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Introduction

1 Enhancing social inclusion has long been a central aim in the practice of youth work. Nonetheless, it may imply different challenges, depending on the background of the young people at stake. Nowadays more and more youth workers are asked to deal with young people living in deprived urban neighbourhoods in which there is an «accumulation of social problems» and many features of «social exclusion». In such settings, the challenge of social inclusion is often formulated in terms of social mobility, which is regarded as blocked. For many young people living in the deprived urban neighbourhoods, social mobility is blocked when several factors are combined : unemployment in the regular labour market is high (which makes the illegal sector attractive); negative discrimination is frequent at the hiring stage (especially for young people regarded as belonging to «ethnic minorities»); the benefits of formal education/ diplomas are not self-evident anymore. As a result, many young people face problems in trying to escape this intergenerational cycle of poverty. Enhancing social mobility is more topical than ever. This holds true for many Western European countries, the Netherlands included. Dutch youth workers are then urged to take over the highly challenging mission of contributing – directly or indirectly – to the improvement of the position of the deprived young people in the labour market and eradicating early school drop out.

2 However social professionals who are dealing with urban youth also have to take another prominent trend into account : the increasing fear of crime among the ordinary citizens regarding the so-called «youth at risk». While it is true that some fights involving young people and the police have occurred in the last few years, Dutch institutions have never been directly and severely challenged by urban youth in the way their French counterparts have been (most prominently during the riots of November 2005 in the «banlieues», but also at many other times since the 1980s (Mucchielli, 2009)). Nevertheless, there is a great deal of attention paid to all kinds of youth criminality figures in the Netherlands, especially those related to young people belonging to «ethnic minorities», most of whom live in the less privileged parts of the Dutch cities. Over the last decades, these young people have been increasingly regarded as an internal threat to public order among Dutch people. As a result, there is a growing emphasis for the need of a «hard line» towards the so-called «youth at risk» in both mass media and policy circles which has spread to various policy fields, youth (social) policy included. Such a «hard line» is not new – the emphasis on punishment was already obvious in the 1990s (Van Swaaningen, 1995; Boutellier & Van Stokkom, 1995) just as in other European countries (Garland, 2001) – but it is still very topical. Since the participation of marginalised young people in crime is also emphasised and since youth workers are involved in the field of crime prevention (Baillergeau & Duyvendak, 2001), one may wonder : To what extent is this compatible with the goal of enhancing social mobility of the «deprived young people» ? To what extent do the new 'hard line' policies influence the front line youth workers in their daily practice ? If so, for how long ? The point of this article is to get some insights into the actual experience of frontline professionals in dealing with marginal young people in order to reflect the rationales for action in that matter : what is actually done about marginality, beyond policy intentions and social practice ? These questions will be addressed on the basis of a literature review into youth work in the Netherlands over the last decades. First, we will give some insights into the development of youth work as a field of social practice and we will outline the extent to which the issue of the marginalised youth has been addressed by youth workers. Second, we will explore the current challenges for Dutch youth work regarding «deprived youth» and what the position of the Dutch youth workers is within in the context of the «hard line» discussion according to the available literature.

3 This article is based on a review of academic and professional literature about youth work in the Netherlands. Generally speaking, the available literature consists of academic sociological/ethnographical research, handbooks for students and/or frontline professionals, quick scan/evaluation research/audits.[1] This review is part of a research project aimed at assessing the contribution of youth work in enhancing social inclusion among marginalised youth in the present situation on the basis of empirical observations of mobile youth work targeting «youth on the street» in Amsterdam («hangjongeren»).

A general outline of youth work in the Netherlands

4 The field of practice at stake in this article is known as «jongerenwerk», a Dutch word for «youth work» (literal translation). What is youth work in the Netherlands ? Just as in other countries such as the United Kingdom (Smith, 1999), Dutch youth work embraces a wide array of social practices focusing on young people. There is no unified definition for «jongerenwerk», neither in policy circles (state-subsidised youth work falls under «youth

policy») nor in the academic or professional literature. The only clear common point among practices falling under the umbrella of youth work is that the youth workers are dealing with young people from 12 to 23 and they are focusing on the young people’s spare time (Van Ginkel, Veenbaas & Noorda, 2006). However a wide variety of activities and services might be offered to fill this spare time.

5 Historical glances show that youth work practices may be traced back in the 19th century (Van der Linde, 2007; Hazekamp e.a., 1994). As in many other countries, most of the early Dutch youth work practices relied on private (religious and later political) initiatives. At the very beginning, two major rationales used to guide the Dutch youth work. On the one hand, the point was to provide ordinary young people with moral background and (religious and/or political) values and traditions. On the other hand, some practices were aimed at addressing concerns about developing inequality in society : what should be done about the marginalised youth ? Hence Dutch youth work may both involve all youth and/or marginalised youth in particular.

6 Besides involving various types of young people, Dutch youth work may be oriented along various perspectives. Authors usually single out «personal development» and «social participation» (Hazekamp & Van der Zande, 1992). The possible perspectives for youth work practices may also be depicted along three lines : entertainment; education; support/help (Van Ewijk, 1992; Veenbaas & Noorda, 2005). These three perspectives may either be combined or not in youth work practices. The first two lines do not only apply to marginalised youth, our central focus in this article. However, we are not suggesting that entertainment coaching alone will translate into benefits for marginalised youth in terms of social mobility (there are indeed great expectations in that matter – namely about sport; see article by Ramon Spaaij in the same volume). Entertainment may definitely be combined with education and/or social support (Coussée, 2008).

