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Access to Social Rights for Young People from Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods



An inter-sectoral project of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe for the development of youth work and youth policy responses to exclusion, discrimination and violence affecting young people in multicultural disadvantaged neighbourhoods.



Youth in the Council of Europe

The Directorate of Youth and Sport is part of the Directorate General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe. The Directorate elaborates guidelines, programmes and legal instruments for the development of coherent and effective youth policies at local, national and European levels. It provides funding and educational support for international youth activities aiming at the promotion of youth citizenship, youth mobility and the value of human rights, democracy and cultural pluralism. It seeks to bring together and disseminate expertise and knowledge about the life situations, aspirations and ways of expression of young Europeans.

Statutory bodies

The European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) brings together representatives of ministries or bodies responsible for youth matters from the 48 States Parties to the European Cultural Convention. The CDEJ fosters co-operation between governments in the youth sector and provides a framework for comparing national youth policies, exchanging best practices and drafting standard-setting texts.

The CDEJ also organises the Conferences of European Ministers responsible for youth.

The Advisory Council on Youth comprises 30 representatives of non-governmental youth organisations and networks. It provides opinions and input from the youth NGOs on all youth sector activities and ensures that young people are involved in the Council's other activities. The Joint Council on Youth is a co-decision body, bringing the CDEJ and the Advisory Council together. It establishes the youth sector's priorities, objectives and budget envelopes. The Programming Committee on Youth is a co-decision body comprising 8 members each from the CDEJ and the Advisory Council. It establishes, monitors and evaluates the programmes of the European Youth Centres and of the European Youth Foundation.

European Youth Centres

The European Youth Centres (EYC) in Strasbourg and Budapest are permanent structures for the implementation of the Council of Europe's youth policy. They are international training and centres with residential facilities, hosting most of the youth sector's activities.

The European Youth Foundation

The Council of Europe's European Youth Foundation (EYF) provides financial support for European youth activities. The EYF is a powerful tool for European youth co-operation. It supports European youth activities organised by non-governmental youth organisations, networks and initiatives, primarily international youth meetings, but also campaigns, exhibitions, publications, audio-visual material, websites and pilot projects.

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An inter-sectoral project of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe for the development of youth work and youth policy responses to exclusion, discrimination and violence affecting young people in multicultural disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Background of the project

Social inclusion is one of the four projects of the Directorate of Youth and Sport, alongside **Human Rights and Democracy, Living Together in Diverse Societies** (intercultural dialogue) and **Youth Policy Development**.

This concern with the social inclusion of young people is not new. Whether looked at from the perspective of social inclusion, social cohesion, participation or equality of opportunities, no youth policy can ignore the situation of young people, particularly those at greater risk of exclusion, poverty and/or marginalisation.

The concerns for the social integration and participation of young people were at the origin of the first Council of Europe instruments for youth policy back in 1972, notably the European Youth Centre and the European Youth Foundation. Today, migration flows and urban concentration in a globalised Europe have very often resulted in a growing number of multicultural communities and neighbourhoods. In and around many cities, the social and economic imbalances associated with migrant and minority communities have led to the development of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, where diversity is also accompanied by poverty and often with marginalisation or exclusion. This is sometimes combined with different forms and levels of *de facto* social segregation, discrimination and violence.

Disadvantaged neighbourhoods across Europe are not mainly or exclusively a result of migration, in the same way that all our societies are deeply multicultural regardless of the number of migrants. Social segregation, poverty and the lack of perspectives for social mobility are a reality for most of our societies; discriminatory phenomena are not targeted at migrants only.

At times of economic and social crisis, the feelings of powerlessness and anxiety about the future risk deepening local tensions and underlying conflicts. Young people are often at the centre of these tensions, because they are more vulnerable and more insecure, and because they are more directly affected by the uncertainties regarding their real possibility of participating in society, contributing to its development and developing their autonomy.

“Growing up in disadvantaged neighbourhoods is for many young people a stigma that conditions their chances of social inclusion.”

In the 47 member states of the Council of Europe, realities are very different from country to country and from city to city; the responses of local and national authorities are also diverse. Rarely, however, are the root causes adequately addressed; at best, policy responses seem to address epiphenomena (e.g. youth violence or delinquency) at times of critical events or media focus. Repressive measures often draw more attention than preventive approaches.

