

Youth Partnership

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



POOL OF EUROPEAN YOUTH RESEARCHERS (PEYR)

9th Annual Meeting Report

Novi Sad, 20 June 2019

Cristina Bacalso

Member of the Pool of European Youth Researchers // cristina@bacalso.me

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this work, commissioned by the European Union–Council of Europe youth partnership, are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of either of the partner institutions, their member states or the organisations co-operating with them.

Introduction

The Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) is an initiative of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth (youth partnership). It consists of 35 researchers and experts from across Europe, possessing a wide range of expertise in various policy areas relating to youth.¹ The purpose of PEYR is to provide qualitative input for the development of knowledge-based youth policy and practice. For 2019, it aims to support the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy and the Council of Europe Agenda 2020, and the reflections on the new youth strategy of the Council of Europe. It generates knowledge throughout its programme, including producing analytical papers, research activities, and materials produced by the youth partnership under the objective “Better Knowledge” (EU-CoE youth partnership, 2019a).

To this end, PEYR meets once a year in an annual meeting, to identify and elaborate on new trends and developments in the youth field, thus furthering a European youth research agenda. This year’s 9th Annual Meeting was held on 20 June 2019 in Novi Sad, Serbia.

Using the discussions at the 9th Annual Meeting of the PEYR, the aim of this report is to answer the following questions: What are the current trends in youth research as evidenced by PEYR? What are the challenges facing youth research? What are the opportunities for future action?

To answer these questions, the report will do the following:

- **Identify current developments** in youth research in Europe, as evidenced by the work of the two partner institutions within the youth partnership’s programme, and the areas of interest and research of PEYR members;
- **Explore upcoming trends** in the main thematic clusters of the youth partnership, including the research needs of youth policy in each area, emerging research findings, and key networks/resources/institutions for research;
- **Understand ideas and aspirations for future** projects/studies/activities that could be done to further develop knowledge in the main thematic clusters, in youth research within Europe broadly, and through the work and functioning of the PEYR.

The report is not intended to cover the full scale of work and research done on youth and youth policies in Europe, but rather provide a glimpse into the European youth research field by looking at the work that is supported by the partnership and its institutions through the PEYR. Through providing an overview of the activities and outputs of the PEYR annual meeting, this report also intends to help guide future directions for the youth partnership in its work to support research and knowledge production on youth in Europe.

¹ For more information and full profiles of the PEYR members, see: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/peyr>

PEYR 9th Annual Meeting Report At-a-Glance

Current state of youth research in Europe

- **Growing recognition by the two partner institutions of the importance of research on youth**
- **Youth work is a potential area of intervention by the PEYR in the development of the Council of Europe 2030 youth strategy and within the so-called European Youth Work Agenda**
- **Digitalisation, education, and participation are popular themes**
- **Gaps in research on gender, inequalities/marginality, transitions, and wellbeing**

Upcoming trends in youth research

- **Trends in applying non-traditional methodologies**
- **Increased focus on vulnerable or marginalised groups**
- **Increased focus on extremism & authoritarianism**
- **Need to measure impact**
- **Calls for more data**

Opportunities for future action

- **Need to promote both policy-relevant youth research, but also youth research broadly**
- **More mapping of existing research on youth is needed**
- **Digital technologies and youth is high on the agenda**
- **Types and formats of knowledge products as important as topics to be covered**

Context of the 9th Annual Meeting of the PEYR

The overall goal of the youth partnership, as defined in the 2019 workplan, is to foster synergies between the activities of the two partner institutions in the youth field. For the European Commission, 2019 is a transition year with the launching of the new EU Youth Strategy (encompassing the Connect, Engage and Empower priorities), while for the Council of Europe, it will continue working on its biennial priorities (2018-2019), preparing the work on its 2020-2021 priorities and planning of the youth sector strategy until 2030. (EU-CoE youth partnership, 2019a).

