



## PROJECT STREAT

**"STRengthening Exchanges Advocacy and Training for outreach youth workers"**

**Partners:** *Asociación Navarra Nuevo Futuro* (Spain) – *BVjong* (Netherlands) – *ACY* (Bulgaria) – *Aseman Lapset ry* (Finland) – *ROCQTR* (Quebec-Canada) – *YAP* (USA) – *El Caracol* (Mexico) – *Alalay* (Bolivia) – *AESMAR* (Brazil) – *ADE* (Senegal) – *ESGB/La pasarelle* (Benin) – *CATSR* (DR Congo) – *CPCS* (Nepal) – *Thao Dan* (Vietnam) – *Virilanie Fd.* (Philippines)

# Advocacy Campaign for Professional Youth Work in the Netherlands

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## DUTCH VADEMECUM

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## INTRODUCTION

Professional youth work in the Netherlands is less and less “accommodation-bound” but develops stronger and stronger towards outreach or detached youth work or streetwork for and with individual and groups of young people and the society around them. We use in this vademecum “youth work” instead of (social) streetwork.

BVjong is the independent, grassroots but formally organised National Association of Professional Youthworkers in the Netherlands (NAPYN). Its main statutory goal is advocacy of youthwork as a valuable and formally accepted profession. Our work in the Project STREAT follows our regular national advocacy work, mostly done on a voluntary basis. Time to invest in the project STREAT was relatively limited. Youthworkers are not writers or researchers: they want to go out in the streets, because that is what they like to do, because there is a need for, because they are paid by local governments to reach concrete results. Investment in international work has a relatively low priority, how important “intercultural learning in an international context” and worldwide solidarity regarding vulnerable young people and workers themselves is.

Advocacy work on local, provincial, national and international level is important to create optimal policy and concrete conditions for working with and most vulnerable youth, upholding ethical principles and professional standards for the professionalism of youthwork. The project STREAT brought the effect for BVjong to analyse her advocacy actions more in depth, concretize its strategic action plan in her annual workplan and present recommendations to all involved stakeholders, not in the least its members. Comparing its vademecum with other partners' contributions gave new insights. Delivering the Dutch vademecum contributes, we hope, towards a stronger European and worldwide advocacy planning.

This vademecum is written under responsibility of the authors. Not being English native speakers, without professional help for translation, excuse us for the quality of our written English. We hope that this vademecum contributes to a further understanding of BVjong's work, now and in the future.

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## Chapter 1 STATE OF THE ART

### 1.1. Youth work

In the Netherlands, the term youth is applied to children and young people from 0 up to the age of 24. In 2014 there were 4.908 million children in this age group. As in most other industrialized countries, the proportion of youth in the total population is decreasing. Dutch children are among the happiest and healthiest in the world, according to much international research. Despite this fact there are still a large number of children and young people that need extra support and care during their childhood. Poverty is increasing, social distances are growing, polarisation in Dutch society has to have much attention. Around 80% of all young people have positive perspectives for future, 15% are at risk of being unhappy and deprived, 5% are in trouble and/or marginalized.

Youth work is an open low-threshold provision for all young people. Youth work in the Netherlands can be divided into age groups. There is work with children (6-12 years), work with teenagers (10-14 years) and youth work (12-23 years), often combined. A professional youth worker concentrates mostly on disadvantaged and/or vulnerable youth, is a coach and counsellor for individual young people in their own living environment, works with groups and with the society around them. Recent theory speaks about multi-method methodological acting (see below). According to the Netherlands Youth Institute (see [www.nji.nl](http://www.nji.nl) > English), youth work:

- takes place outside school, work and family, invests in non formal education
- focuses on the age-group 6-23 years (different per local government)
- organizes leisure time activities for and with young people
- has a pedagogical purpose: promoting the personal development of youth
- has a social target: promoting social inclusion of and democratic citizenship
- and prevents behaviour problems (vandalism, crime, school drop-out).

Youth work is active in the neighborhood and runs with youth the youth center (Participation task). Youth work organizes youth activities, dialogue and / or thematic meetings but also talent development in areas such as culture and music (Talent development task). One of the tasks of the youth worker is to ensure that residents and youth in have good contacts with each other to avoid nuisance on the streets (Safety task).

The youth worker has a special focus on youth with a request for help and/or psychological problems or are refractory and could possibly get relapse. The youth worker can also help with all sorts of problems by providing a listening ear, to devise solutions together and, if necessary by referring to the rescue (Coaching or care task). The youth worker works closely with the residents, the social district team, police and schools. Youth workers know what is happening in youthcultures, what trends are there and what pitfalls or opportunities result therefrom. Social streetwork (ambulant jongerenwerk) reaches youngsters who are less members of sportclubs, frequent less youth centres, spent free time on streets and in public spaces or are homeless (recente estimation: at least 9.000 in the Netherlands).



In the Netherlands a sometimes a distinction is still made between childwork (6-12/14 years) and youthwork (12/14- 23/25 years). BVjong represents both groups. In this questionnaire we will further use the term youth work for our specific methodology for all age groups and targetgroups.

Youth work has traditionally been working in the forefront of preventive activities. Professional workers operate in the street in the middle of (groups) of young people, which live mostly in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods and are often surrounded by elements which are negative for their development. Working in the front line means that workers are directly confronted with social issues like poverty, early school drop-out, drug use, criminality, aggression, radicalisation, unemployment, bad health, homelessness, etc..

