europe”.<sup>6</sup> All of these initiatives focused on discussing the barriers young people face in contemporary Europe and the process led to a vital mapping publication in the field: *Finding a place in modern Europe: mapping of barriers to social inclusion of young people in vulnerable situations*.<sup>7</sup>

The main aim of the symposium was to continue the debate on social inclusion of youth and to move from mapping the barriers to finding and sharing functional approaches to tackling the obstacles which have already been identified and which are preventing some young people from fully participating in contemporary society. The objectives of the symposium were as follows:<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Saleh, A. 2016a. *Opening Poem of the Symposium*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/opening>

<sup>2</sup> Hereinafter referred to as “the symposium”.

<sup>3</sup> Hereinafter referred to as “EU-CoE youth partnership”.

<sup>4</sup> EU-CoE youth partnership. 2014a. *Expert Seminar Related to the Mapping of Barriers to Social Inclusion for Young People in Vulnerable Situations*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/expert-seminar-2014-strasbourg>

<sup>5</sup> EU-CoE youth partnership. 2014b. *Beyond Barriers: Conference on the role of youth work in supporting young people in vulnerable situations*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/malta-2014>

<sup>6</sup> EU-CoE youth partnership. 2015. *Beyond Barriers: A youth policy seminar on social inclusion of young people in vulnerable situations in South East Europe*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/mostar>

<sup>7</sup> Markovic, J., Lopez, M.A.G., Dzigurski, S. 2015. *Finding a place in modern Europe*. EU-CoE youth partnership. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1668217/Finding-09-2015.pdf/a1045d8f-a4c7-4889-b1a1-e783e470858b>

<sup>8</sup> EU-CoE youth partnership. 2016a. *Symposium ‘(Un)equal Europe? Responses from the youth sector’: Draft Concept Paper*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/9000853/Concept+paper+Un-Equal+Europe+%20+10+02+16.pdf/1d5ad05e-bc68-4f18-87ad-9bd6ba4f432b>

- to discuss and disseminate knowledge on inequalities, in particular in the areas of participation and social inclusion of young people in Europe and beyond;
- to share good practice in youth work and youth policy that is relevant to the key questions of the symposium;
- to identify challenges and research gaps, draw conclusions and formulate recommendations, as well as to propose models of youth policy and youth work interventions;
- to support knowledge-based youth policy and practice for fighting inequalities through networking, dialogue and peer learning;
- to connect youth, policy makers, practitioners and researchers.

At the symposium, there were four distinct sessions – in the course of the first day plenary session, presentations by various experts in the fields introduced the topic of inequalities as a multifaceted phenomenon; these were followed by informal Garden Conversations in the evening and there were three rounds of labs which enabled participants to split into smaller groups and discuss in more detail youth inequalities and related issues. Each of these labs was preceded by further plenary presentations from various experts in the field. Lab topics were based on barriers as identified in the recent publication *Finding a place in modern Europe*<sup>9</sup> and entitled as follows: “Identity and finding a place in the community”; “Education, training, work and employment”; “Participation, democracy and civic engagement”. Good practice was, apart from the plenary and lab discussions, also shared during the Good Practice Marketplace session, providing all participants a space for sharing. All of these were concluded on the final day by a plenary discussion during which the most vital messages and dilemmas were debated.

Two documents were produced as a direct outcome of the symposium: key messages and the final report. While the key messages contained a dense summary of the main points debated during the symposium, the aim of the final report you are about to read is to provide a coherent and complete summary of the symposium in terms of particular presentations and debates. For the sake of clarity, the following final report sums up the input of presenting experts and the results of the discussions by the participants by following the programme of the symposium.<sup>10</sup> Since the whole symposium was to a large extent oriented towards finding ways of overcoming the already identified barriers,<sup>11</sup> there is a separate chapter dedicated to the examples of good practice shared by the participants in various areas related to youth inequalities. The final remarks provide a general overview of the most prominent topics stemming from the symposium’s lively debates. The aim of this document is to be practical, giving as many references to further sources of information as possible; these are always in the footnotes as well as at the end of the document, in the alphabetically sorted list of sources, at the readers’ disposal.

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<sup>9</sup> Markovic, J., Lopez, M.A.G., Dzigurski, S. 2015. *Finding a place in modern Europe*. EU-CoE youth partnership. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1668217/Finding-09-2015.pdf/a1045d8f-a4c7-4889-b1a1-e783e470858b>

<sup>10</sup> EU-CoE youth partnership. 2016b. *Symposium Programme*. Online, available at [http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/9000853/Programme\\_Unequal+Europe+26.05.pdf/29d6c284-bcd8-4918-b969-66200372c0cd](http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/9000853/Programme_Unequal+Europe+26.05.pdf/29d6c284-bcd8-4918-b969-66200372c0cd)

<sup>11</sup> See *Finding a place in modern Europe*.

The symposium was streamed live online, and the recording can be found on the YouTube channel of the EU-CoE youth partnership,<sup>12</sup> it was also supported by a Twitter hashtag #UneqEY16.<sup>13</sup>

## Day 1: Setting the stage

During the first day, several important contributions in the form of opening speeches, panels and presentations were made in order to facilitate bringing the participants of the symposium together in terms of information on youth inclusion issues as well as to clarify understanding of the general concepts used during the symposium. These sessions came to fruition in the evening of the first day as the participants had a chance to discuss the presented issues with the experts during the Garden Conversations, and were also very helpful in coming days as participants were more and more engaged in active debates on the topic of youth inclusion.

## Opening

The opening of the symposium started by a brilliant poem by Amerah Saleh from the Birmingham (UK) youth initiative Beatfrees,<sup>14</sup> and subsequently continued with Matthew Johnson, the Director of Democratic Citizenship and Participation in Directorate General of Democracy at Council of Europe, António Silva Mendes, the Director for Youth and Sport at the Directorate-General Education and Culture at the European Commission and Tanya Basarab, Research and Policy Officer from the EU-CoE youth partnership.

Matthew Johnson pointed out the challenges of globalisation which can bring more opportunities as well as more inequalities. He also stated that we now know about inequalities more than ever before in all spheres of human activities, which gives the youth sector the potential to be at the forefront of the efforts to combat inequalities. To do so, the youth sector needs to be open to lessons to be learned from other sectors as well as to develop its own ways of using these lessons. Steps taken by the Council of Europe were mentioned, such as the Action Plan on Building Inclusive Societies (2016-2019),<sup>15</sup> the Council of Europe youth policy initiative Agenda 2020,<sup>16</sup> the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights,<sup>17</sup> the youth-led campaign No Hate Speech Movement,<sup>18</sup> the Roma Youth Action Plan,<sup>19</sup> Young people's access to rights through youth

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<sup>12</sup> EU-CoE youth partnership. 2016c. *The Symposium Recording*. Online, available at [www.youtube.com/channel/UCmnt9QITm11emzB\\_FoL7ipA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmnt9QITm11emzB_FoL7ipA)

<sup>13</sup> Twitter. 2016. #UneqEY16. Online, available at <https://twitter.com/hashtag/UneqEY16?src=hash>

<sup>14</sup> Beatfrees. 2016. *Beatfrees*. Online, available at [www.beatfrees.com/](http://www.beatfrees.com/)

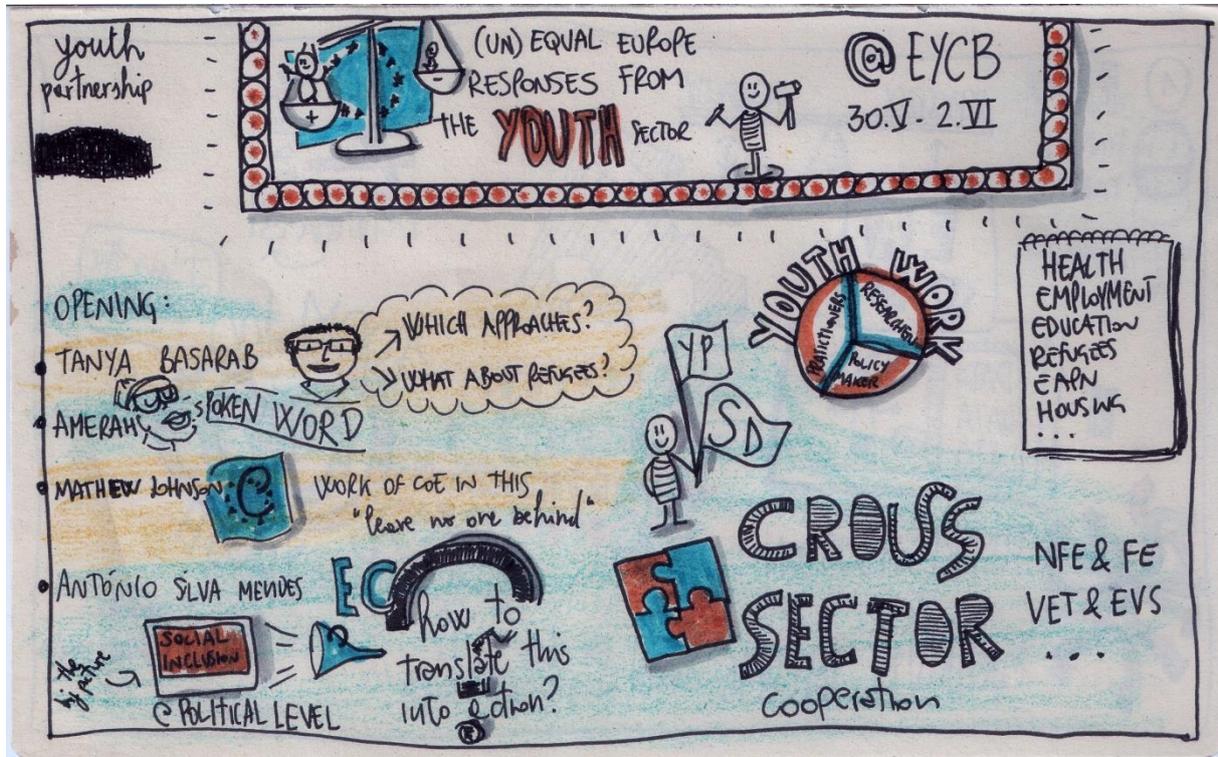
<sup>15</sup> Council of Europe. 2016a. *Action Plan on Building Inclusive Societies (2016-2019)*. Online, available at [www.theewc.org/Content/Library/COE-Steering-documents/Recommendations/Action-Plan-on-Building-Inclusive-Societies-2016-2019](http://www.theewc.org/Content/Library/COE-Steering-documents/Recommendations/Action-Plan-on-Building-Inclusive-Societies-2016-2019)

<sup>16</sup> Council of Europe. 2016b. *Agenda 2020*. Online, available at [www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/IG\\_Coop/Agenda\\_2020\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/IG_Coop/Agenda_2020_en.asp)

<sup>17</sup> Council of Europe. 2016c. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights*. Online, available at [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&Ref=CM%2FRec\(2015\)3&Language=lanEnglish&Site=CM&BackColorInter=DBCDF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864&direct=true](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&Ref=CM%2FRec(2015)3&Language=lanEnglish&Site=CM&BackColorInter=DBCDF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864&direct=true)

<sup>18</sup> Council of Europe. 2016d. *No Hate Speech Movement*. Online, available at [www.nohatespeechmovement.org/](http://www.nohatespeechmovement.org/)

information and counselling<sup>20</sup> and the EU-CoE youth partnership initiated publication *Finding a place in modern Europe: mapping of barriers to social inclusion of young people in vulnerable situations*.<sup>21</sup> He emphasised that there is a need to make further progress: identify solutions, generate new energy in the youth sector and establish new links between the youth sector and other sectors as well.