Aim, objectives, and structure of the meeting

It is within this backdrop that the annual meeting of PEYR is held. The meeting offers a forum for sharing and building up knowledge on youth in Europe, coordinating the group's work, and

connecting PEYR members to each other and other experts and researchers from selected areas. PEYR and its annual meeting contribute to one of the objectives of the partnership, namely, "**Better knowledge**":

A "think tank" function to establish a clear picture of current and upcoming challenges and trends in participation and social inclusion for all young people, based on research evidence, sociological and statistical analysis and input from within and beyond the youth sector (EU-CoE youth partnership, 2019a)

This objective extends to providing support to knowledge-based youth policy and practice, and supporting the development of a strong youth research infrastructure across signatories of the European Cultural Convention² (EU-CoE youth partnership, 2019a). As such, this year's annual meeting was held in Novi Sad, Serbia, hosted jointly with a Regional Youth Knowledge Forum on youth research in South-East Europe³. The youth partnership has a long-lasting engagement in South-East Europe, including undertaking a number of activities in the recent years that aim to strengthen knowledge, policy and practice with young people, particularly in the areas of youth participation, social inclusion, and youth work (ibid).

For the annual meeting, 23 out of the 35 members of the PEYR were in attendance. A joint meeting with the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKCY)⁴ was held following the conclusion of the Regional Youth Knowledge Forum, which served to follow up on joint projects between EKCY and PEYR.⁵

² <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/018>

³ <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/regional-youth-knowledge-forum-on-youth-research-in-south-east-europe>

⁴ <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/knowledge/-/ekcy>

⁵ Note: this report does not cover the outcomes of the Regional Youth Knowledge Forum, nor the annual meeting of the EKCY. These are covered in separate reports.

Summary programme of PEYR 9th Annual Meeting

Opening of the meeting

Developments with regard to youth research within the two partner institutions and in the youth partnership's programme.

Objectives: PEYR members understand this year's work plan; PEYR have a chance to identify which part of the work plan they would like to be involved in; PEYR to understand the broad picture of youth research in Europe.

World cafe:

purpose of this is to look backwards on the work that has been done and evaluate / reflect on progress. In the afternoon we will look forward at what should be done.

Areas of interest and research of PEYR members

Objectives: PEYR members are familiar with each other's work, exchanged ideas, and identified opportunities for collaboration.

Working Groups

Objectives: to explore and develop the main thematic clusters of the youth partnership.

- Monitoring and evaluation of youth policy
- Social inclusion, with special attention to digitalisation
- Youth work
- Citizenship and participation

Current areas and foreseeable trends of youth research.

Mapping of topics, methodologies, resources and networks that can be accessed through PEYR members, to broaden the scope and the perspectives on youth research.

Objectives: to reflect on areas of research and identify trends and to create a list of ideas for 2020 workplan of the youth partnership concerning youth research.

Closing and evaluation

Current state of youth research in Europe

A snapshot into the current state of youth research in Europe is presented here in three parts: a look at the developments with regards to youth research within the two partner institutions; research activities completed in the youth partnership's programme; and current areas of research undertaken by PEYR members, both within the youth partnership's programme, but also outside of it – in the members' everyday professional roles as academics, research experts, and consultants.

Developments in youth research within two partner institutions and youth partnership's programme

As described by Marta Medlinska, coordinator of the youth partnership, there has been an increased interest in research from both partner institutions in the year since the PEYR had last met. This translates to recognition of research as a “natural” partner of the process of policy-making and designing programmes. However there still remains a gap in understanding the research itself, and she pointed to the importance of “knowledge translation” – the theme of

the keynote presentation in the Regional Youth Knowledge Forum the day prior.

Key points from the 2019 EU-CoE youth partnership workplan:

The overall **goal** of the partnership is to foster synergies between the activities of the two institutions in the youth field.

The **themes** of the EU-CoE youth partnership's work plan in 2019 are linked to those of the above mentioned priorities that are within the shared interest of the two partner institutions:

1. Participation and democratic citizenship
2. Social inclusion with a focus on outreach, access to rights and counteracting discrimination against vulnerable groups
3. Strengthening youth work

The **geographical coverage** will be the 50 European countries (EU and other Council of Europe members), signatory states of the Cultural Convention, as well as on neighbouring countries in the South Mediterranean.

