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Diversity of Practice Architectures in Europe:

An Analytical Report Based on Mapping Educational Paths of Youth Workers

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This report analyses patterns and differences in the educational paths of youth workers in Europe using a theory of practice architectures. The analysis is based on the findings of the study *Mapping the Educational Paths of Youth Workers* by Cairns, O'Donovan, Sousa and Valcheva, and also uses the questionnaire distributed to the national correspondents of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKYP) and relevant ministries, institutions and bodies. The research is the result of an EU-CoE youth partnership research initiative on Mapping educational paths of youth workers and gathering knowledge on youth work.

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I Introduction

Taj Mahal, a talented blues musician who has spent five decades getting to know different musical cultures of the world, from the desert blues tradition of Mali to Hawaii, was asked in late 2017 what he has learnt from his ventures with different musicians all around the globe. His answer was highly illuminating, not only because it shows how a musician locates himself within a web of rich musical cultures, but also because it has a profound insight on the nature of learning itself. He said: “What I’ve learned is that you never stop learning” (Wolman 2017, 63).

He’s right. One never stops learning. Yet one has to start from somewhere.

How does one learn to be a youth worker, then? What kind of process it is, where does it start and how do social environments in different parts of Europe help youth workers to flourish? What type of formal education is available, what is the role of workplace learning, peer learning or more generally learning by doing? What are the educational paths available that produce a competent youth worker who is able to work with and for young people in the network of other professions? There won’t be a single European answer, since the answer depends on the national context available for formal and non-formal learning in and about youth work.

The answer to the question about learning how to be a competent worker might begin by noting that in the process of learning any individual youth worker will become a member of a larger community of youth work, and while doing so he or she absorbs the knowledge, ethos, concepts and methodologies held dear by this community. This perspective of learning has its background in the ideas of educational psychologists Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger. According to them, the traditional concept of learning as acquisition – learning as internalising knowledge transmitted in the pedagogical process – misses the point. They feel that this conception is too individualistic and too much concerned on the cognitive level. Instead, they suggest that learning is essentially a process of participating in the shared social practice. In this process, newcomers and old-timers interact. They form a tight professional culture, which is an example of social entities Lave and Wenger call communities of practice. We are all part of several types of communities of practice – some of them at home, some at professional settings (Lave and Wenger 2011; Wenger 2008). In this view, learning to be a youth worker is about becoming a member of a professional community of practice and consequently being able to access the vibrant tradition which has been developed by youth workers and other members of the youth field “to be able to do their job and have a satisfying experience at work” (Wenger 2008, 47).

This perspective emphasises the practical and the social constitution of practices. For an individual, learning means engaging and contributing to practices; for communities it is about refining the practice and making sure that new generations of practitioners will emerge; for organisations learning is about sustaining an interconnected community through which an organisation knows what it knows and thus becomes effective as an organisation (Wenger 2008, 6-7). By becoming a member of the shared community one learns methods and skills, and also

shares the ethos of youth work, learns how to speak a professional language, engages in social practices and shares different relations with young people, their parents perhaps, different citizens, non-governmental organisations, other professional cultures and local politicians – to name but a few.

As is evident, according to this perspective on learning the educational paths of the individual youth workers – as important as they are – are dependent on the larger community around them. Different communities around Europe have different resources. This clearly affects how individual youth workers are able to learn.

In this report, the results of the research group David Cairns, James O’Donovan, Madalena Sousa and Vesselina Valcheva are taken as a starting point of analysis. Needless to say, I am greatly indebted and grateful for the work they have done. I have drawn heavily on their results in analysing and thematising the answers to the questionnaires sent to the national correspondents of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCY) and relevant ministries, institutions and bodies. I have examined the original questionnaires to identify patterns, trends, commonalities and differences in the countries surveyed on the topics which were hard to interpret. Mostly this has been done when analysing how the public sector finances non-formal learning, whether there are identifiable and sustainable career paths in youth work and in looking at the different associations of youth workers. These results are analysed based on the concept of learning as participation: the analysis aims to point out the myriad frameworks of youth work education and learning in different European countries. To do this, I have applied the theory of practice architectures as developed by Stephen Kemmis and his colleagues (another rather heavy theoretical construction, I must warn my readers). This analysis probably does not do justice to individual countries, partly due to the quality of data available, partly perhaps due to the choices I have made as a researcher. Hopefully this analysis, however, sheds light on the different youth work models in Europe.

The report begins by briefly examining how the variety and multi-sidedness of youth work in Europe has been handled in the research discussion. After that I will shortly describe the theoretical framework of practice architectures. This part is followed by a detailed analysis of how three dimensions of practice architectures – sayings, doings, relatings – can be used to analyse the data on the educational paths of youth work. As a result, four groups of European practice architectures are identified. The report contains a reflection on the individual learning paths of youth workers.

II On youth work and training

Anyone researching youth work from the European perspective will note the diversity and even complexity of youth work. This diversity was one of the starting points of the first European youth work convention held in Ghent in 2010. According to the declaration of this convention, the nature

of youth work is often misunderstood because of the complexity of youth work. Different practical realities were emphasised in the declaration. Youth work was interpreted as a social practice between young people and the societies in which they live. And because it has to deal with both the changing cultures and needs of the young, and the ever-transforming society, it has had to accommodate and deal with a range of tensions generated by this relationship (Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention).

The declaration emphasised that while the diversity of youth work clearly is a fact, there are common characteristics of youth work. First, youth work provides space for association, activity, dialogue and action – characteristics that using the educational lingo could be called being together and learning together through peer support. And second, it provides support, opportunity and experience for young people when they are transitioning from childhood to adulthood. These two perspectives, one emphasising the importance of being together at present and other the perspective of development and growth in the future, to be guided by the principles of participation and empowerment, values of human rights and democracy, and anti-discrimination and tolerance (Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention).

Consequently, the declaration emphasised the diversity in the education of youth workers as well. It stated that: “there may be no need for a homogeneous training system for youth workers” (Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention, 4), but it also emphasised that youth work needed common frameworks such as competency descriptions. The importance of common training was emphasised especially in the context of human rights (thus anticipating the increase in immigration of the young to Europe): “youth workers need more advanced training in, and commitment to universal values in order to face the rapidly changing demands of diverse populations of young people. The training proposed must move beyond understanding the need for tolerance to the acquisition of knowledge and competencies around cultural diversity” (ibid.). The importance of youth work training and education was emphasised as a condition for quality youth work. Training in youth work according to the declaration needed to be both flexible and committed to core humanistic values.

The diversity and complexity acknowledged by the declaration of the first European Youth Work Convention has also been manifested in the history of youth volumes which are based on the seminars on the different histories and traditions of youth work in the member states of the Council of Europe. In the fourth youth work history book, researchers Marti Taru, Philip Coussée and Howard Williamson discuss the differences in youth work in Europe. They begin by noting that youth work is an umbrella term to be used in high-level discussions. The practices and environments of youth work are in contrast too diverse to be captured in a short definition. They move on to note that even the first glance at historical narratives on how youth work has developed in different countries “quickly reveals that youth work has been strongly framed not only by social policies and internal developments, and in some sense predominantly, by the political system or state” (Taru, Coussée and Williamson 2014, 130). The authors remain confident that youth work can be a tool for democracy, and that youth work in general is an environment

where young people learn a democratic and participatory world view, even if youth work is influenced greatly by societal and political conditions.

