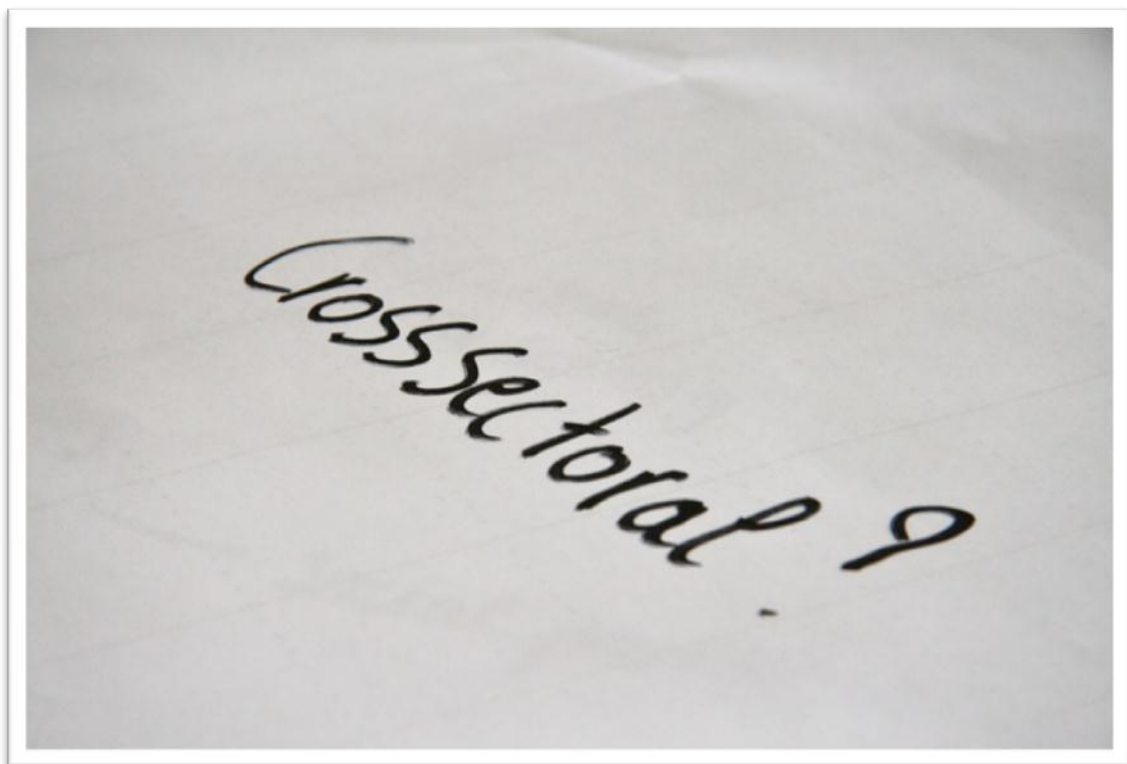




International seminar  
**"Developing cross-sectoral youth policy on local level"**  
under the agreement on cooperation between Flanders and the Baltic states

Lithuania, 21<sup>st</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> of March, 2011



**Main objectives of the seminar:**

- Creating common understanding on **what is** cross-sectoral cooperation in the local youth policy;
- Answering **why** cross-sectoral cooperation **is important**;
- Describing the theoretical model of cross-sectoral cooperation (who's involved, how it works)
- Sharing good existing practices of cross-sectoral cooperation;

- Drawing recommendations how to improve cross-sectoral cooperation in the local youth policy.

## Participants

### The seminar is addressed to:

- Representatives from the municipalities active in local youth policy: local youth coordinator, youth representative, politician/decision maker, at least two specialists from different sectors (culture, sport, policy, education, health care etc.) -> all having CS cooperation experience, but not the same one.

## Trainers' team

### **Koen Steuperaert (Flanders)**

Trainer, expert at Association of Flemish Youth Services (VVJ)

### **Marius Ulozas (Lithuania)**

Expert in youth policy and non-formal education, freelance trainer for Council of Europe, European Youth Forum, international and local NGOs. Communication expert.