The situation of young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods often serves as a barometer of the integration and cohesion within the community and within society at large. Growing up lacking faith in their own future, often feared by the institutions and adults, many seem doomed to confirm the assumption that for some people “bad luck appears to be hereditary”. Growing up in disadvantaged neighbourhoods is for many young people a stigma that conditions their chances of social inclusion. This takes place in a demographic and social Europe in which:

- The proportion of young people in the population is declining while the proportion of elderly people is increasing. In this context of ageing societies and weakening of the welfare state, social policies may tend to underprivileged youth, especially as far as social welfare contributions and benefits are concerned.

- Young people in today's Europe experience longer and more complex transitions to adult life. Highly flexible pathways replace formerly more standardised tracks towards employment and family building. It takes longer for young people to establish independent households and families on their own. Young people's economic reliance on families and social networks is growing.
- With the exception of a few countries, youth unemployment rates are significantly higher than general unemployment rates, and regional inequalities in this respect are still important. Young people are often over-represented in marginal and precarious employment.¹ Access to human rights, in particular to social rights, becomes problematic, if not outright impossible, for many.



The consequences of what is perceived as discrimination weigh heavily on the future of democracy and human rights in Europe.

- Inequalities in educational opportunities and outcomes are not decreasing. Failure to acquire formal certificates and qualifications is an ever surer route to economic and social exclusion. But formal qualifications are no guarantee of economic security or autonomy.
- Persisting and often growing levels of intolerance and discrimination in different forms which, while affecting primarily young people associated with minority groups, actually undermine the democratic foundations of society and, therefore, have consequences far beyond the direct victims.

¹ Background document to Agenda 2020 [MJN-8(2008)5], Council of Europe, 2008

Breaking vicious circles

The problems faced by many young people in these situations are often complex and multi-dimensional, sometimes resulting in a spiral, or a vicious circle, of *discrimination*, *violence* and *exclusion*. Responses, therefore, need to be inter-sectoral and consider the whole social context – the neighbourhood. This complexity, however, cannot justify a lack of action or response. On the contrary, it should stimulate co-operation, creativity and determination in order to prevent the escalation of conflicts and, essentially, to make sure that the social (human) rights of the young people concerned are not denied or violated.

Youth workers and youth organisations are often at the forefront of projects designed to ease tensions, provide alternative non-formal education or leisure time activities, counter discrimination and exclusion and, generally promote participation and citizenship. Rarely, however, are the responses sufficient and sustainable. At a European level, few possibilities exist to share experiences and learn from each other. The youth policy of the Council of Europe aims at "...providing young people, i.e. girls and boys, young women and men, with equal opportunities and experience which enable them to develop knowledge, skills and competencies to play a full part in all aspects of society"².

The Council of Europe has always given particular attention to the specific situations and challenges affecting young people with fewer opportunities, growing up in disadvantaged neighbourhoods or facing greater obstacles to participation and enjoyment of their social rights.

The mechanisms to support policies for the social inclusion and integration of young people put into place by the Council of Europe include training programmes for youth workers, youth policy recommendations and guidelines for social inclusion, educational resources for participation and the support by the European Youth Foundation to pilot projects carried out by young people. The recognition and promotion of youth work and non-formal learning in Europe are also part of this effort. **Non-formal education** has proven to be an efficient approach when working with young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, through its learner centred dimension and the fact that it also addresses the needs of young people. ² Committee of Ministers Resolution CM/Res(2008)23 on the youth policy of the Council of Europe



dresses young people outside of the formal school curricula. Although its recognition remains problematic, non-formal education enables youth workers to address young people's daily realities and to develop their skills, attitudes and knowledge on the basis of their own experiences. Non-formal education is close to what in some countries is referred to as "éducation populaire", aiming at giving everyone an access to learning and education and taking into account the individual needs of a person.

Other measures and mechanisms include the Solidarity Fund for Youth Mobility and the work with the (revised) Charter for Youth Participation at Local and Regional Level of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

The European Youth Centres in Budapest and in Strasbourg have often pioneered innovative intercultural education training concepts for youth workers and for youth leaders. The partnerships with the European Commission in the field of youth, with ERYICA (European Youth Information and Counselling Agency) and the Partial Agreement on the Youth Card are additional instruments that increase our potential for action and for impacting on young people through those who work with young people.