While diversity describes the state of youth work in different parts of Europe, highlighting what unifies youth work in Europe might be a better option when promoting the recognition of youth work. In the second Youth Work Convention in Brussels in 2014, the goal was to find common ground where all youth work stands. Approaching the question along the same lines as the first declaration, youth work was seen as creating spaces for young people and providing bridges in their lives. The bridge metaphor related to social integration of young people, especially young people at the risk of social exclusion. The declaration emphasised the relation of youth work to young people and the society in which they live, and diagnosed digitalisation and cultural diversity as two main challenges.

Once again, the role of training in creating a youth work praxis was emphasised. Training needed to combine theoretical perspectives and practical realities: “training programmes need to demonstrate suitable mechanisms for ensuring the development of reflective practice” (2nd Declaration of Youth Work, 5). It should produce responsiveness to changes in the lives of young people. Similarly with the first Youth Work Convention, the need to develop intercultural competences was highlighted. Also, an “emerging need for cross-sectorial education and training” (ibid.) was identified.

What all of these documents share is the view of youth work as providing spaces for young people to engage in peer activities and consequently peer learning, and as helping young people to find their place in their communities, in the labour market and in society in general. Youth work is about today and about the future. Training is needed to secure that youth work practice is reflective enough and that it is able to tackle the changes affecting societies. At the same time it is recognised that different national contexts vary, and that the recognition of youth work needs to be taken into the agenda in different European countries which have different strengths and points of development. Recognition is needed to secure that youth work is able to fulfil its role in providing spaces for peer activities and bridging the worlds of the young to society and to the local communities.

III Theoretical framework: practice architectures

As is evident from the previous chapter, the diversity of youth work has been seen as a key factor in European youth work. This diversity is explained by different societal and political contexts in different member states. Different conceptions of youth work and the consequent place of youth work within the web of different theoretical backgrounds and different roles of youth work within the professional networks in public services and in civil society are well noted. In this paper, a theory of practice architectures as developed by Stephen Kemmis and his colleagues is used as a

theoretical framework of the analysis. By using this theory as a starting point, a more coherent perspective on the position of youth work in different European contexts is hopefully achieved.

According to this theory, what an individual practitioner does and is able to do is shaped by a wide background of discourses, social and political practices and also concrete material facilities and resources available. Learning to be a competent youth worker in this conception is not a solitary affair. Instead it is a shared, communal, in essence an intersubjective thing. Practice is seen as historically formed and structured: it is influenced by local histories. Practice is socially structured as well, as it is influenced by social relations and interactions. Although there is an emphasis of a social background in this theory, in the end the question is about “what particular people do, in a particular place and time”; social practice “contributes to the formation of their identities as people of a particular kind, and their agency and sense of agency” (Kemmis, 2009, 23). By analysing how different practices are structured, one is able to pinpoint what learning paths are available for a given individual in a local setting. This way a theory of practice architectures can offer useful perspectives on the learning paths and processes in different European countries.

The educational paths of any youth worker in any European country are shaped by the conditions which shape a youth work practice. Practice as a concept is distinct from mere activities, since practice is constituted of shared social and material conditions. There are multiple links between the theoretical, practical and relational elements of practice. There is also an inherent moral element inside any practice: it is always value-laden, it aims for the good of individuals and hopefully humankind in general. A practice produces actions that have moral, social and political consequences. A ‘good’ practice forms and transforms both the individuals involved in the practice and the worlds in which practices occur (Kemmis 2009; Kemmis et al. 2014; Salamon et al. 2016). Practice has the power to shape how the individual practitioners do their work, how they think about it and what type of relations they form with other professions.

Usually the most visible form of any practice is what the practitioners do. In the case of youth work, one is easily able to describe, for example, how young people are able to enjoy the company of their peers, to participate and to hang out in youth clubs; how counselling is offered on the Internet; how outreach youth workers seek out and proceed to empower young people in sensitive conditions; or how youth workers work with gangs. However, a practice is not about actions or activities alone. According to the practice architecture theory, there are three categories or three sets of conditions that mediate and enable the conduct of practices.

1. Cultural-discursive arrangements (sayings) make possible the language in and about these practices. These shared and often taken for granted understandings practitioners draw upon are used to describe, interpret and justify the practice (Kemmis et al. 2014; Kemmis 2009). This dimension is about professional vocabulary, professional recognition and theories of how good practice is organised.
2. Material-economic arrangements (doings) refer to physical and economical realities which shape the practice. These resources make possible the activities undertaken in the course of the practice. They also enable the doings characteristic of the practice (for example, design of youth centres or other arenas of youth work, wages of the youth workers, economic status of youth work organisations, sustainable career paths available or not available in a country).

3. Social-political arrangements (relatings) concern social relationships and power. These resources make possible the relationships between non-human objects, persons and professional cultures. In the case of youth work, youth work relates differently to children, to social work, to different professional cultures, to colleagues within the field.

These different sets of practices are interrelated and even interwoven. According to a rather technical but highly illuminating definition of Stephen Kemmis and others, “A practice is a form of socially established cooperative human activity in which characteristic arrangements of actions and activities (doings) are comprehensible in terms of arrangements of relevant ideas in characteristic discourses (sayings), and when the people and objects involved are distributed in characteristic arrangements of relationships (relatings), and when this complex of sayings, doings and relatings ‘hangs together’ in a distinctive project. This quality of ‘hanging together’ in a project is crucial for identifying what makes particular kinds of practices distinctive” (Kemmis et al. 2014: 31). So, according to this way of thinking, it is important to be able to spell out how different conditions hang together in any given situation in any given practice.

How these conditions hang together is always dependent on the particular history and socio-economic conditions. Practices are always located in particular sites and are influenced by the specificity of these sites (Hardy, Rönnerman and Edwards-Groves 2017, 6). Analysing how different European countries enable the educational pathways of youth workers is dependent on how different dimensions of the practice architectures actually hang together.

When commenting on the outline of the project, Professor Howard Williamson advised a reformulation of this rather heavy theoretical framework in simpler and more accessible terms. Following his sage advice the task at hand can be formulated as follows:

1. Sayings/cultural-discursive dimension: how youth work is recognised, formulated, talked about and debated.
2. Doings/structural-occupational dimension: how youth work education is supported and how youth work can be a sustainable career.
3. Relatings/social-political dimension: how youth work is recognised, supported and organised so that it can relate to young people, general public and other professional cultures.

These categories can be seen as prerequisites of successful, quality youth work (cf. Agdur 2017) – there have to be ways of talking about the methods and goals of youth work, there have to be material and economic conditions for doing this type of work and there have to be professional ways of getting organised and relating to young people, the general public, to civil society and to other professions.

