

## **Art as a medium of inclusion -- IUW Groningen 2014 - report**

This year, the IUW took place at the „Hanze University of Applied Science“ in Groningen. About 60 Students from Germany, Denmark, Austria, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland and Norway took part. The main topic was “Art as a medium of inclusion”. Workshops were held by teachers from the other universities from all over Europe. To just name some parts of the cultural program; it needs to be mentioned the sights-seeing tour through Groningen, the boat trip, a students hip-hop-concert, and the “Street-Art-Tour”. Unforgettable was our farewell party with Salsa dancing lesson and the wonderful life music.

There are different perspectives to see art as a medium of inclusion. The political perspective sees it as the chance for everyone to join and share. Mostly this view is used by organizations to involve the whole community. The main problem with this perspective is, that society decides and defines art.

The second way to look at art is the “art historical perspective”. This means that there is no relation to something, the artist “lives” in his own world and art has a special space. It is not helpful, useful or meaningful to others but the artist.

Art is autonomic; it has no consideration of normal, it’s leaving society and daily life. However it can be seen as a different way for communication to turn away from society. In general, art should keep its critical position and we have to understand that “good art” needs autonomy. So inclusion is a way to produce art.

As all people are different it’s the easiest way for them to express themselves by using art. A painting full of suffering and pain can help to understand the artist and his historical background better than just a general talk where people are still able to hide feelings. A song can show hopes and wishes of the singer. We as social workers should use art more often. It’s not just a medium to get to know the story of people; it also helps people to get together and open up their mind.

As we were able to see in Groningen, art is definitely a medium of inclusion. Students from all over Europe came together. Sure, we all share the same studies, but we were still from different places, our social backgrounds are somehow opposite, but we can express ourselves by singing, painting, dancing and other artistic creations. It’s unbelievable how fast we became a group. But this could not have happened without the help of the teachers of all different universities and the supportive actions of the

“Hanze University of Applied Science” Groningen. With all the seminars, workshops and cultural program, you made it possible for all of us to get an over view of this big topic. It was more than just an international university week, it was a week to make friends and get in contact from all over Europe.

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