

Youth mobilizations from Rennes during COME:ON! 1st semester of 2020



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This document introduces some first elements to report the youth mobilizations during [COME:ON!](#) process in Rennes at the beginning of 2020.

Youth involvement : cultural practices, citizenships and promotion of fundamental rights

COME:ON! aims to support the development of alternative spaces for young people and citizens to improve their engagements. The vacant buildings in European cities are a way to develop temporary uses of spaces and to make stronger translocal communities.

COME:ON! process is based on youth work methods in 7 cities (Rennes, Manchester, Bologna, Riga, Timișoara, Sibiu and Brussels). The creation of collective spaces of young people who have some experiences of temporary uses in vacant buildings at local level develop groups of youth experts, especially with young members of local associations and refugees. These process of youth empowerment are reported in two deliverables shared with the *European Youth Together* program : a Youth Cultural Involvement Study (September 2020) and a Living Charter of Youth Cultural Rights (March 2021).

In Rennes, the local group of young people was created with Keur Eskemm and d'Ici ou D'ailleurs (DIDA) involved in the "[Migration, Youth and Mobility](#)" program and in the [SAPASS network](#). They worked during two workshops in January and February 2020. The main ideas of these sessions are reported here after.

Report of DIDA's Workshop - 24th January 2020

This first workshop gathered 6 refugees and asylum seekers from DIDA, and was animated by Martina and Louise, volunteers for DIDA, with the participation of Iona from RAPAR. It took place over an afternoon during the first youth exchange of COME:ON! (23th to 27th of January), for 2 hours and a half. The aim was, first, to talk together about expectations of refugees and asylum seekers from DIDA as to the project. Then, we wanted to talk about their journey since their arrival in France through all the places they have lived in. We concluded the afternoon thinking together of solutions that could be implemented to make it easier for refugees to find accommodation. The discussions of the workshop were presented at the end of the afternoon to share the expectations of young refugees with the other participants from this first youth exchange.

We asked them several questions :

1. What are your expectations related to the project ?

- Spread/ discover activism around Europe
- Fight to defend our rights before the government
- Think together about occupying building to facilitate the lives of people in need.
- Form duos with one Arabic speaker and one French speaker that could mutually learn new language skills from each other
- Meet and exchange with people in need
- Learning how to volunteer/ to become a volunteer



2. *Can you tell us more about the cities and different accommodations you've been through since your arrival in France?*

Moudassir arrived from Sudan in August 2018 in Cannes and was sheltered in an accommodation for unaccompanied minors. He then arrived in Marseille where he spent one night sleeping on the streets. He left for Valence, where he stayed at a friend's for 3 nights. This friend lived in a young workers' hostel. He went to Paris but only stayed 10 hours before leaving for Rennes, where he stayed for 3 months sleeping in an emergency shelter (115). He was then transferred back to Paris by the OFII (French Office for Immigration and Integration) and was placed in a CADA (Accommodation centre for asylum seekers – administered by the State). He was granted asylum and went back to Rennes where he stayed with friends. Now he is living in a flat rented by Coallia, a charity commissioned by the State to provide social help for refugees.

Osman arrived from Sudan on 25th December 2016 and slept on the streets. He went to Paris and stayed there for a month, sleeping first in a gymnasium, then in a squat for 15 days and then in an accommodation provided by the OFII. He then stayed 4 months in a CADA in Romagné. He spent a year and 3 months in a social care institution in Charleville-Mézières. Then he lived in a CAM (a reception centre for migrants) for a month, in Paris. He lived in a CADA in Epinal for a year. He was granted asylum and lived in a social housing accommodation. He came back to Rennes, lived on the streets and with friends. He now lives with a host family in Thorigné-Fouillard (Rennes' Suburb)

Daniel arrived from Angola in Paris in October 2017 and slept 2 nights on the streets. He came to Rennes and slept in an emergency shelter for a month. He then spent 3 months in different host families from the charity "Bienvenue". He lived in a solidarity accommodation found by the charity Habitat Humanisme for a year. He now stays at a friend's place.

Fah arrived from Mali in Marseille on 5th March 2018. He spent a day in the train station and went to Rennes passing by Paris. In Rennes, he slept in a hotel for a week. Then, he went to Saint Malo and spent a week in a hotel there too. He was sent to Chantepie, in Rennes' suburb, and stayed in a hotel for 2 weeks. He came back to Rennes and was welcomed by a first host family. Since August 2018, he lives with another host family.