### Programme (as it was executed)

	March 21	March 22	March 23	March 24	March 25
7:30 – 8:00	Arrival to Lithuania	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
8:00 – 9:00		Breakfast	8:00 the Bus to Alytus	Breakfast	Breakfast
9:30 – 11:00		<b>Crosssectoral Youth policy: building common understanding</b>	9:30 Meeting at Alytus municipality	<b>Improving Local youth policy</b>	<b>Future of protocol agreement Evaluation &amp; closing of seminar</b>
11:00 – 11:30		Coffee Break		Coffee Break	
11:30 – 13:00		<b>Crosssectoral Youth policy: building common understanding (cont.)</b>	<b>Field trip: Visiting Municipalities</b>	<b>Improving Local youth policy</b>	
13:00 - 14:30		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
14:30 – 16:00	<b>14:30</b> Meeting at the Department of Youth Affairs	<b>Crosssectoral “Heartbeat”</b>	<b>Meeting at Trakai municipality</b>	<b>Recommendations: how to start / improve cross-sectoral cooperation and how can it be supported?</b>	<b>Departure of Participants to Vilnius</b>
16:00 – 16:30	<b>15:00</b> Leaving to the trainings center (by Bus)	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	
16:30 - 18:00	<b>16:30 Lunch Introduction &amp; getting know</b>	Situation of local youth policies in our countries	Existing models of Crosssectoral cooperation	<b>Indicators of (successful) cross-sectoral cooperation Planning future actions</b>	
18:00 – 19:00	<b>Expectations</b>	Reflection / Reporting / Preparation			
19:00 - 20:00	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	
20:00 – 20:45		<b>Steam groups</b>	<b>Steam groups</b>	<b>Steam groups</b>	
20:45 - ...		<b>Cultural eve</b>	<b>Free time</b>	<b>Free time</b>	

## Description of sessions and results

### 1. MONDAY 21/03/2011

Main aim of afternoon session was to get to know each other, to learn the names, start communication and clarify with what expectations participants (and delegations) have come to the seminar.

### 2. Tuesday 22/03/2011

#### Session 1: building common understanding (part 1)

As a first step in this process, we focused on a common understanding. Keeping in mind the different backgrounds, it was important to create a broadly based agreement from where discussions could start the rest of the week. What is cross-sectoral cooperation in local youth policy? And answering *why cross-sectoral cooperation is important?* What are we talking about and how do we fill this terms and concepts from a different local perspective. We divided the participants in four mixed groups (different countries) and asked them to reflect and organize their thoughts on 4 key questions. After the discussion we asked the groups to present their findings to each other. We took time for clarification, discussion and some other views on the key questions.

*The session focused on 4 key questions:*

1. What is Youth policy? What is its value to the society?
2. How (if) Youth policy is different from other sectoral policies?
3. What is cross-sectoral?
4. Youth policy and Youth work: how related are they?

Results:

The discussion was difficult but useful to find a foundation for the rest of the seminar. We soon found a clear filling on the term 'cross-sectoral'. It was more difficult to find a common view on: what is (an effective) 'local youth policy'. This mainly due to a different approach of (different views on) youth policy in each country (protection, provision, facilitating, interaction).

<p><b><i>What is cross-sectoral?</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- we see it as cross points between different policy areas</li> <li>- starting from a joint target group (children, youngsters)</li> <li>- common view on youth as recourse for society</li> <li>- common action area, common region</li> <li>- cooperation: sharing information and competences</li> <li>- shared objectives and goals – positive results</li> <li>- goalkeeper (local youth coordinator)</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>What is Youth policy? What is its value to the society?</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- creating a local climate in which children and youngsters are 'full actors' in society</li> <li>- stimulating dialogue between different groups (cross gender, cross culture)</li> <li>- create dynamics on a local level (power of youth)</li> <li>- active citizenship as an engine for society</li> <li>- based on understanding and den supporting the needs of children and youngsters</li> <li>- a good mix between protection, provision and interaction</li> <li>- youth policy is not an island, it's blended in society</li> <li>- youth policy starts with children</li> <li>- official: documents, strategy's, time frames, budgets</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>How (if) Youth policy is different from other sectoral policies?</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- we see youth policy as a frame</li> <li>- with different inputs: age, regulation, leisure time, target group in every policy area ...</li> <li>- involving professionals and volunteers</li> </ul>

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<p><i>Youth policy and Youth work: how related are they?</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> <b>Policy (politicians)</b>  ↓  <b>Youth work</b> </p>		<p style="text-align: center;"> <b>Policy (politicians)</b>  ↑  <b>Youth work</b> </p>		<p>there must be a direct link between policy (politics) and youth work</p> <p>The links should be two-way:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> understanding  appreciating  supporting  involving  interacting </p>																						

## Session 2: building common understanding: Facilitated discussion

### - All politicians should come from Youth work

There's a split in opinions but majority of participants disagree with the statement. Arguments in favour: with a experience of youthwork(er) politician is open to all opinions and groups, (s)he tends to support participatory decision – making and policies. Arguments against: paths into politics can be very different and we shouldn't limit it to only ex-youthworkers. All the groups of society should be involved into politics and decision-making to ensure best understanding of situations and to come up with best solutions.