IV The practice architectures of youth work education

When analysing the first two conferences on the history of youth work, the research group concluded that “the social (thus youth work) is always ‘under construction’ and it is impossible to reflect on youth work without linking youth work practice, policy and research to the social (pedagogical and political) context” (Coussée et al. 2010, 130). This impossibility highlights the fact that the practice architecture of youth work is related to larger social settings, and also to concepts, thoughts and ideas about what should be done with the young in the society – and what should be done with the society, also. According to the theory of practice architectures, one needs to add to this list the economical and material conditions of youth work.

The perspective of practice architectures points out that anything youth workers are doing is always closely connected to sayings and relatings, that is, on the broader social, material, economic and discursive context surrounding youth work. And consequently, learning to be a youth worker is influenced by the social context as a whole and is dependent on the existing practices. Youth work, like any other practice, cannot be thought outside of a social context which shapes youth work – and this social context is in turn to some extent shaped by youth work practice as well. This way, looking at educational pathways of youth workers through the perspective of practice architecture theory is one way of meeting a challenge of avoiding a narrow perspective of youth work as methodisation, of describing youth work only through the activities and ways of working with and for young people (Coussée et al. 2010). This is one theoretical approach of looking at the youth work context as a whole and having a systemic approach.

The following section will examine the educational paths of youth workers using the three categories described in Chapter III, namely sayings, doings and relatings. The report analyses, first, how youth work is talked and thought about, second, how youth work is done on a professional basis, and third, how youth workers relate to each other through associations. This analysis is of course in no way conclusive: the analysis is based on the data currently available, and will at best offer a rough sketch on different European frameworks. Nevertheless it points out the considerable differences in practice architectures of youth work in Europe.

IV.1. Cultural-discursive arrangements: how youth work is talked about

The first class of analysis consists of those forms of thought and language that make youth work recognised, understandable, interpretable and communicable both inside and outside the youth work profession. This requires looking at the different ways of recognising youth work at the national policy level, and also in the professional discourse. The aim is to find out “what people say the practice is, as well as what they say while they are doing it and what they say about what they do” (Kemmis 2009, 25). If youth work is to exist as a distinct social practice there needs to be a way of communicating what the practice is about and how a competent (or, to use Aristotelian language and emphasise professional ethics, a virtuous) youth worker does his/her job. This is

based on a shared tradition of youth work. “Each particular and each local form of a particular practice presupposes *distinctive arrangements of words, ideas and utterances – distinctive discourses* – which are characteristic of this or that particular kind of practice” (Kemmis 2009, 25).

The analysis uses three sub-categories: is there a legislation for youth work explaining what youth work is about? Is there a competency description of youth work? Is there some sort of method for assuring quality?

First, an analysis of legal recognition is offered. Some sort of law governing youth work obviously provides a formal legal recognition, but it may also offer theoretical grounding as well (Komonen, Suurpää and Söderlund 2012). According to the analysis of the educational pathways, not all the countries examined had a legal recognition.

The second dimension concerns ways of evaluating quality in youth work. Setting quality criteria for youth work is based on the broader definitions of what youth work is and what type of outcomes it may produce in the lives of young people. As has been stressed, the most important thing would be to point out what is distinctive about youth work, and how it differs from other related fields, such as formal education (Agdur 2017, Taru 2017). It is out of the scope of this analysis to evaluate whether the set quality criteria in different European countries actually reflect their youth work practices. Rather, the starting point is that there is a way of evaluating the quality and thus about communicating in some form a value of youth work.¹

The third dimension concerns competency descriptions about youth work. The term competency refers to the ability of the individual to perform a task at hand. It is a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that affect the performance at a job, that can be evaluated using pre-set standards and of course can be improved through training and education (Hsieh et al. 2012). Having a competency description available is one way of describing what youth work is about and how youth workers should do their job. This way it can be counted as one of the discursive and cultural resources available for a youth worker. The declaration of the 2nd Youth Work Convention noted that in order to sustain the quality of youth work there needs to be a competency model for youth workers (Declaration of 2nd Youth Work Convention).

In the table below, all of these three dimensions are combined together to analyse the scope of discursive-cultural forms of youth work available. If the country has a legislation on youth work, value 1 is given and if no such legislation exists, value 0 is given. The same applies for quality assurance and/or competency framework for youth work. The three sub-categories are combined to create a sum variable, reflected in total points. The highest total point score is three.

¹ I have adopted a positive interpretation on the quality systems as a way of explaining what youth work is about. However, critical remarks have been presented about the quality systems as forms of new governmentality and as relying on the instrumental rationality meeting the demands of the neo-liberal era. This is indeed an important point. There may be other ways of meeting these goals. For the purposes of this report, however, it is assumed that quality assurance systems and competency frameworks are indicators about the discursive basis available for youth work. However, to contextualise this a quote by Jon Ord (2016, 176) is necessary: “More importantly ... the transformative and life changing outcomes of youth work, such as genuinely building confidence encouraging aspirations or facilitating changes in people’s beliefs about both themselves and the world around them, do not lend themselves to techne or ‘product’ approach. ... As a practice, youth work rooted in phronesis would be concerned with providing opportunities which necessarily contain a degree of uncertainty, fluidity and unpredictability.” Ord’s perspective emphasises that youth work should be empathically understood from inside, instead of explaining youth work as “a clear business idea” (Agdur 2017, 346). Without taking sides in this debate, it should be noted that the analysis in this paper does not provide an insight into how different national discourses enable youth workers to talk about their processes using a language perhaps based more on phronesis, as a lived and emergent practice. This limitation of the analysis begs further investigation.

The table below is to a large extent modified using the *Mapping the Educational Paths of Youth Workers* study and is based mostly on the work done by the research group. I have accessed the original answers to check the information in those cases which I found hard to categorise. Some of the data clearly is not on the same level and needs a bit of interpretation. This means that country-by-country comparisons probably do not offer an adequate picture.

Country	National/Regional Legislation	Quality assurance	Competency Framework	Total points
Albania		0	0	0
Armenia	Concept of State Youth Policy of the Republic of Armenia (2014) Regulations of the Youth Workers' Institution (2009) Youth Workers' Training Programme (2015)	0	0	1
Azerbaijan	Youth Policy of Azerbaijan Republic (2002, amended 2005 and 2007) Azerbaijani Youth 2017-2021 State Programme	0 (It is planned to be created by the end of 2018.)	0	1
Austria	Federal Youth Promotion Act (2000)	The aufZAQ certification (since 2003)	The aufZAQ certification (since 2003)	3
Belarus	On the Foundations of State Youth Policy (2009)	Employment agreements and local job regulations documents	Educational Standard of the Republic of Belarus № 1-09 01 74-2012	3

