

Youth Center 'Baze' in Gulbene, Latvia

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We interviewed Amanda Krišjāne from the youth center 'Baze' in Gulbene, Latvia. Amanda shared with us what the center does for the local community. We also talked about their priorities, inspiring good practices, and cooperation projects in the municipal youth work.

How does the youth center 'Baze' support and develop the local youth work?

The main activities of the Gulbene district youth center "Baze", involve providing space and place for youth, as well as seeking resources for helping and carrying out youth initiatives. Besides these, the Center puts youngsters and their needs in the spotlight while ensuring the development of their life quality in the district. Every year we highlight the actual needs of district youngsters through three main directions of work. For example, this year, we singled out these three priorities:

1. Representing the interests of youngsters and their involvement in the decision-making process
2. Health – mental and physical well-being
3. Possibilities for everyone through mobile youth work



Could you tell us more about the project *Be Mobile*, its aims, activities, and impact?

We created the project **Be Mobile** aiming to improve the knowledge, skills, and competencies of youth workers. It was important for us to find out more about types of mobile youth work, planning, and implementation processes. Our additional intention is to share best practices of mobile youth work at the international level. **Be Mobile** is a collaborative project between municipalities and countries, enabling practice sharing and the possibility to see a bigger picture of how the mobile youth work can be done.

In this project through cooperation with two Romanian organizations and other partners in Latvia, we will build youth workers' understanding of mobile youth work, and how can the outreach youth work develop in quality. Within this project, we are creating a toolkit for every youth worker to use. This helps to improve or even to make the first steps at mobile youth work activation. We combine the online training and two online discussions on these topics, in which we will welcome every interested youth worker in Europe to join and gain some good practices and knowledge. With this project growing, we hope to develop mobile youth work processes not only in Latvia and Romania but also in other countries.



The youth center 'Baze' is very active in community volunteering. How do you organize it and what are the benefits for the young people, community, and municipality?

The volunteering work in the Gulbene existed before the first youth center was opened, but only several years ago we introduced an adequate structure and support system. We created the guidelines for volunteering work that takes place in the district. The youth center 'Baze' is now the main institution responsible for volunteering. This fits the reality, as the majority of volunteers are young people. Nevertheless, we also have and support our adult and senior volunteers.

If a person decides to volunteer, our youth center has a database of organizations and institutions with volunteering opportunities. So, the volunteers can find the perfect fit for their personal or professional interests and goals. The same goes for the organizations that seek volunteers. We are the first contact point for anyone seeking volunteering experience. It starts with the intake appointment in our youth center, finding the match, registering, and signing a written agreement.

Volunteering is a big part of our local community empowerment. It represents a chance to develop different kinds of skills that will be either beneficial in the future work field or for personal development. The municipality also grows from the engagement of our volunteers.



What tools and resources are used in your local youth work?

In the last years, youth workers in the Gulbene district started using the [European Charter on Local Youth Work](#). We of course, still have space for improvement. Some dimensions of youth work are well-developed, and some at still work in progress. We are currently at our second policy for youth work in the Gulbene and one of the following steps now is to create one for the next planning cycle – 2025 to 2030. It's also the case with institutional cooperation. Professionals in every work field dedicated to youngsters are developing and learning new skills every year. This leads to a bigger understanding of youngsters, their needs, and how to develop more cooperation with them.

How do you ensure quality development of youth work in the district?

The development of youth work in the Gulbene is measured by the youth policy result indicators. After every evaluation period, we know if we have reached the stated goals, what went well, and what needs more attention. Also, each year, through different kinds of activities – worldwide policy updates, discussions, and questionnaires we follow trends in the local youth work. We also carry out focus groups, where we gather our youngsters' opinions and thoughts regarding their life quality in the district. This gives us not only the feedback of what has been done but also what would be the key points for development.



What interesting activities are coming up for the youth center 'Baze'?

All year is filled with interesting activities and events. The biggest one is the project **Be Mobile**, in frames of which the mobile you work in the district is being developed. At the same time, diverse activities ensure continuous and new possibilities for youngsters. This year we are turning seventeen and it's a respectable anniversary. We value all our volunteers, which is why every year we organize a 'thank you' ceremony for them. Life for a young person in Gulbene is filled with interesting activities. We are happy when we can be the hosts and initiators of quality activities for the community. Everyone in 'Baze' can't wait for visitors to show them around so that they get to know our district and programs better.

Read more:

- Get to know Amanda better in [our interview for Faces of EGL](#)
- Website of the [Gulbene District Youth Center Baze](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [YouTube](#)