António Silva Mendes mentioned discussions on social inclusion as a tool to battle right-wing extremism as well as to deal with refugee-related issues Europe is facing today. Nevertheless, these political statements need to be translated into actions, and these actions need to be the concrete answers to the problems young people in Europe are now facing. Mendes mentioned NEETs, as a specific group of young people in difficult situations, while stressing that a cross-sectoral approach is needed not only at the policy level, but also many others: co-operation of different levels of government from the national to the local; co-operation between different bodies, such as public bodies and universities, and so forth. Various funding schemes should also be used in synchronicity: Erasmus+ could bring together youth organisations and formal education institutions; Youth Guarantee could be used for funding volunteering and non-formal education opportunities for young people; an example of a refugee from Denmark participating in a European Voluntary Service project in Belgium focusing on refugees; these are the good practice examples one should be looking for.

<sup>19</sup> Council of Europe. 2016e. *Roma Youth Action Plan*. Online, available at [www.coe.int/en/web/youth-roma/home?desktop=false](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth-roma/home?desktop=false)

<sup>20</sup> Council of Europe. 2015a. *Young people's access to rights through youth information and counselling*. Online, available at

[www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Publications/2015\\_Young\\_people\\_access\\_to\\_rights\\_2\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Publications/2015_Young_people_access_to_rights_2_en.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Markovic, J., Lopez, M.A.G., Dzigurski, S. 2015. *Finding a place in modern Europe*. EU-CoE youth partnership. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1668217/Finding-09-2015.pdf/a1045d8f-a4c7-4889-b1a1-e783e470858b>

Tanya Basarab emphasised that the so-called magic triangle of practitioners, policy makers and researchers needs to be further developed in order to function well: common ground and synchronicities need to be found. She also pointed out that the youth sector is not a universal cure for all youth-related issues and the cross-sectoral approach is now needed more than ever to achieve as much as possible. Approaches used in other sectors might be also applicable with the focus on particular strategies potentially helpful to the youth sector. Lessons to be learned need to be as practical as possible in order to ensure as much youth inclusion as possible: what research is needed, what policy strategies can be applied, what practical processes work.

### Setting the context on inequalities and the situation of young refugees in Europe

Following the opening, Fintan Farrell and Maria Pisani were the first to present their views on youth inequalities in Europe.

Fintan Farrell<sup>22</sup> focused on the topic of poverty, emphasising the links between income inequalities and democracy. Income inequality is directly linked to the level of trust in society, with increasing income inequality the trust is decreasing in population and this influences further negatively participation in the democratic processes, since the active participation is directly dependent on trust of people towards each other. Income inequalities also tend to create tensions between different social groups on the local level as well as between states on the international level (north and south of Europe, for instance). Social support schemes are supposed to tackle the issue by not letting people fall into poverty, but these schemes are often traps in their own right, providing only such a level of support that the individual is able to survive, but not fully participate in the society. This, in turn, practically prevents the individual from getting back on his or her feet. Social support schemes should be rethought in order to provide the individual a chance to thrive in the society and therefore offer a realistic opportunity to reconnect and gain stability. The European Anti-Poverty Network<sup>23</sup> was presented, as well as its cross-sectoral approach to gathering actors from different areas and influencing the society from the bottom up by generating activity on the local levels and translating EU policies into working solutions.

Maria Pisani<sup>24</sup> focused on the topic of refugees, pointing out that people have always migrated and that is not about to change, introducing the term Homo Migratus. She criticised the European Union for investing in policies of containment to keep the migrants in southern and eastern countries and prevent them from coming to Europe. She presented the term “illegal bodies” which reflects the fact that there are very limited legal alternatives for the refugees to get to the EU, describing young refugees as “socially excluded, racialised, politically marginalised and denied access to rights”. Unaccompanied children and minor refugees are a specific youth-related issue, as many of these young people going missing along the way to the EU; some of them do so intentionally, recognising that there is no chance of entering the EU legally, and make illegal attempts to slip in. Moreover, when dealing with refugee youth, we should be well aware that our perception of youth and childhood does not necessarily apply to refugee young people. They might come from very

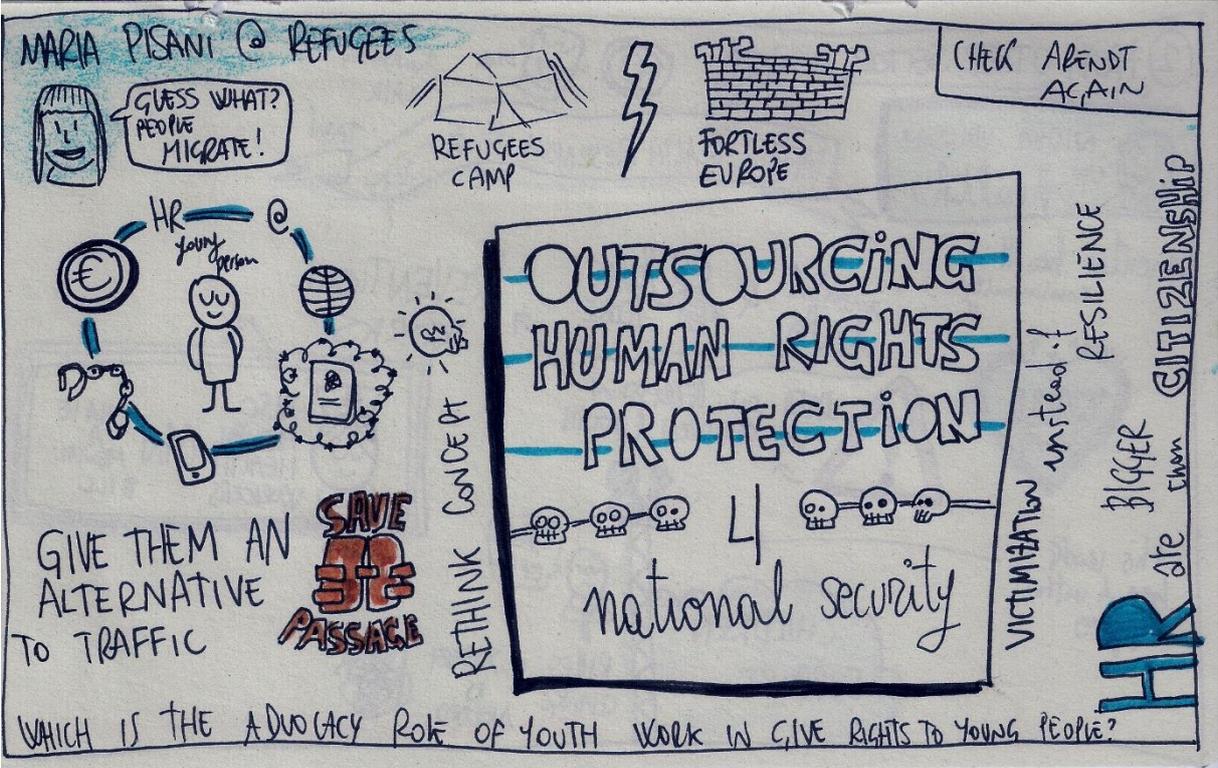
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<sup>22</sup> Farrell, F. 2016. *Poverty, Democracy and Inequalities*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/documents>

<sup>23</sup> EAPN. 2016. *European Anti-Poverty Network*. Online, available at [www.eapn.eu](http://www.eapn.eu)

<sup>24</sup> Pisani, M. 2016. *Social justice for illegalized young bodies?* Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/documents>

different cultural backgrounds and have a rather profound experience of travelling from their country of origin to the EU, which in many instances includes overcoming many hardships and dangers. She stressed that we can only achieve understanding of the young refugees through dialogue with them. Youth work should also have an advocacy role in regards to young refugees to make sure the “illegalised youth”, youth who have come to Europe outside the usual travel processes, and/or are still waiting for their legal status to be determined, have a voice to be heard.



**Panel on the challenges affecting a young person’s daily life – Perspectives from other sectors**

After the initial presentations, a panel of experts from different areas took place, offering input on youth-related issues from different perspectives. Nicola Wilson focused on mental-health-related inequalities in young people; Dario Miloš focused on unemployment issues in youth; Mark Scoular tackled justice and police-related problems; and Stuart Duffin pointed out educational inequalities.

Nicola Wilson<sup>25</sup> drew attention to the fact that there are severe threats to young people in the area of mental health, such as suicidal behaviour, eating disorders, severe depression, stress and many others. Official figures in these areas might not be reliable, but it is clear that this area is currently underdeveloped in terms of funding, workforce capacity building and systematic care provision when it comes to youth as a target group. Transition from youth to adulthood should be also tackled on a systemic level, since mental-health professionals should be able to take over individual cases smoothly, without putting the young adult in jeopardy by bringing in more stress

<sup>25</sup> Wilson, N. 2016. *Inequality of Mental Health Care for our Young People: UK and European Perspectives*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/documents>

than necessary. Last but not least, cross-sectoral co-operation is needed as it is vital that the education system take the mental-health issue seriously and continuously share with young people that mental illness is an illness and there is no shame in being ill.

In his presentation, Dario Miloš<sup>26</sup> underlined that there are about 5 million unemployed 15 to 24-year-olds in the EU. From the Croatian perspective, two main principles connected to the youth sector might be used in order to lower the youth unemployment rates: non-formal learning and lifelong guidance. Non-formal learning in particular needs to be more developed in order to equip young people with relevant labour-market competences, while lifelong guidance is an important tool to align education and the labour market in terms of objectives.