Budget cuts in the social sector in general lead to a decrease of the number of streetworkers, now estimated around 2500. The current change of social law draw much attention to the new organisation of specific youth care, which as a professional group is much stronger than youthwork, and this leads to less attention for preventive activities of streetworkers in the frontlinie. The dominant theoretical basis and interpretations of changes in civil society is the "medical thinking" use also by the care- and cure professionals, as opposed by starting points of welfare (and thus youth) workers who consider citizens (and young people) as whole persons, developing and living under social conditions which are unequally devided, concentrating more on talents then on individual problems.

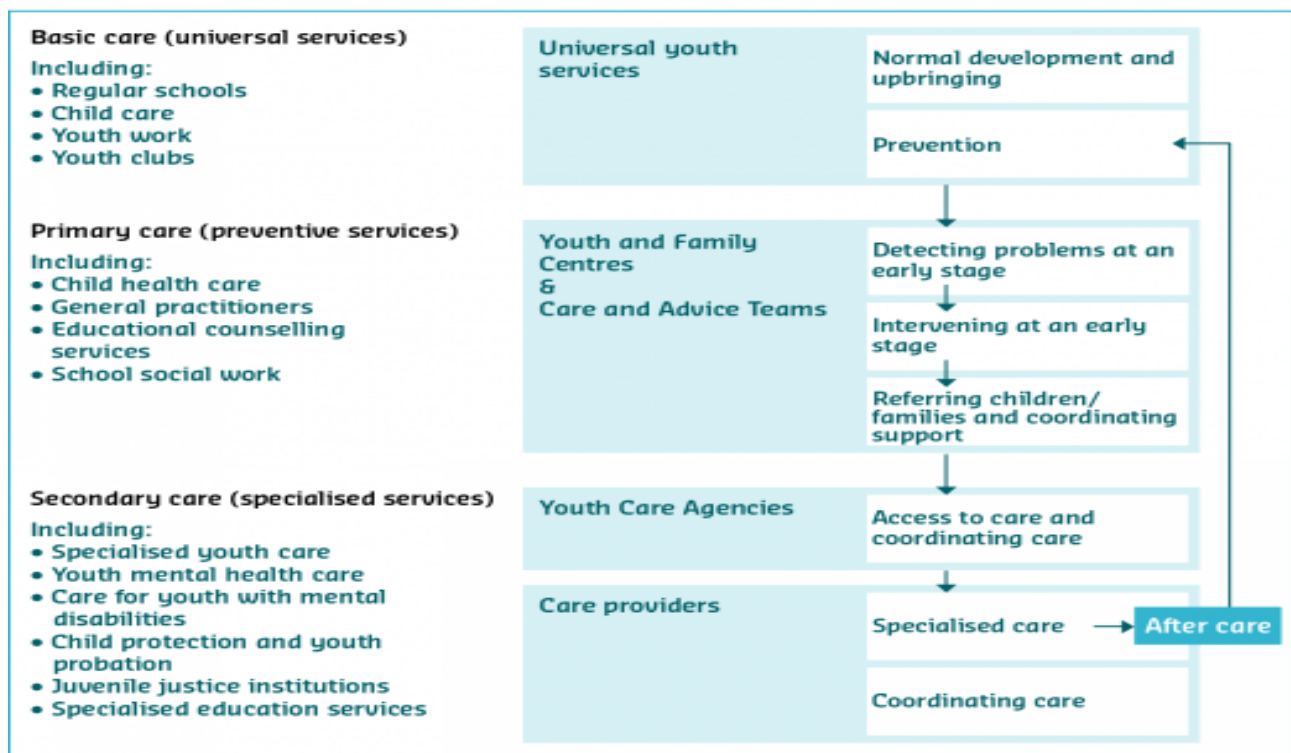
Tendencies towards radicalisation and polarisation and other social problems, especially poverty, even ask for more and better targeted interventions of more professional youthwork, as analysed and recommended also in European studies and policy documents about youth work. In a recently approved big comprehensive two year research program by Youth Spot, the effects of multi-method youthwerk will be measured. Four methods are mostly used in an integrated way: outreach youthwork, groupwork, information and advice, and individual coaching.

## 1.2. Youth policy

*New Child and Youth Act : Decentralization and transformation of responsibilities and approaches.*

Since the beginning of 2015 all 393 Dutch municipalities are responsible for policies and financing of the whole continuum of wellbeing and specialised care for children, young people and families in need of help. This transition relates to all types of services, including mental health provisions. The municipalities now steer a wide range of services for children and families, ranging from universal and preventive services to the specialised (both voluntary and compulsory) care for children and young people between 0 – 18 years.

### The Dutch youth care system



Before 2015 there was a different situation. The general and preventive services, including youth work, were the responsibility of the local municipalities and the youth care system was under the responsibility of the 12 provinces. Now this 'cut' in the system is finished with a new Child and Youth Act and all preventive and care provisions for children, youth and family are now a local responsibility. This is a huge transition of all administrative and financial responsibilities.

