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#4

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – HOW GREEN IS YOUTH WORK?

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Contribution #1

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YOUTH WORK AND CLIMATE CHANGE – A FOLLOW UP ON THE 2019 FINNISH PRESIDENCY COUNCIL DEBATE AND QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE

This survey targets at European Union government representatives of youth affairs about the impact of youth climate demonstrations. The government representatives are the key persons in driving European youth policies and promoting the interests of young people. They also are in a challenging position between public youth administration, established forms of youth work and those young people who choose to express themselves through unconventional ways, like the school strikes. The survey tries to identify how the governments orient themselves in this difficult space.

Climate change intensifies. In 2021 August ICPP 6th Assessment Report says: "Recent changes in the climate are widespread, rapid, and intensifying, and unprecedented in thousands of years … Unless there are immediate, rapid, and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, limiting warming to 1.5°C will be beyond reach."

Youth takes action. Young people have understood this urgency. The global Fridays for Future (FFF) movement of school students have skipped Friday's classes to participate in demonstrations to demand political leaders to take action to prevent climate change and to push the fossil fuel industry to transfer to renewable energy. Since Nov 2018 it spread across the world. In 2019 about 8 million young people participated.

Youth policy starts reflecting climate change – The Finnish EU Presidency debate Nov 2019. During the Finnish EU Presidency in 2019 the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting on 21-22 November 2019 held a policy debate on "A vision for youth work in Europe – climate change, young people and youth work". (The discussion paper available at: *https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13398-2019-INIT/en/pdf)*. Overall, climate change and youth climate action was recognised as important. The Special Eurobarometer 513 on Climate Change (2021) showed that 93% of Europeans believe that climate change is a serious problem, including 78% who say it is a very serious problem. Furthermore,15-24 year olds were the most worried age group.

The European Climate Pact (9.12.2020 COM(2020)788 final) following the EU Green Deal (2019) focused *"on spreading awareness and supporting action"*. It appreciated the young climate activists, who "have captured the world's attention and shaped the discussion on climate change" and concluded: "We invite young people to use the Pact to drive systemic and inter-generational change for society as a whole".

The study. The study, carried out in early summer 2021, is based on a short 3 -page electronic questionnaire with 9 questions. Response rate was 52%. The questions looked at the effects of youth climate activism in the member countries and in youth work and youth policy.

Climate change in youth work – a transitory period with different pace of development across Europe

Climate change is emerging on youth work agenda. A majority of the respondents (64%) said "Some youth work organisations have taken it on their agenda" and the rest (36%) said "Many … have taken it on their agenda". Some governments have initiated capacity building, new working methods have appeared and cross-sectoral projects exist, while just a few reported that youth workers have asked for training in climate change. Even if the respondents were somewhat ambivalent in their responses, one may conclude that (1) climate change is emerging on the youth work agenda, (2) there is a transitory period with different pace of development across Europe and (3) so far, climate change has not become a universally adopted or a determinately accepted priority in youth work

Youth policy makers in Member States recognised positive outcomes and expected the society to support youth climate activism

The respondents thought that youth climate activism have had a positive impact:

- Improved the public image of youth as active citizens
- increased public awareness of climate change
- led to dialogue between activists and decision makers
- received large media visibility

Furthermore, the government respondents were very clear that it is very important for the society to respond to youth climate concern "to acknowledge that young people have the right to a safe future and well-being devoid of risks, dangers and inequalities caused by climate change", "to show the young people that society trusts in them", to safeguard "the inter-generational right of young people to a non-polluted future" and to "strengthen the active citizenship of young people". There is an overall positive orientation of a majority towards youth climate activism, but how far does it carry past today's transitory period, the ambivalence and the controversies, as youth climate activism also seems to question current modes of participation, existing mandates and structures of youth representation, the ability of youth work and youth policy to respond to emergent changes, old formats of youth work or the prevailing profile of a youth worker?

Youth climate activism – a collision between forms of youth agency?

Despite the encouraging findings above, the study raised a number of issues for youth work to reflect, such as: Is youth participation paradigm changing? Of course, it is too early to properly evaluate the impact of FFF as we do not so far have enough research on the long-term life-span or generational effects of the demonstrations, nor the indirect multiplicative effects to the entire cohort and its life-styles and political perspectives. However, the events prompted two kinds of contradictory interpretations. Are the youth demonstrations an inefficient and an inferior way of expressing one's views, while the proper way is through organised and established youth work organisations, such as youth organisations, and their structures? Or, despite certain backlash, do youth climate demonstrations represent a new, emerging and developing form of youth agency, perhaps replacing or comple-

menting the established, highly organised, administrative and too-close-to-existing-power-structures -kind of participation, which much of the young people have become estranged from? Furthermore, a long-term commitment to work through established structures and all-covering ideologies, such as party programs, seem to become replaced by issue- and project based concrete activities, such as Fridays for the Future. Interestingly, the government representatives seemed somewhat ambivalent and divided on this issue.

Tokenism and adultism – existing forms of agency to be modified

Youth climate activities express dissent from existing climate policies. O'Brien et al. (2018) have categorised dissent in four types; dutiful, disruptive and dangerous dissent. **Dutiful dissent** refers to activist work through and within the existing political and economic institutions without questioning their legitimacy, **disruptive dissent** means activism which seeks to modify and change existing political and economic structures including their norms, regulations and institutions, also challenging existing power relations and **dangerous dissent** means initiating, developing and actualizing alternatives that inspire long-term transformations. It generates new and alternative systems, ways of doing things or living, new types of economic relationships and organisations. "We suggest that through direct experiences with dutiful, disruptive, or dangerous dissent, youth may gain important insights into social change, systems change, citizenship, and democracy that many education systems are currently failing to provide" (O'Brien et al. 2018, 8). Piispa et al. (2020: 13) argue that activism which falls in the category of dangerous dissent is particularly important: "[They] have much to contribute to political debate because they have 'imagined the future in new and sometimes radically alternative ways".

It follows that youth policy should make every effort to include the voices of young people who are engaging in climate politics through unconventional participation including all forms of dissent. New voices with new forms of agency are emerging and both should be recognised. This is also an opportunity for existing youth work structures (youth NGOs and public youth work) to renew and modify approaches and working methods. As the responses of the government representatives in this study indicated, a majority of youth policy makers (62%) are open to new forms of youth agency. At the same time, there is a good third of governments (38%) which hesitate to see youth climate demonstrations as a sign of changing youth agency.

Youth work and climate change – an identity issue?

"Youth work is a very diverse field of practice" (Coussée et al. 2014: 260) and has historically struggled between contradictory tensions. The main tension is between "emancipation" and "integration": is the main task to support young people to express themselves, even critically, and change the world, or is it to help young people, the vulnerable young people, in particular, to acquire skills, competences and values to integrate into the existing society? These historical tensions manifest themselves in the relationship of youth

1 *https://www.zivilgesellschaft-ist-gemeinnuetzig.de/attac/*

work between youth climate activists and the society. The dilemma is: should youth work stand behind the young people, to support them, or refuses to or at least hesitates to give moral support to their initiative as it feels it should also support the society - the school, the administration, conservative politics and the industry? The youth field is facing the difficult task of negotiating the youth interests, concerns and rights with the different societal demands and interests. This difficulty is reflected in the ambivalence and hesitance of the government youth representatives to give or not to give "moral support to the school strike movement". But the youth field needs to negotiate these tensions and to clarify its position, whereby it clarifies and constructs its youth work identity.

Of course, it is possible to avoid these identity issues defining that climate issues do not belong to youth work. They are issues to be solved by the society, politics, the environment sector and the fossil industry. However, climate change is a global crisis which threatens democracy and can only be solved through democratically driven climate policies. The question is "On a planet in crises, does democracy have what it takes to save the environment?" (Council of Europe 2020: 3) Active citizenship and democracy is at the heart of all youth policies, so, If climate change is about democracy, youth work should be about climate change. Furthermore, climate warming is essentially an equality issue (as it is treating unequally different parts of the earth and different groups of people) and it is about human rights and justice (between generations, for example). Thus, if human rights are at the core of youth work, climate change should be a youth work priority.

Contribution #2

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FACILITATING THE EMPOWERED INCLUSION OF YOUTH IN CLIMATE POLICY: A CASE STUDY OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF IRELAND'S FUTURE GENERATIONS - CLIMATE JUSTICE PROJECT

1. Introduction: the challenge for youth work

Since 2018, young people in Europe have been taking to the streets in huge numbers to protest the failures of adult systems of climate governance which youth argue are too slow, wilfully ignorant or potentially even captured by the interests of the fossil fuel industry and others who profit from the status quo (Gorman, 2021).

Furthermore, there are significant challenges to parity of esteem in climate governance structures, meaning marginalised non-elite groups face difficulties in being seen, heard and having an impact on outcomes in climate policy making spaces such as the UNFCCC.

This is a particular challenge for young people because our societies are profoundly adultist - there is systematic discrimination and disempowerment of children through policies, practices and actions which privilege adults and limit children's agency, autonomy and subjectivity (see EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership, 2021).

When it comes to climate governance, young people exist in a subordinate relationship to the dominant managerialist, technocratic and scientific climate governance frameworks (Bowman, 2020). Such governance structures tend to privilege expert knowledge and to limit young people's recognition and agency.

All of this, we suggest, has led to young people taking to the streets. The core youth strategy has been to use the strike tactic to collectively raise their voices. A key question for the youth sector then, and the one which motivates our research, is how can youth work and youth policy stand with young people to equalise hierarchies, address power asymmetries and support their voices to be heard? In answering this question we recognise that youth work has long sought to address issues of young people's participation and agency in response to adultism in society (see for example, Corney et al, 2020). In this paper we consider in particular youth engagement in climate governance and draw on the literature which addresses this specifically.

2. Background

2.1. This study

This paper presents some initial findings from a collaborative inquiry to identify insights from the National Youth Council of Ireland's (NYCI) climate justice youth work which are of relevance to youth work practice and youth policy more broadly. The participants

in the study are youth sector professionals in the NYCI Global Youth Work Team, working in collaboration with youth researchers and youth work educators from the Centre for Youth Research and Development at Maynooth University.

Collaborative inquiry is a well-established professional peer-to-peer research process used in educational and organisational settings. It prioritises reflection, dialogue, exchange and exploration of practice in a collegial environment. To date we have conducted two inquiry workshops as well as individual one-on-one interviews between NYCI staff and the youth researchers.

2.2. Youth work in Ireland

Youth work in Ireland takes place in a mix of professional and voluntary-led organisations. The practice has a statutory recognition in the Youth Work Act of 2001, which defines it as:

> *"A planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young people through their voluntary involvement, and which is complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training and provides primarily by voluntary youth work organisation"*

2.3. Irish Climate policy

Ireland has been regularly described as a "climate laggard" in the media and the government has been slow to respond to the challenges of climate change. Recently, Climate Case Ireland took a litigation approach to promoting stronger climate ambition. The state recently enacted the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act, 2021.With this new act, Ireland is now on a legally binding path to net-zero emission for no later than 2050, and a 51% reduction in emission by the end of this decade.

3. Emerging responses to young people's disempowerment in climate governance

Recent scholarship has sought to address the issue of intergenerational climate justice and how climate policy engages with youth climate activists (and vice-versa):

- 'Empowered inclusion' (Josefsson & Wall, 2020)

  This concept offers a framework to theorise child-responsive global governance through policy, institutional, cultural change. It is defined as: 'Interdependent engagement with lived experiences of difference in ways that challenge and transform shared global norms and practices [and…] in which all persons and groups are actively empowered to transform global power relations based on shared responsiveness to lived experiences of difference' (p. 1053).

- 'Inclusive orchestration' (Thew et al, 2021)

  Orchestration refers to governance through co-ordination and collaboration between state and non-state actors (as with the UNFCCC with its constituency groups). Inclusive orchestration involves 'on-

> *going management of [policy initiative] implementation with the explicit purpose of balancing power dynamics and supporting weaker partners'* [1] (p16):

Our research also draws inspiration from the Nutopia project with Finnish youth (Piispa et al, 2020) and from O'Brien et al's (2018) typology of dissent as 'dutiful, disruptive & dangerous'. Addressing policy, institutions and culture, this literature suggests we must:

- Recognise the multi-scaler/faceted nature of the crisis;
- Acknowledge deep interdependence of humans with one another (and between species);
- Support a diversity of actors, a plurality of voices through inclusive structures, capacity building and resource prioritisation;
- Recognise and respond to adultism, strive for equity and equalise hierarchies;
- Give visibility to young people expressing alternative values, perspectives and solutions;
- Value 'disruptive' and 'dangerous' dissent that contests the status quo and promotes alternative norms/values.

Our research is informed by these theoretical discussions and seeks to advance knowledge around how youth work and youth policy can practically advance empowered inclusion of youth in climate governance.

Future Generations: a good practice example

3.1. Project origins

The *Future Generation Climate Justice Project* came into existence as a result of the first UN Youth Climate summit which took place in New York in September 2019. The Irish government included two UN Youth Delegates and a Youth Climate Ambassador in its delegation to represent the voice of Irish youth.

During the summit, in recognition of the unprecedented urgency to step up global efforts to avoid dangerous effects of climate change and the need to include youth voices in the process, Ireland proposed a Climate pledge: The KWON-GESH Climate Pledge which committed states to:

> *'respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on youth, as well as intergenerational equity, when taking action to address climate change; involving our youth in our implementation of the Paris Agreement and the achievement of its goals'* (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019).

Following this pledge, Irish youth activists successfully advocated for funding to support the capacity building of the youth climate movement and strategic mechanisms for meaningful youth participation in climate policy. In December 2019, the government

1 *Inclusive climate policy orchestration 'engages a wide range of diverse actors; facilitates pursuit of a broad range of solutions; strives for equity; proactively balances power dynamics; builds capacity; delegates authority to marginalised actors to perform governance tasks' (Thew et al, 2021: 16).*

launched the Youth Climate Justice Fund which has provided targeted funding to youth organisations to address climate justice issues.

3.2. Addressing climate injustice through participation

The focus of the Future Generations Climate Justice Project was determined by the understanding that climate change is a systemic issue. Attention is required to address the existing discriminatory practices that have led us to this place and how these inequalities will be exacerbated by the climate crisis. By considering social justice, a climate justice approach connects the climate crisis to other worldwide movements such as workers' rights, racial justice, gender equality, youth rights and indigenous sovereignty.

Moreover, the NYCI identified demographic trends in the youth climate movement related to class, race and educational level. Not all young people were participating in the debate around climate justice and climate solutions. The majority of young people in the Irish youth climate movement appeared to be white, settled (non-Traveller or Roma) and middle class. This project was designed to create a space for the unique voices of young people who were missing from the climate discourse. In Ireland this meant young people from marginalised, rural, and disadvantaged backgrounds who are often left out of the conversation and their reality is oftentimes not represented in national and global policies as a result.

With this in mind, the NYCI build on existing partnerships and relationships with youth organisations to develop a project consortium that could bring these missing voices to the table:

- Macra na Feirme: Young farmers / rural youth;
- Involve: Young Travellers;
- YMCA Ireland: Rural youth;
- Sphere17 & Swan Youth Service: Young people from urban disadvantaged backgrounds.

3.3. The Future Generations approach

From the beginning, the focus of the project was to embed a climate justice approach within the consortium organisation in order to then have a wider impact on youth workers, youth people and the wider community. To foster this whole-of-organisation approach it was recognised that three stakeholder pillars were important to engage with: young people, youth workers and organisational management.

The use of a non-formal development education approach meant that project workers were adamant to start where the young people were and to include them in the overall development of the project. We created a **steering group body** which was made up of key workers and two youth representatives from each partner organisation. The steering group decided the direction of the project which meant that young people had the opportunity to shape how they will engage with the project from the beginning to the end.

