



## Our life. Our voice. Young people and poverty

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2014-2-DE04-KA205-001641

ERASMUS+ Key Action 2 – Strategic Partnership in the Field of Youth

### BACKGROUND

Research shows young people living below the poverty line face multiple barriers to access education, employment, housing etc. To be poor is a very stigmatising experience, which affect self-esteem, confidence and personal security. Thus, low income is a strong predictor of low educational performance, lower aspirations for the future and finally social exclusion.

The 2013 Annual Growth Survey shows that poverty and social exclusion are major obstacles to the achievement of the Europe 2020 objective of inclusive growth. There is a lack of extensive knowledge on how young people experience poverty in the different member states and much to learn how the dynamic nature of poverty and youth intertwine. A better understanding is urgently needed towards achieving the Europe 2020 goal of “at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion”.

### OBJECTIVES AND PARTICIPANTS

YES Forum, the European network of organisations working with and for disadvantaged young people having members and affiliates in 18 EU member states, leads the strategic partnership “Our life. Our voice. Young people and poverty”. We will place young people’s views at the heart of this project to explore young people’s attitudes to poverty and what it means for them to live in families struggling to make ends meet from day to day. By listening to the young people experiencing poverty we want to bridge the gap between policy and practice.

The project partnership involves 6 partners and the YES Forum, the coordinating organisation. We implement the project in 5 countries different with regard to welfare system, historical development, and economic performance. Therefore we collaborate with partners coming from the UK, Italy, Germany, Finland and Romania covering different regions of the EU. These organisations have strong experience in delivering services for those experiencing poverty, listening to young people and influencing policy to improve the lives of those in or at risk of poverty. To reach a large audience ranging from youth work organisations, service providers, policy makers and public authorities, we involve another strong European network, active in the field of street work: Dynamo International.

### ACTIVITIES

This strategic partnership builds on a model established by the Children’s Society (see <http://www.childrenscommission.org.uk/>), the partner from the UK. Aim is to set up a group, so-called panel, of young people exploring poverty in 5 countries. These groups of 12-15 young people are accompanied by youth workers applying interactive and participatory methods to get an insight into the experience of young people in poverty. The young people create discussions on different perceptions of poverty and as a result formulate their recommendations against poverty and what real support should look like. At regional and national events they will meet youth organisations, service providers, local authorities, and policy makers to discuss their suggestions. The methodology



used for engaging those young people who might be hard to reach will be published in a tool-kit for practitioners.

The participants' activities culminate in the final international conference organised together with the YES Forum and Dynamo International in collaboration with SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre. This event will be held in Brussels, presenting the project findings in creative and interactive ways, devised by the young people to reach the various actors working with disadvantaged young people across Europe, ranging from professionals of youth services and youth work to opinion formers and policy makers at EU level.

**PARTNER:**

Applicant YES Forum

Land	Institution	Art der Einrichtung
UK	The Children's Society	Charity
DE	Internationaler Bund	NGO
IT	Cooperativa Zefiro	NGO
FI	Aftereight	NGO
RO	Fundatia Ruhama	NGO
BE	Dynamo International	ENGO

**PROJECT DESIGN:**

1. Each country recruits young people to be part their group and this project. We build on the model already established in the Children's Society  
→ <http://www.childrenscommission.org.uk/>
2. Kick start event: 2 young people with their youth worker meet in London  
Purpose: TCS group presents their journey, what they have done, what they have achieved.
3. Each group works in their country to further investigate and find out the views of children + young people. With regard to their findings, the group plans campaigning, lobbying and **taking actions at regional / national level.**
4. **Final youth conference** (in Brussels) aimed at policy makers, MEP's. Findings of the work done by the young people will serve as resource for a final position paper from the young people (final conference open to all YES Forum members) collaborating with SALTO Inclusion and the European Youth Forum

**FINAL PRODUCTS:**

- Summary document – Young people's investigation into poverty
- Policy paper / key messages on poverty through the eyes of young people providing fresh ideas on what real support should look like
- Toolkit for youth workers on how involving young people to take actions against poverty