### - Politicians decide what is Crosssectoral Youth policy and who is involved;

In the real life – that's how it works (especially regarding formal structures of work within municipality). And it is not easy to convince them to make some changes. On the other hand, since to a large extent cross-sectoral cooperation is up to those who are involved rather than formal structures, people can decide to work in a more cross-sectoral way and nobody can stop them :)

### - Crosssectoral Youth policy is not sexy for politicians;

The general feeling is that politicians indeed don't find youth policy very attractive because: they don't understand it, it doesn't win elections, young people are less active at the elections and they comprise rather small electorate in general.

But if politicians get somehow introduced/ involved into Youth policy, they get interested. So the notion is that though situation is not very favourable tendencies are quite positive.

**- Young people don't care about Youth policy;**

Number of people agrees with the statement. Numbers show, that young people are less active at the election, they are not very eager to take part in associations etc. But this trend is not exclusive to young people only and rephrased sentence would also not true: *Young people don't care about Youth policy.*

According to some research (and a general feeling) only about 10% of people are active, while other 80% can be influenced/persuaded/pushed/etc into participation in the civic life. Other 10% tend to be active in a negative way – making obstacles.

On the other hand, there are a lot of pro-active young people, who are willing to propose changes and to be part of changes in our societies and communities.

**- Local youth coordinator must be a driving force for Crossectoral Youth policy;**

Yes, Local youth coordinator SHOULD be the one who is ensuring the cooperation between different policy sectors (domains). But to be able to do that he/she has to be empowered to do that: preparation, recognition of role, sufficient professional and political support, funding available for youth policy etc.

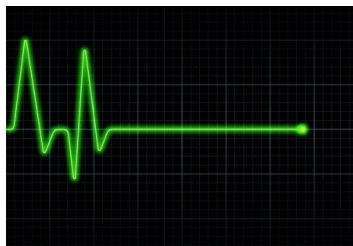
Youth should also play an active role – demanding, controlling, actively participating in the existing consultation or co-management structures.

**- Crossectoral Youth policy means that everybody does something for youth but nobody is actually responsible**

There's a small risk that when many people are responsible nobody assume overall responsibility. But at the moment it is more a theoretical threat, since still too few people are involved and concerned about youth issues or youth perspective on the decisions taken.

### **Session 3: Crossectoral "Heartbeat"**

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In the previous session we learned that local situations and assumptions on (cross-sectoral) local youth policy are very different in the four countries. We assumed that it would be useful for the process, that the participants would get some insight in the diversity of local cross-sectoral situations. This was done without focusing too much on the political and administrative structures and contexts.

We asked the participants to present their local situation (municipality level), using an electro-cardiogram. In other words - to make a visual presentation of the 'heartbeat' of their local youth policy. Where are strengths and weaknesses in cooperation with other sectors? We deliberately chose a very visual form of presentation because of language differences in the group.

*We started from these three assignments:*

1. what are local - common used - policy areas (domains) in your municipality? (youth work, welfare, sports, culture, public space, mobility, justice, education, ...). Use only terms you use in your reality.
2. Look at these policy areas from a youth perspective (children and youngsters). Which areas have more impact on the environment of children and young people (on their reality, their interests, their world, ...)? Try to put in order of importance from a Youth perspective.
3. Give each policy areascorefrom1 to 10, from a cross-sectoral youth policy perspective.



### Results:

The objectives of this session were mainly focused on exchange of the current situation. We've managed to do this without getting lost in structures and systems. The visual presentation and argument about granting a score, brought more insight on the diverse local situations. We saw and understood many differences (different accents, choices, challenges, ...) in cooperation and development of cross-sectoral youth policy. The session encouraged the participants to set an open mind towards the objective of this seminar. In order to find what's common throughout all differences.

## **Session 4: Situation of local youth policies in our countries**

In order to get a clear view on the political and administrative structure of the four municipalities, the participants were asked to do some homework. They all prepared a PowerPoint to present their own local situation. Everyone focused on:

- the basic demographics
- the status of local youth policy
- political and administrative structure
- main actors in local youth policy
- Who is involved (cross-sectoral level)

- What happens on the field (activities, projects, programs, ...)
- Budgets, infrastructure, ...