Furthermore, the **"All Different – All Equal"** European youth campaigns – *against* Racism, Antisemitism, Xenophobia and Intolerance and *for* Diversity, Human Rights and Participation – have provided many good examples of good practice and results achieved when governmental and non-governmental youth actors co-operate towards common goals.

"...non-formal education enables youth workers to address young people's daily realities and to develop their skills, attitudes and knowledge on the basis of their own experiences."

Today, however, this is not enough to reverse the feelings that social exclusion is inevitable and that the exposure of young people to it is unavoidable.

The Enter! project on the access to social rights for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods was set up in response to the growing concern and attention of the European Steering Group on Youth (CDEJ) and the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ), the governmental and non-governmental partners of the youth sector of the Council of Europe, to matters of social cohesion and inclusion of young people. It is these committees that set up Social Inclusion of Young People as a work priority for the Council of Europe, including:

- responses to the exclusion and marginalisation of young people, and measures to facilitate their access to social rights;
- non-formal education as a means of facilitating young people's social inclusion;
- addressing the social inclusion of young migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons;
- the role of youth work and youth policy in promoting intergenerational dialogue and solidarity.

The methodology and the approaches of the Enter! project seek alternative ways of thinking and practising youth work, starting from the involvement of young people themselves, relying on the competent action of youth workers and youth organisations and seeking medium and long-term impact through youth policies at local and national level.

The involvement of youth researchers in the planning and implementation of the project contributes to knowledge-based youth interventions and to maximising the learning potential of the project for the wider community of youth work practitioners. Close co-operation with local and regional authorities supports the link between youth projects and local youth policy, which are often the best placed to develop adequate responses to local situations of exclusion. Furthermore, the outstanding tradition of the youth sector of the Council of Europe to work together with youth organisations and governmental youth services in a spirit of co-management enables the project to benefit from experiences at different levels of youth policy and youth work.

Integrated, human rights-based educational responses

The Enter! project aims at developing youth policy responses to exclusion, discrimination and violence affecting young people in multicultural disadvantaged neighbourhoods. It is rooted in the overall philosophy of youth work and youth policy of the Council of Europe, which considers the following elements as inherent to youth policies:

- a. (lifelong) learning
- b. inclusion / social cohesion
- c. citizenship and participation, and
- d. safety, health and well-being.

In this understanding, youth policies must not consider and approach young people and their issues only as “problems to be solved – the so-called ‘fire brigade approach’ - but holistically across policy domains and through clear objectives that can be assessed.”³ Youth policy ought also to respect the role and “agency of young people while recognising the specific challenges and obstacles they face” according to their position and possibilities.

These approaches are well reflected in the institutionalised forms of participation in the Directorate of Youth and Sport, including the original form of co-management applying to the youth sector, which applies also to the educational and training activities as ways of practising citizenship and learning democracy through youth projects.

The recognition of non-formal education as a tool for social integration and autonomy of young people – alongside and complementary to non-formal education systems – supports these values in as far as it recognises the need to adapt to the specific situations of young people and in recognising, for example, social competencies acquired through youth and social work, and voluntary projects. Human rights are the inalienable rights which guarantee the respect of the fundamental dignity of the individual. Within the Council Europe, the European Convention on Human Rights guarantees civil and political human rights; social rights are guaranteed by the European Social

Charter and the Revised European Social Charter. Thus, social rights are an integral part of the human rights, and include the right to employment, housing, health, education, social protection and to non-discrimination. The level of social and economic development have a direct impact on the access to these social rights. Social rights are also interdependent: not being able to access one social right has a direct effect on accessing other social rights. Realities of exclusion, precariousness, violence and discrimination to which young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are exposed are a threat to their dignity and a violation of human rights.

By focusing on social human rights – and access of young people to them, Enter! adopts a human rights-based approach to social exclusion, discrimination and violence. This includes the awareness of social rights – as defined notably

“Enter! adopts a human rights-based approach to social exclusion, discrimination and violence.”

in the European Social Charter of the Council of Europe – as part of the practice of *human rights education* in youth work.

An awareness of the equality in dignity, however, is not enough. Young people should also feel enabled and motivated to take action for their own human rights and also for the rights of others.

Human-rights education is also the basis for the *conflict transformation* approach that youth projects in Enter! seek to adopt. The ability to understand and deal with conflict in a constructive manner and an understanding of the root causes of social conflict go together with the understanding that violence of any form is an abuse of human rights and results in the violation of the rights of others.



