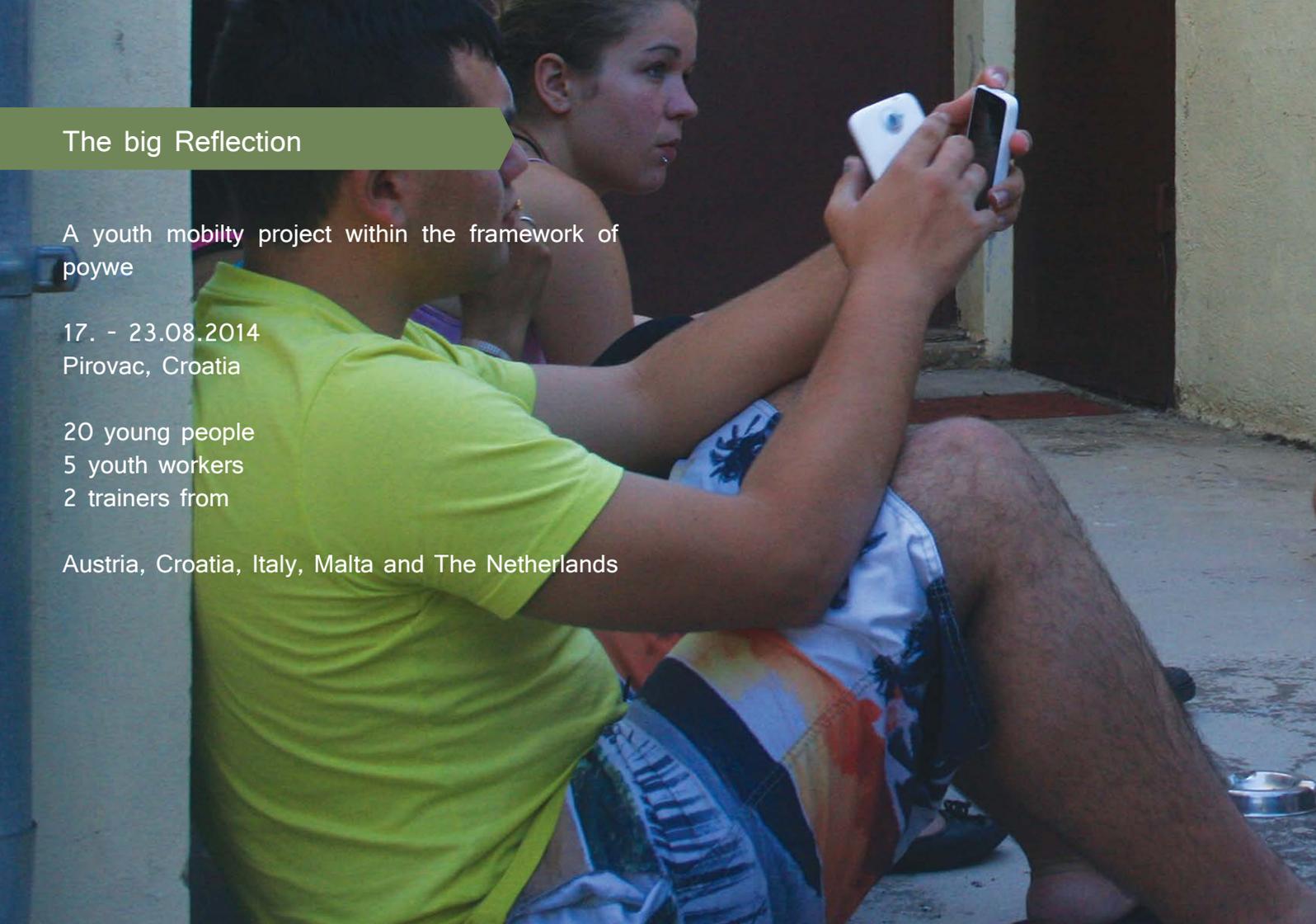




The big R(eflection)