There would be four objectives, through which the EU-CoE youth partnership contributes to youth policy development – two **specific objectives**:

1. "Better knowledge"
2. "Promotion of youth work"

and two **horizontal ones**:

3. "Cooperation with a regional focus"
4. "Communication and information"

Research was involved in the formation of two key Council of Europe recommendations this year: one on youth work, and one on supporting young refugees in their transition to adulthood. Researchers prepared concise background documents in both instances, demonstrating the need for well-targeted, short-form research (think: “elevator pitch” scope) that is presented at the “right moments” to inform policy discussions.

The Council of Europe 2030 youth strategy is in redrafting stage, and is currently supported by a researcher, Howard Williamson. While he is not a PEYR member, it would be good to make a closer link

between PEYR and the redrafting process, especially in the area of youth work, as it is a cross-cutting theme within the forthcoming strategy and is unlikely to be selected for removal in subsequent drafts.

Overall, depending on the evolution of the youth sector, and namely the financing of the youth partnership, this year's developments indicate that due to the increased recognition of the

importance of research, the youth partnership could have higher ambitions for the forthcoming year.

Summary of the current status and next steps of youth partnership projects for 2018-2019

I. Symposium on Young People's Political Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Status: 2 steering group meetings; participants & artists selected• What's next: series of preparatory webinars; confirming agenda	II. European Platform on Learning Mobility (EPLM) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Status: Researchers meeting in Ostende complete• What's next: Next conference to potentially explore how to measure impact at community level (methodology, indicators)	III. MOOC on youth policy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Status: Completed 3 editions• What's next: Next edition to start 7 October; Searching for a researcher with experience in youth policy & youth work to review curriculum
IV. "Shaping Youth Policy in Practice" <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Status: 5 delegations, three of which led by NAs, from 5 countries regions looking at how people can advocate for better youth policy• What's next: <i>unclear</i>	V. Seminar in Georgia focusing on strengthening youth work in EEaC <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Status: focus on bringing in knowledge and working with new stakeholders• What's next: Searching for a rapporteur to put together background paper	VI. EU Youth Dialogue <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Status: Involved in early meetings with the EU Presidency & attended EU Youth Conference• What's next: designing workshops & webinars on how questions and methods could be used by each country

Current areas of research undertaken by PEYR members

While PEYR is a pool made up of “youth researchers”, the definition of who is a “youth researcher” for the sake of membership, is kept intentionally wide. The professional profiles of the members are not limited only to academics; they also include independent research consultants who provide expert research services on youth to governments, European-level agencies and civil society organisations; and researchers in think-tanks or other non-academic research institutions conducting research on young people. Members come from disciplines as diverse as sociology, anthropology, psychology, education, and political science.

To capture such a diversity of experience, among 35 PEYR members, as a sample of the current state of research on youth in Europe today, is a challenge. To tackle this, this meeting's organisers used a digital platform called *Padlet*. *Padlet* is an online blank wall board that can be used by invited participants to collaborate in collecting ideas, brainstorming and sharing information on a specific theme.

Participants were asked to fill in information about their current work and research interests on the *Padlet* prior to attending the meeting. 33 out of the 35 PEYR members contributed, which included members who were unable to attend the meeting itself.

The aim of the *Padlet* is to catalogue the current research interests of members, so that they can be analysed for this report, and also so that other members can learn about each other's work long after the meeting itself. The *Padlet* asked members to complete the four questions:

- **Education:** research activities relating to education include citizenship and human rights education; social inclusion as it relates to education; measuring impact of informal & non-formal education; School facilities and teaching quality in formal education; Educational pathways of youth workers; Vocational education and training (VET) and building employability competencies through education; Educational leadership in formal education
- **Participation:** research activities relating to participation include political participation of young people; online participation; training on youth participation; processes for young people's participation in policy-making; political representation and young people in party politics; youth participation and radicalisation; alternative and non-conventional youth participation

Capturing conversations & building online resources: Padlets

This meeting's organisers used a digital platform called *Padlet* to collect ideas, brainstorm and share information on the themes covered in the meeting. The aim is two-fold: to better capture the volume of ideas from the meeting; and to build an online resource that members can access long after the meeting has concluded for their own research, networking, or interest. *Padlets* include text, pictures, and hyperlinks to further resources:

Research interests of PEYR members: https://padlet.com/dan_moxon1/PEYR

Emerging trends for youth research in the area of:

Social inclusion (with special attention to digitalisation): https://padlet.com/dan_moxon1/SID

Citizenship education and youth participation <https://padlet.com/cristina53/participation>

Youth policy impact and evaluation <https://padlet.com/cristina53/youthpolicy>

Youth work <https://padlet.com/cristina53/youthwork>

Ideas for future knowledge products of PEYR

Both **youth work** and **participation** are also two of the three main themes of focus for the youth partnership work plan in 2019, with the third theme (**social inclusion**) also popular among the research activities of the PEYR members.

