

Working Group „Youth Mobility“

Day 1

The working group on youth mobility started with a getting to know session which was aimed bringing participants closer together and learning names. Everyone presented his/himself and the organisation he/she is coming from. Having gained this little overview, the working session continued by another game where everyone searched one partner within the group whom he would get to know better. Later on, we had a small exercise outside which was supposed to already share some of our experiences about migration, discrimination and mobility. This practice was the introduction into the topic and was followed by our first on-topic task.

Having had this little introductory session, we talked about the expectations we have for our working group. The general consensus was that the exchange of experience and knowledge would be the key in our working group. Still, it should be framed within the setting up of future projects that enable us to see what we can do to facilitate youth mobility. In this regard another important point is to motivate more people to take part in mobility projects. Also, we want to talk about which barriers are still existent to free movement.

In groups of three people we discussed what the term youth mobility entails, which concepts it includes and what it means to us. In groups we agreed on a definition and then compared it to definitions of youth mobility found by other institutions, such as the Slovakian youth council or a scout group.

When presenting our findings, some features about our definitions could be found in every groups' work. According to us mobility refers to a purposeful moving, which can either take place within an individual or institutionalised framework. It is a means to create tolerance and understanding, to acquaint knowledge and experience which equips the individual with added value. From a more normative angle it should entail the movement without facing problems or discrimination, it should help in improving social and economic situations and even more, it should become a right.

Finally, we were presented the agenda for the week and were informed to focus for the following week especially on mobility that is promoting something. Additionally, we will try to reach a neutral definition of youth mobility.

Day 2

The second day of the working group on youth mobility started right away with going back to the basis of mobility. Again working in groups we discussed why young people are actually moving and what the impact of even this movement is.

Group number one divided the benefits mobility can have into four categories. Cultural ones made up the first category since moving and getting to know other countries helps fighting prejudices and racism and encourages cultural exchange between youth. The second categorisation comprised education and career development related benefits such as learning new languages and making use of intercultural competence during business. This was followed by the third group of benefits, namely the personal development. This part is cross

cutting with all other categories, since most of the benefits are somehow personal ones as well. Finally, the promotion of values is a last positive impact that youth mobility brings up.

Group number two on the other hand, presented their findings a little different. They created a puzzle which once put together demonstrated the relation between reasons for moving and the impacts it has. The overall message was that we are moving for promoting peace and understanding. The grounds can be manifold. You are first of all making the decision for mobility based on selfishness. You want to see new places or want to add a powerful aspect to your CV. While being mobile you gain skills and learn understanding other cultures and later on, you give back these skills to society. But the motivations behind our decision to become mobile can also be found in the wish for a new challenge or for a new experience.

Having found this list of motives the next step was to move on to obstacles that exist. Unfortunately, the time was not sufficient to come to conclusions on this topic.

Day 3

The third and last working day of our group started right away with the obstacles to movement. Our task was to find obstacles that national or international institutions, young people or youth NGO's are creating.

Young people and youth NGO's are creating obstacles to free movement in a lot of different ways. They tend to select the same people for their activities and weaken the multiplying effect in this regard. They often provide only limited information and sometimes even information in a language that cannot be understood by all its members. Also, participation fees for seminars, workshops etc. are hindering people from participating in intercultural exchanges. Concerning this application process, the scheduled time can as well result in hindrances, since often you have to apply very long in advance. Youth NGO's are not sufficiently aiming at capacity building and lastly some of the NGO's have a certain political or religious affiliation which limits their membership to people sharing this understanding.

National institutions and nation states still lack a policy framework for youth policy in many countries and even those who have an existing policy on youth work lack coherence in its arrangement. This makes the recognition of youth work hard and certainly does not make it easier to provide sufficient funding for NGO's. Additionally, it becomes harder to establish NGO's. Several countries are laying departure and arrival taxes on people leaving their country. This aggravates movement for many people that cannot afford these extra costs. Another very important point raised were the laws and social customs that prohibit certain behaviours or make entry into a country impossible. Combined with visa problems, youth mobility is restricted in many ways by national governments. Lastly, bureaucracy in many countries demands early applications for travelling and participation.

Considering the last category of our discussion, international frameworks also insert influence on mobility. Like governments they have no harmonisation on youth policy and often lack sufficient recognition of the work of youth workers. They are as well participating in the visa process and as such hindering some people to get entry permission.

What both youth NGO's, national and international institutions have to look out for is the stereotypes or categorisation of images that they can create. All of them share influence and

what they publish or say is of meaning to their members and the public and as such exerts power of impressions.

Before ending our working group on youth mobility we dealt with the most important question, namely, what can we as youth leaders or NGO's do to fight these obstacles. In this regard everybody was able to choose a topic he would like to work on. Having defined our preferences, we founded groups that together developed project proposals combating the obstacles to youth mobility.

The first project proposal aimed at the reduction of stereotypes through intercultural exchange. The objectives were increasing multicultural understanding and showing success stories of migrants who already managed to build up their living in another country. This can be done by either giving the floor to foreign people in the region self or by making use of migrants that visit their country of origin. Targeted for this project are especially youth between the age of 15 and 30 and their parents and relatives.

Project number two focused on a more complex issue by working on the capacity skills of young leaders towards the recognition of the youth worker status.