

The city operation in Brussels

Name of the organisation

Chirojeugd Vlaanderen

Website of the organisation

<https://chiro.be/>

Location of the organisation

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Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work

- Youth work in urban areas

Good practice category

A practice of processes and methods

Good practice aim & purpose

With Chiro Youth Flanders, we want to build a city where social contacts and the social fabric regain their importance. A city where diversity becomes self-evident and where interculturalism is used as an asset. In other words, a city in which every child and young person is welcome and given opportunities. A city that is also child-friendly with attention to the environment, needs and interests of all children and young people in all neighbourhoods, and with attention to living space, playing space and mobility. Where work is done on more tolerance towards children and young people.

Chiro is present in the city because many children and young people live there, often children and young people who are excluded from many leisure facilities. But also because we want to contribute to restoring the social fabric in the city. We see the complexity and diversity of the city as an opportunity in this respect. The city operation must make Chiro in the city possible and easier by working on preconditions and by directly supporting the Chiro groups. These preconditions can range from a friendly policy context with good subsidy regulations to sufficient leadership to the development of a good network.

Good practice description

Within Chiro Youth Flanders we place great emphasis on urban activities. Groups in the city are to a greater or lesser extent confronted with a combination of factors linked to the urban context which make it difficult to set up a Chiro operation. That is why the choice was made to give these groups extra support.

The city operation fulfills at least three functions: directing and developing an overall city operation, specifically supporting individual groups and directing and supporting the professionals. The city operation makes the choices regarding content for Chiro in their city. In doing so, they start from an overview of the city, the opportunities and problems, the situation of the groups, etc. In this way, they draw up a plan for the city in the short and long term. In addition, the city council will support individual groups. This is necessary because of the difficulty of certain situations and numbers. This is where the professionals play a major role and have to be able to respond quickly.

An example here was an acute leadership shortage within a Brussels group. When there is a leadership shortage, it means that the qualitative functioning of the Chiro group is in trouble. The city operation went to this group and they actively guided them to find new leadership. Thus, a networking event was organised for the Chiro group's wider network and surroundings to look at a possible solution. Through the cooperation between the group itself and the city operation with its professionals, a solution was found. In addition to this networking evening, a barbecue was also organised for all interested parties and additional information was given, which eventually led to new leaders being found.

Good practice result & concrete effects

By actively engaging in the city, we try to provide a solution to the ever-changing context of a city. Thanks to the intensive and close contact that the city operation, through its professionals, has with the groups, we are well aware of what is going on within the Chiro group and can help and support them in a targeted way. The diversity of problems also means that the city operation has built up a wide network within the organisations and institutions in a city.

The freedom with which city operations can work creates an open climate in which plenty of experimentation can take place. This is also necessary because the urban context is constantly changing. Experiments in which lessons can be learned and things can be taken to the wider operation.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work

Youth workers