#### *Law of social support of all Citizens*

Next to the new Youth Care Act for 0-18 years, there's also the Law of Social Support for all adult citizens (> 18 years) and the new Act on Income and Labour. All laws were given to local responsibility since January 2015. This should provide municipalities the opportunities for more

integrated approaches in support and guidance from a variety of disciplines and policies. Also local governments are now free to develop their own youth policies, targeting on specific local social issues and/or problems, depending on political views, based on democratic elections of local governments for a maximum of 4 years. The effect of this big change is that conditions, goals and priorities for youth are different per municipality. National policy is relatively less important.

At the moment this recent change in responsibilities, budget cuts in social work in general at all levels, and the political, professional, theoretical and civil society debates, ask for even more important advocacy actions of youth workers at all levels, to maintain positions and uphold their specific methodologies of work, ethical standards and professional qualities and responsibilities.

#### *Status of Youth Work- not in a separate law*

There are still no separate laws or quality standards for youth work at national or local level. In the Netherlands the specific methodology of social streetwork in general is called "detached youth work" (ambulant jongerenwerk)" or "streetcornerwork (straathoekwerk)" and concentrates on most vulnerable, poor and/or deprived youngsters, at risk, in problems and/or marginalised (see English translated introduction of the Dutch DISWN Handbook on methodology of Street work).

Because of the growing need for good quality youth work, all kind of efforts are made by social professionals themselves, including researchers, innovators and other stakeholders, to invest more in preventive social measures and to influence civil society and politicians to incorporate youth work as a valuable profession. For this reason BVjong is generally accepted by all stakeholders at national level as an important "party". Not in the less because of the nature of the organisation.

### 1.3. BVjong, Beroepsvereniging Kinder- en Jongerenwerkers

BVjong is the national association of professional youthworkers in the Netherlands. There are about 2500 youth workers in the Netherlands, about 150 (changes every year) of them are individual member of BVjong, paying Euro 25 annually. The association, now 13 years old (BVjong – “jong” means “young”-) is run by youth workers themselves on a voluntary basis, sometimes facilitated by their institutions.

The members believe strongly in the importance of a professional workers association. 3-17 persons are in the board, elected by the members present at the annual General Assembly (GA), mostly organised in the beginning of every year. In this meeting also activities and the budget from last year are evaluated, and the workplan and budget for next year is discussed and voted for, if necessary. Generally the formal GA is relatively short, the national meeting is thematic with relevant workshops, some central presentations, etc. (see also Minutes 3#).

#### *The birth of BVjong*

Despite a long history, in the early 2000th years youth work existed as a profession with little recognition and appreciation. The professionalisation of youth workers came for the first time full on the agenda. The cause for this was multiple. We mention here the main reasons:

- the appreciation of youth work was low, new generations of social professionals preferred to go to work in related occupations such as child welfare, individual social case work and sports than in youth work itself (Noorda, Van Schijndel, and Spies, 2002; Spierings & Steketee, 2004);
- also in the daily execution of activities youth work was in a difficult situation. On the one hand huge expectations were formulated for youth workers, while on the other hand they did have insufficient quality and quantity to meet all of these demands (Van Griensven & Smeets, 2003 Spierings & Steketee, 2004);
- the relationship between young people and their communities became clouded. Under the influence of the New Public Management (NPM) municipalities wanted more control over the social institutes and greater insight into the effectiveness of youth work in preventing and/or combatting social problems. Youth work itself suffered from the lack of a clear vision on youth policy and lack of orchestration on the part of municipalities. Also, many municipalities subsidized only limited (Van Ginkel, Veenbaas, and Noorda, 2006);
- finally there were hardly any new young youth workers entering the field work with diplomas from the Universities of Applied Sciences or lower levels of professional education, because the formal educational system decided to skip specific youth work programs and only offered more broad, general social work programs (Production, 2009). This is still reality at the moment.

#### *LOJIK (National Development Program Youth Work Innovation and Quality)*

To professionalize youth work and its profile, some national organizations (a.o. researchers from the University of Applied Sciences Amsterdam: knowledge centre NIZW, National Institute Casre



and Welfare, as well as local social institutes and individual workers started LOJIK in 2000. Some of the concrete results were:

- throughout the country regional “quality circles youth work” started where youth workers came together to share experiences and invest in methodology development;
- a first nationwide conference “Day of the Youth Worker” in 2013 with 450 youthworkers;
- starting youth work programs at vocational level (Fabri, 2009);
- research about the way youth workers keep their job (Fabri, 2007);
- the publication Youthwork: state of the art and perspective (Van Ginkel et al., 2006; LOJIK 2004).

The LOJIK “movement” served as a powerful lobby for professional youth work. During the 2003 conference a number of 10 youth workers presented the idea to start their own association for youth workers. Everybody was happy: BVjong was born. And became a formally registered association in 2014.

#### *Statutory goals of BVjong.*

Being eminently an advocacy association of workers, the statutory goals of BVjong are:

- “1. Guardening, strengthening and stimulating children and youth work in the Netherlands, as well as representing the interests of the profession in general and improving the conditions under which the profession may be exercised in particular;
- 2. The association tries aforementioned objectives to be achieved by, among other things:
  - increasing the knowledge and skills of the professionals, with particular attention towards its members, through training programs, discussions, exchange of experiences, operating a website, issuing publications, and using social media;
  - identifying and promoting the interests of the profession to governments and other relevant stakeholders;
  - acting as interlocutor on behalf of the profession in (national) welfare and youth policy;
  - improving the image and standing of the children and youth workers.”

