

A WAY HOME

Young people facing exclusion and homelessness: call for After Care Policies at European level

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EDITORIAL BY PROJECT COORDINATOR: RESULTS, PROSPECTS AND FOLLOW UP OF THE A WAY HOME PROJECT

by An Rommel, Project coordinator "Opgroeien"

We are almost at the end of the A Way Home project, in which we worked on 2 levels: strength-based after care policies and reimagining solutions to end youth homelessness. Young persons who have a past in care have a higher risk to become homeless. Too many youngsters who have left care, face exclusion from sustainable housing, work, education and leisure activities. A more efficient after care preparation for life is needed, but is not sufficient.

Youth homelessness is a fusion policy issue, meaning that the many systems that drive young people into homelessness must also be part of the solutions. The A Way Home movement - that started in Canada - believes that, in order to address the youth homelessness problem, the effort needs to come from various sectors, including youth and adult care, housing, education and training, work and social economy, justice, leisure and youth work...

We developed activities on these 2 levels and have piloted them in 2 cities: Antwerp (BE) and Villach (AU) To implement strength-based after care policies, we inspired youth care providers to strengthen their efforts for smoothening the care leaving in 3 ways:



1. first of all with a strengths-based framework for youth care providers that offers recommendations and guidelines for a policy on care leaving at the level of the care facility;
2. second of all, through a toolbox of methods to prepare youngsters for leaving care, that can be used to choose or create an own method for care leaving in the facility;
3. lastly, with a training program that supports youth care providers by sharing knowledge and experiences on care leaving.

In Antwerp and Villach, local A Way Home coalitions were started, who reimagined solutions to end and prevent youth homelessness. We developed guidelines and key concepts and collected resources that can support communities all over Europe to start their own coalition. These communities can also find inspiration in the experiences of our 2 pilot regions, where action plans were developed and first successful actions implemented (Antwerp / Villach).

During this project, we have connected with the different A Way Home coalitions existing all over the world: Canada, United States, Denmark, Scotland, Wales, Finland, ... and who shared with us their good practices during our final conference, that took place the 18th of February in Brussels. We will continue this shared learning and set up a A Way Home learning network to lever the learning and exchange between communities in order to end and prevent youth homelessness all over Europe.

Let me conclude with thanking all the partners - AP University College, Feantsa, ENSA, the Land of Carinthia, Diakonie de la Tour, Youth Care Platform, Cachet and all the youngsters who shared with us their dreams, wishes and needs and made our project stronger.

For further information, click on the following links

[Strengths-based framework](#)

[Toolbox](#)

[Training program](#)

[Guidelines](#)

[Key concepts](#)

[Resources](#)

[Villach](#)

[Antwerp](#)

A DRIVING FORCE TO PREVENT AND END YOUTH HOMELESSNESS, CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

by Commissioner Caroline Vrijens



On the occasion of the A Way Home final conference, Caroline Vrijens, Children's Rights Commissioner appointed by Flemish Parliament, took the floor to describe the activities of the the Flemish Office of the Children's Rights Commissioner, to focus on the problem of youth homelessness and to analyze the issue from a children's rights perspective.

First of all, Caroline Vrijens focused on the issue of prevention: it is generally assumed that the protection of this vulnerable category should start from a structural poverty policy and a special attention to domestic violence.

Sofia, primary school:

"...My dad was hurting my mum.
He would hit my mum with a stretch of rope.
He'd hit her on the head with a chair and stuff like that."

It is essential to foster activities aimed at changing the system, such as financial support to pay the rent, extra social housing, anti-discrimination and alternative forms of targeted housing.

Moreover, in order to tackle children's homelessness, it is fundamental to insert this theme on the agenda of social and housing counseling agencies at a local level and to promote continuous confrontation and reforms to combat the phenomenon with a global approach.

According to researches and testimonies (collected from 43 homeless children, youngsters and their parents), there are many obstacles and social disadvantages that homeless youngsters experience. They don't have a peaceful place where to live, they lose their friends and they don't have privacy and personal items. This is why it is crucial that not only youth care but also shelters for homeless people, families and youngsters invest in child- and youngster friendly activities and facilities.

