DISCOVER YOUTH TALENTS

Slovak Presidency V4 Conference









Intention of the conference

Visegrad Group and Eastern Partnership countries have a productive and steadily developing relationship with substantial dialogue across a wide range of youth issues, working seminars and annual V4 presidential meeting. For the first time in the history we have decided to enlarge the scope of the cooperation and invite the representatives from Western Balkans to attend the seminar.

There are many important topics and issues related to youth sector, that are also reflected in new EU Youth Strategy and EU Youth Goals set by young people in participatory way. Even though talent and its discovery is not one of the Youth Goals, we chose this topic because we believe that it is an important prerequisite to meet those goals.

The main aim of the conference was to bring together experts, researchers, youth representatives and policy makers to advance a dialogue between these stakeholders about the full development of the potential of young people, the systematic support of talented young people and the issue of their identification in informal and non-formal education; sharing examples of good practice and highlighting the role of talent support and development in various fields. The conference focused on current challenges such as increasing the capacity of youth workers to use innovative approaches, highlighting cooperation between sectors or working with young people at risk of marginalization. The Conference was the only event in the youth field during the Slovak presidency and it slightly followed up the talent topic raised by the 2016 Slovak EU Presidency.



Thursday

13:30 - Opening and Keynote Speeches

15:00 - Coffebreak

15:30 - Talent definition, group work and roundtable discussions

17:00 - Freetime

17:45 - Meeting point in front of the Hotel

18:00 - Departure from the hotel by bus and visit of Aurelium, the "Center of Science"

19:00 - Dinner and vibe of traditional folk music

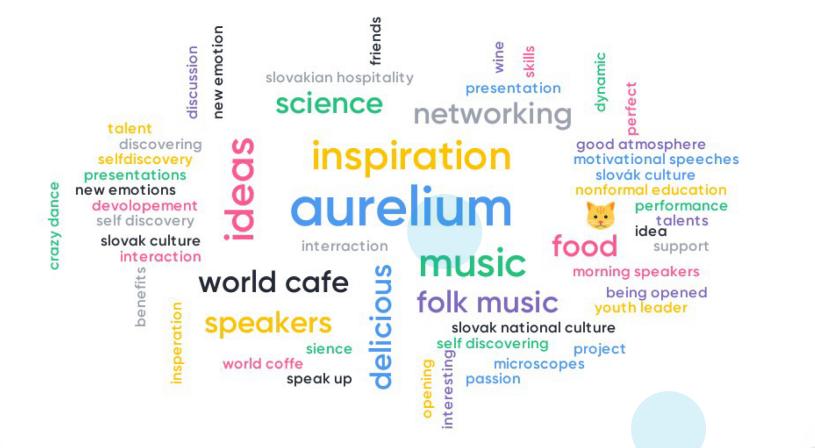
22:00 - Departue from Aurelium



9:15 - 9:45 - Introduction + Henrieta Holúbeková - Lifeology 9:45 - 12:15 - Parallel workshops 12:15 - Reporting back from workshops 12:40 - Evaluation and closing 13:00 - Lunch and the departure

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Highlights from yesterday



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OUTCOMES OF THE WORLD CAFÉ

1. Who is considered as talented in our countries?

We agreed on the explanation of talent based on comparison with others - being talented means usually being better than others are in something. It often means shortcut to success for us, but we do not (have to) always use it.

We tackled the dilemma "Everybody is talented, we just need to find the way to discover it and foster it" versus "Not everybody has a talent". Both approaches were connected with the need of talent "diagnostics" and connection with future studies and employment. The Gallup test as efficient tool was mentioned.

Talent in our countries is often connected with some kind of success or achievement, e.g. in Talent Show, national competitions, certificates, etc. Talent is often mostly associated with artistic or sport skills, or school grades. Young leaders or young inventors are also often perceived as talented people.

Some participants see/experience misbalance in "Everybody is talented" policy and local/national reality. They see that some talents, especially those connected with personal or soft skills are often overlooked. They connect it with the mindset or stereotypes of youth workers, teachers, policy makers, or the public in general.

2. What types of talents are mostly recognized, supported, and fostered? Groups came up with types of talents such as:

1 Visible - with clear criteria to evaluate (such as ones connected with sport) and non-visible – without clear criteria of evaluation.

2. Based on emotions (e.g. art) or mind and science (e.g. mathematics, analytical skills) Groups were also speaking about why some talents are more recognized, supported, and fostered then others. The participants found out that the reason is usually financial or political. The first one is connected with the reward that one gets for developing their talents. For example, entrepreneurial talents make unemployment lower. Some talents are supported by the educational system for political reasons for example traditional dancing as a part of heritage protection and community building. Even more "fashion and time" were pointed

3. What or who helped you to become aware of your talent?

Groups introduced different self-discoveries. First group discussed about what their talent is. Most talents are artistic – playing on musical instrument, singing, painting etc. Participants agreed that certain forms of talent can include creativity, social skills - communication, leadership skills, helping others, see the potential in others, supporting others, work with online media, research, top quizzer, expedition behaviour.