7 Dutch youth workers may appear in various settings. As in most countries youth workers may work in (more or less) dedicated facilities (youth clubs, neighbourhood centres, etc.) where they are assigned to offer some activities for the visitors of the facility. But youth workers may also appear in the living environment of the young people, such as in German mobile youth work (Specht, 1979) or in British detached youth work (Davies, 1999). In the Netherlands, the term «ambulante jongerenwerk» (mobile youth work) applies to mobile youth work in the broadest sense, including providing services in vans and active contact making in street settings. Moreover it is important to mention that Dutch youth workers always work out of a voluntary commitment of the targeted young people, thus, not because of any judicial order – unlike some social workers dealing with «enfance en danger» (endangered children) in France for instance.[2] This general outline of the Dutch youth work reflects a rather old, broad and diverse field of practice. Let’s now focus on the attention paid by the Dutch youth workers to marginalised youth. The fact that marginalised youth has been a target group for a rather long period of time suggests that there is significant and rather settled professional expertise in that matter. Is it so ? What are the main rationales involved ? What are the tools and the resources used by youth workers for dedicated intervention towards marginalised youth ? What can we learn about it from the available literature ?

The emergence of marginalised youth as a target for youth work in the Netherlands

8 Since the 19th century, Dutch youth work has been both meant to reach both all young people and specific groups of young people. According to De Regt, from the 19th century till the middle of the 20th century, youth work used to aim at «raising» the lower class by means of social education of the proletarian youth (De Regt, 1984). Targeted youth work is thus as old as youth work in general. According to several authors, such an early commitment could be explained by the concerns of the dominant class regarding working-class youth (Hazekamp & Van der Zande, 1992; De Swaan, 1989; De Regt, 1984). Hazekamp and Van der Zande (1992) studied the development of youth work all along the last two centuries. They singled out four periods during which youth work paid prominent attention to specific groups. First of all, at the end of the 19th century, there were concerns about the ethical and moral education of «arbeidersjeugd» (working-class youth) living in the expanding cities of the industrial society (see also Van der Linde, 2007; De Swaan, 1989; De Regt, 1984). Just as in the United Kingdom at the end of the 19th century, the main perspective was both care and control of behaviour (Jones, 1984). Back to the Netherlands, Lunenberg argued that the attention paid to the working-class youth in the 1920s – the second period designed by Hazekamp and Van der Zande – came from the fact that – as a result of the change in the employment legislation – working-class young people left school as they turned to 12 and joined the factory. According to the proponents of youth work at that time, the lack of schooling and the lack of moral education within working-class families should be compensated by youth work during the spare time (Lunenberg, 1988). Such a concern for non organised youth (unattached) should be viewed against a very typical Dutch social and political background known abroad as pillarisation (Lijphart, 1968). This background is best to be typified by strong concerns for social cohesion in spite of deep cultural divide in the Dutch society along «ideological» lines – Protestant, Roman Catholic, Liberal, Socialist. Since the late 19th century (until the 1950s), each ideological community was strongly organised both at the local level and the national level in a wide set of institutions – from schools to trade unions and broadcasting organisations – known as «pillars». In turn, each pillar developed youth organisations in order to provide «its» youth with spare time activities.

9 In such a background, «non-organised youth» applied to young people who do not have any connection with one of the settled communities (Veenbaas & Noorda, 2005). Dutch authorities gradually started to provide care to youth and some initiatives were launched towards informal education of the so-called «not-organised working-class youth» (Van der Zande, 1987). The state paid attention to the development of spare time heard as the «third education sphere» (besides home and school) by granting small subsidies to informal education projects as soon as the 1920s (Hazekamp e.a., 1994). In his dissertation about young people on the street, Hazekamp (1985) argued that since the 1920s academic «pedagogues» were concerned about the effects of «growing up» on the street. «The pedagogical interventions were focused on bringing youth back from the street to educational institutions dominated by adults; especially working-class young people were viewed as having a negative impact on young people in general and as being a threat for the public order’ (Hazekamp, 1985 : 215, our translation). Again, the similarities with the case of Britain regarding the presence of working-class young people on the street are striking (Davin, 1996; C. Jones, 1984). However, Dutch historians (Van der Linde, 2007) and

social pedagogues (Hazekamp & Van der Zande, 1994) assert that in the first half of the 20 th century the neighbourhood centres and the youth clubs did not reach the working-class youth in all cases. Since their attempts in line with the pillarised organisations were not successful, some new initiatives were launched in the cities (clubhuiswerk), with a special focus on the working-class youth. In turn, the new initiatives were also not regarded as successful. «Out of the practice it seems that the undereducated working-class youth is not reached by informal education and this looks problematic because they are standing out as a result of their behaviour. Due to compulsory education, more spare time and wage increases, they became visible in public spaces and mainly in the street. Their mode of hanging out was regarded as shocking and perverted by the middle class and the higher working class circles’ (Hazekamp e.a., 1994 – our translation).

10 Gradually, like other fields of social practice (De Haan en Duyvendak, 2002), youth work could get more and more governmental funding, under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Work (1952-1965). After World War II, concerns about the non-educated working-class youth rose again (Hazekamp e.a., 1994 : 20). In an influential research project into «Maatschappelijke Verwildering van de jeugd’ («the social decay of the youth»), young people – regardless of class – were presented as opportunists disappearing in the crowd, simply imitating the badly regarded behaviour – «hanging around, shouting, talking about nothing» – of other young people and they were considered as not able to make responsible choices (Hazekamp & Van der Zande, 1992 : 57). Langeveld (1952), a well known pedagogue at that time and leader of the research project, pointed at the industrialization process which was, he argued, responsible for the disappearance of traditions and stable social relations. The results of this research led to an increase of state programmes in favour of youth work aimed at the general education of young people aged between 6 and 25 who came from «socially weak environments» (Van der Zande, 1987). In this period there was again significant attention paid to the working-class youth as target group for youth work but the term changed into «massajeugd» (mass youth). However, just as in the previous period, authors regard the attempts of Post-War youth work organisations to attract working-class young people as unsuccessful. According to Hazekamp & Van der Zande (1994), the latter did not have much interest in the offered activities.

