

# Betonne Jeugd

**Name of the organisation**

Betonne Jeugd vzw

**Website of the organisation**

[www.betonnejeugd.org](http://www.betonnejeugd.org)

**Location of the organisation**

Sint-Andriesplaats 25, 2000 Antwerp, Belgium

**E-mail address of the organisation**

[kristof\\_daems@hotmail.com](mailto:kristof_daems@hotmail.com)

---

**Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work**

- Human rights
- Inclusion
- Active citizenship/activism
- Safe/secure youth work environment

**Good practice category**

A practice of processes and methods

**Good practice aim & purpose**

Betonne Jeugd vzw is a youth organization for young people in poverty, youngsters in social vulnerable situations and homeless youth. The way we organize our society facilitates poverty and exclusion. Poverty is institutionalized in society's services. Through structural social exclusion, people's rights are endangered. Fundamental societal changes are needed to help ban poverty.

Betonne Jeugd pursues social emancipation and positive imaging of people in poverty.

## Good practice description

Betonne Jeugd unites youth in their leisure time by offering a safe home base on wednesdays, fridays and saturdays. They can chill, cook and eat together, talk, paint, play football ... be young and feel less troubled. And together with the youngsters we strive to change social structures that stand in the way of creating a more righteous society.

We use following methods to fight poverty and social exclusion:

- Being present
  - The workers are reachable for the youth and listen actively to the boundaries the youth experience due to poverty. Trust, respect and acceptance are vital tools. They form a bridge figure to services, schools... and mediate when necessary.
- Empowerment
  - We motivate the young people to be an active member of Betonne Jeugd by offering very accessible volunteer work. This is the first step to rebuilding the self-esteem of the members.
- A safe home base: Threefold
  - A home is where you feel safe, a place to retreat or experiment. We create an atmosphere of safety for our youth.
  - A home base is a place where you can go freely. Walk in and out at all moments of your life, you are always welcome, you always know someone. The first reached youth now come with their children.
  - A home is a family, that's what Betonne Jeugd is, one big family. We do not select the groups by youth, gender... We organise activities through the interests of our youth.
- Peer support
  - Challenging administration and services, our youngsters support each other and give each other the newest information. Some youngsters are buddy's for other youngsters, like a big brother/sister.
- policy advice.
  - Poverty is institutionalized in society's services, to change this we collect the signals of participation boundaries from and with our youth and present these to actors who can change the situation. This from policy makers such as ministers, departments, city's as schools, social organisations and services.

## Good practice result & concrete effects

### Impact on the lives of the youngsters

- On a personal level:
  - Empowerment
  - Broadening of environment
  - Network (formal and informal)
  - Not loitering on the streets, safe.
  - Higher chance of resuming education
  - Better mental health
  - Safe environment.
  - Contact with positive role models
- On the level of society:
  - Higher chance of labour
  - Better communication skills
  - Better understanding of administration and services

### Impact on Society

- Less loitering on the streets
- Higher participation rates in society

### Policy work

- Establishment of Dakuzie: A flemisch network connecting 1st, 2nd and 3rd line organisations in Flanders and Brussels to combat the homelessness of youngsters.
- Woonreporters rapport together with Uit de Marge, A policy advice rapport in co-creation with homeless youth over Flanders.

### Social Awareness

- Courses for educators, schools, services... Over poverty, homeless youngsters.
- Film 'Home street home', a co-creative social film over homeless youth.
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVELW6Td0MQ>

### Other

- Co-establishment of JUMP with the partners of Mind the Gap Antwerp, a walk-in working for homeless youth in Antwerp.
- Cooperative partner establishment Pension Van schoonhoven, a shelter for homeless youth in Antwerp.

## Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work

### Organisation and practice