Capacity building training was offered with all three pillars of the project present: Head of Organisation, Youth workers and Youth people. This allowed for **rich conversation and**

a space for intergenerational dialogue and collaboration. Furthermore, it was apparent to us that the urgency of the climate crisis requires that we do not limit ourselves to raising climate awareness with young people. Rather, working on climate justice requires a **whole organisation approach** if we are to secure a lasting impact on youth and our communities.

*Figure 1: The **Future Generations** approach*

3.4. Understanding the Justice in the Future Generations Climate Justice project

Upholding the principle of **justice** was essential to the delivery of this project. therefore, it was important to name and acknowledge, that the climate crisis is not solely an environmental issue but one that has emerged through the economic and political system that governs our societies today. The climate crisis is a symptom of an unsustainable economic system which is also at the core of other social issues such as inequality between and within countries, racial injustice, poverty and much more. If these same systems are to deliver the solutions to curtail climate change, we must make sure that today's actions do not exacerbate inequality but support a Just Transition that will leave no one behind.

With the groups, we worked on shifting the climate discourse beyond reducing greenhouse gas emissions at all costs, to applying a human rights lens to our transition. Recognising that the impacts of climate change will not be borne equally or fairly, between rich and poor, women and men, urban and rural, older, and younger generations. Starting from their own reality, we invited the group to reflect and discuss in a safe space and utilise the learning by organising series of controversial conversation with policy makers and other young people to highlight the importance of a justice lens in response to climate change. From the beginning, the focus was to embed climate justice within the organisation and hope that this will then have a wider impact on youth workers, youth people and the wider community.

4. Discussion

Our paper presents how a national youth council and youth NGOs are responding to the inequities of the climate crisis. We suggest that the Future Generations approach illustrates many characteristics of an empowered inclusion approach and sheds light on how the youth sector can create the conditions for a more inclusive climate policy orchestration. At the time of writing, our research is ongoing and we are in the process of developing this case study further. We hope to further draw out the contours of the Future Generations approach at its implications for youth work practice concerned with climate justice. Tentatively, we have identified three important elements of the Future Generations which offer a framework for operationalising Josefsson & Wall's (2020) theoretical concept of empowered inclusion' in climate governance:

- Pluralistic participation
- Collective decision-making
- Building youth sector capacity

These themes will be explored in turn below.

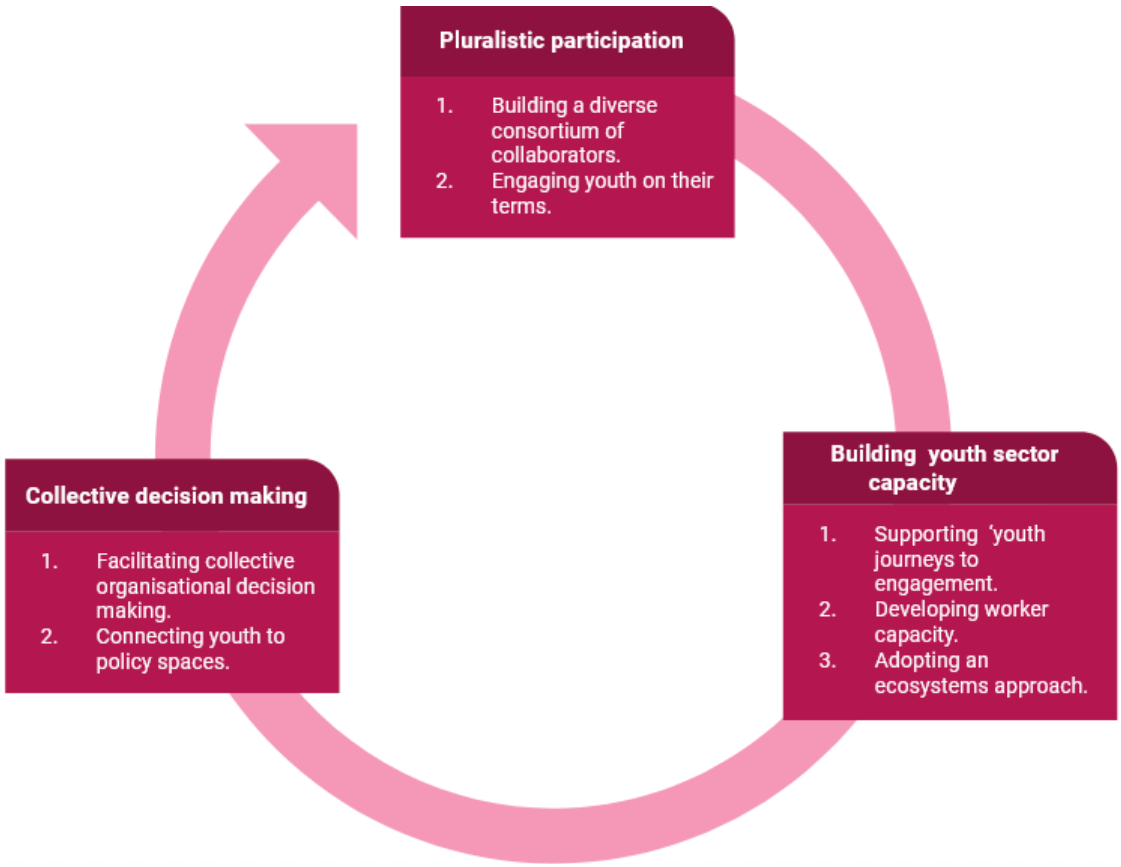

Figure 2: Empowered inclusion through the Future Generations approach

4.1. Pluralistic Participation

4.1.1. Building a diverse consortium of collaborators

The NYCI engaged with a wide range of youth organisations in developing the Future Generations project in order to build a diverse consortium of voices and perspective.. Developing this consortium took time in order to build relationships and trust between partners. Developing relationships between workers and organisations supported young people with a broad range of identities and experiences to engage in the project. This diversity and difference led to 'controversial conversations' such as "can everyone afford to be green?", addressing issues of equity in climate action. This approach welcomed lived-experiences of difference and invited a diversity of voices and perspectives to engage in dialogue around issues of climate justice

4.1.2. Engaging youth on their terms

Future Generations sought to engage young people in climate justice work on their own terms. Project workers undertook consciousness raising work to connect climate issues concretely to young people's lived realities. This approach uncovered the generative themes which catalysed an interest in action for climate justice in young people's lives, responding to issues such as fast fashion and green jobs. This approach supported young people to build their analysis and to connect issues of climate change directly to their lived experience. This youth work process created the conditions for the engagement of traditionally marginalised and hard-to-reach youth in climate justice work.

4.2. Collective decision-making

4.2.1. Facilitating collective organisational decision making

Future Generations encouraged and supported a collective whole-of-organisation approach to climate justice work. Young people were included alongside adults in the project's steering group which developed and monitored the project. Consortium partners (youth work organisations) were encouraged to mirror the inclusive structures of the project in how they develop their own organisational global justice/climate justice policies. The project supported young people, youth workers and organisational management to engage in dialogue in relation to climate justice recognising that:

> *'Dialogue is the key to success. Create opportunities to share the learning and challenges with everyone including the head of your organisation, youth workers and young people. A holistic – whole of organisation approach will ensure that Climate Justice will be embedded within your organisation.'* (NYCI, 2021:14).

In this way, the project sought to address and balance power dynamics between youth and adults in organisational decision making, as well as including young people in organisational governance around the development of climate justice policies.

4.2.2. Connecting youth to policy spaces

Future Generations built the analysis and capacity of young people to engage in climate policy spaces by supporting youth participation in organisational and youth sector cli-

mate policy governance. Young people from the project went on to take part in a number of consultative spaces related to climate governance. However we note that in Ireland and Europe, much more needs to be done to systematically include young people and to remove the barriers to their empowered inclusion in climate governance. In this work, we recognise that non-state actors in the youth sector cannot ensure inclusive climate policy orchestration alone. Further engagement from governments is required to meaningfully support young people in climate making and connect them to policy making spaces.

4.3. Building youth sector capacity

4.3.1. Supporting youth 'journeys' to engagement

Future Generations demonstrates how youth work can support young people on their journeys towards meaningful engagement, starting with group formation and bonding and leading to critical thinking, visioning, dialogue and youth-led action. Youth workers can recognise the different lived realities and starting points for young people and create safe spaces for young people with shared identities/similar experiences of disadvantage to find their voices and build their power before engaging with majority-group youth. This can be important for young people who are marginalised from the mainstream and who require additional targeted support in order to enable parity of participation in decision-making.

4.3.2. Developing worker capacity

NYCI staff noted that many youth workers were hesitant or lacked confidence to take up the issue of climate justice and this requires careful consideration. Youth workers have traditionally taken up other thematic issues such as human rights education and drugs education without having significant specialist knowledge in these areas. Yet climate change feels like a difficult area for many youth workers to engage with. At the same time, youth workers are experts in supporting effective youth participation and outreach to the most marginalised youth. Their expertise in these areas could play a crucial role in ensuring equity in climate policy making. Developing networking, peer support and practice development opportunities for youth workers on the topic of climate justice may be crucial to give workers confidence and catalyse action.

4.3.3. Adopting an ecosystems approach

The experience of the Future Generations project suggests that embedding climate justice work requires a continuum of engagement between all actors within the 'ecosystem' of the sector - young people, youth workers, organisational management, youth work educators, youth policy makers and funders. Engaging youth in organisational and programme decision making develops their capacity and power to engage with decision makers more broadly. In the experience of the Future Generations consortium members, this whole-organisational approach can be challenging and time consuming, requiring careful planning and management. Yet its benefits if done correctly can go some way towards building young people's capacity to contribute to the ongoing management and implementation of climate policy in organisations and support their capacity to engage in climate governance more broadly.

5. Conclusion

Our research is motivated by the question of how youth work and youth policy can stand with young people in the climate crisis in order to equalise hierarchies, address power asymmetries and support their voices to be heard. We recognise that young people are still acting and attempting to be heard within adult structures of climate governance. They may be invited into spaces but their views and demands are rarely reflected in policy outcomes. We suggest that a culture shift is still required to move beyond 'youth-washing' in climate governance. The NYCI's Future Generations project points the way for how youth work organisations can support this culture shift by fostering pluralistic participation and a diversity of voices in the societal dialogue and decision making around climate action. We suggest that such an approach is essential to achieving a fast and fair transition to a decarbonised, climate resilient society which protects the rights and dignity of current and future generations of children and young people.

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Contribution #3

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HOW GREEN WAS THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME? THE CASES OF BULGARIA, FINLAND, GERMANY AND SPAIN AS GREEN "THERMOMETERS" IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH WORK

1. Introduction

In recent years, the environment has become an issue on the public agenda. If in the past it seemed to belong exclusively to more revolutionary ideologies, in the present taking care of our planet is a human need for which there should be no political debate. The European Union (EU) has launched initiatives to become a greener and more plant-friendly space, allowing it to have a sustainable future. In this sense, the Green Deal, which is committed to a climate-neutral Europe where the care of the natural habitat protects people, the planet and the economy, becomes one of the strongest bets. 2021 has become a key year for the EU that seeks to ensure that no one is left behind in sustainable development.

It is from these context, that we modestly approach the environmental realities of Bulgaria, Finland, Germany and Spain through the Erasmus+ Programme. In other words, to identify how this European initiative contributed to the development of environmental policies during 2014-2020. Moreover, our analysis takes a tour around the north, south, east and west of the EU with the aim of verifying how green the Erasmus+ Programme was.
In the first section, we review the main premises that motivate this research, with a special reference to the EU in its quest to be a green space. In the second section, we explain the three key concepts on which the study is based: youth work, sustainability and Erasmus+. Then, we proceed to frame the socio-economic of the four study countries through youth unemployment, youth income and NET rate. In the four section, we go on to expose objectives, material used and methodology applied. In the last two sections, we present and discuss the main results of the statistical analysis.

2. Youth work, sustainability and Erasmus+

In the last decade, youth work has undergone a paradigm shift within the EU. Many European governments have detected that committing to youth work is a guarantee for the future and for youth citizens as a main exponent of development. According to Chircop (2018), the last decade has become a fruitful setting for youth work, showing that it is the ideal framework to develop values, perceptions and attitudes on young people necessary for their present and future. In this regard, youth work seems to be an effective framework to address climate change through awareness-raising events, educational programmes, and sustainability campaigns.

Although in the past it was difficult to find vocabulary related to the environment, in

recent times it has been incorporated into our common glossary. Actions to save our environment take place more frequently, a symptom of awareness by a large group in society. Climate change has become one of the great issues, something that connects with a series of controversies for which there is only one truth: the state of planet earth. Even though the concern is transversal to all areas and social groups, it is true that young people have a special sensibility to this issue, manifested through activism like School Strike for Climate (Boulianne et al., 2020)

Erasmus+ became the EU's flagship programme in the fields of education, training, sport and youth (between 2014-2020). Within the programme we find the strategic partnerships, that aimed to "support the development, transfer and/or implementation of innovative practices as well, as the implementation of joint initiatives promoting cooperation, peer learning and exchanges of experience at European level" (European Commission, 2020).

One of the horizontal priorities of the strategic partnerships was to "support, across all sectors, awareness-raising about environmental and climate-change challenges". As for one of the youth priorities, was to "contribute to quality and innovation in youth work and its recognition". From these priorities, the literature indicates that the Erasmus+ Programme (in general) and the strategic partnerships (in particular) played a very important role in supporting European co-operation both in youth work and in sustainability (Siebel, 2017), as well as achieving positive developments in the European political debate (Fumasoli & Rossi, 2021).

3. Socio economic context

According to Emilsson et al. (2020), there are evidence that economic, social and individual wellbeing are directly linked to environmental concerns. Based on this, below we present the three indicators, from 2014 to 2020, which for this research will represent the socio-economic context for youth in the four study countries. The first one is the youth unemployment rate among 15-24 year olds. The Figure 1 shows the evolution of this indicator from 2014 to 2020. As an average during that period of time, it is observed that the best positioned country is Germany with 6.80%, then Bulgaria with 16.81%, followed of Finland with 19.77 and, finally, Spain with 42.23% (Eurostat, 2021a).

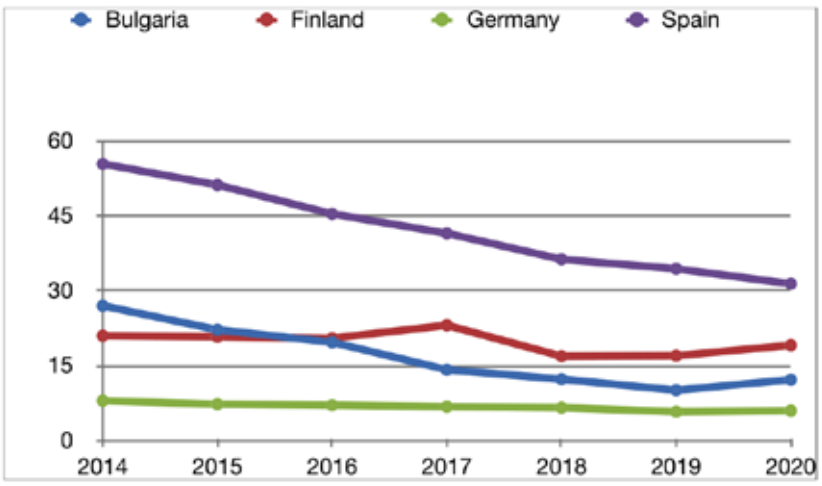

Figure 1. Youth unemployment rate among 15-24 year olds Source: Own elaboration.

The second one is the median equivalised disposable income for young people (between 16 and 24 years old). The Figure 2 shows the evolution of this indicator from 2014 to 2020. As an average during that period of time, it is observed that the best positioned country is Finland with € 20.742,86, then Germany with € 20.309, followed of Spain with € 12.291,57 and, finally, Bulgaria with € 3.531,14 (Eurostat, 2021b).