When discussing who helped them to become aware of their talents, mostly family members, parents, friends, neighbours, teachers, trainers, mentors were mentioned. Some participants went through their own experiences in order to discover their talents. At the end, participants identified benefits that their talents are giving to them such as self-confidence, friends, motivation, energy, enthusiasm, joy, mission, satisfaction, feeling greatness, and recognition.

4. Why are talents important? How/where can they be beneficial?

Discussion between participants highlighted the importance of identification and development of talents in early childhood in kindergarten, schools and youth clubs. Representatives from ministries of education, NA's, youth parliaments have agreed that talents among youth should be supported from the early stage. Youth workers and teachers should have a tool or test how to identify talents among kids and young people. The support measures and tools which are used between V4 countries and Eastern Partnership are Olympics, youth national programs, national awards, "hackathons", summer camps, financial grant support. The role of talent was mentioned in skills for the future at the labour market. The participants found out and shared different points of view between support of marginalized youth from poor areas and support of "talented" youth. An inspiring idea was mentioned where there are interconnect activities between youth parliaments and retirement homes realized.

5. Who are the stakeholders that can support developing talents of young people? How?

The list of stakeholders was long and can be summarised by the words of one participant "everyone can support talents of young people; it's just a question whether they want to". The stakeholders were divided into different groups based on the following axes: private/public, passive/active, vulnerable/ advantaged, local/regional/national/European/international, governmental/NGO/business, on-line/ off line, formal education/non-formal education/leisure time. Another type of division was connected to the origin of the talent, whether it comes from the environment that is surrounding young people, from interests they have or from characteristics that young people are born with. A part of discussion was connected to inspiration young people need and can get from others to see what might be their talents and how it might be possible to develop them. The tools varied from TED talks to talking with pub or café owners.

Research has been mentioned as an important tool to get more information about what needs young people might have in terms of support. Specific attention was paid in some discussion groups to young people with fewer opportunities, vulnerable young people and NEET (not in education, employment or training) young people.

Each group also clarified some terminological differences between gifted and talented, what it means to be a role model or what the difference between inspiring and motivating young people is.

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What does the talent mean to me?



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OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOP 1

HOW CAN YOUTH WORK HELP TO IDENTIFY TALENTS?

We discussed the topic on four different levels and tried to name good practices and challenges in the represented countries:

- 1. Young people's needs:
- The needs named as substantial in talent identification were trust & acceptance, safe environment to make mistakes, connection with role models, being acknowledged, financial support to try different things and discover one's talent
- 2. Type of services offered to young people:
- At this level mostly the services offered to individuals were mentioned, such as mentoring, coaching, counselling, talent measurement tools, internships, and information services. A specific approach of creating a portfolio was mentioned as well (good experience from Hungarian NGO level).
- 3. Youth workers' competences and approach:
- As the key elements in youth workers' approach were mentioned genuine interest, authenticity, individual approach respecting one's own needs, or ability to adapt/differentiate approach and methods
- 4. Support systems on political level (local, regional, national):
- Support of cross-sectoral cooperation in talent identification (e.g. formal and non-formal education systems).
- Recognition of the youth-worker as profession, recognition of the necessary competences, creation of the university degree in youth work.
- Support of volunteering as a universal way to discover talents
- Financial support of services helping to discover talents, and of youth directly.

As general challenges in talent identification, the following issues were discussed: gender issues in some countries; geographical obstacles in some regions; poor connection platforms for youth and employers; and mind-set or stereotypes on the side of employers, with the conclusion that some talents are appreciated more than others are.

WORKSHOP 2

NEW APPROACHES/TRENDS IN YOUTH WORK – FOSTERING TALENTS

The group started with clarifying two areas: The purpose of youth work and how it changes and what youth work means in the participants' context. The group has concluded that youth work should provide space for all young people from the gifted young people, through the mainstream youngsters, to young people with fewer opportunities. It should prepare young people for life, support them to build confidence and trust and gain skills for the future. Therefore, it should provide space for personal development, especially in terms of learning about/from community service, activism, and active citizenship. It should also react to different needs; therefore, sometimes it might not be possible to differentiate where youth work ends and social work starts

After covering the framework of youth work, the group shared different examples of activities and approaches that they perceived as innovative. Among the ones mentioned, there were (a selection showing diversity shared by the group:

1. On the level of activities with/for young people

- Debates, career advice events, job fairs and discussions with professionals from different fields
- living library/human library, Docudays/street cinema, book bus
- graphic tools/graphic facilitations
- storytelling and using stories as a tool of inspiration, motivation and celebrating success both online and offline, TED talks and inspirational talks, animated videos, "Fuck up" nights, talent shows including celebrities
- competitions, power point karaoke
- different online tools and apps, e-learning courses, gamification
- community volunteering

