

# Youth Service Globelink

07/02/2024 - Actions in EGL



We interviewed Fien Morren, Project Officer from the Youth Service Globelink in Anderlecht, Brussels. Fien shared with us what the center does, more about their good practice project KRAS, and how they are making a difference in the local youth work.

## What is the main field of activity of Globelink?

Youth Service Globelink is a national youth service initiating and carrying out projects together with young people from a global, sustainable perspective. Globelink challenges young people to strive for a sustainable, inclusive, and just world. Our organization has a mission to develop young people's skills, knowledge, and desire to make conscious choices and actively promote them. Starting from the power of young people and focusing on Education for Sustainable Development, we want to make sure youth is well-skilled and included and valued as an important stakeholder. Youth service Globelink always had a positive outlook on the future. Young people are our most important partners and bear responsibility for the policy and operation of the Globelink youth service. Their opinion is important and matters.



### **What issues and challenges in the local youth work is Globelink helping to solve?**

Globelink gives voice to young people in Brussels and Flanders, regardless of their religion, background, or place of residence. So, we support youngsters in opening up and discussing social issues, topics such as migration, resilience, and identity. With the education about these issues, we encourage and empower young people to have an opinion. Youngsters can realize they have a say in everything that affects them and their quality of life. We do this in a participatory way, as a more experimental form of youth work. This is not always the easiest way of working, but it's based on using the power and opinion of young people.

### **What is the project KRAS and how does it promote youth empowerment and participation?**

KRAS is a discussion and role play for young people in the third grade of secondary education. KRAS works across schools and networks. And throughout Flanders and Brussels, we organize meetings for young people. At these sessions, they debate global themes with their peers. Youngsters get a chance to have their voices heard. Every school year a new annual theme with a global impact is used to introduce young people to the world of democracy and debate. And this year, the theme is *conflict*.



### **What skills are developed through KRAS?**

Empathy and discussion are central to the theme. From the point of view of people who have something to say, young people get the best insight into the often difficult global themes. That is why young people put themselves in the shoes of a political party, a young person from another country, the government of a country, the press, an interest group, etc. They defend their voice with gusto and experience first-hand the tensions that exist between the different parties. The valuable fact about KRAS is that it has a strong pedagogical structure. We create a safe environment by first letting young people crawl into a role, where the scratch folder is a substantial support young people can hold on to. Step by step, the project moves towards formulating one's own opinion on a theme. Only once this is clear, young people enter into dialogue with local and eventually national policymakers.



### **What is the impact of the KRAS process and methodology?**

The impact of KRAS is that it empowers young people in many different ways. From chairing a committee room to taking part in the press team at the Plenum. From debating at a local final session to co-presenting the youth's decision at consultative bodies. In this project, the process and result have equal value. Above all, it is all about raising the importance of the young people's voices. This project's goal is that the youth can feel that they matter. And next to that, they can learn how to develop and defend their point of view.



### **What interesting activities are coming up for the Globelink this year?**

This year is of course a special one with all the elections coming up, so the KRAS project also has its timeline and set of activities. We start the year with **KRAS Deluxe**, this is the day when will officially begin this year's project. It kicks off on Saturday, January 27 at the Globelink office. There we will bring together all young people who want to commit to the run-up to the Plenum (b)XL 2024. This starting day includes team building, a joint lunch, brainstorming sessions, and the opportunity to collect opinions about the project.

### **Do you have an Europinion?**

The next one is **Europinion**, which is for all curious about the important themes at the European level. For example, youngsters have an opportunity to participate in the discussion about what measures Europe should take to combat further global warming. They can tackle issues such as a smoking ban, or age limit for alcohol. And what can and should the European Union do regarding pensions, minimum wages, and unemployment benefits. Another topic for them to discuss can be what should be the conditions for other countries to join the European Union. This activity serves to collectively engage young people into thinking and learning, and taking a well-considered stand when going to the polls this year.

## Come to Plenum!

**Plenum** will take place on Friday, April 26. The young people will take over the Senate, the House, and the Flemish Parliament for one day. Plenum is the peak of the KRAS project when there is a role and discussion game in which hundreds of young people from 26 different KRAS groups voluntarily debate for a year around one central theme – this year it is **conflict**. As a result of Plenum (b)XL 2023, the KRAS project gathered solutions, ideas, and recommendations from approximately 455 young people on the theme of **identity**, at a Flemish, national, and global level.

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