Zaid, primary school:

"...at the winter shelter, we were also able to do some arts and crafts
and we're allowed to go on the computer if we like..."

Rebecca, primary school:

“At the shelter, I would go round to play at my friend’s home on Wednesdays.
She didn’t come to play at mine.
She was allowed to, but I didn’t want her to.
In the evening, I attended the music classes.”

One point to highlight is that, when assessing situations of precariousness, it is very important to consider the family environment: children are sometimes separated from their parents, because of family rejection or domestic violence.

Rachid, young adult:

“My mother didn’t want me in the house anymore.
I lived on the street for three weeks. I lived in the park.
Friends gave me food, brought clothes. I used their shower at their homes.
I also lived in my friend's house for two weeks.”

According to the Commissioner Caroline Vrijens, when children lose their home, they become refugees in their own country and for this reason, it is essential to try to intervene at local level. In addition, let's not forget that a child friendly shelter is a short term shelter: the homelessness policies should be oriented more to permanent housing solution rather than to shelter solution, to maximize the right to family life and privacy.

Caroline Vrijens concluded her speech by highlighting the need to:

- tackle discrimination and financial thresholds in the private rental market. The 3 months rent, as a compulsory requirement before renting an apartment or studio, is a too heavy threshold for homeless youngsters;
- encourage alternative forms of housing and social support (such as sharing of housing or extra social housing with multiple bedrooms) especially for youngsters, in order to fight isolation.

The core objective of poverty and homelessness policies is to meet the personal and social needs of this category of vulnerable people.

Shane, primary school:

“I want to have a home, and do the things we want to do in that home.”

Ria, single mother of 4 children:

“My dream is to have a home where I can stay and go on living.
That I won’t need to move again...”

INTERVIEW

WITH THE REGION OF FLANDERS, DAVID DEBROUWERE “OPGROEIEN”

With the A Way Home project you have piloted aftercare policies and the A Way home model at regional level in Flanders. This model has been tested in the city of Antwerp.

What were the results of this tests at regional and local level for you?

This European project was a chance for us, to strengthen the already existing policy on after care. In 2017, a specific action plan was launched to reinforce the support to young adults, via instruments such as after care plans and round tables and via collaboration with citizens' and community initiatives. We are continuously searching, together with the private institutions, for the best working standards and methods.



With the A Way Home project, we have deepened out this shared searching and we have developed a policy framework for organizations: six guidelines for successful strength-based and network-oriented aftercare policies, in which the belief in the young person stands central. During training and peer group learning with 16 private institutions, we worked with the experiences and expertise of the social workers and with the insights of young care leavers. In this way, we could tailor the guidelines and content of the training according to the needs of the youngsters and private institutions. This was an important added value of this project and makes it so the results are not abstract at all. Above all, with this project and with the Canadian A Way Home model, we strengthened the collaboration with the different life domains and sectors as housing, employment, education, local governments, youth work...

The collective impact model and coalitions of the willings are very inspiring concepts for our agency. They underline the importance of equivalence between partners who have a shared aspiration and who can install substantial cultural and systemic changes. We are talking about changes that should happen in the way we currently manage the range of interconnected issues that lead to extreme vulnerable situations, such as youth homelessness. This model guarantees that we have a broad support base for the change and that we do not initiate change starting from a macrostructure, but that we stay close to the reality, close to the experiences of the workers on the field and of the youngsters. In the city of Antwerp, this way of working has led to very concrete realizations, worked out by the Mind the Gap collective, in which 40 organizations from diverse sectors participate.

This will lead, in the long run, to a reorganization of the service delivery landscape, using shared principles, tying together the activities of diverse stakeholders across diverse systems toward the shared goal of reducing and preventing youth homelessness.

What challenges have you met and which lessons have you learnt?

A big challenge for us is the collection of figures to measure the impact of such initiatives. We invest more and more in meaningful registration and longitudinal research, to map the impact of youth care on young people. However, we should also combine the data collected in the different life domains that are important for young people to construct an interdependent life, in order to be fully aware of the short, middle and long term results.

This project also confirmed that a participative approach should be the first choice with young people and with all the stakeholders involved. This is how we create cohesion between and involvement of all the partners you need and how you can be sure that the chosen solutions really work for the young people.