When compared to the "PEYR – Map of competencies" (EU-CoE youth partnership, 2019b), there exist a few thematic areas that have little or no coverage in the current work of PEYR members, as reported in the *Padlet*, namely: Gender; Inequalities, Marginality; Transitions; and Wellbeing.

Current state of youth research in Europe: Summary

- **Growing recognition by the two partnership institutions of the importance of research** in designing policies, programmes, and frameworks for young people
- **Youth work is a potential area of intervention by the PEYR in the development of the Council of Europe 2030 youth strategy:** it is a cross-cutting theme which is unlikely to disappear in future drafts of the strategy; it is an area of focus in the partnership work plan; and it is an area of expertise among the current cohort of PEYR members as reflected in their current research interests.
- In addition to youth work, the themes of **digitalisation, education, and participation** are popular among the current research work undertaken by the PEYR members. The current work of PEYR members overlaps closely with the thematic foci of the partnership.
- Thematic gaps that exist among the current research work of the PEYR members includes **gender, inequalities/marginality, transitions, and wellbeing.**

Upcoming trends in youth research in Europe

The annual PEYR meetings are also an opportunity brainstorm and further develop knowledge on areas of specific interest to the work of the two partner institution, using the collective expertise of the PEYR membership. Participants explored the five questions below:

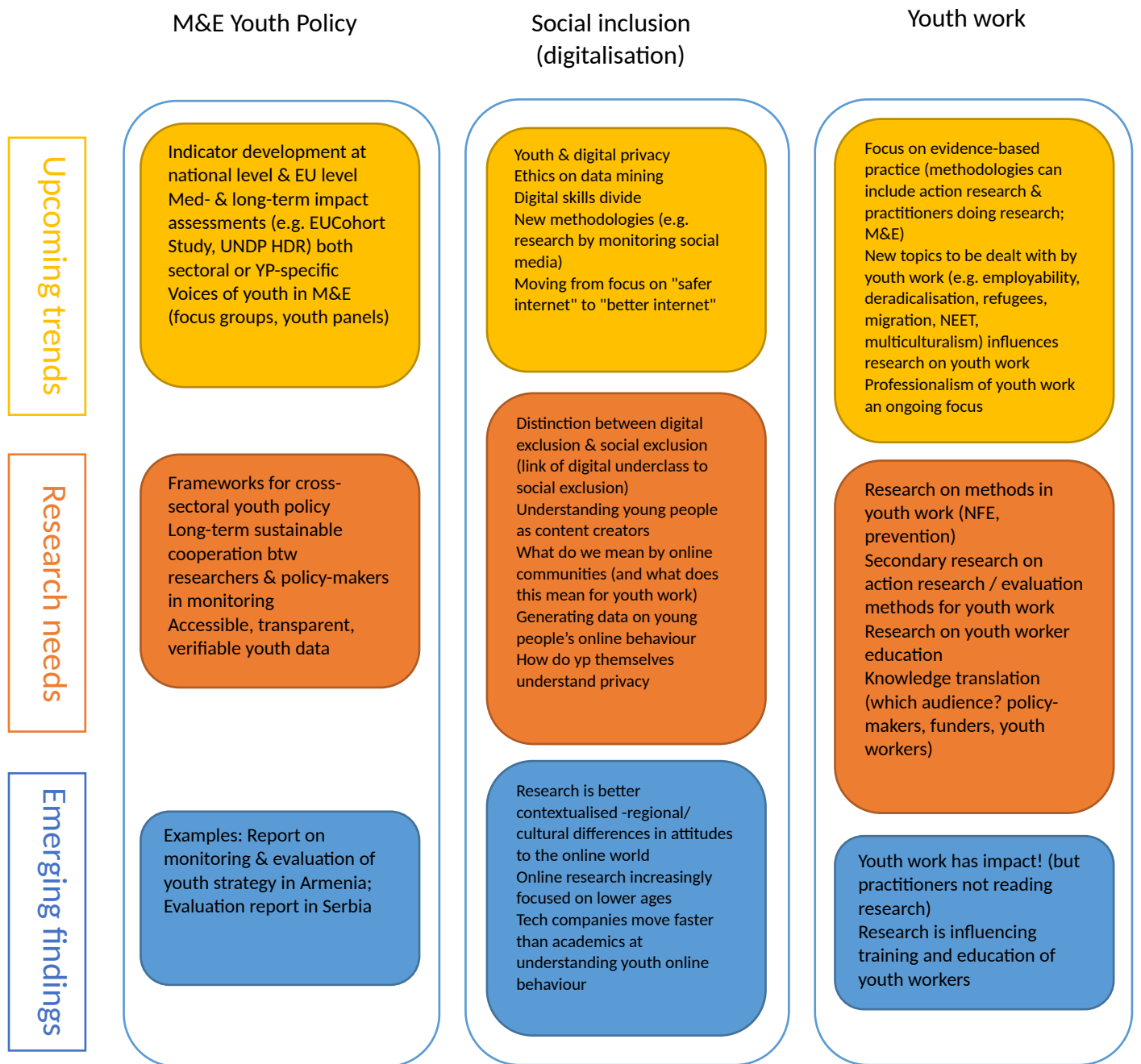
1. What are the upcoming trends in youth research within this area?
2. What are the research needs of youth policy and practice in this area?
3. What are emerging research findings?
4. What are the key networks, resources, and institutions for research in this area?
5. Looking forward, what are some ideas for future projects/studies/activities that could be done to further develop knowledge in this area?

