

## DBYN's aims, membership, structures and activities

Don Bosco Youth-Net ivzw is an international network of Salesian youth work offices and youth organisations which work in the style of Don Bosco. The network assembles 1.074 employees and 8.360 volunteers, who cater for 107.275 children and young people in 12 EU countries. The task of the network is to create and promote international activities for and by young. Next to that we create possibilities for our member organisations to share their good practices and start-up new projects together. Furthermore we represent the voice of Don Bosco young people on European and international level through advocacy work. All actions which we carry out within the network are based on the pedagogical system of Don Bosco, a pedagogical approach with a tradition of over 150 years. To know more of this pedagogical approach please read our publication "Few words and a lot of action" (<http://www.donboscoyouth.net/node/268>).

### Backgrounds

*Don Bosco Youth-Net ivzw* is an international network of youth organisations which work in the style of Don Bosco and of youth work offices of Salesian provinces. The roots of the network lay in the different informal meetings that took place between several Don Bosco youth organisations in Europe: exchanges, study visits, international training courses, an informative meeting on EVS ... However, the satisfaction the participating organisations had from these meetings afterwards was rather low. Most of the times the meetings resulted in texts and reports, but the partners actually wanted to *do* something with the results. They had the idea that young people should be able to participate in all kinds of international activities because of co-operation between organisations from different countries. This idea led to further thinking about organising these different organisations into a formal structure.

In December 2000, under the impulse of Jeugdendienst Don Bosco vzw, seven Don Bosco youth organisations came together in Brussels for a first formal weekend of acquaintance. The countries involved were: Belgium, Croatia, Germany, the United Kingdom, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. They held discussions about a closer co-operation, the idea of networking and the common goals that united them. Each of the present participants took the proposition for the foundation of a Don Bosco network to their country for further deliberation. In January 2001, it became clear there were a sufficient number of organisations wanting to start a network.

In April 2001, the participants came together for a second time to set down the modalities concerning the foundation of a network. This meeting took place in Benediktbeuern (Germany) and involved the countries: Austria, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. During this weekend they reflected on, and discussed the aims, the procedures, the methodologies... Also the application for European subsidising was investigated. The application was drawn up afterwards and submitted. In October 2001, Don Bosco Youth-Net received approval from Europe. By this approval, the network received a one-year grant for their development. The official start was 10<sup>th</sup> October 2001. In August 2004 we received our official recognition as a non-governmental youth organisations under Belgian legislation. Since November 2005 we are an observer member in the European Youth Forum, the largest consultative body in the field of youth in Europe. In 2011 we are celebrating our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## Aims & Actions

Within the heritage of Don Bosco, the partners of Don Bosco Youth-Net strive together to realize the following aims:

1. At first it is important for us to bring young people across Europe and the world together, to take part in youth activities that are linked with the style of working through the spirit of Don Bosco. We want to organize international initiatives that contribute to the full development of young people. It is necessary thereby to broaden the opportunities for young people who are, by reasons of various kinds, excluded from these kinds of activities.
2. Furthermore we strive for a profound exchange of information, ideas and experiences between the different partners. We want to facilitate contact, and deepen the understanding between the member organisations so more joint activities can take place. This is realised through weekends, the development of a website and coordination from the international office.
3. And last, but not least, we want to represent the voice of the Don Bosco young people and defend their interests at an international level.

To put these aims into practice, we develop Master Plan for the period of 3 years. This Master Plan can be downloaded from our website.

If one were to summarise our mission statement and our aims, you could describe it as the creation of a professional framework to support our partners and their members. Within this task there are two functions:

<b>At a network level</b>	<b>At a partner level</b>
<i>to create and support network projects with the partners of the network</i>	<i>assist and support our individual partners on a national and international level</i>

The concrete projects that we organise can be fitted into one of the following categories:

<b>Type of project</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Act. 2010</b>	<b>Pax. 2010</b>
Youth exchanges:	<i>groups of young people from different countries come together to live, play, learn and reflect together.</i>	6	194
Life learning trips:	<i>a guided group of young people on a trip to experience and learn from the life of young people coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.</i>	3	4
Voluntary service:	<i>a young person spends up to one year in another country to do youth work on a voluntary basis.</i>	21	219
Training courses:	<i>youth worker and volunteers from different countries take part in a training programme focussed on a subject connected to youth work.</i>	3	148
Study visits:	<i>youth workers and volunteers from different countries visit youth projects in another country to learn from and to exchange information</i>	3	8
Seminars:	<i>youth workers and volunteers from different countries come together for workshops, lectures, ... on a subject connected to youth work.</i>	3	72
Publications:	<i>our publications aim to inform partners and volunteers, to promote the network and to support youth work practice</i>	16	n/a

## Network

DBYN has 12 member organisations:

Jugend Eine Welt – Don Bosco Aktion	<b>Austria</b>
Jeugdendienst Don Bosco vzw.	<b>Belgium</b>
SADBA – Salesiánská asociace Dona Boska	<b>Czech Republic</b>
Deutsche Provinz der Salesianer Don Boscos – Aktionszentrum	<b>Germany</b>
Salesian Province of Ireland – Youth Ministry Team	<b>Ireland</b>
Federazione SCS/CNOS	<b>Italy</b>
SPYS – Salesian Pastoral Youth Service	<b>Malta</b>
Salezjańskie Centrum Wychowania I Duszpasterstwa Młodzieży	<b>Poland</b>
DOMKA – Združenie saleziánskej mladeže	<b>Slovakia</b>
Društvo Mladinski-Ceh	<b>Slovenia</b>
Confederación de centros juveniles Don Bosco de España	<b>Spain</b>
Salesian Province of the United Kingdom – Youth Ministry Team	<b>United Kingdom</b>

In total Don Bosco Youth-Net assemblies 1.074 employees and 8.360 volunteers, who cater for 107.275 children and young people.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>Volunteers</b>	<b>Young People</b>
Austria	24	300	8.000
Belgium	6	150	2.690
Czech republic	5	200	7.000
Germany	19	100	9.000
Ireland	320	37	1.770
Italy	290	1.300	10.000
Malta	0	50	500
Poland	5	815	20.000
Slovakia	10	1.500	8.000
Slovenia	6	300	1.500
Spain	89	3.484	34.815
United Kingdom	300	124	4.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.074</b>	<b>8.360</b>	<b>107.275</b>

The network is larger than our official and candidate members. There are some organisations taking part in the networks projects, through a full member organisation of their country.

## Partnerships

As a network we try to build and maintain partnerships with European institutions active in the field of youth work and the worldwide Don Bosco Movement.

### European institutions

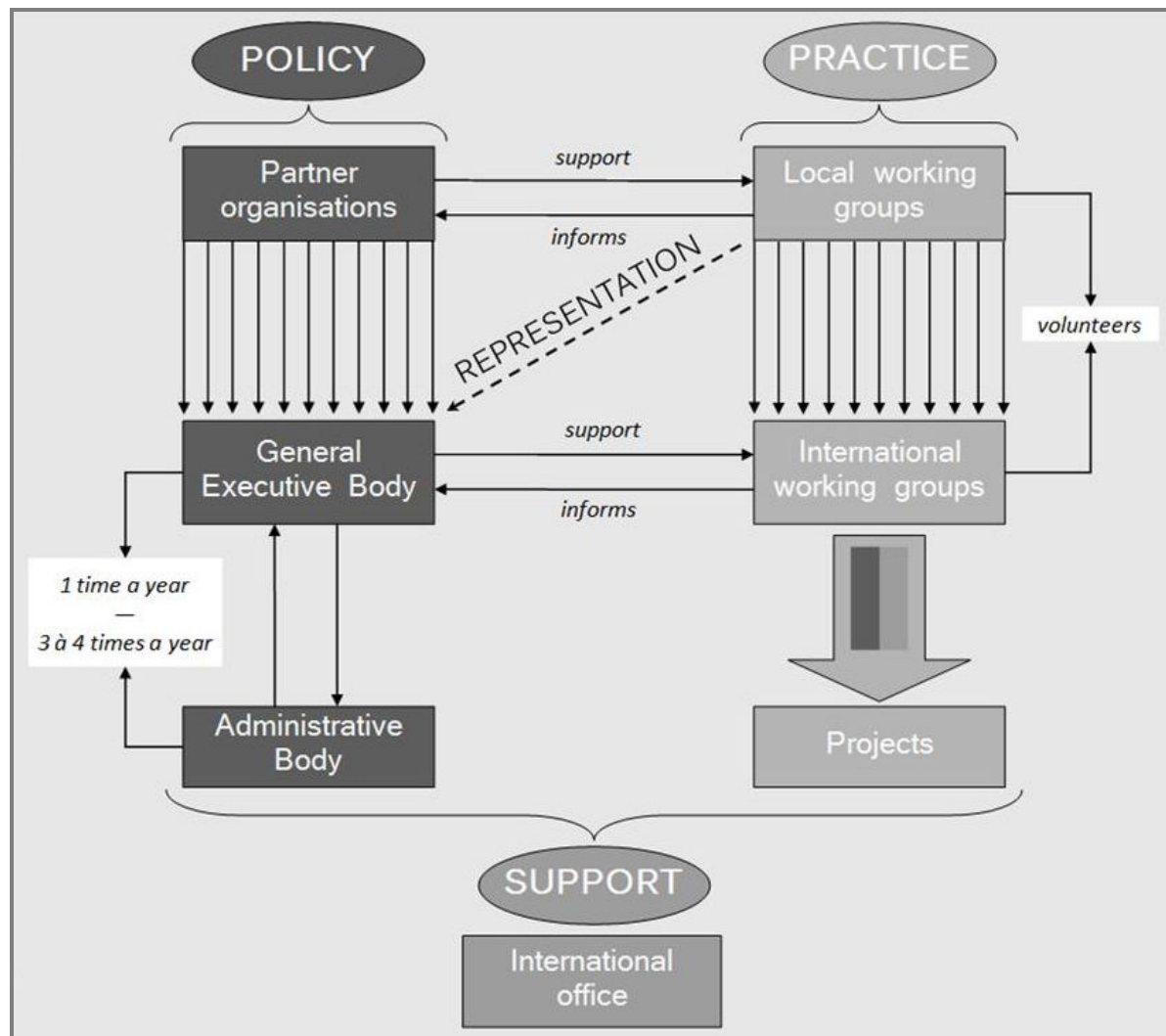
<b>European Youth Forum</b>	<i>Don Bosco Youth-Net is an observer member in the European Youth Forum. The European Youth forum is the largest platform for youth advocacy work in Europe. Don Bosco Youth-Net is member of this platform to represent the voice of the young people connected to Don Bosco.</i>
<b>European Union</b>	<i>The secretariat of Don Bosco Youth-Net is financially supported by the European Commission, through its 'Youth (in Action)'-programme. This programme supports youth projects and organisations involved in the field of non-formal education in European and the rest of the world. Furthermore we try to build and maintain good contacts partnerships with the Executive and National Agencies which are responsible for the implementation of this programme.</i>
<b>Council of Europe</b>	<i>Through the European Youth Foundation the Council of Europe supported the creation of 4 of our publications: "I (am) like you !", an informative game on Conflict management resolution, and "Jabbertalk", a book on non-formal methods for youth work, "Hujambo", a game method to work on intercultural values, and "Dignity", a resource book for trainers on safeguarding. We also received 4 times a grant C for administrative support from the EYF.</i>

