

# I Can See What You Can't See

Gender and Sexual Diversity in Youth Work

Guidelines for more LGBTQIA+ friendly leisure spaces.

In their ambition to strengthen Flemish youth work in its capacity to contribute to the wellbeing of LGBTQIA+ young people, The Flemish Department of Culture, Youth and Media asked us to study perceptions and experiences of gender and sexual diversity in this sector.

From January 2019 to March 2020, our team delved into the life world of young people to learn about the meaning of youth work and leisure in their lives. Together with interlocutors from the youth work field, we simultaneously looked at how the sector can intervene, what works already, and where there is room for improvement.

To capture the wide diversity of this field and its actors, we did interviews and focus groups with 13 experts, 30 youth work leaders, 34 youngsters identifying as LGBTQIA+ and 12 participant observations of youth work activities. In order to include young people as much as possible in the research process, we launched a call for LGBTQIA+ participants for a group interview within their own circles or individually, as well as a call for student-researchers who would like to observe gender- and heteronormativity in their own leisure environments.

The research resulted in a public report, filled with quotes from the wide variety of actors who contributed to the study. Results are structured around 8 'issues of youth work', which are explained in detail in the report, and linked to 21 themed policy recommendations which were member-checked.

Research budget: 40.000€

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