Mark Scoular<sup>27</sup> pointed out that radicalisation in youth is a process, not an event, and therefore may be prevented if sufficient mechanisms are in place. In the UK, a counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST,<sup>28</sup> works to stop people from becoming terrorists, or supporting terrorism. Prevention is achieved through the cross-sectoral co-operation of local authorities, police, education, health and social services and NGOs. This prevention dimension is implemented using the so-called Channel programme<sup>29</sup> which provides guidelines to offer support to individuals who may be vulnerable to extremism. At the same time, it was underlined that the terrorist attacks in North Africa and the Middle East are having a profound effect on the radicalisation potential of young people in the area since these attacks weaken the local economies, cutting the income and overall funding of the youth sector in the area to a bare minimum, thereby spreading more stress and frustration among the local youth.

Stuart Duffin<sup>30</sup> showed that educational inequalities, even though they have been here for generations, have grown larger over time with different inequalities exacerbated by different educational backgrounds of the individuals, and basically contributing to the inheritance of poverty. This educational issue then translates to individuals' health through their low economic opportunities, since low income leads to a low level of living in general. In order to tackle this situation, working with children is as important as working with their families. Experiential learning should be implemented as one of the principles of good education. In addition, the understanding of literacy should also be more in sync with the expectations of the current labour market, instead of providing the young people with skills which no longer fit the current social and labour-market situation.

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<sup>26</sup> Miloš, D. 2016. *Tackling Youth Unemployment – Croatia*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/documents>

<sup>27</sup> Scoular, M. 2016. *Protect, Prepare, Pursue, Prevent*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/documents>

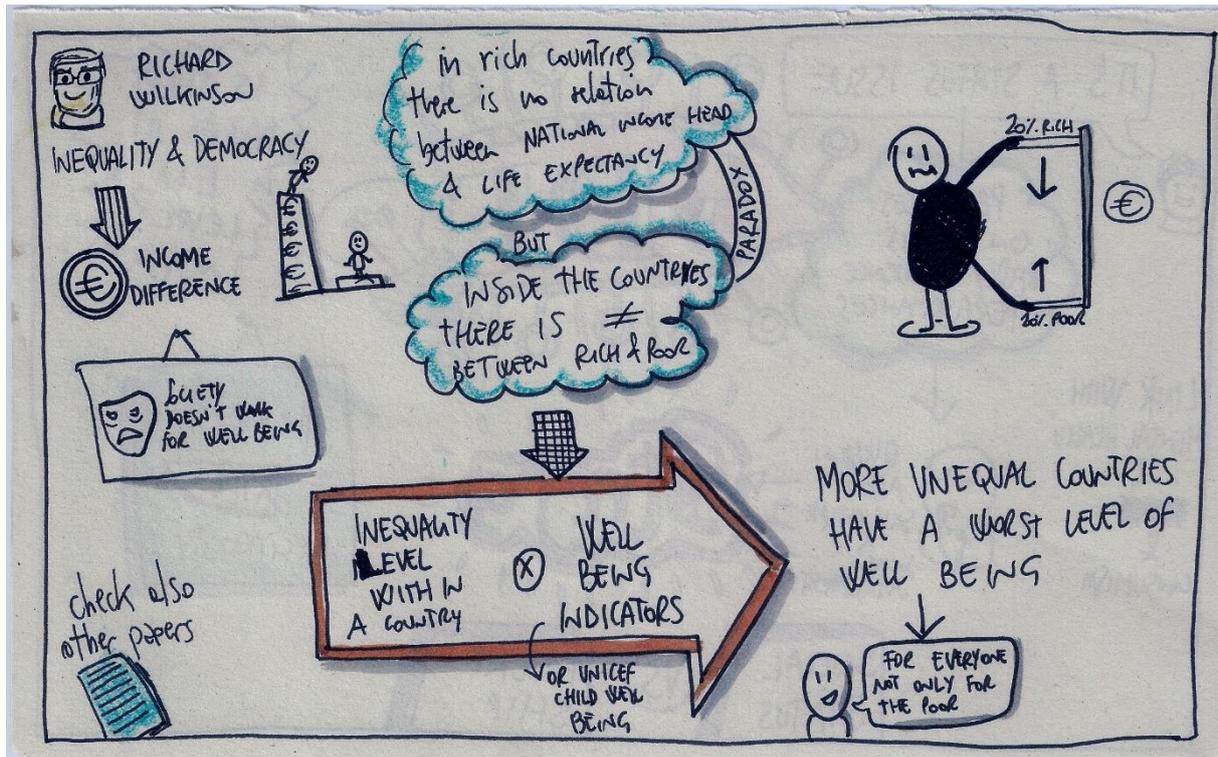
<sup>28</sup> CONTEST. 2016. *CONTEST*. Online, available at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/contest](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/contest)

<sup>29</sup> Channel Guidance. 2016. *Channel Guidance*. Online, available at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance)

<sup>30</sup> Duffin, J.S. 2016. *Educational inequality, poverty of opportunity: Choice not chance*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/documents>

## Keynote presentation – Why equality is better for everyone

At the very end of the first day, the keynote presentation was given by Richard Wilkinson, focusing on the general effects of inequalities on a society. He<sup>31</sup> stated that the more income inequalities there are, the more problems the society has. While low relative income inequalities<sup>32</sup> lead to cohesive, community-based societies characterised by high trust in others, high relative income inequalities lead to atomised, individual-based society characterised by high mistrust in others. Moreover, the abovementioned factors are seen in both rich and poor members of the society and therefore, one can see that income equality is better for the whole society.



## Garden Conversations with speakers

The first day of the symposium was concluded in an informal atmosphere of the European Youth Centre garden where refreshments contributed to setting a friendly atmosphere and deepening the outlined topics with the respective speakers. The speakers each had a rather large table and the participants were free to choose where to sit as well as to switch tables during the evening.

<sup>31</sup> Wilkinson, R. 2016. *Income inequality & social dysfunction*. Online, available at <http://pip-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/documents>

<sup>32</sup> Relative income inequalities refer to the difference between low and high incomes in the given society in terms of proportion, not in terms of the absolute monetary difference: for example, the absolute income inequalities (i.e. the monetary difference between the high-end and the low-end salaries) may be the same in two countries (e.g. the difference between the high-end and the low-end salary is €500 both in the United Kingdom and in the Czech Republic), but the relative income differences can differ widely (e.g. in the UK where the mean income is about €3 000 per month and in the CZ where it is about €1 000 per month).

## Day 2: Reflections from the youth sector and drawing learning for the future

The second day of the symposium focused on bringing the participants of the symposium into the spotlight. Short introductory speeches were made by experts in order to set the atmosphere and common ground for discussions in smaller groups of approximately 15 to 20 participants, otherwise known as labs. There were two rounds of labs during the second day, the first one focused on “Identity and finding a place in the community” while the second one looked at “Education, training, work and employment”. In between these two labs, the Good Practice Marketplace took place, offering participants space to present the examples of good practice with respect to youth inclusion.

### Lab round 1: Identity and finding a place in the community – Setting the context

In the morning, as a preparation for the first round of lab discussions by participants in smaller groups, introductory presentations from the perspectives of research, policy and practice, were given. Biljana Vasilevska Trajkoska opened the floor by debating the Enter! project and its implications for youth inclusion. Anisa Haghdadi followed up by presenting creativity as a mobilising factor with the example of the Beatfrees initiative. Kateryna Shalayeva took aim at gender inequalities and Gerhard Mosshammer introduced a policy initiative of the several national agencies of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme in the field of youth inclusion.

Biljana Vasilevska Trajkoska<sup>33</sup> presented the Enter! project<sup>34</sup> which brought together youth workers in order to enhance their ability to support young people with fewer opportunities through long-term training courses. She highlighted the results of the project, namely the work done on a policy recommendation, a newly developed educational tool and an initiative focusing on youth rights. First and foremost, drafting, elaboration and support for implementation of the policy recommendation on promoting access to social rights for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods<sup>35</sup> was presented. Secondly, an educational tool, “Enter Dignityland”,<sup>36</sup> aiming at social and human rights education was pointed out. Lastly, the Youth Social Rights Network,<sup>37</sup> an initiative of young people and youth leaders working on improving the access of young people to their social rights, was underlined. Research on youth work and youth policy related to access to rights for young people was also supported during the *Enter!* project.

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<sup>33</sup> Trajkoska, B.V. 2016. *Enter! Access to Social Rights for Young People*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/documents>

<sup>34</sup> Council of Europe. 2016f. *Enter! Access to Social Rights for Young People*. Online, available at [www.coe.int/en/web/enter](http://www.coe.int/en/web/enter)

<sup>35</sup> Council of Europe. 2015b. *Policy*. Online, available at [www.coe.int/en/web/enter/policy](http://www.coe.int/en/web/enter/policy)

<sup>36</sup> Council of Europe. 2015c. *Educational resources*. Online, available at [www.coe.int/en/web/enter/enter-dignityland-](http://www.coe.int/en/web/enter/enter-dignityland-)

<sup>37</sup> Youth Social Rights Network. 2016. *Youth Social Rights Network*. Online, available at <http://ysrnetwork.weebly.com/>

Anisa Haghdadi<sup>38</sup> talked about the Beatfreeks initiative,<sup>39</sup> a youth initiative focusing on mobilising young people through art, based in Birmingham UK since 2013, and aiming at bridging the gap between young people and institutions. She introduced the concept of “artivism”, or activism through art, which is one of the bases for the Beatfreeks initiative and offers young people creative opportunities to express their opinions on the world around them. She stressed that youth can be engaged through creativity, by creating a platform for young people to express themselves, providing them with a “web of interactions to give people autonomy to navigate the field of opportunity”. Yet another important idea she presented was the “pick and mix” approach, in other words providing non-linear, creative education. This is a continuous process involving the activity of the young person, reflecting on it, inviting others to participate, and again implementing further steps. In practical terms, the initiative provides an opportunity for young people to come together at workshops, school meetings, peer network meetings and many other occasions. It was also highlighted that the initiative has a rich variety of partners which enables it not only to provide more opportunities for young people, but makes the initiative itself more stable and sustainable.

Kateryna Shalayeva<sup>40</sup> talked about gender-related inequalities, underlining that the largest problem for women is their time options regarding childbearing and careers. Even though the problem has already been widely acknowledged, the general fear is still there: “What would happen if women went to work?! Who would take care of our children?” Moreover, there are additional hurdles preventing women from managing childbearing and careers with support from their partners: the gender pay gap which exists across all spheres of the labour market and all EU member states and also the widely spread idea that men are less capable of looking after children and households. These obstacles lead to even more pressure on both men and women when it comes to home-related and work-related duties.