11 In the 1960s and the 1970s, there was much less attention on special target groups in youth work. The prevailing idea was that all youth work activities should be open to all young people (Van der Linde, 2007; Hazekamp & Van der Zande, 1992). Just as in other European countries, there was great hope about the capability of society to generate well-being for all (Duyvendak, 1999). At that time, the Dutch government saw its role and part of its responsibility as not only to stimulate economic «welvaart» (prosperity) but also «welzijn» (literally : well-being) of citizens (Schuyt & Van der Veen, 1995). Youth work initiatives was still supported by the state, both in terms of financing and organization – though the Ministry of Social Work changed into the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work in 1965 – and was granted with even more funds than before (De Haan & Duyvendak, 2002). Gradually, the governmental responsibility for the funding of youth work was decentralised to local authorities. The prevailing perspective was to bridge marginalised youth to the rest of the youth. Again, youth work is regarded as rather ineffective with regard to marginalised groups. Hazekamp and Van der Zande (1992) argued that in the 1960s and 1970s the activities offered by youth work were designed for «subcultures of middle-class youth and not for the working-class youth» (1992 : 53). In

the 1970s, youth work became more and more politicised, just as the new generation of youth workers. However this development did not affect the targeted youth from the working class neighbourhoods. Therefore they did not visit the neighbourhood centres any more (if they came there at all). Hazekamp and Van der Zande concluded that there is a «connection problem» (*aansluitingsproblematiek*) : youth workers did not manage to reach (a part of) the working-class youth because they offered activities that fitted more with the middle class youth than the working-class youth.

12 In the 1980s – the fourth period – there was a revival in attention for specific groups in youth work, through the emergence of selective approaches. According to Hazekamp (1985) such a development should be framed in the classical pedagogical tradition of singling out «problem youth» – in «problematic situations» – from «normal youth». From then on the target groups were not formulated in terms of social class anymore, but new forms of specific groups such as «addicted young people», «marginal young people», «long-term homeless» and «youth from ethnic minorities». For each of them special practices were tailor-made, inducing a great diversity among the practices carried out under the umbrella of youth work. In the 1990s most of these target groups were put together in the label «probleemjongeren» (problematic youth). This was neither based on a class definition nor a feature definition (such as addiction or migrant status), but rather on the lack of work or educational path. According to Veenbaas and colleagues, the point of youth work is to address the needs of «young people who are in trouble on all sides» (1986 : 17 – our translation).

A rather negative assessment in a context of knowledge fragmentation

13 The available literature provides us with interesting insights into the general perspective of youth work with regard to marginalised youth and the profile of the target groups over the last century. The goal of bridging marginalised youth to the rest of the society is as old as youth work in the Netherlands, although this goal was scarcely met according to authors. But what did youth workers actually try to achieve with these targeted marginalised youth ? So far, it is rather difficult to answer this question. Indeed there is very little information available about the practical experience of the previous generations of Dutch youth workers. Although authors give a clear picture of the target groups and the theoretical background along which they were defined, it is rather difficult for the reader to know what the youth workers actually offered to the target groups. At most, Veenbaas and colleagues reflect some «work principles» such as connecting the living conditions of the young people; active listening, and promoting autonomy (1986 : 29-32). Moreover, several authors make a distinction between facility-based youth work and non-facility-based youth work in which it is rather clear that non-facility-based youth work better addresses the needs of the marginalised youth (for instance Van Ewijk, 1989; Van der Zande & Hazekamp, 1992; Van Ginkel, Veenbaas & Noorda, 2006; Schellekens, 1998). Facility-based youth work includes practices that occur in and/or are organised from locations such as neighbourhood centres and youth clubs. Non-facility-based youth work includes practices involving youth workers who are trying to reach young people in their living environment, namely in street settings (Schellekens, 1998). Street corner work emerged in the Netherlands in the late 1960s – thus slightly later than street work in Britain and Northern America (Crawford, Malamud & Dumpson,

1950; Klein, 1971)– as a method through which youth workers could reach out young people who do not ask for contact or support of «regular» youth- or social work facilities and make contact with them in order to provide them – if possible – with support regarding the problems they were facing. In most cases, such practices deal with homeless young people or addicted young people or those with psychiatric problems. This work is meant to bridge the gap between these young people and all kinds of institutions that could not reach them along the usual path, such as medical institutions, welfare offices and «regular» social support. Besides dealing with young people in deeply difficult situations, mobile youth work has also been carried out by youth work facilities when it appeared that many young people from the working class did not visit youth facilities spontaneously. Therefore outreach methods have been used and directed towards a wider spectrum of young people on the street (Hazekamp, 1976). In the 1970s such practices were driven by the universalistic idea of reaching ALL youth together, thus not only those who were spontaneously visiting the facilities. Over the last few years, the label «outreachend jongerenwerk» (outreaching youth work) has been increasingly used in policy and professional circles in the Netherlands, referring to the same practices as mobile youth work : youth work in which professionals are assigned to make contact with some young people in their own living environment – including street settings – without having been requested to do so by the targeted young people.

14 The venue is clear but what have these mobile/street-based practices actually been about ? How did youth workers approach the target groups in order to convince them to visit youth clubs ? What was actually tried in order to favour facility access among marginalised young people ? One may indeed wonder about intervention towards marginal youth but also possibly towards the spontaneous visitors of youth facilities in order to favour active mixing. The gap has not been successfully bridged but what was actually attempted in order to bridge it ? Through out the literature review it seemed to us that early practices are documented scarcely in the Netherlands. As a result, it seems that there is little to learn from previous failures and the wheel has to be invented all over again at all times. Actually this is the point of Veenbaas and colleagues (1986), whose book is an exception since it does provide a picture of youth work in those days.