## - **Chapter 2    BEST PRACTICES** (of BVjong)

In this chapter we summarize some of the (most recent) examples of our advocacy work. We include “victories” as well as difficulties and challenges. They are basic for most recent and future advocacy activities summarized in chapter 3 and recommendations in chapter 4.

### **2.1. Recent government advices**

Recognized as a formal workers organization our Ministry of WVS (Health, Welfare/Cure and Sports) asked BVjong to give a policy advice about two recently relevant topics.

#### *Youth work and social media*

The use of social media has become a natural part of the world of young people. Youth workers and other professionals who work with young people know what’s going on. The question is how these new forms of communication affect the lives and development opportunities for young people, and what is done by professionals with social media in their contact with young people.

Youngsters are a lot of time on social media, they like it, sometimes too much. Almost every youth work organization has a Facebook page (more important nowadays than a website), which leads to interactive communication with neighborhood youth. Almost every youngster is active in one or more WhatsApp groups: with the professional and the volunteers at the youth center, but also with friends on the streets. Workers know many things young people are doing, not only the funny stories of what they do on weekends, but other less fun stories, where you can respond to as a youth worker or to use in a different, professional way.

What's happening with youth workers and other social workers:

o Youth workers promote self-reliance among young people and provide online help;

- o They can train digi-skills to their target groups;
- o Youth workers and community centers stay online and give information about activities to attract participants;
- o youth workers are in virtual contact with street youth;
- o Youth workers manage websites and educate about digital bullying, misuse of internet, etc.;
- o Youth workers identify how young people are influenced by social media, for example, how young people can always radicalize more;

A preliminary conclusion and recommendation on the use of social media by youth workers is: youth workers are increasingly using social media. However, it is focused too little and not used systematically enough.

Social media provide youth workers at least the opportunity to intensify personal contacts, make new contacts via own pages and chat, reach out to game addicts and vulnerable young people, to inform young people directly about drugs abuse etc, inform them about meetings or events in their neighbourhood, inform young people by referring (anonymously or by name) to virtual assistance.

In short, the challenge is to further develop the use of social media in youth work and use it targeted and planned. This may include both communication with the target audience, deliver information and online assistance/coaching/help, and identification of opportunities and risks of social media usage for individual young people, such as addiction and sexing, and for society as influencing by extreme or radical groups (polarisation).

### *Youth work and mental health*

Helping young people with so called mental health problems is still too much dominated in the Netherlands by defining individual problems, “medical” thinking and the dominance of psychopathology, opposite to one of the motives for changing politics as described before: to “demedicalize” social work in general (welfare, care and cure).

More and more practices and methodologies see results in integrated co-operation between youth work and other disciplines, for example in social district teams where youngsters and their surroundings (parents, important others) with a request for help are central. The power of youth workers is that they look for opportunities of young people rather than a dominant failure thinking. Also, that they start from an ethical viewpoint to see persons in their surroundings, with their socio-economic status, trying to cope with society, to develop an own identity, to gain respect. The important role youth workers can play in reaching youth with multiple problems is also youth coaching - as below described-, an important added value of youth work.

An example:

The methodology 'Individual counseling for young people' is a targeted method to guide inaccessible multi-problem youth between 14 and 25 years by youth workers. Often these young people have already been in contact with care, education or police, but those contacts were unsuccessful. Youth workers encourage young people individually to a positive change in behavior. The guidance is also focused on practical and concrete issues such as education, training, debt restructuring and strengthening of the social network. The youth worker takes time to build a significant trust relationship with the young person. Although the approach focuses on the individual, it appears that the street youth-at-risk culture is also positively influenced.

## 2.2. Professionalisation

A strong, proud, formally and informally accepted profession (as doctors, teachers, advocates practice) has certain characteristics, among others, summarized:

A well developed “body of knowledge”, constant research about effects, a description of competences, formal and lifelong education and training, a self-organization of workers, a professional code of ethics and conduct, formal registration and a system of evaluation of practices to stay professional. Being a workers organisation with statutory goals to further develop and strengthen the profession, one of the characteristics mentioned above, BVjong booked some good results in the past and is involved in new developments on a national level to reach its goals. Some examples are:

*The competences of the youth worker in 2008 (Van Dam & Zwikker, 2008; only available in Dutch).*

In 2007 BVjong took the initiative to describe a profile of and a set of necessary competences for youth workers, funded on the knowledge about youthwork available in theories and practice at that moment and relevant research. The publication about competences of a Youth worker, published in 2008, describes extensively the core of the profession. What should a youth worker need to know (head)? Which ethics and motivation should he should carry about (hart)? How many and which skills needs a youth worker (hands). Do competences vary at different levels of education? An assistant youth worker needs fewer skills than the coordinating youth worker. Some skills also apply to many other occupations in the care and welfare sector. Examples include the establishment of contacts, reliance on supply and demand, act purposefully and cost conscious, taking initiative and seizing opportunities.

In addition, a number of subject-specific competencies needed for youth work are:

- Building a meaningful relationship.
- Working Location Targeted.
- Increasing participation of young people in society.
- Taking the initiative to build networks.
- Planning and organizing activities.
- Creating a safe environment.
- Respectful and clear acting in case of aggression and verbal abuse.
- Intercultural working.

