

# Youth Partnership

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



## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO YOUTH KNOWLEDGE BOOK ON YOUTH WORK WITH YOUNG REFUGEES

We invite you to submit abstracts for a book in the Youth Knowledge Books series exploring the role of youth work and youth sector at large in engaging with young refugees in Europe, what are the expectations, potential and boundaries

**Deadline for submitting abstracts 1 May 2017**

### Background

In 2015 more than a million migrants requested asylum in Europe. Efforts to block the Mediterranean route, through controversial agreements such as the EU/Turkey deal, has witnessed a drop in numbers. However, in the absence of safer alternatives, the Central Mediterranean route has continued to increase, as month on month thousands of refugees and other forced migrants continue to risk their lives in an effort to cross borders, and find safety, dignity and a better life in Europe. The vast majority making this journey are young people, aged between 14 to 34 (Eurostat, 2016).

For many young refugees<sup>1</sup> then, the border represents both death, and hope. The border serves as a state instrument of control, and also as the ideological marker for the construction of national and political identity – delineating who belongs, and who does not;

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this CfP the term 'Refugee' is an inclusive term that includes all beneficiaries of international protection, unaccompanied minors, asylum seekers, undocumented migrants, sans papier, and rejected asylum seekers

who has rights, and the right to rights (Pisani, 2015). But borders are not just definite lines, they are also a messy collage of creative spaces, of relationships and stories (Sassen, 2006). The 'young refugee' embodies the borderlands, a liminal space between nation states and cultures, between childhood and adulthood – where different identities, cultures, ethnicities, languages and ways of knowing, imagining, and being can interact, and intersect, opening up possibilities for transformative, political spaces.

Likewise, positioned at the 'cusp' (Williamson, 2014), youth work can also be seen as positioned within these borderlands – fluid, contested and diverse, the 'borders' of youth work often refutes definition, offering a diverse range of motivations, purpose and activities, ranging from civic engagement towards transformation and social justice, to being an instrument of the state, focused on leisure activities, integration and control.

The borderlands is a space that presents competing pressures and interests, and produces conflicting responses. The youth work response will depend on the varied ways in which we imagine these spaces and how we enact them. Youth work is never complete: evolving contexts and lived realities bring new imperatives, and new questions about the role, purpose and value of youth work.

### **Youth work and young refugees – towards critical encounters**

Throughout 2016, the EU-CoE youth partnership engaged in a number of actions geared towards exploring the situation of young refugees in Europe, and the role of youth work in their integration. It is this background that serves as the impetus for this call for papers, one of a number of actions planned for 2017. Preliminary explorative analyses (e.g., Bello 2016) suggests that the 'youth work' and 'young refugees' encounter has been very limited. There is much work to be done in strengthening and developing this relationship and learning more about the challenges, the strengths, and the numerous ways of moving forward.

This issue of Youth Knowledge Books seeks to create a space to critically engage with the issue of young refugees and youth work, and to further advance a dialogue between policy, research and practice. We would like to invite youth workers, youth researchers, policy makers and young refugees to engage in critical debate around all issues pertaining to young refugee lives and encourage new and innovative ways of thinking about, and

developing youth work practice. We are interested in new critical theoretical engagement, empirical research that prioritises giving voice, examples of new youth work initiatives. We are also looking for examples of practices developed in youth work with refugees, reflections on the limits and potential of youth work and how youth workers can engage cross-sectorally. We encourage authors to reflect on the contradictions and challenges that may emerge, particularly in relation to youth policy and youth work practice.

### **What are we looking for?**

We encourage contributions delving into a range of themes, and from a range of contributors including (but not limited to):

#### **1. On setting the conceptual framework**

- Theories and concepts of integration and their relevance for European youth policy and youth work.
- Democracy and participation – theories and concepts on citizenship and democratic participation applied to refugees.