³ Guidelines for the implementation of the international reviews of national youth policies (DJS/YR/YPI (2003) 1, Council of Europe, 2003

Intercultural learning, as the educational approach supporting the objectives of intercultural dialogue – living together with diversity in dignity, is the third educational basis informing Enter! and its activities. As a process of social education that gives a positive value to diversity, intercultural learning is essential for taking into account the plurality of identity references of young people within an open and dynamic process of cultural participation. Intercultural learning is also the privileged tool for addressing prejudice and discrimination in their multiple and sometimes subtle forms of humiliation.

Objectives

The objectives of the project have been defined as:

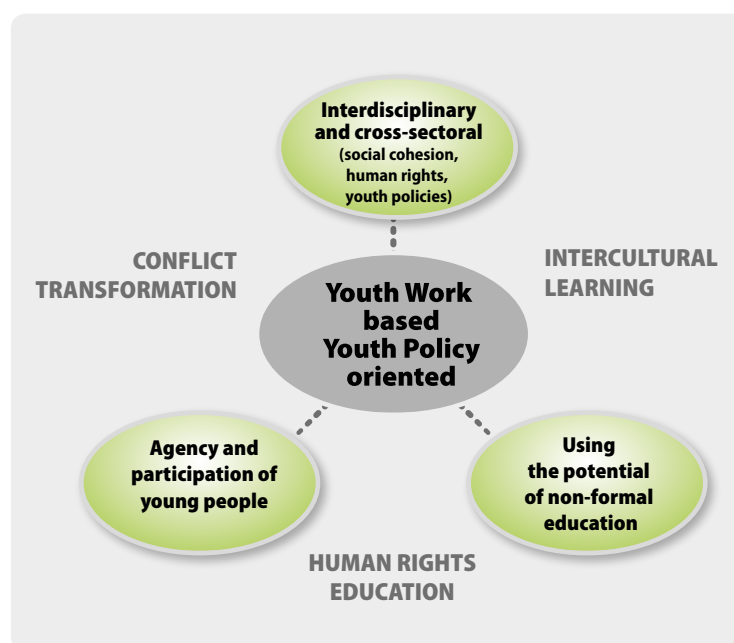
- to address situations of conflict and exclusion of young people living in multicultural environments through non-formal education and youth work projects;
- to develop conceptual and practical means of translating intercultural dialogue into the realities of youth work;
- to explore and identify means for innovative youth work projects with young people at risk of exclusion and violence;
- to initiate, support and evaluate up to thirty innovative pilot projects with a high multiplier effect across Europe;
- to address situations of exclusion, conflict and violence affecting young people through partnerships between youth work, youth policy and local authorities;
- to consolidate results of the All Different – All Equal European youth campaign in relation to diversity, participation and human rights.

Enter! combines different types of activities and youth interventions which, while rooted in the realities of young people and based on youth work practice, seek to influence youth policies in Europe from the local to the national level.

The project is also planned and managed in ways that allow connecting with different experiences, partners and knowledge. Developed through open consultations with partners, with the use of responsive evaluation, and with the potential provided by the Internet, Enter! is participatory and open.

The most visible part of the project – the Enter! long-

term training course for youth workers (LTTC) – is complemented by and linked to seminars and activities in which social and youth policy approaches are shared and discussed. In its final stage, the project will focus on developing and promoting youth policy guidelines and recommendations based on the results of the various project elements. A close and direct involvement of young people is also foreseen, notably through the projects of the LTTC participants.



Main activities

A **preparatory seminar** was held at the beginning of March 2009 in Budapest to set a clearer framework for the project, review the current needs and issues related to the project's aims, take stock of already existing initiatives, define the overall approach and develop an operational model for its planning and implementation. Quality criteria for the project were identified and an informal network of potential partners for the project was established.

The central component of the project is the **long-term training course** that prepares and supports youth workers and youth leaders working in disadvantaged neighbourhoods with young people who face difficulties in ex-

exercising their social human rights. During the course, the participants develop their skills and competencies in setting up projects for integration and in sharing them with colleagues across Europe.

