



**THE STATE OF YOUTH WORK: EXPLORING THE FUTURE OF YOUTH WORK AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S  
ACCESS TO SOCIAL RIGHTS**

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ORGANISED BY  
DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY AND GLOBAL HANDS, **IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE YOUTH  
DEPARTMENT OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

**15<sup>TH</sup> AND 16<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2012**  
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THIS REPORT GIVES AN ACCOUNT OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE SEMINAR. IT HAS BEEN PRODUCED BY AND IS THE  
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## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This two-day seminar took place in Leicester on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> November 2012 and was jointly organised by De Montfort University's Youth, Community and Education Department and the Council of Europe's Youth Department, and it was further supported by Global Hands (Leicester). The key theme was promoting access to social rights for young people in general and for the most marginalised young people in particular, as well as the role of youth work in this process. This is an issue which has become more important than ever and the event offered a space for young people, academics, practitioners and policy makers to explore the state of youth work, its ability to support young people in accessing their social rights and to debate and construct its direction of travel during a time of austerity and flux.

## **1.2 About the seminar organisers**

### 1.2.1 The Youth, Community and Education Department of De Montfort University

The Youth, Community and Education Department is located within the School of Applied Social Sciences, and focuses on equality and diversity. Within it, expertise is brought to bear on the issues facing children, young people and social justice. It is one of the United Kingdom's leading providers of high quality professional training in youth and community work, delivering vibrant, creative and high quality teaching and learning programmes that aim to develop a critical understanding of the theory, policy and practice of working with young people and communities. The Youth, Community and Education staff has a highly successful track record in applied social research that seeks to influence and extend the quality of work with young people and communities. Working with the public, voluntary, faith-based and community-sectors, government departments and research bodies, and with an interest in services for young people, this university department focuses on young people's worlds, needs and aspirations; the environments which shape their lives and which, in turn, they influence. It also examines the approaches and policies which affect who they are, who they will become, and what they do now and in the future.

### 1.2.2 The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is an inter-governmental organisation with 47 member states, covering virtually the entire continent of Europe. It seeks to develop common democratic and legal principles based on the European Convention of Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals.

The Youth Department is part of the Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation of the Council of Europe. The Department 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.

The Council of Europe firmly believes that social cohesion is based on human rights (as codified in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Revised European Social Charter) and this requires an acceptance of shared responsibility for the welfare of all members of society, especially those who are at risk of poverty or exclusion. In line with this, the youth policy of the Council of Europe aims to provide *“young people with equal opportunities and experience which enable them to develop knowledge, skills and competencies to play a full part in all aspects of society”*. Youth work is therefore considered as key to engaging young people so that they may access their social and human rights. The Council of Europe’s recommendations on youth work and non-formal education, as well as the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities’ resolution 319(2010) on the integration of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods have reaffirmed the importance of youth work in young people being able to access social rights. Currently, the social and economic landscape in Europe shows how vulnerable youth and social policies are to economic fluctuations and how social exclusion and related phenomena, (like segregation, the “scape-goating” of minority groups, violence and discrimination, the lack of jobs for young people, as well as a constant deterioration of social policy responses), can persist and grow in a climate of ever growing precariousness and permanent economic crisis.

Governments are increasingly acknowledging the need to make not only the economy work but also society. Social rights are an essential condition for democratic security and sustainable development. Divided and unequal societies are not only unjust but also fail to guarantee stability in the long term. Thus economic development without accompanying social development results in serious problems sooner or later.

For the Council of Europe, social cohesion is “one of the foremost needs of the wider Europe and ... essential complement to the promotion of human rights and dignity”<sup>1</sup>. It is firmly based on human rights (as codified in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Revised European Social Charter) and is based on an acceptance of shared responsibility for the welfare of all members of society, especially those who are at risk of poverty or exclusion.

At present, many young people are excluded from the benefits of social and economic progress and it is for this reason that the Council of Europe promotes the drawing up of policy guidelines on access to social rights, covering in particular access to employment, access to social protection and access to housing, all of which affect young people in particular. In line with this, the youth policy of the Council of Europe aims at “providing young people with equal opportunities and experience to enable them to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies which will allow them to play a full part in all aspects of society”<sup>2</sup>.

The Council of Europe pays particular attention to the specific situations and challenges affecting those young people with fewer life opportunities and facing greater obstacles to participation and access to 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 support by the European Youth Foundation<sup>3</sup> 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. These programmes aim at giving everyone access to learning and education, taking into account the individual needs of a person. Indeed non-formal education has proved to be an efficient approach when working with young people, through its learner-centered dimension and the fact that it also addresses young people outside 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.

## The Enter! project

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<sup>1</sup> Council of Europe, Second Summit of Heads of States and Government, Strasbourg, 10 – 11 October 1997, Final Declaration and Action Plan

<sup>2</sup> Committee of Ministers Resolution CM/Res(2008)23 on the youth policy of the Council of Europe

<sup>3</sup> European Youth Foundation [www.yf.coe.int/fej/](http://www.yf.coe.int/fej/)

An important step in bringing the question of social human rights in the Council of Europe's youth policy is the Enter! project on access to social rights for young people. The Enter! project aims at developing youth policy responses to exclusion, discrimination and violence affecting young people in an effort to ensure access to social rights for all young people. The project takes into account:

- the role of non-formal learning and youth work in supporting the autonomy of young people
- social inclusion and social cohesion as important dimensions of sustainable democratic societies
- citizenship, participation and the agency of young people in matters concerning them
- an intercultural learning dimension to diversity based on the understanding of universal human rights.

The methodology and the approaches of the Enter! project explore 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. By focusing on social human rights, and young people's access to them, Enter! adopts a human rights-based approach to social exclusion, discrimination and violence.

### 1.2.3 Global Hands (Leicester)

Global Hands is a young Leicester-based non-profit, social enterprise set up in early 2012. Established as a Community Interest Company, it aims to tackle issues of inequality by raising consciousness about local and global issues through community engagement. Additionally, Global Hands is interested in supporting people to build their capacities to address these issues; it therefore engages communities through informal and non-formal methodologies to provoke their consciousness leading to any action they choose that is commensurate to their abilities. It currently delivers its objectives through: Education and Public Engagement; Global Hands Publishing; Global Hands Youth; Global Youth Work and International Development.

### **1.3 The aims and objectives of the seminar were to:**

1. Explore the current state of youth work in the United Kingdom, with a focus on England, particularly exploring the role of youth work in facilitating the access of young people to rights;
2. Introduce participants to the work of the Council of Europe in the area of young people's access to social rights, particularly the Enter! project;

3. Explore how youth work/work with young people can continue to effectively engage young people at the margins to access their social rights, by providing guidelines for the future developments in youth work in the United Kingdom and for the Council of Europe, particularly for the Enter! project;
4. Generate a greater understanding of the issues that affect young people's access to social rights ('race', class, gender, disadvantaged neighbourhoods etc.); and finally
5. Provide a space to share good practices and network among different stakeholders at national level and from other Council of Europe member states.

#### **1.4 The profile of participants**

The seminar provided an opportunity for practitioners, academics, policy makers and young people with an interest/stake in work with young people/ youth work to come together around the issue of young people and access to social rights. The 41 participants came from a wide range of community, voluntary, statutory agencies, research bodies and representatives from government agencies at a number of different levels. The international/European level agents were represented by the Council of Europe, Youth Department and Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the British Council and practitioners from Belgium, the Netherlands, Ireland, Greece, Estonia and Italy.

Seminar participants required the following profile:

- Be a representative of an organisation/institution and be in a position to take back recommendations on young people's access to social rights and youth work;
- Be involved in youth work/work with young people and linked with young people's access to social rights;
- Be able to work in English;
- Be available for the whole two days.<sup>4</sup>

#### **1.5 Expected results of the seminar**

The seminar was designed to support the following outcomes:

- Participants to make recommendations to policy makers (local, national and European level) and practitioners on how to improve work with young people on the margins and how they can be supported to access their social rights;

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<sup>4</sup> Details on the seminar contributors can be found in Appendix 2



- A comprehensive report that will summarise the issues raised by the participants as well as capture the recommendations to the various stakeholders;
- A critical interrogation of youth policy and practice in England that will influence the direction of travel for youth work in an environment that is said to be in a state of flux;
- Increased awareness of the Council of Europe's work on access to social rights and the possibility for the seminar participants to be associated with the work of the Council of Europe in the future activities of the Enter! project;
- A greater understanding of the issues that affect young people's access to social rights through a critical analysis of status quo and the capturing of case studies;
- Sharing of good practice nationally and internationally;
- Each participating organisation/institution to make a commitment to explore and, where possible, implement recommendations.

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAMME AND THE MAIN SESSIONS

The sessions were organised into keynote speeches, workshops, a roundtable discussion, question and answer sessions, group discussions (the working groups were sometimes organised into multidisciplinary groups and at other times into four working groups such as 1: Local, regional and national authorities; 2: The voluntary sector 3: European institutions and 4: Research/Higher Education Institutes) and plenaries with a focus on identifying issues specific to the participants and developing concrete proposals that will influence both policy and practice. The programme can be found in Appendix 3.