To do this, participants were split into four thematic working groups, each with its own *Padlet* to capture the outputs of the group:

- Monitoring and evaluation of youth policy <https://padlet.com/cristina53/youthpolicy>
- Social inclusion, with special attention to digitalisation https://padlet.com/dan_moxon1/SID
- Youth work <https://padlet.com/cristina53/youthwork>
- Citizenship and participation <https://padlet.com/cristina53/participation>

The following page captures the main inputs for questions #1-3 above. It is a quick overview of the inputs for the sake of analysis – the complete entries can be found on the *Padlet* hyperlinks. Question #4 “Key networks, resources, and institutions” can be accessed at the hyperlinks above for reference. Inputs for question #5 will be analysed in the next section, *Opportunities for future action in youth research.*

Summary of emerging trends for youth research from thematic working groups



Upcoming trends in youth research: Summary

- **Trends in applying non-traditional methodologies:** including action research, social media analytical data, and different actors conducting research (e.g. practitioners, young people).
- **Increased focus on vulnerable or marginalised groups:** including as an explicit focus on the nature of marginalisation in areas of growing importance in a young person's life (e.g. digital); as an increasing focus of youth work; or as a sub-group focus in research on participation.
- **Increased focus on extremism & authoritarianism:** with need to understand pull factors for youth, attractiveness; also how to mitigate or address with participatory structures, youth work, or youth policy.
- **Need to measure impact:** either through evaluation or other types of studies; including indicator and framework development; important for broader understanding of "what works" but also as a way to convince policy-makers, funders, etc. of the importance of interventions;
- **Calls for more data:** across all areas; broadly, in terms of youth wellbeing measures, or specifically, on digital usage; brings up questions of who owns the data, how accessible is it, transparency, reliability etc.

Looking forward: Opportunities for future action

The annual PEYR meeting is also an opportunity for the members to help further refine ideas on planned activities in the 2020 youth partnership work plan, and to brainstorm new ideas to be considered for addition on the work plan – both in relation to the four themes explored above in the working groups, and more broadly.