Azouher arrived from Mali in Paris in July 2018, and stayed with a friend for 2 months. He then came to Rennes at the end of August and stayed with another friend until the end of September. He then came back and forth between Rennes and Paris, in Paris he stayed with 2 different host families, and in Rennes at a friend's apartment. At the beginning of the year he got an apartment with the help of the charity "Bienvenue".

Abdallah arrived in France from Sudan on 19th May 2017, he stayed with a friend in Paris – La Défense for 3 months. He came to Rennes on 2nd August 2017, he stayed in a CAO (Cellule d'Accueil et d'Orientation pour l'accueil, l'information et l'aide aux sans domiciles fixes – Reception and Guidance Committee for information and help for homeless people, a social care institution welcoming and helping homeless people, managed by the Department/County Council). On 13th April 2018, he was placed in a CADA (Accommodation centre for asylum seekers – administered by the State) in Le Rheu, in Rennes' suburb and stayed there for one or two months. As he was under Dublin procedure, he was sent back to Italy where his fingerprints had been registered first. He stayed there for 2 or 3 days and came back to Rennes. He stayed with friends then thanks to his lawyer he found a host family in La Guerche de Bretagne (a small town not far from Rennes) and lived with them for 6



or 7 months. He has now been living for a year in a flat, shared with other refugees, rented by Coallia, a charity commissioned by the State to provide social help for refugees.

Nasseradine arrived in France from Sudan two and a half years ago, in Paris. He spent his first 40 days in France in a gymnasium along with 150 other asylum seekers. He then moved to Rennes, and stayed in a CAO for 6 months. He was transferred to a CADA in Le Rheu and stayed there for a year. He has now been living for a year in a CADA in Betton, another small town in Rennes' suburb.

Nader arrived in France from Sudan at the end of 2016, he spent a night in Nice, and took the train to Marseille, where he also spent a night before taking the train to Paris. He only spent a few hours there, at Porte de la Chapelle, where he recalls seeing many refugees sleeping rough. He took a train to Calais, with the aim to reach England. He stayed in tents and shacks in the Jungle for 6 months. Then, the Jungle was dismantled and he took a bus to Brittany. He did not choose the city, only the region. He arrived in Lorient. There, he stayed for 4 months in a CAO. He was auditioned by the OFPRA and a week after, the OFII placed him in a CADA in Saint Brieuc where he stayed for 8 or 9 months. He was granted asylum and decided to move to Rennes. At first, he stayed with a friend for a month or so. Then, Dida found him a host family, with whom he stayed for 3 to 4 months. He has now been renting a private apartment for a year.



3. Housing system in Rennes

We talked about housing possibilities, we asked what were the advantages and drawbacks of the housing system in Rennes.

Advantages	Drawbacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Charities facilitate temporary and solidarity accommodation solutions - The city council makes an effort finding accommodation for families - The possibility to easily access culture and charities, to meet people and learn French 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People in difficult administrative situations are not allowed to stay in vacant spaces in the city (Les Gayeulles Park campsite – people living there were arrested) - Unaccompanied Minors find themselves in great difficulties to find accommodation : the government does not make the procedure any easier for them, as a consequence, some of them cannot be sent to school and end up in traffics. - There is not enough solidarity accommodation to shelter everyone - There are consequences in the housing field to the new measure forbidding people benefiting from asylum seekers' allowances to withdraw money with their credit card. Before this interdiction, they could withdraw €100 and pay someone for a room, in an informal way, but now it became impossible and make it even harder for them to find a job.

4. Propositions to improve housing system in Rennes

What could be done so that no one would be sleeping on the streets ?

- Incite more people to shelter people in need
- Families who have the means to, could welcome people in their home : people in need of accommodation could show them what good they can bring, make it an exchange : can cook, wash dishes, help around the house... in exchange for accommodation
- The government should commit to know how many people are homeless and evaluate their situation (in terms of health, for instance) and place them in accommodation according to their level of struggle. They could open a building with rooms specially made to welcome homeless people.
- Creating and strengthening the link and communication between emergency social services, charities supporting refugees, state social services, local councils, and state services dealing with refugees is absolutely necessary
- Organising actions to raise awareness as to living conditions of refugees – organising meetings between people in need of an accommodation solution and politicians responsible for housing, to listen to each other and to open and build a dialogue, build participative policies.
- The city council could allow the collection and occupation of vacant buildings to create accommodation for people in need, with charities managing those places. It could even be possible to put a small fee to access those places, according to the means of people, so that people who have a little money, but not enough to access social housing or regular apartments, could pay according to what they can.
- To create a budget at the state level to make sure no asylum seeker/refugee sleeps on the streets, like in Germany. Because when people sleep on the streets it has consequences like taking part to traffics or to illegal activities, and it can also affect mental health. Those problems end up costing more to the state than housing for everyone.
- We could organise meetings between young refugees and young locals and communicate as much as we can around those meetings. This could incite new people to become host families.