Throughout the two days, the managers of the seminar De Montfort University and Global Hands spoke about their commitment to youth work values and principles, moreover there were speeches from young people including Noreen Zahida (Global Hands - Director of International Relations) and Ayolah Hanley (Director, Global Hands) on their journey to becoming youth workers and the work of the agency.

On day one, Joanne Hunting (Co-Secretary to the Current Affairs Committee of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe) and Mara Georgescu (Educational Advisor in the Youth Department in the Council of Europe) helped the seminar to better understand the role of the Council of Europe and provided a European context for understanding its contribution to youth policy development in Europe. In this way participants were able to recognise that social cohesion is the main goal of the Council and that its other priorities included human rights and democracy, intercultural dialogue, living in a diverse community and peace building. This means that there is special emphasis on the social inclusion of young people and their access to social rights. The role that youth based NGOs can play in the co-management of the departments' work was a point of discussion on the second day as well as how they can get involved as representatives, which was outlined by Sergio Belfor – Representative of the Advisory Council<sup>5</sup> on Youth of the Council of Europe.

Thierry Dufour's (Bureau International Jeunesse – Belgium, and representative of the Steering Committee on Youth of the Council of Europe) keynote input on the role of the youth policy of the

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<sup>5</sup> The Council of Europe's commitment to fostering greater youth participation can be demonstrated through its system of co-management. This involves representatives from youth non-governmental organisations (NGOs) sitting down in committees with government officials who together then work out the priorities for the youth sector and make recommendations for future budgets and programmes. More information can be found at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe\\_youth/co\\_management\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe_youth/co_management_en.asp)

Council of Europe in promoting social rights for young people highlighted the value of European wide projects that respond to issues raised by young people. He showed how the Enter! project was able to influence youth policy at a European level.

The theme of the state of youth work and work with young people in England was explored over both days, for example in day one, there was a roundtable discussion involving national and local agencies, practitioners, managers, researchers and policy advisers. Each of the following contributors to this process spoke briefly about their standpoint which was then followed up by questions from the delegation.

**Fiona Blacke**, Chief Executive - National Youth Agency – argued that youth work can do enormous good for young people but that the field needs to be prepared change and to engage in a dialogue about how it can do this best. Overall finances for youth work appear to have been reduced, which means that workers need to be able to find a way to address the needs of young people and looking to the past may not always the best way forward. In line with this the NYA has sought to find ways to support youth workers and youth work itself by becoming involved in the shaping of the National Citizens' Service (NCS).

**Tania de St Croix**, Voice of Youth - In Defence of Youth Work – suggested that good youth work is the precursor to young people being able to successfully access social rights but this is impeded by cuts in youth work and attacks on its core values and principles. She identified a number of ways in which youth work is being attacked which include managerialism, the de-politicisation of youth work, a reduction in detached youth work and an overemphasis on targeting.

**Tony Gallagher**, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) of Education Services (which includes the area of youth work) and National Adviser (Youth Support) – HMI's are employed by the government's Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). They inspect services including those providing education and skills for learners of all ages. Tony considers the changes in youth work to be part of an on-going process that has been happening for decades. Today there is so much diversity in the way that youth work is organised and delivered that it is no longer possible to predict the shape of a youth service. He argues, however, that it is possible to say what is the essence of good youth work and that practitioners should hold on to this and take responsibility for making sure that they find the space for ensuring that quality youth work happens.

The next keynote speaker Kevin O'Kelly, (Associate Researcher, European Trade Union Institute, Ireland) considered youth work and access to social rights. His presentation looked at how young

people's social rights were being eroded in particular through high levels of unemployment which then was impacting on social cohesion, which is one of the three pillars of the Council of Europe.

Subsequently opportunities were presented for delegates to examine from their own working context, the link between what they do and young people's access to social rights as well as the challenges they face in trying to make this happen.

The second day emphasised the engagement of young people, especially marginalised young people. Input from keynote speakers was followed by question and answer sessions exploring the issue of 'Different young people at the margins: how do we engage with them? How do they access social rights?'

**Carlton Howson**, (Senior Lecturer in Youth and Community Work, De Montfort University) and **Eunice Campbell-Clarke**, (Nottingham City Councillor and Member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities) provided input as keynote speakers on the theme of engaging marginalised young people and accompanying them in accessing their social rights. The first speaker stressed that effective practice relied on understanding social structures and how marginalised young people were caught up in them. It also highlighted the need for workers to ensure that they did not reinforce inequality by only seeing young people as troubled or in trouble. The second speaker highlighted examples of young people's involvement in decision-making processes and how good youth work programmes had been mainstreamed by Nottingham City Council.

There were opportunities to share good practices throughout but namely through a series of workshops on

- **The Shape of Youth Work** was led by Nic Gratton of Staffordshire University - [www.staffs.ac.uk](http://www.staffs.ac.uk) whose research on youth work in the West Midlands revealed cuts, changes in structure to the service and multidisciplinary teams headed by non-youth work managers. Some of the issues raised included partnership working with other sectors such as the voluntary sector, the problems that their partners face including the sharp reduction in funding and the competitive nature of life in recession hit countries, the ways in which the youth services have been impacted and responded to changes in income.
- **Money Power Respect (MPR)**. Ruth Richardson from Global Education Derby – ([www.globaleducationderby.org.uk](http://www.globaleducationderby.org.uk)), began this workshop by informing the group about her project which used young people's love of hip-hop to explore global issues, and to up skill them to use youth

work approaches to work with young people themselves. The workshop considered amongst other things the development of young people through music, reaching the most socially excluded young people and supporting them to use youth work skills, the importance of global youth work and the skills and knowledge needed to deliver it.

- **Young people's democratic engagement in civic structures** - Malcolm Ball & Jacob Sakil, Office of the Young Mayor, Lewisham Town Hall – (<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/youngmayor/Pages/default.aspx>) . This workshop exemplified best practice in that the former Young Mayor led the discussion on the processes, and the benefits of this approach to responding to the disenfranchisement of young people from traditional political processes. The process of becoming Young Mayor and the advantages of this role to the Young Mayor and to the local young people was considered. Participants explored the value of the process and what might be needed to embed it in other areas.

**Feeling the Streetvibes – Brian Quinn and Laura Hall, Streetvibe.**

(<http://www.streetvibeyouth.com/>) This co-led session involved delegates by encouraging them to make objects (something which they do with young people) as part of a wider process where they discuss a range of social and environmental issues. It was used as an opportunity to discuss social rights and mobile youth work. This approach demonstrated the key role that creative methods can play in allowing workers to consider complex issues in a fun and accessible manner – issues considered included inequality in general, economic impacts on young people, the dilemmas facing youth workers as they shape their language and work to chase funding and the potential effect on the young people they work with. The speakers also emphasised the importance of sustainable engagement with young people and youth workers' contribution in helping young people gain the skills and confidence to access their social rights.

The final set of working groups considered recommendations for the future of youth work in the United Kingdom and reflections on future directions. This was the precursor for participants to structure personal commitments towards supporting this end point.

## **2.2 The main conclusions of the seminar**

Youth work's role in supporting young people to access their social rights was reinforced and participants felt that there was much that the UK can learn from taking up opportunities to work with colleagues across the country and in other parts of the continent. There was an agreement that the UK was in a state of flux, as illustrated by the restructuring, reduction and closure of services,

changes in what services are being delivered, how those services are being delivered and who delivers them. Delegates agreed that the sector needed to work together to shape its response to the pressures it was facing both from within but mostly from outside of the sector by people who often failed to understand the benefits it can provide to young people at this time of particular economic difficulty. It was concluded that the benefits of working and learning together across national lines were substantial and that steps should be taken to create more and continued opportunity for this to occur to the benefit of some of the most marginalised young people in the UK and across Europe.

### **3.1 THE MAIN DISCUSSION POINTS**

**3.2 Supporting youth work through policy and practice. The role that various agencies can play in helping youth work to adapt and survive so that it can assist some of the most marginalised young people at a time of austerity, increased levels of unemployment and a need for welfare services that is greater than ever.**

A series of seminar-wide multi-disciplinary discussions over the two days explored the nature of youth policy and practice. It was revealed that there was an agreement about the benefits of youth work to young people, the role it can play in helping them access social rights and the purpose of youth work i.e. to make a significant difference in the lives of young people by having meaningful conversations with them. It was generally accepted that youth work can fundamentally change the lives of young people and the National Youth Agency supports youth work to do this by for instance Influencing policy; improving youth work quality and working to secure resources for young people.

