Triangles and pyramids, or something like that

An analysis of the youth sector based on applicants' responses and profiles

A synthesis

This papers analysis the applications made by individuals from all over Europe and from all the corners of the triangle, for the 2017 symposium on "Youth Policy Responses to the Contemporary Challenges Faced by Young People" organised by the team of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth (the youth partnership). This paper starts by analysing the composition of the sample, taking a close attention to the overlapping of roles and how it relates to having or not a good practice to share. This is a way of analysing the engagement of the different corners of the triangle with actual concrete practices. Secondly, we will analyse the meanings and processes associated with youth policy and how they differ by corner of the triangle. Lastly, we analyse the responses about the contemporary challenges faced by young people.

Written by Magda Nico
Pool of European Youth Researchers
Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology, University Institute of Lisbon

1. How is the 'active' sector composed?

- The so- called triangle is a busy structure, but some roles are over represented:
  - youth workers are in double of the other roles (researchers, policy makers, and young people).
- Overlapping roles are quite common. The most frequent overlapping roles are:
  - Youth workers that are young persons themselves
  - Youth workers that are also researchers
  - Youth workers that are also policy makers
- Other overlapping roles (or at least good communications channels) are needed:
  - Researchers that are also policy makers
  - Young people that are also policy makers
- Two profiles were identified as having good practices to share:
  - Being a researcher (and specifically not being a young person).
  - Being a youth workers (and specifically not being a researcher or a policy maker)

2. What's youth policy about?

- Youth policy is much more positive than negative
  - less frequently, negative words such as "radicalisation", "deficit", "conservatism", "rhetoric", "out-of-touch" were also mentioned.
- Youth policy is as almost as much about the end as it is about the means
  - Youth policy is defined by its goals: "inclusion", "equality", "education", "opportunities", "democracy", "mobility", "diversity" or "freedom";
  - But it is also defined by its means: "development", "cooperation", "dialogue", "power", "cross-sectoral", "collaboration", or "sustainability".
  - Participation can signify end and mean, further inquiry is needed.
- Youth policy is almost always about participation
  - Participation is the most frequent and common word mentioned in all the professional roles.
  - Inclusion, opportunities and equality are also mentioned transversally.

3. What are the challenges faced by young people?

- From the multiple choice list, participants choose again "youth participation" (23%) is the most selected issue, followed by "mobility and migration" (14% of the selections), "young people's voice in the context of the democratic deficit" (13%), "Youth expression and spaces for young people" (12%), "Young people's access to rights, precariousness and social dislocation" (11%), "Gender equality" (10%), "Combating radicalisation" (8%), "Information literacy"(6%) and lastly "Safeguarding values" (3%).
- In open questions about the contemporary challenges of young people nowadays, transition to the labour market appears now with an expressive percentage of 20% of the challenges mentioned (75% concerning unemployment).
- The political context is also in the mind of the participants, namely: "radicalisation" "migration and (im)mobility", "distance from European institutions", "right-wing and populists leaders", "corruption" and "human rights violations".