

QJ : a new headquarter for young people in Paris

Name of the organisation

Ville de Paris

Website of the organisation

<http://jeunes.paris/>

Location of the organisation

25, boulevard Bourdon, 75004 Paris, France

E-mail address of the organisation

missionjeunesse@paris.fr

Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work

- Participation of young people in decision making
- Diversity
- Employability
- Safe/secure youth work environment

Good practice category

A practice of processes and methods

Good practice aim & purpose

In 2021, at the end of the 1st lockdown in Paris due to COVID, the Mayor of Paris has decided to create a central place for young people to tackle the difficulties accentuated by the crisis: lack of access to employment, increasing poverty, weakened mental health.

The Mayor set several conditions: to use a historic building in a tourist district (a former arrondissement town hall emptied of its services), to involve young people and companies in the process, and to open the facility before summer 2021 (in less than 6 months).

To achieve this goal, the City of Paris had to innovate and break with its usual processes. In June, the first services were made available to young people, and in October the facility was officially opened. Quartier Jeunes, as it is called (a play on the word “Quartier Général” meaning “headquarter” in English), is a unique facility in Paris: a one-stop shop for employment, information, health, civic engagement, access to culture; food distribution for young people in need; a third place with a coworking space; a café-restaurant run by a social economy company, etc.

Good practice description

From the very beginning of the project, it was clear that such a project could only be envisaged with the participation of young people. A week after the Mayor's announcement, consultations with the various stakeholders began, and while the first to be consulted were youth or student organizations, the largest consultation organized in March 2021 involved over 70 young people of all profiles, including Neets and young people with less opportunities. These consultations enabled young people to tell us what they wanted (concrete services rendered by professionals, an open and friendly place where you can come even when you don't need anything without having to justify yourself) but above all what they didn't want (no change to the historic architecture, no glass counter, tickets, numbers, having to make an appointment, being directed elsewhere, etc.).

All these elements formed a roadmap that was displayed in the "project room" at the heart of the site, and to which all professionals had to refer.

Today, Quartier Jeunes offers a low-threshold, unconditional welcome (no need to justify coming, say how old you are or where you live).

A safer place charter is currently being drawn up with the young people.

Numerous partners offer concrete services: youth information, sexual health consultations (e.g., immediate HIV testing, but also condom distribution) or with a psychologist, free or reduced-price tickets to the theater or an exhibition, the presence of companies that come to recruit, the possibility of volunteering or taking on a civic service mission, etc. But you can also simply meet up with friends and play games (table soccer, esports, board games, etc.) or have a drink (the café is open until 1 a.m.).

57,000 young people came to Quartier Jeunes in 2022 and over 100,000 are expected in 2023. Half of these young people do not live in Paris.

Good practice result & concrete effects

The Quartier Jeunes project required the City of Paris to modify and invent new work processes. As youth policies are essentially cross-cutting, several departments, public and private partners had to work together in the same location. This organization had to be endorsed by the institutions, not by the young people, for whom the process had to be as fluid and seamless as possible.

This meant setting up a shared governance structure involving institutions, associations, companies and, of course, the young people themselves.

But the speed with which the project had to be delivered also called for a healthy dose of pragmatism: rather than using private companies, it was the city's own staff who carried out much of the work (architects and artistic directors, but also plumbers, painters, carpenters, watchmakers, gardeners, etc.). For example, all the wooden furniture was designed and built in the City's workshops.

In terms of youth policy, this has meant working closely with youth workers to ensure that they are familiar with the facility and its services, and that they learn how to use it with the young people they accompany.

Today, the city is looking to roll out other, smaller facilities based on the same model as Quartier Jeunes.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work

Core principles of youth work