Network of Youth Centres Ljubljana

Name of the organisation
Mestna občina Ljubljana (City of Ljubljana)

Website of the organisation
www.ljubljana.si

Location of the organisation
Mestni trg 1, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

E-mail address of the organisation
mladina@ljubljana.si

Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work
- Non-formal education/-learning
- Youth work in urban areas

Good practice category
A practice of processes and methods

Good practice aim & purpose
In 2016, Ljubljana introduced its very first youth strategy. A significant objective outlined in this strategy was to boost the participation of young people in leisure activities. During the development of this strategy, it became evident that there was a pressing need to create programs that foster active involvement and creativity among youth while providing them with safe environments. Consequently, Ljubljana decided to enhance its support for youth programs that could run on a daily basis, invest in youth infrastructure, and establish new youth spaces.

Upon initial assessment, it was outlined that Ljubljana already had some ongoing programs for youth. This included the Public institution Young Dragons, which managed four district youth centers, as well as a few daily centers for children and youth overseen by the Centres for Social Work (institutions at the state level). Additionally, there were some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that, with some additional support, could run continuous daily programs.

This assessment led to a proposal to establish a minimum standard for youth centers, allocate extra funding to support these centers, and enhance the accessibility of high-quality youth programs in districts where such opportunities were lacking.

Good practice description
As it was envisaged in the Strategy for Youth of the City of Ljubljana, we would build a Network of youth centres, comprised of three different structures:

1. Youth Centres operated by Public Institution Young Dragons (founded by the city)
2. Daily centres for children and youth by Centres for Social work
3. Youth centres managed by NGOs and funded through public tender by the city.

This was to be a network that has common values, works on same basic principles, and represents physical spaces open for young people (primarily between 15 and 29). As youth centres are placed in different districts of Ljubljana, they should answer to the specific needs of young people living there and connect with other organisations within these districts.

In 2017 we published first call for financing the NGOs who will be running the youth centre programmes. Within the call, applicants had to prove and commit – among other – to having appropriate space (at least 70 m2), to have employed staff (at least one youth worker for implementation of programme), to be open for at least 20 hours/week and they had to commit to participate in the Network of Youth Centres Ljubljana with at least 100 working hours/year.

Network started off with 4 youth centres of Young Dragons, 4 units of daily centres of Center for Social Work, and 6 youth centres managed by 5 different NGOs.

Young Dragons co-ordinate the network, but the principles of co-operation and the common values were developed by all in a process that took place in the first year of establishment.

The MISSION of the Network of Youth Centres of Ljubljana is: to provide an environment in Ljubljana for young people to discover their talents and get to know their strengths.

How the Network achieves this:

- Connects the Youth Centres of Ljubljana and supports their work.
- Raises awareness of the Youth Centres and the opportunities for young people in Ljubljana.
- Embraces and utilises diverse content and working methods, the network is an example to all who connect to the good of the city.
- Builds bridges between formal and non-formal education.
- Organises and conducts trainings for youth workers.
- Is the voice of the young and a credible voice to communicate with decision makers in the city and beyond.

It was decided at the first (founding) meeting that organisations and youth centres joint in the Network will have joint activities and events. They will facilitate rotation within youth organizations and among employees. They will build on simple starting goals and experiences. Have regular

meetings that open space for people to collaborate and build trust. Each meeting will take place in a different Youth Center to foster acquaintance. The hosting Youth Center will moderate the meeting. At least one member of the organization that hosted the previous meeting will always be involved in preparing next meeting, bridging the gap between meetings. The same people will attend the meetings to continue the story. And Network will constantly explore what works in youth work in Ljubljana, considering local specifics and adjusting practice. And the Network will build a common image.

Good practice result & concrete effects
Soon after the establishment of the Network, we started discussing best way for documentation and follow up of work in youth centres with an aim to find common ground for daily monitoring of youth work, as well as to be able to develop a common ground for understanding quality and progress, while still appreciating the diversity and specific needs of young people, organisations and city districts.

In the frame of Europe Goes Local, we have learned about Logbook, system for documentation and follow-up in youth work, presented by Keks network from Gothenburg, Sweden. We implemented the pilot phase in 2019. By now, Logbook has become an indispensable tool, used regularly by all youth centres, as well as the Youth Office of the city administration.

Since the beginning, not much, in sense of organization, has changed. There are a few more of youth centres in the network and our common meetings are now moderated by an external moderator, but we still remain committed to our mission, supporting young people, building a positive image of youth work (based on measurable data), and bringing youthful ideas to the city and community.

Result: 16.297 activities, 50.666 programme hours, 160.000 visits, 13.547 hours facilitated by youth in 2022.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work
Youth work policy