It was agreed that youth policy and projects can play a supporting role in promoting social rights for young people as exemplified by the Council of Europe's Youth Department. The Council of Europe works on the basis of democracy with ministers and youth organisations, and relates to regional authorities; it also involves international NGOs, all working towards the aims and objectives of democracy. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is a Council of Europe's body which works to strengthen local democracy. One aspect of the Council's work is youth participation in decisions that concern them at all levels, as reflected in the revised Charter for the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life because only young people truly understand the problems that they face. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities has also been very involved in developing policies that will help young people to access their rights through the political processes, mainly by providing local and regional authorities with directions to take in policy development and in practice to engage young people in the decision-making process.

One of the main contributions of the Council of Europe's youth sector in what concerns young people's access to social rights is the Enter! project. The Enter! project is important to the work of the Council because it emanated from previous work that demonstrated that although young people were decreasingly engaged in conventional politics e.g. voting, instead they were motivated and engaged by a different type of politics. More importantly these realities were not being reflected in the party politics they were expected to engage with. The project promotes access to social rights for young people, through youth work and policy responses. For example, intensive training

prepares youth workers so they are better able to set up projects that integrate, encourage active participation, human rights education, and address the challenge of access to social rights with young people. The insights from the project formed the basis of policy recommendations that the Council of Europe will feed back to the member states for them to put into place national policies.

The Council of Europe's Youth Department continues to work on youth work and its recognition. They argue that the work should be properly recognised and try to encourage governments to value youth work as a profession. For example, they have created a portfolio of competence for youth workers and youth leaders in this area. This can be used by workers to assess and validate their competence and to help them to create plans for developing those areas they need to work on.

In 2013, the Council of Europe is launching a course for youth workers specifically on social rights. It was stressed that they are not training youth workers to be youth workers – but to support those workers in the area of social rights for young people.

It was acknowledged that understanding the role that different agencies play in supporting policy and practice means that youth workers are better able to know where to direct their issues, concerns, gather information and come together with young people to exert influence on the issue of social rights.

### **3.3 Barriers and drivers to supporting access to social rights for young people. How well do decision makers understand what youth work is, what it can do and how it can help young people to know about their social rights and use them?**

There was a general concern amongst the members of the seminar that the status of youth work was being eroded. There was a wider discussion that suggested that a lack of understanding about youth work led to it being directed in a number of different ways which undermined workers' abilities to assist young people in accessing their social rights.

Engagement was identified as a potential area for developing good practice but also a barrier where workers do not understand the nature of inequality and oppression and how it operates. Without it, workers may not be able to engage critically with young people around the issue of state control. This issue was exemplified by the notion of a **medusa tree** – <sup>6</sup>the face causes problems because despite its beauty and appeal it is harmful. By looking closely, workers can see that at the roots of the tree, there is oppression – hetero-sexism, racism etc. – it's not easily visible but it is there and

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<sup>6</sup> Carlton Howson



has a tremendous impact on the opportunities and access to social rights for young people. If workers have only a superficial understanding about society (i.e. the medusa tree) then they cannot work effectively with young people on their social rights. With this knowledge, it is easier to recognise how adults can come to limit young people – it can reveal that adults often see young people as causing trouble or being in trouble. Young people on the other hand may not see themselves this way. Workers may come to expect and accept things as they were in the past – but young people may not know about that past – they only know about today and what can be done in the future. It should also be remembered that marginalised young people have always faced austerity and so they may not necessarily view the world in the same way as adults/workers, thus young people may not necessarily talk about austerity– they still feel as though they can do anything. Workers should not assume that they know more than young people who may take a different position from their youth workers. The question put to the groups was about the extent to which youth workers are being hampered by what went on before? It was felt that workers can still make a difference in the lives of young people if they work with young people where they are and go forward together without further marginalising young people.

It was suggested that the language of funding bids encourages young people (especially marginalised young people) to be stereotyped in a way which looks as if the problems lay with them rather than at a societal level. Workers themselves can feed into this way of thinking which can be dangerous and limiting. When freed from the typology and the language of funding regimes, young people relate to each other and themselves in different ways – they still believe in themselves and their ability to take action.

Discussions in smaller seminar groups were about some of the key issues raised by Carlton Howson's presentation. How do workers ensure that they do not stereotype and reduce young people to the problems they face? It was further recognised that workers were at risk of looking for funding to meet their need for employment rather than the needs of the young people. They were urged to remember that they can successfully engage with funders to explain how youth work functions and can also have discussions around labels. Others suggested that by engaging on issues that young people found important and by negotiating with them about any funding bids – their voices will not be lost.

As youth workers can help young people access their social rights, threats to effective youth work could be said to be a menace to this process. These obstacles have been summarised as reductions

in services with, in some cases, whole youth work services being shut down – and young people's groups going unsupported by youth workers because of cuts. The movement in the field is towards youth hubs which offer information and advice to individuals for example – and away from youth work thus threatening the political dimension of the work. The difference between an individualised non-political approach to working with young people stands in opposition to the politicised approach embedded in youth work.

'Whilst workers may believe society has an obligation to all its members, in reality that obligation is far from being fully honoured. A privileged few take a disproportionately large share of the resources and opportunities. This places social educators in a real dilemma. As soon as they try to enable a growth in people's power to make and carry through decisions, they are challenging the distribution of power and, therefore, acting politically. Conversely, when workers ignore or avoid this political dimension they are, in effect, limiting people's social development and so maintaining the power structure. Thus in an unjust society, where power is in the hands of the few, social educators can never be neutral or 'non-political'.' (<http://www.infed.org/archives/creators/cnc-4.htm>)

It follows therefore that providing housing, or welfare information and advice to a young person without raising their awareness of inequality and how society is structured is not youth work. This is why helping young people to access their social rights is inextricably linked with helping them to understand that they have those rights in the first place.

Second, there was said to be an increase in targeted youth work – with pre-defined targets. Less time being spent on social rights and supporting young people along youth work dimensions – as a result workers are less able to support young people to take action. There has been less group work and more 1-1 working, which is not felt to be the optimum configuration to be able to work on social rights. For example it supports the individualisation of issues and where things go wrong in a young person's life then the problem is owned by that individual. This is again a de-politicisation of what is happening in the larger society. Youth work is being undermined by a rise in managerial-ism with highly monitored work regulated by lots of targets, making it difficult to respond to young people's needs. Thirdly youth work for profit is increasing, where even large charities are operating like profit-making bodies. They are behaving more like the private sector in terms of taking off the highly paid aspects of the work in management fees and leaving small local agencies to deliver. And finally although young people have a right to meet wherever they want and effective legitimate work can occur with them where they are – youth work has largely been taken off the streets. Financial pressures have led to many detached projects being reduced or cut, this has meant that young

people are being expected to go where the work is being delivered (in buildings) rather than youth workers going to young people and working with them from their territory. Furthermore there was concern amongst some delegates that young people's privacy was being eroded by the restructuring of youth provision from a separate service into multidisciplinary services (which may include education, health and social services) where data is routinely being shared amongst the professionals within it. In this way information is being collected by people that young people trust (youth workers) and then being shared with other service areas where the trust levels may not be so high e.g. Education and Health.

There was much discussion about the different aspects being raised – for instance it was agreed that workers must be accountable for their work but that this should be done more creatively. It was acknowledged that some youth work is brilliant but some is not very good at all. It is therefore not unreasonable to be asked to account for money which has been given to an agency or project to deliver work. The important point is that the indicators are able to address issues of quality and not just quantity.

It was recognised that workers can still support critical democratic youth work and they can continue to do this in their conversations with young people, it is just more difficult to do this in some circumstances. In this way disenfranchised young people should be able to better understand the situation they are living in and to work out ways to take action.

Another point of reflection is how much the rights discourse is adopted in a consistent way by youth workers themselves and how much youth workers talk about rights with young people. It became obvious that for some seminar participants, the rights-based approaches in youth work were not known at all. This pointed to a need for further training in this direction.

**3.4 Voluntarism and the essential nature of effective youth work. Must young people always choose to be involved in a youth work relationship in order for it to be real youth work? Is the tendency to prescribe the context for youth work self-defeating and exclusionary? Being forced into youth work relationships may itself be negatively affecting young people's social rights.**

Current youth work definitions stress the importance of democracy and voluntarism. Given the current political environment, this raised issues about the strong pressure to force young people to

be involved in youth work and whether it was possible to ensure that young people are able to 'choose' youth work.

There was much discussion around the current rhetoric where young people are being forced to 'volunteer' for work – especially the more vulnerable and excluded young people who have less access to the employment market and have greater need of welfare services. Some young people are being coerced through benefits removal. Critical thinking can be developed with young people in the face of these difficulties.

On the one hand some participants suggested that youth work is embedded with contradictions and that workers need to find a way to live and work through those incongruities. There were debates about funding where youth workers are 'chasing' money to keep the provision alive and that in some cases it was leading them to do work which somehow clashed with some of their principles.

Some participants were concerned about the National Citizens' Service (NCS) which has been designed to support the UK Government's vision of building a Big Society. It aims to help young people develop the skills and attitudes they need to become more engaged with their communities and become active and responsible citizens. There were questions about the extent to which young people were 'choosing' to do NCS and the amount of support and critical analysis that would be embedded in the programme. NYA as an agency became involved in the NCS because they wanted to try to embed the best aspects of the programme into youth work practice. Their feedback from workers is that some of them believe that it has proved a help, allowing them to do the youth work they think is important and so things are not black and white anymore; it is more about shades of grey.

