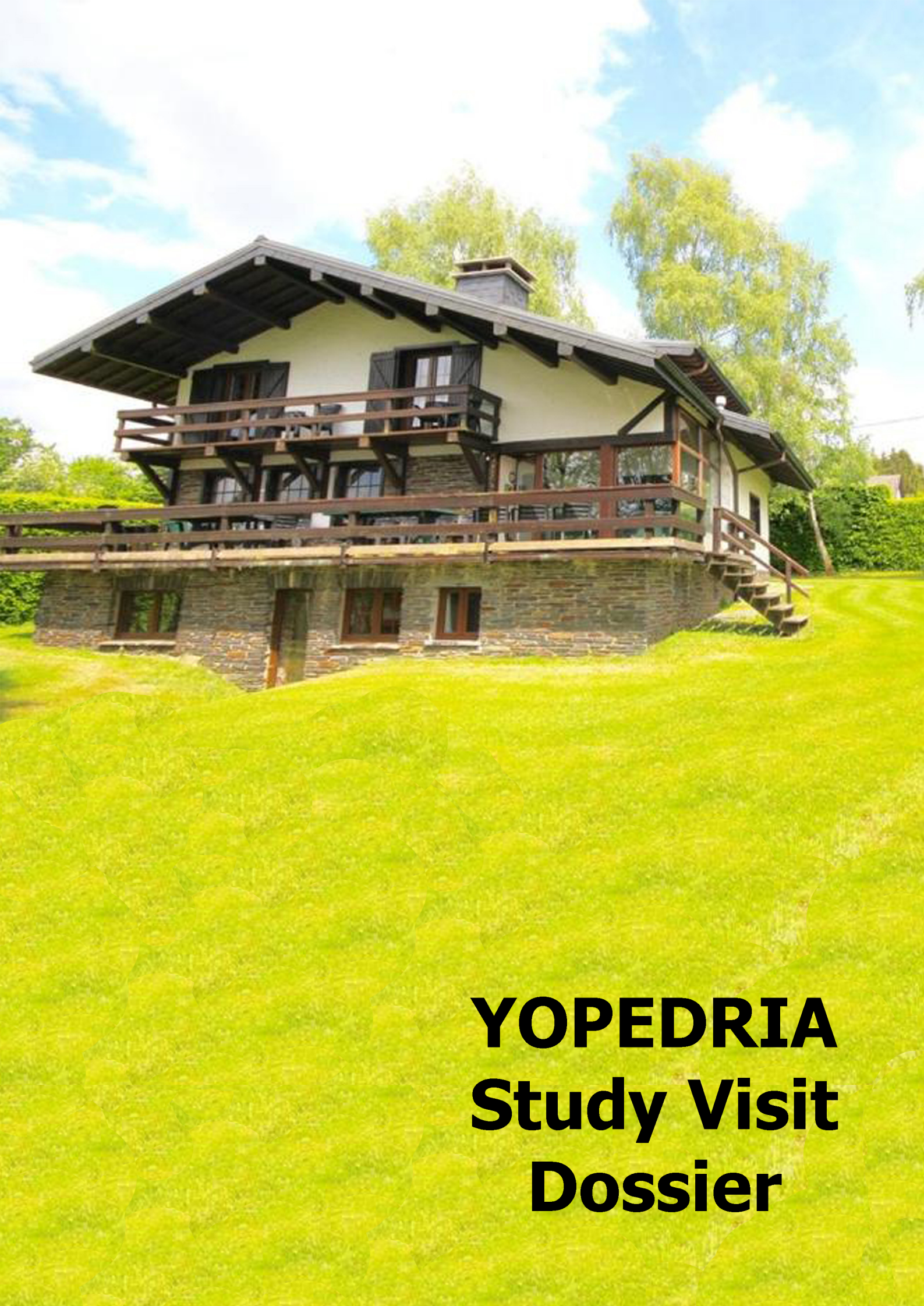




YOPEDRIA Study Visit Dossier

YOPEDRIA

YOUNG PEOPLe for the Development of Rural and Isolated Areas

Outcomes from the Study Visit realised in Xhoffraix (Belgium) from 16th to 22nd May 2022