Report of DIDA and Keur Eskemm's Workshop - 15th February 2020

We gathered with young people from Keur Eskemm and from Dida during a Saturday afternoon of February to think together about the potentialities brought by the youth exchanges and the STUN camp in Brussels.

We were 9 people. We divided into 2 groups. Those who had already taken part to another project and to other european youth exchanges and those who did not. In the group of people who did not travel, we were 5, 3 members of DIDA, one member of Keur Eskemm and one university researcher.

Within our group, we started by thinking about questions we might have as to how the trips were going to go, what was the utility of going to another city when you are volunteering for a charity in France. We then focused on what was going to happen, what we were supposed to do there, who/what we were representing during the trip. After what we started to discuss how we were going to implement some of the ideas gathered during the trips in our own city, and how to create link between the different exchanges and the occupation in Brussels. We ended up talking about how we were going to give feedback to those who did not go, how we will pass on what we learnt during our trips to the other members of DIDA.

We then had a talk with the group which had already travelled.

1. *Participation of people from Rennes to the youth exchanges*

Communication between us and with the other members of our charities

- We agreed that we needed internal communication means, between young people who were going to take part to the trips (WhatsApp Group), and that we needed to meet after each youth exchange.
- We imagined we could create a roadmap of what you should do before, during and after your trip.
- We thought we should organise dissemination events with all the young people from both charities in between the youth exchanges to share what is happening.
- We also mentioned that we should evaluate how the trip went in the days following the return trip to ensure everyone has the same information.
- We suggested starting a log book, in which each young people from DIDA and Keur Eskemm traveling could write about his/her experience.
- We should take photos and videos.
- We also find it essential to create link between those 2 organisations by inviting people from Keur Eskemm to DIDA's events and the other way around.

Communication to a broader audience

- We talked about the possibility, for instance, for the Bologna team to promote the project during the Baumhaus festival in June.
- The English team suggested the creation of a podcast after the Rennes' meeting. This could be broadcasted to anyone wanting to listen to it.
- DIDA and Keur Eskemm could talk about the project during the several events they organise.



2. *Status of the participants during the youth exchanges*

We discussed of who we were going to represent during those exchanges, ourselves or our charities?

We agreed on the importance of preserving the identity of each participant. There is a separation between the person and the charity he/she belongs to. Those exchanges are meant to be times of training, discovery and learning. The aim is to share as many ideas as we can, so that in Brussels, many projects will be bound to happen. Still, traveling with a charity changes the way we are traveling, and what we are looking for. It is a way to discover different realities, the different angle from which other charities from other countries see things, the different public policies, the different possibilities of working with the same targeted group. Methods and actions are different and can influence the way we see things back home. It is a way to work as a European network on the long run.

Then we divided into 3 small groups of 3 people and started thinking about the questions we would like to ask during the trips in the different cities of the project. The questions were to be related to 3 topics: artistic and creative practices, housing, use of vacant buildings. The 3 groups had to treat all 3 topics.

3. *Questions defined to discover the local practices*

For the artistic and creative practices

- For the charities and people that worked on the SAPASS project, were different new projects born following this experience?
- How can we find places where to take dance classes?
- What is the cultural influence of your city?
- Are there any subsidies, grants, financial help to develop new cultural practices?
- Do places where we could share those new practices exist?
- Do young people have their place in the cultural landscape of their city?
- What could be hindering freedom in cultural practices? What about accessibility?
- Are there charities facilitating social diversity in cultural practices?
- Are there activities impossible to do?
- What are the most popular activities?