Pictures, anecdotes, facts, and figures of the participants accompanied the presentations. We took time for questions, reflections and concerns after every presentation. It was the perfect end to a first day of philosophizing about the future of cross-sectoral youth policy. All presentations can be found following hyperlinks below:

- [Municipality: Põlva \(Estonia\)](#)
- [Municipality: Talsi \(Latvia\)](#)
- [Municipality: Tienen \(Flanders\)&Youth policy in the 3 communities of Belgium](#)
- [Municipality: Jurbarkas region \(Lithuania\)](#)

Some findings after the presentations:

- Situations are so different, the challenge will be to step out of the local context and think national and international;
- Size does matter! it is easy to get blinded by the proportion of some municipalities. on the other hand : The larger the local context, the greater the strength, governing power, budgets, cooperation possibilities, ...

**“Steam groups”** – daily reflection moment in small groups

Three questions to be discussed and answered:

- What is the feeling after the day?
- What was most/least useful (if anything)
- What would you like to propose to trainers/team?

### **International night**

(what happens in Vegas – stays in Vegas☺)

## **3. Wednesday 23/03/2011**

### **Study visits**

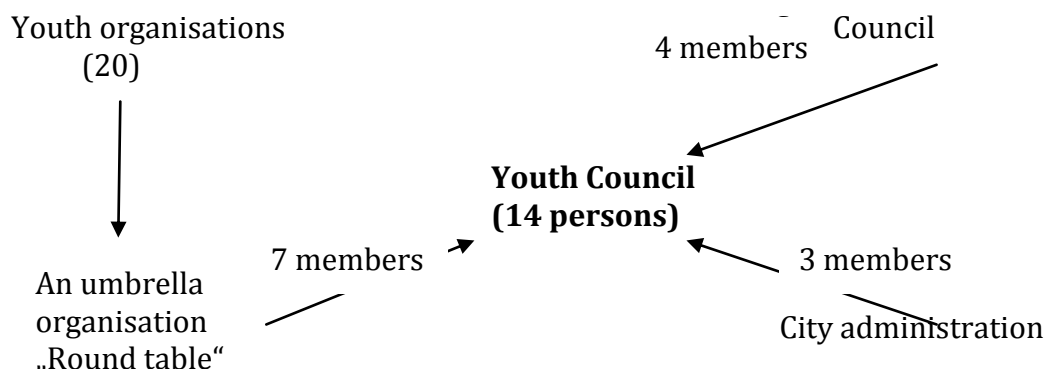
At the end of the Year 2010 the Department of youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour were sending to all Youth coordinators in 60 municipalities in Lithuania short questionnaire about the cross-sectoral cooperation in their municipality, what kind of activities they are doing, which sectors are involved, how coherent the activities



are organising and what are the best practices, good examples as a result for cross-sectoral cooperation. After this survey there were chosen few municipalities for the study visit, but as the cross-sectoral cooperation is just starting to be implemented (or better to say used) for Youth policy development.

**Morning: visit to Alytus municipality. Meeting, hosted by Local youth coordinator, youth organizations, and active actors in the youth field;**

Alytus is one of the youngest cities in Lithuania (according to the age of inhabitants). Today in Alytus city live around 63,6 thousands inhabitants and 16 thousands of them (25,20 percent) young people from 14 to 29 years old. Youth is active in community live, participate in various organizations, organise a lot of activities and create a positive face of the city. Youth policy in this municipality is relatively young (as the whole Lithuanian Youth policy), but in this municipality a lot of different stakeholders are involved into Youth policy implementation. The main cross-sectoral example is a Youth council, which consist from 2 parts: NGO sector and municipalities administrative and political representatives. Here one can find how the structure of the Youth participation in decision making is involved and how do the cross-sectoral cooperation works in Alytus:



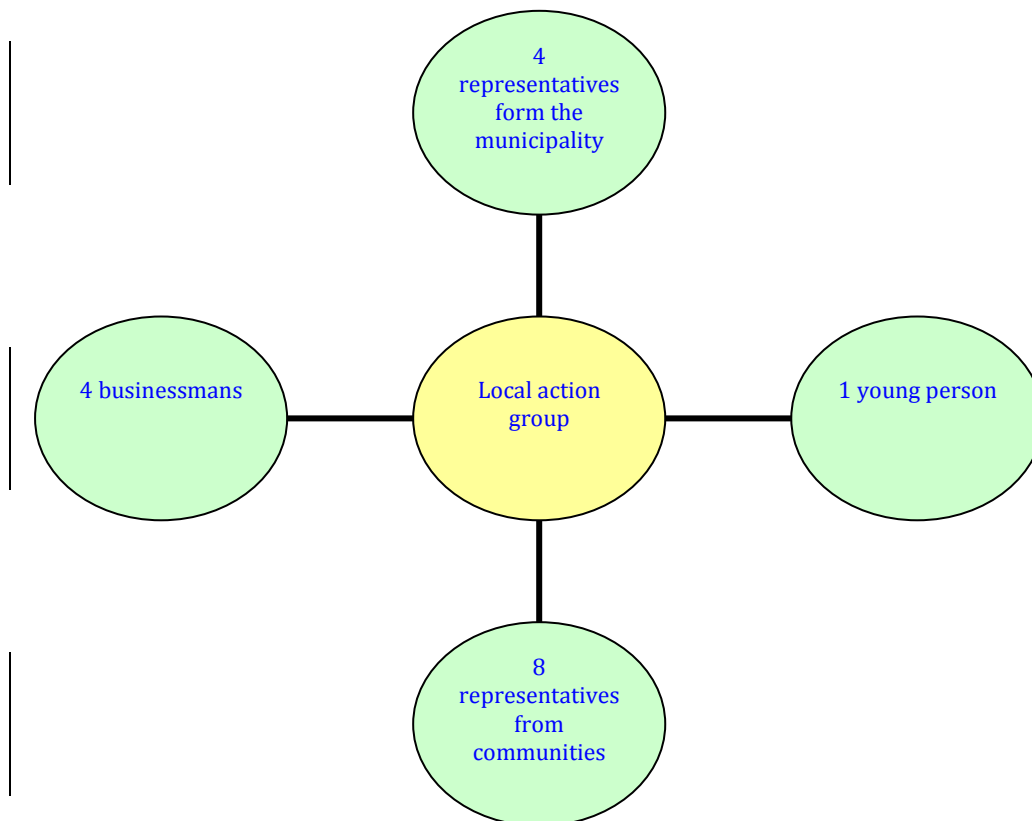
How does it work? There around 20 Youth organisations which decided to have an umbrella youth organisation named “Round table” (“Apskritasis stalas” in Lithuanian). It is an organisation which represents all the Members and in the same way also youth of Alytus city. 7 people from the “Round table” are delegate to Youth Council and it is half of the whole Youth Council. The rest of the Youth Council consists of 4 members from City Council (elected by the hole Alytus city community) and 5 representatives from municipality administration (different sectors: education, culture and sport, social affairs). The Youth Council is responsible mainly for common decision for the Youth policy implementation in Alytus city municipality. For example: one of the most important question for the Youth organization is financial issues and this Youth Council is deciding how, for whom, why and etc. should the municipality give money.

The role of Youth coordinator – he/she is coordinating this Youth Council, giving all the necessary information and she/he has to implement Youth policy in the municipality in cooperation with other sectors.

What were presented in Alytus were more practical examples: how it works in reality and what kind of the results Youth policy already reached in Alytus city.

**Noon: visit to Trakai municipality. Meeting with the Mayor, Local youth coordinator and Local action group**

Trakai is a small city with only 5000 inhabitants, but the Trakai region municipality has 36 thousand inhabitants, where Local action group (LAG). Which was presented to the group, is one of the possible structures for the cross-sectoral cooperation not only in Youth policy, but also in other sectors.



This group is able to initiate projects, activities and the municipality as well as other parts of the structure could be involve in to decision making process. There is an example (in Jurbarkas region), where the main priority of the LAG is YOUTH, that means, that all the youth projects are supporting and financing.

## **Afternoon: Wrap-up of the visits and discussion about models of Cross-sectoral cooperation**

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Some reflections:

- *For me it was too formal, no interaction. Sometimes I had a feeling that they have too strong top-bottom influence. If you want to present things – presentations have to be good. I have a feeling that only „gentle youth“ might get supported while „rebels“ – not.*
- *Interesting – „umbrella organization“ of youth organizations (Round table) and the co-management structure for decision on youth related matters. Pity we didn't see the Youth centre.*
- *We saw some concrete examples (ways of working) but we could barely see the link with Local Youth policy. But this is maybe due to inability to clearly present.*
- *I was very curious to see from the side how other youth coordinators working. It obvious that they do more than was showed and it's a pity. Was useful for me but curious what other colleagues would have loved to hear.*
  - *Talking about presentations, it depends on the subject... if it's about youth work, then you concentrate on that. Now the topic is Crosssectoral cooperation, so it had to concentrate on that. There's no a standard for successful presentation.*
  - *We couldn't find were is Youth in this cooperation.. We didn't see specific examples and youth centre.*
  - *In our country LYC are strange.. They do both – write plans, but also active in the field. It helps to find out what young people do, what are their concerns etc.*
- *Youth policy youth organizations – round tables. Co-management structure of decision making, where youth representatives bring to highest level problems, situation and ideas.*
- *Reflecting on the situation I understood that not every town has money for swimming pool, fancy youth centre etc. Maybe in a long term vision municipalities should become bigger or few municipalities should work together.*
- *On the other hand, in smaller municipality – everyone knows each other and it is easier to work in the cross-sectoral way.*
- *Crosssectoral – is not exclusive to youth policy field. It can and should be applied to all policy areas.*