There was also an exchange of ideas about youth work in the youth justice system where young people had little choice about their involvement with a youth worker. It was argued that at a time when there are so many issues facing young people and so little money available, the onus is upon workers to find and make the spaces where effective youth work can happen. Exchanges suggested that workers operate to help young people to reach their potential e.g. self-actualisation. As value-based participatory informal educators, encouraging participation and critical consciousness; workers can work cross-professionally, locally and globally.

There was no overall agreement on the issue of voluntarism in youth work. Some thought that the voluntary nature of youth work was essential. For instance teachers can and do work well with young people and even draw on some of youth work's methods – young people have no choice about going to school; however youth work should be on young people's terms. Others suggested that the issue of voluntarism was a misnomer and that today the question was largely redundant. Absolutes were considered to be unhelpful, for example youth workers used to define themselves on the basis of structures they operated in; in the 1980/90's it was advocated that it was impossible to do youth work within the confines of a leisure department. In the past, workers got over involved in debates that 'real' youth work could not happen in the uniformed services. Then workers suggested that only local authorities did youth work. The seminar participants tended to agree that it was better to move away from this way of understanding what youth work is and instead to look at what workers do and why they do it.

There was discussion on the essence of youth work in relation to *purposive conversations with young people to build social rights to live in the world they all want to live in.*

**3.5 Change and change about – the changing nature of youth work in the UK as a non-statutory service. Although not always easy to be clear about the exact state of youth work in the UK today, there is evidence of absolute reduction and changes in provision occurring. Youth work was considered to be an easy service to cut and to make changes to because it is not a requirement by law as is formal education. Workers were urged to work together to respond to the changes.**

It became clear that helping young people understand social rights was not the only challenge to be faced, instead the major issue in many instances was accessing them and that this was sometimes linked to resource issues. Input from research on social rights and the economy emphasised that Europe is in crisis but it is not affecting everyone equally as some businesses are actually increasing their profits. Youth work needs to change so that it prioritises its work in response to these issues. Participants were urged to remember that young people use some social/welfare services more than the average adult. Not only are they high users of education services, they are overrepresented amongst the unemployed and consequently experience disproportionately high levels of poverty and the needs related to this problem. Paradoxically these are the places which are taking a disproportionate amount of cuts. Alongside this, they face the myth that unemployment is a lifestyle choice and a dialogue that young people are too lazy to look for and acquire a job. There is research

to suggest that the rate of exclusion is increasing<sup>7</sup>. Many people are moving from full-time to part-time jobs.

It was generally thought that youth work and work with young people was changing so fast and so much that it was no longer possible to know what a youth service might look like in 21<sup>st</sup> century UK.

The National Youth Agency (NYA) supports about half of the local authorities in the country in the development of their youth work policies. They also analysed the section 251<sup>8</sup> returns, and from this information they have gathered some crude data on what is happening to youth work across the country. There has been an overall reduction in youth services in local government of approximately 9.9%. Further analysis shows that whilst universal services have been cut by 17.9%, for targeted services the reduction is only 3.2%. This is happening within a wider context where local authorities are increasingly seeing themselves as brokers and commissioners of youth services and less as providers of those services. Agencies have been looking towards core partnership working and have been reducing their staffing accordingly. There were strong arguments about the impact of such moves on the quality of the work that may result, with heavy cut backs as youth work is based on face-to-face interactions which is resource heavy.

There was much discussion in working groups about the relationship between the voluntary sector and the youth sector, which has been beneficial in some cases but still needs greater nurturing in order to get the benefits from it. There was contemplation of how to best support effective partnership working which leads to better services and practices which can assist the needs of marginalised communities. This in itself presupposed a relatively strong voluntary sector and yet many of them are facing collapse according to participants. Work where this has happened was shared and new ways of working to address the impact of austerity was discussed such as where people were sharing experiences and skills. There was a continued call for training to support the unique identity of youth work and that this be valued by employers.

There are signs that young people's voices are being eroded – although this varies from place to place around the UK.

Similar findings were being reported by participants as well as Staffordshire University in the report 'The Shape of Youth Work in the West Midlands: A Profession at Risk or an Opportunity for

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/g20labourministersmustfocusonyoungjobseekers.htm>

<sup>8</sup> Information about budget and outturn statements on the planned and expected expenditure of local authority education and children's social care functions, as required under Section 251 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

Innovation?<sup>9</sup>. This was tempered by the difficulties in being able to compare like with like – the youth services are so different from each other that it was difficult to understand exactly what was going on within it.

Some of the issues that were discussed included that managers of services were less likely to have a youth work background, not only was the work generally reconfigured to include other disciplines/professions, the role also required greater management skills.

The rise of new services (such as the NCS) was contemplated and there was a feeling from a number of participants that it was somehow undermining traditional youth work for instance whilst several weeks of youth work in a residential setting used to be the norm, now it is the exception. Indeed the work taking place as part of the NCS is not many workers' idea of youth work. On the other hand, for some young people, they experienced significant growth and development as a result of the programme because of the challenges they faced, whilst on it. The issue for many workers was that the youth services should be resourced to make the work on-going and not just a short period of time. For some young people undertaking the programme, they did go back to good youth work support once the programme was over but this did not happen in all cases. It is notable that the restrictions being placed on existing youth work mean it is much more constrained and much harsher than it is for the new services such as NCS – which is being allowed to look at whether lots of growth has taken place, whether young people enjoyed the programme etc.

The seminar agrees that the sector has to take the lead on changes in this new world order because it cannot come from anywhere else, if the outcome is to be successful.

**3.6 Resourcing youth work. Who should resource it, what impact does it have on the shape of youth work and youth services and how does that affect the quality of provision? E.g. chasing funding might take the work off into unsupportive directions.**

One interesting question that engaged participants was whether or not chasing money to deliver youth work compromised the youth work agenda. It was felt that many managers of youth services did not understand youth work, which made the service vulnerable. It was suspected that workers and the work itself can become compromised as a result of a number of things e.g. managers, employers and also from funders. Tania Le Croix suggested that 'wherever the money comes from, then this is where the control is.'

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<sup>9</sup> Nic Gratton

Workers were asked to reflect on whether or not to chase funding just because it is available. It should be noted that sometimes the work is corrupted by chasing money and sometimes it is not. By way of example O2 gives grants of £300 which they place directly in the hands of young people – no receipts – they just say – take some social action in your area. Sharing knowledge about opportunities like this encourages young people’s involvement in social action on their own terms.

Entrepreneurship is sometimes proffered as the solution for many of the country’s economic problems and workers are being employed to support young people to set up social enterprises. Yet the evidence reveals that this is a difficult time for businesses as well. Between 01/01/2012 and 30/09/2012, some 7,954 small to medium-sized enterprises were made bankrupt with 16,000 people losing their jobs in Belgium (Le Soir 2/10/2012).

The challenge is therefore to create a dialogue between young people and national, local and regional authorities, which responds to the concerns that young people raise. There are very few states that have used the findings from the Council of Europe to apply to their own setting – this can be used to encourage dialogue between young people, workers and decision makers and to meet young people’s needs in more creative ways.

### **3.7 The role of youth work in young people’s access to social rights**

The variety of youth work projects and activities being delivered by delegates was immense yet despite these differences they were able to agree on some basic common aspects of youth work practice

The context of today’s youth work and work with young people is that of austerity alongside a ‘war on rights’ – with minorities/marginalised young people under greatest attack. Youth work’s taken for granted approach towards valuing cohesion is also being eroded. In Greece, there has been a rise in the extreme right – the Golden Dawn. In the UK there has been a rise of the English Defence League. There is therefore a role to play in terms of opposing the rise of nationalism. There needs to be support for minorities such as Roma people – and solidarity across groups, communities and countries, and trade unions have the potential to support this process. Workers are getting caught up in structural changes which are reinforcing oppression and the status quo. The budget cuts are substantial – affecting rights to services, and putting pressure on young people to be involved in certain programmes. As workers they feel driven to meet the changing agenda.



In terms of practice and responding to the wider context for some participants, there was a greater feeling of optimism about the value and potential of youth work. Despite restrictions to funding, by working together new and better possibilities can exist for assisting young people – for example building alliances and allegiances amongst a range of agencies, adapting methods whilst holding on to the values and principles of youth work. New ways of organising were emphasised as a way to organise and take social action. Participants shared examples of how communities have come together to try to weather the current economic storms. E.g. a doctor volunteers a few hours a week to help people without the money to visit their own doctor, people working together to grow and share food. Working together increases social capital, offers opportunities for further awareness raising and the potential for on-going social action.