Which networks (local, regional or European) did you involve to fight youth exclusion?

With the support of our partners, ENSA, the Youth Care Platform and Feantsa, we want to set up an European A Way Home Learning network. All over Europe, A Way Home coalitions, inspired by the impressive work done in Canada, exist, fighting together to end and prevent youth homelessness. We wish to accelerate the accomplishment of our mission - ending and preventing youth homelessness all over Europe - by sharing expertise and inspiring new communities.

How do you think the interventions you carried out could work in other regions and cities?

The A Way Home model has already proven its international applicability with coalitions in Canada, the United States, Wales, Scotland, Denmark, Belgium, Austria, ... Our agency will continue to work with this model and keep on nourishing a European-wide A Way Home Learning network, hopefully with the support of a new European Project. In my opinion, the most important reason for other regions and cities to start working with this model should be the fact that it is a strong motivator for a change that is not initiated from a macro structure. All the partners, together with young people, participate in an equivalent way in the building of a shared aspiration, mutually reinforcing activities. (...) this is a strong and important driver to reimagine shared solutions to youth homelessness.

INTERVIEW WITH THE LAND OF CARINTHIA, DR. BEATE PRETTNER, DEPUTY GOVERNOR

With the A Way Home project you have piloted aftercare policies and the A Way home model at regional level in Carinthia. This model has been tested in the city of Villach.

What were the results of this test at regional and local level for you?

In Carinthia, during the AWH project actions at several levels were set, firstly to better prepare young adults for adult life, to make the transition from care to independence more constructive and sustainable and, secondly, to minimise the number of homeless young adults. For this purpose, a broadly diversified cooperation network is being established, which currently consists of the following areas:

- further assistance systems, which go beyond child and youth welfare or beyond the age of 21;
- preventive contact and advice centres from the adult assistance sector;
- "Train the trainer" workshops for child- and youth welfare institutions;
- support networks from the psychiatric department or from the department of people with disabilities;
- City of Villach.



The offers of the cooperation partners must be suitable for the Careleaver target group. On the other hand, strategic measures are taken to promote a strength-oriented attitude among social pedagogues and to sensitise institutions for the situation of young adults who have grown up in youth care facilities. In addition, various research projects and scientific work are promoted by establishing contact with careleavers and accompanying them to interviews, etc., in order to create a better theoretical and scientific basis. A better theoretical understanding can be supportive as a working basis in everyday social education.

It is also very important to realise that most of the help systems and facilities that are offered for "18 and over", i.e. "adults" according to the law, are "tailor-made" for them, whereas it is often not appropriate for the sensitive age group of 18-21 or 24-year-olds. These services must be adapted to this target group in order to better address the issues that affect them. 18-year-olds often have, as practice shows, completely different worries and problems than older people and for this reason they often do not take advantage of this assistance.

It would also be important to give the young people a legal basis. I.e. "What do I need for an independent life?" Furthermore questions about social security, "what do I need to get my own apartment (documents, deposit, rent)? What do I have to consider or which authorities do I have to contact?". Teenagers and young adults must also be prepared for routine matters. Very important are also simple things like organising and managing appointments (authorities, doctors, meeting payment deadlines), as well as learning and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. It is also the aim that the young people have contact persons for all situations in life and possible problems whom they can trust.

The province of Carinthia sees this as a great opportunity to implement the already existing results in the best possible way and to provide for the future of the Careleavers.

A functioning aftercare system must start very early on, which is why in the Pilot region of Villach we also try to work together with shared flats and facilities that not only look after young people shortly before leaving care, but also younger children.

In the sheltered outside living areas or in the last phase of preparation for the transition in independent life, there is often very little time to prepare them sufficiently for the transition and at the same time to be able to adequately accompany current learning fields. Therefore it is very important to know the guidelines in the aftercare protocol at a very early stage and to be able to take them into account in the care. Examples of possible steps in early support were written down and presented and discussed in team meetings.

The aim is to adapt or create an aftercare that starts very early and to promote the factors/areas of life at an early stage according to a strength-oriented concept already in residential groups with younger children and adolescents. The focus is currently on a strength-oriented approach and the early promotion of social contacts outside the facility. However, the main focus within the framework of this strength-based model should be on the positive impact of existing strengths and the resulting opportunities for young adults.