In practising youth work professional tradeoffs have always to be made. It is necessary to find the right balance in choosing approaches, methods, solutions. Choices, dilemmas and tensions can be addressed to in the following areas:

- Dealing with diversity.
- Balancing between involvement and detachment.
- Choosing between symptoms and structural work.
- Choosing between a network switch and individual intervention.
- Encouraging autonomy and safety.
- Coping with limited resources.
- Coordinating versus controlling.
- Switching between different parties.
- Setting clearly behavioral borders.
- Handling of confidential information.

With the right skills, knowledge and ethics a youth worker finds a professional balance. Knows what he is doing as a profesional, why and how. He can explain practising his job to young people themselves, to other colleagues, to parents, community members, other stakeholders like the police or teachers, politicians, etc. The work was described well and that was and is still a big profit. The profile was an excellent basis to further develop youth work.

Due to the changes in policy, growing insights, research, new challenges for youth workers, new social issues, changing youth cultures, international exchange with colleagues, the description of the profile of and competences for a youth worker as profesional, should be renewed. Up till now no specific effort has been taken by BVjong. We are stakeholder in several developments towards quality Youth Work and Social Work in general. A new publication is a wish.

*Professional Code Youth Work: an ethical standard for youth work (Niko de Groot, BVjong 2014)*

On request of BVjong members, analyzing the position of youth work at the moment, BVjong asked the Ministry VWS in 2013 to subsidize the development of a Professional Code for Youth Workers. The request was approved. Based on an international and national literature research, some workers meetings, a draft was discussed with the members of BVjong at the GA in January 2014. With a few remarks the code was accepted. Being member of BVjong means that those workers agree with its content, and are willing to discuss it with colleagues, the institutes they work, partner organisations and other stakeholders, and local governments. BVjong does the same at national level.

BVjong's Professional Code is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). In summary there are 3 starting points and 10 more specific (ethical and behavioral) rules. Summary:

- a. Participation: Children and young people have a right to express their opinions. These opinions should be taken into account, particularly when decisions are being made that affect their lives;
- b. Interests first: the interests of young people always come first. Maintain a focus on these in dialogue with stakeholders and involve young people in this dialogue where possible;
- c. Non-discrimination: Regardless of race, gender, religion, disability, national, ethnic or social background: all young people have the same rights.

10 Headlines of the professional code

1. The professional youth worker works with individuals, groups and the community and acts as a 'neighbourhood pedagogue'. engaging with the social environment of vulnerable children and young people (up to 23 years old)
2. The worker works with and for most vulnerable children and young people and focuses on identifying talents and increasing opportunities.
3. The worker respects every youngster regardless race, nature, gender, handicap, religion, ethnicity or social origin.
4. The worker acknowledges and advances the opinion of young people and acts as an advocate of these opinions
5. The worker is conscious of his professional task and acts as a role model and co-educator.
6. The worker is actively involved in the development of organisational policy and acts in a collegial way.
7. The worker engages in efficient and effective cooperation with stakeholders and partner-organisations.
8. The worker responds to undesirable behaviour and signs of this behaviour consciously and professionally, when working with children and young people
9. The worker shares information with other people if this is in the best interests of the child or young person.
10. The worker contributes actively to the quality of his profession and commits to the continuous development of their expertise and professionalism.

### *Working towards professional registration*

BVjong is currently developing together with other national stakeholders, such as various associations in the youth field, BPSW, MO groep and unions a professional registration for social workers, including youth workers. An important issue. Here are some reasons:

- Professional Registration contributes to craftsmanship;
- Professionals show that they stand for the quality of their work;
- They adhere to guidelines and a professional code and are called to account for it;
- Professional Registration requires more employers involvement;
- In short: stimulates professionals and employers to invest in professional competence.
- And, necessary by law: Children and young people who receive help from registered youth professionals (in general) can count on good and controlable help and support.

What's happening:

Work has already partly developed. There is a Professional Register workers in the Juvenile Probation sector, for specialised youth care workers, and soon also social workers (including youth workers). The development at national level cannot be stopped. There is no specific Law for Youth Work, nor for social street work, but takes into account social work in general. There is a lot of discussion between youth workers: it is not a bottom-up development, the question is of youth work as a specific form (pedagogical task, concentrating on youth) of social work in general, has to “go with the flow” BVjong tries to uphold this specificity in national developments, using their own set of competences, ethical code and being a workers organisation. The discussion goes on.

Relevant for youth workers is:

- (preliminary) registration is possible from May 16, 2016;
- required: a valid professional diploma and VOG declaration (Good Conduct) ;
- for both MBO (ower educational) and HBO (higher educational) professionals in social work
- performer: SKJ (Association Quality Register vYouth Care) See [www.skjeugd.nl](http://www.skjeugd.nl);
- operational performer: Register Square ([www.registerplein.nl](http://www.registerplein.nl));
- later:[ legally required for youth professionals in formally decided coaching trajects (named: responsible allocation of work)
- later: voluntary but highly recommended: for all social workers in the welfare field and social services
- registration requirements ready by spring 2017.

## *Organisation BVjong*

*Independant stronger grassroots organization, informal network/movement or merging into a broader workers organisation? Important decisions. A new era.*

In the last AG in 2016 (see also Minutes 3#) the board of BVjong announced that the limits of their capacities for her advocacy work had been achieved (see also Minutes 2#, also result of the STREAT SWOT analysis). Change was necessary. It is a voluntary board, boardmembers have to do their work alongside existing (payd) work. Fortunately, with the support of several independant consultants, the most necessary advocacy and operational work could be done, mostly on a voluntarily basis or only refunding of travel costs, due to the limited budget of BVjong. There were also board members who decided to stop, due to different legitimate reasons. The current active group within BVjong was too small to continue on the same path. The board BVjong outlined two other options to continue and asked the members to become more active, also in the board.