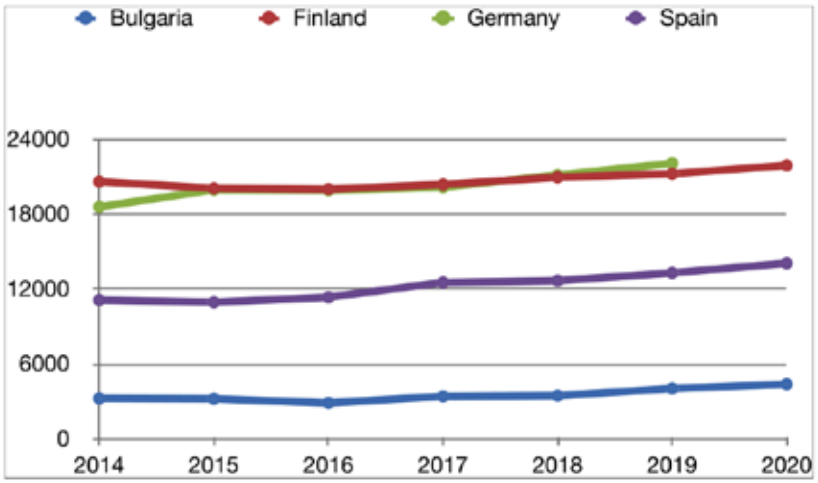

Figure 2. Median equivalised disposable income for young people (16-24 years old) Source: Own elaboration.

The third one is the NEET rate among 18-29 year olds. The Figure 3 shows the evolution of this indicator from 2014 to 2020. As an average during that period of time, it is observed that the best positioned country is Germany with 8,39%, then Finland with 10,96%, followed by Spain with 17,44 and, finally, Bulgaria with 20,06% (Eurostat, 2021c).

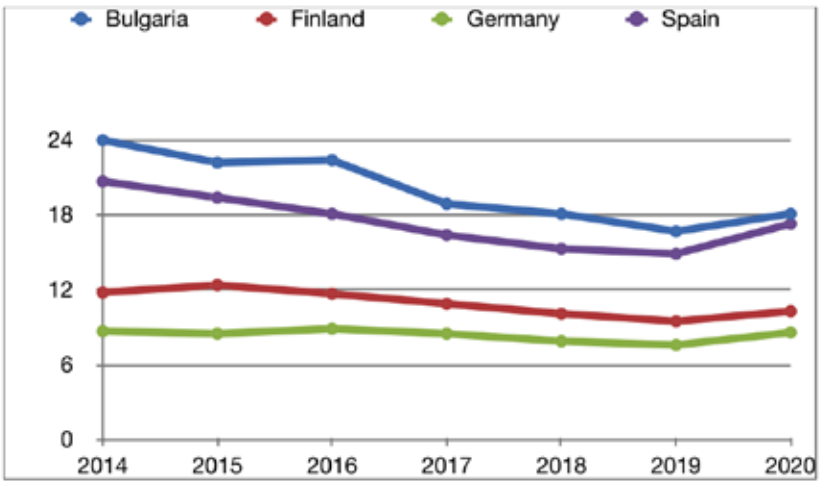

Figure 3. NEET rate among 18-29 year olds Source: Own elaboration.

From the above indicators, it is determined that Finland and Germany are within a stable socio-economic context. On the contrary, Bulgaria and Spain have an unstable socio-economic context.

4. Objectives, material and methods

This research analyses the degree to which the Erasmus+ Programme addressed the issues of environment, climate change and sustainable development within its strategic partnerships in the field of youth during the 2014-2020 period. In this regard, we expect that in stable socio-economic situations (Finland and Germany) there will be a greater presence of projects dedicated to sustainability. On the contrary, we expect that in unstable socio-economic situations (Bulgaria and Spain) there will be a lower presence of projects dedicated to sustainability.

Our dataset includes information about 465 strategic partnerships funded by the Erasmus+ programme between 2014 and 2018 in four EU countries. Specifically, 67 in Bulgaria, 31 in Finland, 161 in Germany, and 206 in Spain. The dataset was download from the Erasmus+ Results platform[1] and cleaned in order to disaggregate the information into: Project Title, Project Summary, Topics and Coordinator's country.

Using MAXQDA software, we carried out a documentary analysis to categorise and systematise the information of each of the projects in the four countries, specifically to identify whether the following words appeared in Project Title, Project Summary and Topics: climate change, ecology, environment, green, sustainable, energy and resources[2].

Using SPSS software, we designed contingency tables and performed Pearson's chi-square test as significance method (with a level of 5%). The foregoing allowed us to analyse the association between the socio-economic and the level of projects dedicated to sustainability.

5. Results

The first contingency table addresses the correlation between the socio-economic context and the project's topic in a general perspective. As can be seen in Table 1, of the total of 435 projects only 30 (6.5%) were explicitly dedicated to environmental issues, which are divided equally between both contexts (15 to each other).

Context	Topic		Total
	Environment	Others	
Unstable			
Count	15	258	273
% inside Unstable	5,5%	94,5%	100%
Stable			
Count	15	177	192
% inside Stable	7,8%	92,2%	100%
Total			
Count	30	435	465
% inside Context	6,5%	93,5%	100%

Table 1. General Socio-Ecnomic Context v Project's Thematic Source: Own elaboration.

1 *This platform is the database that gives access to descriptions, results and contact information of all projects funded under the Erasmus+ Programme.*

2 *According, mostly, to the own topics of the Erasmus+ Programme.*

When performing Pearson's chi-square between the socio-economic context and the topic matter of the projects, it is found that this association is not significant (p> 0.316) (Table 2). The above does not validate our hypothesis that the socio-economic situation has some kind of influence on the project's topic.

Table 2. Pearson's Chi-square
Source: Own elaboration.

Test	Sig. Asymptotic (bilateral)
Pearson's Chi-square	0,316

The second contingency table addresses the correlation between the socio-economic context of each country and the project's topic. As can be seen in Table 3, the projects explicitly dedicated to environmental issues were 2 in Bulgaria (3%), 1 in Finland (3.2%), 14 in Germany (8.7%) and 13 in Spain (6 ,3%).

Table 3. Country Socio-Ecnomic Context v Project's Thematic
Source: Own elaboration.

Context	Topic		Total
	Environment	Others	
Bulgaria			
Count	2	65	67
% inside Bulgaria	3%	97%	100%
Finland			
Count	1	30	31
% inside Finland	3,2%	96,8%	100%
Germany			
Count	14	147	161
% inside Germany	8,7	91,3%	100%
Spain			
Count	13	193	206
% inside Spain	6,3%	93,7%	100%
Total			
Count	30	435	465
% inside Context	6,5%	93,5%	100%

When performing Pearson's chi-square between the socio-economic context of each country and the project's topic, it is found that this association is not significant (p> 0.316) (Table 2). The above does not validate our hypothesis that the socio-economic context of particular countries has some kind of influence on the project's topic.

Table 4. Pearson's Chi-squareSource: Own elaboration.

Test	Sig. Asymptotic (bilateral)
Pearson's Chi-square	0,359

6. Discussion and Conclusion

Although the two hypotheses have not been fulfilled, it is considered, modestly, that the results of this study are relevant. In the first place, because this research shows as a common point how little the environment issue was taken into account among the strategic partnerships in the field of youth. Second, because it offers a first analysis framework that can be used to deepen on this as other topics inside the Erasmus+ Programme. In third term, because we set a provisional baseline on the direct weight that this environment topic had within the programme in its old version (2014-2020), as well as a way to compare how this issue evolves within the new Erasmus+ Programme, in its 2021-2027 period.

At the same time, it is important to mention that this research only focused on the information available on the Erasmus+ results platform. So it is possible that there are many more projects that are dedicated to the environment than those identified in this study. Furthermore, this research only addressed a specific sub-action of the programme and on four of the twenty-seven members of the EU. In this regard, it is necessary to broaden the spectrum of study in the two previous areas to achieve a more accurate and reliable perspective to verify whether the projects of the Erasmus+ Programme in the field of youth gave little importance (or not) to the environment topic.

In the coming years, is expected to have an exponential growth of youth work within the Erasmus+ Programme. Both issues will become indispensable frameworks for action that will allow, without a doubt, to consolidate the environmental awareness among the new generations of Europeans and, hopefully, a structural change in all citizens. At the same time, we perceive that the incorporation of the Green Deal as a EU priority will bring more environmental projects into the Erasmus+ Programme, with special emphasis on sustainable development connected with civic skills. All of the above will give young people a leadership role in working to achieve a sustainable planet that offers new generations the same opportunities as that they enjoyed.

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Contribution #4

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FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE, FROM VALUE TO ACTION YOUTH WORK, CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Introduction

Concerns about the future of our planet and species are paramount nowadays. Youth work has a long tradition of engaging with societal problems; from unemployment to right-wing extremism, from school drop-outs to discrimination. But how does youth work relate to environmental issues? Do youth workers care about sustainability? If so, how is this reflected in their work? What role can and does youth work play to support young people's sustainable behaviour and activism? And how to make the youth sector more sustainable?

During the *Practice Panel* at the *Youth in Europe: Offenburg Talks #04* [1] in October 2021, we asked four youth work practitioners to share their reflections on these questions. All of them are deeply committed to making youth work more sustainable and/or in supporting youth workers and young people to learn about, connect and act upon environmental and sustainable topics.

This report presents a summary of the main points in the discussion. The full panel discussion can be watched here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZCyYpscSgw

The practice panel members

"An environmental activist in every sense" and a "nature lover", that is how *Esther Vallado* (Spain) would describe herself. She has been and continues to be engaged in various forms of environmental activism, and is now focussing on how to support young people in becoming more active and making their activism more effective. She co-founded *Asociación Biodiversa*, an association aiming at the conservation of nature through education and awareness raising. Within this association, she manages European projects. As a freelance eco-trainer, she trains young people and adults on environmental issues, while also passing on sustainability values. Recently, she developed the checklist *11 tips to make your project more sustainable* for SALTO Participation & Information.

After his youth-work sector career, which he started as a volunteer and continued as a professional in youth clubs and open youth work, Finn Van Dinter (Belgium) joined the PULSE Transition Network. PULSE represents a broad cultural network supporting transition towards sustainability in the youth, arts, socio-cultural and media fields in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking community in Belgium. PULSE connects professionals who want to improve their sustainability, both within their own organization and in the wider society. PULSE fosters the cross-sectoral approach very strongly and

1 *This is the fourth edition of the Youth in Europe: Offenburg Talks, an annual seminar co-ordinated by Jugend fur Europa, the German National Agency for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, and co-organised by the National Agencies of Belgium (Flanders), Estland, Finland, and Slovenia.*

positions itself as a "match-maker" facilitating peer-learning between organisations. Based on their needs, PULSE helps organisations to connect with others that have the expertise they need. In addition, they organise networking events and maintain an online forum.

Christina Thomas is a Sustainability Officer for the Regional Youth Council in North-Rhine-Westphalia. This is an umbrella association for 25 youth associations, constituting a very heterogenous group. The Youth Council represents the interest of young people and youth associations, towards politicians, the media and society in general. It is composed of different thematic departments, ranging from migration, integration, democracy, youth policy and sustainability. Currently, the Youth Council is on a journey to shrink its ecological footprint and enlarge its ecological handprint. The council also want to use its influence on societal and political structures, in order to make them more sustainable. But the basis of their work is what happens within the youth associations, who do a lot of sustainable education with young people.

A grassroots youth worker by nature, *Fien Morren* works with young people aged 16-26 at youth association Globelink. Globelink wants to contribute to a sustainable, righteous, just world, by supporting youngsters to develop their competences to develop the power to make sustainable choices. The activities of Globelink take place on all levels, from the local to the international, and are always set up together with young people. Fien's role is to guide young people through to the process of setting up their own actions. For example, in the current project "The Road to Glasgow" (preceding the COP26 in November 2021), young people formulated recommendations, afterwards we spread the recommendations literally, by spraying them on the streets with ecological chalk sprays. Globelink also participates in international projects, such as a project on resilience in an ever-changing world.

Question 1: What is the situation in your youth work context, regarding sustainability and environmental matters? Is there a sense of urgency?

- There is certainly *a sense of urgency*. In various youth work contexts, the topic is picked and pushed forwards by youth associations, in youth projects and at the level of youth work supporters (like NAs and SALTOs). There is also a clear demand for specific youth worker trainings.
- However, the *diverse backgrounds of youth work* are also reflected in youth work responses. Some associations fail to see a connection to their work or do not prioritize it.
- In addition, youth organizations tend to *focus on becoming sustainable themselves* and are often *hesitant to activate the young people* they work with or engage in societal activism.
- Importantly, youth work should address all types of youth activism in relation to sustainability and environmental issues, and just school strikes or manifestations.

- Youth work and other socio-cultural actors can act on two levels: on the one hand, it is about greening their own organizations, but on the other hand, beside the required "hardware" shifts, the society also need *a cultural transition narrative*. This underpinning narrative is needed to get the idea of sustainable transition into the heads and hearts of the people.

Question 2: In your context, how did youth work respond to the youth climate activism, which emerged from 2019 on? Was this response adequate?

- Overall, youth workers were deeply impressed by the *action-centred, assertive attitude* of young climate activists. They experienced young people's actions as a wakeup call for the youth work sector.
- Youth work associations reflected on their own position vis-à-vis the climate movement but took a rather *ambiguous position*, usually. If there was support, it was often backstage, logistical rather than active, public support. The main reason for doing this, was not to 'steal the young people's thunder', to keep the young people at the centre of public attention. Also, youth workers did not want to undermine the power or a youth-led movement. However, some notice in 2021 a shift towards more outspoken, public support to the youth activism by the youth sector. Finally, there was a fear to be accused of greenwashing.
- The relationship between young climate activist and established youth work remains also rather ambiguous today. A main part of the youth-led climate associations is positioned *outside of established youth work structures*. As a result, there is a need to rethink conditions for membership in for instance Youth Councils.
- Due to the youth climate activism, the *issue of sustainability gained in importance within the youth sector*. Many projects and trainings are set up now in relation to this topic to respond to young peoples and youth workers' needs, and it is also being integrated into support structures.

Question 3: What can the youth sector learn from youth climate activism?

- Lesson 1: There is a need for systemic change and collective transition. While individual behavioural change is needed too, it can never be the first or only solution. Just as for individual citizens, for youth associations there is *no need to be 'perfectly sustainable' before speaking up about sustainability*.
- Lesson 2: Be bold and *focus on action*. Youth associations are often focussing on long processes and reflections, while the young people took the streets with a clear message: "here we draw the line".
- Lesson 3: The amount of people the climate movement was able to mobilize is impressive, as well as the level of global connection they have.

Question 4: A central value in youth work practices is youth participation. How can youth work strengthen youth participation about climate related matters?

- A first step should always be to *listen to young people* and help them to identify their needs. In terms of outcomes, it is recommended to move beyond talking, into action. Climate action can take many forms: it can be a climate strike, an open letter to a politician, a public action, ... The role of the youth workers is to *guide the process*, from ideas to action.
- Youth work helps young people to *build their capacity and resources* to develop actions.
- Youth work needs to recognize *young people's need for support in addressing climate issues*. A useful framework here is the Education for Development framework, based on the SDGs.
- Youth work can help to *get young people's voices heard* by politicians and other stakeholders. Youth associations, especially youth councils, can operate as a bridge between youth and policy makers and facilitate direct contact between both groups.
- More broadly, youth work should *advocate for structural participation of young people in decision making* about environmental and other issues. For example, this can be accomplished by lowering the voting age to 16.

Question 5: What actions have been taken in your own organizations, to them more sustainable?