As long as children and adolescents are still in institutions, target agreements and a help plans should be drawn up. One of the main findings of this project is that this Care Leaver topic is perceived at an early stage in the facilities and can be implemented in the future.

What challenges have you met and which lessons have you learnt?

It is crucial that all those involved are aware of the importance of the problems and concerns of careleavers. Raising awareness and providing comprehensive information about the situation of the Careleavers was one of the main tasks and challenges. Careleavers, like other young adults, are confronted with numerous hurdles of growing up and it was necessary to sensitise all participants to these. In addition, strategies were developed to enable them to receive help, not (only) to be supported directly, but to be prepared as best as possible for an independent life, so that they no longer need to make use of these support services or do so in a reduced form. If these have to be used, the careleavers should have clear and defined points of contact and not be constantly "passed on".

The aim and main task is to ensure that young adults do not fall from one support system (accommodation in an institution) to the next (minimum security, homeless facility,...) if they have the necessary prerequisites for a functioning independent life. This is on the one hand a financial aspect for politicians and authorities and on the other hand a mandate to society to take care of this vulnerable target group of people even beyond the legal obligation.

It was also a nice insight that this project allowed us to test how the effect is, how the methods are received and how people could work with them.

By working with the region in Flanders, Antwerp and the other parties involved, both sides experienced the same thing, and by also having to coordinate linguistically, certain issues were formulated much more precisely. The existing language barrier was a challenge, but it also helped to improve communication.

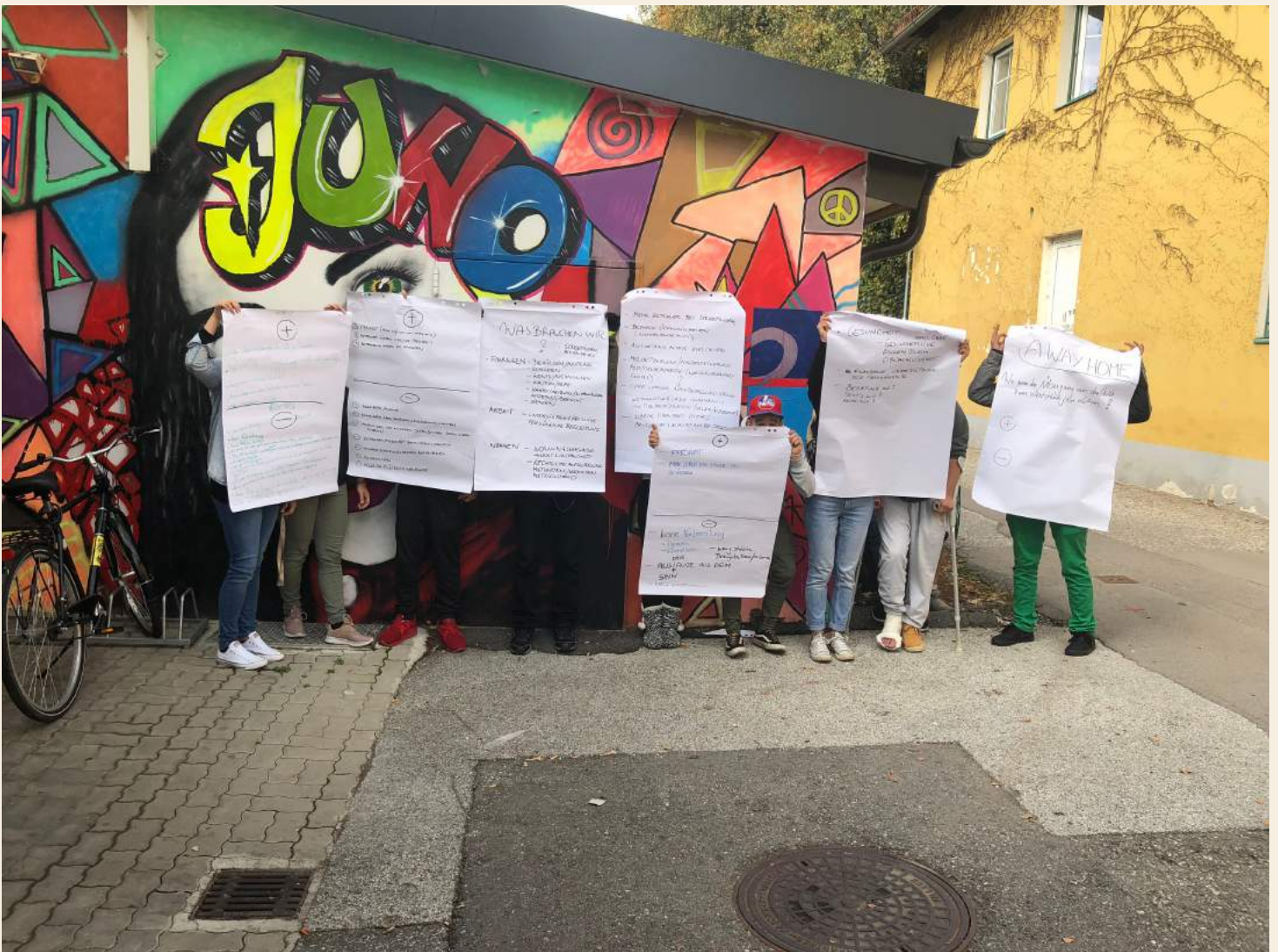
Which networks (local, regional or European) did you involve to fight youth exclusion?