#poywe

asking young people what they expect from youth work



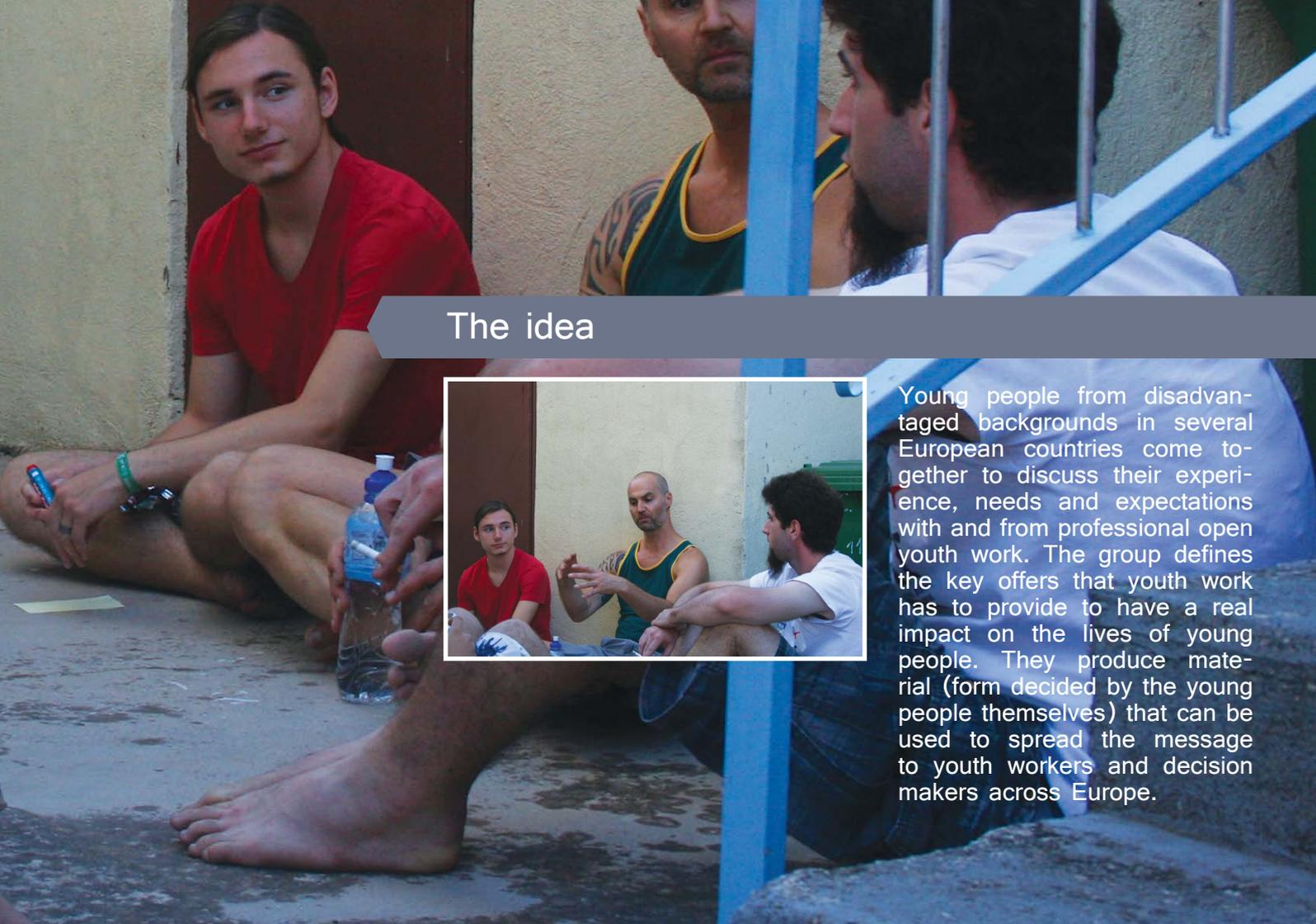
The big Reflection

A youth mobility project within the framework of poywe

17. - 23.08.2014
Pirovac, Croatia

20 young people
5 youth workers
2 trainers from

Austria, Croatia, Italy, Malta and The Netherlands

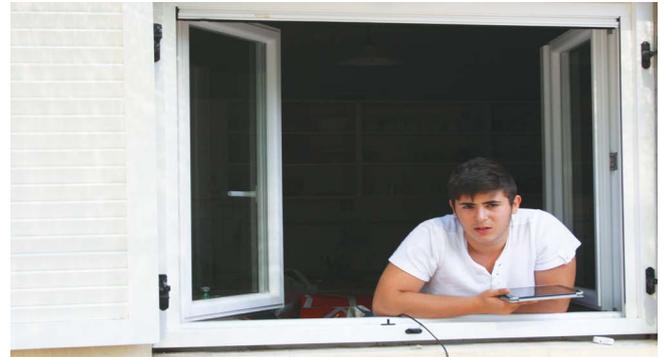


The idea

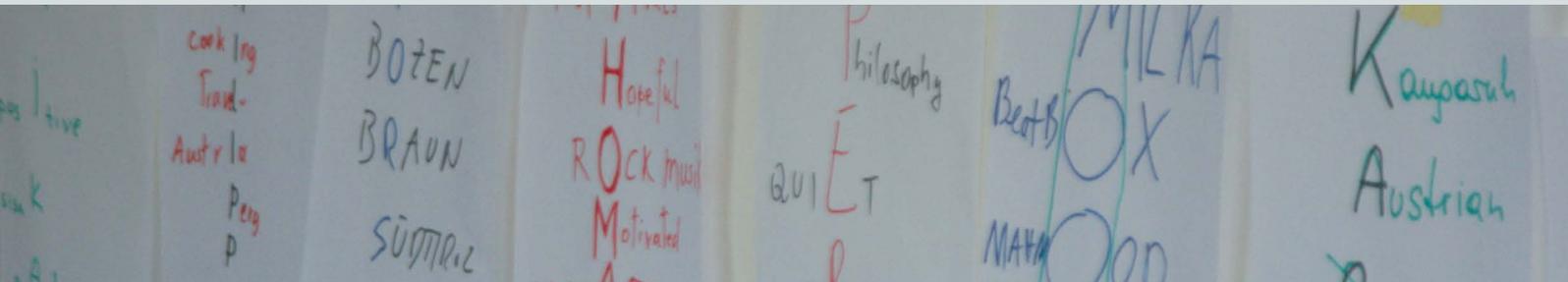


Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in several European countries come together to discuss their experience, needs and expectations with and from professional open youth work. The group defines the key offers that youth work has to provide to have a real impact on the lives of young people. They produce material (form decided by the young people themselves) that can be used to spread the message to youth workers and decision makers across Europe.

The main aims of the project were



- to reflect with young people of the main target group of professional open youth work on their needs and expectations from this field of action.
- to examine possible common ground despite different national realities in the participating countries on those expectations.
- to gather input for the development of a European professional open youth work profile from those that are concerned with it and use it.
- to create material that reflects the opinion of the young people and also serves
- to showcase what are the benefits that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds can get from this form of youth work.
- to raise the skills and self esteem of the participating young people.
- to have fun!







Five experienced youth workers accompanied the group – they supported the young people, took part in discussions and helped the young people to reflect on their learning experiences during the daily Youth Pass hour.