- For most panellists, their organisations are founded on the environmental philosophy and they already do a lot of efforts in relation to sustainability. For instance, some have a *no-flying policy* and/or an internal policy paper addressing all elements of their sustainable policies.
- Only in the Regional Youth Council of North-Rhine Westphalia, there is an actual transition going on since its members passed *a resolution in 2014 to become climate neutral*. Currently, they are being accompanied by a climate-research institution to calculate the emissions of their events, offices, and their members' offices and events. This institute analyses the data and gives concrete measures on what to do.
- It was observed that in smaller organizations it is easier to realise a transition towards sustainability than in large structures that represent many interests (like the Youth Council).
- In youth mobility projects, a major challenge is how to approach the issues of long-distance transport. One approach is to reimburse the cost of *sustainable transport*, alternatively a symbolic reward can be offered (like a price).

- It is important to also consider sustainability as *a condition in partnerships*: to practice what you preach also means to "keep your foot down" when it comes to partner's sustainable behaviour.

Question 6 What (external) incentives could support the process towards sustainability?

- Overall, it is observed that in the youth organizations there is very much willingness to become sustainable as an organization, both on an ecological, economic, and social level. This is because it is part of the values of youth work and youth workers. The problem is related to funding: often, sustainability is included in policy plans in the youth sector and elsewhere, but no funding is available to realize it. Y*outh organisations don't need a motivation to become sustainable, there are motivated already. They need the means to be able to do it.*
- The fact that green travel is now in the *Program Guides of Erasmus+* is seen as a big step forwards. Not only because the extra cost of green travel is considered, but also because of its mentioning it in the Program Guides, awareness about the possibility of green travel will grow among people who were unfamiliar with it.
- A suggestion is to take a more holistic approach and give *extra funding to projects that are also sustainable in other ways*, for instance with the food that they provide or the content of the training.
- One incentive lies in the process of becoming climate neutral itself. By taking concrete measures to become climate neutral, this *brings a feeling of self-efficacy*. This feeling, that you're able to shape your surroundings, is very empowering.
- Importantly, many organisations are doing the same "exercise" to become more sustainable. Reflections about the travel, the catering, but also be like sustainable as an organisation. It is worthwhile for youth organizations to *connect with others in the youth sector and beyond* and share expertise as much as possible. A core value of the transition towards sustainability is to be *open source*.

Question 7: Is there sufficient cooperation and exchange within the youth sector?

- Why is a network approach important: caring for the planet and people is part of most youth organizations' values, but *sustainability is not a core task for most organizations*. Bringing them together makes it easier for them to work on these issues.
- The level of actual cooperation is strongly dependent on the context. In the context of Flanders, there appears to be a willingness. In Germany, the observation is that *cooperation is unevenly distributed*: some associations – those for whom the environment is at the heart of their work – cooperate, while others remain outside of this.
- At the European level, there seems very little exchange on the topic.

- It is stressed that also individual associations can give fuel to a *learning network on sustainability*, by sharing their own good examples actively in the youth field.

Question 8: Do youth workers have the right competencies to deal with the topic of sustainability appropriately? Should youth work education pay more attention to the topic of sustainability?

- There is a big *need for capacity building* on this topic. There is a big demand for trainings on this topic; there is not so much material available on how you can train an environmental topic or how you can organise a European project more sustainably.
- As there is a lack of established training programs related to sustainability, it is recommendable to design an educational pathway for yourself. There are for instance some very good online trainings by the *UN Environment Programme*. There is also a website *Ecoliteracy*, there's a lot of resources there. There is the *Green Toolbox*, developed by International Young Nature Friends.
- There is now also the toolkit by the Youth Partnership: *CoE Sustainability Checklist*
- Having basic know-how is important, but the most important is that youth workers can learn it and that you can also *learn it on the job*. In addition, it is not required to be a climate expert to voice your concerns. In fact, *the notion that only (adult) experts are legitimated to participate in discussions is often used to curtail young people's right of participation*. It is not to job of young people to come up with expert solutions; it is the job of politicians is to get the expert counselling done to put young people's demands into practice.
- It is important that youth workers do not set a very high bar for themselves, by thinking that they must know all technical details of climate change. It is not needed to know all technical details of climate change. In addition, the sustainability topic is complex, technical, and ever shifting. Especially when you look at more technical things like energy transition and mobility, *it is impossible to be an expert* in this. *Therefore, the main concern of the organizations we work with, should be to become a process manager*, focusing on establishing partnerships where all expertise needed is brought together.
- Youth workers' job is also to make *essential information accessible* for young people, for instance, by connecting the SDGs to young people's life worlds.
- It is noted that many youth workers are in fact practice-based experts on sustainability already, though without using the vocabulary, or without the label "education for sustainable development". It is important to recognize this.
- *Youth work is characterized by a tradition of being socially and sustainable,*

being economically sustainable. Youth work is often at the forefront in innovative organisation models.

Question 9: Not all young people are engaged or interested in climate and sustainability actions. Is it the task of youth work to reach out to new groups?

- Reaching young people who are not involved or interested is considered as a challenge by youth associations. To reach people who are not naturally drawn to the topic, it needs to be stressed that *many forms of activism and action exist*. Youth work should enable different forms of participation beside street activism, such as trough arts, music, poetry etc.
- From a psychological point of view, for *many young people the climate is a frustrating, negative, and burdening thing to think about, that brings about a sense of stagnation and not to participation*. Youth work can turn the tide by offering fun activities, non-formal learning and practices that empower them and build a sense of community. In that way, young people experience how they can change something, they have a feeling of self-efficacy. In addition, it is important to offer mental support, work on prevention and control of anxiety and depression among young people. Because well-being is a prerequisite to be able to participate.
- Youth work needs to be outreaching, to be where the youngsters are. It should not be expected that youngsters will find your youth organisations, instead you must look out for them wherever they are. It requires a mind-shift, to build your youth work offer on the youngsters' needs, on their energy level, and to approach this in fun ways.
- From an organizational perspective, a part of the solution lies in *cooperation between organisations* with different audiences and expertise. If organisations with different expertise and target groups cooperate, new audiences are reached, and intersections are created where the topic of sustainability can be brought in.

Q10 What should be the youth work's future agenda on sustainability? Should it aim for more sustainable behaviour among young people, for systemic change or both at the same time?

- Environmental degradation is a systemic problem, but we are individuals living in this system, so there needs to be *change on a behavioural level and on a systemic level*. These two things communicate. By changing your behaviour, you influence the system to change as well, and vice versa.
- Some youth organisations are better positioned to work on the systemic level, because they are positioned where they can influence policy makers, or even industries. And some are not, they work on a micro-, on a personal level. Both levels of work are important.
- *Education for sustainable development* should ideally be transformative

education, education that leads people towards changing the structures, and changing societal, political structures. Therefore, the idea of systemic change is integral part of this.

- It is important to also try to make visible what is already happening. One of the biggest thresholds in people changing their behaviours is the thought "I'm all alone, I'm the only one doing this." But a l*ot of sustainable choices are invisible*. Talking about them, showing them, mentioning them in your communication helps to spark public dialogue and encourages sustainable behaviour.

Contribution #5

Violeta Duncan, ***Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Berlin Germany***

INTERGENERATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR LOW CARBON & CLIMATE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES: EUROPEAN APPROACHES FOR CENTERING YOUTH LEADERSHIP & INCLUSION IN LOCAL & REGIONAL CLIMATE PROTECTION

Research Summary

Youth have played a decisive role in mobilizing global climate action and in fostering support and engagement of citizens in the climate transition ahead. Might they also play a role in their local communities, helping to shape their cities to be green, sustainable, and inclusive? This research explores under what conditions youth participate in urban climate governance. How do European youth engage with public, private and civil society actors and institutions to articulate local climate goals, exercise influence and authority, and manage local climate planning and implementation processes? What further resources and support are needed to expand participation?

Youth and Local Mobilization Against the Climate Crisis

To protect the present and future generations of youth against heat waves, droughts, biodiversity loss, wildfires, extreme storms, land loss, human displacement, and inequity, young people are advocating for the phasing out of all fossil fuels by 2030. Inspired by young leaders like Greta Thurnberg, who, along with 15 other youth across the globe have filed a legal complaint to the United Nations,[1] on the basis of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, youths are taking up a variety of means to encourage policymakers to fight the climate crisis with decisiveness and justice.

Youth activists in the climate movement have been credited with shifting political discourse so significantly that today, climate change is recognized by households and governments across the world, as one of today's most pressing issues.[2] In fact, German Chancellor Angela Merkel noted, in reference to Germany's new climate law and carbon pricing mechanism, "The seriousness with which Greta [Thunberg], but also many, many other young people, are telling us that [climate change] is about their lives, and that their life spans extend further, has led us to approach the matter more resolutely."[3] Many have attributed the Green party's recent gains in the European Parliament to the Fridays for Future movement.[4]

At the same time as youth commitment to climate action grows, sub-national

1 *Arnoldy, B., 'Greta and 15 Kids Just Claimed Their Climate Rights at the UN' (23 Sept. 2019) Earthjustice*

2 *Centre Kantar sur le Futur de l'Europe and Jacques Delors Institute (2020), The Green Paper, Paris, Centre Kantar sur le Futur de l'Europe and Jacques Delors Institute.*

3 *The Local de (2019), 'Greta Thunberg 'drove us' to act on climate change, says Merkel,' 19 July 2019*

4 *Schwägerl, C. 'How Green Party Gains Could Make Europe a Leader Again on Climate' (5 June 2019), Yale School of the Environment*

actors are investing in climate protection. In fact, nearly 2,000 cities across the world (the majority in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand), have made Climate Emergency Declarations, with several calling for zero carbon economies by 2030.[5]

Cities, which can "deliver or influence just over 50 percent of the savings needed to keep [the] 1.5 degree trajectory,"[6] of global warming prefered in the Paris Agreement, have legislative and executive control of many of the factors related to greenhouse gas emissions, such as land use planning and regulation, residential and commercial regulations, transit options and solid waste disposal, and often the public transportation and electric supply networks.[7] In Europe, "local and regional governments are responsible for more than 70% of climate mitigation," and when considering climate adaptation measures, "that percentage goes up to 90%."[8] Two thirds of all EU cities have developed comprehensive mitigation plans and 17 percent have developed adaptation plans."[9]

European and Multinational Commitments to Fostering Youth and Civic Participation

Simultaneous to climate crisis mobilization efforts, many cities are developing new participatory models to ensure that the decisions and investments made in the next few years are not only environmentally and economically sustainable, but informed by democratic participation. And in Europe, the New Leipzig Charter, Europe's key policy framework document for sustainable urban development, encourages that, "wherever possible, citizens should have a say in processes that impact their daily lives." Moreover, the charter advises that "new forms of participation be encouraged and improved, including co-creation and co-design in cooperation with inhabitants, civil society networks, community organisations and private enterprises." In doing so, cities may manage conflicts, share responsibilities, and foster innovation, leading to "high quality built environment[s]."[10]

Amidst this backdrop, calls for meaningful youth participation are growing. Young people's participation is already enshrined in the *Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local & Regional Life*, which calls for the active participation of young people in decisions and actions at local and regional level. Meaningful youth participation and active citizenship, is understood to be "essential if [the EU is] to build more democratic, inclusive and prosperous societies."[11] And in a 2020 opinion, the European Economic and Social Committee remarked, "the intergenerational aspect of climate and sustainable devel-

5 *Climate Emergency Declaration, 'ICEF - Governments emergency declaration spreadsheet' Toolkit to Declare a Climate Emergency (2019) Global COvenant of Mayors for CLimate and Energy*

6 *Smart City Hub (2018), 'The role of cities in the pursuance of the Paris Agreement,' 5 March 2018*

7 *Pohlmann, A (2011), Local Climate Change Governance, Hamburg, University of Hamburg/KlimaCampus*

8 *European Committee of the Regions (2020), We urge the European Commission to develop a new EU climate adaptation strategy, 11 November 2020.*

9 *"Reckien, D, Salvia, M.; Heidrich, O.; Church, J.; Pietrapertosa, F.; De Gregorio-Hurtado, S.; D'Alonzo, V.; et al. (2018), "How are Cities Planning to Respond to Climate Change? Assessment of Local Climate Plans from 885 Cities in the EU-28", Journal of Cleaner Production, Vol. 191, pp. 207-219.*

10 *Ministers responsible for Urban Matters and Territorial Cohesion (2020), New Leipzig Charter, Berlin, EU2020*

11 *Council of Europe, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (2003), Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, 21 May 2003.*

opment policies and implementation mechanisms needs to be reflected in strong meaningful youth engagement at all stages of EU decision-making processes, from the drafting of legislative proposals and initiatives through to implementation, monitoring and follow-up."[12]

These values are reiterated and expanded in the 2019-2027 European Youth Goal Space and Participation for All to "ensure young people can adequately influence all areas of society and all parts of the decision-making processes, from agenda setting to implementation, monitoring and evaluation through youth-friendly and accessible mechanisms and structures, ensuring that policies respond to the needs of young people."[13]

The commitment to intergenerational equity through local youth participation is also expressed in Agenda 21, a non binding action plan for sustainable development developed in 1992, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit, which laid the foundations for the Kyoto and Paris Agreements. Member states agreed that "youth [...] participate actively in all relevant levels of decision-making processes because it affects their lives today and has implications for their futures." Youth have not only a right to participate, but they offer "intellectual contributions, [...] ability to mobilise support, [and] they bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account."[14]

Building off this foundation, 15 member states (including Spain, Slovenia, Sweden, Monaco, and Luxemburg) at the 25th Conference of Parties (COP 25) signed the Declaration on Children, Youth, and Climate Action, which stated several proposals to promote intergenerational equity, including pledges to

- ➔ Strengthen the capacity of children and young people on climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.
- ➔ Enhance the meaningful participation of children and youth in climate change processes.
- ➔ Adopt institutional and administrative measures, as well as partnerships to actively pursue the above objectives.[15]

Youth Participation in Urban Climate Governance

European youth are taking up a variety of approaches to expand their participation in urban climate governance. Amongst the pathways to participate in climate decision making in local and regional government,[16] youth are engaging in

- ➔ **Representative Democracy** - a form of governance where elected

12 *European Economic and Social Committee (2020), Own-initiative opinion Ref: NAT/778-EESC-2020 Towards structured youth engagement on climate and sustainability in the EU decision-making process, 20 February 2020*

13 *European Council (2018), Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027, Brussels, 18 December 2018*

14 *United Nations Sustainable Development (1992), Rio 21, 14 June 1992*

15 *UNICEF (2019), Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action, 9 December 2019*

16 *For more information on forms of youth participation in local and regional democracies see Gretschel, A.; Levamo, T., Kiilakoski, T., Laine, S., Mäntylä, N., Raisio, H. (2014), Youth Participation Good Practices in Different Forms of Regional and Local Democracy, Helsinki, Finnish Youth Research Society*

politicians or office holders must renew their position in elections. Youth may run for office, work with candidates to mobilize young voters, and organize to lower the voting age in local elections.

