

Youth in Urban Space

Developments pre and post Corona, how municipalities and youth work could deal with them



In recent years youth workers observed change in the use of public space by young people. Whereas the contact with young males in Streetwork and Outreach Work was decreasing, demography provided evidence that the number of boys/men at this age was stable, even slightly increasing. Simultaneously contact with females on public places has increased. Data analysis of usage of public space partly confirmed these observations being a phenomenon in many areas of several cities in Europe.

Some theories came up as reason for the development, none of those has been examined: Changes in leisure activities of young males and generally the increasing role of social media obviously seem to play a part either. A strong security driven focus with more CCTV monitoring would support girls/women taking public space and restrain boys/men on the other hand. Educational programs and labour market developments have influence on it. How urban public space is planned and constructed might have changed.

The aftermath of the current Corona Crisis is expected to be another game changer on this topic. Any predictions about the impact on the usage and perception of public space are not possible at this moment, though impact is already seen; new hotspots came up in summer 2020, on several places user groups changed

The idea of a research project based on a strategic partnership within the European funding program Erasmus+ aroused already in 2019, the current situation gave even more boost to it. Therefore, we could establish a partnership of four cities (Helsinki, Milano, Stuttgart, and Vienna) where that topic is eminent for responsible persons. Every city has its unique subtopics, but the general issue was observed equally. Every city had to manage the Corona Crisis.

The partner organisations are responsible for Youth Work in their cities to a large extend (or even fully). They are all involved both in strategic planning in cooperation with the respective municipality and responsible for operations in youth work. In total, they are responsible for almost 2000 professional youth work practitioners.

Key questions for the project are:

- Which changes in young people's usage and perception of public space can be observed?
- Which general developments, political decisions and local strategies have an influence on this topic?
- In which way are observations of the recent year influenced by the impact of the Corona Crisis?
- What are possible European and local strategic approaches to gain influence on these factors?
- What are the consequences regarding our lobbying activities for the interest of young people?
- What are proper structural and methodological answer Open Youth Work can offer?
- In which way activities and offerings of Open Youth Work in public urban space need to be adapted?



The project will deliver intense research on the questions that will be planned and supervised by the research partner and carried out by the practitioners. In several meetings we will extract both general European but also regional outcome and develop practical structural and methodological proposals. Target groups for our proposals will be both policy makers and practitioners

As the project partners has huge capacity in directly using and implementing the results into their practical work we can provide an extremely high degree on sustainability and are able to ensure that this will not be a "Stand alone" project but will have impact on the four involved cities at least.

The intellectual output will be delivered in a way that also those not directly involved will benefit, regardless if they are located in one of the partner cities or anywhere else in the European Union.

The partnership is made of

- Vienna, Verein Wiener Jugendzentren (Lead) – AT www.jugendzentren.at (VJZ)
- Donau Universität Krems – AT (DUK)
<https://www.donau-uni.ac.at/en/university/faculties/business-globalization/departments/migration-globalization.html>
- Helsinki Youth Department - FI <https://www.hel.fi/nuoret/en> (HEL)
- Stuttgart Jugendhaus gGmbH – DE <https://www.jugendhaus.net/> (STG)
- Milano, Comune di Milano - Area Giovani, Università e Alta Formazione – IT (CdM)
<https://www.comune.milano.it/comune/amministrazione-trasparente/organizzazione/articolazione-degli-uffici/organigramma/direzione-educazione/area-giovani-universita-e-alta-formazione>
- Milano, Tempo Per L'Infanzia Cooperativa Sociale – IT (TPI)
<http://www.temperlinfanzia.it/>

Intellectual Outputs

- Evidence collection ("Study"), Policy recommendations, Recommendations for Practitioners, Videos, Presentations, Journal Article

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