For housing

- Are there large squats? What are they used for?
- What are the accommodation options offered to refugees?
- Are there many homeless people?
- Is there a political or administrative agency dedicated to solidarity? (a member of the city council dedicated to the matter, for instance)
- How can we find/meet charities fighting against substandard housing?
- Is there existing social housing? What is it used for? In which state are the buildings?
- Is it still possible to find a house or an apartment in the city itself or are most of people forced to live outside the city?
- Are there housing benefits?



- Is the public transportation network efficient enough so that it can take every inhabitant of the city from his/her home to cultural access points?

Concerning the use of vacant buildings

- Are there any vacant buildings? Is it something charities are looking for?
- What are the policies implemented concerning the use of vacant buildings?
- Which activities are the vacant buildings researched for?
- How do charities find vacant buildings?
- What are the legal strategies used to occupy those buildings?
- Are there many vacant buildings? Why?
- What are the legal risks when taking a vacant building over?
- Is temporary occupation a way to transition towards buildings permanently used for social purpose or a kind of immobilism?
- Can we forecast the activities taking place in the vacant buildings? (duration...)
- What do the neighbours of vacant building occupation projects think about them?

4. *Testimony of one of the facilitators of DIDA's workshop*

Martina wished to give us her feedback on her experience during DIDA's workshop. She found that what was said was telling a lot about the will to make this project really participatory and to focus on the ideas and needs of young people, in this case, young refugees :

« Last year, during MYM, I was an international student in Rennes, I was a participant to the project. During this COME :ON ! workshop with DIDA, I became a facilitator and it really made sense as I was able to use the things learned last year for COME:ON!”

« We were trying to put the young refugees in the spotlight, for them to really be involved in the possibilities of change, taking their ideas as starting points, because we are always talking about how, in those projects, the use of vacant places must answer to the needs of people living in the city. So, it is a good start to ask “If I were in the decisions makers' shoes, what would I do?””

« If we consider participatory policies, people who want and need policies to change should be the ones giving their opinion and solutions to their problems must be found with them, with the people targeted by those policies. Answers can be found together. The links between the City councils, the State social help, and charities helping refugees must be strengthen.

« It was very constructive to ensure the involvement of young people from DIDA and to make suggestions together that we hope we will be able to perfect throughout the project.”

“I particularly liked to exchange views with a member of RAPAR. We noticed that many problems encountered by young refugees from DIDA as to finding accommodation in France were also problems which young refugees from Manchester were confronted to. There were also differences, it was really interesting to discuss these issues. »



First preparatory steps of a long-run process linking Work Package 1 and Work Package 4

Work package 1 is a 9-month long work package that started in December 2019 and should end in August 2020. Work Package 1 was supposed to consist of 5 youth exchanges, taking place each month in a different city of the project, from February to May. Meaning that young people from each participating city were supposed to meet each other in a city at a time to discover youth involvement in cultural policy and action. Amongst those young people, some would already have taken part to the SAPASS and MYM projects. The young people who travelled with the project were to be gathered one last time in Brussels during the summer for the occupation of a disaffected university. During the 5 first exchanges, they were supposed to share and learn from the previous SAPASS experience, visit cultural and vacant spaces to discover and discuss cultural policies and urban planning policies and plan the occupation in Brussels. Thanks to the methodology and experience brought by young people who previously took part to SAPASS or MYM, they would have the tools to be co-researchers in the construction of a “youth cultural involvement study”. This study would consist of making an inventory of as many initiatives and policies favouring or maintaining involvement of young people in cultural and urban planning matters as possible in each city. They were supposed to give a feedback during the Brussels’ occupation. This was to be the springboard for Work Package 4.

Work Package 4 is a 10-month long work package entitled “Youth on the margins co-learning their transcultural rights”. This Work Package, taking as starting point the “youth cultural involvement study” from WP1, will use participatory action research methods to work with marginalised young people on their cultural rights. The young people involved in this study will mainly be refugees. As those young people are the one confronted to the pros and cons of the cultural landscape and cultural rights of their city, they will be the best judges of what needs to change and the best actors to think and implement this change. The research will take place in 4 steps, to which marginalised young people will take part. The first one is about deconstructing concepts to allow young people appropriating the topic and expressing what they want to discuss. The second step is to start focusing on which ideas, which aspect of cultural rights they want to work on and the indicators testifying of the change they will make. It will also be the occasion to appropriate the space they are going to work in. The third step is about learning about transcultural rights for young people, in every aspect in every city. During this step, they will begin to write a Living charter of youth cultural rights for their own city. The last step is gathering all the knowledge produced during the 3 first steps. Each young person who took part to the process will be invited to reflect on what he/she learnt during the process. The charters will be shared and a common Living charter of youth cultural rights will be written.