- **Formal Youth Participatory Structures** - permanent participatory structures exclusive to children and youth, which allow young people to express themselves through representatives who deliberate issues and advise public authorities. Common examples include youth and children's councils, parliaments, and boards, such as the Sønderborg Youth Climate Council (DK) and Bremerhaven Youth Climate Council (DE).
- **Deliberative Democracy** - a process by which youth participate in public deliberation, debate, and consideration prior to actual decision-making. Deliberative democracy processes may be designed for exclusive youth participation or accessible to the entire population (including youth). Examples of youth inclusion in deliberative climate governance include Molina de Seguera Youth Participatory Budgeting for climate change (ES) and Dutch regional energy strategies planning (NL).
- **Activism and Protest**[17] - agonistic models of democracy, independent from public authorities and the state, in which youth strive to influence decision making through participating and organizing sit-ins, popular education programs, mass demonstration, and other activism activities, such as the successful effort by youth activists to establish the citizens assembly, the Krakow Climate Panel (PL).
- **Co-management/Co-Production Structures** - decision making bodies composed of young people and adults working collaboratively to run an institution or project, such as the Manchester Climate Change Partnership (UK) and the Göttingen Climate Advisory Board (DE).
- **Participatory Spaces** - though not a form, method, or process of participation in itself, participatory spaces make way for dialogue and reflection where young people learn their voice, build confidence, develop expertise, and build support amongst a community of peers. They foster enabling environments and settings which encourage youth participation in the longer term. Examples of these spaces, critical to facilitating youth participation in urban climate governance include Eltville Child Friendly City/Your City for Future (DE), youth owned renewable energy cooperative Allons en Vent (BE), and Platz Project Hannover (DE).

17 *For additional guidance, see Partispace: Spaces and Style of Participation (2018), European Policy Brief: Addressing Conflicts as Moments of Participation, June 2018*

European youth are just beginning to see the impact of their participation in urban climate governance, but are eager to continue in this sphere. They celebrate the ways in which they have been able to build alliances and exchange amongst their peers, accelerate local carbon reduction goals, establish and reinforce youth as legitimate political actors, and destabilize adultist norms in pedagogy and participation. They cite as critical to their early successes, the following enabling factors

- ➔ A culture of youth participation/civic engagement amongst institutional and political actors.
- ➔ Funding to support and reward youth engagement.
- ➔ Encouragement and support for youth to lead and design initiatives and proposals.
- ➔ Approaches which prioritize proposals and projects with immediately visible impact.[18]

Accordingly, critical challenges to this progress occur when adult institutions/decision makers undervalue youth participation and when they pre-define goals of youth projects and proposals. Youth also noted the significant challenge of engaging youth of diverse backgrounds--particularly those from low-wealth families and migrant backgrounds who may require more targeted engagement.[19]

Youth leaders and urbanists noted the corona crisis both as an opportunity and threat. The pandemic allowed some youth organizations to reallocate money, previously directed to cover expenses related to in-person events, to making stipends available to compensate for volunteer labor. However, few institutions had the adaptive capacity to reorganize work plans or develop new strategies appropriate to the constraints presented by the pandemic.[20]

Despite these challenges, there are a number of ways whereby European youth can build leadership in urban climate governance. Local government and institutional actors, key facilitators in urban climate governance, can receive training on meaningful youth engagement and its application in their work, with emphasis on how to continue intergenerational engagement even amidst conflict. Youth and institutional actors can build peer to peer sharing networks to develop and refine youth intergenerational governance structures and capacity building tools. Additionally, funders (both public and nonprofit sectors) can allocate funds to support youth groups and youth workers in engagement activities, rather than relying solely on voluntary models.

18 *Author interviews with European youth, urban development professionals, and youth organizations focused on climate/environment (January-June 2021)*

19 *Author interviews with European youth, urban development professionals, and youth organizations focused on climate/environment (January-June 2021)*

20 *Author interviews with European youth, urban development professionals, and youth organizations focused on climate/environment (January-June 2021)*

Contribution #6

Niccolò Milanese, ***European Alternatives and Institute of Human Sciences Vienna***

THE RETURN OF GEOPOLITICS AND THE YOUTH CLIMATE MOVEMENT : WHAT IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUTH WORK?

If geopolitics is the study of the way natural and human geography influence international relations, then climate change as an issue would seem to be a geopolitical issue par excellence. It is therefore perhaps surprising that the geopolitical aspects of climate change have only recently been thematized as such in a popular way in the public sphere. There are perhaps three factors at play:

- In the western world, and in particular in its foreign affairs establishments, 'geopolitics' has been highly marked by cold-war bipolarism. Chinese and European strategic interventions on the global stage during the Trump years, followed by the election of Biden, have led to a situation of clear geopolitical rivalry for climate leadership, not unrelated to questions of global leadership and the shape of the international architecture more generally.
- From the 1970s when climate science started to reveal the potentially catastrophic implications of a changing climate until recently (perhaps as recently as the Paris COP21 agreements in 2015), concern with climate change has been seen as the preserve of scientists and climate activists, neither of which have a place in traditional theories of international relations as relations between states. Put another way, as a recent publication of the Wilson centre entitled declaratively 'Foreign policy is Climate policy', 'For too long foreign policy makers have largely left climate issues to energy and environment ministers'.[1]

In this evolving political landscape, the new youth climate movements emerged in the post-2015 moment, associated above all from 2018 with Greta Thunberg, climate school strikes and the Fridays for Future movement. With a less directly thematized 'youth' dimension and an older and more intergenerational participation, the direct action associated with Extinction Rebellion has also come to play an important role and has wide awareness amongst Western youth in adolescence onwards. Centered in Europe, both movements have an impressively global reach, on an unprecedented scale (and in the case of Fridays for Future with unprecedently young participants), perhaps most adequately comparable to the student movements of 1968. Both movements are global in their call to action, but also position themselves with regards to a global political stage by calling on global political leaders to act to address climate change, most notably timing their actions

1 *https://climate-diplomacy.org/magazine/cooperation/21st-century-diplomacy-foreign-policy-climate-policy*

to coincide or influence global meetings of leaders, and in Fridays for Future's case basing their action on the upholding of the 2015 Paris agreements.

Through both the act of school strikes themselves and the discourse of the strikers, the Fridays for Future movement has consistently insisted that

a) Adults are failing children and future generations (a powerful moral claim)
b) It is not the responsibility of the Fridays for Future movement itself to propose solutions (a classic claim of all protest movements)
c) Politicians and businesses should listen to the scientific consensus and act accordingly (an epistemic demand, common for climate activists, rare amongst other activists in the West until recently – although in the global south and in the East of Europe it may have been heard more frequently in different domains over the past decades)[2]

If Extinction Rebellion has more the character of an insurrectionist avant-garde, and is more radical in its actions than Fridays for Future, its public demands are very similar: a demand for politicians to tell the truth about climate change and the risks it poses, a demand that politicians act accordingly, and a demand that politics works differently in a more inclusive and horizontal fashion (through citizens assemblies). Both Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion thereby make some (rather modest) claim for systemic change in the international political architecture without this being the core of their claims, and place a much greater emphasis on the responsibility of world leaders to act, without confidence that they will.

To the extent that neither movement takes sides in geopolitical rivalry, nor makes proposals for what ought to be done, it could be said that neither engages in geopolitics directly. But looking at a recent newsletter of Fridays For Future which prepares the narrative for the most recent global strikes on 24th September 2021, entitled 'Uproot the system' it is notable the degree to which geopolitical concerns enter. The contents of the newsletter include: Vaccine Injustice, Climate Refugees, Indigenous Groups, Varying Climate Responsibilities, Climate Reparations, Social Impacts on Minority groups.[3] What this and other evidence suggests is that the youth climate movement is increasingly pulled to relate to issues which have geopolitical aspects in the sense that they involve taking sides in political disputes with global dimensions (even if those sides do not correspond with national rivalry). This plausibly has at least three reasons:

- The all-encompassing nature of climate change as an issue leads it to be related to many other phenomena
- As the disruptive effects of climate change become ever more obvious, and adaptation becomes a pressing priority, the trade-offs involved and winners and losers will be inescapable

2 *Compare the analysis of Greta Thunberg's speeches in Holmberg, A. and Alvinius, A (2020) 'Children's protest in relation to the climate emergency: a qualitative study on a new form of resistance promoting political and social change' Childhood 27(1) 78:92*

3 *See https://fridaysforfuture.org/newsletter/edition-no-5-uproot-the-system/*

- The Fridays for Future movement has become an actor on the world stage (also as the subject of political criticism), with the risks of instrumentalization and personalization which this brings

In order to bring out some of the ways that the youth climate movement emerging after 2015 has interacted with other issues with a geopolitical character, I will consider 3 examples. For each, an objective will also be to show the potential for disagreement inside the movement, and an overall objective will be to motivate 3 recommendations for youth workers.

1. Amazon rainforest fires

The fires in the Amazon rainforest in 2019 and 2020 were unprecedented in scale and duration, and attracted widespread global concern and condemnation of Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro. These episodes touched on several issues of longstanding concern in the climate movement: the crucial role of the Amazon rainforest as the 'lungs of the planet', as home and source of biodiversity, and the land rights of indigenous peoples. Two further issues specific to the wider context of 2019 and 2020 were added: the role of Bolsonaro as a leader of a country with global influence both for his 'illiberal' views and practices, and for his denial of climate change as a legitimate concern; and the Covid-19 pandemic, which had particularly disastrous implications in the Amazon.

In addition to reacting in many other ways through protest slogans, political speeches and social media, Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion produced videos which touch on the Brazilian wildfires, within several months of each other, both produced with an NGO called Amazon Watch. The extinction rebellion video 'Guardians of Life' featured with world-renounced actors such as Joaquin Phoenix and Q'orianka Kilcher (who notably played roles of Pocahontas and Princess Ka'iulani of Haiti resisting American colonisation).[4] The scene is of a modern medical operating theatre, where doctors are trying unsuccessfully to resuscitate a patient with defibrillator. One doctor (played by Q'orianka Kilcher) continues to attempt to resuscitate the patient using a simple CPR technique. The 'patient' is revealed to be planet earth, with megafires engulfing the Amazon and in Australia. A heartbeat returns, and the doctor removes her surgical mask, showing traditional indigenous tatoos across her cheeks. The film closes with the question 'What next?' and 'Act now' and the Extinction Rebellion logo

The Fridays for Future video, posted online in May 2020, features various young people addressing the camera.[5] After several voices explain where Manaus is in the Amazon rainforest, and the ecological diversity and ecological importance of the rainforest, the voices switch to declaring 'We are dying!', explaining that Manaus is the epicenter of Covid-19 in Brazil, with a health system that cannot cope, with 'migrants' coming to Manaus for treatment. 'The traditional people of the Amazon need your help', says a Brazilian

4 *Can be viewed here on youtube 'Joaquin Phoenix & Extinction Rebellion partner on 'Guardians of Life' film': https://youtu.be/qpjw9cNxwew*

5 *Amazon Watch facebook page posten on 17th May 2020 https://fb.watch/8w2g7MDRuH/*

activist, and then Greta Thunberg immediately follows up with 'The Amazon Rainforest Needs your Help!' and a further Brazilan activist 'Our Future Needs Your Help'. The video then moves to appeals to other countries with resources, and specifically the 'governments and parliaments of other countries watching this' to provide medical assistance, and an indefinite call to everyone to help in even the smallest of ways.

Both films relate the megafires to the sustainability of the earth itself, but also bring to the front the indigenous people, and both relate the climate issue to health. Where the Fridays for Future video is apparently targeted to political decision-makers, the call to action of the Extinction Rebellion video is entirely open in its addressee and deliberately vague in its message. In both is a failure of care, but the responsibility is very different: Fridays for Future say a 'massacre is going to happen' and puts responsibility on 'invaders' and the federal government; the Extinction Rebellion video suggests a failure or inefficacy amongst other things of modern medicine and technology. Comparing the videos reveals potential tensions in the youth climate movement in terms of who to call to action, who to blame, and what science, technology and knowledge is of value in finding solutions.

Climate and non-climate refugees

In as much as the youth climate movement can be seen to have started following 2015 and the Paris climate agreements, and have been incubated in Europe and to some extent in the USA, the wider political context of 'migration crisis' was very present. As the Fridays for Future movement spread from Greta Thunberg's strikes in summer 2018 to a Europe-wide and ultimately global movement, it often came into contact with Refugee welcome campaigns and activists which had started earlier. In numerous instances, particularly in Germany, the facebook logos of Fridays for Future local groups mix the Fridays for Future logo with the Refugee welcome logo (see Erfurt, Leipzig, Kaiserslautern facebook group, but also Venezia facebook group). From 2015 climate groups such as 350.org (which was established in 2007, and very quickly supported and partnered with Fridays for Future around global strikes) were drawing attention to the importance of climate activists supporting refugee rights by pointing out that climate change will lead to climate refugees in the future.[6] There was notable public debate about whether Syrian refugees could be understood as climate refugees, on the basis that severe drought contributed to the 2011 uprisings.

Fridays for Future has called for the 1951 refugee convention to be updated to recognize a right to climate refuge. Extinction Rebellion has gone a step further in recognizing that 'throughout human history climate an (the lack of) resources has prompted the majority of all mass movements of people'.[7] Through public events with slogans like 'Climate Justice is Migrant Justice' it has contested the militarization of borders and the rise of racist attitudes.

6 *See 'why (we as) climate activists stand with refugees', Nicolo Wojewoda, 11/9/2015 https://350.org/why-we-as-climate-activists-stand-with-refugees/*

7 *See https://extinctionrebellion.uk/event/climate-justice-is-migrant-justice/*

Debates over who should have the right to move and to stay, under what conditions and where are fraught areas of political disagreement, and it seems plausible that as climate breakdown leads to displacement inside the youth climate there will be disagreements about this, as well as disagreements about the status of economic migrants and refugees with non-climate related claims to asylum. Furthermore, the radical demands for removing borders altogether, such as those of the No Border movement which has had some interaction with the climate movement, challenges the architecture of the state system and modern conceptions of citizenship altogether, a much more radical critique than the frustration and calls for citizens assemblies that Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion usually include in their calls for systemic change.

Weapons and war

It is notable that in the discourse of Greta Thunberg and Fridays for Future, the 'military-industrial complex' is missing as a culprit for pollution or inaction: blame is put systematically on political leaders and businesses. This is a sign of a very different political context to the youth movements of 1968, and also to the 1970s when Greenpeace was launched, at first with a focus on nuclear weapons and only subsequently with an increasing focus on climate change. But over 2021 war and the weapons industry has become a theme. Great Thunberg expressed concern over the fate of young people in Afghanistan in the context of the withdrawal of American led invasion and Taliban victory in August 2021. Howey Ou, an 18 year old Chinese girl who has been called 'China's Greta Thunberg', was excluded from school in Guilin for her lone school strikes, and has moved into exile in Europe, appeared at a protest camp outside the DSEI arms fair in London in September 2021.[8] Her discourse both in public speeches to the movement attempting to shut down the arms fair, and on social media, explicitly links climate crisis to the arms trade, and the arms trade to the suppression of young people and their political expression. A Chinese climate activist making these points at a moment of rising geopolitical tension in the Indo-Pacific region (at the same time an international row about nuclear submarine deals and alliances irrupted between the USA, Europe and Australia, with China being the threat) portends a near future in which military conflict and climate change are more explicitly interlinked, and young people may be forced either to take sides in such a conflict or take sides against all military conflict.

Lessons for Youth Workers

The encounters of the youth climate movement with geopolitical issues I have briefly explored have the character of the youth movement on the one hand reacting to contemporary events, and on the other hand intersecting with other preexisting movements in society. As climate change becomes an ever more central part of political debate domestically and internationally, it seems safe to suppose the youth climate movement will come

8 *See her instagram page posts of 14th September 2021 https://www.instagram.com/p/CTzpNCXtYV-/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link*

under more tension. Youth workers wanting to support the movement and its members, might consider the following:

1. Accompany the current generation of youth strikers

The current generation of youth strikers have accompanied what appears to be a historic breakthrough of climate concerns to the top of the political agenda on a global level, and where the political debate about climate change has moved dramatically from an argument about whether climate change exists and when and in what ways it is a threat, to widespread acceptance that it exists and is a present danger, with real winners and losers now. As the present generation moves further towards adulthood, it will need support to move from a position of political innocence, to a position of political engagement in which taking sides in geopolitical conflicts may be unavoidable, with all the threats to the unity of the movement and its moral purity that may bring. This will potentially require providing information and education on different aspects of the intersection of climate change with geopolitical issues, but also mentorship and psychological support entering into a conflictual political space.