Feedback on planned youth partnership activities for 2020 workplan

ACTIVITY	PEYR feedback/ideas to consider
<p>I. Perspectives on youth</p> <p>Online platform/forum for on-going debate on a topic without needing to bring people physically together</p> <p>(already online): https://pip-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/perspectives-on-youth-web</p>	<p>Topics to be covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth participation (models, best practice, seldom heard youth); Gender (including transgender young people); Sexual and Reproductive health; Access to social rights; Polarisation and isolation in society; Perceptions of democracy; Values of young people; Education & employment; Rise of authoritarianism & appeal <p>Format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Target audience is broader population outside of PEYR network - Dissemination through FB, link to Medium, webinar in Zoom – too confusing. Should there be a “one-stop shop”? - Maybe needs an editorial team? (e.g. to moderate discussions) - Maybe needs an engagement strategy? (e.g. plan of how to get people engaged using this tool, monitoring & evaluation)

<p>II. Youth Knowledge Forum</p> <p>Event specifically on youth research & knowledge. 1st edition: Regional Youth Knowledge Forum on youth research in South East Europe https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/regional-youth-knowledge-forum-on-youth-research-in-south-east-europe</p>	<p>Target audience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not only knowledge providers but also knowledge users - Should be participatory with young people in the middle - Not just ECKYP and PEYR <p>Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What really is knowledge for the 21st century? Who owns knowledge (and how does it relate to power?) *but could be too epistemological and not relevant to policy-makers - Comparability of data, quality of research - Horizontal issues about youth research (methodological) - Evidence-based policy-making (or policy-based evidence-picking) - Could incorporate more economists (underrepresented in PEYR) <p>Format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Size similar to a symposium
<p>III. Youth Work</p> <p>All youth partnership activities relating to youth work</p>	<p>New themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professionalisation of youth workers vs. professionalism of youth workers - Youth work happening in different contexts (In schools, employed in prisons) - Who has the right to certify youth workers when it doesn't exist in the country? - Continued conversations from Youth Dialogue on concerns with quality of youth work

<p>IV. Expert reflection on youth policy evaluation</p> <p>Survey in May/June – produce a report on overview on state of youth policy evaluation</p>	<p>More ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Database of interventions on youth policies/ youth work; Good practice on evaluation of youth policy making - Collecting data which would be useful for evaluation of youth policies; What kinds of data needs to collected? (could be connected to the Knowledge Forum)
<p>V. Study on digitalisation and social inclusion</p>	<p>New ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing country examples: New expert group in NL on parenting and digitalisations; Portugal - Youth workers and how they can use digital tools - Dark web, social inclusion - Set a direction of thematic topics for the field; Conceptual - distinction of general inclusion with digital inclusion - Knowledge book & study could be translated into Ukraine

Summary of ideas for future projects/studies/activities from thematic working groups

M&E Youth Policy

- Monitoring new types of intelligence outcomes (e.g. emotional) & competencies (e.g. self-management)
- Creating a toolkit for policymakers with the criteria for evaluation of their work & self-evaluation
- Develop tools & knowledge around measuring impact of informal/non-formal learning

Social inclusion (digitalisation)

- Mapping gaps in the evidence
- Identity formation of young people online
- Measuring young people's awareness of digital opportunities
- Study on youth participation in internet governance
- Foresighting methodology involving young people
- Digital literacy education for young people
- Participatory research across Europe on YP experience of online world