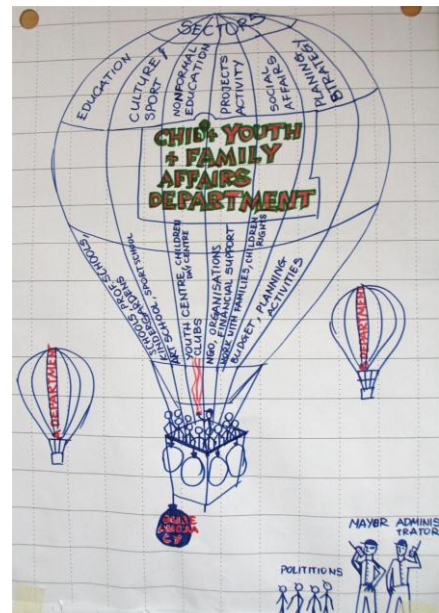
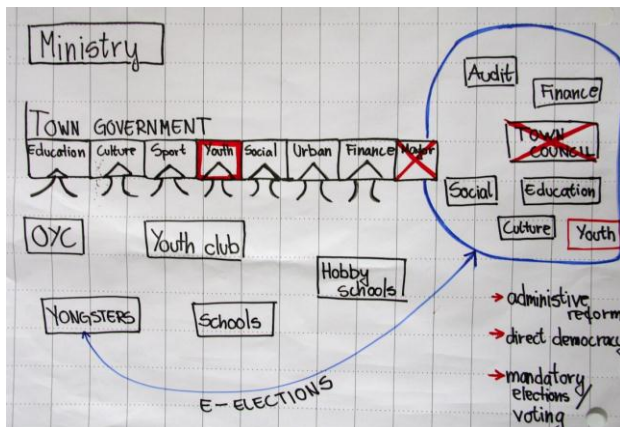
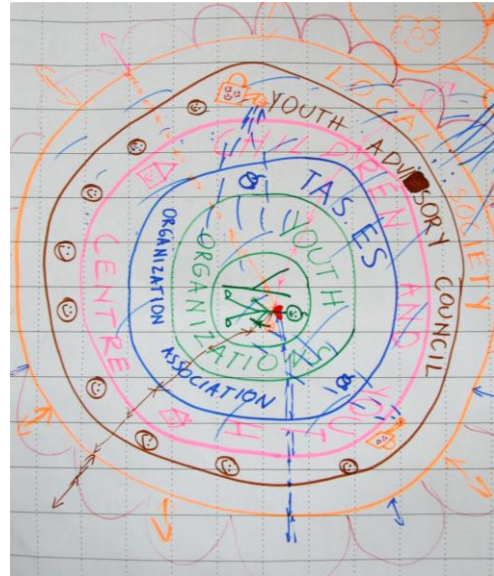
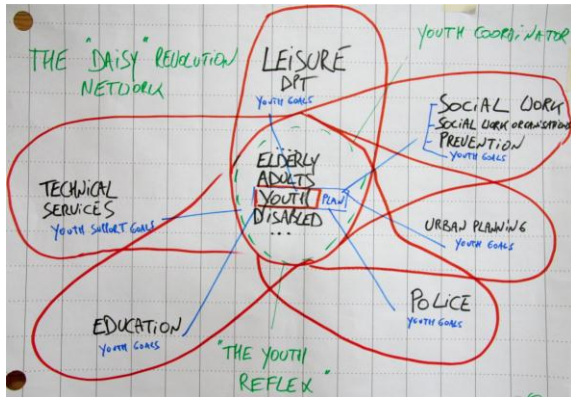
4. Wednesday 24/03/2011

## Models of Crossectoral youth policy: Situation NOW and Ideal situation

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*Participants were reflecting on the current situation local youth policy in their municipality AND were dreaming about ideal situation → this led to identification of steps and improvements to be made. The proposed actions at different levels and by different stakeholders are listed below.*





**What can be done on the National level to support cross-sectoral local youth policy OR what can National government do to push/support cross-sectoral local youth policy**

- To stimulate thinking in all municipalities about improvement of local youthwork;
- To stimulate improvement of local youth policy by funding and forcing (demanding);
- National level should take a leading role (demand of youth plans, youth effect assessment etc, legal framework for youth policy);
- Local youth plans are needed;
- youth effect report in every policy domain;
- administration reform (make municipalities bigger);
- ensure more direct democracy;
- consider mandatory participation in the elections;
- provide opportunity for e-voting in the elections and local referendums;

- introduce idea of decreasing age when work with children/youth should start (starting with 3 year old kids rather than teenagers).

