

## EUROPEAN ACADEMY ON YOUTH WORK - WORKSHOP REPORT

### City Incubator

**Ksenja Perko**, manager of the Public Institution Young Dragons, trainer and facilitator, specialised in creative thinking and developing ideas.

Contact: [ksenja@mladizmaji.si](mailto:ksenja@mladizmaji.si)

#### TOPIC / PROJECT DISCUSSED

City Incubator is a platform for the implementation of the ideas of young people in Ljubljana.

##### What is working well, and what could be even better?

The challenge the city of Ljubljana wanted to address was how to approach young people who have ideas. We tackled the challenge with positive enquiry: what works well, and what could be even better? We approached young people with a thoughtfully designed programme that supports them on the path of making their ideas happen. We developed the City Incubator as a sustainable tool of knowledge support, implementation tools and co-financing for local youth initiatives. The innovation addresses young people who have their own ideas on how to increase the quality of life in the city and who wish to be actively involved in the life of the city.

City Incubator represents an implementation of a strategy to increase the support to young peoples' initiatives, which is included in the Strategy of City of Ljubljana for Youth 2016-2025. It was developed and first put into practice in 2016 by the Public Institution Young Dragons in co-operation with NGO TiPovej! Taking into consideration the specifics of youth, a lot of thought and effort was put into answering the following questions:

- How to approach young people?
- How to activate them?
- How to support them toward the realisation of their idea?
- How to empower them, so that when they stumble on the way they do not give up but rather learn from the experience and try a second or a third time?

With City Incubator we stimulate and support activities that are based on and require active engagement and the responsibility of young people on the local level which is an essential part of youth work. City Incubator is an opportunity to support initiatives suggested by young people active in the youth centres and those who were not (yet) visitors to the youth centres. The youth centre then becomes a place that offers to youth resources for creation, challenges for getting experience, opportunities to prove themselves and a chance to lead their own project. All this develops competences that increase employment and life opportunities.



### City Incubator = Workshops + Mentorship + Financial Support.

#### The programme “What is working well, and what could be even better?” as the first module of City Incubator includes:

- 3 x 3 hours workshops with professionals for the realisation of ideas.
- 5 individual hours with experienced mentors (carefully selected matching with the needs of young people and their ideas).
- For selected projects at the end of the training process there is 200 € as a financial re-ward for the creators of the projects and up to 1.000 € financing for the realisation of the idea.

#### Currently young people are invited to propose ideas that address the following issues:

- Ljubljana is a green capital, ideas that promote sustainable living.
- Youth for youth, co-create a programme and activities for young people.
- Intergenerational co-operation.

#### Program process:

1. Young people submit their ideas in a simple online form.
2. Up to 15 ideas participate in workshops, discussions and fun activities, to clarify and fi-ne-tune their ideas.
3. Participants submit their ideas in the form of a project application.
4. A committee of experts select a maximum of 10 projects for implementation.
5. Selected projects receive mentorship and financial support.
6. Implementation of selected projects is conducted in collaboration with other public in-stitutions founded by the City of Ljubljana and with NGOs for youth and local businesses.

#### Our criteria for the selection of participants is as follows:

- Feasibility of the proposed project.
- The positive effects for the city.
- Applicability of the project.
- Motivation of the applicant.

#### Positive example of collaboration

The Public Institution Young Dragons provided infrastructure, financial support and reach to the young people while NGO TiPovej! provided a customised training program and a mentorship scheme. City Incubator is a positive example of collaboration between youth organisations, municipality and business which makes people's lives in the city better and has a positive im-pact on the city. Two full cycles of the programme have been conducted so far. Twenty-four youth projects were realised.



*“Co-creating the beat of the city”  
notebooks and other materials  
prepared for the EAYW workshop.*

## CITY INCUBATOR AT THE EAYW: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Presenting the City Incubator at the European Academy of Youth Work was a great opportunity to get feedback from colleagues in the youth field. I wanted to showcase a successful local pro-gramme to inspire and pass forward an idea that works in Ljubljana and can be applied to different environments of social development through youth support.

“How to ensure it is accessible for everyone?” was one of the most important questions when we meet at the workshop. The inclusive aspect is at the core of youth work. Inclusion is one of the critical building blocks of contemporary society and one of the important issues of today. We are always looking for innovative solutions to inclusion. The participants agreed that the basic idea of the City Incubator is amazing because we are giving youth a space to contribute to their society’s life. They have an opportunity to express what they think needs to be done and which is also based on their needs. Youth is delivering a solution for the city, for society, for everybody.

I developed my way of thinking and exchanged thoughts which generated ideas for the future development of City Incubator. Future plans are to involve more public institutions and companies for implementation. We would also like to build a bigger pool of mentors and to adapt future challenges to the real needs of the city and youth. Future challenges are (and will be) communicated in regular consultations with youth in the process of evaluation of the city strategy for youth and in the Network of Youth Centres of Ljubljana (which now includes 13 youth centres).

The three most important ideas for further development of the programme were,

- To follow up on how the projects ‘live on’.
- To give more space to intergenerational projects.
- To learn more about lobbying to be able to influence change at the political level of the city.

A better knowledge of lobbying can help give more influence to youth work and open the space for the social innovations which we have developed. It can also be useful to look for futuristic solutions. I think what is needed is to create training for mastering lobbying and to work on a political level with the mission to create a better society for people, animals and nature.

## LINKS TO FURTHER RESOURCES

<https://oecd-opsi.org/innovations/city-incubator/>  
<https://www.mladizmaji.si/mestni-inkubator/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/mladizmaji/>



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More information about the EAYW:  
[www.eayw.net](http://www.eayw.net)