

urban leadership

Name of the organisation

JES vzw

Website of the organisation

www.jes.be

Location of the organisation

werkhuizenstraat 3-5, 1080 Brussels, Belgium

E-mail address of the organisation

info@jes.be

Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work

- Entrepreneurship
- Youth work in urban areas
- Volunteering/voluntarism
- Participation of young people in activities (planning, preparing, carrying out, etc.)

Good practice category

A practice of processes and methods

Good practice aim & purpose

JES is a youth work organization based in Ghent, Antwerp and Brussels. It is our mission to strengthen children and youngsters growing up in these major cities. Youngster can be a participant in activities (based on playing,creativity,sports) courses (leadership trainings) and workshops (music and multimedia studio). Youngster can also be a volunteer in the activities described above and others. Over the 3 cities, JES had more than 500 volunteers.

Occasionally we see young volunteers taking a long term engagement being a volunteer at JES. While many youngsters choose a different path, or they outgrow our (and others) organizations. Still, some youngsters want to engage themselves even more and create an impact on the city. Outside the safe walls of organizations, these youngsters engage themselves by starting their own projects or /and by taking a role as a spokesperson. At JES we call this “urban leadership”

We want to embrace these urban leaders because they create a positive impact on the city and the surrounding youngsters. It is our goal to be there for them while they create new organizations and examples for the upcoming young generation.

Good practice description

JES looked for the competency profile that urban leaders have in common. Based on this competency profile, we looked at how we support these urban leaders.

We see that young people who take on urban leadership are streetwise and have the courage to take their own initiatives. They are **trusted** by youngsters, organizations, politicians.. They **engage** and **empower** themselves and others. They see what is needed to make their city better and they can **inspire** and **connect** others.

Based on this competency profile, we have developed a support tool. We hereby offer a substantive framework for youth workers who coach their volunteers in their journey from participant to young leader in the organization and possibly later to urban leader. The tool helps us realize that we support urban leadership at JES long before they start their own initiatives and/or take up a role as a spokesperson. During an often long-term process as a volunteer at JES, they can develop the competencies above. Within the safe walls of the organization, young people are allowed to experiment, discover themselves and develop their competencies. As they progress in their journey, young people can also take more and more initiative within the organization. A youth worker stands next to them to guide them with feedback and coaching during this process.

When they set up their own initiatives, we want to continue to be there for them. In this phase, the young people take ownership on their project. They want to take responsibility themselves and break out of the walls of the organization. Our role as 'supporter' or coach is changing. Both the youth worker and the young people are looking together for a new attitude in working together. Every year we see about 10 urban leaders at JES. They claim urban leadership in 3 different ways. Whether it is by starting your own youth work, by representing the voice of young people or by organizing cultural festivals and evenings; These are all young people who are committed to helping the children and young people in their city towards a better/enhanced future. Together they reach hundreds of youngsters in the city. For the young people setting up initiatives themselves. We want to let them know that we are still there for them. We want to put them in touch with the network that can support them on the one hand and for whom they are a source of innovation and inspiration on the other hand. We also see young people in the youth cultural landscape who are committed to giving their peers and others opportunities. JES created a framework in which these young people can develop their own ideas and skills while organizing their festival. Also young spokespersons, who are bringing the voices of youngsters in the city can always contact JES to prepare together for conversations with the media, journalists and politicians.

Good practice result & concrete effects

By using and developing the term 'urban leadership', JES recognizes our young people who are committed to their city with full enthusiasm. JES creates a forum to showcase their projects and express their voice during congress, in publications, in articles and at sector consultations. We give them more visibility. Backed by the trust of a professional organization like JES, they gain trust more quickly and find it easier to find subsidies, infrastructure and support.

Together with a group of Brussels urban leaders and partner organizations, we developed a training project in which experienced urban leaders develop and supervise training for their successors. About 30 young people involved in self-organizations were trained by their example figures.

To strengthen young people's spokespersons skills and receive signals from young people, we started working with urban girls through the M-Power project for young ladies (18-25 years old)

The Brussels youth work project Loupix was supported by JES and JINT as a local solidarity project. They received resources to develop their project and coaching from JES.

Finally, we also offered performance opportunities to young artists in collaboration with cultural urban leaders who themselves organize events and festivals within the established cultural houses.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work

Core principles of youth work