

Concept for our research:

Chapter one:

Title:

What makes the Venture effective in the community?

Effective means in this context:

- People visit the Venture daily voluntarily.
- The Venture was built by the people of the community.
- The Venture has existed for over thirty-one years.
- The Venture has close contact with schools and other organisations.
- A lot of positive comments from the people that used to visit the Venture when they were little.
- The Venture has been a recipient of many prizes concerning Social Work.
- The Venture receives parties interested in the Venture's unique approach to Social Work from all over the world.

Community in this context means:

Caia park, where the Venture is situated. Caia park is an disadvantaged area in Wrexham, Wales. Caia park has coped with high crime rates and problems within families, such as; child abuse, drugs and alcohol abuse, high rates of unemployment.

The area in which the Venture is located has become an 'underclass' area throughout the years. Whenever we speak about Caia Park to people from outside the estate, people are being very judgemental about the area, and most of the times they don't have anything good to say about the estate.

Robert Macdonald's defines the underclass as: *"a social group or class of people located at the bottom of the class structure who, over time, have become structurally separate and culturally distinct from the regularly employed working-class and society in general through processes of social and economic change (particularly de-industrialisation) and/or through patterns of cultural behaviour, who are now persistently reliant on state benefits and almost permanently confined to living in poorer conditions and neighbourhoods."* (Macdonald, 1997).

The context between the title of the research and the problem:

We don't have a problem as such, but from what we've seen from our placement at the Venture last year, the methods of the Social Workers/ Playworkers and Youthworkers. are different from anything we have encountered before. We want to research what makes the Venture's approach so effective and how it can be used in other environments.

What are the sub-questions?

- What makes the Venture unique as an effective response to specific local needs?
- Which methods does the Venture use in response to the localised needs of the community?
- What different professions are present at the Venture and how do they complement each other and work together as a group?
- What makes the children and youngsters voluntary return to the Venture every day?

Chapter two:

What is the nature of the research concept?

The nature of this concept is the action research model. This means our research is based on the actions as seen at the Venture. It's grounded in the good practise methodology. Organisations such as the Venture are completely unknown in the Netherlands.

Chapter three:

What is the reason for this question?

We (Joran and Peggy) had our work placement at the Venture last year. What intrigued us was the unique way the Venture works, as it was so different from what we were used to in the Netherlands. The Venture is very much a process-based environment, whereas other organisations are usually product-oriented. This also applies to the government and funders, who want to see results, which is difficult to prove when it comes to this kind of social work.

As described the Venture's Social Work / Playwork / Youthwork is effective, and we would like to research how they approach their duties. And how built up relationships with the youngsters and other people within the community.

Chapter four:

How does the organisation benefit from answering this question?

The Venture values the opinion from students from different countries, this because they have a clear and fresh mind to the approach the Venture is using. They value new opinions even if they differ, it helps evolving the work method. They feel that people from outside take different theories and approaches to the Venture, from which not only children can benefit but also the staff.

Chapter five:

What is the goal of our research?

Our main goal is to answer the question 'What makes the Venture effective in the community?'

The following sub questions will also be answered:

- What makes the Venture unique as an effective response to specific local needs?
- Which methods does the Venture use in response to the localised needs of the community?
- What different professions are present at the Venture and how do they complement each other and work together as a group?
- What makes the children and youngsters voluntary return to the Venture every day?

Our report will also cover the following topics:

- The reason(s) kids and youngsters, groups that usually turn away from organised events, return to the Venture on an almost-daily basis
- Ways the Venture ensures people to keep using the playground and other facilities
- Other activities organised by the Venture
- What influenced the home-grown staff in becoming permanent staff members
- How the Venture first set up different projects within Caia Park and what made these projects successful
- How the organisation was first brought to life
- Which social work factors and goals are present there
- How the methods and activities are altered to assist people from Caia Park in the best manner possible
- How the informal atmosphere at the Venture came about and how people feel about it now
- What we as students can learn from the way people at the Venture do their jobs
- How working at the Venture differs from Social Work in the Netherlands

What do we want to achieve with this research?

What we want to achieve with this research is to create a list of the factors that contains the information about how the organisation works, and why it functions as well as it does. This can be used for a number of purposes, previously described.

Purpose of our research?

Our purpose is to create a detailed report of how the Venture works and how it was started thirty-one years ago. This because the Venture has an effective way of building up relationships with youngsters

and people from within the community. This can be used by other organisations, since building up relationships with 'clients' is an important aspect of Social Work.

Chapter six:

What is the target group on which this research is focussed?

The target group are the service-users of the Venture.