In addition to a fundamentally great interest on the part of politicians and the administration in better understanding, taking seriously and improving the living situation of the Careleaver target group, the province of Carinthia is also a member of the European Youth Care Platform and is chairing it from 2018 to 2020. The YCP is involved in the project "A Way Home". There is also close cooperation with the project partners at European level, FEANTSA and ENSA, as well as an exchange of information and data, findings and results.

The other project partners at regional level, the Diakonie de la Tour, child and youth welfare organisations, authorities and many other responsible parties are also working closely together to develop and optimise the results already achieved in a preventive and future-oriented manner. The know-how and awareness raising achieved so far for all those involved must not stand still.

How do you think the interventions you carried out could work in other regions and cities?

In general, it is always important for regions and cities to learn from each other, exchange results, share experiences and define and coordinate common objectives. However, other regions can learn from the results that supported young people who, due to a lack of preparation for self-employment or aftercare after reaching the age of 18, in the worst case can never become fully integrated members of society because they don't have the prerequisites. They would be dependent on social benefits for so many years. All the more provision should be made, with relatively small financial effort, to enable at least this target group to live an independent life. It is also important to adapt to the individual circumstances and special features of the regions, but also of the people involved.



Second day of A Way Home Kick Off Event in Villach. - Workshop in the youth shelter in Villach.

Young people's work fixed on flipcharts. They discussed and wrote down their needs, worries, problems, wishes and suggestions for themselves or the target group of the care leaver.

ABOUT THE FINAL CONFERENCE OF A WAY HOME PROJECT AND THE WORKSHOPS CHALLENGES

Six workshop sessions took place during the A Way Home final conference, to present concrete programs working on different levels, to end and prevent youth homelessness.

1. PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION IN POLICY AND PRACTICE: ESTABLISHING UPSTREAM CYMRU & CANADA - Hugh Russell, A Way Home Cymru

“Youth homelessness occurs where an individual between the ages of 13 and 26 is experiencing rooflessness or houselessness or is living in insecure or inadequate housing without a parent, family member or other legal guardian”- FEANTSA draft definition of Youth Homelessness. Hugh Russell explained that, thanks to the Upstream model, it is possible to identify and track down homeless young people, through monitoring within schools. Similar projects and initiatives have

been implemented also in Canada, Wales and Australia. In order to achieve full monitoring, educational institutions submit questionnaires to students, with questions about their school situation, family environment, social inclusion, acceptance within the community and class, etc. The setting up of the survey is articulated in the following steps: schools submit the questionnaire to the students, they collect the results and then meetings with a staff of experts are scheduled.