Belgium (Flemish)	Flemish Parliament Act (2012)	Specific funding conditions for national level (Flemish) organisations	0	2
Belgium (French)	Decree on the Conditions of Approval and Funding for Youth Organisations (2009) Decree on the Conditions of Approval and Funding for Youth Houses, Meeting and Accommodation Centres, Information Centres for Young People and their Federations (2000) Decree establishing the Youth Council in French Community (2008)	Training organisations need to have an accreditation from Youth Service	A profile for the job (socio-cultural group leader) and the content of training courses, defined by the French-speaking Service for Professions and Training Courses	3
Belgium (German)	Youth Decree (2011)	Evaluation of youth workers – monitoring of their youth work twice per year, creating analysis of their achievements every five years and delivering concept for the next five years	no (will be in 2018)	2
Bosnia and	0	0	0	0

Herzegovina				
Bulgaria	Youth Law (2012)	-	-	1
Croatia	National Youth Programme 2014-2017	0	0	1
Cyprus	National Youth Strategy 2017-2022	0	0	1
Czech Republic	National Youth Strategy 2014-2020	The “NGO recognised by the Ministry for providing quality youth work” award	- National project Keys for life – Developing Key Competences in Leisure-Time-Based and Non-Formal Education - National competency-based framework for youth workers in youth information centres (produced by Youth Department; Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in 2008)	3
Estonia	Youth Work Act (2010)	0	Occupational standard of youth workers developed by the Estonian Youth Work Centre (2012)	2
Finland	Youth Act (2016) Decree on Youth Work and Youth Policy (2017)	internal frameworks developed by the organisations	0	2

		themselves; peer quality assessment method		
France	Priority to Youth 2012-2017	compulsory registration of all vocational training organisations with the Ministry in charge of Vocational Training and the Ministry in charge of Youth and Sports	Professional training is included in the National Register of Professional Qualifications (RNCP)	2
Georgia	National Youth Policy of Georgia (2014)	0 (Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs of Georgia is working on it).	0 (Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs of Georgia is working on it.)	1
Germany	Child and Youth Services Act (1991)	Various quality assurance catalogues for different areas, e.g.: - Youth information - Eurodesk Germany Quality Catalogue - National Quality Standards to qualify for JULEICA	0	2
Greece	0	0	0	0

Iceland	National Law on Youth Affairs (2007)	Municipality of Reykjavik provides guidelines for quality youth work in after-school programmes for children and in youth clubs for teenagers	0	2
Ireland	Youth Work Act (2001) National Youth Work Development Plan (2009)	National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work	- The National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work (NQSF) - National Quality Standards for Volunteer-led Youth Groups	3
Italy	0	0	competency-based framework are defined in regional repertories of professions	1
Latvia	Youth Law (2009) Youth Policy Implementation Plan 2016-2020	0	0	1
Liechtenstein	Child and Youth Act (2008) Ordinance on the Contributions to the Child and Youth Promotion (2009)	Supervision of the work of the Youth Work Foundation by the board of trustees and by the municipalities	Agreements between the municipalities and the Youth Work Foundation	3
Luxembourg	Law on Youth (2008)	Quality Framework for	0	2

	Youth Pack (2012)	Institutions Providing Non-formal Learning Opportunities (2016) introduced by the Youth Law		
“The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”	National Youth Strategy 2016-2025	0	0	1
			(initiatives that includes recommendations for basic competences / responsibilities)	
Malta	Youth Work Profession Act (2014)	0	0	2
			Competency descriptors for youth workers are included in the Code of Ethics under the Youth Work Profession Act (2014)	
Moldova	National Strategy of Youth Sector Development 2020 (2014) Law on Youth (2016)	0	0	1
Montenegro	National Youth Strategy 2017-2021 Law on Youth	0	0	1
The Netherlands	Youth Act (2015) Social Support Act	0	0	1
			Competence profile for youth work (2008)	
Norway		0	0	0

Poland	0	0	0	0	(The 2011 Law on supporting family and the foster care system)
Portugal	Organic Law 123/2014 Organic Law 98/2011 Statutes - Ordinance no. 231/2015 Statutes - Ordinance no. 11/2012	0	0	2	The National Qualification Catalogue
Romania	Youth Law (2006) National Youth Policy Strategy 2015-2020	0	0	2	The Occupational Standards
Russian Federation	Decision of the Supreme Council of the Russian Federation 'On the Main Directions of the State Youth Policy of the Russian Federation' (1993) Federal Law 'On governmental support of youth and children's associations' (1995) 'Fundamentals of the State Youth Policy of the Russian Federation until 2025'	An educational standard for the Bachelor and Masters' degree programmes in "Organisation of Youth Work" (approved by the Ministry of Education and Science) defining the way specialists of youth work should gain a degree in this speciality. Beside that, a professional standard for youth	0	3	A draft version of the National professional standard for youth workers.

	(2014) 'A plan of activities for implementation the Fundamentals of State Youth Policy of the Russian Federation till 2025' (2015)	workers is being discussed.		
Serbia	Law on Youth (2011) National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 Action Plan for its Implementation 2015-2017	National quality assurance framework	Passport of Competences developed by NAPOR	3
Slovakia	Act no. 282/2008 Youth Strategy of the Slovak Republic 2014-2020 The Concept of Youth Work for 2016-2020 National Action Plan for Children	Requirements in the National Youth programs 2014-2020 Standards of volunteer management and recommendations for work with youth in the field of volunteering	- National system of professions - National project KomPrax	3
Slovenia	Act on Public Interest in Youth Sector (2010)	0	National vocational qualification certificate for youth workers (2017)	2
Sweden	0	Common training plan/curriculum The network, "Quality	0	1

		and competence in cooperation, KEKS”		
UK (England)	0	National Youth Agency’s Quality Mark Organisations have developed own methods	Covered under the frameworks mentioned earlier	2
UK (Wales)	National Strategy for Youth Work in Wales 2014-2018	- Quality Standards for Youth Work - Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales	The Youth Work National Occupational Standards (NOS)	3

Table 1. The Discursive-Cultural Arrangements of Youth Work

Eleven of the countries have legislation, quality assurance systems and competency frameworks. Twelve countries score two points. These countries (except UK (England), which has both quality assurance and a competency framework) have legislation and either a quality assurance system or a competency framework. For some of those countries, this seems to be a deliberate choice. For this reason I would be tempted to categorise points 2 and 3 into the same group. Eleven of the countries examined have one point. The most typical model is having legislation but no quality assurance or competency framework. However, the case of Sweden, for example, points out that a country can have a well-developed and impressive quality assurance system but no national legislation. Five countries examined do not have any of the discursive-cultural resources examined here. It is clear that different countries have a lot of variation in their resources on how to speak about youth work, how to think about it, and how to recognise it. This affects the learning paths of individual youth workers as well.

In any scientific study, thinking about the limitations of the analysis is required. Therefore the following obvious limitations of this analysis should be pointed out. Important cultural and discursive resources are lacking. There is no analysis if there is a theoretical debate on youth work and if the work itself is rooted in the professional discourse on what youth work is about. Also, empirical research on youth work provides not only data, but also theories and concepts on how to approach youth work practice. Therefore having a youth work research that is accessible to youth workers would be an important part of the cultural-discursive resources. The question is also about the scope and richness of the professional vocabulary on youth work – it is in no way insignificant how youth workers are able to describe and discuss their professional ideas and ideals (cf. Forkby and Kiilakoski 2014). Therefore, analysis based on the data available in this

survey will probably give only a partial picture about the resources of youth work in any country. This mapping is in no way conclusive, nor it is likely to do justice to individual countries and their traditions and current practices of youth work.

