

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



Call for Abstracts

Learning from the History of International Youth Organisations, and Their Impact on Youth Work Practice Today

For the final meeting and publication in the History of Youth Work in Europe series (History VII), the EU-CoE youth partnership together with the government of Slovenia will co-organise on 2-4 October in Ljubljana, Slovenia, a workshop on the history of international youth organisations and their impact on youth work practice today.

In preparation for that workshop, we launch an open call to researchers, practitioners and policy-makers interested to submit an abstract of about 500 words, along with a brief CV by 9 March 2018 to Tanya.basarab@partnership-eu.coe.int.

The purpose of the workshop

The seventh, and final, workshop, and the ensuing publication (Volume VII), will consider the history of transnational or pan-European youth work activity and the place of transnational youth organisations and movements throughout the whole youth work (hi)story. The workshop will address the following questions:

- Why they exist?
- Where they came from?
- How they evolved?
- What they did, and what they do now?
- In which ways have they added value to the national stories?
- What were critical changes?
- What are shared core elements and principles that drove practice?
- How did they contribute to how we understand youth work practice today and which of their principles and procedures are central to (or could have more weight in) actual youth work practice and policy?

As with previous seminars, there will have to be reliance on voluntary contributions from those willing to play their part – sometimes academics, sometimes government officials, sometimes practitioners. In other words, the History of Youth Work in

Europe material has been compiled from all three corners of what has sometimes been called the 'magic triangle' in the youth sector: research, policy and practice. This invariably produced sometimes partial and selective accounts, but the intense debates and the editorial work of the volumes have permitted a critical distance from individual contributions, pointing to divergences and convergences, disconnections and connections, within and beyond the youth work field. Critically, these volumes often suggest how youth work may both inform youth policy and draw from it, in order to cement a stronger position for itself and strengthen a positive offer and experience for young people. International youth work has been especially prominent in this exercise through an expertise that draws on diverse knowledge and experience from across different borders and boundaries.

The addition of the history of international youth NGOs and movements will finalise a mosaic of histories of youth work: from grounded national narratives and commentaries, through the connection of those accounts to the changing national political and policy contexts in which youth work had to survive, to youth work activity that almost sits above those national realities in order to advance both their specific agendas (for example, political or faith positions) and some level of shared commitment to a common set of youth work aspirations and principles: the participation, engagement, inclusion, and empowerment of young people.

A call to make a contribution to the thematic clusters

The workshop will seek to *learn about the histories of very varied forms of transnational youth work development* through international youth work, through the activities of international youth *organisations*, and through transnational institutional arrangements designed to support youth work in a variety of ways. Some organisations will fall into all three camps, but for the logistical organisation of the workshop, sessions will be clustered in the following way:

- (a) Those designated as the 'Big 6', having secured a global reach, though their roots were often within Europe
- (b) Youth work organisations and initiatives reflecting and addressing the sustaining 'grand narratives' of discrimination and inequality: race, gender, class and geography. Here the focus will be on international youth work concerned with ethnic, sexual and other minorities, including rural youth.
- (c) Those engaged in a 'struggle for ideas': belief-driven youth work through faith-based organisations, the youth wings of political parties or the youth strategies and structures of authoritarian regimes.
- (d) Issue-focused youth work development that has emerged in response to new European and global challenges: ranging across but not excluding such themes as housing and homelessness, environment and ecology, tolerance, mobility and conflict
- (e) Transnational youth work advocating for or defending particular methodologies of youth work: self-governed youth organisations, club-based, street-based, project-based, information-based and more.

- (f) Institutions and NGOs established whose institutional and professional role incorporates the promotion and support of youth work

The Big 6 comprise the Scouts, the Guides, the YMCA, the YWCA, the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, and the International Award Association. Under (b) one can think of the International Gay and Lesbian Youth Organisation (IGLYO) or the 4H/Young Farmers' Clubs. Within (c) there are bodies such as the Young European Federalists (JEF), JEMI/MIEC, the International Falcon Movement or the Komsomol. In (d), there are the Young Nature Friends, and UNA Exchange; and in (e) the European Youth Forum, the European Confederation of Youth Clubs, Dynamo International and EYRICA. Finally, under (f) there are both long-established political institutions, such as the European Commission (with its Youth Unit) and the Council of Europe (with its Youth Department), and more recent initiatives such as InterCity Youth – the association of municipal youth work services. The role of national youth councils is also of relevance here, as many have shared experiences across borders and their roles have subsequently evolved from service organisations to advocacy bodies as they have engaged in new forms of cooperation and collaboration in the context of youth work. The list is clearly no more than illustrative and far from exhaustive. There are, of course, many more.

What such organisations and initiatives have done, however, is to forge an identity of pan-European youth work that has, in turn, played its part in wider youth policy formulation, governance and implementation at a European level, through procedures such as co-management and the structured dialogue.

Choosing which organisations, establishing the rationale for doing so, and identifying individuals who may have the capability, confidence and commitment to write their histories is the paramount challenge for the preparatory team. There is clearly a need both for some proactive selection and invitation and an open call that seeks submissions and applications to make a contribution to one of these session clusters and the ensuing book.

All contributions to the workshop are expected to provide an account (for about 20 minutes) of the following:

- A narrative (hi)story of the organisation around critical and pivotal moments of change, development and transformation: recognising both internal forces (such as charismatic individuals) and external pressures and influences (such as the wider political environment)
- An analysis of the reasons for change
- A perspective on the organisation's contribution, across borders, to the understanding and development of European and transnational youth work development agenda.

Those invited to make such a contribution will then be expected to prepare a text on these issues for subsequent publication following the Council of Europe communication guide.

As with previous workshops, while the focus in history workshop VII is on transnational youth organisations, we continue to encourage authors from member States that have not yet had their (hi)stories written or presented to send us their proposals as well. There remains a [handful of countries whose histories have not been written up](#) or presented yet and which would enrich the European youth work development initiatives. We will be happy to publish online their contributions and will look for spaces to present these stories either in history workshop VII or in other contexts.

Anyone wishing to make such a contribution should indicate in the subject line the number of the session to which they would like to contribute, and submit a short CV and an abstract (around 500 words) by **9 March 2018** to Tanya.basarab@partnership-eu.coe.int

We invite you to also read the full concept note of the History VII and the overview of contributions so far.