The Venture is located in Spring Lodge, Caia Park. Caia park is marked by high rates of unemployment, alcohol use and abuse, drugs use and is known as one of the biggest council estates, with one of the highest rates in child poverty which includes neglect and abuse. The organisation is an open access facility and all the kids and youngsters are welcome. The Venture is set up about thirty-one years ago with as purpose to reduce the high crime rates in the area. As far as we know it started with building small bonfires where youngsters got together, just to sit and talk. From that point it grew into the organisation it is now. The heart of the organisation is the open access playground, where everyone aged from 5 till 18 is welcome. Children below the age of 5 must be accompanied by an adult.

The children and the youngsters are the target group of the Venture. All ages up to 18 are welcome. There is also an early years centre for kids up to three years. Furthermore, there is a parents and toddlers group. The Venture wants to get in touch with the parents and get to know them through these groups.

There are special projects for special target groups. For example, there is a YIP project, this is for the youngsters who are in danger of getting involved in the life of crime.

Chapter seven:

Which overlaps are there with the subjects on:

Micro level:

Our research will mean something to clients directly. We will interview youngsters, parents and others who have used the Venture. We'll ensure they know their opinions are respected and valued. It will influence them directly because we will ask them about their opinions on the Venture and what they think can be improved. We will then notify the Venture about our findings and changes – if any – can be made. The Venture reflects the needs of the community. Without the community and their involvement with the Venture, the Venture would not be as it is today. Relationships with the community are very important and also needed. Without these relationships the Venture would not be able to survive as an organisation.

Meso level:

This research will greatly influence the team and organisation. The Venture has existed for thirty-one years and as such, it's only natural things have changed. We'll highlight these changes in our research and it's possible things will be changed based on these findings.

We will interview members of staff. This is important for our research, as it will provide an intimate depiction of the way the Venture works. Furthermore, the research may have a positive effect on the work morale and play an affirming role concerning effective practise. It may also provide a fresh perspective on things and influence the way certain projects and playground-work are handled. Also the work at the Venture is very process-based (**informal education**) so a lot of work the Social Workers / Playworkers / Youthworkers are doing is not immediately visible, not only for funders but also for the colleagues themselves. It will affect them in a positive way, to get recognition for the work they are doing.

Macro level:

Chapter eight:

Who is the initiator of this research?

We are the initiators of this research. During our internship at the Venture last year, we were amazed by the methods and approach to Social Work the Venture showed us. It was vastly different from anything we'd encountered before, and research pointed out that there is no such place in the Netherlands. We were intrigued by the idea of starting a Venture-like project in another setting. Of course, working at the Venture has already given us some insights as to how things are different there from other Social Work institutes, both in the UK and the Netherlands. This prompted our interest to such a degree that we felt conducting this research was something we both wanted to do, and in fact needed to do.

We've thought about and discussed the project a lot, and we feel the project as we're proposing it now would benefit a lot of people. We know it'll give response to a number of questions brought forth from the workplace during our stay there.

Chapter nine:

Which students are involved?

Peggy den Brok
Joran Effting

Chapter ten:

Which competences do we wish to achieve by doing our research?

- Working according to a set-up plan. During a project last year, we discovered our plan wasn't specific enough and as a result, we ended up doing a lot of work multiple times. This is time we could have spent on other things. This time, we'll make a detailed plan beforehand and discuss this every week to make sure we keep on schedule.
- We want to communicate more with our sponsor. We won't only discuss what we're doing, but also how we're doing it and how this can be improved.

Chapter eleven:

Who sponsors the research?

We have a potential sponsor for our project in the form of Mr. Thoby Miller, who works at Glyndwr University in Wrexham. He was our guidance councillor during our internships and also guides other students when they have relations with the Venture (for example: a Danish student who's doing a work placement at The venture now). He has a genuine interest in the Venture and has proven to be a valuable tutor.

We are currently waiting for his approval. If he can't be our sponsor there is a possibility that we have sponsor at the Venture.

Chapter twelve:

First and foremost, we feel there should be a group specifically aimed at people going abroad, as there will be many differences between people going abroad and those staying in the Netherlands. To date, it's unclear whether such a group will be created.

Out of the groups currently provided, we feel Actively Participating within the Community (actief burgerschap) would make the best fit with our research.

The Venture was set up with the community and keeping them involved in the Venture is an important pointer in what makes it a unique place. The community feels they share ownership over the Venture,

which is visible in many ways. The children and youngsters still help whenever there are new parts built at the Venture.

When people in Caia Park need help, the Venture is where they turn to. It's a vital and central part in the community. It has been said more than once that without the Venture, the community would fall apart.