

YOUTH PRESS AGENCY

Nurturing youth self-expression through media

THE CHALLENGE

Young people in the Netherlands, especially those from low-income communities, lack access to quality leisure time activities. As a result, many end up using their free time unproductively, engaging in risky behaviors such as alcohol and/or drug use. At the same time, young people throughout the country demonstrate a strong interest in creative uses of technology and the media, be it the Internet, radio, TV, photography, or the print media. Through such creative outlets, they are able to explore the world around them, express their views, and have them heard by their peers, parents, and community members.

THE PROGRAM

Launched in 2004, the Youth Press Agency (YPA) seeks to provide more than 600 at-risk youth, ages 12 to 16, with structured leisure time activities. The program partners with community centers at the local level to establish Youth Press Agencies (YPAs) around the country. Through the YPAs, young people are given the opportunity to express themselves concerning issues they care about. In a ten-week training session delivered by community staff and a professional journalist, groups of 10-12 young people learn how to write, investigate, and produce stories using diverse media, including video, print, the web, and radio. Participants are also given opportunities to participate in Master Classes to further develop their journalistic skills. In the process, youth develop key life skills, such as responsibility, teamwork, and self-confidence. Through the program, young people not only have the chance to explore their neighborhoods, but communicate issues of local importance to parents and community members.



OUTCOMES

The program will contribute to increasing the life skills of targeted youth. Over the long term, the program hopes to sustain the number of Youth Press Agencies within community centers.

THE PARTNER

The Youth Press Agency program is managed by Jantje Beton, IYF's partner in the Netherlands. Established in 1968, Jantje Beton is a non-profit organization responding to emerging youth needs, especially as they relate to structured leisure time activities. In addition to grant making, Jantje Beton works to influence policies beneficial to children, advocates on their behalf, and promotes the interests of children through the dissemination of vital information.



RESULTS TO DATE

So far, more than 170 youth have participated in the program. Together, these young people have developed 32 media projects, exploring issues ranging from homosexuality to careers to drug use. Two youth-produced videos were broadcast on local TV stations.

PROGRAM: Youth Press Agency
PARTNER: Jantje Beton
PERIOD: 1 June 2004 – 31 December 2007
LOCATION: National
REACH: 600 youth, ages 12-16
MODEL: Creative expression using media and technology