Project realised by:

ARCI Chieti, MJ Récollets, Istituto Abruzzese per le Aree Protette



Study Visit Coordinators and Staff:

Mario Serrao (IT), Giorgio Micoli (IT), Yves Reuchamps (BE),
Marie-Pierre Coninx (BE), Tanja Boromisa (BiH)

Project granted by:



This publication reflects the views only of the authors and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein

Intro

The Covid19 pandemic forced all our organisations to review the approach of the activities targeted to young people: from one side, during the series of periodic lock downs, the isolation, the impossibility to meet, the interruption of all scheduled activities didn't allow to give continuity to the youth work realised in each local level as well as at international level; from the other side, after each lock down, the security measures to be adopted with the related regulations reduced the possibility to realise regular activities and to have a proper "opening" of the proposals, projects and dynamics. Of course, the security of the young people and the guarantee of a youth work that is realised in safe conditions are important aspects with which we will have to deal most probably for long time.

The experience we are having during the Covid19 pandemic can be, anyway, useful and fruitful for the development of youth activities targeted in areas where, for their geographical characteristics, it is difficult to give continuity and to be efficient and effective. In fact, the so called "social distance" could be seen as an opportunity to learn how to deal with other type of "distances" such as the geographical one.

The project YOPEDRIA (YOUNG PEople for the Development of Rural and Isolated Areas) would like to represent a practical and concrete opportunity of sharing experiences and learning path for youth workers, youth leaders, educators, young volunteers and young people interested to the development of activities targeted to the youth living in rural and geographical disadvantaged areas.

The project aims to realize an educational, formative and experiential path together with different European partners, coming from Italy, Belgium, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Poland, Serbia and in close contact with local communities (institutions, youth associations, etc.), as well as allowing the direct involvement of young people, especially those from the area of geographical disadvantage, based on the principles of Non Formal Education (in particular the methodology ORA, Observe Rethink Act) on issues and practices of youth work. The approach of ORA methodology starts from the assumption that to ensure a fruitful work that gives real answers to the needs expressed by young people in terms of social inclusion, it is necessary to Observe one's own context, Rethink one's role as active citizens both at individual and community level, Act positively within and for one's own community. As a consequence, the structure of the project is composed by three different mobilities in order to have the possibility with the Study Visit (A1) to share experiences and methodologies and to know on field examples of good practices applied in the province of Liege (Belgium) to be studied and remodelled in order to be applied in different local contexts (Observe), with the Training Course (A2) to let participants reflect on their role (operators, animators, managers, volunteers) and how to improve the quality and efficiency of the activities carried out (Rethink), with the Youth Exchange (A3) to create a moment of direct and inclusive protagonism on field for young people from disadvantaged geographical conditions (Act).

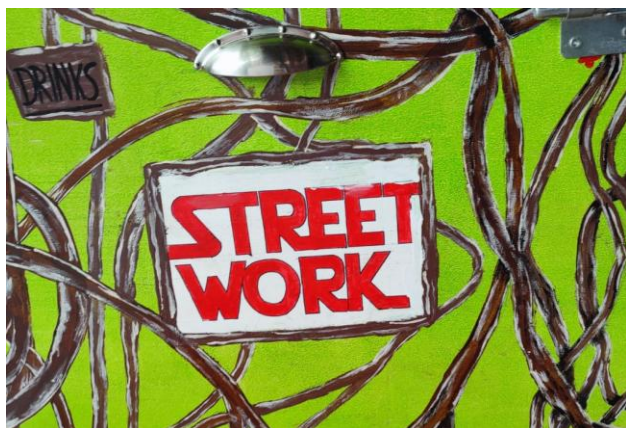


The Study Visit

The Study Visit took place in Xhoffraix, in the province of Liege, Belgium, where positive experiences and methodologies realise innovative and successful activities aimed to involve and include young people. The Visit was the first international meeting and it represented the Observe phase of the project.

