



Peer Learning Activity (PLA) on Education and Training of Youth Workers

Competences frameworks and competence-based approaches in education and training of youth workers

Concept Note

Rationale

Youth work development is now fully on the European agenda thanks to the EU youth programmes, the longstanding work of the Council of Europe, the EU-CoE youth partnership, and the National Agencies, as well as thanks to the outcomes of the 1st and the 2nd European Youth Work Convention in 2010 and 2015. The Council of Europe Recommendation on Youth Work CM/Rec 2017(4), the EU Youth Strategy 2021-2027 (notably the 'EMPOWER' area of action and the Youth Goals), the recently adopted Council of Europe Youth Sector Strategy 2030, and the Council Conclusions on Education and Training of Youth Workers (2019/C 412/03), adopted under the Finnish Presidency of the European Union, encourage learning, quality initial and continuous education and training for youth youth workers, capacity building and further policy development and sustainable structures and resources for the development of quality and innovation in youth work.

Processes aiming at supporting youth work development are further being articulated in the preparation for the 3rd European Youth Work Convention, organised in the framework of the German Presidency of the European Union and the Chairmanship of the Council of Europe, which should launch the European Youth Work Agenda

In support of these European initiatives, the EU-CoE youth partnership has been carrying out research into understanding the realities of youth worker education, training and work across Europe and the challenges of strengthening the identity of youth work in relation to other, recognised sectors working with young people. This resulted in a mapping in 2018 of educational and career paths for youth workers in Europe, and further thematic analytical papers, which explored important drivers for quality youth work development (including in the areas of education and training of youth workers; ethics, early career perspectives, professionalization). The research has also created opportunities for cooperating with



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educators of youth workers in universities and vocational formal education structures and has helped disseminate knowledge on national education systems for youth workers in countries where they have been developed.

SALTO Training and Cooperation, in the framework of the European Training Strategy (ETS), has developed a series of tools for youth workers' competence development, namely a Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally, which serves now as a basis for residential and online training courses (in development), as well as an online self-assessment tool (also in development). The fourth ETS revision process will focus on the strategy responding to new developments and situation in the field of European youth work, including opportunities for education and training of youth workers funded by EU youth programmes.

In 2021, the EU-CoE youth partnership, together with the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, JUGEND fur Europa and SALTO Training and Cooperation will organise a peer learning activity with the intention to develop a shared understanding between the participating countries of quality youth worker education and training and make a step further into cross-sectoral cooperation (bringing together decision-makers, formal and non-formal education sectors' representatives and practitioners, supervisors and other stakeholders who have a say in training and educating youth workers) to study country approaches with regard to the complementarity and links between formal education and training of youth workers, competence development of youth workers, explore how European and international standards, tools and approaches are can be applied in such context, and create a pool of resources.

Proposed focus and format of the PLA

The PLA should be a common reflection, exchange of approaches and mutual learning process with a small group of stakeholders interested in exchanging competence development within the frame of education and training of youth workers, as the key actors involved in or motivated to engage in promoting quality educational offers to youth workers and applying international standards, tools and good practices adapted to meet the particular conditions and needs in respective countries.

The proposed focus of this PLA is /contributing to/ on the development of **a competency-based framework for education and training of youth workers**. The PLA will look at the following dimensions in particular:

- the cooperation between formal education and non-formal learning;



- how are competence frameworks/competence-based approach translated in training and education of youth workers' contexts;
- how is the operational support for those engaged in cooperation mechanisms being organized; and
- how European institution's agendas and programmes, international standards, tools and good practices from other countries are considered in national training and education models.

The PLA is not intended as a one-off activity, but rather a series of steps with diverse formats over the course of several months. The PLA will be prepared in late autumn 2020 and take place in spring 2021. The first phase of the PLA will require a thorough documentation to ensure that the results may be shared and used by others. The results of the PLA should be widely disseminated and be seen as a contribution to the implementation of the Council of Europe Recommendation on youth work, the Council Conclusions on education and training of youth workers of the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the EU and to the future European Youth Work Agenda.

Target group

The participants involved in the PLA should form a group composed of maximum 5 persons per country (teams) with a maximum 5-6 countries. Each of these teams will not have to be composed of exactly similar profiles. On the contrary, diversity is seen in this PLA as an enriching factor. Nonetheless, each team should be interested to exchange and cooperate on the topic of this first PLA, no matter if already involved in competence development processes or interested to learn about them.

The national teams could include the following profiles:

- Higher Education and VET structures, including universities
- Associations of Youth Workers
- Researchers (incl. one that would have the role of rapporteur)
- Non-formal educators that teach/train youth workers (e.g. trainers)
- National Authorities –
- National Agencies (Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps), e.g. DE, FI, BEFL, CH, maybe IE.
- Council of Europe and the European Commission



Steering group of the PLA

The PLA will be co-organised by SALTO Training and Cooperation and the EU-CoE youth partnership and supported by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. Together with other partners involved (e.g. National Agencies, Universities, other educational institutions, organisations with established education and training programmes) and researchers from Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Serbia and Portugal, they will further plan the different activities – what should happen when and where - in more detail.

Funding of the PLA

The German National Agency has foreseen funds in their TCA 2020. Co-funding would be needed from the participating structures. The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture can also contribute to the hosting and organisational costs. The EU-CoE youth partnership may fund analytical and reporting work linked to the PLA (e.g. research) and finance a delegation from a non-programme country. A more detailed budget will need to be defined once there is an agreement on the format of the PLA.

Timeline

- November 26, 2020: online preparatory meeting with representatives of the country delegations and the steering group (one afternoon – 13h00 – 17h00 CET)
- Until spring 2021: exploratory phase and preparation of the PLA – development of a background note gathering the conclusions of, i.a. the Estonian study on that topic, the research paper developed by Marko Kovacic, gathering information about countries supporting the Council Conclusions on education and training of youth workers, analysis of the European processes and related document tackling youth workers' competence development.
- Late spring 2021: first activities of the PLA (e.g. residential seminar with possible site visits, working groups, exchange on national processes – what works well, what can be borrowed and implemented from other countries etc.) The process will be documented for reference and inspiration for others.
- Summer 2021: sharing the first results and next steps.