Gerhard Mosshammer<sup>41</sup> presented the newly established Strategic Partnership of the National Agencies for the Erasmus+ programme focusing on the topic of inclusion and providing an opportunity for a co-ordinated approach across EU member states. This initiative is actively combating youth radicalisation using support from the Erasmus+ programme, while widening the framework beyond the programme itself, therefore aiming at as much sustainability as possible. One of the outcomes of this initiative is a needs analysis, supporting youth organisations network for inclusion as well as supporting capacity building for organisations working with inclusion target groups. Yet another important outcome is the development of an Austrian Inclusion and Diversity Strategy focusing on cultural differences (mainly focusing on the situation of immigrants, refugees, descendants and their families in their current countries of residence) and providing a basis for further actions in the area of youth inclusion in Austria.

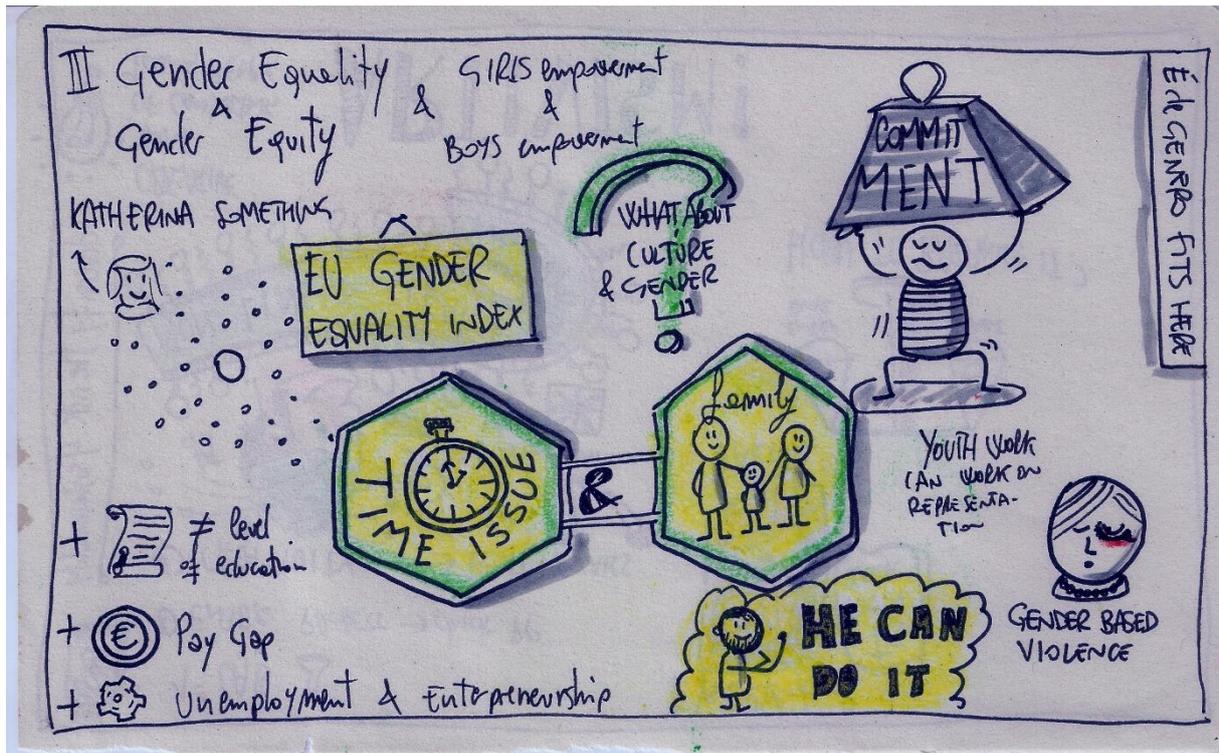
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<sup>38</sup> Haghdadi, A. 2016. *Beatfreeks*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/documents>

<sup>39</sup> Beatfreeks. 2016. *Beatfreeks*. Online, available at [www.beatfreeks.com/](http://www.beatfreeks.com/)

<sup>40</sup> Shalayeva, K. 2016. *Gender in Inequalities*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/documents>

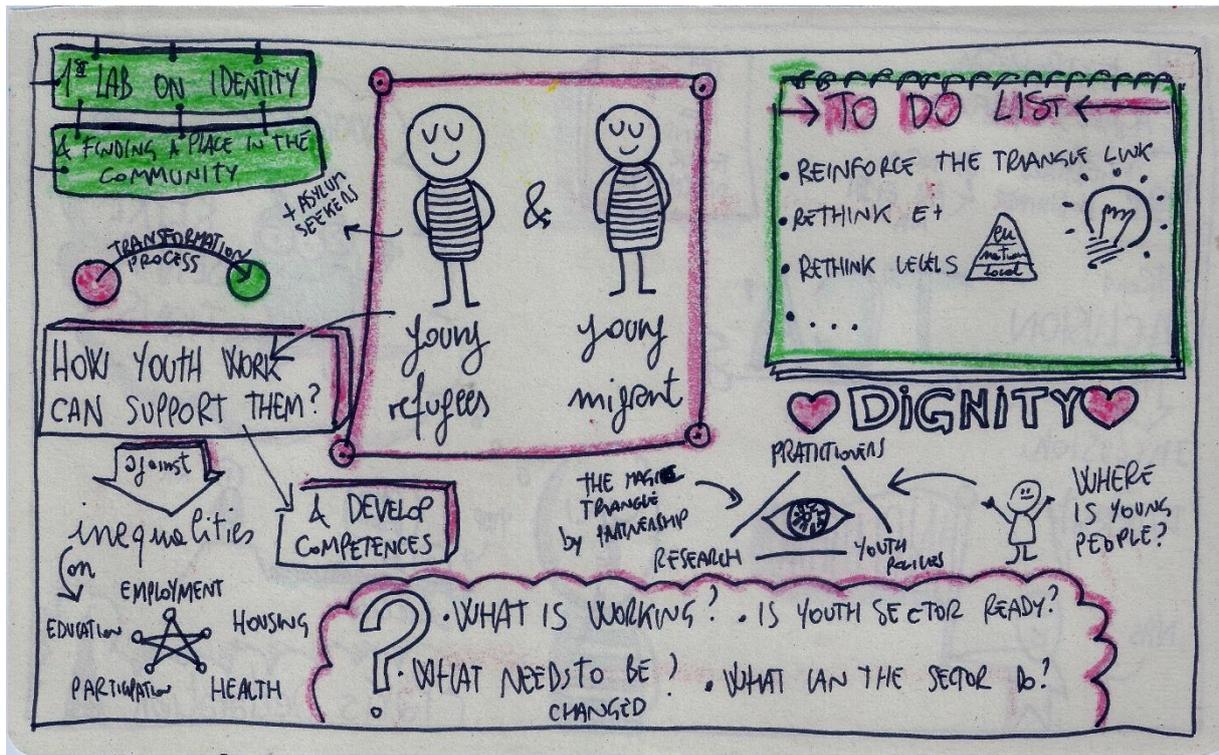
<sup>41</sup> Mosshammer, G. 2016. *Measures undertaken by the Network of National Agencies ERASMUS+: Youth in Action on Inclusion and Diversity*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/documents>



### Lab round 1: Identity and finding a place in the community – Participant discussions

Participants were divided into five different labs after listening to the above-described presentations, and set off to discuss the implications of what had been said as well as their own experience in the area. Each of these labs had a facilitator and a lab rapporteur who supported the groups in their debates and ensured that there was feedback to the plenary. The following text is a summary of the lab discussions as presented to the plenary during the last afternoon of the symposium as well as the discussions that stemmed from these presentations. There were several prominent messages which Ewa Krzaklewska, the lab rapporteur in charge of the final lab summary, pointed out in her presentation back to the plenary.

First and foremost, the youth sector should become an advocate for young people's rights and equality. Participants seemed to voice the idea that the youth sector can and should advocate for policy reforms to ensure that barriers to youth inclusion are reduced for the most marginalised young people in order to improve social inclusion and increase resources for innovative social programmes. Youth work, with its experiences, competence and expertise, can and should contribute to an overall strategy of integration and inclusion with the aim of setting up equal opportunities. This strategy should not encompass only the youth sector, but should incorporate all and any necessary partners, and could be particularly useful in the area of refugee work.



Secondly, there is a clear general need to connect strategically with other sectors. To do so, there are two possible alternatives: the youth sector as a leader of change and the youth sector as a valued partner in change. The current situation with an education sector in the forefront does not seem to provide many opportunities for the youth sector to be the leading power. This brings in the question of priorities and funding which, in many cases, come from outside the youth sector, without the youth sector having a say in the goals or in the division of funds. The youth sector, on the other hand, does have the potential to become a valued partner for other sectors through excellent quality work that no other sector can provide. This might give the youth sector the value and the power to become an equal partner in cross-sectoral co-operation, as well as a source of knowledge and know-how for other sectors. The youth sector should not, in any case, stop listening to other sectors, as there are valuable lessons to be learned to make it even stronger. It was also pointed out that the youth sector should be willing to co-operate with other sectors, since marginalisation of the youth sector stems to a certain extent from its own unwillingness to co-operate with other sectors, as is described in *The History of Youth Work in Europe, volume 5*.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, the youth sector should keep the ability to ask the questions that no other sector dares to ask, as well as its agility and flexibility based on fewer formal rules and obligations. The youth sector should try to overcome the lack of visibility and communication within and outside of the sector itself. This is also connected to a desired increase in material resources (budgets, structures, etc.) as well as a desired increase in recognition of the value and impact of youth work. To accomplish this, an increased connectivity within the youth sector, through creating platforms of communication, co-ordination and exchange between the corners of the triangle to define priorities and increase stability and recognition, is a

<sup>42</sup> Siurala, L., Coussée, F., Suurpää, L., Williamson, H. 2016. *The History of Youth Work in Europe. Autonomy through dependency – Histories of co-operation, conflict and innovation in youth work, Volume 5*. Online, available at <http://pip-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1667851/History+of+Youth+Work+V-5-WEB.pdf/93ac247b-b664-4998-9f53-71e4191515fc>

must. Safe and permanent spaces for dialogue among different actors in the youth field need to be created, and these need to be permanent and sustainable.

The third important issue was the one-fits-all approach often imposed by the current society on young people. Youth work should aim at changing this approach to making society fit young people, not the other way around, namely by avoiding and preventing victimisation, labelling, and dependence creation. Young people should be given an opportunity to create their own paths, be it in education or in employment. Education should not have dead-ends; it should, instead, apply the step-on, step-off model of creative and fluid learning, in which formal and non-formal learning closely co-operate and create a safe environment in which young people can find their own identities. This is the case of the Beatfreaks approach to non-linear creative learning or the stepping stones approach. The same applies to the area of youth participation, where innovative and positive ways of participation for young people should be found and identified (because many alternatives can already be found in different initiatives).