During the course, participants also develop **specific projects with young people**, based on active participation, intercultural learning and human rights education, and also address specific challenges in their access to social rights. These projects provide the practical basis for learning about how to promote the social rights of young people and how best to use youth research for youth policy action. They should be implemented in co-operation with **local or regional authorities**. Through the involvement of local authorities, other organizations in the neighbourhood and various actors in the social field, the projects aim at bringing real change and impact at community level concerning the access to social rights of the young people. The community awareness of the project is also important to secure the sustainability of the project and its support by the local authorities.

The LTTC is spread over the three years of the project and is structured around three residential training seminars at the European Youth Centre. In between the seminars, the participants work on the development and implementation of their project while being mentored by trainers. The European Youth Foundation has prioritised eligible projects of the LTTC for financial support as pilot projects. An e-learning platform provides deeper insights into specific issues and

allows participants to co-operate and share experiences.

The experience gained from participants' projects of the LTTC will serve as a basis for the development of policy recommendations on the access of young people to social rights.

A seminar on **gender equality in youth projects**, held in Strasbourg in June 2010, deepened the work done by the Directorate of Youth and Sports on "gender matters" and gender-based violence, with a special focus on gender equality in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The seminar made several proposals for the inclusion of a gender equality dimension in Enter!, and in the projects set up by the LTTC participants.

A consultative meeting on *youth information and counselling* held in Budapest in June 2010, discussed ways to improve access to information for young people and youth workers in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, including the role of young people in producing and providing information. Links were made with the LTTC through some of the participants' projects; very interesting examples of successful synergies between youth work and youth information were provided.

New ways of participation in multicultural youth work were shared and discussed at a seminar in Budapest in June 2010. The programme and recommendation focused on the participation of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the ways to support unrecognised forms of participation while working towards



equality in the access to existing structures and processes of youth participation.

A joint conference was held together with the Directorate General of Social Cohesion of the Council of Europe in July 2010, within its project on Social Mobility. The conference focused on the **social mobility of young people** and the factors that support and hinder it, including the role of youth work and non-formal education. The conference highlighted the relationship between social inclusion and social mobility, and called for more research on the role of youth work in supporting the social mobility of young people, social mobility being a clear indi-

cator of access to and exercise of one's social rights. One of the conclusions of the seminar was that social mobility and geographical mobility of young people are closely linked. Giving young people and opportunity to leave their neighbourhood and experience other realities is an important factor for their personal and professional development.

The experiences provided by the practice of the LTTC projects and the insights provided by the seminars are the basis for the policy recommendations and guidelines to be prepared in 2010 and finalised in 2011. To this end, a **seminar on access of young people to social rights – the youth policy approaches** takes place in December 2010.

“The experiences provided by the practice of the LTTC projects and the insights provided by the seminars are the basis for the youth policy recommendations”

The seminar is organised in co-operation with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (the Congress) and the Directorate General of Social Cohesion. The seminar will draw on the conclusions of the various activities of the project and identify the areas for youth policy recommendations.

In 2011, an experts group is to be composed to prepare and finalise the policy guidelines and prepare a **recommendation by the Committee of Ministers** on access to social rights

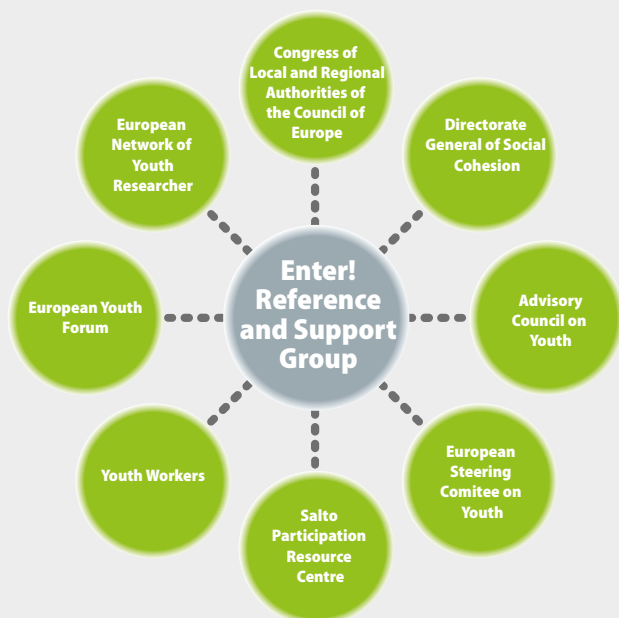
of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

The involvement of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the project is foreseen in a large-

scale event – the **Enter! Youth Congress** – through which young people from across Europe will meet and provide input to and feedback on the policy recommendations. The congress is planned as an opportunity for young people to develop their intercultural skills and to plan or initiate their own activities. The Enter! Youth Congress is to take place in Strasbourg in the autumn of 2011.

