

Komaf- Where leisure is connected to inclusion and diversity

Name of the organisation

Bataljong

Website of the organisation

Bataljong

Location of the organisation

Ossenmarkt 3, 2000 Antwerp, Belgium

E-mail address of the organisation

info@bataljong.be

Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work

- Inclusion
- Diversity
- Discrimination
- Disability

Good practice category

A practice of processes and methods

Good practice aim & purpose

Youthwork in Flanders has a great influence on the lives of children and youngsters who participate. However, only 20% of all minors in Flanders participate on a regular base in formal organized youthwork.

With the Flemish project 'Komaf', we want to create a network between organisations with expertise about a subject, related to inclusion and diversity. Komaf is a project, carried by four umbrella-organizations. De Ambrassade supports youthwork-organisations in Flanders, Bataljong supports local governments and youth councils in their childfriendly, local policy-making. KeKi focusses on research about Children's rights and Jint is our international stakeholder.

Because of research, we (Komaf) know that some children with special needs experience obstacles when they want to participate.

We also saw that there is a need to support local youth work initiatives in their knowledge and tools about inclusion and diversity. Those local initiatives want to reach the organization with the right expertise but they don't know where to find them. We want to work with this clear signal and want to build a strong network between organisations and (local) governments, on different political levels. The project Komaf exist for almost 2 years now and we are thinking about continuation.

Good practice description

We try to accomplish this with our online platform (www.komaf.be) where we collect good practices, tips and tricks and knowledge about different themes, connected with inclusion and diversity. We also try to construct a network where local youth workers, organisations with expertise in the Komaf-themes and local governments find each other in the common goal for more inclusive and diverse youth work. Examples of Komaf-themes are: intersectionality, racism, migration, Children's rights, poverty, disabilities... We focus on local youth workers and local youth-initiatives, to support them to be more accessible for more children and youngsters.

We undertake some concrete actions to reach this goal.

- We create a system where youth workers can request a training about a topic in the scope of Komaf. Then, we try to find some organisations with an expertise in that topic, who can give the training. We also give a big discount to make those trainings more accessible. The aim of the training is to introduce a topic of diversity and inclusion to (voluntary) youth workers. If they want to make some structural changes in their youth work initiative, they can also ask for a 'guidance' where an organisation with the right expertise helps them to analyse their youth work and make some changes to improve their accessibility. We have some great examples of local youth work initiatives who had a training or guidance, that we can introduce.
- We also organize some trainings, where we support local youth workers to have a reflective attitude, and to analyse their initiative with that attitude. Research showed us that a reflective attitude can help to reach more children and youngsters, because you can lower the boundaries to participate. We have a group trajectory, together with Roots vzw (umbrella organisation for (self-)organisation, for and founded by youngsters with a migration background). For 3 days, we will focus on intersectionality and the reflective attitude, and how youth workers can implement this in their local work situations. There is also a training of 2 hours about this topic.
- There is a new network of local youth workers who meet each other with a concrete question about inclusion and diversity. We try to inspire each other to understand where the difficulty comes from and maybe to start to build on a solution.
- We also try to participate in events about inclusion and diversity, to make our project more visible so we can support more local youth work initiatives and share more expertise about inclusion and diversity.

Good practice result & concrete effects

First of all, we create a network of local youth work organisations and organisations with expertise about inclusion and diversity. We notice that youth workers who discover obstacles of participation in their youth work, get to know each other and start to inspire each other. They also get to know the organization that can support them to overcome those challenges.

But Komaf has also an effect on the expertise-organisations. They hear the signals and the needs of children and young people (with or without disabilities, with or without a migration background, with or without a difficult situation at home...) to participate in the organisation. The project Komaf is a unique Flemish project where diversity, inclusion and connection are some of the most central values.

The outcome of this project is difficult to put in numbers, because inclusion is very complex and multi-layered. However, we see that Komaf is getting more and more known in the local governments and youth work initiatives. Because of all the things we offer, we invite youth workers to think about diversity and inclusion. If we contact them a few months after they got a training, some of the youth workers has taken a concrete action to make their initiative more inclusive.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work

Youth workers