### **What can be done on municipality level to ensure better cross-sectoral local youth policy?**

- If you want good cross-sectoral youth policy, there should be a *good youth policy and youth centre(s)*;
- improve (establish) relations between young people and politicians;
- there should be youth umbrella organizations on municipal level;
- every town/municipality should have council of youth affairs (co-management structure on youth issues);
- every municipality should have youth plans including cross-sectoral cooperation goals;
- Plans of all departments should have youth goals (and youth impact assessment);
- ensure same level of salary for local youth coordinator (and other administration employees);
- common information system (were information about youth and what is done for youth is kept and shared across administration);
- Set up new youth centers, have a mobile youth center which could be going to different villages;
- Have more youth workers and put them into already existing structures: culture centers, youth centers;
- Municipality structure has to be changed and departments have to grow bigger in order to decrease the number of “bosses”, ensure cross-sectoral cooperation under Department of Child, Youth and Family affairs;
- Money should be allocated for youth projects (via advisory council or co-management structures);
- Funds should be established on the local level for local projects;
- We need round tables of politicians and youth; more initiative groups in each village, community. Cooperation is needed on all levels;
- To establish youth commission next to already existing ones;
- Establish youth department at the administration;
- To stimulate thinking in all municipalities about improvement of local youth work;
- There’s a need for more integration between all departments at the municipality;
- Involve department heads, politicians, colleagues by networking, informally;
- Structural consultation (once a week, a month);
- Involve youth organizations, NGOs, youth initiatives into political debate about matters of municipal importance.

### **What can/should do local youth coordinator (LYC)? How can LYC be empowered?**

- LYCs across the country should launch discussion(s) about cross-sectoral local youth policy;
- They should be able to initiate networking of different departments and stakeholders;

- LYCs should take the leading part in the preparation of Youth Plan (@the municipal level);
- LYCs should ensure participation of youth and specialist in the drafting of Youth Plan;
- LYCs should demand youth goals in different policy domains and be involved (consulted) in defining those goals;
- LYCs need more colleagues and more money for Local youth policy;
- International exchange between LYCs from different countries;
- Research on LYC and role of LYC in different European countries.

### **What can youth (young people, NGOs etc) do to support (fight for) better cross-sectoral local youth policy?**

- Youth should network more and should activate other youngsters; they should become advocates of youth policy and tell about their work/activities to others and involve them into lobbying politicians;
- If they are not invited to participate in the policy debate and decision-making, they should ask for that!
- Organizations and initiative groups should cooperate more, share information;
- youth shall be provided with relevant information (in the youth language) and training to empower them;
- youth shall have and voice (!) a broader view on society, not only from the perspective of daily life of young people.

### **On European level:**

- EU should become more cross-sectoral itself;
- „Leader“ and other EU funding programmes should have an aspect on youth (target young people, assess youth impact, promote youth involvement etc);
- European-wide Congress of Local Youth Coordinators.