The debate does however continue in terms of a wider feeling of cynicism and despondency that exists in the workforce in general whilst the changes are taking place. On the other hand there was a feeling that new technology can support social action. Social media and new technologies provide opportunities for organising and activism. The energy of young people can be mobilised and it was agreed that more use should be made of opportunities in Europe to increase skills and knowledge around mobilising for social rights.

Examples of ways in which workers are supporting young people to access their rights include

- Making global/local links
- Involve young people – ask for feedback
- Valuing social cohesion, family and inter-generational bonds
- Lobbying and campaigning for social rights
- Creating space for young people on their own
- Making resources/tools to raise awareness of issues and to help young people make decisions on taking social action
- Looking beyond the crisis/cuts/funding problems and planning for the future
- Using media and technology – to build the capacity to do work well
- Link ground level with structural level issues (conscientization)
- Work together and build alliances where possible rather than competing
- Continue to develop an understanding and develop practice in relation to how youth work links with social rights
- Continue to undertake research – e.g. young Muslims and social exclusion

- Work with minority group – Roma exclusion e.g. from education
- Self-run youth clubs
- Make links with other countries – intercultural understanding
- Share and respond to dialogue on issues of everyday experiences of young people e.g. stop and search
- Challenging the idea of rights as a negative and the individualisation of rights

#### **4.1 AN OVERVIEW OF SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES FROM YOUTH LEADERS, YOUTH WORKERS AND ORGANISATIONS**

(Some of these issues have been raised in previous sections)

Two young people from Global Hands spoke about their journey into youth work and about the value it has added to their lives. They stressed the importance of the confidence they now feel as a result of undertaking projects that have been successful in one instance obtaining great results without access to a budget/any funding.

Examples of how one local authority has engaged and supported the participation of young people and their dialogue with decision makers was considered. There is a Youth Parliament that fits into the wider corporate structure. There are also local youth forums which provide its members with significant levels of responsibility and power including the recruitment and selection of senior youth workers.

Examples of youth work in the neighbourhood were outlined such as one which offers amongst other things skills development including communication skills. One of the highly successful projects was mainstreamed after being successfully run in the voluntary sector. It now has 15 years of history under its belt and is incorporated into the council's Children and Young People Plan. Another instance was given about the involvement of young people who evaluate the effectiveness of the project they use themselves. It is part of a wider approach called 'Your choice – Your say'. The information from this monitoring process feeds back into the local authority.

Money Power Respect - a group of young people were trained in the global youth work framework Connect, Challenge, Change (CCC) and in youth work approaches/methods to deliver youth sessions in areas across an East Midlands' city. They have also planned a big performance as a culmination of all these activities. There was a discussion in the working group about the role of global youth work in the project – the young people in the project were intrigued about global issues and this helped to engage them and to involve them in critical thinking. Other workers were asked about being able to respond to global issues within their own work. On the one hand some were able to embed it in what they do but several felt that there were pressures to address pre-defined targets. There was talk about the extent to which global themes can be embedded in all work that is carried out regardless of the context of the youth work and the external pressures.

This particular project helps some of the city's most marginalised young people to run projects themselves, they have said that it has been life changing because they have found out more about themselves and others have increased their confidence and found themselves doing things they could only have dreamed of. The young people plan to create a CD of hip-hop music and to challenge the stereotype of the type of music and how it can be used for positive ends. The participants of the seminar were interested in the process of engaging marginalised groups. By using hip-hop the workers have been able to attract young people who are already listening to the music, many of whom are disenfranchised, opening up dialogue on how this type of music has moved from being at the margins and anti-status quo, a music of resistance to becoming mainstream and in some cases misogynistic, materialistic and violent.

Many young people enjoy creating things and this has been used to engage young people in discussions about issues which affect their lives. An example of this was making a bag such as one that can be bought from a shop to hold presents. All the participants who made the bags seemed to enjoy the process but they also appreciated the opportunity to speak about issues such as environmental sustainability – where the paper was sourced from to make the bags. How using newspapers and recycled paper still led to the creation of attractive bags – how resources should be used in the future. A second issue was that the bags could be personalised through adding glitter, words from magazines etc. The choice of words can explore themes such as social change – thus the session can open up dialogue around any ideas that the workers or the young people considered to be important.

The former Young Mayor Jacob Sakil, presented information on the next project - the Lewisham's Young Mayor's Project which began in 2004 and is designed to mirror the election of the Mayor. Decision makers recognised the disengagement of young people in general and politics in particular and aimed to increase their participation in the life of the borough. Using the school register to form the equivalent of an electoral register (though there is space for postal voting, recognising people schooled at home and those who are educated across boundary lines) elections are marketed in secondary schools and colleges throughout the area on an annual basis. To stand for Young Mayor, individuals must either live or attend school or college in the borough and be between the ages of 13 and 17 years. Support is given through training to write a manifesto and run a campaign and what to expect if they get elected. There was much discussion on the benefits that occur for young people through this process in terms of increasing the voice of young people and increasing their engagement in politics at all levels. The skills and confidence that individuals develop are

tremendous because regardless of being successful or not the individual gains confidence – speaking to potential voters, clarifying what they stand for, leading a group of people who help them to campaign. For instance since being elected Jacob has worked with the Young Chamber of Commerce to help young people who run their own businesses. He now also mentored the following Young Mayor and Deputy Young Mayor. The second place candidate automatically becomes the Deputy Young Mayor and the third and fourth candidates from the election are automatically invited to serve as Young Advisors to the Young Mayor and the Deputy Young Mayor. If they want to, the third and fourth place candidates can also represent the borough at the United Kingdom Youth Parliament (UKYP).

#### **4.2 Supporting young people at a European level - the work of the Council of Europe for youth work and young people**

Delegates acknowledged that they had not previously focused enough attention to examining issues facing people at a European level. Practitioners and managers were urged to continue to increase their awareness of the support mechanisms at the European level for the recognition and support of youth work and to acquaint themselves with the opportunities and information presented below

1. Pursue activities in the European youth centres ([www.coe.int/youth](http://www.coe.int/youth))
  - a. Enter! LTTC – examine how the information here can benefit young people
  - b. Seminars/conferences – there are opportunities available through agencies such as Salto that will support skills and understanding
  - c. Study sessions
2. National/regional activities
  - a. NRTC Human Rights Education - this is an online meeting space for the organisers of national and regional training courses in human rights education. Beta version for 2012
  - b. National seminars
3. Educational tools
  - a. Compass - the manual on human rights education with young people!
  - b. Education packs
  - c. Living library  
[http://book.coe.int/EN/ficheouvrage.php?PAGEID=36&lang=EN&produit\\_aliasid=1987](http://book.coe.int/EN/ficheouvrage.php?PAGEID=36&lang=EN&produit_aliasid=1987)
  - d. Gender matters e.g. Gender Matters - A manual on addressing gender-based violence affecting young people (2008)
  - e. Portfolio – Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers  
[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/resources/portfolio/portfolio\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/resources/portfolio/portfolio_EN.asp)

- f. Have your say manual on the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional life (2008)
- 4. European Youth Foundation <http://www.eyf.coe.int/fej/>
- 5. Young people combating hate speech online <http://act4hre.coe.int/>

## **5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS ON WAYS FORWARD FOR YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORK AT NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN LEVELS**

Groups were convened in light of the learning over the past two days what might be taken as a way forward to support the aims and objectives of the seminar with a focus on the future of youth work. Each of the groups created a list of recommendations which can be seen below.

### **5.2 Higher Education Institutions and researchers**

The working group supported the Council of Europe's paper on the access of young people to social rights and acknowledged the vital role of research and higher education in the training of youth workers. The delegates in this sector recommended that:

1. Universities find a way to make visible the value of youth and community work departments.
2. Youth and community work departments take action to let key players inside and outside of the university know what it is that youth workers do.
3. Youth and community work departments make alliances and build bridges with other departments where there is a possibility of growth.
4. The Council of Europe continues to act as an advocate for the recognition of youth work in Europe.
5. European agencies consider supporting national and international summer schools with universities, young people and youth workers.
6. Key agencies consider mobilising the involvement of people – collecting 100,000 signatures through petitions and or the use of a Facebook page to engage politicians and policy makers.

### **5.3 Youth workers and voluntary sector - directed to National Youth Agency (NYA), National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS), Local Government Association (LGA), Trade Unions (TU's) UKYP (UK Youth Parliament), Training Agencies Group (TAG)**

The practitioners identified a list of preconditions for contextualising the recommendations which are:

- The centrality of the JNC agreement (e.g. pay conditions and qualifications of youth workers).
- That all in attendance were striving for a gold standard in youth work.
- That young people should be included in all decision making.
- That there are differences in different areas of the country for example in London boroughs versus rural authorities.
- The landscape and opportunities in England are different compared to other parts of Europe.
- That we are all at different stages on a journey but that everyone's view is valid.

Delegates in this sector recommended that:

1. The above agencies work with the Council of Europe to create and debate social action which sustains and develops youth work and Non Formal Education across our communities so that we continue to learn from each other.
2. Work consistently on processes that recognise the legitimacy of young people to speak out and take action through youth forums/democracy projects to represent other young people's views.
3. With the Council of Europe, the above agencies to embed greater learning and understanding of social rights in a youth work context with young people and practitioners' curriculum acknowledging the Council of Europe's Charter for Education for Democratic Citizenship.