2. THE RAPP & GOSCHA MODEL AS BASIS FOR STRENGTHS-BASED AFTER CARE POLICIES - Sharon Van Audenhove, Opgroeien / Sarah Debaets, Cachet / Wim Van Tongel & Gwendy Moentjens, AP University College

The Rapp & Goscha model is a holistic method for the care of children and young adults. The model is based on identifying the individual's strengths and on building self-esteem, in order to facilitate reintegration into society and the construction of supportive social networks.

It is essential to remember that “people have the capacity to recover, reclaim and transform their lives” and that “the community is viewed as an oasis of resources”, to focus on the individual's resources rather than on deficits. In doing so, the development of a personal (and not only professional) relationship between the social worker and the caregiver should be carefully considered, in order to rebuild self-esteem and the skills needed to live and work independently. In this session, young care leavers, trainers of social professionals and policy makers presented the most important outcomes of the use of the model in the A Way Home Project. They interacted with the public on different practices of effective strength-based after care policies.



3. SECURING PERMANENT HOUSING FOR YOUTH WITH HOUSING COUNSELLING - Tiina Irjala, Finnish Youth Housing Association, Development Manager

The Finnish Association for Youth Housing (NAL, a non-governmental, non-profit organization established in 1971) showcased youth housing policies adopted in Finland, where this leader association deals with:

- building houses for young adults between 18 and 29 years old;
- providing psychological and financial advice to residents;
- contributing to the development of internal housing policies;
- domestic training.

NAL's apartments have affordable prices and 15% of the places in each apartment are reserved for residents who need special support, in order to promote social inclusion. It also prevents evictions with early interventions on rent debts and problems with the landlord. Youth housing includes also a responsible resident selection process, orientation for a new resident, possibility of support, guidance and counseling and participation into decision-making in the housing community. The aim is to reach young people that are outside services and help them getting on the right track for the future.

4. ADDRESSING INEQUITY AND DISCRIMINATION: FOCUS ON LGBTIQ YOUTH - Gregory Lewis, True Colors United USA, Executive Director and CEO

Young people in the LGBTIQ community are 120% more likely to be homeless. Even so, care centers often do not implement specific programs to target their needs. This is one of the reasons why these young people do not feel safe to ask the centers for support and fear discrimination and violence. Lewis has therefore set the example of True Colors United, a U.S.

nonprofit organization that addresses the problem of homeless youth and focuses on the specific needs of the LGBTIQ community. According to their studies, most cases of LGBTIQ youth homelessness are the consequence of family rejection and violence.

Some possible solutions to the above challenges could be:

- education on issues related to the concept of sexual orientation and gender identity, the use of the right pronouns...;
- a guide to data collection;
- the creation of inclusive spaces (e.g. gender neutral bathrooms);
- training for care centres and communities.

In conclusion, the US experience reported by Gregory Lewis provided an overview of the US approach to improve services for homeless people and to support the LGBTIQ youth community.





5. HOUSING FIRST FOR YOUTH - Robbie Stakelum, FEANTSA & Anne Bergvith Sorensen, Home for All Denmark

The recognition of the right to housing is central to end and prevent the phenomenon of homeless youth, a condition that leads to difficulties in finding a job and in achieving social integration. The solution can only be found through collaboration between the public system and the various organizations working in the field, both on a theoretical and practical level. Some examples to guarantee the right to housing are:

- private individuals that volunteer to host the assisted young people;
- youth residences that offer a part of the beds to homeless young people, keeping them within a social community;
- municipalities that act as guarantors for the payment of rent.

Since 2015 FEANTSA has worked, using this model, with 42 young people: 32 people got tenancies and 13 accessed education and employment, maintaining a gender balance in the treatment of youngsters. The motto when undertaking this type of activity should be “give opportunity for a second chance without any precondition”.

6. OUTCOME-DRIVEN TACTICAL AND STRATEGIC LEARNING IN SOCIAL PRACTICES - Ann Decorte, lecturer, social worker, and researcher Vital Cities at the University College of West-Vlaanderen (Howest)

Ann Decorte explained how an outcome-driven tactical and strategic learning method can be employed in social practices. The workshop explored how to set up an appreciative learning process with all stakeholders, in order to co-create and to improve social practices, with the goal of enhancing their impact and understanding what works and why it works.