The project should be concluded by an **evaluation and follow-up seminar** in 2012, where the evaluators of the project, partners and stakeholders will draw lessons learned and make proposals for furthering the work on social inclusion of young people.





Partners, monitoring and support

The project brings together and associates the experiences and expertise of various stakeholders and partners in the Council of Europe and beyond. A direct co-operation with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe will ensure the support of local authorities in the participants' project implementation phase.

The experience of the Directorate of Social Cohesion of the Council of Europe will be taken into account, notably in relation to its project on Social Mobility and in relation

to Access to Social Rights where valuable knowledge and experience has been developed.

Other sectors of the Council of Europe (such as the Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs and the Parliamentary Assembly) will be involved in specific activities and moments of the project.

The statutory organs of the youth sector of the Council of Europe – the European Steering Committee on Youth and the Advisory Council on Youth – attach great importance to the issue of social cohesion and inclusion. They will be naturally involved in all phases of the development of the project as well as in the monitoring and evaluation.

The European Youth Foundation funds individual pilot projects of the LTTC participants.

The European Youth Forum, as a privileged partner of the Directorate of Youth and Sport, contributes to the preparation and evaluation of the project and links it with the relevant work of their member organisations.

The Salto Youth Resource Centres on Inclusion and on Participation are also closely associated with the project as they have outstanding experience in promoting the issues of the project through the Youth in Action programme of the European Commission.

The European Network of Youth Researchers provides specific expertise in youth policy matters and in developing the evaluation of the project.

Most of these partners are active within the Reference and Support Group of the project. This group supports the development, monitoring and evaluation of the project and its links with other projects and programmes. The group meets at least once a year and its members may also provide input to specific activities.

Contact:

youth-enter@coe.int

The project is supported by an Internet site –

<http://www.coe.int/enter>

and by an e-learning platform within

<http://act-hre.coe.int>.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

2009

Preparatory Seminar

First Meeting

Reference and Support Group

Enter! LTTC for youth workers
Launching

Enter! LTTC for youth workers
Introduction Seminar

Enter! LTTC for youth workers
E-Learning and project preparation

2011

Enter! LTTC for youth workers
Evaluation Seminar

Third Meeting

Reference and Support Group

Experts Group

Youth Policy Recommendations

Enter! Youth Congress

(Draft) Recommendations to the
Committee of Ministers

2010

Second Meeting

Reference and Support Group

Enter! LTTC for youth workers
Consolidation Seminar

Seminar

The role of youth information
and counselling

Conference

Social Mobility of Young
People

Seminar

New Ways of Participation
in Multicultural Youth Work

Seminar

Gender Equality in
Youth Projects

Enter! LTTC for youth workers
Project implementation and E-Learning

Seminar

Access to Social Rights of Young
People: Youth Policy Approaches

2012

Final Evaluation and Follow-up
Seminar

The Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe
thanks the Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs for their
financial support to the project.

Social Inclusion of Young people is one of the work priorities of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe, alongside with Human Rights and Democracy, Living Together in Diverse Societies and Youth Policy Development.

ENTER!, is a three-year year project on the access to social rights of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. It was set up in response to the growing concern and attention of the European Steering Committee on Youth and the Advisory Council on Youth, the governmental and non-governmental partners of the youth sector of the Council of Europe, to matters of social cohesion and inclusion of young people.

The project aims at sharing experiences and developing innovative and effective youth work and youth policy responses to exclusion, discrimination and violence affecting young people in multicultural disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

In addition to a long term training course for youth workers and youth leaders, ENTER! involves researchers and youth policy experts in activities that complement the experience of youth workers and connect the course and the project with the other priorities of the youth policy agenda and other sectors of the Council of Europe. In its final stage, the project will focus on youth policy guidelines and recommendations to promote access to social rights if young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

This publication provides the readers with a thorough description of the ENTER! project, its main elements and its role in the overall work of the Council of Europe.



The Council of Europe has forty-seven member states, covering virtually the entire continent of Europe. It seeks to develop common democratic and legal principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals.



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