15 Is there any knowledge transfer at all in youth work ? Indeed Winkelaar (1983) and Hazekamp & Van der Zande (1992) suggest that there is limited use of knowledge grounded in practical experience in the past and rather little amount of knowledge exchange as they provide explanation for that : «when youth work education is dealt with, in most cases the «Cultural and Social Education» fields of study are dealt with. At any level of these fields of study there is extremely little consultation regarding youth work education. It seems that everybody is only working on his/her own’ (Winkelaar quoted by Hazekamp & Van der Zande, 1992 : 72 – our translation). Moreover, there has always been rather little deliberation, discussion or cooperation between Universities of Applied Sciences at the national level about the contents of educational programmes and (the development and exchange of) methods for youth work (Hazekamp & Van der Zande, 1992). In a way, the current situation suggests the same impression. First of all, specific education in the field of youth work is still scarce and isolated in the Universities of Applied Sciences.[3] For instance the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences provides a «minor» curriculum in the field of youth work as part of the Cultural and Social Education curriculum[4], but it is rather unclear what is meant to support the education of youth work with regard to marginalised youth. More generally speaking, the literature

review shows that the formal education offered by the Dutch Universities of Applied Sciences to students who are willing to get trained as a youth worker has always been relatively fragmented. This is striking when we compare with education to social work students (in the British sense – «maatschappelijk werk»). Some Universities of Applied Sciences have offered some kind of a specialized programme about youth work, others not.

16 The recent literature about mobile youth work – with marginalised youth as a central focus – also suggests knowledge fragmentation. Former mobile youth worker Jan Schellekens wrote his book «Ambulant Jongerenwerk» (mobile youth work) in a relatively isolated way with regard to the past. In the introduction, he states that when youth workers are asked about the contents, methods and effects of their work, they declare that they are developing a practice based on their «own work experience» (as a youth worker). According to Schellekens, the reason for that is that many field workers are working alone. Moreover, opportunities for reflection, knowledge exchange and institutional support are scarce (Schellekens, 1998; Hoijtink, 2006). As a result, there is high turnover rate among youth workers and, in turn, expertise gets easily lost. By describing his accumulated experience and translating it into more general principles, «diagonals for the practice» (his own words – our translation), he intended to overcome the lack. Moreover, the private company Bureau Stade recently published a little book about mobile youth work. This can be seen as an attempt to provide knowledge and to support youth workers (Schwarze & Van Woudenberg, 2004) in addition to the book by Schellekens, which is quoted by Stade. However to what extent youth workers are using this book as a source of knowledge remains unclear. Finally, a large social care institution for addicted people recently published a booklet about street corner work (IRISzorg, 2007). The writing of this booklet was not supported in any way by any research institute such as the Dutch Youth Institute or by any other academic scholar.

17 Hence it seems that there is high degree of knowledge fragmentation in the field of youth work, especially when we compare with other fields of social welfare work. As a result it is probably difficult for contemporary youth workers to take advantage of the experience of their predecessors. Furthermore it is difficult for researchers to analyse the rationales of youth work with marginalised youth in the long run. The literature shows that for many decades youth work has been driven by the general goal of bridging the gap between marginalised youth and the rest of society, either by universalistic or selective practices. For the rest the reasons for the suggested failure of youth work remains unclear in secondary literature : How come the youth workers did not reach the target groups and why ? The cultural split assumption (between youth workers and marginalised young people, both in the first decades of the 20th century and in the 1960s and early 1970s) sounds interesting, but was it so critical in the failure of youth work with regard to marginalised young people ? Missing knowledge about the suspected problems of the target groups (did youth workers get special training in order to work among marginalised young people, either via formal education or professional coaching) ? Inappropriate tools/practices ? Was there too little institutional and/or financial support in order to develop appropriate interventions ? Furthermore, the balance between the three main lines – educational, entertaining and supportive activities – in daily practice remains unclear. More insights in this matter would be useful in order to provide the contemporary reader with some relevant questions and guidelines for the understanding of the intrinsic challenges of youth work as a field of practice addressing the needs of

marginalised youth. Without such insights, the early years of Dutch youth work remain more than mysterious.

Recent developments in the state-funded youth work

18 Does the available literature provide us with more insights about the recent period than about the early years of the Dutch youth work ? Since the 1980s, Dutch youth policy and related state funds (and thus youth workers’ practices) have been increasingly focused on specific target groups, namely what is commonly heard as «problematic youth» («probleemjongeren» in Dutch) or lately «youth at risk» («risicojongeren» in Dutch). During the same period, security emerged as a central concern in the Dutch society, involving young people to a large extent. How are these two issues addressed in the literature about youth work ?

19 By increasingly focusing on special target groups Dutch youth policy is no exception in the era of the retrenchment of the Welfare state and the increasing use of targeting measures towards the less privileged layer of society in most Western countries’ social policy arrangements. As a result, selective youth work became the prominent approach, mainly in relation with the implementation of the «big cities policy». Since the late 1980s, the Dutch government has launched specific programmes for a number of «deprived» neighbourhoods. Special funds have been allocated in order to improve the quality of life of the residents and bridge the existing gap between these neighbourhoods and the remaining part of the city (Stouthuysen e.a., 2000). The Dutch «big cities policy» recalls the French «politique de la Ville» to a large extent and many projects designed in its framework are funded by European programmes, such as URBAN and its followers. Hence Dutch youth workers are increasingly working in deprived urban areas and dealing with «marginalised youth» within the framework of governmental schemes related to anti-deprivation policy. There are clear expectations regarding their contribution to the improvement of the social position of marginalised youth. Many youth workers are employees of local welfare organisations that are, in turn, sponsored by the local governmental bodies, thanks to central governmental funds. Accordingly, social mobility emerged as an issue for the Dutch youth work in the 1990s while unemployment and school drop out have become prominent concerns regarding the youth from some deprived urban areas. Therefore youth workers are not only assigned to provide marginalised young people with opportunities for entertainment but also for additional education and/or social support. There is now a strong focus on formal education – guidance towards additional professional training and diplomas – whereas «education» was previously meant as informal education in youth work.

