



CALL
Church Action on
Labour and Life

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN
EMPLOYMENT AND
ECONOMY NETWORK

Youth employment in Europe - a challenge for Churches?

24th - 26th of March 2014
Chant d'Oiseau
Brussels
Belgium

Project background and objectives

Project background

According to Eurostat, in August 2013, 5.499 million young people were unemployed in the EU28. This is more than the population of Denmark. Behind these numbers there are concrete young individuals, who face many aspects of unemployment that need to be addressed urgently.

Due to the current crisis in Europe many young people find themselves in situations, where they are unprotected and with no security for the future. This constrains them to take precarious jobs or unpaid internships to succeed in the labour market. This is prolonging their transition into adulthood and disables them to be active participants in building the society together with other generations. Many young people lose trust in the community they live in and are less willing to participate in society and attempt to make a change.

In the Christian faith, the dignity of a person is given by God, not depending on her/his work, efforts and results achieved. Every human being is equipped with competences and capacities and called by God, the Creator, to serve his/her neighbour and the whole creation in the daily life. Therefore unemployment is not only an economic obstacle, but a far reaching impairment of a person, her/his well-being and the integration in society.

Already in October 2012 the CALL Assembly established a working group on Youth Employment. Gathering representatives of different generations coming from various CEC member Churches and church related organisations, the group will try to define the role which these actors can play to overcome the dramatic situation of young people today and to secure better inter-generational dialogue and cooperation within society.

In order to determine the concrete need for its contribution to the matter mentioned, the CALL working group is organising a conference to address issues of youth employment and the situation of the young people today. This event will be designed to bring together young people and representatives from various European Churches, in order to understand their expectations and needs, and to identify possible ways of cooperation in addressing the issues around youth employment in Europe.

This conference will not start from a zero point, but will seek to map the existing projects and initiatives dealing with youth unemployment issues, as well as define the concrete needs for this work. Many churches and church related organisations in Europe are already engaged in youth employment projects and they will be represented at this conference as examples of good practice, to share ideas and their experiences.

Objectives of the conference

Following objectives can be outlined for the conference:

- to have an overview on the expectations of the target groups invited regarding the issue
- to receive inputs that would show different realities that young people are in today
- to share good practices in churches that deal with issues of supporting youth in employment questions
- to develop concrete ideas and initiatives for possible further contribution to the youth employment issues on different levels (e.g. create network for partners for EU Youth Guarantee)
- to explore possibilities to contribute to policy shaping processes on the issues of youth employment on local, national and European levels
- to provide a forum for exchange of ideas, experiences and good practices

Target group

The project will bring together 50 participants, coming from various backgrounds and representing various target groups that will be addressed through this conference.

- 1) Young people from various social backgrounds, who are facing the employment crisis.
- 2) Church organisations, which have experience with youth employment projects, and youth workers/ social workers from various churches, who deal with the issues at stake and can share practical insight into the issues addressed.
- 3) Decision makers in churches, who have the potential to address the issues on the "political" level and can initiate implementation of concrete initiatives in their churches.

Experts from EU institutions related to the youth employment issues (e.g. DG Employment), the European Youth Forum and already existing church project will be invited to contribute to the conference.

In addition, in order to bring successful outcomes for the conference, CALL has invited several partners to cooperate for this project, such as Gustav Adolf's Werk, Eurodiaconia, Diakonie and the Y.E.S. Forum (Youth and Europe Social workers Forum).

Date and venue

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