2. On the level of issues/themes:

- Hate free school
- Support of mental health of young people
- Reaching young people with fewer opportunities rural youth, minorities, unorganised young people
- Focusing on topics of mindfulness, emotional intelligence
- Digitalisation of youth work
- Media literacy education
- Combating radicalisation and extremism

3. On the level of approaches and strategies:

- Sharing good practices among youth workers
- Cooperation with different sectors and stakeholders
- Involving young people in running activities by themselves
- Research for evidence-based youth work
- Support of development of youth workers' competences and professionalization of youth work, making youth work more sustainable
- Individualised support to young people

WORKSHOP 3

TALENT DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT IN REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL

1. Participants started with creating a vision of an "ideal state", a place that is perfect for talent development.

What would that state be?

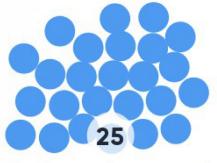
- One with a National Action Plan on Talent Development and political commitment to implement it, including the responsible Ministry and stakeholders' coordination tools
- One that acknowledges that everyone has a talent and education system supports it
- One with flexible but holistic education approach that combines formal and non-formal education. Such system should be based on research, individual support and outreach to rural areas
- One that invests in talents support, e.g. between teachers (networking, training, extra funding) and prevents brain drain

2. Good practice examples are:

- Fund for Young Talents and Science Research centre PETNICA (Serbia)
- National Action Plan and Databanks of the gifted youngsters that reach high score in competitions (Belarus)
- European Youth Parliament (EU Level)
- Scouting (Poland
- Youth Award (Armenia)
- NTP (Hungary)
- Network of youth clubs and grants for young people (Moldova)
- Lifeology, LEAF Academy, Olympiads (Slovakia)
- National System of Talent Management and Regional Talent Network (Czech Republic)
- Youth Centres Development, State Programme for youth and Grants for young people(Ukraine)

Which young people's needs do you see as the most important concerning talent identification?

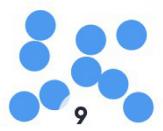




Safe environment to make mistakes



To be acknowledged



Role models

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Waht is the best incentive for a person to develop their talents.



0 Financial reasons



Obtaining high social status

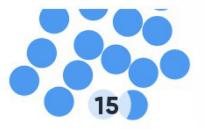
How does a talent "happen"?



In-born

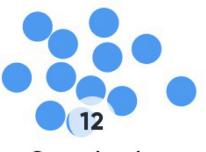


Through practice



Naturally appears





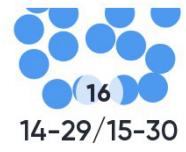
Somebody teaches me



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In your country, what are the age limits to be a young person?









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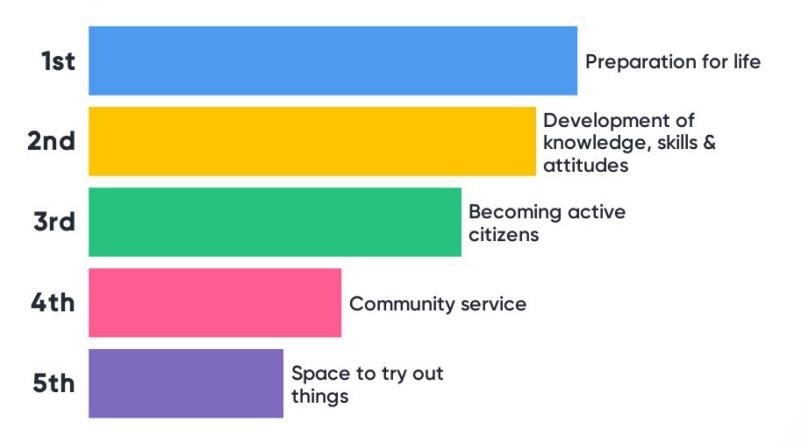
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And now you can rate the statements and select which is 1st; 2nd; 3rd and so on...

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What are the most important purposes of youthwork for you??



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What are you taking home for your own work?

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What are you taking home for your own work











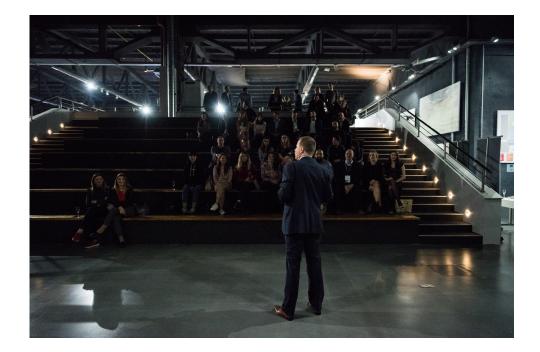
















THANK YOU!