#### **5.4 Local authorities and national governments**

Delegates from this sector recommended that:

1. There should be greater transparency and dialogue when introducing young people and bureaucratic processes (prioritising the one-to-one relationship between the youth worker and young person).
2. Youth workers be involved in formal education institutions – promote manuals – e.g. Compass – ex-youth centres in schools, train the teacher seminars etc.
3. Social rights be considered globally not just locally and relate it to international youth work and exchange good practice around this.
4. Educational system become more inclusive, pluralistic and respectful towards social rights (see point 2).
5. Reconsideration be given to the way external politics are affecting access to social rights and how this is eventually transferred into the local community and civil life.
6. Media be used to promote youth work and success stories.

#### **5.5 European institutions**

Delegates from this sector recommend that:

1. Work be undertaken to increase dialogue and involvement of all member states in the work of the Council, and the British Council.
2. More use be made of existing agencies such as Training Agencies Group (TAG) to help get information about issues such as training opportunities out to agencies in the UK.
3. Improvements be made to the prospects for participation of UK youth NGO's in the co-management of the Council's work.



4. Use be made of other youth related agencies such as community agencies to develop work and to get information out to the youth sector.

## **6.1 DELEGATES' COMMITMENTS TO SUPPORTING SOCIAL RIGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

Each delegate was asked to reflect on the issues of the seminar and to make a commitment towards helping to address the concerns raised and to contribute to making improvements. The table below represents the statements made by attendees

<b>PARTICIPANTS' COMMITMENTS TO SUPPORTING THE ISSUES RAISED IN THIS EVENT</b>		
<b>NAME</b>	<b>ACTIVITY/COMMITMENT</b>	<b>ORGANISATION</b>
<b>Thierry Dufour</b>	Willing to attend another event	Bureau International Jeunesse – Belgium
<b>Global Hands</b>	Will provide a space for participants to meet and contribute to providing administrative support	
<b>Annik Batimba</b>	Young people must be a part of the process	Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Youth Support & Dev Service
<b>Kevin O'Kelly</b>	Will disseminate to International Youth Organisation (IYO) European Trade Union (ETUC) message	European Trade Union Institute Ireland
<b>Malcolm Ball</b>	Will help to keep the issue of young people and social rights active, 'keep the pot boiling'	Lewisham Young Mayor's Office
<b>Ian Richards</b>	Will not be negative about social rights, instead he has committed to creating a positive narrative	Think Global
<b>Marco Santos</b>	Will ensure that they keep updated on the social network and meeting at Strasbourg	MTU Edela Arenduskeskus
<b>Ayoola Hanley</b>	To support the work she will set up a state of youth work Facebook (or similar network)	Global Hands
<b>Momodou Sallah</b>	Will circulate information from the seminar and develop follow-up activities/dissemination	De Montfort University
<b>Joanne Hunting</b>	Is committed to creating an internet site for best practice on the issues of social rights for young people	Congress of Local & Regional Authorities of Council of Europe
<b>Sarah Hargreaves</b>	Will work to look at this area and work with L3 – introduction to Higher Education	De Montfort University
<b>Mariana Kosic</b>	Will work towards a summer school and access to funding	Scientific-cultural Institute Mandala
<b>Jeremy Barnett</b>	Salto cultural diversity will continue to communicate opportunities to youth workers in UK and Europe for professional development in areas/topics that have been discussed in this event  Youth in Action will commit to take points from this conference and feed them into our work/plans for where we commit resources in the future. <sup>10</sup>	British Council

<sup>10</sup> [www.salto-youth.net](http://www.salto-youth.net)

## 7.1 AN OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION FORMS

Most of the participants who answered the question said that the seminar had either fully achieved or partially achieved the original aims.

It was suggested that there was a *'high level discussion and information, good sharing focuses'* and there was an appreciation of the *'key presentations on the table.'* The seminar was felt to be timely; *'a really useful conference, needed at this time!'* and participants said that they found it *'easy to draw conclusions on UK realities'* however they also felt that they would have benefited from hearing more from their European counterparts.

Following the seminar, participants aim to take a range of action including continuing the discussion with the young people they work with and ensuring their input is included in decisions. *'I will also raise the discussion with my other colleagues in the youth service.'* Others aimed to become more informed about European policies and guidelines in the area of social rights as well as to develop new networks and partnerships and practice more democratically.

Respondents said that they now had a *'greater understanding of the complexity of social policies and youth work in England (apart from UK!).'* Another participant stated that they had now had an understanding of some of the threats facing the youth sector. Several individuals spoke about the benefits of making contact with other workers at the seminar, that it had been inspirational and that it had widened their understanding of good practice and encouraged them to share practice more.

### **How do you intend to share the information you received with your organisation /structure and to follow up the seminar?**

Responses to this question include reporting to their association through other colleagues (youth workers, researchers) and their newsletter, *'writing press releases and implementing new projects with people I've met at this conference.'* One person intends to share the learning with the youth network for social rights. Another person intends to work on international events. Several stated that they will use the official report as the basis for wider discussion on ways forward in one case the new ideas will be presented to fulfil their departmental commitments made. At a managerial level these issues will form an agenda point in a monthly youth service management group meeting.

Confidence levels have increased around this area with participants suggesting that they *'can provide youth workers in my country with new ideas and points of view on the topic.'* *'I already felt confident before but now I have improved my knowledge about some contacts and some ideas (good practices)that I can implement already now.'*

This confidence extended beyond youth work practice for instance one respondent stated that they already felt *'Pretty much confident in continuing my work-research on how non-formal education can be useful in contributing to fight youth unemployment, happy that the ideas of the international summer school are supported by Unite'*.

**How should the organisers (DMU, Global Hands and the Council of Europe) follow up this seminar?**

Respondents wanted this to be the first of a series of similar seminars, that work should be done to continue sharing information and resources on the theme of social rights and good practice.

It was felt that there was a need to apply for funding to support this process to ensure that it is undertaken effectively. At an immediate level a request was made that contact be made by email to participants so that they can network and for information about funding applications to be shared.

On a longer term basis, one person asked that participants create a roadmap with commitments and time frames focusing on the promotion of non-formal education.

The methodologies used throughout were valued, as they provided opportunities to gather and share information. Most people stated that they were either happy or very happy with the processes used. The schedule was however felt to be rushed by one or two participants. It was suggested that more young people could have been more actively involved in the programme.

There were two requests for more natural lighting, one individual stated that the stairs were a difficulty and another individual stated that the timing of the sessions affected the ability of the group to respond to complex issues. On the other hand, there was a high level of satisfaction with the room and the food though. The following typified the responses of the two days - *'Organisers did a great job.'* *'Excellent'* *'very satisfied, congratulations to volunteers'* *' V good'* *'very satisfied, it.....was very well appreciated an each detail (t-shirts for staff was good idea, venue, wifi connection, maps, closeness hotel-railway, venue, staff, support, hospitality)well done! Thank you'*

## Appendix 1 Delegates List

Name	Employer	Position
1 <b>Ball</b>	Malcolm Lewisham Young Mayor	Advisor to Young Mayor
2 <b>Barnett</b>	Jeremy British Council	SALTO <sup>11</sup> Cultural Diversity/Youth in Action
3 <b>Batimba</b>	Annick Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Youth Support & Dev Service	Youth Participation Co- ordinator
4 <b>Belfor</b>	Sergio Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe	Vice Chair
5 <b>Blacke</b>	Fiona National Youth Agency	Chief Executive
6 <b>Boyd</b>	Lyn Training Agencies Group: Youth & Community Work & University of Huddersfield	Secretary/Director of TAG/PALYCW <sup>12</sup> & Lecturer in Youth & Community Work at Uni of Huddersfield
7 <b>Burke</b>	Gerry Leicester City Council	Area Youth Manager
8 <b>Campbell</b>	Eunice Nottingham City Council, member of the Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities	City Councillor
9 <b>Cangela</b>	Ruth Via National Youth Agency	Commonwealth Professional Dev Scholarship from Mozambique
10 <b>Donnelly</b>	Frances Coventry Roma Project	Volunteer
11 <b>Drosopoulou</b>	Mary Social Rights Network of Youth Works Estonia "Bridge" Cultural Centre	Trainer-project coordinator
12 <b>Dufour</b>	Thierry Bureau International Jeunesse – Belgium	Project officer
13 <b>Flett</b>	Julie De Montfort University	Senior Lecturer
14 <b>Gallagher</b>	Tony Office for Standards in Education, (Ofsted)	Her Majesty's Inspector
15 <b>Georgescu</b>	Mara Youth Department, Council of Europe	Educational Advisor

<sup>11</sup> SALTO - Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the European YOUTH programme