### **Indicators of successful cross-sectoral youth policy and cooperation (brainstorm):**

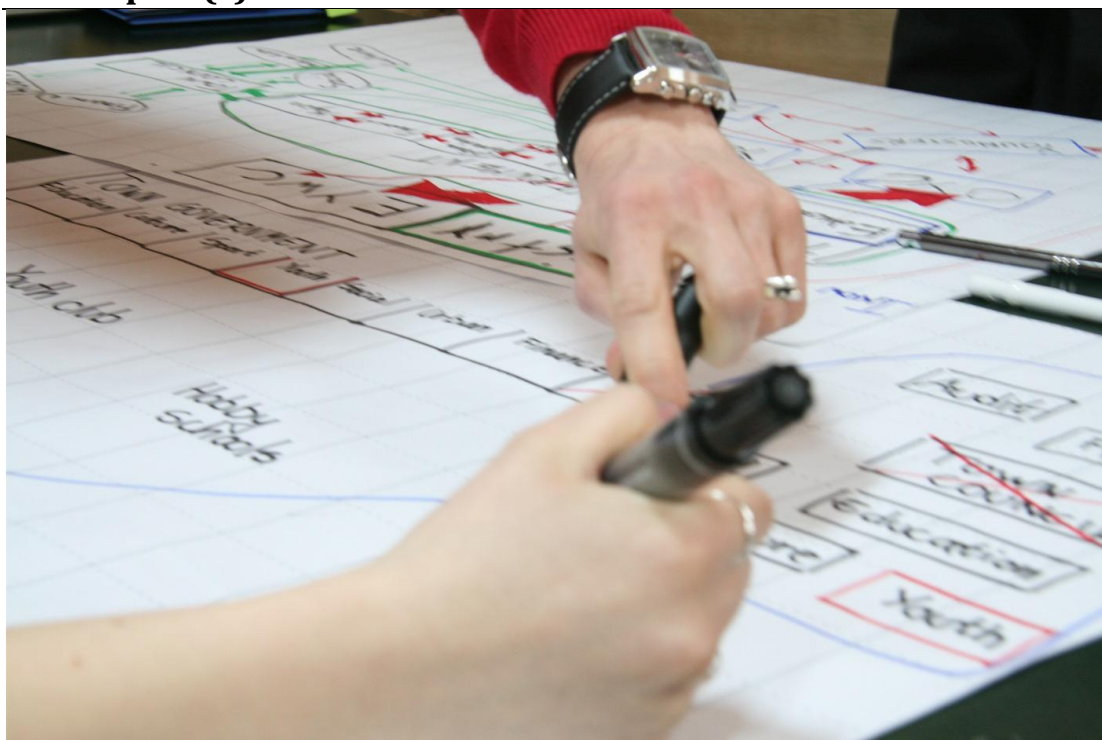
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We are talking about developing successful cross-sectoral cooperation in the local youth policy. To be able to measure “success” of cooperation set of indicators is needed. Result of brainstorming is listed below and group felt that work on indicators should be continued.

- Structural meetings between department heads: youth coordinator should be a driving force here;
- Number of informal meetings between the youth coordinator and other department heads (because decisions are made not during the structural meetings but in between them. Number of informal meetings would show the will to cooperate);
- Is there a chapter on youth in other sectoral plans? (Yes or No);
- Number of activities (projects) run in cooperation of different departments or sectors;

- Participation of the youth coordinator in the decision-making processes;
- How often local youth coordinators contacted by other sectors of administration;
- Number of articles about youth in the policy documents and plans;
- Information exchange (conference, exchange, articles, ...) about youth policy,
- Number of youth opinions taken on board by city council;
- Budget for youth policy and youth projects;

## Action plan(s)



National groups continue developing concrete action plans – how will they improve cross-sectoral cooperation in the field of youth in their municipality.

## **Future of Protocol agreement of countries involved: input into planning of upcoming two years (discussion)**

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The general feeling of participants is that cooperation between our four countries is needed and protocol agreement shall be continued. Group came up with several topics to be worked on. As well, reconsideration of format of meetings was proposed. Result of brainstorming:

- Exchange between LYC or organizations working to support local youth work (or coordinators);
- Info pack for LYCs about cross-sectoral cooperation;
- Analyse and share between countries information about youth plans planning processes;
- Work on volunteering, youth councils;
- Politicians should be involved in the cooperation: maybe to organize international congress OR study visit for politicians;
- Continue developing indicators (of successful cross-sectoral cooperation) and USE them;
- Exchange between Youth centres;
- Maybe to change format of some meetings and instead of seminars make a meetings of experts.

## **Evaluation:**

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Evaluation of the seminar was done in three steps:

- 1) Assessing individual impact;
- 2) Assessing setting and conditions;
- 3) Sharing thoughts, feelings (and little presents) with the group

### **1) Assessing individual impact, participants had to finish the sentences**

#### **I learned..**

...gained tools for my work;  
...youth work fundamentals in different countries;  
...what is youth policy and how does it work;  
...understanding in different languages.

#### **Most useful for me was...**

...reflecting on own situation;  
...to be critical;  
...reflection;  
...how to do a good brainstorming;  
...huge amount of information;  
...all! all the information I didn't know;  
...thinking on the other level;  
...indicators;  
...already become coordinator ☺

#### **As a result of seminar I will...**

...sleep;  
...be more active;  
...be more active with youngsters;  
...news ideas for advisory council future plans and activities;  
...launch youth commission;  
...introduce youth goals.

#### **(during seminar) I missed...**

...more practical visits;  
...physical movement / action;  
...visit to youth centre and sport centre;  
...things to see about youth work;  
...Vilnius;  
...action;

#### **Anything else to share? Tell us!**

...thanks, it was inspiring;  
...good working methods;  
...thanks, it was very inspiring and fun;  
...it was wonderful;  
...Sandra should become youth worker/politician;  
...thanks!

**2) Visual assessment of venue, setting and conditions (closer to the centre - the better)**