The board presented two options:

Option 1: BV jong should become stronger and stay independent. BVjong continues as a grassroots youth workers association with professional support and preferably also a professional back-office. To achieve this, the number of members should be doubled to at least 500 paying members, including a number of active members in several working groups to reach all the goals set in the workplan. The anual membership contribution should be raised and (more) external resources should be found to finance everything. Point to discuss was whether this option is realistic: to recruit more paying members and to get more active members.

Option 2: Continue for the time being as board of the BVjong, accepting the limits achieved. The old NVMW (association of individual social case workers; partnerorganisation for BVjong) has already changed her name into BPSW and broadened into an Association of Professional Social Workers for the entire field of social work. BVjong could merge into thisn organisation, and then become a separate, recognizable “chambre” for youthworkers. Anmd finish the formal association BVjong. Advantage would be becoming part of a more professionalised and older organization, with more registered members, lots of trainingcapacities and a magazine for its members. A strong professional association in which one can remain as a professional worker when chanching from youth work to another another social job. The disadvantage would be that it is unclear how much “visibility” as a seperate chambre can be guaranteed, how much independency for specific advocacy work regarding youth work stays existing, and definitely a higher membership feewith no garanties that employers will pay for.

The board of BVjong got permission from its members to continue further investigation of these options in 2016 and present a more concrete proposal how to go on, to discuss or to decide upon, in the next GA (now set on April 24th 2017).

Besides this, several of the (young) members present showed their involvement and willingness to become more active. In a relatively short time during 2016, with assistance and guidance from



Movisie, the national knowledge centre for social work (see [www.movisie.nl](http://www.movisie.nl) > English), three workings groups were formed, concentrating of the topics of communication, future perspectives and registration, and boardmeetings were enlarged with at least two new asperant boardmembers (to be chosen formally in the AG 2017).

Concrete effects of this new strengthening of BVjong's functioning end 2016, being followed up in 2017, in this way being also a result of the STREAT project and part of new already realized advocay actions, to be followedup in 2017 (see chapter 3), are, a.o.:

- start of a new, more interactive and modernized Website ([www.bvjong.nl](http://www.bvjong.nl)) per Januari 1st 2017, to stimulate more communication and attract more members;
- organisation of a big national conference in Amsterdam, with the most important stakeholders, aiming at 250 youth work participants, followed by a smaller conference for local youth work for civil servants and politicians, managers youth work and members themselves;
- growth of stimulating and support for regional meetings of workers, supported by a research project by youth/social work students;
- filling up the STREAT OER with relevant Dutch and international materials (first quarter 2017) and distributing the STREAT OER flyer, to finalize at the conference 240417;
- support from active members in the national ongoing process of development of registration;
- more active representation of BVjong by members in (inter)national meetings (f.e. the STREAT coordinationgroup meeting 3# in Maastricht, octobre 2016);
- adding a new, third option for BVjong's organisational future: end the formal association BVjong and change into an informal network of youthworkers, concentrating more on a social (and professional) "movement" (to be further investigated and eventually worked out in a concrete proposal for next AG).

### 3. Priority topics

*The role of youth workers in preventing and addressing radicalization.*

In 2015 BVjong finished a publication about the role of youth work in preventing and tackling radicalization/polarisation. A publication that was created on the basis of the experiences of 35 young workers during two expert meetings in Venlo and Gouda. That is the method BVjong uses to develop attention for actual social problems, also concerning youth work: by organising meetings to join and bundle practice stories from the workers at the base, in the field.. The BVjong publication has produced many good response and was also offered to the Secretary of State for Social Affairs, Mr Van Rijn.

BVjong also organised an international workers meeting in the Euregion Meuse-Rhine (Aachen, Eupen, Liège, Hasslt, Maastricht, Sittard-Geleen, Heerlen-Kerkrade, with guest colleagues from Molenbeek/Brussels). On Novembre 25th 2016, 60 youth and streetworkers met in Maastricht, followed central lectures, attended workshops, discussed relevant topics and differences in situations and approaches, but also discovered similarities in etics and methods. The conference will lead to further international cooperation between youth workers from the three countries, also supported bij DISWN, the intiative also the result of the STREAT project (see report –in Dutch- Euregionale Conferentie Jongerenwerk en radicalisering/polarisatie, decembre 2016, BVjong).



*BVjong's report about Youthwork and Radicalisation is in december 2015 presented to Mr. Van Rijn, Secretary of State for social affairs by Niko de Groot (consultant, projectcoordinator BVjong) and Ahmet Almis (Chairman of the Board, BVjong), followed by a roundtable discussion with the minister about the developing of a nation wide plan for prevention of radicalization and polarization. These discussions are ongoing. BVjong stays a partner. One of the results of advocacy work of BVjong.*

Youth workers are confronted regularly with stress, alienation, radicalization and polarisation of young people and their surroundings. What can the youth worker do in preventing and combatting radicalization/jihadism/right wing movements and polarisation? That was the main question for BVjong, suggested to the youth workers during the two “expert” meetings.