2. Keep a safe space of innocence for the youngest

The Fridays for Future movement is unprecedented in the degree to which it has mobilized very young children. This has been the moral force of the movement because it is able to credibly claim that as children they have had no role in climate change, that they represent the future and that they are politically disenfranchised. If climate change becomes increasingly caught up with other political issues, and polarised geopolitical conflict in particular, there is a danger this space of innocence and moral force will be compromised. Youth workers should try to keep a protected space for the youngest to safely explore and express their appreciation of the preciousness and fragility of nature, which appears to be one of the first sentiments about the world young children are able to appreciate.

3. Let the world in and be open to reconceptualisation

What we identify as the youth climate movement is global in scope but led by the West. This leadership, which also is a conceptual leadership in how the issues are framed, is likely to be ever more contested, both internally in Western societies and as youth in other countries find voice and international attention. Youth workers and the resources they can bring to the youth movements have a role in establishing spaces of intercultural dialogue around climate change as rapidly as possible, building appreciation that climate change has different effects, different interactions with different parts of life, and can even be understood according to different epistemologies in different parts of the world, whilst attempting to reinforce unity and consensus.

Contribution #7

Dr Maria Pisani, ***Youth & Community Studies - Faculty for Social Wellbeing, University of Malta***

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE WITH SOPHIA AND GAIA: DECENTERING YOUTH IN YOUTH WORK.

Keen et al (2018) call on youth workers to acknowledge our role in the destruction of the planet we call home, and to step up, to take responsibility and respond to the ecological crisis. We are living in the Anthropocene[1], a geological epoch wherein the human species is a geomorphic force impacting climate change, and geology and the Earths ecosystems. The way of life we have chosen is not sustainable, our planet is dying, and humanity will die too; 'we' are staring in the face of the sixth extinction (Kolbert, 2014).

Acknowledging the violence some of us have wrought on this planet (since the wealth, and the effects of destruction are not shared, it seems hardly right to share the blame or responsibility) invites us to ask how youth work might respond relationally, politically, and with ethical accountability?

Taking responsibility as youth workers requires critical reflection and raising uncomfortable questions. I'll start with a simple question: when we say 'environment, climate change and sustainable development concerns all of us'…who is this 'us'? When we refer to 'our' planet, who are we including/excluding? And when we say 'we' need to do something, well, who are 'we'? To be sure, I don't have the answers to these questions and I will not be attempting to answer them in this presentation. However, in order to begin to explore some of these issues, I'll start by introducing Gaia. Drawing on Latour (2018), I'd like to think about and understand Gaia as the Earth, as a 'totality of living beings and materials that were made together, that cannot live apart, and from which humans can't extract themselves' (Latour, 2018).

A tale of two sophias, a burning planet, refugees and transcending borders: how I got here.

> *"Alice: Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?*
> *The Cheshire Cat: That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.*
> *Alice: I don't much care where.*
> *The Cheshire Cat: Then it doesn't much matter which way you go.*
> *Alice: ...So long as I get somewhere.*
> *The Cheshire Cat: Oh, you're sure to do that, if only you walk long enough."*

My green credentials are limited, and this will be my first written piece that includes the terms 'climate change', 'Anthropocene' and 'sixth extinction'. For the past twenty years, my youth work practice and academic work have largely engaged with issues

1 *For the purpose of this presentation I will be adopting this term, cognizant of its many limitations (see for example Haraway, 2016), to draw attention to the destructive legacy of the Human – the Anthropos – at the centre of the Enlightenment and how it is entangled with, and responsible for the destruction of the planet .*

related to forced migration and young refugees. It is a context wrought with racism, ugly violence, death, love, life and hope. So why am I here, writing about environmental issues?

Operation Sophia was an EU military operation set up in 2015 in response to the political crisis that continues to claim the lives of thousands of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea. The operation is named after a baby girl born on one of the military vessels, Sophia. Her mother was denied the right to travel in a legal, safe and dignified way, this is how Sophia, an illegalized baby was born at sea. In November of 2018, another Sophia, was the guest of honour at a conference in Malta. This Sophia was a youthful, white cyborg. During the conference, discussion revolved around whether Sofia and other Robots with artificial intelligence, are able to understand their legal rights and responsibilities as citizens. Sophia, who has already been granted citizenship in Saudi Arabia, travelled to Malta in a plane – baby Sophia was denied this opportunity.

In 2019, I visited Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. I was working on a project with young people who have lived in the camp all of their lives – they are not allowed to leave Kakuma, their world extends to the borders of the camp. As I sat on the field that doubled as a runway, I flipped through my phone. European leaders were expressing anger and frustration, Mr. Macron tweeted: "Our house is burning. Literally. The Amazon rain forest - the lungs which produces 20% of our planet's oxygen - is on fire. It is an international crisis" (The New York Times, 2019). The borders imposed on refugees perish in the fires of the amazon: Gaia doesn't respect national borders.

> *"I wonder if I've been changed in the night. Let me think. Was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is 'Who in the world am I?' Ah, that's the great puzzle!"*

If I can pinpoint a moment in my life that marked such an utter sense of despair, but also a moment of realization, it was on that runway. Refugees, forced migration, poverty and grotesque inequalities and injustice, technology, globalization, climate change and environmental destruction are intrinsically linked. This moment of clarity soon morphed into frustration: the vocabulary, concepts and theoretical paradigms on which I have depended to make sense of the world and inform my youth work practice, fell short in explaining and addressing the painful challenges we face at this time. I'd like to suggest that if youth work is to respond to the challenges of the Anthropocene, we need to imagine and work towards a planet where 'we' can co-exist, thrive even – and this necessarily demands a radical shift, a youth work praxis that must remain faithful to its critical roots, but that is ready to transcend disciplinary borders, to explore new ideas, new theories and methodologies, and to play with new ideas.

Down the rabbit hole

> *"Alice: Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?*
> *The Cheshire Cat: That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.*

Alice: I don't much care where.
The Cheshire Cat: Then it doesn't much matter which way you go.
Alice: ...So long as I get somewhere.
The Cheshire Cat: Oh, you're sure to do that, if only you walk long enough."

Perhaps it is time to move beyond the anthropocentric paradigm that has characterized youth work theory and the theories that have inspired youth work thinking. The "big picture" perspective that Keen et al (2018) call for in youth work demands new theoretical paradigms, a radicalism that transcends human relations and 'society'. We need a new relational praxis that decentres the human, whilst also embracing human-non-human relationships and acknowledging our interdependence. My journey down the rabbit hole led me to new materialism (see for example Barad, 2007, Braidotti, 2019) and new ways of understanding how the materiality of my body is related to, entwined with the material world, I am transformed as I transform:

To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence. Existence is not an individual affair. Individuals do not preexist their interactions; rather, individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating (Barad, 2007).

How might these new ways of thinking about the world and our intra-action in the world inform our understanding of young people's lives as autonomous individuals? What are the implications for how we understand our role in climate change and environmental destruction? It dawns on me today that there is a certain arrogance that comes with the very notion that we might understand the lives of young people, and their relationships with and in the world, by limiting our theories to the study of society and social relationships. It is such hegemonic anthropocentric ideas that have fed into the unquestioned belief that the planet is simply a resource to be used and abused by 'Man' (but not humanity, for not all of our species have been considered completely Human). And so, I would argue that understanding the effects – and the affects- of the 'H'uman-made ecological and environmental crisis requires much more than an add and stir approach. It means that before we even think about developing youth work curricula, we need to be asking questions about who 'we' are, what 'we' are becoming, what got us here, and what new ideas, values and ways of thinking we need to explore in order to inform youth work praxis. It means thinking about youth work and young peoples' relationship with, in and as a part of the planet we share. Teaching about environmental awareness simply isn't up to the task, it's not enough. At this historical and situated conjuncture that is the Anthropocene, we need to transcend disciplinary boundaries and critically engage with new ideas, new concepts, new approaches and new theories that need to become intrinsic to youth work theory and practice. This is a bold move. It requires moving outside of our comfort zone, because our comfort zone – the enlightenment legacy that places the ideal of 'Man', a very particular Human at the centre - has contributed to the mess that we find ourselves in (Braidotti,2019). Seal (2014), reflecting the dominant idea in youth work theory, argues that that youth work remains 'primarily concerned with people' (2). Should it though?

I'd like to suggest that a Youth work praxis that responds to the challenges of the anthropene requires a 'radical respositioning' of the young person, whilst also thinking through some of the themes, such as autonomy and in/inter/dependance that frame and inform youth work practice. This radical move demands two shifts, the first is a step away from the hierarchal relations that contine to privilege some 'men' over others, more than evident in the disproportional impact of climate change on the poorer countries of the world. The second is to confront the prevailing notion of human exceptionalism, thereby engaging issues such as climate change, environmental degradation, capitalism and globalization in all of its entangled complexity. By way of example, challenging and building on the work of Davies (2015) a Youth Work Manifesto For Our Times would need to engage with and understand the ongoing effects of the 'H'uman-made ecological crisis and reflect before we 'proactively seek to tip balances of power' in favour of young people (op.cit:100). This is not to say that we no longer consider the young person, rather, our practice might be guided by a politics of location, advancing multiple, situated perspectives that includes the nonhuman, the species we share this planet with. I'm asking you to consider a critical posthuman youth work practice, that recognizes the particularity and value of every individual human being, while simultaneously dislodging our species from the centre.

> *"But I don't want to go among mad people," Alice remarked.*
> *"Oh, you can't help that," said the Cat: "we're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad."*
> *"How do you know I'm mad?" said Alice.*
> *"You must be," said the Cat, "or you wouldn't have come here."*

If 'we' face an existential threat, then perhaps it is time to really reflect on the meaning of existence, life and death, of knowledge and science, of our values and the words that we use. Youth work, as an 'exercise in moral philosophy' (Young, 1999:2) can provide the space, opportunity and skills for young people to question in an affirmative way, to think about their relationships with other humans and nonhumans, to explore the ethical issues and decisions that need to be taken, and to imagine new possibilities and opportunities (see also Keen et al, 2018) Let us invite another Sophia into this madness, Philo-Sophia, embracing a love for wisdom. It is about staying with the trouble (Haraway, 2016) and sticking with hope: for hope is a political act. This requires courage, humility, creativity, love and a leap of faith…take a leap down that rabbit hole, Sophia and Gaia are in it with you and along for the ride…

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Contribution #8

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KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE OFFENBURG TALKS: "ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – HOW GREEN IS YOUTH WORK?"

Can we build a common vision for the youth sector in Europe in addressing climate related challenges? Academics, civic society organisations, national youth councils and government representatives offered multiple perspectives in addressing this topic during the two-day talks hosted in Offenburg.

The main insights can be summarized under 7 main areas.

1. Diversity of Voices and Models of Youth Participation

"Not all youth participation processes were made equal."

We are working within a policy environment which often has technocratically-driven decision making, which does not always meaningfully engage its stakeholders in climate governance, opting instead for "youth washing". Examples can include: offering a one-off consultation with no follow-up; inviting a young person to a meeting to merely observe; or even enabling national Youth Parliament and giving it only a powerless, symbolic role while it is presented as a successful and participation-enabling tool. Overall, meaningful participation goes beyond consultations, and should include agenda setting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and other in-depth ways to engage with the young people on issues that matter to them.

Another challenge is that policy makers are happy for young people to engage, but only in a manner they see fit. Whereas we need an expanded conceptual framework on the forms of participation, including youth dissent.

We also need more research on how different models of participation (i.e. youth protests) affect young people and society – including personal growth, awareness raising, motivation on active citizenship. It could be argued that young people are increasingly less committed to organisational contexts, are less institutional, and more political (Hummel 2021), some even being labeled as part of "unsystematic guerilla war". However, we know that alternative forms of participation came out, because the formal one was not working. We should support a diversity of actors, a plurality of voices through inclusive structures and capacity building, including more focus to support multiplier trainings (i.e. eco-trainings for trainers). Recognising that young people may choose different models of participation, offline or online; at a protest, youth council or voting ballot.

Also, I'd note a recommendation to go beyond focus on youth councils, and not necessarily privileged organised youth groups versus young people not active/engaged in formal structures.

We need to embrace and be open to different ways of collaboration, not necessarily included in formal structures. For example, Fridays4Future may not be open to becoming members of organised youth or adult organisations, but are open to communicating and cooperating. So we need to embrace and be open to different ways of collaboration, not necessarily included in formal structures.

There's also the need to Include more citizens in democratic cultural structures altogether. Sometimes people are not aware of the existing avenues of participation, be it youth or adults. One of the things noted is the urge of young people to see their ideas put into practice, and the importance of feedback mechanisms altogether.

2. Participation in policy and decision making: decision makers: effective allies of young people in addressing the climate crisis (?)

> *"The intergenerational aspect of climate and sustainable development policies and implementation mechanisms needs to be reflected in strong meaningful youth engagement at all stages of EU decision-making processes."*
> European Economic and Social Committee

Climate change has not become a universally adopted priority within Youth Work in Europe. It is in a transitory period with a different pace of development. There are divisions within the policy maker community – some strongly recognise the role of youth work in addressing climate change, some are not yet completely "sold" on the urgency and the "necessity of including climate related topics in youth work.

The EU and the Council of Europe have not alway been very quick to react to the issue of climate change either, but they have been catching up. Although climate still occupies a marginal role in the EU Youth strategy and does not reflect the clearly articulated wishes of the youth climate strike movement for wider structural change, it is still increasingly included in the Erasmus+ programme and even the European Climate Pact, which gave credit to youth climate movement for capturing the world's attention and shaping the discussions on climate change.

Wish for the future: To move from "hesitant ambivalence" to determined Green youth work and youth policy strategy.

When it comes to the political arena, one of the concerns to be addressed is the politics of fear, where people are increasingly aware of the situation, but can be manipulated by fear (i.e. of job losses) and cost as well as inconvenience. However, we can see a U-turn is possible: i.e. Ireland, where litigation on inadequate climate policy led to a Road Map to Carbon Neutrality. Notably, with this new Act, Ireland is from now on a legally binding path to net-zero emission for no later than 2050, and a 51% reduction in emission by the end of this decade.

3. Ensuring Diversity & Accessibility of youth participation in climate governance

Policy creation is missing a lot of people when we rely solely on volunteer labour since it

limits accessibility of people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Also, more proactive efforts are needed to reach out to marginalized youth groups, which otherwise may feel that they are not welcome.

4. The power of Going Local

Cities can play an increasingly larger role in climate mitigation and a significant amount of impact can be achieved on a local level. Also, climate marches often voice dissatisfaction for the states or United Nations, the EU and other international bodies. Yet we know that the number of young people that can attend international Climate Summits is also limited. However, a lot can be done to influence climate at a local level, which can be highly empowering for young people.

Further, we speak and hear a lot about the cities within the framework of "best case practices", which of course can be inspiring and help exchange knowledge. At the same time, there are many cities where little effort is made to address climate change or even worse – where the policies are going backwards. This has created an interest to learn why and how we have these distinct differences and how they could be influenced for the better.

5. Open questions: Competence Development

In promoting awareness of global and interconnected social issues, some would argue that it is important to mainstream competence development and adapt the language used to be more "friendly". For example, shifting from Global Development Education to the concept of Global Youth Work to relate better to the experience of the youth workers. In addition, there is a need to pay more attention to multiplier trainings on competence development for youth workers and activists in general; of course, ensuring that it is voluntary and does not overburden them.

6. Intersectionality, Cross-sectoral cooperation & Geopolitical World

We have heard how public participation is central to the success of a high quality built environment. Youth work engaging in already existing structures, urban planning for instance, has spin-off effects such as strengthening local democracy, managing conflicting interests, social cohesion, etc.

