Empowering Brussels girls through identity development and shared leadership

Name of the organisation
Molenbeek Rebels Basketball

Website of the organisation
www.molenbeekrebels.be

Location of the organisation
Gillonstraat 23, 1210 Brussels, Belgium

E-mail address of the organisation
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Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work
- Participation of young people in decision making
- Inclusion
- Diversity
- Gender

Good practice category
A practice of processes and methods

Good practice aim & purpose
Molenbeek Rebels dreams of a society where all girls and women are allowed, able and dare to claim their rights and actively participate in society. We combine passion for basketball and social commitment. Our main goal is not so much sporting success, but empowering girls. Especially girls who grow up in socially vulnerable environments.

With Molenbeek Rebels we offer a framework within which girls support each other, learn from each other and therefore strengthen each other. This gives every girl the opportunity to participate in a tailor-made growth program, guided by peers, with a focus on talent development and competence acquisition.

We break the stereotypes of the typical top-down organization and let the girls make their own way: they run the club themselves under the guidance of their peers and experienced coaches, and decide for themselves how much commitment they can and want to undertake. We actively work on inclusion and equivalence: every girl is welcome, every girl counts. We work with talents and possibilities, instead of possible problems and ingrained structures.

Good practice description
Molenbeek Rebel's core values are equality, shared leadership and ownership, and the principles of the Self Determination Theory (autonomy, competence, relatedness and justice) are the common thread on the field as well as at the level of club governance.

The club is a pioneer in youth and girl's ownership, with a board that largely consists of young girls and women with a migration background who grew up in and grew with the club. In 2023, no fewer than 85 of the 130 girls over the age of 12 (65%) made a small or large commitment to the club. The policy lines are drawn up by the very young policy team, the sports activities are supervised by a sports coordinator and more than 30 coaches and assistant coaches, the logistics are provided and coordinated by a team consisting of young teenagers, and the camps and events are organized and supervised by the animators team.

Molenbeek Rebels structures its program in 4 growth paths, each of which is linked to a volunteer commitment/job within the club.

Growth path 1: policy

Girls aged 12 to 25 set the course within the policy team (12-18 years) and the administrative body (18+) for the future and growth of the operation, represent Molenbeek Rebels and share the club's expertise with the broad network and far beyond. They attend workshops and training courses to acquire competencies within this domain.

Growth path 2: sports animator

Girls aged 14 to 25 organize and supervise the sporting activities (team of coaches, team of referees) and the youth activities (animators team) and provide (basketball) entertainment at club and partner events.

Growth path 3: communication

Girls aged 12 to 25 work within the communications team to develop the communication strategy of the operation and are trained to manage and develop social media.

Growth path 4: logistics

The logistics team with girls from 11 to 25 years old, is responsible for the organization of club events and management of the cafeteria. The team is also responsible for the budget. We are working on IT, accounting and internet banking training.

Good practice result & concrete effects
The impact of this program is significant. On the one hand, we see an increase in self-confidence, openness, independence, positivity, and for some, self control. Girls testify the club feels as a second home where they feel loved and supported, a safe haven of equality and justice in a society where inequality and injustice rule. In Molenbeek Rebels, they find the space and the courage to be themselves and to take action.

On the other hand, working with shared leadership in a horizontal hierarchy with girls taking on responsibilities and having ownership, results in the acquisition of skills. Peer teaching teaches girls to take an active role, to coach others, analyze and reflect and see strengths and working points. Girls learn about team roles, learn to recognize and acknowledge their own talents and those of others. They learn to communicatie, argue, align expectations and look for consensus. They learn to manage their team, on the field as well as at the governance level, to work tranparently, motivate their choices and judge fairly.

Through workshops and training courses, girls acquire competencies and obtain diplomas.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work
Core principles of youth work