The fourth point was the development of efficient and constructive methodologies for building relationships with young people. Young people need respect in their communities, families and schools; they need space and a place in which they can experience the feeling of belonging; they need a voice and choice instead of ready-made solutions. In connection to the aforementioned spaces and voices, the European Youth Work Declaration<sup>43</sup> was described as it brings forward similar concepts of places and bridges. Last but not least, young people need the youth sector to be the safety net that is extended in case of failures of other sectors (e.g. education). This safety net needs to be based on co-operation with other sectors, and it needs to have the properties of a trampoline. Young people cannot stay in the safety net; it needs to launch them back into their lives.

Some questions and dilemmas were also communicated back to the plenary, and further discussed. The first question aimed at the target group of youth work was: does general youth work create enough opportunities and spaces for specific groups of young people, such as young people with fewer opportunities? Some reactions from the participants suggested that most of the young people with fewer opportunities need to be, and often are, reached through general youth work, and that youth workers naturally use different approaches with various groups of young people. The second question, which remained unanswered, focused on strengthening knowledge about young people without betraying their trust. The third dilemma pointed out that youth work, research and policy always need to find the fine line between autonomy and dependency on other sectors, which also brings in the need to find a balance between the bold, daring attitude of the youth sector and the necessity to conform with priorities and funding schemes of other sectors at the same time.

Finally, the last question presented served also as a message to the audience: one of the tasks of youth work is to create hope for and in young people and there is a need to find a way to do so in order to make young people optimistic about their own future.

## Good Practice Marketplace

A space specifically devoted to sharing examples of good practice was offered to the participants of the symposium, and many participants used the opportunity to present their own

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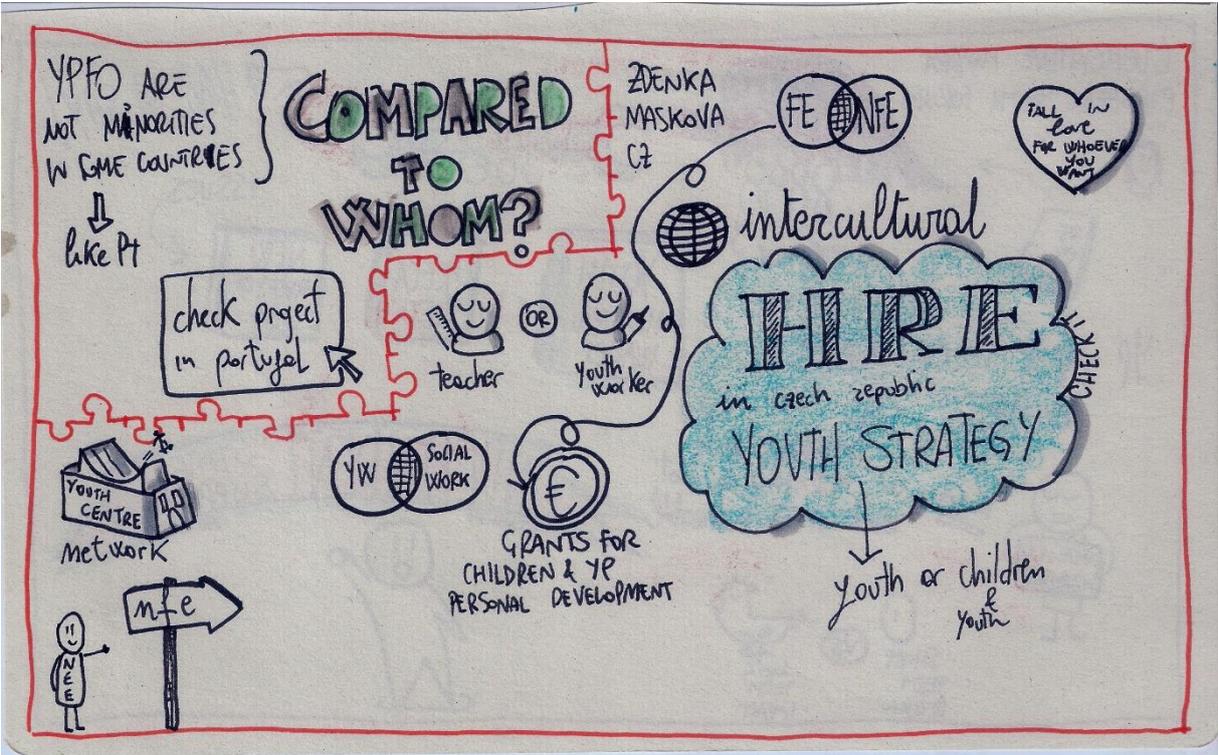
<sup>43</sup> European Youth Work Convention. 2015. *Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention*. Online, available at <http://pip-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/eywc-website-declaration>

experience in social inclusion of young people. Participants had presentation stalls at their disposal while their peers moved among the stalls, asked questions and listened to presentations or lively discussions. Good practice sharing happened throughout the symposium and examples of good practices are summarised in a separate chapter at the end of this report, for the readers' convenience.

**Lab round 2: Education, training, work and employment – Setting the context**

Before another round of labs took place, experts again introduced the main topic from different perspectives. Magda Nico talked about youth inequalities in general; Zdeňka Mašková presented co-operation between formal and non-formal education in the Czech Republic; Clementine Moyart spoke of systemic barriers to social inclusion of young people in Europe; and Daniel Briggs zoomed in on the impact of educational inequalities on young people.

Magda Nico<sup>44</sup> stressed that inequality is a process, not a state, and therefore no one is necessarily immune to it. The fact that an individual does not belong to a disadvantaged group at the moment does not mean they will not belong to one in the future. During her speech she pointed out that dynamic, cumulative and holistic indicators of inequalities are needed in order to assure that inequalities are well monitored and that we have a chance to react appropriately and in a timely manner.



<sup>44</sup> Nico, M. 2016. *Understanding Youth Inequalities*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/documents>

Zdeňka Mašková<sup>45</sup> talked about the Czech National Youth Policy,<sup>46</sup> using it as an example of inclusive good practice on the policy level. The Czech National Youth Policy supports children and youth with learning difficulties, as well as talented pupils on the basis of individual needs. She also highlighted that intergenerational solidarity and dialogue is an intrinsic part of the policy as well as one of the core goals, underlining empathy as an ultimate achievement. She also pointed out that support to young people must not exceed a certain limit beyond which it is no longer an impetus for young people's development but becomes an obstacle for growth.

Clementine Moyart<sup>47</sup> stated that multiple discrimination of youth is taking place in areas such as access to rights, housing or health care, with cumulative effects on the individual. She emphasised that more investment in lifelong learning and non-formal education is needed in addition to second-chance programmes and quality apprenticeships. In other words, the system needs to change in favour of young people; we should not be trying to squeeze young people into the current system, as it is not in line with their needs.

Daniel Briggs<sup>48</sup> introduced the idea that meritocracy went wrong. Young people are led to believe that success is only their responsibility, but this is not true and never was. Success is largely influenced by the system as such, which then to a large extent determines who will succeed and who will fail. Thanks to the aforementioned rhetoric of meritocracy, failure is felt twice as hard: not only as a failure, but as a failure in something which one was led to believe can be successful. As an example of this mechanism, a concept of cultural capital was presented, which refers to life skills and general cultural knowledge on behaviour, norms, language and society usually learned at home. Many young people from disadvantaged background miss such an opportunity and have more difficulties preparing for high end jobs.

## Lab round 2: Education, training, work and employment – Participant discussions

Participants were divided into five different labs after listening to the above-described presentations and then set off to discuss the implications of what had been said and their own experience in the area. Each of these labs included a facilitator and a lab rapporteur who supported the groups in their debates and ensured that feedback was given to the plenary. The following text is a summary of the lab discussions as presented back to the plenary during the last afternoon of the symposium as well as the discussions that followed these presentations. There were several prominent messages which Marti Taru, the lab rapporteur in charge of the final lab summary, pointed out in his presentation back to the plenary.

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<sup>45</sup> Mašková, Z. 2016. *Inclusive National Youth Policy 2014 – 2020, Czech Republic*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/documents>

<sup>46</sup> MEYS. 2016. *Koncepce podpory mládeže na období 2014-2020*. Online, available at [www.msmt.cz/mladez/koncepce-podpory-mladeze-na-obdobi-2014-2020?lang=1](http://www.msmt.cz/mladez/koncepce-podpory-mladeze-na-obdobi-2014-2020?lang=1)

<sup>47</sup> Moyart, C. 2016. *Proposals for tackling systemic barriers to social exclusion of young people in Europe*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/documents>

<sup>48</sup> Briggs, D. 2016. *Meritocracy gone wrong: The “winners” and “losers” of learning in European education systems*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/documents>



they left the educational system without completing any certificates at all (due to their sudden escape from the country, etc.). Current educational systems should be adjusted in order to allow young refugees to participate, make up for lost time and get the lost certification which is necessary for them to enter the labour market later on. In order to help the school systems with the necessary adjustments, as outlined above, a bridge between youth work perceptions of individual learning and personal fulfilment could be used to complement the formal education approach which is mostly based on labour-market priorities. In other words, schools should be encouraged to co-operate with youth work in order to create flexible and friendly learning environments and teaching approaches which would allow all young people not only to participate in formal schooling, but to do so positively motivated and emotionally engaged. The question of how much young people should be trained to fit into the existent labour market, and to what extent, on the contrary, should young people be encouraged to change the labour market to fit their expectations and needs, was raised. Flexible and appealing schooling might provide a balanced answer to that question by providing young people with necessary basics while also allowing them to experiment and supporting them in thinking out of the box.

An idea of establishing coalitions with companies and entrepreneurs in order to provide labour-market training for young people was presented and heavily discussed. Should youth work invite companies to take part in its activities, or rather offer its expertise for the purposes of enhancing company training programmes? What is the balance between producing economic results and creating socialised human beings? Should youth work tackle economic issues or social ones? Whatever models might be adopted in practice, such coalitions should include several partners working together, to enhance the sustainability of such endeavours. At the same time, the system of internships should change in order to provide real added value to young people, and to limit exploitation by employers to the largest extent possible. Internships should allow young people to step into the labour market, to get introduced not only to the procedures, but more importantly to people who have achieved certain goals during their internships. They should be treated as employees, and not as a cheap labour without any recognition.