With the Study Visit we aimed to achieve:

- to share experiences, good practice, innovative methodologies/approaches and case studies developed by each partner at local and international level to give continuity to their youth work during the Covid19 pandemic;



- to visit on fields, know and acquire positive examples, good practices and successful experiences realised in the province of Liege to facilitate processes of inclusion, involvement and active citizenship among target groups coming from rural contexts and, more in general, geographical fewer conditions;

- to identify the way to adapt and reproduce the knowledge and skills acquired during the Study Visit in order to develop a methodological and educational platform able to define innovative and

common strategies, approaches, actions and tools in the youth work realised in geographical disadvantaged areas in order to facilitate processes of involvement, inclusion and engagement of young people

Through field visits, meetings and, in general, the opportunity to observe, learn about and experience at first hand of examples of good practices carried out in a particularly advanced context, such as the western Belgian area, we were able to respond to the need to make youth work more qualified within geographical isolated and rural areas.

During the Study Visit, an Editorial Board was constituted in order to be in charge of following and reporting the different field visits. All participants were involved in the Editorial Board and they were divided in small groups connected with each visit. All the main information collected and/or acquired during the visits were reported using different media and all the reports have been collected in this dossier.



Enjoy your reading!

Miroir Vagabond in Gouvvy and 51 Liernes



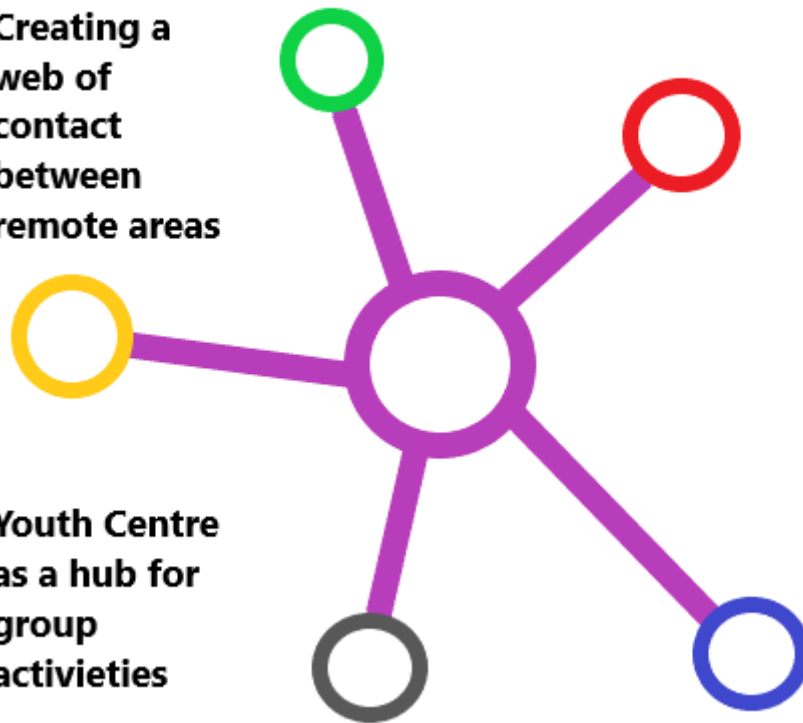
The Centre is located in a remote area, a beautiful place with rich history known for the Arden Offensive. Now the fight still goes on, but on the line is a very pressing issue of youth socialization. The nearest urbanized area is about 2 hour drive and the main problem is creating a common space in which young people can meet, talk, find friends and spend some quality time. People visiting and participating in Youth Centre activities are usually in high school student age, but everyone is welcome. The beginnings were humble, there was no place to stay, just some simple activities that young people gravitated too. It was more of an excuse to meet up, do something together and break social barriers. The workers took their time and talked with the pupils, getting to know them and learning about their

needs. They could not afford to act blindly. Actions were elastic and Youth Centre workers build their structures from the bottom up. They started with 15 pupils and now more than 200 are passing by regularly. Background of animators are in culture, education and art.