IV.2. Material-economic arrangements: What are the resources of youth work education and employment

Different resources make possible the activities undertaken in any practice. These physical, material and economic conditions affect what are the characteristics of youth work practice (Kemmis et al. 2014). The most obvious case is the fact that in some countries youth work can be done as a long-term professional career with possibilities of career advancement, and in some countries it is mostly done on a voluntary basis.

The need to pay attention to material-economic arrangements has been emphasised by the recommendation to member states on youth work by the Council of Europe. The recommendation emphasises the need to provide sustainable structures and resources particularly at the local level. The need to provide youth work education is also underlined (CM/Rec(2017)4).

In the following analysis, the emphasis is on the questions of employability and training and education. The countries are evaluated according to their educational possibilities. Education is divided into two categories: vocational education² and tertiary/higher education. In addition to this, attention is paid to the non-formal learning opportunities. Within these questions the data provided is really diverse. Most of the background information is available in the national languages, which means that as a researcher I am mostly forced to rely on the data provided by the national correspondents. According to the *Mapping the Educational Paths of Youth Workers* study, most of the countries provide some sort of non-formal learning. However, evaluating plausibly the scope, quality or accessibility of non-formal learning is not possible based on this material. Therefore I have chosen to include the factor that is easiest to analyse. I have chosen to examine if the state takes part in providing for non-formal learning. (I have not taken into account money allocated by the national agencies.) The data on the career opportunities also varied. I chose to integrate two sets of questions, the number of youth workers employed in a country and identifiable career patterns. If the number of employed youth workers was low, I chose to interpret that there are no sustainable career paths (for example, 120 youth workers employed in Malta). This question required analysing the questionnaires. The rest of the table is based on the work done by the research group.

² Vocational education in the countries examined usually belongs to secondary education. Some countries in Europe have dual-sector education, where tertiary education institutions combine an academic approach with vocational education. In the countries examined, Germany and Finland have universities of applied sciences offering youth work education.

Country	Vocational Education	Tertiary / Higher Education for Youth Workers	Non-formal learning opportunities provided by public authorities	Sustainable /Identifiable Work by Career	Total points
Albania	0	0	0	0	0
Armenia	0	0	1	0	1
Azerbaijan	0	0	0	0	0
Austria	0	0	1	1	2
Belarus	1	0	1	1	3
Belgium (Flemish)	0	1	1	0	2
Belgium (French)	1	0	1	1	3
Belgium (German)	0	0	1	1	2
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	0	0	0	0
Bulgaria	0	1	1	0	2
Croatia	0	0	1	0	1
Cyprus	0	0	0	0	0
Czech	0	0	1	0	1

Republic					
Estonia	0	1	1	1	3
Finland	1	1	1	1	4
France	1	1	1	1	4
Georgia	0	0	0	0	0
Germany	1	1	1	1	4
Greece	0	1	0	0	1
Iceland	0	1	0	1	2
Ireland	1	1	1	1	4
Italy	0	0	0	0	0
Latvia	0	1	0	1	2
Liechtenstein	0	0	1	0	1
Luxembourg	1	0	1	1	3
"The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	1	0	0	0	1
Malta	0	1	1	0	2
Moldova	0	0	1	0	1
Montenegro	0	0	1	0	1
The Netherlands	1	0	1	0	2

Norway	1	0	1	1	3
Poland	0	0	0	0	0
Portugal	1	0	1	0	2
Romania	1	1	0	0	2
Russian Federation	1	1	0	0	2
Serbia	1	0	1	0	2
Slovakia	1	0	1	1	3
Slovenia	0	0	1	0	1
Sweden	1	0	1	1	3
UK (England)	1	1	1	1	4
UK (Wales)	1	1	1	1	4

Table 2. Economic-material arrangements of youth work

Six states (Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, UK (England) and UK (Wales) scored four points, having both vocational and tertiary education, public money for non-formal learning and sustainable and/or identifiable working careers. In these countries, therefore, youth workers are able to have formal qualifications, take part in non-formal learning opportunities provided by the state as well as other sources, and have identifiable career paths. This means that there are possibilities for long-term on-the-job learning. Seven countries scored three points. All the countries belonging to this group have viable working careers and non-formal learning opportunities provided by the state. They also have youth work education, either on a vocational or a university level.

Twelve of the countries scored two points. The most common feature is that these countries do not have sustainable career opportunities for youth workers, but have a formal education programme for youth work and provide non-formal learning opportunities. Nine countries scored one point. For the majority of them, this meant providing non-formal courses funded by the public authorities. Seven countries scored zero points.

There are limitations in this analysis as well. An important part of economic-material arrangements is the physical facilities for youth work. Current analysis lacks this dimension totally. Also, the question about the non-formal opportunities is analysed in a very rough manner, although there is a lot of evidence that in the professional growth of youth workers this dimension is very important (Fusco 2012). Mentoring, coaching and networking through different courses, programmes and projects obviously affect the learning paths (McGuire and Guffins 2010). However, having access to education on youth work, public funding for professional development and career opportunities obviously is a factor that influences the practice of youth work in a significant manner.

IV.3. Social-political arrangements: the organisation of youth work

The third dimension of practice architectures is relating, interpreted very broadly. It affects how youth workers relate to children and young people, to parents, to the wider public, but also to other professionals and to youth work colleagues. These arrangements influence what type of relations there are. The themes of power and solidarity affect how youth workers relate to other fields. These create social solidarities and practical agreements about what to do (Kemmis et al. 2014; Salamon et al. 2016).

This dimension cannot be studied thoroughly using the data available. One way of analysing would be to examine how existing legislation and policy programmes enable multi-professional co-operation, and what professional cultures are seen as related social fields to youth work. Having gone through the data, I fear that this task cannot be achieved using the data available. Therefore, only one dimension is analysed: is there an association for youth workers? This clearly provides only a thin perspective on the overall social-political arrangements affecting youth work. I have examined the question by looking at the questionnaires.

Country	An association for youth workers / youth work communities
Albania	0
Armenia	0
Azerbaijan	0
Austria	0
Belarus	1

Belgium (Flemish)	1
Belgium (French)	1
Belgium (German)	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0
Bulgaria	0
Croatia	0
Cyprus	1
Czech Republic	1
Estonia	1
Finland	1
France	1
Georgia	1
Germany	1
Greece	1
Iceland	1
Ireland	1
Italy	0
Latvia	0
Liechtenstein	1
Luxembourg	1

"The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	1
Malta	1
Moldova	0
Montenegro	0
The Netherlands	1
Norway	0
Poland	0
Portugal	0
Romania	0
Russian Federation	0
Serbia	1
Slovakia	1
Slovenia	1
Sweden	1
UK (England)	1
UK (Wales)	1

Table 3. Associations for youth work

In the analysis, I have adopted a different strategy compared to the research group. I have chosen to include all the organisations mentioned by the national correspondents. Their reports include both organisations of youth workers, and organisations that promote co-operation between different youth institutes (for example, Cyprus Youth Clubs Organisation (KOKEN) which offers

training for volunteers at youth clubs). Of the countries examined, 25 countries responded that they have some sort of organisation. I have assumed that having an association is an indication that there is communication within the youth field of the country and consequently that the communities of practices within youth work engage in peer learning, in developing shared practices and helping to increase the flow of ideas, experiments, practices and learning experiences. Therefore it can be counted as one feature of practice architectures contributing to learning paths.