### Significant findings

Prevention is still an insufficient priority. Only with repressive measures, including prosecution and withdrawal of passports, we do not solve the problem. It is necessary to invest in an early preventative approach. Primary welfare professionals such as social workers, youth workers are essential in the prevention of radicalization. They should place, along with family members, seeds of doubt in the minds of those who threaten to radicalize. And countering radicalization must be a multidisciplinary effort. A complete picture about the radicalization process in individuals arises only when government, civil society and communities, join hands and exchange information with each other. An important role in such a joint effort should be given to the people in the neighbourhoods, religious organisations, neighbourhood police officers, community workers, youthworkers and other professionals and volunteers who have “ears and eyes” in communities.

One of the causes of radicalization may be that young people feel excluded in Western society, for example as a result of discrimination. It is the responsibility of the youth worker to bring issues such as discrimination, terrorism and war into discussion. It is of course important that the youth worker helps youngsters who feel aggrieved to “arm” themselves with knowledge and skills to express their dissatisfaction in a democratic way.

Also good contacts with parents can do a lot for the integration of young people, while one may think of parenting support and matchmaking events for immigrant parents and meetings with immigrant parents.

### The main conclusions:

The school, the streets and communication with peers are the places where young people form also their identity and show it. If a youngster or a group is radicalizing, the street or a youth centre could be one of the places that can be overseen. This means that youth workers have an important role as they see a young person begins to turn away from society. For this, they must know how to recognize signs of polarization and radicalization.

Each youth worker must be sufficiently equipped to be able to identify good or normal signs of identity searching and bad ones. For this, some basic knowledge of extreme radicalism is desired.

It is also important that the youth worker can spar with colleagues or partners if they have questions. BVjong therefore recommends that youth workers are regularly targeted trained on extreme youth behavior and extreme radicalisation. Trainign also in integrated groups of professionals from various diciplines.

The youth worker often stands between two fires: he wants to help young people through open-minded contacts. But there is also the network with the municipality, police and security houses who seem to focus more on tackling the issues from a repressive perspective and have insufficient insight into the present-oriented approach of the youth worker.

It's important as a youth worker also preventive work to prevent radicalization.

In short: the youth worker can make a very good contribution by identifying polarization and radicalization among young people; by empowering young people and their parents; by proper information in the neighbourhood; by removing the breeding ground (sense of discrimination, working on appropriate work and good education). It is important that the child and youth worker has the ability to be effectively outreachend in his work, that safety is guaranteed in the network approach and that he is well trained in the detection of polarization and radicalization.

### *The role of youth workers in the reception and integration of (young) refugees.*

In total in the beginning of 2016 there were over 42.000 refugees in the Netherlands. A large part coming from Syria. Another large refugee group are people from Eritria. A large part of them are children and young people (mostly men) between 18 and 29 years with no proper education and/or work experience.

In our STREAT NM 3# the following challenges for youth workers were mentioned:

- create work experiences and/or jobs
- complement schools and youth care with the youth work approach
- invest in talents, increase self-esteem
- build bridges between cultures, overcome cultural differences
- use games, sports, arts, music for non formal education
- empower girls in particular (as a vulnerable target group)
- emancipate and increase resilience
- educate knowledge of the Dutch legal system
- educate knowledge of protection facilities
- Inform young people about the Dutch society in a nonformal way
- Introduce and increase support from young Dutch peers

Important recommendations for youth workers regarding the reception/intergration of refugees.

As a key recommendation for youth workers: be pro active, take your role and make yourself important for the refugees and the local community. Claim your place when it comes to integration of newcomers! Make clear what the added value of youth work is. Develop local projects and search for additional resources from the local municipality, national government and/or the EU! Work together with the COA (Central Organization for Asylumseekers).

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **ACTION PLAN (2017 and further; summary)**

#### **3.1. Organisation**

1. Renew interactive communication tools: Website, FB, Twitter, etc.: January 1st 2017.
2. Involve active members in temporary projectgroups (3 already existing since June 2016) and refresh the Board of BVjong with new and young youth workers (chosen at GA april 2017).
4. Organize the national Youth Workers Conference and General Assembly on April 24th, 2017 and co-organize the annual national Child Workers Conference (Novembre, 2017).
5. Co-organize and/or promote thematic and regional meetings of workers, aimed at experience exchange, professional development and positioning (several realized in 2016, ongoing proces).

#### **3.2. Professionalisation**

6. Discuss the conditions of entry in a broader professional association social work, or decide to keep up BVjong as it is (but improved) or change it towards an informal network/movement.
7. Be an active stakeholder in the development of ther professional registration system, the harmonization of various professional codes and the strengthening of professional associations.
8. Contribute actively to the national Action Plan Professionalization of Social Work together with stakeholders MO Group, Abvakabo/FNV, other social partners and stakeholders.
9. Develop and strengthen further the relationship with the Ministry VWS (National Gouvernement) and VNG (Association of Municipalities) and social partners.
10. Active participation in the National Strategic Consultation Youth Work (coordinated by knowledge Centre NJi, National Youth Institute), collaboration in the Amsterdam Youth Spot reserach program, and other relevant national projects and forms of consultation.

#### **3.3. Priority Topics**

11. Keep Youthwork and radicalisation/polarisation and Youth work and (young) refugees on the agenda at all levels and invest in training and advocay work.