20 However, in spite of the obvious expectations towards youth workers with regard to the improvement of the position of marginalised young people, there is – again – rather little research data available. Indeed, the literature relies primarily on quick scans rather than on comprehensive quantitative or in-depth qualitative analysis into the reality of youth work. First, there is very little comprehensive data on how many youth workers are actually employed, where exactly in the Netherlands they are and what their formal assignments are. However, some authors are striving to sketch the field. Social scientist Van Grienvsen conducted quantitative research among 236 youth workers, most of which are working on a permanent basis in local welfare organizations. Van Griensven concluded that there are very scarce figures available about youth work in the

Netherlands (2006) – such as number of youth workers, facilities, budgets for youth work activities, nor about the composition of the professional group. Searching for an explanation of this lack of data, Van Griensven points the lack of links between youth work and social science by quoting Peters et al. (2003) : «a reason may be that there is no direct link between youth work and a scientific field of study, as it exists in the Netherlands for most of the social professions. Because of this the knowledge base is diffuse. The acknowledgement and the classification of «working knowledge» and the professional logic are scarcely an issue. Too much relies on personal understanding and too less relies on research, this is why the core content of the occupation is not sharply fenced (our translation)’. Among the little available data Van Griensven points out – quoting the Central Statistics Agency (CBS) – that, in 1995, 1.903 facilities were providing social cultural work (including youth work). Half of this number accounts for community centres and neighbourhood houses. Next to it, there were – again in 1995 – roughly 500 facilities related to welfare associations and 242 facilities focusing on youth work.

21 Second, some authors such as Van Griensven tried to assess the profile of youth workers, which seems to be very diverse. This is confirmed by another quick scan study conducted by Wil Fabri (2007) among 197 youth workers. Almost every youth workers claimed to have followed professional education, among which 68% youth work related-educational programme at the polytechnic level. For the rest, thirty different types of education were mentioned. Another current trend is that more and more youth workers, as least assistant-youth workers, are recruited among the peer-groups. The Dutch youth work occupational group is thus a rather vague one in many respects, but there are attempts to strengthen the coherence of the group. Indeed, there are now «national knowledge circles» in which youth workers may meet each other and talk about their profession and exchange knowledge. Moreover, there are attempts in order to create a professional association in the field of youth work. Recently some of these institutions cooperated in the frame of the preparation of a «competence profile» for youth work which was published in 2008 (Van Dam & Zwikker, 2008) under the auspices of BVJong (the Dutch youth worker professional association) and supported by ABVAKABO (employees’ union) and the MO-groep (employers’ branch organisation). Moreover, it seems that youth work is getting more and more attention as a field of education at the Universities of Applied Sciences. Indeed some of them (Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht) are offering more and more specialized minors and other kinds of educational programmes. Furthermore, another recent development is that Universities of Applied Sciences have been paying more and more attention to research – thanks to governmental dedicated funds, part of which is dedicated to youth work (Youth Spot research club at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences). Such a move also implies some stronger ties between lecturers and field workers than in the past. Hence there are now new developments that can perhaps play a role in producing, deliberating and exchanging knowledge in the close future.

22 Another major development in the state-funded youth work is the focus on risk factors. This development follows a general development in social policy in many Western countries under the influence of the works by scientists Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens since the late 1980s. According to them, whereas risks used to be out of the control of human beings and governments, they are now increasingly linked to human activity, as a result of the improvement of technological and scientific knowledge. As it seems possible for the state to influence risks, such as the causes of disease or accidents, it increasingly became a duty for the state to direct governmental action towards risk management –

thus not only dealing with the disease and accidents once they took place but trying to eliminate the risks that caused them (Giddens, 1991 ; Beck, 1992). In the Netherlands, risk-management based on the definition of risk-factors invaded many fields of policy, including youth; the emphasis on youth at risk is an example of that. Indeed «risicojongeren» (youth at risk) has become a very present term over the last few years. The word can be found in a wide range of documents, from newspapers to governmental policy documents, but also in research reports and professional journals. Since roughly 2000, youth workers are more and more urged to deal with youth at risk (Veenbaas & Noorda, 2005). Besides publications, youth at risk was also the focus of a national conference in 2008.[5] Just as for youth work, there is no unified definition for youth at risk in the Netherlands. The «youth» being focused on is in most cases aged from 15 to 23 (Dienst Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling, 2006), sometimes from 18 to 23 (Baan, A., 2007), sometimes younger (Rovers & Kooijmans, 2008). Different types of «risks» are considered. Probably the most common one is the risk that these young people will drop out of school without getting a secondary school diploma[6] and the risk that they would become unemployed (and thus dependant on social benefits – since there is a state-guaranteed minimum income in the Netherlands). The risk that some young people would commit petty crime or become a nuisance towards fellow citizens also gets a prominent place in many definitions (see for instance Rovers & Kooijmans, 2008). *Risks* are considered, but also some *facts* like that some young people «at risk» are not attending school (some time or all the time), the fact that some young people «have problems either at school, work, home or in their spare time» (Nicolai, H.J., Niemeijer, T., 2002).