The financial sustainability of youth work was also underlined as a vital topic. Even though youth work is a public service and as such should be funded by public budgets, experience shows that this cannot be guaranteed at all times. Therefore youth work should not rely on public funding only, but should also aim at achieving a certain level of independence by using alternative financial sources as well, for example donations from the private sector.

Last but not least, peer learning within the youth work field was mentioned as an important tool to keep up with the rapid pace of social change in today's societies. It was stressed that adopting good practices from one country, target group or cultural environment to another takes effort and youth work should be prepared to make this effort for the sake of levelling-up its own experience both nationally and internationally. Currently, a recommendation is being prepared on how peer learning should be conducted in order to be efficient and successful, which can help this complicated process in the future and should be used to the advantage of the youth field.

## Day 3: Drawing conclusions – Proposals for strengthening the youth sector

The third day of the symposium provided more space for the participant discussions during the third and last lab focusing on participation, democracy and civic engagement and at the same time brought the whole symposium programme to a conclusion by gathering and discussing various contributions and ideas from the participants and expert presentations during a plenary session, followed by a summarising presentation by the General Rapporteur Ondřej Bárta, and closing remarks by the Council of Europe and European Union officials.

### Lab round 3: Participation, democracy and civic engagement – Setting the context

Four experts gave speeches as an introduction to the final round of labs. Veronica Stefan spoke of developing practical solutions to inequalities and social exclusion; Alexandra Severino and Sergio Maia Tavares Marques talked of links between the social situation of young people and their citizenship identity; and Mohammed Alsaun elaborated on working for the integration of migrants in community life.

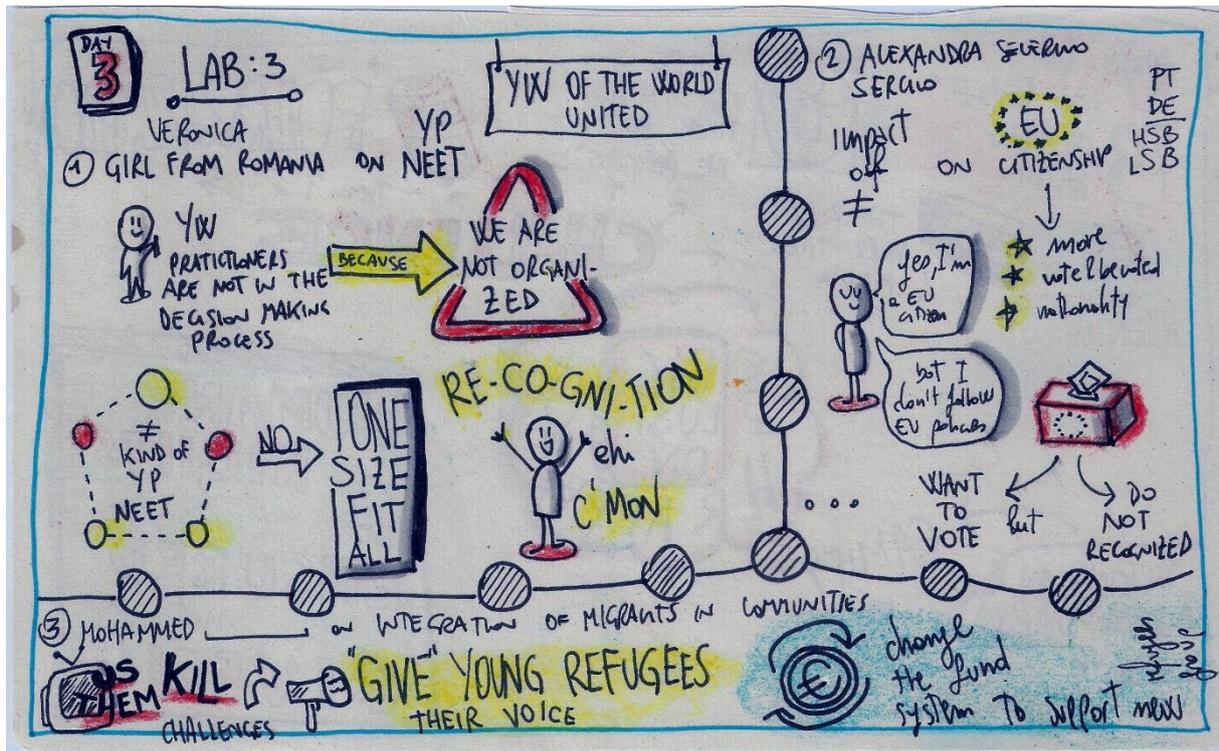
Veronica Stefan<sup>49</sup> stated that NEETs constitute an invisible generation which does not participate in civic life; therefore their voice is not heard and their interests are not being represented on the policy level. She also underlined that NEETs cost the society twice as much as one might think: not only in social welfare support, but also the contributions to the gross national product which are lost due to their inactivity. She highlighted that further investment in the youth sector, as a strong player in this area, is needed as well as recognition of the youth field and youth workers. Apart from these requirements, youth work also needs to develop advocacy mechanisms to reach policy makers and be able to introduce working mechanisms into political discourse (grassroots approach). In order to do so, youth workers should get organised, using umbrella organisations or various other forms of coalitions in order to bring together as many NGOs and other actors in the area as possible.

Alexandra Severino and Sergio Maia Tavares Marques<sup>50</sup> presented the results of research into the European identity of young people in relation to their social background. They learned that young people attending schools in low socio-economic areas are less likely to participate in EU activities and therefore less likely to feel European, in comparison to their counterparts from schools in high socio-economic areas. Shockingly, teachers in low socio-economic area schools explicitly express that talking to young people about the EU does not make sense, suggesting that the young people attending such schools have no interest or opinion to share. Two lessons can be drawn from the study. Firstly, European identity cannot be created in young people who are not reached by EU programmes – these young people have no opportunity to experience what the European ethos is about. Secondly, European programmes are not efficient in reaching out to young people with fewer opportunities, which subsequently leads to them not being able to develop their European identity.

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<sup>49</sup> Stefan, V. 2016. Developing Practical Solutions to Inequalities and Social Exclusion. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/documents>

<sup>50</sup> Severino, A., Marques, S.M.T. 2016. *Considerations on European citizenship and access to equal opportunities for young people in Europe*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/documents>

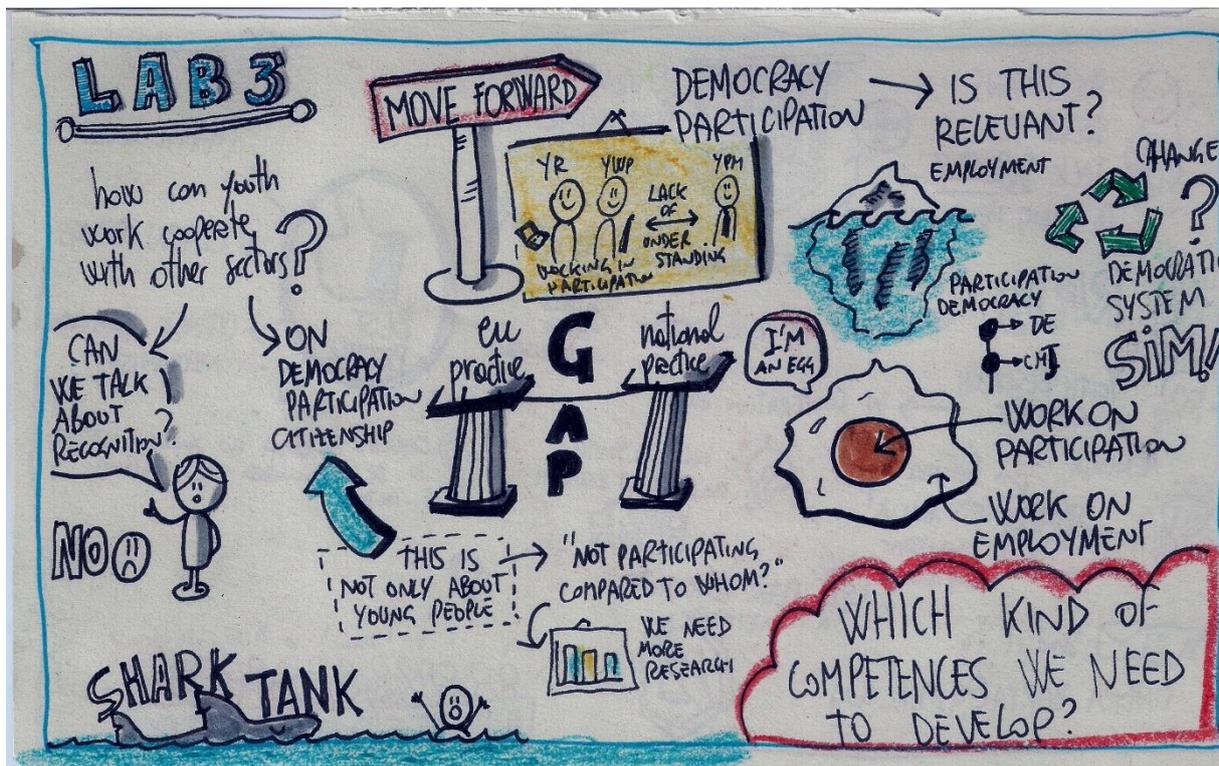


Mohammed Alsaun<sup>51</sup> focused on refugee-related activities within the youth sector, stating that these are often about refugees but without input from refugees. He stressed that it is vital that these activities are conducted in co-operation and in dialogue with refugees themselves, since it is necessary to tailor them to the needs and realities of the refugees. Refugees are not a homogeneous group – there are more than 60 nationalities in the current migration wave. However, old and well-established organisations working with migrants tend to use old processes for the new situations. There is a need for change and this change should be happening in dialogue with the refugees themselves. It has also been noted that there is severe anti-refugee sentiment throughout Europe, much of which is in direct contradiction to the European tradition of human rights promotion and rule of law. It is necessary to keep promoting human rights and the rule of law across Europe, especially to young people, using methods close to their needs, such as games and simulations.

### Lab round 3: Participation, democracy and civic engagement – Participant discussions

Participants were divided into five different labs after listening to the presentations described above, and set off to discuss the implications of what had been said as well as their own experience in the area. Each of these labs included a facilitator and a lab rapporteur who supported the groups in their debates and ensured that there was feedback to the plenary. The following text is a summary of the lab discussions as presented back to the plenary during the last afternoon of the symposium as well as the discussions inspired by these contributions. There were several prominent messages which Adina Marina Calafateanu, the lab rapporteur in charge of the final lab summary, pointed out in her presentation back to the plenary.