It was also noted how environmental concerns are linked with Peace concerns, and how climate movements try to address the geopolitical dimension; and the importance to reach beyond and include people, youth and adults, who have been mobilised around other social issues.

7. Reinventing our Concepts & Perceptions: moving towards a system change ?

The effects of climate change are unequal across the planet, which is one of the several reasons why we should be open to reconceptualisation of what climate change is. This includes being sensitive and aware of the fact that is currently conceptualized by the Global North. Furthermore, the climate crisis is a symptom of an unsustainable economic and political system, which is also at the core of other social issues in our society. To reach

climate justice, there is a need to include social justice elements and go beyond sole focus on environmental issues.

There are also more philosophical questions about ethics and the relations humans have with the planet. We see how in the current neoliberal order, exported and often imposed on the world by the West and Western-backed institutions, is not sustainable. This individualist view relies on exploitation of animals, the planet and those less privileged to be able to sustain our economies. One could argue that if the current generations continue to see animals and the environment as an exploitable source at any cost, we will not be able to achieve cohesion with the planet.

The European tradition could learn from the indigenous cultures, many of which have done a better job at living in harmony with nature, and rethink and re-form its modus operandi. An intergenerational and interdisciplinary discussion is a great place to start.

Contribution #9

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REPORT AND REFLECTIONS

MONDAY, 11TH OF OCTOBER

To start this reflection on the first day of the 4th Offenburg Talks, I tried to remember my half a century carrier as a protest walker. Beginning as a teenager against Vietnam, with my friends for more democracy in schools and education, as a young man resisting nuclear energy, as a young father against the missiles, for more equality, opposing racism. As a grandfather for a climate change. From this personal perspective, being a rapporteur of the Offenburg Talks on climate change, one has to ask some questions…

Exactly these questions and even some answers arose in the Monday interventions. But the lessons learned out of these presentations were doubtful, sometimes contradictory, sometimes they sounded convincing or disparate in the same introduction.

In an attempt to reflect on them, I tried to reduce them to simple questions and to ask the public for a yes or a no.

1. Is history repeating? Are the actions on climate change a variation on previous themes like racism, tolerance, shrinking civic space, solidarity etc.? Yes… we see and feel similar phenomenon's, like indignation, fear, anger and a clear sense of urgency. Especially young people seem engaged, with enthusiasm an endurance. With good arguments, worldwide. But also no, because the climate cause seems more strongly based on overwhelming scientific evidence, more global than ever before and with a stubbornness that amazes (and enjoys). We may and cannot forget that is always a new generation who's taking the lead. For them, those activating is new to discover and to give it a contemporary content and form.

2. Do these actions have any positive impact, are they speeding up a radical solution? No… the introductions of Lasse Sirula and Teresa Martin/Alonso Escamilla did not give any evidence for such a conclusion. But yes, the efforts of the Irish Youth Council give proof of an increasing participation and an effective activation. Also the witnesses in the panel offered strong examples of successful practices in different realities. On this behalf, we must answer a key question: who is setting the agenda for young people? What makes them go in to an activated mood? Is there any causality to the roles of the media, social media, scientists… or is it an infection by peers in other countries or cities. Or is it a difficult too intangibly complex of reasons and causes?

3. Is there a special, explicit accountability for youth work? A yes or a no? Also difficult to decide. On the one hand, there is often spoken of youth work as a change agent, also to be used in favour of the climate change. On the other hand: can youth work be reduced to a mean, an instrument to play in favour for some powers,? Or is youth work not predominately autonomous pedagogical system, self-organising? So isn't it the privilege of young people (themselves) to decide if they want to go with the climate change or rest indiffer-

ent or even reluctant for this form of activism? An can a whole category of people (young people) be taken in account for a failing worldwide system? And are the dominant images of protesting young people, very young leaders etc. a true images of what the majority of them really feels?

4. And in relationship to these actions (climate change and previous themes): is there an enemy? Who is causing all these problems? Can we describe and put a finger on the painful spots? No, who is still believing in a global conspiracy of bad people against the wordl? The old communist crocodiles cannot be taken serious anymore… But at same time: what about capitalism in his raw version, only concerned with materialistic profit for the chairholders of the global top enterprises and big money-makers? Is the rejection of radical action for a clean earth not in contradiction to quick profits? Is the brutality of the free market not responsible for the destruction of nature? Earlier, now and later? Aren't politician defenceless to the influence of these so called captains of industry – gossiping in Davos etc.? Are we afraid to draw this conclusions? Why is de enemy question not present and in the focus of all these actions, surveys and solutions? Are the activators not more than a lesson in repressive tolerance, providing a convenient outlet valve, with the cynical reflex: it will blow over. In a few years a new dilemma will conquer the public and political agendas?

5.Concluding question: how do we answer Greta Thunberg's doubts about conferences? Were we this first day involved in blahblahblah… or did we experienced a thrilling day, with more energy to go on in a struggle for a better world. On this question, the audience answered clear and loud: yes, we did not get lost in the blahblah.

TUESDAY 12TH OF OCTOBER

For the reflection on the second day I used the system of translating the presentations in paradoxes. Paradoxes are apparently contradictions, but in fact, it's all of finding a balance between to extremes… knowing that each extreme is not realistic. So, a paradox is not an apory… a unsolvable contradiction.

Paradoxes are used to make an inventory of arguments, doubts and tendencies. A strategy to explore opinions and to put these in a perspective.

1. Do we need a friendly, strategic or rather a radical, angry approach? There is little doubt that actions and activation need strategic thinking and well considered moderation in actions. But how to decide on the balance between acting to kind or to aggressive? The introductions on de Offenburg Talks tend to a choice for patience, ample thinking and reluctancy to radicalism. It seems that the majority of the activists wants to organise dialogue and ongoing communication with the enemy (cf. earlier point: is there an enemy?) Can it be that this choice pleases the counterpart… Captains of industry, even of the most polluting industries and raw capitalism, like to sit a side young activists (filmed with a friendly smile), proving that they really are not the devil in disguise, but openminded and engaged citizens. They even have children themselves! Must this balance be corrected? With a little more aggression? A more stubborn and apert no to sterile dialogue? Like Greta T. communicated with her blahblahblah? So she annoyed many.. but harvested a lot of attention.

2. The Tuesday introductions **gave participation a lot of attention**. Quite right. Although this notion can carry different contents. The context of youth and climate change, demands a clear and well defined meaning. Please, let's be clear – at least – on this. Participation must be approached as a continuum, evolving form taking part (a more consuming relationship) to having part (a co-ownership). In a youth work perspective, the having part prevails. Isn't youth work primarily a process of making part, striving to give young people the status of co-owner? Starting in their own youth work initiative, but hoping on an participatory engagement in the broader society, local and higher? In regard of societal menaces, young people often functions as a target group to be consulted… most of the time by experts (scientists, politicians, civil servants and – self declared – specialists above any critical suspicion). We must leave this approach. Young people are experts, especially in matters of their live, their biotope thus their society. They carry at least equal expertise – although not wrapped up in specialised vocabulary or flashy presentations. Let's not go for less.

3. And what about priorities? The Offenburg Talks earlier choices revealed serious menaces, for society, for young people and youth work: vanishing solidarity, upcoming racism an shrinking civic space. In 2021, the focus was on climate change and climate youth. Which of them is prior to the other. Today, strong voices should plea for climate change, with an extreme sense of urgency and overwhelming scientific proof. But is this not so for the other menaces? And are they not interrelated? Can there be an accurate climate policy without solidarity and racism… and based on civic enthusiasm? How do we have to deal with an abundance of priorities, without losing a focus and not to be drowned in a swamp of serious threats?

4. Global or local? Climate change illustrates the global dimension of an acute problem. No doubts about that. On the other hand, a lot of actions and activated young people emerge in a very local context, close by. And what about the national level? How do we have to understand the value of the nation state, a 19th century creation. It seems that the EU-euphory is turned into a shrinking internationalism (Brexit, deviant Poland, Hungary…). The revival of the nation state seems clear. Where do we put the priority of our energy? Or is this an unnecessary question? It seems, also stated by the introductions, that we have to invest on all levels. But in a youth (work) perspective, local engagement and activism seem absolutely crucial to build up a strong base for more central and international actions.

5. What about young people. Some testimonies, also in the panel of Monday, illustrate the increasing importance of involved and truly activated children… even toddlers. They also feel the sense of urgency. Look at the street actions, the intergenerational presence, surely also the strong commitment of children (primary school). These observations question the wide spread but still very artificial border – especially in an international and European context – between youth (described between 14/15 y. and reaching until 35 y) and children. For some countries (Belgium), there is no gap in the approach of young people. Youth – in this definition – is the whole of growing up people, starting as a baby and ending as an adult (25y?). Breaking up this boundary, enlarges youth to one third of the population and nearly

one third of an average human live. What a relevancy, at the same time a pedagogical and educational reality. And of course, regardless of the definition, there will always be a necessity to describe sub categories (a 14 year old differs a lot from a 25 year old).

6. The introduction from Maria Pisani opened a new approach. She took us for a walk in the jungle of philosophy. She emphasised on **the problematic of the antropo-centred paradigm** that (to) often rules the discourse of climate change (and other issues). She referred to what sometimes is called *antropocene* as a last phase in describing the evolution of the world; also defined as the *capitalocene*. Her plea can be summarized as an obligation for respecting all elements of our biotopes, not only animals but also plants, rivers, landscapes. All aspects – seen as actors - of our physical world deserve the at most radical respect and must treated/seen as co-owners of our world. For Maria Pisani, also youth work with their explicit goals for young people, illustrate the *antropo centrism* and must change radically. Society is completely entangled in his nearly autistic self-exaltation. This introduction excites and opens a lot of thoughts and reflections. In this report I tried to summarise a few.

- Economy and ecology are strongly related (more than semantic) by oikos, the Greek word for house. They both approach our home with similar goals: to keep it on good order. Reality proves that one cannot put them against each other. What is the value of having a good balance of needs (economy) when the environment collapses. And the other way around. Let broaden the oikos to the world as a whole, an interdepended system where we have to combine respect for all elements, both materialistic and mentally;
- Do we have to go back in time and believe the beautiful but phantasy stories like Saint Francis, talking to the birds? Birds and rivers do not talk? If we enlarge our knowledge and science beyond the classical empirical sciences, do we open the door for the wisdom of (often) indigenous communities and cultures? How do we have to interpret the demands of nature? There is surely a tension between our enlightened scientific approach and a culture that works with completely other standards of knowledge. How can we integrate both approaches, with total mutual respect?
- What about the old Marxist slogan "Erst das Fressen und dann die Moral" (first food, than philosophy). The plea against a men-centred view, proposes an inversion of this slogan: first a moral base, needed to build up concrete policies. It sounds logic… if one has food. In cases of extreme poverty and exclusion, the victims are really not in for a previous moral discussion… they will not survive it. Is the approach resisting an antropo centrism not an interesting but for the have not's a quite cruel business?
- Couldn't the plea contra the antropo centrism be seen as a widening of Kant's categorical imperative? A general application of the consequences of human behaviour, also for all elements of our world?
- What comes first: to build an identity (as men, group, community, culture, nation…) as a condition for integration in a more holistic approach… or the

other way around: no identity without a holistic view as common ground. Building an identity means to create a form of apartheid, to draw frontiers: me/we versus him/she/them. This is undeniable. If an holistic view dominates, how can a diversity of identities grow and develop? How do you manage these tension and are they insoluble opposing? Youth work is an example of a pedagogical approach with building an identity in a specific (democratic, playful, respectful…) environment is crucial. Is it fair to categorize (as dr. Maria Pisani did) contemporary youth work as a pure antropo centric practice? Can holism be a synonym for no mono cultural identity?

- In fact, is this preaching against antropo centrism not an unmistakable illustration of antropo centrism? Because no other element of nature is able to reflect on this. Whatever men (antropos) does, it will be always start from a human perspective of conviction. So, a contradictio in terminis?

Dr. Guy Redig
October 2021

Contribution #10

Prof Dr Howard Williamson, ***professor of European Youth Policy, University of South Wales, UK***

HOW 'GREEN' IS YOUTH WORK? FALLACIES, FICTION AND FACTS
REFLECTIONS ON THE YOUTH IN EUROPE OFFENBURG TALKS #4: ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: HOW GREEN IS YOUTH WORK?

Introduction

The Offenburg Talks #4 sought to forge understanding and connections between four, not two (climate and youth work), distinctive but overlapping issues:

- Climate change and justice
- Wider social justice, inclusion, democracy and (perhaps not only human?) rights
- Youth participation
- Youth work (and youth policy)

Fallacies, fiction, and facts

#1 There is no green tradition in youth work

It was suggested that climate issues are relatively new to youth work and not yet a significant feature of youth work practice.

In fact, youth work has a long history of engaging with environmental and 'nature' issues, though of course the interpretation of those commitments, objectives and activities has differed over time. We know that the Boy Scouts of America were strongly influenced by Native American culture, but the Scouting movement more broadly was divided between its militarist and ecological origins. In the UK, 'White Fox'/John Hargrave who led the 'woodcraft' dimension of Scouting for Baden Powell went on to establish the Kindred of the Kibbo Kift (a spin-off of which was the Woodcraft Folk) and then the Green Shirts of England and the social credit movement (arguably an early version of universal basic income). Environmental issues were very prominent in the evolution of those forms of youth work, alongside internationalism and peace.

As far back as the 1980s, youth and community work training was incorporating modules (albeit optional at the time) on topics such as 'global youth work', focusing initially on the social justice that was not emanating from economic inequality and exploitation, but steadily shifting ground and focus to pay greater attention to environmental destruction, renewal and climate injustice. Alan Dearling and Howie Armstrong published a textbook for youth workers in the UK called Youth Action and the Environment, on 1st April, 1997. It was no 'April fool' joke.

#2 Climate justice must shape and frame the policy and practice of youth work

Climate justice and activism is clearly a major aspect of some young people's lives, though by no means all. Indeed, though it is young people in more disadvantaged contexts who suffer most from environmental degradation, they may well be the least likely to engage in protest and action. The Fridays for Future school strikers were predominantly from more privileged backgrounds. Youth work has to recognise this diversity in youth orientation to climate issues just as it has to do so in relation to many other issues. Climate cannot dominate the youth work agenda.

One view of youth work is that it is, essentially, about relationships: with self, others, community, and society. Youth work operates at personal, cultural, and structural levels. It may be both responsive and proactive on a host of issues such as (drawing on a list from my own long period in practice) schooling, jobs, benefits, health, housing, drugs, death, family, leisure, friendships, safety, loneliness, and volunteering. Climate is but one issue amongst many. And, when climate does rear its head, does climate justice come before or after wider youth work concerns with equalities and social justice?

#3 Humanity is embedded and entwined with other living creatures and the natural environment; it does not stand above all else

Youth work must approach young people with an open mind, but not an empty one. The climate crisis is the existential issue of our time. Youth work needs both to cultivate and respond to opportunities to inform and debate with young people about the interdependency of the natural world, including human beings. Just as, long ago, St Francis may have talked to the birds, so, more recently, has Rolling Thunder talked to the berries, with apparent effect and to the astonishment of the 20th century scientist who observed the situation and had no modern explanation for it (see Doug Boyd's Rolling Thunder).

There is a strong case for reconceptualising the world – in the context of floods and fire, letting the world in and reflecting carefully on the impact and experience of current events, thereby possibly moulding new social and political arrangements in response. It just happens to be the 40th anniversary of the women's march on Greenham Common, with the objective of removing American cruise missiles from British soil; some of those women, motivated and influenced by the trilogy of the women's, peace, and green movements, returned to Wales to configure new training and employment initiatives for women in the former coal mining valleys.