IV.4. An analysis of different European practice architectures supporting youth work

As has been noted above, different European countries vary considerably on how youth work is talked about and recognised, how it is supported through providing formal education and how resources are allocated to non-formal learning and career paths, and how youth workers relate to each other through associations. These different features form a picture of social and institutional conditions affecting the learning paths of youth workers.

In the table below, these findings are combined using the three categories analysed in the preceding chapters. The column at the far right represents a sum variable on the strength of the practice architectures supporting youth work, and on the educational paths available.

Country	Recognition of youth work in legislation; quality assurance and competencies	Formal learning, economic support and career paths	An association for youth workers / youth work communities	Total points
Albania	0	0	0	0
Armenia	1	1	0	2
Azerbaijan	1	0	0	1
Austria	3	2	0	5
Belarus	3	3	1	7
Belgium (Flemish)	2	2	1	5
Belgium (French)	3	3	1	7

Belgium (German)	2	2	1	5
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	0	0	0
Bulgaria	0	2	0	2
Croatia	1	1	0	2
Cyprus	1	0	1	1
Czech Republic	3	1	1	5
Estonia	2	3	1	6
Finland	2	4	1	7
France	2	4	1	7
Georgia	1	0	1	2
Germany	2	4	1	7
Greece	0	1	1	2
Iceland	2	2	1	5
Ireland	3	4	1	8
Italy	1	0	0	1
Latvia	1	2	0	3
Liechtenstein	3	1	1	5
Luxembourg	2	3	1	6
"The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	1	1	1	3
Malta	2	2	1	5

Moldova	1	1	0	2
Montenegro	1	1	0	2
The Netherlands	1	2	1	4
Norway	0	3	0	3
Poland	0	0	0	0
Portugal	2	2	0	4
Romania	2	2	0	4
Russian Federation	3	2	0	5
Serbia	3	2	1	6
Slovakia	3	3	1	7
Slovenia	2	1	1	4
Sweden	1	3	1	5
UK (England)	2	4	1	7
UK (Wales)	3	4	1	8

Table 4. Summary of the findings

The above table shows a lot of variation in the practice architectures of youth work. Some of the countries have plenty of supporting structures that most likely produce strong practice architectures which help youth work to blossom. Some countries lack even the basic infrastructure for promoting professional youth work. Educational pathways available in different parts of Europe vary accordingly.

Any categorisation of the data is always somewhat arbitrary. Bearing that in mind, I would suggest the following interpretation. Countries that have numbers from 7 to 8 have strong practice architectures supporting youth work education and probably youth work in general. Of the countries examined here, nine belong to this category. Most of them are located in the northern

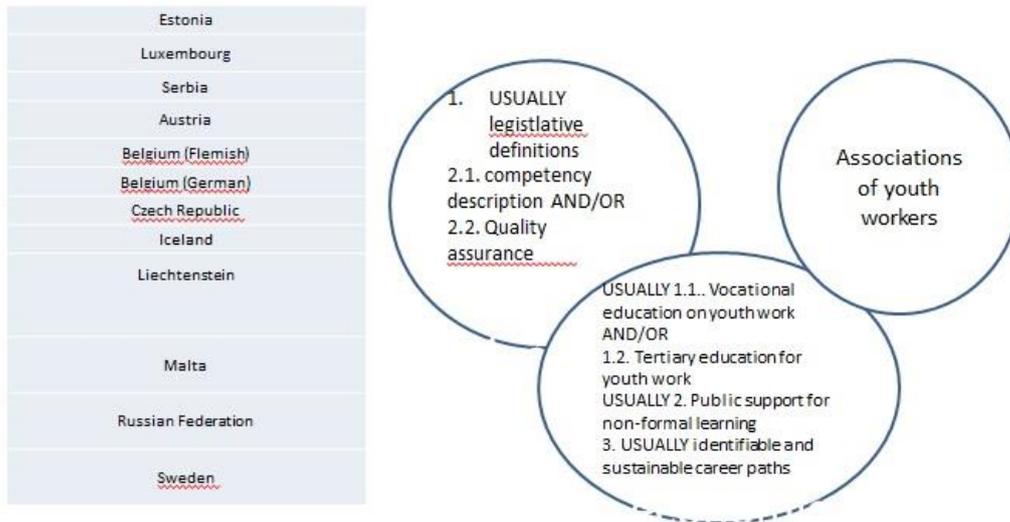
part of Europe. Countries ranking from 5 to 6 have strong practice architectures as well, but they may be lacking some important elements which should be developed in the future. There are 12 such countries. Countries having numbers from 3 to 4 have developed some parts of the practice architecture but would most likely benefit from establishing stronger structures for youth work. Seven countries belong to this category. Countries with numbers from 0 to 2 are only starting to develop their youth work architectures and will probably benefit from learning from other European countries. There are 13 such countries. While the analysis is most likely not going to do justice to individual countries and there might be misunderstandings in interpreting the data, the overall analysis in categorising European countries in four categories could be helpful in analysing how strong practice architectures are in different corners of Europe.

Group 1. Strong practice architectures



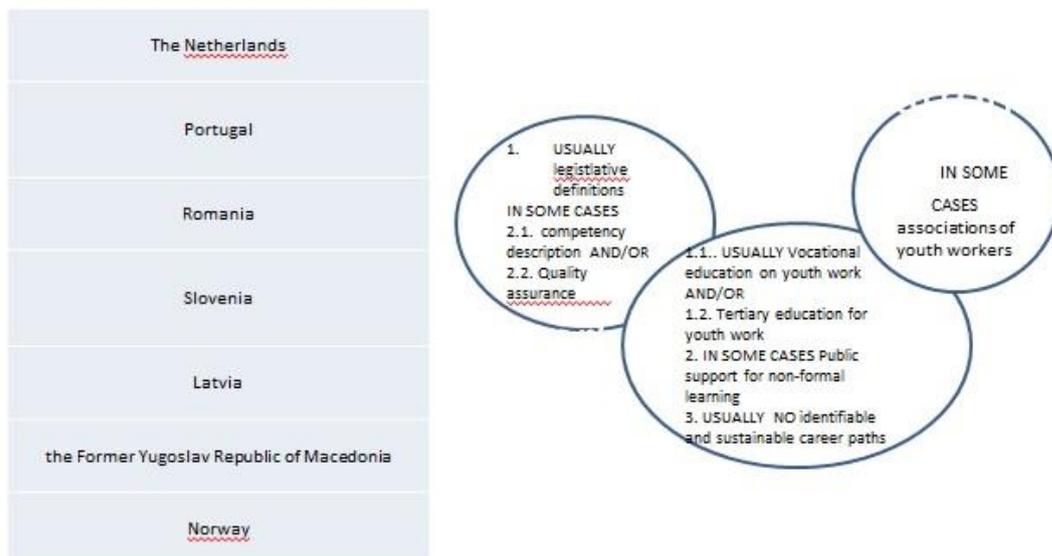
The first group of states (strong practice architectures) consists of nine countries: Ireland, UK (Wales), Belarus, Belgium (French), Finland, France, Germany, Slovakia and UK (England). All of these countries have legislative definitions and have either competency description or quality assurance if not both. They all have public support for non-formal learning and identifiable career paths. There have formal learning on youth work available, half of them both on vocational and tertiary education. They have associations for youth work.