23 In some cases *risks* and *facts* are combined in a same definition. For instance, the Municipality of Amsterdam launched the programme Bijzondere Trajecten Risicojongeren (2003) in order to strengthen the motivation of young people «at risk» for school or work (Dienst Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling, 2006; Rigter & Krooneman, 2008). The latter is defined as «young people aged between 15 and 23 who do not have any starting qualification; young people who are in danger of loosing contact with the education sphere or the labour market or who already have lost contact in that respect». Some definitions combine different aspects like «school drop out, unemployment and out of reach for the municipal authorities» (Baan et al, 2007 – reporting on some practices held in cities like Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht). This recalls the definition of the NEET (Not currently engaged in Employment, Education or Training) that has been in use in the United Kingdom since 2000 (Department for Education and Employment, 2001). It may also happen that some definitions conflict with each other. For instance, some young people may be registered as «being at risk» in the national database Verwijsindex Risicojongeren (launched in the Beleidsprogramma Kabinet Balkenende IV, 2007-2011 : 24) as soon as there are two signals from police agents, teachers or social workers, whereas they are not regarded as «at risk» at the local policy level and the other way round. It is also important to mention that it may happen that the term is not defined at all, namely in many newspapers articles (and even general policy documents). Then the «common sense» applies, that is that «youth at risk» is about what is generally been heard as youth in trouble, young people who are tied to deprived urban (highly stigmatised) neighbourhoods or – generally speaking – youth who does not fit in the mainstream's expectations regarding its future. Another common feature – outlined by some definitions – is that youth at risk is difficult to reach – and thus society hardly has a grip on this youth.

24 Such terms – navigating between what is commonly understood as a social problem and the attempts of objectification of these terms in order to turn them into policy concepts (Becker, 1963) – have existed for decades, so what is new about youth at risk ? Let’s step back in time and consider earlier terms like probleemjongeren («problematic youth») or kwetsbare jongeren («vulnerable young people») for which Dutch sociologist Kees Schuyt provided a comprehensive literature review and some policy recommendations on behalf of the Dutch government in 1995. In the 1990s, many of the target groups of youth policy were put together in the label «problematic youth». This was neither based on a class definition nor a feature definition (such as addiction or migrant status), but on the lack of work or educational path. Anyhow the common focus is put on young people who have lost connection with either school or work or those who obviously may loose that connection. Hence it seems that there is not so much new about the intrinsic understanding of youth at risk. However it seems that there have been significant shifts in the political understanding of the term. In Schuyt’s report, although the security concern is already present, there is a clear concern for the improvement of the position of the 10 to 15% vulnerable young people in the Dutch society. Observers may wonder whether this concern is still present. As a matter of fact, there is now a strong emphasis on the perception of behaviour in the literature, namely 'bothering' behaviours even though they are not directly connected to serious criminality (Rovers & Kooijmans, 2008). This also applies for a related common term, hangjongeren (youth on the street). Over the last few years, «youth on the street» was such a topical issue in the Netherlands that the government commissioned a group of scientists to make policy recommendations on the basis of a literature review on the issue (Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling, 2008). In their research report they argue that there are many different ways to hang around in the street, not only threatening other citizens or even committing crime or quarrelling with other «gangs», as often stated, but also socializing, meeting peers in a context of scarcity of meeting places for young people (RMO, 2008). Thus dealing with young people on the street may not only mean dealing with violence, crime (very low) but also about «risk» of (small) criminality or even many other issues related to loneliness and getting familiar with socialisation beyond the family circle. Taking for granted that the young people are hanging around for criminality purposes may lead to all kinds of misunderstandings and negative consequences such as stigmatisation. An important feature of recent risk-management in social policy is that it is less and less about acknowledged/recognised threat or actual failure (school drop out) and more and more about vague risk. Moreover, risks might be regarded as holding for the young people him/herself or for the rest of society. Although the two are combined in several definitions of youth at risk (Van Ginkel et al., 2006), the focus is more and more about the risk for society in the recent literature.

The Dutch youth work in the era of the «hard line»

25 What is actually done about «youth at risk» in the sphere of youth work ? Actually crime as a risk has been largely commented about in the youth work literature since the call for more security has clearly been taken over by some youth work-related institutions in the Netherlands. In the 1990s, some youth workers got involved in partnerships with police officers in order to reduce fear of crime in some deprived urban neighbourhoods (Baillergeau & Schaut, 2001). More recently, in 2003, the MO-groep asked the Ministry of

Health, Well-being and Sport for more money to be granted to youth workers (1000 extra youth workers appointments) with the argument that this would contribute to a safer society. They argued that a greater number of youth workers would mean less pressure on the police (MO-groep, 2003). What should be done about youth crime ?

26 The available literature dedicates significant attention to discussions about the so-called «hard line» regarding «youth at risk» in the Netherlands. In particular, in May 2007, Mayor of Amsterdam Job Cohen directly attacked the efficiency of the youth work approach towards «problematic families» (probleemgezinnen). According to Job Cohen, the youth workers are «too soft», they neglect their pedagogical role and they do not make the appropriate decisions. A relevant alternative – according to Cohen – should be a harder approach, involving some new actors, the «straatcoaches» (street coaches) who are combining street intervention and home intervention in order to urge the parents to strengthen their control upon the young people who are making trouble, for instance making noise in the street at night (Stam & Zuithof, 2007). This approach has been implemented in some neighbourhoods of Amsterdam since November 2006 but it is not new as such. In the United Kingdom the «get them off the street» approach has been very topical over the last two decades (Tiffany, 2007; Jeffs & Smith, 2003). In the Netherlands, since the 1990s many projects have been launched in order to restore control upon public spaces, either by favouring residents’ participation (neighbourhood watch) or by creating new surveillance positions through work experience programmes but rarely via actively seeking out so-called trouble makers and their families. This intrusive perspective is indeed rather recent but very popular in the Netherlands, not only with regard to youth. In various fields of social policy, professionals are increasingly getting «behind the front door» (Tonkens, 2008). By the means of home visits, they enter the private life (again) of citizens who are assumed to be isolated and/or at «risk». The premise is that under the influence of prevailing cultural liberalism and neoliberal modes of government, the state, represented by professionals, abandoned the poor. This had negative effects for the latter and for society as a whole. Now the state, represented by institutions and professionals, should re-enter and be more present in the living environment («leefwereld») (Van der Lans, 2008) of citizens in order to improve their living conditions and their «disturbed» relation with their (social) environment.