(HUB CHART)

**Creating a
web of
contact
between
remote areas**

**Youth Centre
as a hub for
group
activities**



From 2018 till 2021 social workers were helping *pro bono*, with no accreditation from the government. Gathering funds is always challenging, but that is a common concern for every social worker in every country. This kind of work depends on engaged practitioners who choose needs of the many before their own. Community is always a priority. Actions of workers in the Youth Centre received positive feedback from the community, but it didn't end there, the initiative received material support in means of furniture, tools, equipment and transport (parents are engaged in taking children of their neighbors' home after a long day of activities). The doors are opened every afternoon, after school and on special occasions, but activity on social media allows contact anytime and creates a space for talking about difficult situations and problems young people face daily.

THAT'S NOT ALL

Rwendy (30 yo) – social worker from 51 Lierneux

We talked with one of the supporting social workers responsible for conducting physical activities, team sports, like football, basket ball, hand ball etc, he informed us that one of the main problem is that young people in isolated areas don't have a place to go and call their own. It's not only a case of boredom but loneliness which could have bad influence on mental health. Then young people have too much free time on their hand they could develop dangerous ideas and they don't have anything to do with their energy, the Youth Centre initiative is to direct that energy and find a creative output for it. But the problems can be much more severe... Miroir Vagabond in Gouvvy and 51 Lierneux are helping with school problems, not only by providing a place to study but also with finding friends, getting people closer that can also help each other. The weight of decisions don't only apply to the Youth Centre guardians, everybody has access to the board of ideas where they can leave their suggestions on how to better the experiences and add good changes that benefit all the community, not only the young people whom attend. Once a month there is a meeting concerning propositions from the pupils and every possibility of upgrading the centre is discussed.

Helene (29) – social worker from Miroir Vagabond

Helen said that you can find challenging to create activities interesting for young people in very different ages. When it is possible social workers try to engage all the pupils in mixed activities that bring them together. But for example when you make an artistic project about violence or relationships, it is targets for older pupils. Maybe it's surprising but cooking is the thing that brings people together in the best way, because there is no age limit and you can learn a lot about other cultures, preferences and perspectives by collectively cooking and eating. Main problems are violence and sexual violence in families and social workers are often only people that youth can trust. Once a year there is a big project about dangers young people face when pupil try to inform in an artistic way, that young people are not alone and where can they find help. It's important that social workers be diverse and represent different age, gender, ethnicities and talents. The main way to inform the community about activities of the Youth Centre is going door to door.

It's important to mention that all youth and social workers in those centers are very satisfied with their work and they don't want to change it. Interesting fact is that this job is "**dream job**" for them.

MAIN GOAL:

- NO EXCLUSION! (everyone is welcome)

- DIVERSITY OF STAFF

(a lot of ages, ethnicities and experiences; workers must come from different backgrounds and represent represent different values)

- EXPLORING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

(every person is different, it is important to talk and get to know that they want)

- SUSTAINABILITY (consistent work which can provide stability and planning for the future)

- ESTABLISHING TRUST (young people don't listen to people they don't trust)



COMMON PROBLEMS?

- DISTANCE
(Rural areas are problematic mostly in the context of providing transport for the participants)
- NO SAFE INFRASTRUCTURE
(no safe road, pavements, you can't really safely walk to the centre and back)
- ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL DIFFICULTIES
- REFUGIES
- YOUNG DISABLED PEOPLE
- FAMILY PROBLEMS – VIOLENCE, SEXUAL VIOLENCE

SOLUTIONS!