<sup>12</sup> Professional Association for Lecturers in Youth and Community Work

16	<b>Grace</b>	Pauline	Newman University College and In Defence of Youth Work	MA Programme Leader
17	<b>Gratton</b>	Nic	Creative Communities Unit Staffordshire County Council	Senior Lecturer
18	<b>Greig</b>	Finn	Voice of Youth & Gendered Intelligence	Youth Worker
19	<b>Hanley</b>	Ayolah	Global Hands	Director
20	<b>Hargreaves</b>	Sarah	De Montfort University	Head of Department Youth & Community Education
21	<b>Holmes</b>	Linda	Leicester City Council	
22	<b>Howson</b>	Carlton	De Montfort University	Senior Lecturer
23	<b>Hunting</b>	Joanne	Congress of Local & Regional Authorities of Council of Europe	Co-Secretary to the Current Affairs Committee
24	<b>Khan</b>	Muzzambil	Global Hands Leicestershire	
25	<b>Kosic</b>	Marianna	Scientific-cultural Institute Mandala	President, Funding Manager, Project Manager
26	<b>Low</b>	Jodie	University of Derby	Lecturer on Community and Youth BA
27	<b>McMullen</b>	Sarah	University of Derby	Senior Lecturer Applied Community & Youth Work
28	<b>O'Kelly</b>	Kevin	European Trade Union Institute Ireland	Associate Researcher
29	<b>Plumb</b>	Claire	Leicester Masaya Link Group & Global Education Leics	Development Worker
30	<b>Power</b>	Kevin	De Montfort University	Head of Quality & International Activity
31	<b>Richards</b>	Ian	Think Global	Member of Advisory Council
32	<b>Richardson</b>	Ruth	Global Education Derby (GED)	Youth Programme Manager
33	<b>Sakil</b>	Jacob	Lewisham Young Mayor	Young Mayor
34	<b>Sallah</b>	Momodou	De Montfort University	Senior Lecturer
35	<b>Santos</b>	Marco	MTU Edela Arenduskeskus	Project Co-ordinator
36	<b>Shukra</b>	Kalbir	Goldsmith's University of London	Lecturer in Community &

Youth Work

37	<b>St Croix</b>	Tania	In Defence of Youth Work & Voice of Youth & Kings College London	Youth Worker
38	<b>Stutz</b>	Alex	National Youth Agency	Head of Policy
49	<b>Thompson</b>	Sonia	De Monfort University	Rapporteur
40	<b>Wright</b>	David	Confederation of Heads of Young People's Services (CHYPS)	Chief Executive
41	<b>Zahida</b>	Noreen	Global Hands Leicestershire	Director of International Relations

**Volunteers List**

1. Mike McAllister
2. Murgatroyd Becky
3. Oughton Jes
4. Parmar Jaymi
5. Bhana Julekha

## Appendix 2 Seminar Programme

<b>14 November 2012</b>	
Arrival of participants from abroad	
<b>15 November 2012</b>	
9:00	Registration of participants
9:30	Opening, introduction to the seminar and welcome remarks <b>Momodou Sallah</b> , De Montfort University - Seminar Convener <b>Mara Georgescu</b> , Youth Department of the Council of Europe - Educational Advisor, Youth Department, Council of Europe. <b>Joanne Hunting</b> , Co-Secretary to the Current Affairs Committee - Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe <b>Noreen Zahida</b> , Global Hands - Director of International Relations. <b>Kevin Power</b> , The Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, De Montfort University - Head of Quality and International Activity.
10:15	<b>Thierry Dufour</b> , Representative of the French-speaking community of Belgium in the Follow-up group of the Enter project - Keynote input on the role of the youth policy of the Council of Europe in promoting social rights for young people.
10.45 - 11:15 Lunch break / Question and Answers	
11:15 - 13:00	Round table discussion regarding the state of youth work in the United Kingdom, with: <b>Fiona Blacke</b> , Chief Executive - National Youth Agency <b>Pauline Grace</b> , Lecturer, Newman University College, University of Birmingham and <b>Tania de St Croix</b> , Voice of Youth - In Defence of Youth Work. <b>Tony Gallagher</b> , HMI National Adviser (Youth Support)
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch break
14:00 - 14:30	<b>Kevin O'Kelly</b> , Associate Researcher, European Trade Union Institute, Ireland - Youth work and access to social rights Keynote input.
14:30	Working groups on the role and current developments of different actors in promoting access to social rights for young people Working group 1: Local, regional and national authorities Working group 2: The voluntary sector Working group 3: European institutions Working group 4: Research/Higher Education Institutes



16:00	Tea/Coffee break
16:30	Plenary reporting from the working groups and discussion Conclusions of the day
17:30	Networking space among seminar participants

<b>16 November 2012</b>	
9:30	Introduction of the day
9:45	Different young people at the margins: how do we engage with them? How do they access social rights? <b>Carlton Howson</b> , De Montfort University - Keynote input. <b>Eunice Campbell-Clarke</b> , City Councillor and Member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities Good practices on local authorities' commitment to social rights: the case of Nottingham.
10:30 – 11:10	Workshops on good practices 1. The Shape of Youth Work - Nic Gratton, Staffordshire University 2. Money Power Respect (MPR) – Ruth Richardson, Global Education Derby 3. Young people's democratic engagement in civic structures - Malcolm Ball & Jacob Sakil, Office of the Young Mayor, Lewisham Town Hall 4. Feeling the Streetvibes – Brian Quinn and Laura Hall, Streetvibe
11:10	Break
11:30 - 13:00	Working groups on proposals for the future of youth work in the United Kingdom Working group 1: Local, regional and national authorities Working group 2: The voluntary sector Working group 3: European institutions Working group 4: Research/Higher Education Institutes
13.00	Lunch
14:00	Reporting from the working groups Plenary discussions on the follow-up of the seminar
16:00	Coffee/Tea break
16:30	Support mechanisms of the Council of Europe for the recognition and support of youth work

17:00	Closing remarks <b>Sergio Belfor</b> – Representative of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe <b>Ayolah Hanley</b> , Director, Global Hands. <b>Sarah Hargreaves</b> , Head of Youth, Community and Education - De Montfort University.
18:00	Reception

## 8.3 Appendix 3 Presentations

Council of Europe  
Youth Policy  
and Access to Social  
Rights for all Young People  
« ENTER »

**The Council of Europe Youth Approach**

**CO-MANAGEMENT**

On the one hand: The CDEJ (European Steering Committee on Youth)

On the other hand: The Advisory Council

One common body: The Joint Council

**The Council of Europe Decisions on Grants**

**CO-MANAGEMENT**

In the frame of the Programming Committee:

Equal voices for the Governments and for the ENGO's.

**The Council of Europe Youth Policy**

**BASED ON:**

- Defence of Human Rights and Human Rights Education
- Peace and reconciliation
- Youth participation
- Fight against racism
- Fight against exclusion (in the frame of non formal education)

**SOCIAL RIGHTS**  
**The European Social Charter**

**HOUSING**  
Adequate, affordable, respecting dignity and non nationals, respecting disadvantaged categories...

**HEALTH**  
Accessible, effective facilities, prevention, safety at work, protection of maternity...

**EDUCATION**  
Free (primary and secondary), guidance services, accessible higher education...

**The European Social Charter**

**EMPLOYMENT**  
Free trade unions, right to strike, no children, free choice, decent pay, fair conditions, and... *ENSURING FULL EMPLOYMENT...*

**LEGAL AND SOCIAL PROTECTION**  
Young offenders, no exploitation, social security and services, be protected against poverty and exclusion...

**The European Social Charter**

**MOVEMENT OF PERSONS**  
Family reunion, leave the country, simplification of immigration formalities...

**NON DISCRIMINATION**  
All its forms...

**HUMAN RIGHTS ?**

**HUMAN RIGHTS**  
vs  
**SOCIAL RIGHTS**

**OR**

**SOCIAL RIGHTS**  
**ARE**  
**HUMAN RIGHTS**

*(Approach privileged by the Committee of Social Rights of the Council of Europe)*

**« ACCESS » ??**

These rights exists

**Problem**  
**=**  
**accessing them**

**CURRENT SITUATION**

**CRISIS (for whom ?)**

For the population at risk, especially for young people, increasing problem of access:

**Budget cuts:**

- social services
- health care
- education
- culture
- wages, salaries, « social » fees

**Increasing prices:**

- health care
- housing
- education

**SPAIN Employment**

Current unemployment rate under 24 years old =

More than 50 % of this age range population !!!

Unemployment allowance: a bit more than 400 euros, if you have worked more than 360 days !!!

**EUROPE Housing**

**2008:** 46% of young adults aged 18-34 in EU live with their parents

**After 2008:** crisis !!

Source: Eurostat.



**FRANCE Health**

**2011:** A little less than 1/3 of the French, being 29%, decided not to go to the doctor and get cured, because of lack of money.