27 This approach is presented as new and different to «regular» youth work. How do authors portray what «regular» youth workers do about marginalised youth ? Again there is not much about what they actually do but some authors present what they should do. In his testimony about mobile youth work practice, former mobile youth worker Schellekens (1998) gives some insights in how to deal with young people «who cause problems or who have problems» and who could be met during their spare time in public spaces such as squares, parks and so on. On the one hand, he argues, one should look for opportunities to «activate» the young people, and on the other hand check whether there would be obstacles in their situation that could be removed by means of social help/support. «Before that the problems occur», mobile youth workers try to be on location. According to Schellekens, there are several phases in mobile youth work : contact making, relation building and maintaining, support and activation. Regarding the activation phase, Schellekens argues that the point is to create opportunities for the group, the subgroups and the individuals where they can learn how to make their situation successful. Therefore mobile youth workers should function as a «good example» for the young people. This should lead to imitation behaviour in which young people would like to look

like the youth worker and find their way on the «good» side (Schellekens, 1998). This is very much in line with the «work principles» presented by Veenbaas and colleagues a decade earlier : to approach the young people by contact making and active listening in order to involve them in projects on a voluntary basis (Veenbaas e.a., 1986).

28 These work principles seem to be very complex to turn into practice. Thanks to long-term observations about street culture of Dutch young people with Moroccan backgrounds in Amsterdam, ethnographer De Jong argued that any young people who would listen to any youth worker with a middle class background and inspired by mainstream ideas about how to deal with a conflict for instance (dialogue rather than violence) would be regarded as weak by peers and would become marginalised in his/her own community (De Jong, 2007; Hoijtink, 2006). Hence the attempts of the youth worker to bridge the gap between the target group and the mainstream society seem rather hopeless. Ben Rovers also portrays youth workers – among other social workers – as weak actors with regard to marginalised young people. According to him they seem to be lonely and lost and they are not innovative (Rovers, 2008). On the top of that Van Griensven argues in his quick scan (2006) that young youth workers do not feel comfortable in their job[7] because of their lack of experience and their difficulty to influence the target groups and to set limits with them. Van Griensven (2006).According to Van Griensven the lack of influence upon young people is not only due to the lack of experience but also to the lack of supervision/ coaching in regard of the rather complex situations they have to deal (debts, addiction, unemployment and difficult relationships, sometimes combined). This all suggests a rather depressive view on youth work. On the contrary some authors claim that there are signs of innovation in the field of youth work practice, namely Maaike Kooijmans and Marcel Spierts. However, the innovative projects need to be strengthened and their visibility should be increased (Kooijmans & Spierts, 2008; Spierts & Van Vliet, 2008).

29 As a matter of fact research data about youth workers practice are lacking at this stage. Additional research would surely help to increase the visibility of innovative projects in the field of youth work by showing what is actually done beyond policy intentions. Criminologist Dirk Korf and colleagues (2007) investigated crime prevention projects and their impact on migrant youth in various Dutch cities – one may wonder : what is the share of youth workers in the implementation of these projects ? Research about practice would also help to support in-depth discussion about what to do about marginalised youth at the present time. Far beyond the opposinghard/soft approaches which hardly portrays the actual challenges of youth work with regard to marginalised young people, the question of «influence» actually looks of tremendous importance. So far it seems that the pro-hard liners are claiming the monopoly of authority upon the young people, by blaming the «soft liners» for prioritizing contacts with them. In so doing they are regarded as simply following the views of the young people in order to «be (and stay) good friends». In the end, they have contacts among the youth but it seems that they cannot do anything about it. This view makes any alternative to the hard line inconsistent because it is obvious that you cannot do anything without authority. However, authority might be regarded in another way. Authority may indeed be established along different paths : either by showing that you are the most powerful one (authority imposed by domination) or by showing that you have something to offer and that you could be trusted as a peer (authority based on mutual trust). Such alternative approaches are used by youth workers in other countries, namely in the United Kingdom (Tiffany, 2007). Do they also exist in the Netherlands ? There is no evidence of that in the

available literature about youth work, but this does not mean that alternative approaches do not exist in the daily practice of youth work. Considering differing ways of influencing would also lead to question the relevance of the so-called hard-line with regard to social inclusion and/or mobility. Gaining domination upon young people may not always help in getting out of marginality. So far there is little evidence that the Amsterdam «straatcoaches» actually favour social inclusion/mobility of the young people.

Conclusions

30 What is striking in the literature review about youth work in the Netherlands is that there is amazingly little academic knowledge about youth work in spite of the topicality of the issue of «youth at risk» and despite the fact that many observers state that youth workers have a role to play regarding the current problems of «youth at risk». While significant attention has been paid to marginal youth as a social problem in the academic and professional world, youth work still has less prestige than other fields of social practice, such as social case work. Whereas there are two chairs dedicated to academic research about case work, there is no chair dedicated to youth work. As a result there is very little data available, both quantitative data about the field of practice (although it has existed for more than a century); and qualitative data : what do the youth workers actually do about youth at risk ? What did they do when they were granted more funding some decades ago ? This lack of data sounds even more problematic in light of the negative assessments regarding the efficacy of youth work. Things might change in the close future though, given the expectations regarding the publication of a «competence profile» for youth workers and the implementation of some projects for which the combination of the «hard line» and a «soft line» is claimed and the recent attempts to improve youth work education and research in the Universities of Applied Sciences. As another sign of hope we may also point out the revival of ethnographic research in the sociology of deviance in various countries. Not so much in the Netherlands yet but some recent works such as those of De Jong are very useful to learn about the challenges faced by marginalised young people in urban settings. Might they be complemented by some ethnographic research about youth work practices involving «youth at risk» ?