The 3 main objectives that should be achieved by the end of this work package are :

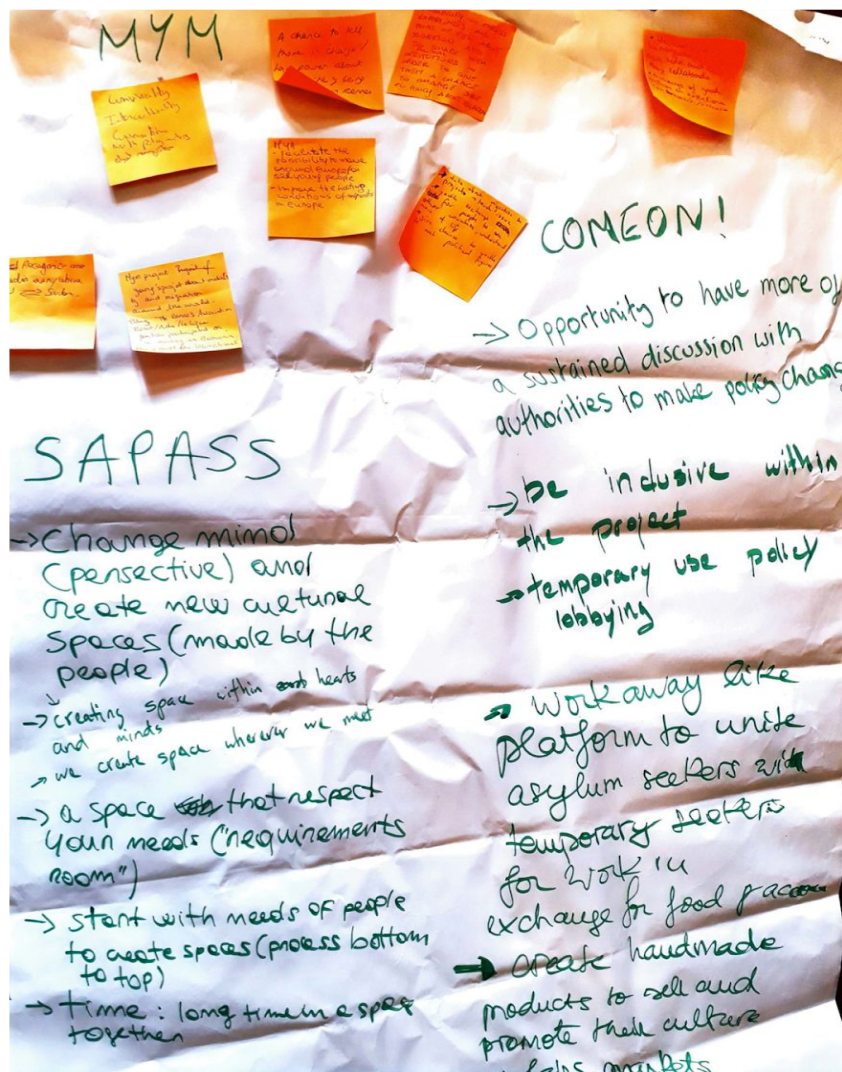
- to co-design a Living charter of youth cultural rights
- to reinforce the skills (organizational, social, political, artistic) of marginalised youth, especially refugees
- make cultural temporary occupation spaces more accessible for all youth in an inclusive way



Mobilisations of the participants during the preparation of Stun Camp - August 2020

At the beginning of COME:ON! project, we wanted to organize 4 other youth exchanges in Manchester, Bologna, Timisoara and Riga. For us, it's really important to create dynamics between all the local groups of young people to support their capacities of youth leaders. By this process, they will be able to improve their power, especially to influence public policies and decisions of stakeholders to develop temporary uses of vacant buildings for community organizing.

Due to Coronavirus crisis, it will be impossible to maintain these activities. The main event of COME:ON! network is the Stun Camp, organized in August 2020. We're trying to do our best to continue the development of the european links between the local groups of young people before the Stun Camp. This phenomena is important, we began to create some written, audios and videos contents to share with each other. We're thinking about the organization of a preparatory meeting in Brussels before the Stun camp at the end of June, with youth leaders and youth workers involved in the project.



TO BE CONTINUED!



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