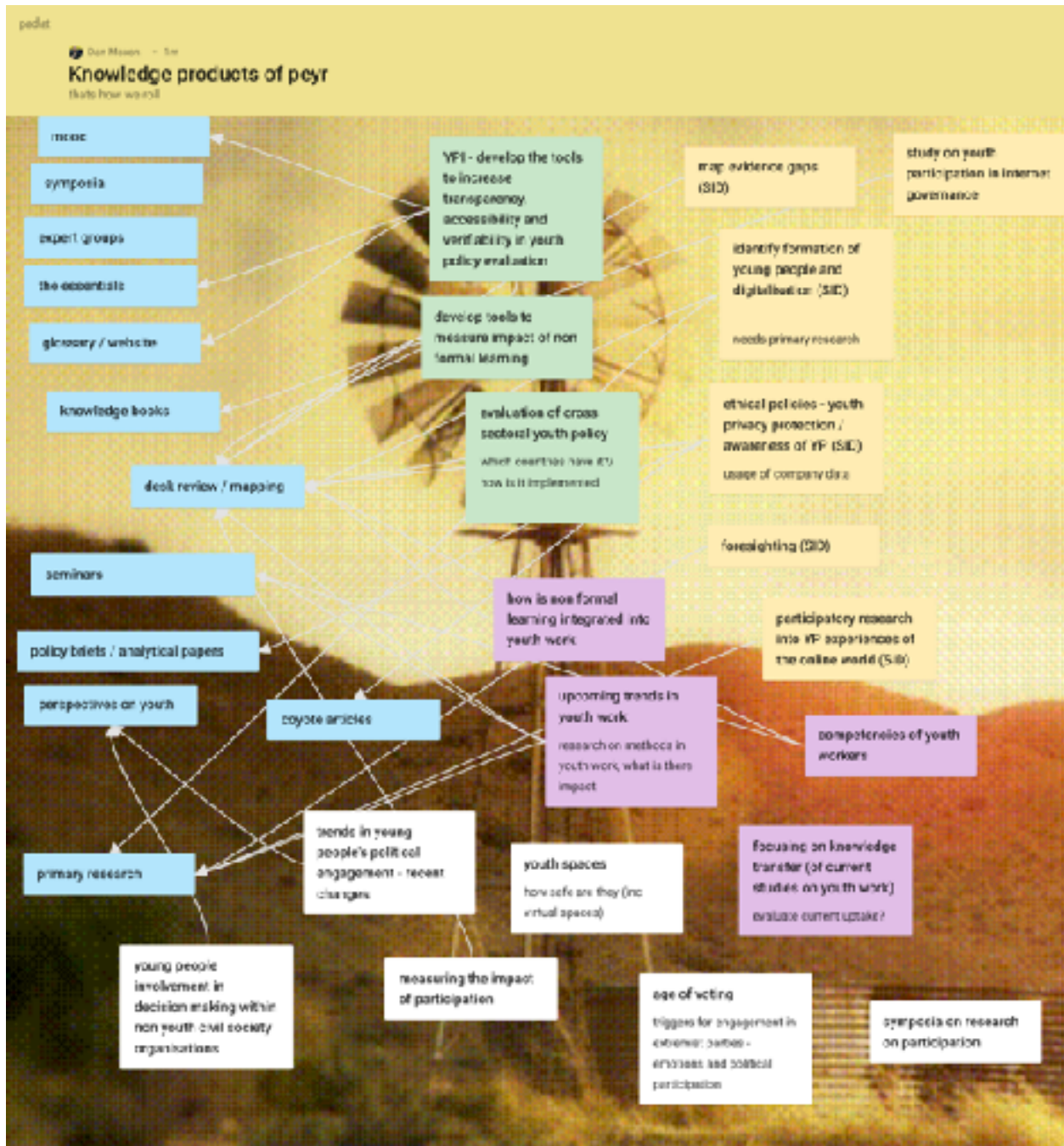
Youth work

- Comparative study on what youth workers do in their daily work
- Researching competencies of youth workers (more than what is written in the curricula)
- Knowledge transfer (focusing on different

Citizenship & participation

- Need to look into why young people prefer to come together in these loose initiatives
- Forums for young people with opposing views e.g from youth political parties;
- Youth taking part in decision-making in CSOs other than youth organisations;
- Role of PEYR in this research? Knowledge translation from research to organisations
- Impact of youth participation on other areas

Padlet of ideas for future knowledge products that the youth partnership could develop



This Padlet can be accessed here: https://padlet.com/dan_moxon1/n1ijndznx3tp

Opportunities for future action: Summary

- **Need to promote both policy-relevant youth research, but also youth research broadly:** linking applied research to policy is important but activities should not only focus on research which is considered to be policy-relevant
- **More mapping of existing evidence is needed:** brainstorming on future research agenda and activities requires reflecting on what research exists, what is the quality of that research, and what gaps remain
- **Digital technologies and youth is high on the agenda:** youth partnership could help to advance this field, conceptually (e.g. defining digital exclusion vis-à-vis social inclusion) and also through mapping existing research, resources at the European level
- **Types and formats of knowledge products as important as topics to be covered:** the type and format of knowledge products needs to suit the audience, ideally as part of a larger knowledge translation plan that would be created for each research project

Works Cited

EU-CoE youth partnership. (2019a). *Draft 2019 EU-CoE youth partnership work plan*. Strasbourg: EU-CoE youth partnership.

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