<sup>51</sup> Alsaun, M. 2016. *Presentation at the Symposium*. Online, available at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSoJcZx2sxs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSoJcZx2sxs)



The discussions were introduced by a quote underlining the difficulties youth work experiences when trying to keep young people engaged long term in the mechanisms and projects designed for strengthening participation. Even though there are examples of good practices, such as structured dialogue, co-management tools, local youth councils and other examples of participatory frameworks, it is often hard to keep young people engaged on a continuous basis. It was pointed out that this system of constant re-creating of opportunities for young people in order to, again and again, engage them, could be adjusted in order to enable young people to participate in creation, preparation and implementation of these tools; the sense of ownership which would therefore be established in young people could contribute to keeping them engaged in the long term. It is necessary to start planning concrete actions in concrete timelines.

In connection to this, it seems that sustainability presents a challenge. Funding schemes almost always demand that the activities and projects be "innovative"; this concept, however, has to be used with caution since it came from the labour market and economic areas and indicates the need for constant growth which is not necessarily applicable in other areas, such as youth work. In youth work, we first need to ensure sustainability of the existent good practices to make sure the outcomes developed so far are secure. Secondly, the quality of these tools and practices needs to be enhanced and ensured. It should be stressed that youth work does not produce and does not aim to produce economic profit, but provides young people with opportunities and hope for the future, assets which are not of an economic nature, but priceless nonetheless.

The question of refugee participation was also raised. First and foremost, young refugees need to have an official status in order to have access to democratic mechanisms and to be able to participate. In other words, access to rights for young refugees is of vital importance. After this first important step is taken, they can start to engage in youth work or voluntary activities. When

debating refugees, we should not forget about yet another vulnerable group of young people with migrant backgrounds, the second generation immigrants from places such as Kosovo or Montenegro. These young people are in some cases forced to leave the country where they were born and return to the country of origin of their parents despite not knowing the language of that country and not wishing to return. This specific situation should also be tackled and since it is in certain aspects similar to the situation of the refugees, measures taken might apply to both vulnerable groups. It is also important to stress that “refugee” is not an identity, but a situation. The identities of young people who are among the refugees vary greatly and need to be taken into account when working with them. Youth work could create bridges for young refugees to become entrepreneurs; there might be brilliant ideas to be put to economic use and these ideas could then help Europe to reduce its unemployment rates. These bridges, however, are connected to the issue of power relations and power sharing. It is necessary to empower young refugees instead of keeping them powerless.

The issue of power relationships was also raised when dealing with youth participation in general. There is a general consensus that young people should actively participate in society, nevertheless, activities of young people often make policy makers and adults in general nervous and uncomfortable. Participation of young people implies sharing the power with them. This also applies in the area of digital participation which should not end with social media, but should stretch further into specific tools of digital civic engagement using specific technologies as a resource to increase trust and transparency in democratic societies. In this particular case, the digital divide and digital literacy should be taken into account as well, to enable as many young people as possible to profit from the aforementioned technological developments.

Power was also an important aspect in the last debated issue: the fine line between guiding young people (youth worker is keeping the power) and letting the young people guide themselves (giving young people the power). We need to be aware that there is no precise line indicating at which point young people should listen or where they should act on their own; this fine line changes as the relationship between young people and the rest of the world unfolds, which is especially true in the case of the youth worker–young person relationship. Youth work should be aware that this is one of the largest strengths of the youth sector: the ability to approach young people on an individual basis, applying different strategies and offering different possibilities to each of the young people in order to enable them to develop their potential to the fullest. Unlike other sectors, especially education, which often applies a uniform rigid approach to all young people with no distinction for individuality, the youth sector has developed this unique faculty to be flexible and case sensitive. This is one of the strengths of the youth sector which should be stressed more often to make sure other sectors know that the expertise is already here and ready to be shared.

## Highlights from the General Rapporteur

General Rapporteur Ondřej Bárta delivered a summarising presentation<sup>52</sup> bringing together all the discussions and highlighting the main points stressed during the symposium by both the participants and the experts.

## Closing of the symposium

The symposium was closed by speeches from Karin Lopatta-Loibl, Policy Officer, Directorate-General Education and Culture, European Commission; and Antje Rothemund, Head of the Youth Department, Council of Europe.

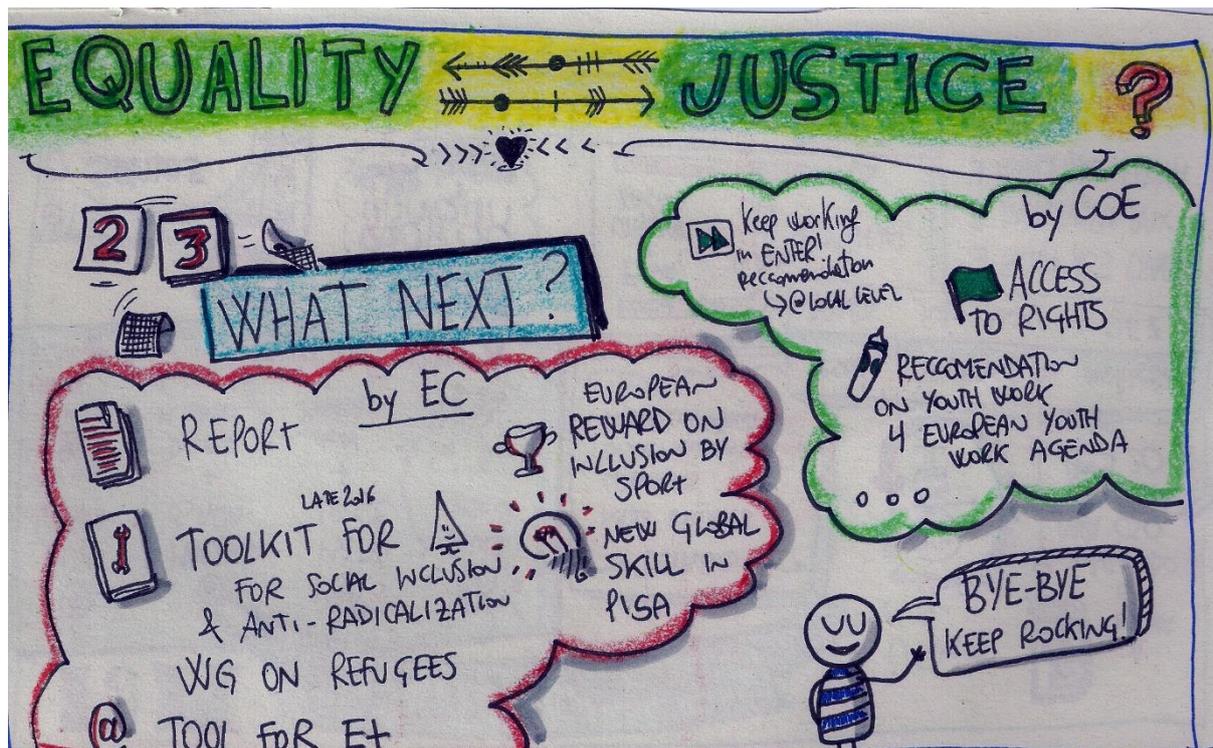
Karin Lopatta-Loibl underlined the cross-sectoral approach as a basis for treating contemporary European issues: they are too complex for the youth sector to deal with them all alone. She also appreciated the special emphasis put on the issue of young refugees, emphasising that the work done should not be about them, but with them. The innovative seating arrangements were also appreciated: participants were seated in semicircles of 5 to 6 people, which helped them in networking, sharing ideas and actively participating. The main points stated by her in connection to the overall symposium results were connectivity and dialogue with other sectors; strengthening the visibility of the youth sector; increasing recognition of and resources for the youth sector; further development of peer learning and good practice sharing in the youth sector; and further exploration of the tools for active digital participation for young people. Currently, she informed, there are two expert groups preparing Toolkits focusing (a) on promoting active citizenship and preventing marginalisation and radicalisation in youth,<sup>53</sup> and (b) on contributing to the inclusion of young refugees into the new environments. Concerning digital participation, she pointed out an online tool within the Erasmus+ framework which is being developed and which should allow the digital mobility of youth to take place, with an aim of reaching 200 000 young people from Europe, the Middle East and Africa by 2019. As an example of good practice in the area of cross-sectoral co-operation, the European Award for Social Inclusion<sup>54</sup> in Sport was mentioned as a common endeavour of the youth and sports sectors. Interesting news in the area of research was also shared: the intention of the OECD to include the measurement of “global skills” (awareness of different cultures and beliefs) into the PISA testing. She also thanked the participants as well as the organisational team for the hard work before, during and after the symposium, stressing that the participants should also be taking the messages and ideas from the symposium with them and incorporate them into their everyday practices.

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<sup>52</sup> Bárta, O. 2016. *(W)rapping up. Symposium “(Un)Equal Europe? Responses from the youth sector”*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/unequal-europe>

<sup>53</sup> European Commission. 2016a. *Mandate of the expert group on youth work for active citizenship, preventing marginalisation and violent radicalisation*. Online, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/documents/mandate-expert\\_group-active-citizenship\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/documents/mandate-expert_group-active-citizenship_en.pdf)

<sup>54</sup> European Commission. 2016b. *Social inclusion and citizenship through formal and non-formal learning*. Online, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/social-inclusion\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/social-inclusion_en.htm)



Antje Rothemund stressed the importance of the youth sector as an advocate for young people and their rights; the importance of youth work reaching out to young people and to young people with fewer opportunities; the importance of co-operating with young people; the importance of international youth work as an opportunity builder for young people, and especially for young people with fewer opportunities; the importance of youth workers coming together and organising themselves, especially with respect to the recognition of youth work. Moreover, she underlined some practical steps taking place at the moment on the European level, such as the policy recommendation on promoting access to social rights for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods<sup>55</sup> which was drafted as an outcome of and in co-operation with the Enter! project and which is to be implemented on the regional and local levels across Europe; the recommendation on access to rights for young people is to be put forward for approval by the Council of Europe in summer 2016; a recommendation on youth work is being prepared by the Council of Europe in order to promote and support youth work as a strong agent capable of implementing youth policy as such; Voice of Young Refugees in Europe<sup>56</sup> are organising activities for young refugees and unaccompanied minors; the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest are diplomatic territories and the Council of Europe might offer practical help in organising international youth events including young refugees in case travel would be problematic; the Council of Europe has data available on 47 member states and is willing to share these data upon request, especially in the areas of gender equality, domestic violence, violence against children and more. She also thanked the whole organisation team, all the participants and speakers for making the symposium a friendly and successful event.