- CARS SHARING
(parents share the means of transport to maximize mobility of their children with no additional charge)
- TALKING ABOUT IMPORTANT ISSUES USING ART
(like "Le consentement. C'est important!", participants did the graphics and created posters about consent concerning sexual acts)
- INDIVIDUAL DIAGNOSTIC AND COMPANION PROJECT
(Young people face many problems and there are no universal solutions, you have to stay open for every possibility too support those in need. Workers advocate and represent young people in formal affairs)
- FINDING OUT ABOUT INDIVIDUAL CAPABILITIES OF PUPILS AND GIVING A LEANWAY TO EXPLORE THEM
- EXPLORING CREATIVITY (finding ways to improve and new media of artistic expression)
- MIXED ACTIVITIES (many possibilities of choosing what you want to do)
- COOKING TOGETHER
(one of the most popular and effective way of bringing people together is by preparing food that they like)
- ENGAGING SPECIALISTS – PSYCHOLOGISTS, TUTORS, EDUCATORS
- DOOR TO DOOR PROMOTION
(Workers are doing a "live promotion", they go to houses and talk about their initiative encouraging to visit the youth centre)
- DEVELOPING SKILLS IN WORKSHOPS
(learning how to use tool, how to do things on your own)

Social workers involved in Youth Centre activities are: Nathan Gerouville, Jérôme Degée, Helene Gillard and a lot of others.

MJ 23

Gouvry 

Maison des Jeunes "MJ 23" 

mj23gouvry 



MJ 51

 Lierneux
 MJ 51 Lierneux
 mj51_lierneux

WHERE CAN YOU FIND THEM?

MAISON DES JEUNES MJ23
OURTH 57 6670 GOUVY
FACEBOOK: MAISON DES JEUNES MJ23
MJ23@GOUVY.EU
WHO TO ASK FOR?
NATHAN, JÉRÔME AND HELEN

MAISON DES JEUNES MJ51
RUE DEVANT LA VAUX 2A 4990 LIERNEUX
FACEBOOK: MJ 51 LIERNEUX
MJLIERNEUX@GMAIL.COM
WHO TO ASK FOR?
AMANDINE, RWANDY AND LYA

By Giada Ciarcelluti, Elise Cransveld, Tanja Šnjegota and Jurand Barlik

Mobile Youth Centre in Eupen



We visited the Mobile Youth Centre in Eupen. Mobility is considered the most important asset that you can imagine in city where there's no place for a regular facility of this type. The main base of operation is the bus station because many young people need it to go to school and then back home. The mobile Youth Centre gives an opportunity for young people to spend their free time on collective and involving activities. The mobile bases of operations are buses rebuilt to answer the needs of young people. It creates a safe space in the middle of the city where kids can relax, drink something and even use a mobile kitchen when they need it. Social workers are responsible for keeping order inside the buses, they also help with crisis management, identity and health care problems, finding jobs, apartments, limited access to social benefits, writing documents and are mediators between young people and official governing bodies. The workers started with their projects in 2013 and the first van has been bought in 2015. Now they count two of them which were mostly equipped by the youth. Since they have been working on the street, they call themselves the street workers, including the youth that has been highly involved in the work.

After years of observation street worker decided to be active on two levels. They are present in Eupen three times per week – Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 12 p.m. till 10 p.m. The exact place where they will park the van, is sent everyday through social media and it depends where they are needed. Street workers are present also in the schools in the neighborhood. Every day they park the van in the school parkings so youngsters can come there during their long hour-break.



MOTTO: ADAPT TO THE SITUATION!



The van project is active in the field for 8 years now. Workers also support social projects and help young people to find themselves in a difficult situation. They don't have a program, no planned activities, just a place to be yourself and meet new people...

- *Really?*
- *Yeah! But it's much more than that.*

PREVENTION! - Workers are doing their best to prevent difficult situations and law-breaking, racism and xenophobia. They think it is better to act, save and help than to punish.

Workers are open for cooperation with parents but understand that children sometimes keep secrets from their caretakers. They rather try to be friends of young people to build trust and solve all possible social problems than to be judgmental towards them.

We saw how influential they are because they were recognized and greeted by many people and youngsters on the streets.

CREATING SPACE FOR YOUTH INTERACTION! Workers want to be role models and persuade young people to become social workers themselves; it's an always developing type of social work so...

→ REAL ROLE-MODELS



**Do you want to be so driven?
Remember!**

1. Support and forgive.
2. Stay open-minded and neutral.
3. Create companionship.
4. Be real! Project real trust.
5. Be elastic.
6. Help in socializing.
7. Be there for them.