#### **3.4. International**

11. Respond pro-active to European youth policy on children and youth, and on youth work.
12. Participate in relevant international activities, inter alia Dynamo International Street Workers Network (DISWN). Including implementation findings project Streat, participating in two new Erasmus+ projects and in relevant European youth work conferences.

## Chapter 4

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **4.1. Youth work.**

We recommend national and local governments and stakeholders to strengthen the **role** of youth work at all levels:

- as eyes and ears in the neighbourhood, based on meaningful trust relations with target groups,
- concentrating on vulnerable and socio-economic deprived youngsters and their surroundings,
- to prevent difficulties in growing up by using all talents and potentials,
- and to educate towards democratic citizenship,
- specially targeting on radicalisation/polarisation
- and on the integration of new citizens, specially young refugees.

We further recommend national and local governments and stakeholders to improve the **position** of youth workers and the **quality** of their work by:

- development of professional registration in the fields of youth care and social work,
- actualisation and elaboration of competences and the professional code,
- improvement of formal education at different levels and possibilities for life long education,
- supported by action research and evidence-based practice.

#### **4.2. BVjong.**

We recommend all youthworkers, members and stakeholders to strengthen BVjong as a bottom-up organisation of workers by:

- improvement of communication between (non)members and with stakeholders,
- an active invitation and search for more (paying) members,
- recruitment of new boardmembers and active members in projectgroups,
- stimulation of regional and thematic meetings of youth workers
- and acquirement of more financial means to realize BVjong's statutory goals.

### **4.3. Agreements**

I agree with the recommendations In this Vademecum:

Ministry of social affairs (Ministerie van VWS; department youthpolicy):

Secretary of State: Mr. Van Rijn ..... Date: .....

Association of local governments (VNG; department youthpolicy)

Mrs. Marieke Hebbenaar ..... Date: .....

Netherlands Youth Institute (NJI; national expertise centre youthwork in general):

Department Youthpolicy and –practice

Mrs. Marja Valkestijn ..... Date: .....

Movisie (national expertise centre social work in general)

Mrs. Els Meijsen ..... Date: .....

Youth Spot (Research Institute Youthwork, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences)

Mrs. Judith Metz ..... Date: .....

BVjong (Board)

Mr. Jazie Veldhuyzen ..... Date: .....



## ANNEXE

### Template Strategic Action Plan BVjong (Netherlands) Advocay Youth Work 2016/2017

Objective		Output		Monitoring	
How (Activities)	With Whom	When	Qualitative	Quantitative	Indicator
National Child workers day	Co-organizing Members, Experts, VNG, Ministry and other stakeholders	Nov 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- professionalization; training, sharing experiences</li> <li>- conclusions to Ministry, VNG and other national stakeholders</li> </ul>	75 participants 60 workers; 15 experts and decisionmakers	Minutes, social media, Reactions stakeholders
National Youthworkers day	Members, Experts, VNG, Ministry and other stakeholders	April 25th 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- professionalization; training, sharing experiences</li> <li>- conclusions to Ministry, VNG and other national stakeholders</li> <li>- <b>UNDERSIGNING CONCLUSIONS TREATED BY DECISIONMAKERS</b></li> </ul>	250 PARTICIPANTS 200 workers 50 experts and decisionmakers	Minutes, social media, Reactions stakeholders, undersignment, press publications, photos, video

Follow up Euregional conference youthwork and radicalisation Novembre 25th 2016	Workers in the euregion MR, Some representatives of stakeholders	January 2017	Further professionalization of workers by intercultural learning in an international context. Stenghtenoing positioning international youthwork in integrated work (vs police, justice etc)	60 participants: 40 dutch, 5 Germany, 15 Belgium (DISWN members!), 15 stakeholders	Interreg subsidizing press publications, phototos, video
Decisionmaking professional registration	National government , Experts, colleague organisations regarding youth work and social work in general	ongoing process, monthly national meetings with stakeholders, possibly finished end 2017	Decision registration under conditions from worgkers themselves, organized by BVjong	Number of registration workers	By external experts and Minstry
Development BVjong as recognizable “chamber” within bigger social workersorgansation	MOgroup, expertcentre, Ministry, members, Other stakeholders	Ongoing process Decision April 25th 2017	Positioning workers, advocacy, members agree with developemtns and criteria	Formal ending of BVjong, membership changes, board BVjong has relative independency in bigger association	Reports Ministry and operational experts Minuts AG 2017
Proactive response to European youth work policy, in collectivity	DISWN, Cfc	Ongoing process and STREAT project in 2016	Strengethening position youth work by succesfulle advocacy campaigns at European and worldwide leven	Reports send to ??? Prswess attention, articles	Reprt, undersiggnament European and worldwide decisionmakers

Strengthening BVjong as a bottom up workers organisation	Boardmembers, members, workers, working groups (new), Movisie (other stakeholders, Ministry, VNG, funding organisations)	Ongoing process in 2017 (end 2016 evaluation), 2 monthly boardmeetings, presentation results at general assembly 2504 2017 (at national workersday)	String, independent, bottom up, proud, well known organisation with good and smoothly operating functioning, known well by everybody relevant	End 2017: from 125 till 500 paying members. At General assembly beginning 2017: from 3-7 boardmembers, young workers replace henks functions. At least 3 workgroups finish with reports. 5 new are starting	