

EUROPEAN ACADEMY ON YOUTH WORK - WORKSHOP REPORT

The Pigeon Plan e.V. - Skateboarding to reach disadvantaged youth

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TOPIC DISCUSSED

Skateboarding and Olympia; skateboarding as a medium to foster cross-border cooperation; skateboarding and its subculture to reach disadvantaged youth (through art and creativity); diversity and inclusion; gender equality

Countries involved include Germany, Denmark and South Africa.

METHODOLOGY

60 minutes' input and discussion

- Introductory question: What do you know about Skateboarding?- Mind Map creation- Literature review: Skateboarding between Subculture and Olympia, a youth culture under pressure from commercialisation and sportification- The Pigeon Plan story: South Africa, Refugee home Germany, cross border project Denmark/Germany

30 minutes' practice outside

- Skate over the wave/ramp which was built by refugee youngsters- create an art work by rolling through paint- discuss possible ways of implementing Skateboarding in the participants' local communities

KEY ISSUES RAISED SUCH AS CHALLENGES

One of the main challenges raised in our workshop was the implementation of a suitable project for refugee children in Germany. Donators and their contribution (equipment) as well as equal gender participation in our workshops were part of the discussion. We talked about integrative tools such as building skate parks in the communities to make Skateboarders visit the places (for example the refugee home in Kiel). On the other hand, we presented an event which brought many refugee children to the city engaging with the street culture of Skateboarding.

Another challenge stressed was the voluntary participation of young adults in our project. At the end, we talked about different ways of including Non-Skateboarders (those who might have issues participating in the physical movement) by creating a safe space to develop creative ideas/products connected to Skateboards. In this context, we also spoke about the social participation of those who have disadvantages themselves.

Our future perspective concerns possible ways of helping youth find out skills which connect them to the labour market. Skateboarding offers many aspects and functions as a great medium to reach the younger generation.



INNOVATIVE RESPONSE(S) TO THOSE CHALLENGES

Through the immense support of local skate shops, skateboard communities and online platforms, our project provided at least 200 complete skateboards to different institutions. From South African townships to different local institutions in Germany, we have managed to enable Skateboarders to participate in sharing their passion with disadvantaged youth. Through the fundraising of a Mini Ramp and by placing it in the centre of a refugee home, we brought many active Skateboarders to the outskirts of Kiel. With female instructors from the skateboard scene we empower young women in participating in our skateboard sessions. Innovative practices, such as redesigning used skateboards, collective art performances or recycling skateboard wood, brought many more tools to involve a broad array of Non-Skateboarders (physically).

Integrative events like the “Kiel Week” or the “Dönerjam” are ways of bringing some of our youngsters from the refugee camp to the city. These authentic events also show skateboard locals and other young adults the need to become part of a voluntary project. One could say that our project provides tools to reach both refugees and volunteers and enhances their social awareness.

After some years, we have found out that there is a big need to support youngsters in finding meaningful tasks. Therefore, we have included our participants in ramp building activities and other creative work in order to help them find out more about skills which could possibly be characteristic for their future career.



KEY TRENDS IDENTIFIED (COMMONALITIES BETWEEN COMMENTS/ PARTICIPANTS)

The increasing population in cities brings creative work to the foreground. Performances and creative work with / from Skateboards displays the acquisition of urban surroundings by youth (urban crafts).

Explanation: Rolling through paint marks pathways of Skateboarders. Bringing the acquisition of urban architecture / streets to the wall of exhibition rooms, for example, opens up discourse.

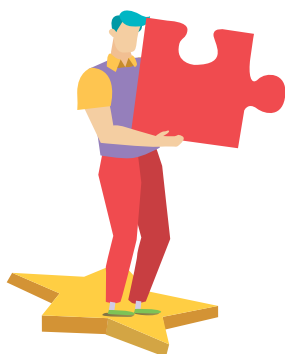
The expected sportification of the youth movement (Skateboarding) could possibly create further counter cultures. The subcultural dimension of Skateboarding will thus become a meaningful tool to reach the young generation in the near future.

Inclusion and diversity in projects like the one we have established in Kiel were part of our discussion. Providing a safe space and new tools were reflected. We showed that one way of how to involve more women/girls in refugee projects can be to work with skateboards.

Explanation: Many people do not know Skateboarding as a sports discipline and therefore cannot forbid the participation of young girls. Working creatively and through other subcultural aspects also creates a gender equal atmosphere in our group.

Fostering active and creative participation of young adults through the medium of Skateboarding offers many aspects of social engagement. Working with something that is “really cool” can reach many children, youngsters and young adults, also with disadvantages.

FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS



We received really positive feedback from our participants. Many came up to us and were amazed by the products we have designed and built in former projects. Others told us that they were inspired by our approaches and that they would love to become a network partner. One participant told us: *“When I come back home, I will definitely create a skateboard art work with our youth. We have skateboards in our institution already.”*

The expertise in skateboarding does not necessarily play the biggest role. Rather we tried to offer a variety of creative activities which can be transformed by any youth worker. Another comment was: *“Olympia – I see your critical point about measuring skateboarding. Imagine you would include the competitors by giving points to one another.”*

This and other comments show how much our workshop engaged the participants with the topics discussed. Furthermore, we (the contributors) started to reflect upon the great ideas of workshop participants, which might open up new innovative practices in our projects.



LINKS TO FURTHER RESOURCES OR INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT AVAILABLE ONLINE



<https://www.thepigeonplan.de/>
<https://www.facebook.com/thepigeonplan>
<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2523099207714898&set=a.102269736464536&type=3&theater>



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