They were 11% in 2009

Source: L'Express, 30/09/2011 - Poll CSA for Europe Assistance

**VICIOUS CIRCLES...**

NO JOB NO MONEY NO HEALTH  
NO JOB

NO EDUCATION NO MONEY NO JOB

NO JOB NO MONEY NO DECENT HOUSING

NO DECENT HOUSING NO CONDITION TO STUDY NO NO JOB  
NO MONEY NO DECENT HOUSING

**Often: combined !!!**

**(UN)EMPLOYMENT**  
The myth (or trickery?)

Belgium:  
Metal industry: 6,000 out  
Sub-contractors: betw. 9 and 10.000 out

France:  
PSA: 8.000 out  
Sub-contractors: how many out?

ALL OF THESE LAZY PEOPLE ???

**(UN)EMPLOYMENT**  
The myth (or trickery?)

Belgium again

**ECONOMIE**  
Travail : le taux d'insertion  
des jeunes ne cesse de baisser



**(UN)EMPLOYMENT**  
The myth (or trickery?)

Belgium again, 2011:

425.000 unemployed officially

60.000 « empty » jobs  
= 14%

What to do with the remaining 86% (= 365.000) ?????

ALL OF THESE LAZY PEOPLE ???

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP**  
The myth (or trickery?)

Belgium again, September 2012:

From 01/01/2012 till 30/09/2012:

7.954 small enterprises have gone bankrupt

= 16.000 people out

Source: Le Socr 02/10/2012

ALL OF THESE LAZY PEOPLE ???

**Coming to ENTER...**

LITC

33 local projects developed (creative, campaigns, networks...)

15.000 young people reached

Parallel reflection activities and seminars

RECOMMENDATIONS

Collaboration with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

**ENTER without barriers**

Identified barriers to access to SR:

- Lack of information, or access to
- Exclusion, no interest, discrimination
- Lack of listening, dialogue and cooperation with authorities and policy makers
- Self-exclusion
- Reduced, far away and not (youth) user's friendly social services
- Complicated (sometimes contradictory) administrative procedures and processes
- Lack of accessible housing (price, numbers)
- Expensive, unadapted or outdated education systems
- Lack of financial means (lack of jobs, health care...)

All these factors strongly complicate, if not totally prevent, access to existing social rights.

**CONCLUSIONS or try ... ?**

Taking these factors into account and considering that:

- Full employment: a myth
- Social rights: broader and at risk
- Access: necessary for well being (even survival)
- Exclusion creates violence

**AGAINST THE CURRENT TREND AND MAINSTREAM ECONOMIC RECIPES ?**

YES.

Imagining new social relations, considering the social or societal organisation as a whole, where the different aspects of social life are linked to each other, and where values like solidarity, equality, personal development could be the engines, instead of « moneymoneymoney », and crazy consumption and exclusion... Societies in which the democratic and social system would be in favour of its people rather than in favour of banks, markets and speculators...

**CHALLENGE**

Dialogue, and trustful relationships between young people and local, regional or national authorities: role of youth work, in all its diversity?  
(Decentralisation of what happens in ENTER)

Thanks for your attention.

Have nice and fruitful discussions !

ACCESS TO SOCIAL RIGHTS, SOCIAL COHESION AND YOUTH POLICY IN EUROPE

Kevin P O'Kelly  
European Trade Union Institute

SOCIAL POLICY PROJECTS

- > New forms of Work Organisation
- > Promoting Access to Employment
- > Access to Social Rights
- > Low-income workers
- > Promoting Employee Participation in Hungary
- > Access to Social Rights in the South Caucasus and in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- > ENTER! Project

A CHANGING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

- > Major social and economic change
  - o Climate change
  - o Demographic changes
  - o Growing social and income gaps
  - o Migration
  - o Use of ICT
  - o Long-term impact of financial crisis
- > Impact on jobs
  - o A changing labour market
  - o Challenge of unemployment

COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S SOCIAL EUROPE

A EUROPEAN CRISIS IN 5 PARTS!



1. Social Cohesion in Europe
2. European Social Charter
3. Monitoring Social Rights
4. Access to Social Rights in Europe
5. Youth unemployment

1. SOCIAL COHESION

- > Three Pillars of Council of Europe:
  - o Human Rights
  - o Democracy
  - o Rule of Law
- > Social cohesion is central to the objectives of the Council of Europe
  - o European Social Charter
  - o Code of Social Security
  - o Action Plan for People with Disabilities

SOCIAL COHESION OBJECTIVES

- > Reinvesting in social rights and in Cohesive Societies
- > Building a Europe of Responsibilities
- > Strengthening representation and democracy
- > Building a secure future for all

SOCIAL COHESION

Focused on:

- o Supporting employment for vulnerable groups and those excluded from the labour market
- o Improving access to quality Public Services
- o Promoting sustainable communities
- o Building civic dialogue, local employment and a sustainable environment

2. EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

- > 2011 was 50th Anniversary of the Charter
- > Economic Rights
  - o Employment - the right to work
  - o Labour market - safe and healthy work environment
  - o Industrial relations - fair remuneration, freedom of association; right to collective bargaining
- > Social Rights
  - o Health protection
  - o Social security

EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

- > The Rights of Children and Young People (Part 1.7 and Part 2 Article 7)
  - o Protection against physical and moral hazards
  - o Minimum age for workers (15 years)
  - o Access to continued education / vocational training
  - o A fair wage and holidays
  - o Safety and health protection
  - o Restriction on night work (under 18 years)

3. MONITORING SOCIAL RIGHTS

- > European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR)
  - o 238 reported violations of Social Charter in 2011
  - o Greek Labour Law Reforms
  - o France: Access to Education and Vocational Training
  - o Portugal: Housing for Roma
- > ECSR National Reports on Implementation of Social Charter
  - o UK
  - o Ireland

MONITORING SOCIAL RIGHTS

- Report on United Kingdom 2011:
- > Higher minimum age in dangerous or unhealthy occupations ✓
  - > Prohibition of employment of young people subject to compulsory education ??
  - > Fair pay for young people X
  - > Inclusion of time spent on voc training ✓
  - > Regular medical examinations ??
  - > Special protection against physical and dangers moral X

MONITORING SOCIAL RIGHTS

- Report on Ireland 2011:
- > Prohibition of employment under the age of 15 X
  - > Prohibition of employment under the age of 18 in dangerous activities ??
  - > Prohibition of employment of young people subject to compulsory education X
  - > Working time for young people X
  - > Regular medical examinations ✓
  - > Fair pay for young people X

4. ACCESS TO SOCIAL RIGHTS

- > Brought together the work of a number of Council expert groups:
  - o Improving Access to Social Protection
  - o Access to Housing for Disadvantaged People
  - o Promoting Access to Employment
- Also included work of:
  - Education Steering Committees
  - Group of specialists on health care services for marginalised groups
- > Adopted by Committee of Ministers, 2002

ACCESS TO SOCIAL RIGHTS

- > Set agenda for past decade - resulted in further studies:
  - o Access to Social Rights for People with Disabilities
  - o Social Policies for Families and Children
    - Rights of children at risk
    - Corporal punishment
  - o Social Services
  - o Social Housing
  - o Social mobility

## ACCESS TO SOCIAL RIGHTS

- > Policy guidelines
- > Guidelines for the employment of marginalised groups
- > Guidelines for local partnerships involved in the development of employment

## ACCESS TO SOCIAL RIGHTS

- > Policy Guidelines:
  - o Make entitlement comprehensive and explicit
  - o Better monitoring of provisions; policy proofing; charter for users
  - o Adequate resources for providers and claimants
  - o Reduce fragmentation between levels of administration

## ACCESS TO SOCIAL RIGHTS

- > Policy Guidelines:
  - o Better communications and information exchange; tailor information to different target groups
  - o Counter stigmatisation of and negative attitude towards certain groups
  - o Focus on vulnerable groups, communities and regions

## ACCESS TO SOCIAL RIGHTS

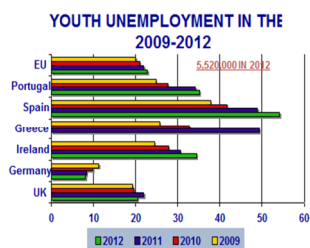
- > Malta Declaration (2003):
  - o Called on Governments to implement policies to promote access to social rights

## 5. YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

- > A strong increase in last three years
- > Twice as high as the overall unemployment rate in EU
- > Youth unemployment more susceptible to cyclical economic change
- > Gender dimension - unemployment convergence
- > Role of Education and Training
- > NEETs

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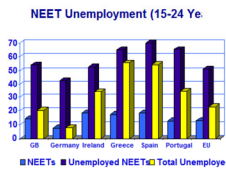
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## YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

The great challenge of the next decade is to release the potential of the most educated and skilled generation ever, who are shut out of the labour market and participation in the social and economic life of their communities.

**We need to create jobs for young people!**



THANK YOU  
[www.etui.org](http://www.etui.org)  
[www.eurofound.eu](http://www.eurofound.eu)

[okellykp@eircom.net](mailto:okellykp@eircom.net)  
<http://kevinokelly.eu>