Drive through at...

<https://www.facebook.com/Streetwork-Ostbelgien-1554455718143348>



By Nina Petricevic, Kinga Mastalerz and Mario Braham

Portrait of Youth Centre Worker in Stavelot/Francorchamps

PLACE OF WORK: FRANCORCHAMPS/BELGIUM

NAME: SARAH

SURNAME: DELVAUX

AGE: 33

FROM: MALMEDY/BE

EDU: SPECIALISED EDUCACION BACHELOR, HIGH SCHOOL

Janusz : Sarah, what do you think about your wok? Do you like it?

Sarah: I like this job a lot, because we ca do different projects and activity. I vave international experience too. By one year all over the world. I have been in in Japan, Australia, Thailand, Sveden... In this job important is diversity, no place for boredom. I like creativity at work.

J: Oh, do you have interesting international experience. Sorry for personal question. How about balance between your private and vocational life?

S: Well, I have no children, but sometimes I have a tricky situation when I have to do something at work and I am late in another place. You know, in this work you have to be flexible.

J: Describe briefly your place of work.

S: My youth centre is in school building in Francorchamps. I usually work with youngsters between ten to fifteen/sixteen years old. It is important in our activity to follow the rules in acronym C.R.A.C.S. (citizen, responsible, active, critical, solidary). This youth centre exists from four years but headquarters in Stavelot (this centre exists from twenty years).

J: At the end let's dream☺ What will you do at work if one day will you have decision power and money to spend?

S: So, we need more space here. I can imagine youth centre in new bigger and comfortable place... Next wish? - More links with local community. And at the end – I am not against salary increase. (laugh).

J: Thank you Sarah



Manga Workshops in Stavelot

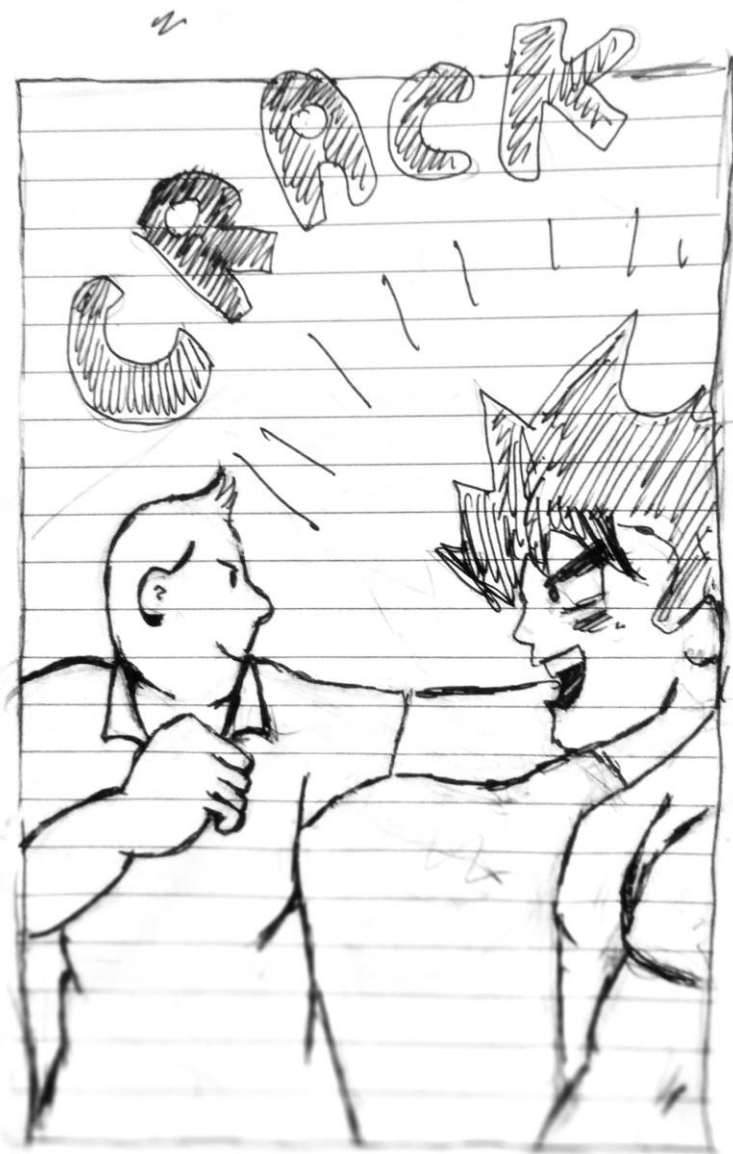
Stavelot Youth Centre is also organizing a manga workshop, which is very interesting and here we will try to explain why?