Group 2. Strong practice architectures, room for development on certain level



The second group of states (strong practice architectures, room for development on a certain level) consists of Estonia, Luxembourg, Serbia, Austria, Belgium (Flemish), Belgium (German), the Czech Republic, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Malta, the Russian Federation and Sweden. These countries, except Sweden, have legislative definitions. They also have a quality assurance system or competency description if not both. These countries usually have either vocational or higher education for youth work. They also usually have public support for non-formal learning and usually have sustainable career paths. They all have associations of youth workers.

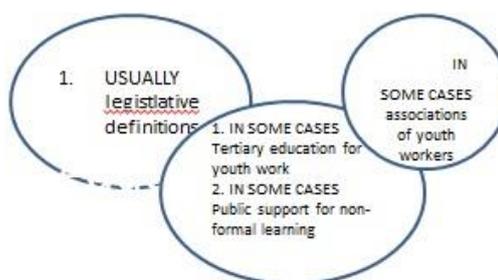
Group 3. Practice architectures where some parts have been developed



The third group (practice architectures where some parts have been developed) is the smallest, and consists of seven countries: the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Latvia, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and Norway. They usually have legislative definitions. In some cases they have a competency description or quality assurance. They usually offer formal education for youth work. In some cases they have public support for non-formal learning. Usually there are no sustainable career paths. In some cases there are associations of youth workers. Of all the countries belonging to this group Norway is different from the others, having formal education, public support for non-formal learning and identifiable career paths but scoring zero points in other dimensions.

Group 4. Practice architectures in the need of development

Armenia
Bulgaria
Croatia
Georgia
Greece
Moldova
Montenegro
Azerbaijan
Cyprus
Italy
Albania
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Poland



The fourth group (practice architectures in the need of development) consists of 13 countries: Armenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Montenegro, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Italy, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Poland. These countries usually have legislative definitions. There are no competency descriptions or quality assurance. There is higher level education in some cases, and public support for non-formal learning in some cases. There are no identifiable career paths. In some cases there are associations of youth work.

The four groups described above all provide different opportunities to learn how to become a youth worker and develop in the profession. The more structures are available, the more opportunities there exist for youth work. Also, it has to be emphasised that important dimensions are lacking and the picture provided by the analysis is far from complete. Perhaps the best way to interpret these results is to think of them as different models for European states in promoting youth work. Interpreted this way, they show that possibilities, available resources and opportunities to function as a recognised profession vary considerably.

V An individual learner's perspective: meaning, practice, community, identity

The analysis preceding this chapter has been carried out by closely following the national reports, written mostly by correspondents linked to EKYP, and has been based on the work done by the research group who produced the *Mapping the Educational Paths of Youth Workers* research. In

this chapter, I will offer some theoretically informed interpretations on what the different practice architectures could mean for learning on the individual level.

The first point concerns the nature of education itself. Since the 1970s it has been criticised that learning is narrowly equated with formal schooling. Thinkers like Ivan Illich and Carl Bereiter emphasised that learning is a human activity that is continuous and is in no way restricted to schooling only. Ivan Illich wrote that most learning is not the result of instruction, but rather a result of unhampered participation in the meaningful settings (Illich 1981). This perspective emphasises social and communal aspects of learning. Learning is about taking part in an activity. While one does not need to share the scepticism of these writers towards the impact or even necessity of formal learning, their perspectives are still valid in pointing out that much of our learning happens outside schools. Educational paths are about schooling and formal learning, but not only about that. In a larger sense we need to take into account the wide variety of educational contexts and the wide variety of educational settings. This perspective is embedded in the theory of practice architectures.

We believe much Anglophone usage of the term “education” is much corrupted today because, in Anglophone usage, we too often use the term “education” when we really mean “schooling” (the activities that routinely go on in different kinds of “educational” institutions that *may or may not* be educational). Common usage obscures and threatens to erase the important distinction between education and schooling, with the consequence that the philosophical and pedagogical origins and competing intellectual traditions of education as a discipline, field and profession begin to become invisible (Kemmis et al. 2014, 26).

As is clear from the above, the educational paths of youth workers are shaped by processes inside and outside educational institutions. Educational paths inside formal education help one to access the information, concepts, methods, ideas and values already held by the professional community. For this reason, formal learning is an integral part of practice architectures providing support to youth work. Of course, it is not enough to produce competent workers. According to Dana Fusco (2012, 225-26), one important aspect of learning the craft of youth work comes through the lived and applied experiences that teach us the fluidity of human growth. Adopting a perspective of learning as participation will shed light on how youth workers learn. According to the analysis there are considerable differences in the practice architectures around youth work, even if there are formal learning paths available.

The above analysis offers a general view about the practice architecture of youth work. According to a social theory of learning as developed by Etienne Wenger, learning as participation is the way people learn how to be competent workers. In this theory, an individual is seen as an active participant in the practices of social communities, and his/her professional identity is constructed in these communities. People continuously create their shared identity through engaging in and contributing to the practices of their communities. According to Jon Ord, even the totality of youth work can be seen as a community of practice because youth work has shared practices, meanings and identities (Ord 2016, 220). A community of practice in youth work supports learning if: *i.* there is a social recognition for youth work, *ii.* there is a possibility for life-long learning in formal, non-

formal and informal environments, *iii.* there are professional associations and networks. This perspective in turn shapes professional learning paths.

Wenger describes learning as having four dimensions. First, there is a dimension of meaning, which Wenger defines as an individual and collective ability to experience our life and the world as meaningful (Wenger 1998, 5). In the context of educational paths of youth workers this means having discursive resources to talk about youth work, to understand it, to find it important to oneself and to society. The collective dimension in this article has been examined from the perspective of legal definitions, quality assurance mechanisms and competency descriptions. It would be too mechanistic, however, to suppose that having these would by itself help the individuals learn. These available resources need to be experienced as meaningful by youth work communities and by individual youth workers. There clearly is a need to research further how well these resources support the learning of individual youth workers.

The second dimension of learning is practice. People learn by doing, and doing happens when engaging in activities. This is due to shared historical and social resources, frameworks and perspectives that can sustain mutual engagement in action (Wenger 1998, 5). Through doing something together one can learn the craft. In the educational paths of youth workers this dimension requires that something is recognised as youth work and there are arenas of doing youth work together. If youth work is about being responsive to youth (Fusco 2012), one clearly has to have opportunities to learn about these ways of working for and with the young in different settings. The richer the practice architecture, the more it provides opportunities to engage in different ways of doing youth work.