The basic concept that she highlighted was the one of assumptions. These can be distinguished between descriptive and prescriptive: the former derives from experience and leads us to

investigate the causes of the problem; the latter, on the other hand, concerns the risks that we can predict and makes us focus on the actions that we must take to produce changes. In order to find a solution, it is important to understand what kind of presumption we have formulated. This is the starting point to understand why we do the things we do, in order to gain insights and learn how to evaluate our own social practices.



THE VOICE OF YOUNGSTERS

Introduction by Britt Dehertogh, AP University College

Youngsters in care prefer to be guided by a reliable and warm care giver, that focuses on possibilities for the future. However, transitions are often approached by care facilities from a 'limitation' perspective (skill to learn, problems to solve, ...).

Youth care should accept youngsters as participating members of society, with dreams and hopes for a better future. Youngsters in the project believe that there is no ideal age to start preparing youth care leaving, because it should depend on the development of the youngster and its surroundings.

A strength-based approach in care is fundamental and we would like to emphasize it by starting from the voices of young people and of youth care organizations, experts and professionals.



Quotes from YOUNG PEOPLE:

"I need someone who can make me believe in myself, that I will make it, and to show me my potential"

"A positive attitude of the care worker is important"

"Motivate us to do better, to reach higher, to study and make us believe in a better live."

"I wanted to do what I wanted to do and I tried to enforce that."

"I want to be able to prove to everyone that I did it. They used to say I wasn't going to achieve anything in my life"

Quotes from YOUTH CARE ORGANISATIONS, EXPERTS AND PROFESSIONALS:

"Don't focus on the problem, just stick to the things that could go well"

Britt Dehertogh, AP University College, on the need to have professional and expert people working in the aftercare.

"Education is key to break the circle"

Kris Clijsters, Cachet, while reflecting on the youth assistance policy and encouraging young people that are normally not obtaining successes or results.

"Only if everyone who is involved in the aftercare services collaborate with each other, no careleaver will be afraid of the future or of being abandoned by the aftercare system"

Christine Gaschler, Land Karnten

"The most important thing is the connection between social workers and youngsters"

Roos Steens, Emmaus, talking about the aftercare system.

"It is important to collaborate between networks and services providers in order to have a collective impact, which means that all the services work together, even if they come from different fields and backgrounds, to meet a challenge and reach a global goal."

Robbie Stakelum, Feantsa

"The Mind the Gap project is so special because it's always enriched by collaborations, partners and the support of local Authorities"

Julie Degrieck, A Way Home Antwerp

"The strength of our work consists on the continuous exchanges between youngsters, social workers and policy makers"

Carina Koffler, A Way Home Villach

"In the US, 40% of young homeless are part of the LGBTQ+ community and a youth action is needed, in order to give youngsters the opportunity to do something, to create their own narrative and to live life spreading a meaningful message"

Gregory Lewis, A Way Home US

SYNERGIES WITH OTHER PROJECTS AND EU PARTNERS RELATED NEWS

The ENSA Network is committed to keep on its agenda the fight against youth exclusion and homelessness. It is also making synergies with other projects, such as:

C&I - Cognition and Inclusion **Facing exclusion: what about people with disabilities?**



The Cognition and Inclusion project aims at achieving social inclusion and equal opportunities for people with disabilities. Strategies to support cognitive skills and adaptation are significantly contributing to inclusion and employment of people with disabilities, who sometimes face difficulties in integrating into society and having a permanent home. This project wants to give access to methodologies to foster cognitive skills within LD adults, and to create necessary conditions for effective implementation.

Main objectives:

- Promoting and showing evidence of the value of cognitive methodologies by mapping/analyzing successful approaches;
- Increasing the importance of the mindset of professionals, organizations and adult learners by developing a valid mindset device on three levels, useful for HRM, VET and assessment of outcome of support/training.

Next transnational meeting: 25th-26th March, Évora- Portugal

Lead: GROEP UBUNTU X 8K (Flanders, Belgium)

Further information at: <http://www.ensa-network.eu/cognitionandinclusion/index-c-i.html>

WHY- We hear you

Facing exclusion: what about youth participation?