<sup>55</sup> Council of Europe. 2015d. *Policy*. Online, available at [www.coe.int/en/web/enter/policy](http://www.coe.int/en/web/enter/policy)

<sup>56</sup> Voices of Young Refugees in Europe. 2016. *Voices of Young Refugees in Europe*. Online, available at [www.facebook.com/WeAreVYRE/](http://www.facebook.com/WeAreVYRE/)

## Concluding remarks

The symposium brought together a wide variety of actors from all three corners of the practice–policy–research triangle. Well-prepared and content-rich contributions from experts served as excellent discussion starters and sparked content-rich debates both in the plenary sessions and in the labs.

Apart from the general discussions providing many interesting and important ideas to push the overall discussion on youth inclusion in the youth field forward, there were many practical ideas and examples which may be utilised in one way or another: starting with policy documents already published or in preparation, through the general schemes used in various contexts and potentially applicable in youth work, to the concrete examples of the practitioners' approaches to the topic of inclusion.

This document provides numerous references and we invite the reader to use them to explore further and in their respective practice, be it for a practitioner's, policymaker's or researcher's purposes. Moreover, there are many more examples of good practice listed below for the reader's convenience. References were listed where possible.

Coming back to the opening of the symposium, we must agree with António Silva Mendes in saying that the most important and at the same time the toughest part is to go back and put all the brilliant ideas into action. We hope this final report, together with the key messages, will help you to do so and that apart from the undoubted contribution the symposium had to the overall debate on inclusion of young people in Europe, there will be many practical effects if all of you implement some of the ideas mentioned in the text above or in the examples of the good practice below.

*“We can fly to the moon from right here; all schools have creatives and professionals supporting kids because we care about more than ourselves. Action gets taken quicker than any race, everyone wants to do something. This is a destination of less talking more doing.”  
(Amerah Saleh, Closing Poem of the Symposium<sup>57</sup>)*

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<sup>57</sup> Saleh, A. 2016b. *Closing Poem of the Symposium*. Online, available at <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/opening>

## Good practice examples

Many examples of good practice were shared during the symposium. These have been sorted and listed below.

### Education

The Czech National Youth Policy: an example of inclusive good practice on the policy level.

- Children and youth with learning difficulties, as well as talented pupils are supported: individual needs are taken into account.
- Intergenerational solidarity and dialogue is an intrinsic part of the policy.
- “Support must not exceed a certain limit beyond which it is no longer an impetus for young people’s development but becomes an obstacle for growth.”

### Finding a way to a healthy life

- Norrköping, a municipality in Sweden carried out a project, PSYNC, which is financed partly by the government. It is a project aiming to stop mental illnesses among young people; co-operation between organisations and sectors is a significant part of the project. Behind this project is a new way of thinking: they invest money in early prevention/prevention activities at an early age and expect to save more in the future. Interventions at a later age are much more costly than early interventions.

### Finding a place in the labour market

- The Job Protection Action Plan in Hungary<sup>58</sup> is a mechanism aiming at supporting young people in finding employment or starting their own businesses.
- Implementation of the Youth Guarantee in Lithuania. Jobs for youth workers were created in order to reach geographically remote areas and co-operate with local schools and with other actors, such as social service offices, or labour offices, to keep an eye on the situation of young people and act quickly if needed.

### Finding a place in communities

- Youth work organisations working together in Romania, to be stronger both within the youth sector itself and in the context of other institutions (advocacy, etc.).
- Non-formal learning approach in human rights teaching.
- Freedom drive: Meeting of citizens and Members of the European Parliament organized by European Network on Independent Living<sup>59</sup>.
- Youth workers using various channels to reach young people with fewer opportunities: activities in the streets, home calls, social media, TV ads, etc.
- Austria – legal age limit for voting set to 16!

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<sup>58</sup> RSM. 2012. *Job Protection Action Plan: Options for Reducing Employer's Burdens*. Online, available at [www.rsm.hu/job-protection-action-plan-options-for-reducing-employer-s-burdens](http://www.rsm.hu/job-protection-action-plan-options-for-reducing-employer-s-burdens)

<sup>59</sup> ENIL. 2016. Freedom Drive. Online, available at <http://www.enil.eu/campaigns/freedom-drive/>

- The Channel programme in the UK offers support to individuals who might be vulnerable to extremism.
- Youth Plus<sup>60</sup> – bringing together young people with learning disabilities, visiting schools, etc.
- Participative Budgeting in Helsinki<sup>61</sup> enables young people to participate in decision making concerning granting social projects.
- The representatives of the Students Association<sup>62</sup> from Constanta city, Romania, sued the City Council for monthly scholarships for every student, in accordance with the law on education. The students won the lawsuit and received their scholarships. The president of the Students Association was only 16 years old when he and his colleagues decided to file the law suit.
- Local Youth Participation Network (Rede Participação Juvenil de Sintra<sup>63</sup>) is a local network of young people and youth organisations aiming at influencing the development of local youth policies. It was established in 2012 with the support of Dínamo, a youth NGO, and was transformed into an NGO at the beginning of 2016. Currently, the network works on two levels: the development of competences of young people for youth participation and democratic citizenship and the advocacy process to influence local decision makers.
- The Beatfrees initiative<sup>64</sup> – Concept of “artivism”: activism through art. Youth can be engaged through creativity by creating a platform for young people to express themselves, providing them with a “web of interactions to give people autonomy to navigate the field of opportunity”. Youth should be embedded in the process; they should have a chance to discover who they are in terms of identity, sexuality, etc.
- The UK counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST brings in a dimension of prevention to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Prevention is achieved through the cross-sectoral co-operation of local authorities, police, education, health and social services and NGOs.
- ENTER! Youth workers came together in order to enhance their abilities to support young people with fewer opportunities through long-term training courses. Outcomes: drafting, elaboration and support of implementation for the policy recommendation on promoting access to social rights for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods.<sup>65</sup> Outcome: an educational tool “Enter Dignityland”<sup>66</sup> aiming at social and human rights education. Outcome: research on youth work and youth policy aspects related to access to rights for young people. Outcome: Youth Social Rights Network.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Youth Plus. 2011. *Youth Plus*. Online, available at [www.youthplus.net](http://www.youthplus.net)

<sup>61</sup> Ruuti. 2016. *What is Ruuti?* Online, available at <http://ruuti.munstadi.fi/en/ruuti/>

<sup>62</sup> Asociația Elevilor Din Constanța. 2016. *Asociația Elevilor Din Constanța*. Online, available at [www.asociațiaelevilor.ro](http://www.asociațiaelevilor.ro)

<sup>63</sup> Rede Participação Juvenil de Sintra. 2016. *Rede Participação Juvenil de Sintra*. Online, available at [www.redeparticipacaojuvenil.pt/](http://www.redeparticipacaojuvenil.pt/)

<sup>64</sup> Beatfrees. 2016. *Beatfrees*. Online, available at [www.beatfrees.com](http://www.beatfrees.com)

<sup>65</sup> Council of Europe. 2015a. *Policy*. Online, available at [www.coe.int/en/web/enter/policy](http://www.coe.int/en/web/enter/policy)

<sup>66</sup> Council of Europe. 2015b. *Educational resources*. Online, available at [www.coe.int/en/web/enter/enter-](http://www.coe.int/en/web/enter/enter-dignityland-)  
[dignityland-](http://www.coe.int/en/web/enter/enter-dignityland-)

<sup>67</sup> Youth Social Rights Network. 2016. *Youth Social Rights Network*. Online, available at <http://ysrnetwork.weebly.com/>

## Refugees

- Thessaloniki: Museum of Refugees. A space for sharing experiences and interacting on equal terms as human beings.
- Online courses for refugees.
- Mentoring in universities.
- Kirunn University adjusted admission criteria in order to give refugees opportunities. Similarly, for example, the “Djamiaa Project” in the UK and Belgium. In Bulgaria learning sessions and master degrees for refugees were introduced at a university.
- Open-air cinema is a a crowd funded instrument to educate and psychologically help refugees using open air movie theatres, examples are known from Africa<sup>68</sup>.
- European Scouts<sup>69</sup> help refugees on various levels.

## General issues

- Inclusion strategy within an organisation. This should concern participants, employment strategy, management or even youth exchange group design.
- In Finland, youth services and policy makers occupy the same physical space – a very advantageous setup!
- In the UK, youth workers are often consulted by researchers before the research programme starts.
- International Volunteering Opportunities for All (IVO4ALL<sup>70</sup>) project aimed at creating more inclusive cross-border volunteering services.
- Young people with disabilities, parents with strollers and bikers all came together to lobby for easy access and ramps in public spaces.
- Peer-learning activities. These are helpful in sharing the good practice examples among the interested parties.
- A president of a local organisation in Romania<sup>71</sup> constantly encourages other organisations to create co-operative projects for the community. The impact of such projects is wider, reaches more people and spreads an example to the young people involved. In just two years since this person became the president of the organisation and started persuading the organisations to co-operate for the sake of the community, the community changed, the public administration representative started to make monthly meetings with the NGOs and currently, there is the first coalition of NGOs in the city.
- The newly established Strategic Partnership of the National Agencies for the Erasmus+ programme focusing on the topic of inclusion provides an opportunity for a co-ordinated approach. Outcomes: needs analysis; support of youth organisations in networking for inclusion; supporting capacity building for organisations working with inclusion target groups. Outcomes: development of an Austrian Inclusion and Diversity Strategy focusing on cultural differences (immigrants, refugees, descendants and their families). This initiative is

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<sup>68</sup> Open Air Cinema. 2007. Open Air brings films to Refugees in Africa. Online, available at <https://www.openaircinema.us/blog/category/humanitarian/filmaid/page/3>

<sup>69</sup> Scouts. 2016. *European Scouts and Guides engage in refugee support activities: let's tell their stories!* Online, available at [www.scout.org/refugees](http://www.scout.org/refugees)

<sup>70</sup> IVO4ALL. 2016. IVO4ALL. Online, available at [www.ivo4all.eu/it/](http://www.ivo4all.eu/it/)

<sup>71</sup> Civicum Voluntaris. 2016. *Civicum Voluntaris*. Online, available at <http://civicumvoluntaris.ro/>

actively combating youth radicalisation using support from the Erasmus+ programme, while widening the framework beyond the programme itself (sustainability).

## Examples of bad practice

- Internship in Montenegro. Programme financed by the state allows nine-month internships. Companies, nevertheless, are only using these financial incentives to find cheap, short-term staff; positions are not met with the right qualifications; and generally there are very few benefits.
- Youth Conference in St. Petersburg in 2012 during which adults complained about young people participating (protesting).

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