All involved youth workers facilitated a prep meeting with the participants from their respective countries in which they prepared the young people for the programme, prediscussed rules and clarified expectations.



Programme / methodes

The week started with getting to know each other and defining necessary rules to work and live together in one house with so many people from different cultures and backgrounds around.

The exchange took place in Pirovac in the training center our partner PRONI runs there – it is a former family home, which was restructured to serve as training place especially for young people. This means it provides group rooms for sleeping, a kitchen where the young people sometimes also had to cook themselves and a garden/backyard which very quickly turned into the main socialising zone. Choosing this location was not a coincidence since we know that this kind of accommodation can serve as a kind of “pressure cooking pot” to speed up and intensify the group process.

Drawing a youth worker

The young people were divided into smaller groups and invited to draw a youth worker, symbolizing in their drawings the skills and attitudes needed for doing a good job in this field.

Among the things that were repeatedly mentioned in the presentations were:

- big ears - being a good listeners
- big or many hands/arms – help and support but also being able to multitask and do a lot of different things
- Tattoo, big feet,.. - „have both feet on the ground“, someone who is not easily taken off-balance.

Gallery walk „Experiences“

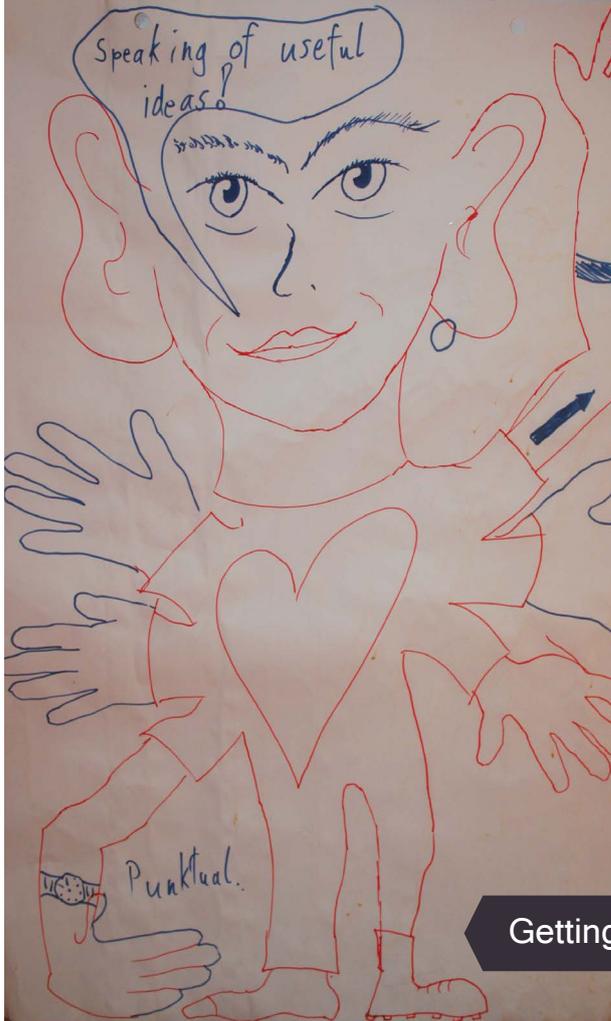
We then had a short gallery walk about the actual experiences the participants had had with professional open youth work. We asked four questions and everybody had the opportunity to walk around and fill in their own, very personal experiences. The questions tackled were:

How did you get in contact with youth work?

The majority answered “through friends” (or other people they know e.g. aunt)

My best experience in/with youth work...

Most answers here reflected fun and meeting new friends/people, but we also had answers like “to take over responsibility”, “to see children laughing”, “getting in touch with other cultures” or “learning to accept and to become a better person“.



Media – what to use for delivering the message: trial & error

Having a first idea on what the expectations on youth work are and thus what their message could be the group started to work on ideas how to spread the message and especially what media they wanted to use for that.

They quickly agreed on video as one of the most powerful tools especially in combination with social media. It also became clear that a target group needed to be chosen for making a successful video.

After choosing three different target groups (young people, youth workers and decision makers) the young people formed three groups and started with a trial & error-session to get to know the technical equipment. During the test phase they also came up with first ideas on the contents of their videos.



Statement battle

The next step was then to get the statements/messages ready. Everyone was invited to come up with their three most important statements concerning professional open youth work – after some reflection time they paired up and had to decide together for their common three statements. Subsequently small groups of four/five were formed who did the same exercise. The statements of those groups were presented in plenary.

Youth Pass

Every evening between the end of the programme and dinner was the so called Youth Pass hour. The young people sat together one by one with their accompanying youth workers to talk about their experiences, what they thought they had learned that day and what were their expectations for the coming days. Since this was included in the programme for the whole week, it very soon became a structural moment for the young people to calm down after a full day and reflect on their very personal learning aims and experiences.

At the end of the week the young people took the reflections from each evening as a basis for deciding what they wanted to have written in their Youth Pass.

Most of them named the following:

- improvement of language skills
- improvement of technical skills (video)
- being more open minded and learned to respect other cultures
- being more independent (away from home)
- being able to live with so many people in one house



And around

we had some team building moments at the beach and city of Pirovac and during the cultural visit to the neighbouring town of Šibenik.



The statement

Youth work should...

ENCOURAGE young people!

Provide know how, take charge and responsibility for projects, raise the moral and influence = encourage! Youth workers should have an open mind, an ear for everyone and a creative attitude.

Provide/create a SAFE ENVIRONMENT with TRUST and RESPECT!

To give the possibility to us to express ourselves (ideas, problems, etc.) by talking, writing, listening. We should have the feeling to trust the youth worker and to get the respect returned. Let us feel like home or maybe even more comfortable.

HELP and SUPPORT young people!

Youth workers should listen to our problems and try to help us anyhow/anyway. Help with personal problems and help to grow as a person. Be helpful with concrete issues e.g. problems at work/school, finding a job, family issues, drug addiction,...





Create POSITIVE EXPERIENCES!

Resources to organise and support projects for/of/with young people. The more international experiences (youth exchanges, EVS, projects,..) we have, the better it is. More facilities more exchanges and countries involved.

Give young people SPACE!

More physical space in a good environment for children and young people with a friendly and easy atmosphere. A place where you can get information, meet others with an open mind, tools and support for our own ideas .

Be more VISIBLE!

Promote what we do - show the outside world what youth work is.

The videos

The young people created three videos aiming at the different target groups: young people, youth workers and policy makers. The videos were made for spreading their message on what they expect and get from youth work.

The videos can be found on <http://poywe.org/site/?p=303>



The process

In the end during the “Oh Captain, my Captain evaluation method” all young people took not only the floor to give some feedback and goodbye to the others but did so standing very exposed on a chair.

A symbol for this week and professional open youth work as such can be this photo series that shows Miranda (from Malta) being intimidated by the method and our youth work colleague reacting to it in the youth work way – supporting Miranda to be able to have her say:



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