### Don Bosco Movement

<b>Salesians of Don Bosco</b>	<i>Don Bosco Youth-net maintains good contacts with the general council and the head offices of the Salesian order in Rome. They are responsible for all Salesian communities and Don Bosco works worldwide.</i>
<b>Don Bosco International</b>	<i>Don Bosco International is a European NGO which promotes European opportunities within the Don Bosco Movement. It also performs advocacy work towards European institutions.</i>
<b>Don Bosco Network</b>	<i>Don Bosco Network is a network of development NGO's from the Don Bosco Movement. Their work varies from project management and fundraising to educational work and voluntary service.</i>
<b>Salesian Youth Movement</b>	<i>The Salesian Youth Movement is an international group of young people involved in Youth ministry, which exchange ideas and coordinate the tri-annual Don Bosco youth encounter CONFRONTO.</i>
<b>GEX</b>	<i>GEX is the young part of the international Past-pupil movements of Don Bosco School. Their aim is to network amongst young past pupils which want to share and propagate the values of their education.</i>

## Structure of DBYN

Because we are an international non-governmental YOUTH organisation, we include as many young people as possible in our structures. We are confident that by giving young people the chances and responsibilities of creating their own projects, we keep Don Bosco Youth-Net young and relevant. The diagram is divided somewhat arbitrarily into policy and practice. In reality this division is not so strict: there are many young volunteers active in the partner organisations on policy level, and some bigger project can only be set-up by the help of the partner organisations. On the other hand the diagram very well reflects our vision on the task of the young people we are offering our services too.



## *Policies*

DBYN developed a series of policies which enable the network to better manage our work:

Statutes	<i>describes the foundations of our network</i>
Rules and regulations	<i>describes the fixed procedures concerning membership, etc.</i>
Master plan	<i>describes the strategic aims for a period of 3 years</i>
Work plan	<i>describes the projects planned for 1 or 3 years</i>
Operational plan	<i>describes the work plan of the international secretariat for one year</i>
House style for DBYN	<i>describes the house style of our written communications</i>
Partner book	<i>describes all partners of the network</i>
Communication structure	<i>describes the communication strategy of the network</i>
Training structure	<i>describes the training strategy of the network</i>
Representation structure	<i>describes the representation strategy of the network</i>
Few words and a lot of action	<i>describes the working style of the network</i>
Resource management	<i>describes the resource management of the network</i>
Annual report	<i>describes on a completed working year</i>

The development process of these policy papers included all actors of the network (member organisations, volunteers and international secretariat). When a policy paper is ready, it is presented to the meeting of the General Executive Body for adoption. Once a policy paper is adopted the network starts to implement it. A policy paper is implemented until it is updated, replaced or discarded.

Each policy paper focuses on a specific field of work of the network. They are written to give the network some structures and procedures to fall back on. They are not intended to be used rigidly, but more as a set of guidelines. In this chapter we want to focus on how these structures and policies are correlated.

All policy papers can be downloaded at [www.donboscoyouth.net/toolbox](http://www.donboscoyouth.net/toolbox) or can be requested from the international secretariat.