M-Power Brussels

Name of the organisation
JES vzw

Website of the organisation
www.jes.be

Location of the organisation
werkhuizenstraat 3, 1080 Brussels, Belgium

E-mail address of the organisation
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Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work
- Active citizenship/activism
- Youth information and counselling
- Youth work in urban areas

Good practice category
A practice of processes and methods

Good practice aim & purpose
M- Power Brussels is a safe space for young ladies (18 – 25 years old) from Brussels. Togehter the group of ladies talk about their experiences and frustrations while growing up as a girl in the city. They create an action to make ‘their point’ and work towards inspiring others.
The aims of the project are to find on 3 levels:
1. Strenghten individuals in their competencies related to politicizing. More specifically: information searching, interviewing, forming and expressing your opinion, debating, talking for groups, organising actions.
2. We want to collect the opinions of young girls in Brussels about the themes that they find relevant.
3. On a third level we want to increase the voice of the girls and help them to be heard. Therefore it is the task for professional youth workers to make sure there points of view are connected to (local)authorities and specific policy about the themes the girls find relevant.

Good practice description

The Project M-Power Brussels starts from selecting a group of young ladies. After forming a group the youthworkers constantly adapt the program by following the incentives the young ladies are giving us. However, we start from a process of 5 phases to guide the ladies towards their goals.

Fase 1 : Each year (september to june) JES Brussels invites a new group of young ladies to participate in the M-Power project. To promote the project we start from our connections within partner organisations in youthwork. This way we can explaine the project and our expectations towords the competence level of possible participants. We want to start with a group of girls that have a simular level in interest, competence and expectations. Therefore we organise an' getting-to-know-day' before starting with a new group.

Fase 2: Once we formed a new group of ladies it is our focus to help them choose a relevant theme together. In the beginning We use different active methods in brainstorming and debat on a wide level of themes we know girls in Brussels find relevant. This way they get to know eachother, the opinions of themsemlves and others. Through these activities they learn on a competence level aswell as they recieve information. While the groupsformation gets furder and furder the girls find a theme they want to work on as a collective.

Fase 3: In the Third fase we stimulate to research on the theme and specific aspects within that theme. We try to informate the participants aswell as stimulate the search of information themselves. So they can form there opinions and bring them to debate excercises.

Fase 4: is to work towards action. The participants have chosen there theme and the aspects on wich they want to take action. They can choose a form of action (examples: writing an article, organise an event for other youngsters, start an experiential project, ...) They will organise and take leadership on this action themselves. It is the task of the youthworkers to coach the participants during this program and widen their netwerk.

Fase 5: after the action fase it is time to collect all the gatered information and search for ways to bring this to relevant actors like organisations working on this theme, local policy, media and other relevant actors.

Good practice result & concrete effects

To explaine the results I like to start by the example of the M-Power Group of 2022-2023. This group of 6 young ladies chose to work on the theme ‘self image of young girls growing up in the city’. After a bride search on this theme they wanted to organise an event for girls (16 – 20 years old). In this event they invited 35 girls girls to talk about taboe subjects, how and with who they can talk about these subjects. They also asked the girls if they would talk to professionals in scools, youthwork and psychologists.

By resarching the theme and organising this event:

- The girls empowered themselves in searching for information about the theme, forming their opinions, going into debat, organising an event and talking/prensenting in front of a group.
- They gattered a lot of interesting information and gattered signals of the young girls who were present on the event. Local professionals who work on the well-being of youngsters were also invited to the event. This way they were invited to listen to the girls and talk about their needs.
- We collected the information and processed the information into the youth referandum by the local youth councel.

The 6 young ladies who took part in this group described that the project helped them to devellop themselves and grow as a young women. It also helped to enlarge they network. One of the girls participates in the new M-Power group of this year. One of them now works as a professional youthworker. One has started voluntary work in an other youthwork organisation. The other girls take focus in their studies.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work

Core principles of youth work