Deeper questions come to the surface: what does it mean to be human? When some human beings are denied human rights, it is also important to ask – within and beyond humanity – who has the right to rights? The Kakuma refugee camp may be the place where 'hope comes to die' but, as Studs Terkel (2003) has reported 'hope dies last'. There are hopeful possibilities on the horizon, but it requires and demands the transcending, not the defence, of borders, not just amongst human beings but between them and others in the animal and natural world. Capitalism, this view would assert, is the elephant

in the room, bringing to mind the old, familiar and often cited, Cree proverb spoken by Chief Seattle that:

> *Only when the last tree has died, and the last river has been poisoned, and the last fish has been caught, will we realise that we cannot eat money*

Climate issues cannot be divorced from issues of injustice and inequality, and they are also the opportunity to re-appraise the place of humanity within the circle, not pyramid, of life –within which people are embedded and embodied, not ascendant over it. On that count, youth work is not just about people, as many youth work thinkers posit. It may remain a relational practice, but it is about relationships with the earth and other animals, not just human animals.

Youth work practice could adopt such thinking, starting – for example – with the way different peoples (Native Americans and white settlers and hunters) related to the buffalo (the latter slaughtered millions and just took their hides, the former made use of every part of the animals they killed), or adapted to the seasons.

Such a paradigm shift will invariably command some uncomfortable conversations, not least around the paramountcy of human rights, which themselves have at times been subject to scathing criticism that 'they are not worth the paper they are written on'. The essential message is that yet more tweaking around the edges is pointless; a radical transformation is needed, one which extends rights beyond humanity without annihilating individuality, one that minimises borders and boundaries in recognition of a shared world, and one which embraces inclusivity and pluralism as the anchor for understanding the world. And, to that end, youth work can and arguably should make a significant contribution.

#4 Youth work must stand alongside young people, accompany them, amplify their voice and ensure full and meaningful participation

Approaches to youth participation in youth and community work practice is by no means straightforward and certainly not as simplistic as suggesting youth workers should just stand, march or shout alongside young people (see Corney and Williamson 2020). The history of youth work is littered with questions about 'which side are you on?', particularly when youth workers venture out of isolation and seek to address wider issues such as health, employment, and (both social and criminal) justice. From the local to the global, and all points in between, youth workers have to consider how they navigate and negotiate the space between young people's views and voice, and those of the decision-makers and sometimes those who pay their wages. It is easy to condemn 'adultism', especially in the context of climate issues because of its particular generational context and consequences, but supporting young people's perspectives, aspirations and right to a seat at the table is likely to demand a reflective balance of dutiful, disruptive and sometimes dangerous action by youth workers to achieve those ends.

#5 Youth participation on climate issues is at least disruptive, often dangerous – "mass demonstrations are here to stay"

It is argued that the school climate strikes and the Fridays for Future social movement are way beyond conventional 'dutiful' forms of youth participation. Temporarily, this may have been so, as missing school was condemned (though, sometimes almost simultaneously, also acknowledged as a human right – the right to protest peacefully). But many of the envoys, delegates, activists, and advocates have been brilliantly co-opted and accommodated within contemporary initiatives such as the WHO's Global Youth Mobilisation initiative or the UN's Unlock the Future. There is hardly the radicalism, angst and anger – and noise and violence – that was expressed by young people and indeed by some parts of the youth sector in those other two epochal moments of social change following 1945: les évènements of 1968 and the fall of the Wall in 1989. There are now well-crafted speeches rather than the stones and barricades, and angry tirades, that characterised those moments, and which were incontrovertibly disruptive and dangerous. As Judith Bessant (2021) has written, young people have always been involved in social movements, but the adult world has been immensely skilled in marginalising their demands:

> *In essence, Bessant detects threads of political action taken by young people throughout history, even at times when institutional and intellectual power sought to mute it in one way or another, through paternalism and denials of young people's capacity to act, through labelling young people as vulnerable and at risk, through media and judicial practices that converted a "mild form of exhibitionism" into an "epidemic of delinquency" (p.132), and through dismissing student action relating to both self-interest and wider issues as either irrational and pathological, or extreme and Communist-inspired. Bessant digs beneath both high theoretical and populist perspectives to provide a different view, one that identifies the rationality and autonomy behind the actions, whether for reasons of personal identity or social change* (Williamson 2021)

Mass demonstrations that involve and include young people are not exactly new. The 1960s saw mass protests against the Vietnam War. In the UK, there were marches about the failure of the rich world (now designated the 'Global North') to provide sufficient and suitable aid and support to the 'third world' (now designated the 'Global South') and there was a vocal critique by young people of the subservience and compliance of major (British) charities, such as Oxfam – originally the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, to state regulation, to the point where young people themselves attempted to establish their own political organisation, 'Crisis', to press conventional politics to recognise, and act on what were considered to be its global moral responsibilities.

#6 The public has now woken up to the climate emergency; young people have got their point across

The 'Climate Change election' result in Australia, in 2019, suggests that however much working people express concern about climate change and desire for investment in renewals and reductions of the carbon footprint, this ends up being a secondary considera-

tion when push comes to shove: when jobs and personal sacrifice is on the line. Climate change denier Scott Morrison was re-elected when all pre-election prophecies pointed in another direction.

A very recent survey by the British newspaper The Guardian suggests there is now 'overwhelming' backing amongst the British people – irrespective of age, location and political leaning - for strong climate action, including reducing speed limits, limiting meat eating, imposing levies on flying, subsidising the installation of heat pumps, establishing carbon taxes, and developing better integrated public transport systems. We shall see.

#7 Raising awareness does not necessarily produce behaviour change

Whether 'dutiful' or 'dangerous' in their participatory actions around the climate issue, stimulated by the initial solitary action of Greta Thunberg, there is little doubt that the street climate action protests by young people have raised awareness of many relevant issues (particularly the melting of the Arctic, the burning of the Amazon and their consequences for 'global warming'). However, questions need to be asked about the extent to which this highly visible and widely reported youth participation (see below) has led to meaningful climate action. Less apparently 'extreme' behaviour by young people, notably polished speeches by global envoys and ambassadors for youth, has perhaps had equally limited effect. As somebody put it recently, albeit in relation to a different context, there is a risk of getting lost in the 'treacle of circular conversations', where protest and advocacy is either absorbed by those already in agreement or ignored by those who are not. Either way, there is little impact on the behaviour of those who could make a difference.

#8 The climate action movement has produced a new more inclusive paradigm for youth participation

There has always been a cry to accommodate 'unconventional participation' within the policy making structures that enlist and embrace youth participation (as more and more do). The space for young people to play their part is contested: some argue it remains modest, others say it is now shrinking, some claim it is still expanding, and others assert it is transforming (see Crowley and Moxon 2018). What is rarely contested, however, is that less advantaged (what the EU calls 'young people with fewer opportunities') and less organised young people have less access to participative possibilities, including in the realms of policy decision-making.

This has been especially evident in the context of climate governance and justice; the result, some argue, has been the street protests to challenge what have been essentially 'adultist' forms of climate governance. According to Gorman (2021), this has led to the emergence of new theoretical perspectives on youth participation in relation to climate, such as 'empowered inclusion' and 'inclusive orchestration'. These emphasise the multi-scale, multifaceted, inter-dependent and diverse character of the climate strike movement, one that has consolidated the political identity of youth and demanded intergenerational equity and a demand for alternatives to existing power relationships, especially between the generations. The imperatives here are about reach and inclusion, building capacity and training for action, through embedding climate justice within youth organisations,

resulting in a systematic and equitable approach to climate governance. This is, so it is argued, a model of 'empowered inclusion', on account of ensuring pluralistic participation, building the capacity of the youth sector and engaging in collective decision-making.

Others are not quite so sure! There are many typologies that impinge on discussions of youth participation – representative democracy, established youth participative structures, deliberative democracy, activism and protest, co-management and co-production. Interestingly, rarely is there much discussion of categorical representation, whereby categories of young people most affected by particular issues are afforded disproportionate space, voice and audience (see Lundy 2007). This is surprising within the climate context, given the prevailing evidence that those young people least active in the climate movement (those from less advantaged backgrounds and neighbourhoods) are most likely to be adversely affected by climate change.

#9 Climate issues appear rather insignificant in European documentation relating to the youth sector

An analysis of the European youth strategies (the EU youth strategy 2018, and the Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030), the conclusions of the sequence of EU youth dialogue, and the final declaration of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention held in Germany in December 2020, would suggest that climate issues have, hitherto, had marginal presence and profile in debates within the youth sector. Erasmus + strategic partnerships across four European countries (Finland, Germany, Bulgaria, and Spain) paint the same picture: there is not much that is green about youth work, at least not in the headlines.

This may of course change. The European Union's Green Deal will certainly force climate issues to the forefront of policy, perhaps including youth policy, and there are certainly already practices that compel the youth sector to consider and apply their green credentials (such as when deciding on modes of travel).

Nor do headlines necessarily tell the story closer to the ground. There may be much more environmental action and concern with sustainability in everyday practice, even if it is not foreshadowed in policy statements and funding applications.

#10 Youth work and climate action operate in 'splendid isolation'

Youth work, certainly, has always bemoaned its position in the sidelines, though it has been equally reluctant to forge alliances with other professional groups on wider issues, perhaps fearing it would be colonised and subordinated, and its autonomy and values threatened. Volume 5 of the History of Youth Work in Europe (Siurala et al. 2016) suggests otherwise: greater autonomy for youth work may derive from greater 'dependency', through work on issues such as health, employment, formal education (schooling) and justice.

A similar debate may prevail with regard to climate. To what extent should climate action be connected to other forms of action, or are others perceived as threats and enemies? Are urban planners inherently the opposition?

Certainly, climate cannot be addressed 'splendid isolation': ecological issues must, at minimum, be connected to questions of economic and social existence, even if climate is the ultimate existential threat. As noted in the Australian case of failing to win over the

general public, over-preaching the climate threat at the expense of other considerations carries a serious possibility of backfiring. The same might be said of youth work that over-played its climate credentials and commitments, perhaps alienating the very young people it was hoping to engage with and inform. It was suggested that, arguably, young people may be divided into three when it comes to climate understanding and commitment: those already converted, those who can be won over, and those who remain uninterested or, indeed, sceptical and cynical. Winning over 'the middle' should be a manageable challenge for youth work. Engaging with and persuading the third group is likely to be a delicate and diplomatic task. There will have to be different ways of bringing 'youth work' and 'climate action' together, for different groups of young people with different knowledge, understanding, attitudes and values in relation to climate issues.

Youth work does not (yet) appear to have embraced the climate agenda with a great deal of vigour, according to research across four European countries on the thematic focus of strategic partnerships within the Erasmus + programme during the last seven-year round of EU funding (2014-2020). Irrespective of the 'stability' of the societies in question, in terms of their economy and rates of youth unemployment, the conclusions were that context did not exert a great deal of influence on the topics for which funding was sought, of which climate hardly featured (see Escamilla and Martin 2021). Yet, despite the reservations expressed about the methodology and focus of the research reported, this does provide some baseline data and analysis, with which future connections between youth work and climate may be compared. After all, with the EU's Green Deal and greater awareness of the climate emergency, it is highly probable that funding applications in the next seven years will give this a greater priority and there will be an increase in action, interest, and engagement. Further, it was noted that there will need to be attention to the 2022-24 work plan for the EU Youth Strategy, in which climate should feature more prominently. Hitherto, however, environmental activism would certainly appear to have been largely disconnected from institutional youth work, perhaps as the political intentions of institutional youth work have, arguably, more generally diminished (see Ohana 2020).

One recent measure to bring together youth work is the Sustainability Checklist, launched by the Youth Partnership. It is a contribution to the 'greening of the youth sector', an intersectional resource designed, in part at least, to combat environmental racism. It provides guidelines for youth organisations, summarising best practice and exhorting them to strengthen their green credentials.

There is certainly a strong professional and moral case for youth work to show solidarity with young climate activists, to anchor its work in sustainable and green values, to enable young people to learn, act and advocate on climate issues, and to support the orientation and engagement of young people towards politicians and the media. Put succinctly, youth work should play its part in shrinking the ecological footprint and enlarging the ecological handprint.

But, when one drills deeper, the role of youth work is complicated. Too much explicit support for youth climate activists might jeopardise public support (and political

funding) for youth work, as well as perhaps 'contaminate' the 'purity' of young people's campaigns. There may, of course, be implicit 'back-stage' support, just as there often is, more broadly, around youth work support for youth participation, though this always leaves youth work open to allegations of softening the sharp edges of young people's angst and anger or, in this case, 'greenwashing' their concerns. It is easy to maintain that the role of youth work is to amplify the voices of young people, but how loudly and in whose ears? It is also easy to advocate that youth work should 'accompany' young people – the idea of 'journeying together' (see Rogers and Smith 2010) – but it is not always easy to work out exactly how.

#11 Youth work is a central element of youth policy

Youth work is a collection of diverse practices (see the Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention) bound together through a shared commitment to defending 'spaces', and building 'bridges' for young people (see the Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention). It can be an important element and experience in young people's lives, but it is a small fragment of overall youth policy. It is, indeed, only a tiny fragment of overall education policy, if it is presumed to have its roots firmly within non-formal education and learning (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUT2KqlMAGA).

#12 Both climate action and youth work need to build beyond their boundaries

Size matters! Despite the large scale of the youth climate strikes and because of the relatively small scale of youth work, both need to forge alignment beyond and alliances within their boundaries. Just as there are tensions and philosophical differences within youth work, so there are similar paradoxes and contradictions within the youth climate movement. There are disputes about the science, the politics, and the distribution of responsibility. Were, for example, the Syrian refugees who fled to Europe essentially climate refugees (see Briggs 2021). There is a strong case for developing a united front. There is also a strong case for establishing connection with other professional and progressive groups. The climate movement must become more 'savvy' about working at the intersection of new and older social movements (such as Black Lives Matter), and at the intersection with wider geopolitical issues.

It is always easy to make assumptions about one's 'enemies' but it is always much more important to identify those who might, even temporarily and perhaps from a different value and objective base, be 'allies'. In youth work, there have been significant cases of alliances with the police and the military, and with various faith groups. Climate action may have to find some level of rapport with urban planners! Alliances clearly need careful and conscientious negotiation, but they should rarely be ideologically ruled out. There are progressive and regressive elements in almost all professional groups.

#13 Be careful of warm words

Carefully crafted speeches, including 'blah, blah, blah', and positive sounding policies may command attention but, in and of themselves, do absolutely nothing to change the world. Policy is easy to write, incredibly difficult to implement – to put into practice. We need

to beware of warm words that seemingly go nowhere. Rhetoric has to convert into reality, policy into practice. The youth policy clock (see Basarab and Williamson 2021), in the context particularly of the climate emergency, is ticking.

Conclusion

Debates about youth work, youth participation, democracy and climate change always undulate between questions of frameworks and foundations, and content and process. Youth work has constantly to navigate and negotiate between and within competing demands and expectations, either mediating the two-way tensions between young people on the one hand, and institutions and funding bodies on the other (see Coussée and Williamson 2011), or often positioning and re-positioning within numerous triangular pressures (see Williamson and Coussée 2019). There is always the question of 'which side are you on?', though the answer is rarely straightforward, for it is rarely a binary choice and usually calls for a more nuanced professional response.

And so it is hardly surprising that the same dilemmas and 'trilemmas' prevail in the context of the green credentials of youth work. Climate issues unavoidably impinge on youth work policy and practice. Youth work must unequivocally commit to addressing them. But at that interface, multiple options present themselves and are enabled or obstructed by familiar themes: the policy context, the context where the youth work is taking place, the knowledge and skills and capacity and confidence of the youth workers involved, the position, interests and aspirations of the young people taking part, and the resources available for deployment on the project in progress. This is the essence of the youth work journey: the group, the issue, the context and the method. The skilful youth work is always reflecting, adapting and engaging, reactively seizing opportunities and proactively injecting possibilities. Plus ça change, plus reste la même chose!

Howard Williamson
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