

Supporting Youth Employment and Well-Being: Progress Report

The UBC General Conference decided in October 2013 to establish a Task Force on youth employment and well-being. Task Force presented its' final report during the next general conference in Gdynia, Poland, in October 2015. The final report called *The Good, The Bad and The Next Practices* was based on the idea of seeking answers to three basic questions: why?, where?, what?

Task Force suggested that UBC and the member cities should be active in dissemination of the best practices collected by the TF. Moreover, UBC should encourage implementation of the new projects and other forms of joint development between UBC cities.

UBC decided in Gdynia to disseminate the final report widely in EU and also to make a new working plan for the future. The report received a warm reception and it has been presented in various seminars, workshops and meetings around Europe during the past twelve months.

A new agenda for the Task Force was set in UBC Board meeting in June 2016 in Kaunas, Lithuania. The agenda includes the following measures:

- co-operation inside the UBC
- joint projects
- follow-up survey on the implementation of the Youth Employment and Well-Being Programme
- workshops and seminars

Implementation of the new work plan has started well. For instance, UBC cities have developed new forms of co-operation with the Baltic Sea Flagship projects and also started to plan new projects together. Good examples are *Mentoring* and *Support for the refugee youngsters* projects, which include partners from Finland, Sweden, Poland and Latvia.

The Task Force conducted an online survey about the implementation of the Youth Employment and Well-Being Programme in early autumn 2015. The overall picture that emerged from the survey was mostly positive, but with some important caveats. Guidance and support measures and cooperation between different actors received mostly positive marks, and the general consensus is that in both areas things have been moving to a positive direction. When it comes to special groups such as immigrant youth and youth in need of special support, the picture was much bleaker. A new survey will be conducted 2017 to make sure that we're still moving to a right direction.

The next step for the Task Force is IAEGV-conference in Madrid in November 2016, where the Chair of the Task Force will held presentation about Finnish Youth Guarantee models. Conference offers also an opportunity to disseminate the results of the UBC work. Task force's best practices were also disseminated in *One Region – One Future* seminar in Stockholm.

Planning of the European-wide Youth Employment and Youth Guarantee seminar in February 2017 is currently under progress.

Matti Mäkelä

Chair, UBC Task Force on Youth Employment and Well-Being