In the comics culture such as Franco-Belgian, which gave us comics as: Tintin, Lucky Luke, Smurfs, Asterix..., beside that the mangas (japanese comics), are the most popular ones among youngsters.

This youngsters from Stavelot Youth Centre even managed to travel to Japan and took a closer look on their culture.

Beside educative mangas which learn teens a things such as medicine, history, psychology, science, math, there is also a bad side of mangas. Some of them can be extremely violent, and also there is a lot of them with adult content. Speaking with Sarah, youth worker in Stavelot we realized that they take care about what mangas teens reads, so we can say there is a bit of censorship. To be more precise they warn them about hurtful and inappropriate content in some of mangas.

In the illustration we show Tintin classical hero of Belgian comic school, with the famous comic sound effect above **CRACK**, which in this case has a double meaning.



Le Fagotin asbl

When a dream come true



In the heart of Eastern Belgium areas you can find a place with a vision – Le Fagotin, rural eco pedagogical center.

Placed in little village named Stoumont, Le Fagotin is just 44 km away from Liège - main University and administrative center in this area. Other closer towns nearby are Verviers (27 km from Le Fagotin), and the distance from Malmedy is just 26 km.

The story of Le Fagotin started in 1995 when a group of volunteers created Educational farm. From the humble start with just one building, one animal and without any

employees, had gradually developed its activities and grown into very well equipped Youth Centre. In the 1998 farm become Nature center. Today they are recognized as a youth center (CRH), Nature Center, Animation Farm and Social Tourism. Le Fagotin become a key player in environmental education in the Liège Ardennes.

Le Fagotin is located in the heart of the Sources Natural Park, which includes the towns of Spa and Stoumont. Its mission is to preserve, restore but also enhance natural environments and landscapes, promote economic, rural and tourist development with a view to sustainable development, and finally promote reception, education and public awareness of the riches of the territory. With his colleagues from the CRIE de Berinzenne, Le Fagotin is the place where you can find everything related to the nature in the Parc naturel des Sources.

Main values of their work are built around four key terms: CITIZENSHIP, SUSTAINABILITY, SOLIDARITY & BENEVOLENCE. These values are promoted and shared through Education on the Environment and Sustainable Development. Team is made up from experienced activity leaders. Today, Le Fagotin has 17 employees and several local and international long-term volunteers. They are all divided into 3 teams: Educational, Tourism and Administrative team.

Mobile youth centre – Project Caravane

The pandemic of Covid19 spawned another creative project for the kids – Mobile youth center, on French “Caravan Project”. Old white trailer is transformed into wheeled youth center. Entire transformation was created and designed by young people. In the trailer there are chairs, games, and different natural based activities. Meeting point is placed in the villages of Stoumont, mobile structure can be used to deploy during events, passage in a MJ or a youth movement. The caravan is at the service of young people and aims to be a real tool for meeting, solidarity, amusement. Well planted on its two wheels, it moves where mobility remains a difficulty for



young people.