#### **2. On lived realities of young refugees**

- Exploring the lives and experiences of young refugees in Europe - their own understanding of their rights, dreams, aspirations and reality, their relation to the new community, their coping mechanisms. What are their needs? How do they negotiate their identities, expectations and lived realities? What is their experience of youth work back home and in Europe.
- Crossing borders, and moving through nations, accessing asylum and basic human rights, education, employment, and finding a home. How does being a young person intersect with *inter alia* gender, dis/ability, sexual orientation, 'race'/ethnicity, religion, and legal status? How can youth work contribute and support them in this journey?
- Transition to adulthood while being refugees – what do young refugees turn to when they lose basic rights and protection at the point of "adult" legal age?

### **3. On youth work and young refugees**

- Youth work and young refugees: what is the state of play? How, if at all, are the different tensions in political discourse, policy limitations and service provision being addressed by the sector? What is particular about working with this group and what learning/capacity could be brought to it?
- Conceptualising the role of youth work with refugees: an instrument of care? Control? Advocacy? Political and social transformation? How does youth work negotiate different agendas, roles, expectations, needs and motivations?
- How does youth work support young refugees' agency in host countries and their aspirations for a better future? How can youth work serve as trusting reference for the most vulnerable young refugees, such as unaccompanied minors?
- Engaging the 'other' – how can youth work overcome real and perceived borders? How can youth work facilitate dialogue and relationships between young people from different backgrounds, perspectives and lived realities?
- New and evolving contexts accrued or new learning needs for youth workers, including, but certainly not limited to, dealing with trauma, conflict management, human rights violations and transcultural relationships. What are these new learning needs and how do we go about developing new knowledge, skills and competences for youth workers in the field?
- Unwelcome refugees? What is the role of youth work in addressing the rise of nationalism, racism and xenophobia? What are the challenges, risks and opportunities?
- Active citizenship, the non-citizen, and the Nation state - exploring new forms of, and possibilities for youth (formal and informal) participation and political engagement and coalitions with young and adult people in the countries of arrival.
- Transnational political mobilisation – what, if any, is the role of youth work in supporting young refugees to develop the knowledge, skills and capacities to support civil society in their country of origin?
- 'Illegalised youth' and human rights - how can youth workers promote and protect human rights in practice? What are the challenges and opportunities when working with young refugees invisible in formal records?

#### 4. On implications for policy

- Conceptual analysis of integration, inclusion and analysis of current policy frameworks.
- 'Illegalised' youth, securitised borders and the rise of xenophobia and racism - what are the limitations, challenges and possibilities for youth policy?
- Participation and active citizenship – how can youth policy address the challenges and opportunities presented in an increasingly multi-national, multi-ethnic and diverse Europe? What can be done differently?
- How can youth policy foster intercultural dialogue, human rights education and empowerment of young refugees?
- What cross-sectoral approaches to youth policy should be emphasised in working with young refugees?

#### Process and timeline:

We invite you to write a contribution and send it to [Tanya.basarab@partnership-eu.coe.int](mailto:Tanya.basarab@partnership-eu.coe.int) and to [maria.pisani@um.edu.mt](mailto:maria.pisani@um.edu.mt). We strongly encourage in your papers to focus on youth work with young refugees primarily - which is the main theme of the Youth Knowledge Book.

The editorial team, composed of Maria Pisani, Barbara Giovanna Bello, Sofia Laine and Tanya Basarab will read through the contributions and share joint feedback with each contributor. You would then be invited to revise the contribution addressing the comments and have another month or so to finish.

Those authors who already submitted a background paper to the seminar "Journeys to a New Life: Understanding the Role of Youth Work in Integrating Young Refugees in Europe" do not need to resubmit the contribution unless they propose significant changes following the seminar.

**In order to facilitate the book production, we would like to draw your attention to the following issues which are essential for the next steps:**

Please submit your **long abstract to (500-800 words**, including 4-5 keywords and short bio note: your name, working field and your relation to the topic of the book, approx. 50 words)

by **1<sup>st</sup> of May** to [Tanya.basarab@partnership-eu.coe.int](mailto:Tanya.basarab@partnership-eu.coe.int) and to [maria.pisani@um.edu.mt](mailto:maria.pisani@um.edu.mt) with the following subject line: YKB Youth Work and Young Refugees.

The editorial team will shortly reply if your article is accepted, hoping to receive the **full papers by June 23<sup>rd</sup>**. The text should not exceed **5000 words**.

On behalf of the editorial team,

Tanya Basarab