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NOTES

1. First, a significant part of the literature derives from a group of researchers, based at the Institute Youth and Welfare within the Faculty of Psychology and Education of the Free University of Amsterdam. In this article the names of three senior researchers are frequently quoted; Hazekamp, Veenbaas and Noorda. Their institute claim to conduct applied youth research in the field of youth services and youth policy. Over the last decades, this institute has conducted research in order to clarify what is meant by youth work and to provide youth work methods that are grounded on everyday practice. A very important book – although rather scarcely quoted – is *Jongeren op straat. Jongerenwerk in de jaren tachtig* (Veenbaas et al, 1986). Deriving from contacts between field workers and academic researchers, the books gives some

insights into youth work as a professional practice dealing with marginal young people. It is also a plea in favour of the improvement of education in the field of youth work. Second, private consultancy bureaus involved in the social sector are increasingly conducting research works aiming at describing and providing the field of youth work with practical methods (Schwarze & Van Woudenberg, 2004).

2. However some Dutch social workers are actually out of judicial assignment (judicial youth care) and youth workers may have to work together with them from time to time.

3. The Dutch word *hogeschool* (literally: high school) designates the non academic higher educational system. As a result of several reorganisations over the last decades, the ‘Universities of Applied Sciences’ include - among many other departments - what was previously known as ‘schools for social work’. These schools are entitled to deliver diplomas in the field of social work in the broad sense (including social cultural work and community work). Within the Universities of Applied Sciences, youth work is taught in the frame of some departments that are known as ‘institutions for social and cultural professions’ at the Amsterdam's University of Applied Sciences and ‘education for behaviour and society’ at the Rotterdam's University of Applied Sciences.

4. Culturele en Maatschappelijke Vorming – now leading to all social cultural work professions, community work included.

5. *Geen land mee te bezeilen?*Conference was organised on June the 11th, 2008 by a group of professi onal higher education institutions and a professional journal, *TSS – Tijdschrift voor Sociale Vraagstukken* (*Journal for Social Issues*). Both target social professionals in particular.

6. In the Netherlands a ‘startkwalificatie’ is regarded as a basic requirement in order to access the labour market with a fair chance to make a carrier in the long run (Van der Steeg & Webbink, 2006).

7. Next to Van Griensven several authors point out the high turn over among youth workers: Fabri (2007), Peters (2003).

RÉSUMÉS

Cet article a pour but d’explorer les principes d’action de l’intervention sociale de première ligne auprès des jeunes marginalisés en milieu urbain : au-delà des intentions politiques et pratiques, quelles sont les réponses apportées à la marginalisation des jeunes ? Cette question est abordée à partir d’une enquête bibliographique sur l’intervention sociale auprès des jeunes aux Pays-Bas. Dans un premier temps, les auteurs présentent l’émergence de ce champ de pratiques sociales ainsi que l’attention accordée aux jeunes marginalisés dans ce champ au fil du 20e siècle. Puis ils explorent les défis contemporains de l’intervention sociale néerlandaise et notamment la position des intervenants sociaux face au tournant sécuritaire. Cet article met en évidence un décalage entre, d’une part, l’attention accordée aux jeunes marginaux en tant que problème social et, d’autre part, la rareté des connaissances disponibles sur les pratiques sociales liées à la sortie de la marginalité des jeunes, malgré l’actualité de la question des «jeunes à risques» aux Pays-Bas et le fait que de nombreux observateurs stipulent que l’intervention sociale a un rôle majeur à jouer face à cette question.

The point of this article is to explore the rationales for action of frontline social professionals who are dealing with marginal young people : What is actually done about marginality, beyond

policy intentions and social practice ? This question is addressed on the basis of a literature review into youth work in the Netherlands. First, the development of youth work as a field of social practice is outlined as well as the extent to which the issue of the marginalised youth has been addressed by youth workers all along the 20th century. Second, the current challenges for Dutch youth work regarding «deprived youth» are explored together with the position of the Dutch youth workers within in the context of the «hard line» discussion according to the available literature. The article shows that persistent attention has been paid to marginal youth as a social problem in the academic and professional world over the last decades. However, there is amazingly little academic knowledge about youth work with regard to marginalized youth in spite of the topicality of the issue of «youth at risk» in the Netherlands and despite the fact that many observers state that youth workers have a role to play regarding the current problems of «youth at risk».

Este artículo apunta a analizar la lógica de los profesionales sociales de primera línea que tratan con jóvenes marginales : ¿qué se hace realmente acerca de la marginalidad, además de las intenciones políticas y la práctica social ? Procuramos responder a esta pregunta basándonos en una revisión de la literatura sobre el trabajo con jóvenes en los Países Bajos. En primer lugar, se destaca el desarrollo del trabajo con la juventud como un campo de la práctica social, y hasta qué punto se ha tratado el tema de la juventud marginalizada durante todo el siglo XX. En segundo lugar, se estudian los desafíos actuales del trabajo con jóvenes de los Países Bajos con respecto a la “juventud necesitada” junto con la postura de quienes trabajan con esos jóvenes en el contexto de la dura discusión según la literatura disponible. El artículo muestra que se ha prestado mucha atención a la juventud marginal como problema social en el mundo académico y profesional durante las últimas décadas. Sin embargo, sorprende que existan tan pocos conocimientos académicos acerca del trabajo con jóvenes con respecto a los jóvenes marginalizados pese a la topicalidad del tema de “juventud en riesgo" en los Países Bajos, y pese al hecho de que muchos observadores afirman que quienes trabajan con la juventud tienen un papel que desempeñar con respecto a los problemas actuales de la "juventud en riesgo".

INDEX

Palabras claves : juventud en riesgo, trabajo con jóvenes, trabajo de calle, inclusión social, Países Bajos
Keywords : youth at risk, youth work, street work, social inclusion, Netherlands
Mots-clés : jeunes marginalisés, animation socioculturelle, éducation de rue, intégration, Pays-Bas

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