The WHY project, funded by the Erasmus+ Program, ended in 2019 but the results that have been achieved are now providing examples of best practices for other similar projects that deal with youth participation and civic dialogue, in a framework of cooperation and innovation.

There is a growing sense of frustration concerning the low level of youth participation in democratic processes, as well as young people's lack of trust in democratic institutions and values, which is particularly concerning when it comes to vulnerable youth at risk of being marginalized in society, such as individuals experiencing youth homelessness that don't have a stable accommodation and are consequently living in precarious conditions.

This project aimed at providing a basis for an improved culture amongst professionals as well as structures that will support democratic dialogue and youth involvement in order to promote civic participation, create participatory mechanisms, thus preventing marginalization and its negative effects on individuals and society.

Further information at: <https://www.whuwehearyou.eu/>

Lead: Västerås stads Gymnasie- och vuxenutbildning

SAVE THE DATE: ENSA GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2020

INTEGRATED SERVICES & CARE

ENSA General Assembly venue – Kallion virastotalo, Toinen linja 4 A 00520, Helsinki, Finland

The City of Helsinki together with ENSA, European network of Social Authorities, the Veneto Region, IS.R.A.A. Treviso (Istituto per Servizi di Ricovero e Assistenza agli Anziani), the Youth Care Platform and the ELISAN Network have the pleasure to invite you to the ENSA General Assembly.

Due to COVID-19, this event will not take place in the previously scheduled date (25th–26th May 2020); the City of Helsinki will however host the event in 2020, in a date to be defined. The Assembly will bring together social and healthcare stakeholders in the setting of a truly innovative country: Finland. The topic that has been chosen this year is integrated care.

Study visits will be organized by the City of Helsinki, targeting at risk youth and minors, homelessness, persons with disabilities and seniors. A project development workshop will follow up the EU proposals being presently developed through a Digital Slack Platform, that allows continuous interaction. Therefore, feel free to send us the practices and strategies you would like to develop jointly.

This is the link for the registration form: <https://forms.gle/rLW9caDQwQ9cJLSL7>.

Organizers:

- Juha Jolkkonen, Executive Director, Social services and health care division, City of Helsinki
- Seija Meripaasi, Division Director of Social services and health care division, City of Helsinki
- Arja Peiponen, Service District Director, Social services and health care division, City of Helsinki
- Manuela Lanzarin, Regional Minister social and Health Services, Veneto Region, General Coordinator of ENSA

Referees for further information:

ENSA Legal representative:

- *Marco Paolo Mantile, Director Veneto Region's Brussels Office*

ENSA Elderly thematic working group:

- *Anthony Polychronakis, City of Rotterdam*
a.polychronakis@rotterdam.nl
- *Kerstin Seipel, kerstin.seipel@nacka.se*

ENSA Disability thematic working group:

- *Pierre Joseph, Miljana*
Dejanovic, Miljana.Dejanovic@valdemarne.fr

ENSA child working group:

- *Rudy De Cock, rudy.decock@kindengezin.be*

ENSA youth working group:

- *Lorenzo Rampazzo*
- *Elena Curtopassi*
elena.curtopassi@regione.veneto.it

Youth Care Platform:

- *Christine Gäscher-Andreasch Head of Youth Welfare in Carinthia,*
- *Jos Sterckx, jos.sterckx@odisee.be*

EU PARTNERS RELATED NEWS:

The ESCF - European Social Catalyst Fund: a new initiative designed to have significant impact on some of Europe's most pressing social challenges. The objective of the ESCF is to bring together public and private resources to improve social services to enable people who need support to live as valued and participating members of their communities. The ESCF has been established and co-funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme.

For more information, visit: <https://www.euscf.eu/>

The European Youth Event (EYE2020): The Future is Now will take place at the European Parliament's seat in Strasbourg on 29-30 May 2020. [LINK](#)

The right to affordable housing: Europe's neglected duty [LINK](#)

Dedicated social partner hearing on reinforcing the youth guarantee [LINK](#)

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European Commission 2020 Work Programme: An ambitious roadmap for a Union that strives for more [LINK](#)

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Youth sector strategy 2030 [LINK](#)

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GREETINGS FROM THE A WAY HOME PARTNERSHIP!

For further information: <http://www.awayhome.eu/>



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