Main activities are formed for individuals and groups. They offer courses, outdoor classes, workshops, walks, guides, training, meetings... in order to share with everyone, mainly young



people, the riches of the Walloon natural heritage. Far from the so-called traditional methods, Le Fagotin offers an innovative pedagogy in connection with the Living: sensitive approach, critical spirit, creativity, integration. Methods they use on daily basis are evolutionary, adaptive and anchored in reality. Courses and educational approaches are adapted for Schools, Youth, Volunteers, Families, Sports Wo/men, Tourist. People with mental and physical disabilities has opportunities to socialize with therapy animals and do gardening and farm activities. Le Fagotin also has other animals you can touch, feed, ride or just learn about. There you can see lambs and sheep, goats, horses, chicken, rabbits... Outside walks and cooking lessons are essential for kids and adults to reconnect with the nature. From 2021. in the Le Fagotin there is possibilities to prepare your own bread in the outside oven. It is especially interesting for young who can pass the entire process from mixing the flower and yeasts till the consumption with goat cheese made in Le Fagotin.

We had very active visit and explored some of team building activities created for companies and their employees. Creative team of Le Fagotin ecological education center invented original and innovative games for youth and adults. Games stimulate people into proactive approach, to find and decipher several clues on field and using modern technologies. Using QR codes two teams needed to find the right code and cooperate together in order to symbolically "enter into a building".



Accommodation:

Located in the center of Stoumont and with a car park, Le Fagotin is the ideal base for spending one or more nights in the Ardennes. Le Fagotin today can host up to 52 a person, in single or bunk beds, private or shared shower rooms, PRM or valid access. Guests can use a common room with its small kitchen, a refectory, a terrace and a large garden. There's something for everyone.

Several hours we spent in this magical place was not enough to discover all its possibilities.

Information:

Address: Route de l'Amblève 56, 4987 Stoumont

Email info@fagotin.be

Web page: www.fagotin.be

+32 (0)80 78 63 46



By Marija Rasic, Mirjana Martać, Andrea Cicchitti and Giorgio Micoli

Youth Centre "C.I.R.A.C." in Marcourt

C.I.R.A.C. – **C**entre **I**nternational de **R**econtres et d'**A**ctions **C**ulturelles or Meeting and Accommodation National Center is located in Marcourt, Belgium. Their first purpose was a part of the YMCA, and sixty years ago they became the youth center they are now, known as CIRAC.



The centre consists of four buildings, which are in their own property (45 beds, 30 beds, 18 beds and 23 beds) + a small house that can accommodate a small family. They are open every day all year round, even during holidays. They employ 15 employees which are divided into different areas – management, kitchen, housekeeping, animators and technical staff.



This organization is a social tourism organization, and they have different approaches depending on your age and interests (pupils, students, the elderly, sportspeople and disabled people). They focus on outdoor activities – sports, biking, hiking, canoeing, fishing, etc. People can book accommodation and activities based on their wishes.

They struggled in the two previous years, due to COVID and floods that came up in this area. They had to stop with their activities and because of that some of the staff didn't get their salary for a few months. The prices are adjusted to the visiting group, the so-called democratic prices.



CIRAC Fernand Goosse asbl

Address: Rue des Martyrs 13, 6987 Marcourt, Belgium

E-mail: info@cirac.be

Phone number: 084477211

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ciracmarcourt>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ciracmarcourt/>

How to reach us: <https://www.google.com/maps?cid=12058894450548453751>

Just as our hostess said: "With us, everything is possible!"



By Nataša Dendić, Ana Ognjanović and Ljubiša Popović

Participants

Yves Reuchamps, Francois Cormeau, Marie Pierre Coninx, Mario Braham, Elise Cransveld, Tanja Šnjegota, Ljubiša Popović, Branislav Ristić, Tanja Boromisa, Giada Ciarcelluti, Mario Serrao, Giorgio Micoli, Andrea Cicchitti, Nikolina Petricevic, Nataša Dendić, Đorđe Kamenarović, Kinga Mastalerz, Jurand Barlik, Janusz Wojcieszek-Łyś, Mirjana Martać, Marija Rasic, Ana Ognjanović.

**We are all just human beings: for this reason it is possible that this dossier
contains mistakes and inaccuracies.**



Feel free to write us to:

circoloarcichieti@yahoo.it

Contents may be used and reproduced

but, please, quote the source.

Thank you



2022