The third dimension of social learning is community, which is characterised by learning as becoming. This dimension is about social configurations in which our enterprises are defined as worth pursuing and our participation is recognisable as competence (Wenger 1998, 5). Through taking part in a community one learns to appreciate youth work, to justify it, to defend it and point out the benefits of youth work in cross-sectoral co-operation and in itself. Youth work communities come to being if youth work is recognised as something that has a recognisable form and ethos. In the educational paths of youth workers this means that individual workers have to be able to attach themselves to a larger community. This too can be supported by having recognition, common definitions, material resources, organisations and possibilities of learning both inside and outside the formal education system. While the data of this survey does not warrant me to draw conclusions about individual countries, I think it is fair to say that different practice architectures certainly must mean that the possibilities of joining youth work communities are vastly different in different corners of Europe.

The fourth dimension of learning is identity – learning as becoming. Learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of our communities (Wenger 1998, 5). In this dimension of learning, the educational path of a youth worker produces the feeling that one can say to herself or himself: I am a youth worker, in the community of other youth workers. What youth workers are able to do and to be is framed by the practice architectures of a country.

Sometimes they can view youth work as a lifetime opportunity, sometimes as something that needs to be fought for and something that may not be economically sustainable. To become a youth worker is to be able to join a community of youth workers and in this process, develop an identity as a youth worker.

The four dimensions of learning – meaning, practice, community and identity – all point out how educational paths are at the same time individual, and at the same time communal. These processes are shaped by the existing practice architectures within European countries. The perspective in this report has been to look at these inside the national boundaries. Luckily there are many ways of co-operating with other youth workers all around Europe, of becoming members of larger European communities of youth workers and finding meaning and identity in joint projects. Therefore, the European or global educational paths should be examined as well. This viewpoint is outside the scope of this article, but the fact needs to be stated: the shared frameworks of meaning can be created by working together as a European community of practice of youth work.

VI Conclusion and recommendations

This report has provided an analysis of patterns, commonalities and differences in the educational paths of youth workers in Europe. The analysis was based on the *Mapping the Educational Paths of Youth Workers* study, the results of which were further analysed to compare different countries in three dimensions: discursive, material-economic and social. The theoretical framework was based on theories of social learning, in particular a theory of practice architectures as developed by Stephen Kemmis. These three categories were combined to create different groups of European youth work pathways. Results of the analysis show that there are considerable differences in different European countries.

According to the analysis, the 41 countries examined can be classified in four different groups. Nine countries have strong practice architectures supporting youth work education and probably youth work in general. Twelve countries have strong practice architectures as well, but they may lack some important elements which could be developed in the future. Seven countries have developed some parts of the practice architecture but would most likely benefit from establishing stronger structures for youth work. Thirteen countries are only starting to develop their youth work architectures and will probably benefit from learning from other European countries.

Different dimensions of practice architectures are examined separately. However, practice architectures are dynamic mechanisms. Different constituents of practice architectures – laws, regulation, competency descriptions, availability of education, sustainable career paths, availability of non-formal learning and all of the important things like physical settings or professional literature not examined in this study – ‘hang together’ (Kemmis et al. 2014) and form a totality. Evaluating the interlinked totality in a local context is likely to be required to understand

different country realities better.³ To cite only one example, sustainable and identifiable career paths are in this study examined from the viewpoint of economic and material arrangements. In reality, they also influence sayings by making it possible to talk about youth work as a profession and relatings by giving access to different cross-sectoral networks, for example school-based youth work. Therefore the lack of certain elements in the practice architectures might actually mean that the dynamic effects are lost.

Some countries have developed strong structures which can support the learning of individual youth workers and youth work communities. On the other hand, the situation in some European countries is more challenging. The report concludes that there is need for sharing good practices in youth work and learning from them.

The analysis of this paper gives only a partial picture about the practice architectures of youth work. As illuminating as comparing countries this way can be, there are dimensions that are important for learning paths which cannot be examined based on the approach chosen for this study. It is recommended that further research should cover the following topics:

- The actual career paths of youth workers are only touched upon in this study. On-the-job learning is vital to one's professional development. Understanding what type of career paths (sustainable, cumulative/short-term, precarian) different practice architectures make possible are likely to shed light on how youth workers learn and develop as individuals and as communities.
- Studying quality, scope and availability of non-formal learning in different countries cannot be done reliably using the data of this study. A different methodology might be needed. In a context of life-long learning different opportunities to share ideas and learn new things based on one's own motivation are important. Understanding what possibilities youth workers have for non-formal learning makes the picture about educational paths more complete.
- The relations dimension could not be covered properly in this study. One aspect of this is the relation of youth work to other professional cultures. How is youth recognised as a partner? What types of professional networks are formed and what is the role of youth work in these? Do youth workers work in isolation or together with other professions?
- The links between different topics covered in the analysis should be analysed further. Of particular importance is the connection between formal youth work education and the structures of youth work practice. What are the possibilities for learning in versatile environments (on the job, at the institution, virtual platforms, peer learning)? How is on-the-job learning integrated to curricula of youth work education?
- Some aspects of studying the educational paths are likely to require qualitative interviews with youth workers from different backgrounds. This way the meaningful learning experiences and contexts as experienced and lived by the youth workers could be found out.

³ I am grateful to Prof. Hannu Heikkinen and Dr Kathleen Mahon for pointing this out.

- An important aspect of the practice architectures of youth work is the knowledge about the living conditions of the young. If young persons are engaged as the primary clients in their social contexts (Sercombe 2010, 27) in the process of youth work, youth work in general requires knowledge about the young. Different methods for producing knowledge about the young and their connection to youth work should be studied to gain a better understanding of how youth work relates to the young and their social networks.

On the policy level, the following recommendations can be given if the aim is that “establishment or development of quality youth work is safeguarded and supported within local, regional or national youth policies” (CM/Rec(2017)4):

- The results show that support for youth work infrastructure, training and practice varies considerably. The resources allocated to youth work are not sufficient in all the examined cases. National governments should make efforts to secure adequate funding for youth work.
- Some countries have developed a strong discursive basis for youth work. This includes defining in legislation what youth work is, developing quality assurance and explaining competency frameworks. The legal basis should be supplemented with different descriptions of what youth work is and what it contributes to in society. Efforts should be made to establish descriptions about quality youth work and a competency description of youth workers.
- The learning possibilities of youth workers vary considerably. In some countries formal education of youth work should be further developed. This should be combined with access to non-formal learning, so that learning paths for youth workers support life-long learning on an individual level and creating reflective practices on a communal level. Training should be offered to voluntary and professional workers alike.
- In about half of the examined countries there are not yet sustainable career paths for youth workers. Creating a sufficient system of funding for youth work is required to enable youth workers to have sustainable careers and to create learning networks and communities based on their continuing careers.

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